

the rosier of predictions for the number of vaccinations. President Biden initially promised 100 million vaccinations to be administered in the first 100 days, but the pace of vaccinations was so fast that the President had to double his initial goal to 200 million in the first 100 days, and we have already reached it. It is fair to say that, in the first 100 days, America is winning the all-important “arms race” to get our citizens vaccinated.

On the most important measure of progress—getting the country protected against COVID-19—the new Democratic administration and congressional majorities have been a roaring success. Thanks to the American Rescue Plan, our economy has gotten its own shot in the arm, too. Over the past several weeks, the Biden administration has delivered more than 150 million stimulus checks to the Americans who have needed them the most.

Weekly unemployment claims have fallen to their lowest level during the pandemic. The month of March saw the economy create nearly 900,000 jobs. Retail sales are surging. Consumer confidence has rebounded. Economic forecasters are now projecting that our economy could grow as fast as 7 percent this year. In the wake of the American Rescue Plan, the economic boost was so significant that forecasters had to increase their projections for global growth as well.

Our former President blithely predicted that electing Joe Biden would crash the stock market. It turns out President Biden’s first 100 days have delivered the best stock market results in 75 years, since President Eisenhower.

At the same time, the Democratic majority in Congress has made sure that our Nation’s economic recovery will be felt by everyone. The American Rescue Plan is expected to boost incomes of the lowest 20 percent by 20 percent. Guess what those in the top 1 percent will receive? It will be so contrary to what the Republicans did when they had power. They will get zero percent instead of the overwhelming percentage in their bill, their tax cuts. Just one policy in the American Rescue Plan—the historic expansion of the child tax credit—is expected to cut child poverty in half.

The story of the first 100 days is about shots going into arms, checks going into pockets, and life finally returning to normal. The story of the first 100 days is about the country turning a corner and seeing some hope on the horizon. More broadly, the first 100 days of this administration and this Congress have proven two things: one, that the government can work for the American people; and, two, that the Senate can legislate.

The last few decades have brought faith in our government to alltime lows. You don’t have to look very far in the past to find surveys about how Congress has been less popular than traffic jams, root canals, and Genghis

Khan. Faith in our democracy and trust in our elections were brought to new lows by the persistent and mendacious lies by the former President, culminating in an armed insurrection here in the Capitol.

Part of our mission here in Congress, in working with the Biden administration, is to restore Americans’ faith in our institutions and Americans’ faith in our government. Through the American Rescue Plan and the successful roll-out of the vaccine, we are slowly proving to the American people that government can work for them.

So we have a long way to go, but in the first hundred days, this new Congress has made an important downpayment. Congressional approval is now the highest it has been since June of 2009.

Here in the Senate, the first hundred days have shown that this Chamber can legislate. Bipartisan work on the anti-Asian hates crime bill, the water bill this week, and hopefully an American competitiveness bill in the coming weeks proves that there are still many issues that unite Republicans and Democrats. Of course, our two parties are not always going to agree. In those instances, the Senate must still make progress on the challenges of our time. We did that through the American Rescue Plan.

So in the first hundred days, the Senate has accomplished a lot more than most observers might have predicted. The next hundred days will bring more of the same.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 61.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Samantha Power, of Massachusetts, to be Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the

Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close the debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 61, Samantha Power, of Massachusetts, to be Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development.

Charles E. Schumer, Mazie Hirono, Ron Wyden, Jack Reed, Benjamin L. Cardin, Patrick J. Leahy, Michael F. Bennet, Tim Kaine, Christopher Murphy, Richard J. Durbin, Christopher A. Coons, Cory A. Booker, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Martin Heinrich, Chris Van Hollen, Sherrod Brown, Edward J. Markey, Bernard Sanders.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call for the cloture motion filed today, April 26, be waived.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. I yield the floor and once again thank my friend from Vermont.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

JOHN KERRY

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam President, I rise today on the Senate floor to call for the resignation of John Kerry as a member of the Biden administration’s National Security Council.

Now, I don’t do this lightly. As a matter of fact, in my entire time in the Senate, I have never called for anyone’s resignation—Obama-Biden administration, Trump administration, Biden administration now. I have been tempted, particularly when some in government have tried to hurt my State. A lot of that is going on right now with the Biden administration. But his record—John Kerry’s record—of undermining working families and working against American national security interests is too much to bear. He needs to go.

Today, I have heard such disturbing news that, if true, it should absolutely result in the call of John Kerry either being fired or resigning. Enough is enough. Why am I saying this? First, he is killing jobs, arrogantly killing American jobs. That is a fact. He is putting hard-working Americans, particularly in the energy sector—the great men and women who make our country strong by developing oil and gas resources; a lot of my constituents—in the name of climate goals, he is putting them out of work. He is going to Wall Street, saying: Don’t finance these projects anymore. That is what reporters are saying.

On these issues, I completely and adamantly disagree with the arrogant way—frankly, callous way—he says: Hey, people need to move on to better jobs. But for this issue alone, I wouldn’t be calling for his resignation. This is a major difference in the Biden administration’s policies and priorities with regard to the American people. I think it is going to really come back and hit this administration hard because the vast majority of Americans don’t agree with putting people out of work, energy workers out of work during a recession and pandemic, but that

is going to be decided in the voting box in the elections. The American people will ultimately decide whether arrogantly putting thousands and thousands of energy workers out of work right now is a good idea.

In the name of these climate goals, he has also been a strong appeaser of countries that threaten ours.

Let me take you back to 2015. I was a brandnew U.S. Senator. President Obama and President Xi Jinping are meeting in the Rose Garden.

President Xi Jinping from China tells the President of the United States and the American people: No, we are not going to militarize the South China Sea. We won't do it.

Of course, the Chinese Communist Party was not telling the truth to the President of the United States and the American people. They started to do this already, militarizing one of the most important sea routes in the world.

Many of us here in the Senate, Democrats and Republicans, said: We need to stand up for our interests. We need the U.S. Navy to do freedom of navigation operations.

The Secretary of Defense wanted to do this. The admiral in charge of the INDOPACOM area of responsibility wanted to do this. But we now know, in principals' meetings, we delayed doing this for almost 3 years because John Kerry said: We don't want to get the Chinese mad, or they will go back on their Paris climate deal and commitments—which, by the way, are way out in the future.

This is true. This is true. This happened. Again, in my view, this bordered on treacherous but not treasonous. I didn't call for his resignation then. I was mad about it. By the way, a lot of people in the Obama administration were mad about this, including the Secretary of Defense. We lost a lot of time.

It certainly makes me nervous that John Kerry is out in Beijing again. What kind of deal did he cut this time with China, the Communist Party of China, which won't keep any commitments? But, again, that wasn't a call for resignation.

The straw that broke the camel's back came out today, and it is the reason I am up here calling for John Kerry to resign. It is a tape that was leaked of an interview with Iran's Foreign Minister, Mohammad Zarif.

First, some background. Zarif was being interviewed by an economist and journalist who is an adviser to Mohammad Khatami, the pro-reform cleric who served two terms as Iran's President. An edited version was intended to be public of this interview only after Iran's current President left office in August, but it was leaked.

Zarif, according to reports, says many interesting and telling things in the tape, one, for example, that, in my view, the rightful killing of General Soleimani, the Quds Force commander, in January of 2020 when he was in Iraq

looking to kill more American soldiers—Zarif said this “was a major blow to Iran, more damaging than if it had wiped out an entire city in an attack”—that was what a lot of us were arguing at the time—and that unlike what John Kerry had been telling the public when negotiating the Iran nuclear deal in the Obama administration, it is the Revolutionary Guard Corps, the Quds Force, not Zarif, who calls the shots in Iran. That is all on the tapes.

But the most disturbing part of the interview that was leaked was when Zarif said that John Kerry told him, the Iranian Foreign Minister, about covert Israeli actions against Iranian interests in Syria. Now think about that. According to news reports, Zarif is heard as saying:

It was former U.S. Foreign Secretary John Kerry who told me Israel had launched more than 200 attacks on Iranian forces in Syria.

That is Zarif saying John Kerry told him that, classified information about one of our most important allies in the world, Israel.

Zarif said that he “listened to this information [from Secretary Kerry] in astonishment.”

Now, when I read this today, I was astonished as well, that a former Secretary of State, now a member of President Biden's National Security Council—who wasn't confirmed for that, by the way, by this body—would reveal the secrets of one of our most important and enduring allies in the region to an avowed enemy and the largest state sponsor of terrorism, a country that was responsible for the killing and wounding and maiming of thousands of American service men and women, whose leaders have the blood of American soldiers on their hands. He is telling them that information.

It is unclear why John Kerry would relay such information to the leaders of the largest state sponsor of terrorism in the world, but here is a guess: During the Trump administration, after that administration pulled out of the JCPOA, the Iran nuclear deal, which John Kerry negotiated—and by the way, a bipartisan majority of U.S. Senators in this body were against that deal—John Kerry started to freelance. He admitted to meeting with Zarif in 2018 to try to salvage the nuclear deal. In other words, he was likely acting and working against the previous administration, the elected administration, the Trump administration, and many of us here in Congress who applauded when we pulled out of the JCPOA.

Madam President, I would ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD an article written today by the National Review titled “John Kerry, Enemy of Israel.”

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

JOHN KERRY, ENEMY OF ISRAEL
(By David Harsanyi)

We know now that former secretary of state John Kerry isn't merely a critic of

Israel; he is an adversary. In leaked audiotapes obtained by the U.K.-based Iran International, as reported by the New York Times, Iranian foreign minister Mohammad Javad Zarif told a supporter that the former secretary of state had informed him about “at least” 200 covert Israeli actions against Iranian interests in Syria. Zarif listened to this information in “astonishment.”

It's predictable, perhaps, that the Times glides over this remarkable exchange in a single-sentence paragraph that is submerged near the bottom of the piece. (I guess it's better than the Washington Post, which doesn't even mention the interaction.)

A high-ranking American official feels comfortable sharing this information with an autocratic adversary—a government that's murdered hundreds of Americans, regularly kidnapped them, interfered with our elections, and propped up a regime that gasses its people—about the covert actions of a long-time American ally. What else did he tell Zarif? The Times doesn't say.

It wouldn't be surprising if Israel was more reluctant to share intel with the United States when Democrats such as Kerry show more fondness for those making genocidal threats against the Jewish people than they do for the state that protects them. It's worth remembering that others like Senator Chris Murphy (who is now “requesting a classified briefing” on the Natanz incident, in which Israel likely sabotaged a nuclear facility) also secretly met with Zarif in Munich in a coordinated effort to undercut the Trump administration's efforts to derail Iran's ongoing nuclear-weapons program—an incident that comports far more closely with the definition of “collusion” than anything turned up against Trump officials. We have no idea what Murphy discussed with Zarif, either.

We do know that after the assassination of Qasem Soleimani—head of the Revolutionary Guard's Quds Force and the terror group behind the death of over 600 American servicemen and thousands of others—Kerry and Murphy were among the many people scaremongering over a “massive regional war” that never materialized. In his leaked conversation, Zarif says of Soleimani that “by assassinating him in Iraq, the United States delivered a major blow to Iran, more damaging than if it had wiped out an entire city in an attack.”

As the Trump years proved, there are a number of options available as we wait for the Iranian regime to come to its senses or, hopefully, crumble, including maximum economic pressure and sabotage. Last week, Israel reportedly blew up Iran's Natanz nuclear facility's electrical substation, located 40 to 50 meters underground, damaging “thousands of centrifuges.” This is likely the second time in the past few months that the Israelis have been able to smuggle explosives into the facility and detonate them remotely. Of course, this incident is only one in a long line of unexplained fires, assassinations, and computer worms that have caused substantial delays and damage to the illegal Iranian nuclear-weapons program. All of these efforts have likely saved lives by delaying the ability of Iran to become another North Korea—or worse, since Iran exports terror all over the world.

During the Obama years, Democrats would offer an ugly false choice: You either support diplomacy with the “moderate” wing of the theocratic state, or you endorse “war”; either fly unmarked euros in tonnage and bail out the Mullahs, or plunge America into another Iraq War. At one point, Obama claimed that the Republican caucus was making “common cause” with Iranian hard-liners.

The opposite was true. In the leaked audio from Zarif, we hear that the military and

theocratic forces in the nation “call the shots” and overrule “government decisions and ignoring advice.” According to the Times, Zarif says that the political wing is “severely constricted” and decisions “are dictated by the supreme leader or Revolutionary Guards Corps.” Obama’s contention that the Iran deal was being forged with the “moderate faction” was always a fantasy.

The real moderates in Iran were forsaken by Obama and Biden when they decided that the United States wouldn’t support the 2009 Green Movement, in what Soviet dissident Natan Sharansky called one of the biggest failures of human rights in modern history. Democrats Murphy, Biden, and Kerry are more interested in ensuring Iran becomes a regional counterforce to Israeli power.

Whatever you believe about the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or Biden’s iteration of the deal, it should not have to be said that high-ranking United States officials shouldn’t be sharing sensitive information about an ally with a terror regime. Yet it also seems quite likely that’s exactly what John Kerry did.

Mr. SULLIVAN. The beginning of this article says:

Let’s pause to reflect on how monumentally stunning it is that the former U.S. secretary of state allegedly tattled on Israel to Iran.

It goes on to say: A high-ranking American official would feel comfortable sharing this kind of classified information “with an autocratic adversary—a government that’s murdered hundreds of Americans, regularly kidnapped them, interfered with our elections, and propped up a regime that gasses its people—about the covert actions of a long-time critical American ally.”

What else did Kerry tell Zarif, this article asks? Press reports don’t say, but if this is true, if John Kerry told Iran—the leaders of Iran—about issues relating to our most critical ally in the region, Israel, which Iran has repeatedly said they want to wipe Israel off the face of the Earth, if he did this, he needs to resign. If he did this with the intent of undermining the current President of the United States at the time, President Trump, and the Members of this body, he needs to resign.

He is a member of the current administration’s National Security Council. It has become clear that our adversaries, whether Beijing or Iran, like it when John Kerry is in charge of foreign policy and national security. Why? Because they know how to use him to their advantage. And our allies fear him. Why? Because they know his judgment is off on so many issues. So, too, do America’s working families.

We need to look into this. If this is true—if this is true—I certainly hope other Members of this body, Democrats and Republicans, will join me in calling for the resignation of John Kerry. Enough is enough. The redline that was crossed, if this is true, revealing secret information to one of America’s most sworn enemies, with the blood of thousands of American military members on its hands, undermining the interests of one of our most important allies, the State of Israel, if this is true, John Kerry needs to go. He should resign or

he should get fired by the President of the United States.

I yield the floor.
The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

DEFENSE BUDGET

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Madam President, you know, there is a lot that we do not agree on here in the Senate, but I think everybody, including the Presiding Officer, can agree that we need to secure our country. We need to be safe. Our citizens need to feel safe. Our job as elected officials is to make sure that those who have stepped up to defend our country have the resources they need to do their job and do it safely.

The President’s recent budget proposal for the Defense Department does not, and I repeat, does not give our men and women in uniform the tools to do their job properly. It is clear that President Biden thinks we don’t need further investment in our military. It is clear he thinks it is OK to ask our men and women to do more with less, and that is impossible. This should alarm the Members of this body and all American people.

The world has changed a lot in 50 years. When President Biden first came to Washington in 1972, there were two superpowers: the United States and the Soviet Union. Back then, we spent 6.5 percent of our Federal budget on national defense—6.5. Today, we spend less than 3.5.

In 2021, we are facing different but very, very serious threats. Secretary Austin has said that China remains the top “pacing threat” for our military. It is much, much more than that. China isn’t just trying to dominate Asia and its neighbors; they are trying to dominate much of the world through its growing military and economic influence. Simply keeping pace with China is not enough.

We have got to outpace all of our adversaries, but doing that requires smart, substantial, and strategic investments in our military—much more investment than the President and many people here in Congress publicly propose.

Let me walk through some of the ways that a supposedly flat defense budget hurts our national security.

President Biden says he wants his administration to trust the experts on things like COVID, but this defense budget shows he doesn’t apply the same principle to the Pentagon. Unlike the President and some of my Democratic colleagues, I think we should take seriously the advice of our commanding generals, for they are the experts in this purview.

Here is what ADM Charles Richard, commander of U.S. Strategic Command, who is over our nuclear capabilities, said in last week’s hearing to the Senate Armed Services Committee:

I have what I need today to deter. . . . But I need it modernized. . . . There’s no remaining margin.

His warning is clear. We must modernize our greatest deterrent and keep

peace among our adversaries with our nuclear arsenal. That means updating all three legs of the nuclear triad: submarines, bombers, and intercontinental ballistic missiles. It is necessary to do so, and it is also possible. As former Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said, “America can afford survival.”

The Russians have made modernizing their nuclear arsenal a priority. The Chinese have made growing their nuclear stockpile a matter of national pride. But the United States? Each day we rely on nuclear weapons that, in many cases, were designed by an analog mechanical computer. The free world, meaning the United States, works and sleeps under a nuclear umbrella that hasn’t been updated to the digital age.

Meanwhile, the Chinese are fielding hypersonic missiles, which are missiles that go into space and then return to their target. Ours are still on the drawing board.

China’s arsenal of ground-based and medium-range missiles continues to grow. They are pointed right at our forces in the Pacific and our allies in the region. We need investment to maintain our missile defense systems so we can protect our people and deter the Chinese from attacking our allies.

We are also in a new space race, and it is a race we must win. Americans may not realize how much we rely on space for our daily lives. Our satellites allow us to get GPS for our phones or even watch football games on television, but the Chinese want to weaponize this new frontier of war, and we are falling way behind.

Right now, the Chinese have set up satellites over Taiwan as they continue to ramp up their threats on this democratic neighbor. It is unbelievable. I heard about the growing gap between us and the Chinese when I visited Army Materiel Command at Redstone Arsenal a few weeks ago in Huntsville. These folks shared with me how desperate we need to modernize our space-based systems that contribute to our missile defense.

The U.S. Army is the largest consumer of space products, and our military relies on Materiel Command to provide the resources to train our soldiers for research, development of new equipment, and defend our Nation. They should not have to beg the President of the United States for the money to invest in the capabilities that we need.

The United States must ensure secure and reliable access to space. Our budget needs to demonstrate commitment to defending our existing space assets and developing new technologies so we can win this next theater of conflict. We also need to invest in the safety of our service men and women, especially in aviation. Currently, the average age of an airplane in our military is older than the pilots flying them—older.

According to a recent report by the National Commission on Military