

Semitism and racism in our communities.

As Members of Congress, we have an enormous responsibility to take strong action and stand up against intolerance before it takes root in the next generation. It is incumbent upon all people to ensure that adequate tools are in place to counter the resurgence of fear and hate-mongering—whether directed at old targets or new—that led to the Holocaust and other atrocities.

America must maintain its leadership abroad, especially when it comes to the issues of human rights and religious freedom—the core foundations upon which our Nation was built. We must uphold these standards here at home and defend and promote them globally.

In my role as the representative on anti-Semitism, racism, and intolerance for the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's Parliamentary Assembly, I visited Paris and Copenhagen and met with local leaders in the aftermath of the violent, anti-Semitic attacks in 2015, including the Charlie Hebdo massacre. The gruesome murder of Holocaust survivor Mireille Knoll in Paris on March 24 is a grim reminder of the urgency of our task.

In Poland, there have been no attacks recently, but there is a growing climate of fear. Government officials have equivocated regarding Polish responsibility for the World War II massacre in Jedwabne and the postwar pogrom in Kielce, which occurred on our Independence Day—July 4, 1946. The Polish President recently signed into law an anti-defamation bill that makes it illegal to attribute responsibility for or complicity during the Holocaust to the Polish nation or state. This law will, in fact, restrict academic freedom, chill free speech, and hinder teaching about the Holocaust and the crimes committed in occupied Poland during World War II.

In Hungary, Viktor Orban has stoked a campaign of hatred against migrants and Muslims in his bid for a third term as Prime Minister. In the final days of his campaign and perhaps revealing some concerns for his margin of victory, his party has sharpened its call for a country that is White and Christian, escalating its anti-Semitic and anti-Roma rhetoric.

Here at home, we have witnessed extremists and neo-Nazis marching in the streets openly carrying painful hate symbols from the 1930s. In a brazen public display, neo-Nazis and White supremacist groups took to the streets in Charlottesville, VA, last August, inciting violence that cost 32-year-old counter-protester Heather Heyer her life. Just this past weekend, another group of neo-Nazis marched in Newnan, GA, and burned a large swastika afterwards. Burt Colucci, a member of the National Socialist Movement, told the Atlanta Journal-Constitution that there was no particular reason Newnan was chosen for the rally. He said:

We pick these rallies randomly. It is always preferable that it is in a white town.

How can we address these challenges and build a more tolerant, peaceful, and global community?

Earlier this year, in commemoration of International Holocaust Remembrance Day, the Italian Government hosted the Rome International Conference on the Responsibility of States, Institutions and Individuals in the Fight against Anti-Semitism in the OSCE Area. At that event that convened on the 80th anniversary of the passage of Italy's "racial laws," which discriminated against Jews and people of African descent, leaders from across Europe and the United States re-committed to address anti-Semitism in their societies—from collecting and reporting hate crime data to supporting education—at a time when few Holocaust survivors or witnesses to the atrocities of World War II remain.

The OSCE also reported on its Turning Words Into Action project, designed to assist governments and civil societies in bolstering security for Jewish communities, educate our own societies on how to recognize and address prejudice, and build coalitions between Jewish and other communities.

Yet, at this critical juncture, we have been cutting funding and other resources meant to bolster America's diplomatic efforts abroad. It is for this reason that I fought to include \$1 million to combat global anti-Semitism in the fiscal year 2018 Omnibus appropriations bill recently passed by Congress. I also wrote letters urging President Trump and his administration to select a new special envoy to monitor and combat anti-Semitism. This position has been critical in working with governments and organizations abroad to facilitate action against anti-Semitism in communities around the world.

We must all understand that a threat against one religion, race, or ethnicity is a threat against all religions, races, and ethnicities. Hatred unleashed rarely forms its own boundaries.

In the aftermath of World War II, a Protestant pastor famously said:

In Germany, they came first for the Communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist; and then they came for the trade unionists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist; and then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew; and then they came for me . . . and by that time there was no one left to speak up.

History has shown time and again that the failure of governments and political leaders to denounce those who advance an agenda of hate and bigotry brings instability and violence.

As hate crimes continue to rise in our own Nation and as the number of refugees around the world fleeing political violence and persecution reaches record highs, we must reaffirm our sense of duty and our commitment to preserving freedom, equality, and fundamental human rights for all people.

Addressing the anti-Semitism and other forms of discrimination and persecution takes a concerted and sustained effort from a coalition of gov-

ernments, faith and community leaders, and global advocates to denounce these atrocities and promote peace and tolerance around the world.

Now more than ever, we need to join together and speak up to protect human rights around the globe because it is in all of our interests to do so. We must also use tools available to us, from hate crime laws to capacity-building measures for civil society and governments, such as those offered by the OSCE.

I will continue to stand alongside civil society and remain an advocate for equality and human rights, and I urge my colleagues to do likewise.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session for the en bloc consideration of the following nominations: Executive Calendar Nos. 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, and 825.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nominations be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nominations of Rohit Chopra, of New York, to be a Federal Trade Commissioner for the unexpired term of seven years from September 26, 2012; Noah Joshua Phillips, of Maryland, to be a Federal Trade Commissioner for the term of seven years from September 26, 2016; Joseph Simons, of Virginia, to be a Federal Trade Commissioner for the term of seven years from September 26, 2017; Christine S. Wilson, of Virginia, to be a Federal Trade Commissioner for the unexpired term of seven years from September 26, 2011; Christine S. Wilson, of Virginia, to be a Federal Trade Commissioner for the term of seven years from September 26, 2018; and Rebecca

Kelly Slaughter, of Maryland, to be a Federal Trade Commissioner for the term of seven years from September 26, 2015 en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the following nomination: Executive Calendar No. 757.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Andrea L. Thompson, of South Dakota, to be Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nomination with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nomination be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Thompson nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, many of us were shocked when the President tweeted that he was deploying the National Guard to the border.

The President's claim that we face a crisis at our Southwest border is simply false, and it is particularly ironic when the President himself has repeatedly bragged—again, falsely—that illegal border crossings are at an alltime low.

I remain concerned that the Trump administration is diverting Defense Department resources to the border to help carry out its deportation agenda. The Department is unable to tell Congress how much these deployments may cost our Nation—paid for with money diverted from other, critical de-

fense programs. So far, the Department of Defense has provided a preliminary estimate that these deployments will cost \$182 million in fiscal year 2018, but there is no end in sight.

I am also concerned that these deployments may harm the readiness of our National Guard by disrupting training for core missions. As one local elected official in New Mexico noted in the Albuquerque Journal, "We're going into forest fire season. A big percentage of the state is in drought right now, and if National Guard folks are continuously rotated down to the border for a problem that doesn't exist, are they going to be available for a real problem when it happens?"

Well, yesterday, Secretary of the Air Force Heather Wilson issued a surprising report, which inadvertently agreed with these concerns.

Last year, Congress required the Department of Defense to examine past deployments of National Guard troops to the border and to analyze those experiences for whether they had been beneficial for those Guard members. As Vice Chair of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, I received the Department's report yesterday.

It is fair to say that its conclusions are probably not what the President wanted to hear from his own political appointees.

The report notes that several States have conducted training and operations along the Southwest border. It concludes that training and operations by California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas Guard units "does not directly contribute to collective core Mission Essential Task readiness" of those units. In other words, we are diverting them from their most important missions.

It was even harsher in its conclusions for National Guard units from other States traveling to the border for similar training. It describes a pilot program to send 250 National Guard personnel to the border. Not only did the pilot program cost a half a million more than that unit's regular, scheduled training, but it also resulted in only 22 more apprehensions than normal, while contributing almost nothing to the unit's training.

The report also notes that these kinds of deployments "comes at a cost to the individual soldier, his/her family, and her/his employer, as well as to overall united readiness."

Is that what we want? To impose costs on our volunteer Guard personnel, their families, their employers supporting their service?

The report goes on to say, "Such tasking could also potentially impact support to validated Global Force Management Allocation Plan requirements." That is a mouthful, but it means that these deployments could make our National Guard less prepared to respond to a natural disaster back home or, God forbid, a war.

Is that what we want? No. There's an old adage that goes, when you find

yourself in a hole, the first thing to do is to stop digging.

We all know that the President wants to build a wall on the border, but he has failed to convince Congress that spending \$25 billion on a campaign promise is the right thing to do. Instead, he is sending the outstanding women and men of the National Guard to the border, as if to compensate for his inability to work with Congress.

I have met a great number of members of the National Guard, and I know they will carry out their assigned duties as well as they can. Many will view their deployments as a chance to serve the country they love, but we owe it to them to send them on a mission that is worth it, and the Pentagon's own study raises serious questions about that.

I hope that we end National Guard deployments to staff the crisis that the President invented and get them back to their core job: protecting their States and protecting this country.

FOURTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ABDUCTION OF THE CHIBOK GIRLS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I would like to recognize a tragic anniversary upon us this month. Four years ago this month, the terrorist group Boko Haram kidnapped 276 girls in the dead of the night from a school in Chibok, Nigeria, where they were taking final exams.

Some of the girls managed to run away, but Boko Haram abducted 219 girls.

These hundreds of young girls were held captive, abused, made to be slaves, forced into marriage with their abductors, raped, starved, and, in some cases, forcibly converted to Islam.

Some have tragically died while trying to flee or even during childbirth.

You might recall the global campaign on Twitter, #BringBackOurGirls, to urge the rescue of the girls.

Former First Lady Michelle Obama was moved to join the campaign for the release of the girls, as were over 3 million people around the world.

I, myself, was mortified to learn that, for the mere act of seeking an education, the girls were abducted and forced into child marriage or slavery. That is why, back then in 2014, I introduced a resolution condemning the Chibok abduction and calling for the immediate, safe return of the girls.

Since the kidnapping, just over 100 girls have been released, leaving over 100 girls still missing. I fear some may have already perished.

Parents marked the fourth anniversary on Saturday by marching with thousands of others to the school in Chibok where the girls were abducted in 2014.

I think we should join them here in the Senate in remembering this tragic anniversary.

That is why I have introduced, with some of my female colleagues, a resolution calling for the immediate release of all Boko Haram captives, especially the remaining Chibok girls.