

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

with the troops risking their lives in Afghanistan for another 20 years, for another trillion dollars?

Not me. I believe we have reached a point where we have to do everything we can to help Afghanistan really progress into the 21st century. Yes, I feel a personal obligation to the men and women who risked their lives for our troops.

For those who are opposed to or unaccepting of the notion of refugees coming to the United States, for goodness' sake, let us have the character to stand behind those Afghan men and women who risked their lives for our soldiers and who are now probably marked by the Taliban for death themselves. Yes, I would open our doors to them. They gave their lives for our men and women, and we should never forget it. I hope my friends on the other side of the aisle who have strong feelings about immigration would at least realize that these individuals are critically important to our role in history and our message to the rest of the world when we seek their assistance.

S. 1260

Mr. President, this week we are going to consider a critically important bill that will help secure America's role as a global leader in science and technology. The investments that the United States Innovation and Competition Act of 2021 makes in innovation will help ensure our prosperity and national security. It supports American research and development and will help to grow America's industrial and manufacturing base by investing in clean energy, cyber security, and biotechnology.

I thought a few years ago, reflected on the fact that I served in the House and Senate, there have been moments, particularly important moments that didn't receive the recognition they deserved, and one of them was a bipartisan decision by several legislators: John Porter, who was a Republican Congressman from Illinois; Senator Arlen Specter, a Republican Senator from Pennsylvania; and Senator Tom Harkin, a Democratic Senator from Iowa. Back in the day, they made a decision to try to double the research budget for the National Institutes of Health—quite an undertaking. I have seen a lot of things come and go with the Congress, and that I thought was as ambitious as it gets.

They did it. They ended up doubling the NIH budget and received some recognition for it, but far less than what they deserved.

So I went back out to the National Institutes of Health and spoke to Dr. Francis Collins, whom we are lucky as Americans to have in that position leading that great Agency. I said: Dr. Collins, I remember those days with Specter and Harkin and Porter. What can we do now, our generation, to help you at the National Institutes of Health? I don't think I can double the budget. I wish I could. But what can I do?

He said: Senator, if you could persuade Congress to give us 5 percent real growth every year—real growth over inflation—we will light up the scoreboard. These researchers will stay on the job. They won't worry about whether next year there is going to be funding. And you are going to see some remarkable things occur.

I said I will set out to do that. I knew at the time that I needed help. So I turned to PATTY MURRAY on the Democratic side, who has been our leader at the HELP Committee and on the Appropriations Committee. And we then turned to Senator ROY BLUNT of Missouri, Republican leader of the subcommittee, as well as Lamar Alexander, our retired friend from the State of Tennessee.

So the four of us came together, and in a span of 5 or 6 years, we took the NIH budget from \$30 billion to \$40 billion, just at the right moment. We didn't anticipate COVID-19, but here it came, challenging us: Are we ready? Can we develop a vaccine in a timely fashion?

And, thank goodness we could, because of the investment that we had made as a Congress and the American people in this Agency. It paid off. Not only did we save lives in the United States; we saved lives around the world, and we will continue to because of that good work.

I came to believe that that was critically important and went to the Department of Energy, sitting down with the Secretary, 5 or 6 years ago, and told him the story about our commitment to NIH. And I said: You know, I guess it is conceivable that we will do research that will lead to some treatment of Alzheimer's and dementia. We know that it is picking up speed, unfortunately, because people are living longer.

He said: Do you have any idea what Agency of government is responsible for creating electronic means of monitoring this sort of change in our brains, the change that leads to Alzheimer's?

I said: No, I don't.

He said: Well, it is the Office of Science in the Department of Energy.

And I thought to myself: DURBIN, you should have known better. It isn't just the NIH. There are Agencies all around our Federal Government that are doing research that complement one another. So I came up with the notion to take that NIH model of 5 percent real growth and start applying it to all the other research and innovation Agencies of our Federal Government.

This bill we are considering this week, this United States Innovation and Competition Act, acknowledges that and makes the investment in research. I will tell you, I can't think of anything we can do that is more bipartisan and will be accepted by the American people than the knowledge that we are going to continue to encourage and subsidize, if you will, scientists and researchers to move us forward in innovation and technology.

This bill increases funding for the National Science Foundation and the Department of Energy. That is going to spur research. It is going to help at universities around my State and all around the Nation, and it has been a priority, as I mentioned, for years.

But one important way we can compete economically in the world is by boosting support for domestic manufacturing and strengthening our domestic supply chain. The legislation that we are considering this week does that exactly: \$52 billion to boost our semi-conductor manufacturing capabilities. This includes \$10.5 billion for semiconductor research and development; \$2 billion for legacy chip production to support the auto industry; \$2 billion for research, testing, and workforce development for semiconductor needs at the Department of Defense; \$500 million for coordination with foreign government partners to support international semiconductor supply chains. And importantly, this bill also ensures the payment of prevailing wages on construction projects that are supported by this funding.

Many semiconductor manufacturing jobs already pay more than typical manufacturing jobs, and they should, but the workers who will help build the facilities won't necessarily benefit from that unless we ensure the same standards that we apply to other federally funded construction projects apply here.

Research shows us that providing prevailing wage boosts worker productivity and provides good value to taxpayers. Several studies have found that construction costs are not affected by prevailing wage rates. It is our goal to compete with China and other nations, and China, unfortunately, has morally abhorrent labor practices. Let's do better. Let's show them and the world that we can do better.

In 1990, the United States produced 37 percent of the world's semiconductors. That was 30 years ago—30 years ago, 37 percent. It is 12 percent today. What a dramatic decline. We want to turn that around.

Now there are some who question us, who question whether the United States should invest in this kind of technology on semiconductors. I call them the second-place finishers. They decided that the United States can have a solid second-place finish from this point forward. I couldn't disagree more.

This Nation can lead by example and investment, and that is what this bill does. And those who are against it have to explain why giving dominance in this critical industry to another country, whether it is China or any other nation, is in the best interest of the growth of the United States and in the best interest of the next generation of American workers.

We are already facing a global shortage in microchips that led to layoffs in my State and in many other places. Illinois has been a leader in auto manufacturing, and I believe it will be in the