

Mr. WARNER. The Senator will yield.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, I thank the Senator, and I appreciate that very much.

I just want to make a brief statement about the vote that just took place. I tried to communicate this, and there wasn't time before the vote. Right now, we have more threats than we have ever had in the history of this country. I think we all realize that.

General Dunford said that we are losing our qualitative and quantitative advantage over our adversaries. He was talking about Russia and China, in this case. We have adversaries out there that are actually ahead of us in terms of their capabilities in artillery and other areas.

Here we are, and, quite frankly, we knew how this vote was going to come out. I have a list of the same vote that has taken place for the last 5 years, and it came out the same way it did before. The point here is that even though it wasn't going to pass, the problem is, it is sending a message to our kids who are out there in harm's way.

We look and we see that we have started our road to recovery, and it has been an exciting thing because we came so close to being in a position where one-third of our brigade combat teams didn't work. The F-35s in the field—the Marines could use less than half of them. All of these things were going on because of what has happened to our military.

Finally, we turned the corner. We turned the corner on the last vote—not the one we took today but the one we took a few months ago—and we now are rebuilding our military.

I had breakfast this morning with the Secretary of the Army and with the Chief of the Army, and really good things are happening. I can't think of anything worse than to send a message to our kids in the field that we are going to go back and undo the positive things that have pulled us up into a competitive position.

For the sake of our military, for the sake of defending America, the vote there was to vote against sending the wrong message to our kids in harm's way.

I thank Senator WARNER for yielding.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

Mr. WARNER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume executive session and consideration of the Haspel nomination.

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

Mr. WARNER. Madam President, I thank our friend, the chairman of the committee, the Senator from North Carolina.

We have gone through a lot over the last couple of years, and I appreciate the fact that in terms of timing, he is going to allow me to speak first on Gina Haspel.

Gina Haspel is among the most qualified people to be nominated for the position of the Director of the CIA. She has served with the Agency for 33 years, including tours as a Case Officer, four times as a Station Chief, the Deputy Chief of National Resources Division, the Deputy Director of the National Clandestine Service, and currently as the Deputy Director of the Agency. In many ways, her story is representative of the thousands of people at the Agency and throughout the intelligence community who serve quietly, without recognition, and often at great personal risk in order to keep our Nation safe from those who wish to do us harm.

In addition, while she has not emphasized this, we should not overlook the historic nature of Ms. Haspel's nomination as the first woman to be nominated as Director of the CIA. Seeing her portrait in the halls of the Agency next to the long line of former Directors will be a long overdue but important breakthrough for the intelligence community.

I would also note that as a Senator from Virginia, the home to thousands of CIA personnel and the vice chairman of the Intelligence Committee, I have heard from many Agency officers—and for that matter, members of the rank and file of other intelligence community agencies—and almost to a person, the rank and file have supported her nomination.

Let me be clear. This has not been an easy decision for me. Over the past several weeks, I have held multiple meetings and calls with Ms. Haspel and many others about her record and her character. In our open hearing, I raised questions about her involvement with the rendition, detention, and interrogation program and, if she were to be confirmed, her willingness to push back if President Trump asked her to undertake any immoral or legally questionable activity. I questioned her willingness to declassify, to the extent possible, more information about her background at the Agency. I still wish more could be done to discuss her background in an open setting. The Agency just recently has declassified more information about her service with the counterterrorism center. I thank them for that but still believe it would have been preferable if we could have found a way to be even more transparent. If she is confirmed as Director, I would encourage Ms. Haspel to keep this in mind.

To those here who have concluded that Ms. Haspel's background with the RDI program should preclude her from leading the CIA, well, I respect their arguments, and I know the passion with which they put forward their position. I myself struggled with this point.

Many people at the CIA participated in the program. They were told it was legal by the Justice Department and ordered by the President, but some of the actions undertaken were repugnant and amounted to torture. Since those days, America has had a long debate about the standards that we, as a nation, can and should apply to the treatment of detainees regardless of who they might be. That is why I was one of the 17 cosponsors in the Senate of the McCain-Feinstein amendment to prohibit torture and to prohibit any interrogation techniques not authorized by the U.S. Army Field Manual. That is why I voted to both approve and to declassify the Senate Intelligence Committee's extensive study of the RDI program.

I strongly believe that we, as Americans, have a duty to look squarely at our mistakes and not to sweep them under the rug but to learn from them and, in the future, to do better. Nor do I believe that we can excuse torture or the way in which detainees—no matter who they were or what crimes they were guilty of—were treated. We are better than that, and we need a CIA Director who will ensure in an ironclad way that we will never return to those days, that we will follow the law as enacted by Congress.

This is why I pushed Ms. Haspel, both in our hearings and in our private meetings, on this very point: What is her view now of the RDI program? And how will she react if she were asked, as Director, to undertake something similar in the future? In both our one-on-one meetings and in classified sessions before the committee, I found Acting Director Haspel to be forthcoming regarding her views on that program. However, I thought it was important that she say this in public, not just privately, which is why I asked her to memorialize those comments in writing.

Gina Haspel wrote: "With the benefit of hindsight and my experience as a senior Agency leader, the enhanced interrogation program is not one the CIA should have undertaken."

I believe this is a clear statement of growth as a leader and learning from mistakes of the past. While I also wish that she would have been more forceful, I also understand her reluctance to condemn the many men and women at the Agency who thought they were doing the right thing at that time.

I first met Gina at one of her overseas postings, but I didn't really get to work with her until this last year, when the former Director appointed her to be Deputy Director of the Agency. Over the last year, I have found her to be professional and forthright with our Intelligence Committee.

I have had the ability to have candid, unfiltered discussions with her. Whether the challenge we confront is North Korea, ISIS terrorists, or the long-term challenges of countries like China and Russia, I will feel safer knowing that the CIA has Ms. Haspel at the helm.

Most importantly, I believe she is someone who can and will stand up to

the President and who will speak truth to power. If this President orders her to do something illegal or immoral, such as return to torture, she will refuse. I believe this not just because she has told me so or because she wrote it in a letter or even because she said it in front of the committee under oath; I believe it, as well, because I have heard it from people who have worked with her for years, people who know and trust her—John Brennan, Jim Clapper, Leon Panetta, Jim Mattis, and many, many others who have served Presidents of both parties. Every one of them has said that they trust her to push back on actions that might be inappropriate coming from this President.

I furthermore believe that she is someone who will push back—and push back strongly—against any attempts by this President to undercut, denigrate, or ignore the professional men and women of the CIA and their responsibility, again—first and foremost—to speak truth to power, whatever the political implications may be.

It is for these reasons that I am supporting Gina Haspel's nomination to be the Director of the CIA. I respect my colleagues who made a different decision. This is not an easy choice. I, too, have spent weeks working through it, but at the end of the day and as we vote, hopefully, later this afternoon, I believe Gina Haspel should be confirmed. I look forward to supporting her. I look forward to her being a good Director of the CIA. I look forward to her performance, convincing those who could not support her today that her long-term value to our country will make our Nation safer and that she will act in accordance with the principles and values of our country.

I yield the floor and 30 seconds to my colleague, the chairman of the committee.

I want to thank him, as well, for continuing to push not only Ms. Haspel but the Agency, the Department of Justice, and others to make sure that members of the committee and, to another extent, Members of the Senate had as much access to information as ever before with any CIA Director. I value our working relationship with the committee. Sometimes the chairman and I don't always agree, but we always deal with things in a straightforward manner.

I yield the floor to my dear friend, the chairman.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BURR. Madam President, I thank the vice chairman of the Intelligence Committee, and I would also reiterate what he said. This is one of the last bipartisan committees on the Hill. It should be. It is because we are entrusted with seeing things and hearing things that nobody else can and verifying that we live within the letter of the law and the Presidential directives for the rest of the 85 Members of the Senate and the American people. We take that very seriously.

I rise today in support of Gina Haspel, the President's nominee to be the next Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. Ms. Haspel has been asked to lead one of our Nation's most treasured assets, an Agency that works in the shadows. It requires a leader with unwavering integrity who will ensure that the organization operates lawfully, ethically, and morally.

Gina was born in Kentucky. She was the oldest of five children. Her father was in the Air Force. She traveled from place to place. She told her dad one day that she wanted to go to West Point, only to hear her dad very gently remind her that West Point did not invite women. That did not delude her sense of service. After graduating from the University of Kentucky, Gina went on to work as a contractor with the 10th Special Forces Group. It was at Fort Devens that Gina learned about the CIA, a place where she could serve her country along with other women doing clandestine work around the world. This excited her.

In 1985 Gina swore an oath to defend the Constitution and began a 30-plus year career of service at the Agency. Since that day, Gina Haspel has developed extensive overseas experience and served as Chief of Station in several locations around the world that we can't mention. But I can tell my colleagues that every time I traveled abroad to a location where Gina was the Chief of Station, I received the most thorough brief from the most organized station that I have had the opportunity to see.

In Washington she has consistently proven herself a strong leader, rising to the role of Deputy Director of the National Clandestine Service and then Deputy Director of the entire Central Intelligence Agency. Those who saw her approach to that role say she served as a peacemaker, a general, a tough advocate for people, and a clear, steady guide for an Agency dealing with a complex web of world crisis.

I believe Ms. Haspel's experience, her dedication to service, and her judgment make her a natural fit to lead the CIA as it enters a period of profound change and uncertainty. She is, by many accounts, the most qualified person the President could have chosen to lead the CIA and the most prepared individual in the 70-year history of this Agency. She is intimately familiar with the threats facing our Nation. Where others can discuss world events, Gina Haspel has lived those events. She has no learning curve.

She has acted morally, ethically, and legally over a distinguished 30-year career. She has earned the respect of the Agency workforce, of her peers, of Republicans and Democrats, of military officers, and of civilian security leaders, evidenced by the number of letters received in support of her nomination—too numerous to read.

Gina has also the courage to speak truth to power, and she has demonstrated that courage time and again. She has a clear-eyed vision for the

Agency and its future, informed by her career and her past experiences. Previous outside leaders of the CIA have worked hard to understand the Agency they were asked to run. But when a case officer, just back from a war zone, describes to Gina the credibility of a newly recruited asset and the challenges of dodging check points to get to a meeting with a source, she knows all the right questions to ask because she has been there and she has done that.

For all these reasons, I support Gina Haspel to be the next Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. I am also mindful of the historic nature of Gina Haspel's nomination and what it means for those first-tour case officers and junior analysts who will join the Agency this year and in the years to come.

As I said at Ms. Haspel's nomination hearing, outside the Agency workforce, not many Americans get an opportunity to walk the halls of the old headquarters building. Those who do, after entering, encounter a series of portraits depicting former Directors of the OSS, Central Intelligence, and the Central Intelligence Agency, as its name has morphed. Some of these Directors were loved. Some were controversial. Some little understood the Agency they were asked to lead. Some made disastrous decisions out of hubris or inexperience or both. But one thing is common: All the portraits are of men.

Many want to make Gina's nomination about one small piece of the Agency's past. If that were the standard that this institution applies, John Brennan would never have been confirmed as the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency because when he was at the Agency, he was fourth in command, versus Gina Haspel, who was a GS-15. Most of us, though, are looking toward the Agency's future.

Avril Haines, Meroe Park, and many others who have served or are currently serving have cracked the glass ceiling at the Agency. Gina is poised to break it. It may be impossible to measure the importance of that breakthrough, but I do know that it will send a signal to the current workforce and to the workforce of the future that a lifetime of commitment to the Agency and its mission can and will be rewarded. To those walking for hours to get to a source meeting, to those officers who stay up all night preparing for the Presidential daily brief, to those making tough calls about putting their people in harm's way to secure the intelligence we need to keep our country safe, to those who find a needle in a haystack, catch the bad guys, find the weapon shipments, and come home and walk past a wall of stars at the Agency, know that we support you and we support the job you do. You deserve a Director who understands who you are, what you do, what you can do, and what you should do. You deserve a Director who understands your sacrifice and has a clear vision for the future of

the Agency and its mission. You deserve Gina Haspel.

I ask that we in this body this afternoon confirm Gina Haspel as Director of the Central Intelligence Agency without further delay.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

AMERICA EMBASSY IN JERUSALEM

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, I rise today to give thanks and celebration for the United States' Embassy established in the city of Jerusalem and for the continued safety and security of the Jewish people in Israel and across the world.

Almost exactly 70 years ago, Israel's founding father, David Ben-Gurion, brought together members of the Jewish People's Council in a Tel Aviv museum to declare the founding of the modern State of Israel. Eleven minutes later, President Harry S. Truman courageously recognized the State of Israel over the objection of many of his advisers and the State Department, and the fates of our two countries have been intertwined ever since, until this week, when the U.S. Embassy was finally moved to Jerusalem, recognizing that it is the eternal capital of the Jewish people and the undivided capital of Israel.

I was proud to have traveled to Jerusalem along with my fellow Senators for the official opening of the new Embassy. It was an incredible honor to witness history unfolding. It was a joyous moment for Israelis, for Americans, and a moment of history.

I had the opportunity to visit with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu about the incredible significance of ending the 70 years of discrimination that Israel had faced. In no other country on Earth did America have our Embassy in a city other than its capital city. It was only Israel where our Embassy was not in the capital.

I would note that for many years Presidents of both parties, Democrats and Republicans, have campaigned promising that they would move the Embassy to Jerusalem, which is the capital of the nation. Yet Presidents of both parties have failed to do so. I commend President Trump for honoring that campaign commitment and for delivering on that campaign commitment.

Moving our Embassy to Jerusalem is an acknowledgement of undeniable truth that Jerusalem is, in fact, the capital of the nation of Israel. It is where we find the supreme court. It is where we find the Prime Minister, and it is where we find the President of Israel.

It is the capital city, and now our Embassy reflects that fact. But moving

the Embassy and recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel has significance beyond that. It has significance because it sends an unmistakable message to our friends and to our enemies that the United States stands with our friends and unshakably stands alongside the nation of Israel.

There was considerable debate within the administration about whether and when to move the Embassy. That has been true in prior administrations as well—considerable debate. The principal argument against moving the Embassy has always been that the enemies of Israel will not like it. I believe that is yet another reason this was the right thing to do.

There were some who made the case that moving the Embassy would diminish the chances of peace in the Middle East. I will confess, I am skeptical that peace will be attained anytime soon. I don't believe the impediment to peace in the Middle East is the nation of Israel. Israel wants peace. It is Israeli babies who are being murdered by the terrorists.

I don't believe we will see peace in the Middle East unless and until, No. 1, the Palestinian leadership acknowledges Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state, and No. 2, they renounce terrorists. As long as the Palestinian leaders are engaging in a unity government with Hamas—an avowed terrorist organization seeking to destroy the nation of Israel and murder innocent Israelis—peace will not be had.

But what I urge President Trump and the administration is that moving the Embassy increases, I believe, the chance for peace. Why is that? Because it demonstrates that America stands strong, stands by our friends, and is not shaken, is not buffeted by global media opinion. I suggested to the administration that our Arab allies in the region would publicly denounce the move. They would have to for domestic political concerns. However, I believe that privately, those allies—the Egyptians, the Jordanians, the Saudis—would be relieved that America moved our Embassy. Why is that? Because an American President and an administration strong enough to move the Embassy and stand up to the nattering nabobs and the press might well also be a President and an administration strong enough to stand up to Iran to end the catastrophic Obama Iranian nuclear deal and to do whatever is necessary to prevent the Ayatollah Khamenei from getting nuclear weapons. Indeed, we saw that assessment was true.

I think it is quite fitting that the opening of the new Embassy occurred just days apart from the President making the historic decision to pull out of the disastrous Obama Iran nuclear deal.

We are seeing the difference between strength and weakness. If history teaches anything, it is that weakness and appeasement do not work. Instead, I think America is far better when we pursue policies of peace through strength.

We all recognize there are those who rage against the existence of the State of Israel. There are the Ayatollahs of Iran who swear "death to Israel and death to America," indeed who refer to Israel as the "Little Satan" and America as the "Great Satan" and who finance terrorism at Israel's doorstep and across the world.

There are the terrorists of Hamas who seized control of the Gaza Strip over a decade ago, after Israel had already fully withdrawn from the territory. For the last several months, Hamas has been organizing civilian mobs with terrorist cells embedded throughout to attack Israel's border and the soldiers stationed there. They call the riots the march of return in reference to what they call their right of return, which is a euphemism for having millions of descendants of Palestinians flood into Israel and destroy the modern State of Israel and its existence as a Jewish state.

Hamas timed their weeks of riots to culminate this week during what they call Nakba Day. "Nakba" means "catastrophe." It is the word they use to reference the creation of Israel. We should understand that. Every year, they denounce what Israel celebrates—the creation of the modern State of Israel. Hamas mourns the catastrophe—to use their word—that Israel even exists. But inevitably, in these battles for survival that Israel faces daily, we can count on global media elite acting as little more than propaganda arms for Hamas and other terrorists, and no week has that been more evident than this week.

I direct you to the front page of the New York Times from this week. The New York Times's headline is "Israel Kills Dozens at Gaza Border as U.S. Embassy Opens in Jerusalem." Anyone reading this headline would say: Goodness gracious. Why are the Israelis murdering people? That is what the New York Times says. One takes from the coverage, apparently, that poor, innocent, unarmed people are being shot for no reason by Israel. That is certainly what the global media elite are portraying.

What are the actual facts? You remember facts—the things that used to be reported when journalists were actually being journalists and not propagandists. Let's talk about the facts. For several weeks, we have seen riots and violent attacks at Israel's border, terrorist attacks that culminated in the attacks that led to these shootings in self-defense. The rioters used massive tire fires to create smoke to cover their attacks. They used guns. They used pipe bombs. They used Molotov cocktails. They used grenades. They used mechanical catapults to attack the border and to attack Israeli troops. They tie petrol bombs to kites, and they launched them to set fire to Israeli fields and livestock.

Let's take a look at the kites. The kites that they used are painted with swastikas. Just so you are not confused