

law enforcement. Senators BOOKER and SCOTT, as well as Representative BASS and others, have been working diligently behind the scenes to fashion such a bill on a bipartisan basis. That important work must continue as we strive to ensure George Floyd's tragic death will not be in vain.

U.S. INNOVATION AND COMPETITION ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on another matter, the Senate continues to work on the U.S. Innovation and Competition legislation that will lay the foundation for the next century of American economic leadership.

I have spoken a lot about the substance of this bill. So, this morning, I want to reinforce how bipartisan and inclusive this bill is. It is the product of at least a half a dozen Senate committees, meaning that nearly every single Member of the Senate has had fingerprints on this bill in one way or another.

The two pieces of legislation that form the core of the bill—the Endless Frontier Act and the Strategic Competition Act—passed out of committee on overwhelmingly bipartisan votes: 24 to 4 in the Commerce Committee and 21 to 1 in the Foreign Relations Committee. That kind of bipartisanship—almost unanimous support in multiple Senate committees—is rare when it comes to major legislation. It goes to show just how bipartisan this issue is and this legislation is as, literally, dozens of bipartisan amendments were added to the bill before it ever reached the floor.

Here on the floor, we are going to continue working through a series of amendments from both sides. With such a depth of cooperation and consensus between our two parties, there will be no reason we can't wrap up this bill this week and achieve a strong result for our country. Leader MCCONNELL should be welcoming this bipartisanship as we move forward on the bill.

WASHINGTON, D.C. ADMISSION ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on a final matter, later today, a group of Senators will come to the floor to highlight an important issue: DC statehood.

The District of Columbia has more residents than in Vermont and Wyoming and has nearly the same number as Delaware, Alaska, and several other States. They have the same obligations of citizenship. DC residents pay Federal taxes. They can be summoned for juries. They have served in every war since the Revolution, but they are all denied real representation here in Congress.

DC statehood is an idea whose time has come. So I want to thank Senator CARPER for organizing a group of Senators to shine a spotlight on this issue today.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

ISRAEL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the world is relieved that Hamas has stopped firing rockets at Israel's cities and, for the moment, the fighting has stopped.

Israel's response to Hamas's terrorism was entirely justified. It was targeted, restrained, and extraordinarily precise. So it was disappointing to see disproportionate blame heaped upon Israel, the victim, and disproportionate pressure put on Israel's democratic, coalition government to spearhead the cease-fire with the aggressors.

Israel's actions appear to have helped restore some measure of deterrence and damaged Hamas's ability to wage terror, but we have every reason to expect the terrorist commanders will seek to rebuild their arsenal with assistance from their sponsors in Tehran.

The Biden administration must not pursue Iran policies that make this process even easier. We should not lift terrorism and missile sanctions just to leap back into discussions over the flawed Obama-era nuclear deal. Already, this administration removed terrorism sanctions on Iran's Houthi proxies in Yemen, hoping to encourage negotiations. Instead, the Houthis have escalated their offensive, rejected diplomacy, and actually fired into Saudi Arabia. Likewise, giving Iran relief from sanctions will just yield more support for terrorists like Hezbollah and Hamas.

Now, I am encouraged that the President has committed to refilling Israel's Iron Dome stockpiles. I hope his budget proposal coming this Friday will make room for increased military assistance to Israel and reflect the fact that America's interests are not served by cutting our own defense budget.

Sadly, here in Congress, more and more Democrats are falling under the anti-Israel influence of the farthest left branch. From the junior Senator from Vermont, we have a resolution to block a routine sale of precision-guided munitions that would make it harder for Israel to avoid civilian casualties as it defends itself; from a Congresswoman from New York, the accusation that Israel is an "apartheid state."

Historically, support for Israel has been bipartisan. During the last major

flare-up with Hamas back in 2014, when hundreds of rockets were fired at Israel, the Senate passed a resolution reaffirming our support for Israel and making clear Hamas's responsibility for the violence, and we did it by unanimous consent.

Back in 2019, after another rocket attack, the Democratic leader insisted, "No government can allow its civilians to be subject to rocket attack." He said he stood "shoulder-to-shoulder with the people of Israel . . . and doing what they must do to defend their homeland."

That was true in 2019. Well, this month's attacks involved not hundreds but literally thousands of rockets. Yet, instead of vocal support for Israel, 29 Senate Democrats pressured Israel's coalition government to stop defending itself. One of our colleagues who ran for President said the United States helping our ally means "supplying weapons to kill children." Their base is energized. An open letter from hundreds of former Democratic Party and campaign staffers has urged President Biden to be harder on Israel. Apparently, a lot can change in just 2 years.

Helping Israel defend itself against terrorists shouldn't be a divisive issue. The Senate should vote on Senator SANDERS' resolution and reject it overwhelmingly.

ANTI-SEMITISM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, now on a related matter, the despicable, age-old specter of anti-Semitism continues to rear its head, even here in our country.

Last week, authorities from New York to Los Angeles were investigating assaults on Jewish people. According to press reports, in New York City, one Jewish man was kicked, punched, and sprayed with chemicals by five or six men yelling anti-Semitic things. That happened, by the way, right in Times Square. A synagogue in Arizona was vandalized. So was another in Illinois. A Jewish family visiting South Florida had a car pull up next to them and multiple occupants begin screaming: "Free Palestine . . . die, Jew." That is what he got for wearing his yarmulke in public.

The head of the Anti-Defamation League said:

We are tracking acts of harassment, vandalism, and violence as well as a torrent of online abuse . . . it's happening all around the world.

This garbage—this garbage didn't begin a few weeks ago. It isn't a response to geopolitics. This hatred long predates the recent fighting between Israel and Hamas, and it hasn't gone anywhere since the cease-fire.

This spring, in the shadow of this Capitol Building, a U.S. Capitol Police officer was killed in broad daylight by an unbalanced follower of the Nation of Islam, the extremist group led by the anti-Semite Louis Farrakhan.

This trash should be the easiest thing in the world for every person in a leadership position to call out. But perhaps—perhaps—because Israel has become a strangely controversial issue on the far left, the condemnations do not seem to be flowing quite as easily and unequivocally as they should.

Yesterday, a Democratic Congressman from Minnesota tweeted this:

I'll say the quiet part out loud. It's time for "progressives" to start condemning anti-Semitism and violent attacks on Jewish people with the same intention and vigor demonstrated in other areas of activism. The silence has been deafening.

I couldn't say it better myself.

So Senator COTTON and I are introducing new legislation to fight anti-Semitism. Our bill will support State and local law enforcement and ensure the bigoted thugs who are attacking Jewish Americans face the full force of our justice system.

I am proud to be cosponsoring this legislation, although I regret that in the year of 2021, it remains, unfortunately, necessary. I hope every one of our colleagues will join Senator COTTON and myself.

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, now on one final matter, the President's decision to retreat from Afghanistan is not clear-eyed or strategic; it is dangerous, wishful thinking.

As discussions with the administration are making clear, this decision is not underpinned by a coherent plan to mitigate the geopolitical and humanitarian risks that our departure will create.

When we are gone, after we leave, there is every reason to believe al-Qaida will regroup in its historic safe haven. Giving up the high ground while the enemy is still on the battlefield isn't a strategic move. Neither is banking on conducting so-called "over the horizon" counterterrorism missions without presence on the ground. If we have learned anything in the fight against terrorists, it is the importance of reliable access and local partnerships. Give up the former, and we likely lose the latter.

The military currently flies both reconnaissance and strike missions against terrorists from within Afghanistan. The country is not easy to get to. Its immediate neighbors are Iran, Pakistan, and Russian-influenced Central Asian nations. They aren't exactly likely to let us base significant counterterrorism units in their countries. So where will we be basing these forces? How will we maintain sorties from thousands of miles away? How many forces will be required to secure our Embassy? If a pro-Taliban mob threatens to overrun it, what will we do to protect it? Where will a quick-reaction force be based if not in Afghanistan? Will it be quick if its response time goes from minutes to hours? We learned from Benghazi the so-called

tyranny of distance. If the Taliban takes Kabul, will the Biden administration recognize it as the legitimate government of Afghanistan? Will we shutter our Embassy and our aid programs? The reality is, they don't know. They can't say. There is no plan.

It is not courageous to abandon our allies. That is a view many Democrats said they held when the last President considered withdrawing from Syria and Afghanistan. But now, as Afghans, especially women and girls, face even worse dangers, many Democrats have suddenly become much less vocal. The horrific—horrific—reports of the Taliban beginning to reimpose their version of sharia law are just a taste of the catastrophes facing our friends in Afghanistan who have borne the brunt of the fight. Human rights. Women's rights. Counterterrorism refugee flows. As far as I can tell, the administration has no plan.

But the world is watching—allies and adversaries. Democrats can dress up this decision in flowery language, but the world will see it for what it is: retreating from the fight, abandoning our partners.

This is the President's decision. He chose precipitous withdrawal from Afghanistan. Unbelievably, he even chose the anniversary of September 11 as the deadline. As his team belatedly confronts him with the risks and the consequences of this decision, I hope the President will think again and reconsider.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Chiquita Brooks-LaSure, of Virginia, to be Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip is recognized.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as if in morning business.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, when I listened to the speech by Senator

MCCONNELL, the Republican leader, about Afghanistan, it transported me back in history to October of 2002, when I was a U.S. Senator representing the State of Illinois, just days away from a reelection campaign, and we faced a historic vote here in the U.S. Senate. The vote was whether or not we would invade Iraq; whether the United States would give the President the authority to send American forces to Iraq. There were 23 votes against that invasion. I was 1 of them, 22 Democrats and 1 Republican.

I can remember that night so well. It was late, past midnight, when the vote was finally taken. But we had previously taken another vote, and although I had voted against the invasion of Iraq, I saw the invasion of Afghanistan as a different story. We believed that Osama bin Laden and al-Qaida, responsible for 9/11, were in Afghanistan. And the story was—the story line, and I bought it completely—if we don't tell people like Osama bin Laden that there is a price to pay for attacking America and killing 3,000 innocent people, who are we, and who will be the next attacker?

So I voted. I voted for the invasion of Afghanistan and believed that was the right thing to do at that moment in history. That vote passed unanimously here in the Senate. There was only one dissenting vote in the House of Representatives, Congresswoman BARBARA LEE of California. Virtually everyone else—everyone else, both political parties—voted for the invasion of Afghanistan.

I will tell you, there was not a single Senator or Congressman who would have stood up that evening on that vote and announced "I am prepared to vote for the longest war in American history," because that is what we ended up voting for.

It was our belief that if we came into Afghanistan, we could stop using this country as a haven for terrorism and we could help escort them into the 21st century.

Well, after 20 years, after thousands of Americans gave their lives and thousands more were critically injured, after the spending of trillions of dollars in Afghanistan, we learned a bitter lesson. Our willingness was not enough. The people in Afghanistan have to be prepared to embrace change for it to happen.

We had to create an army in Afghanistan, a security force. It virtually didn't exist. The warlords had their military, and they were for sale, usually, to the highest bidder. And we were trying to create a national security force. We were trying to create a nation, which was quite a challenge.

I am not going to dwell on what happened, the bitter disappointments. But when I hear Senators come to the floor saying, "Isn't it a shame that we are leaving Afghanistan? They are going to descend into chaos and many, many problems," my question to them is: So what would you have us do? Continue