

concede even that point about the Taliban. Second, it must engage in terrorist activity. Has the Taliban engaged in terrorist activity? Countless victims of Taliban suicide bombings, targeted assassinations, IEDs, and acid attacks would surely answer yes to that question, if they survived those heinous crimes.

Consider the following as well: At least 14 of the Taliban's 33 so-called cabinet ministers are on the United Nations' sanctions list for terrorism. No fewer than five were once held with terrorists at Guantanamo Bay.

One of the most powerful factions of the Taliban is the murderous Haqqani Network—a twisted clan that the United States has already designated a terrorist organization under the Obama administration.

The Taliban has put the leader of the Haqqani Network in charge of the country's secret police and, yes, its immigration system, which is currently determining which persons can leave the country.

Sirajuddin Haqqani is one of America's most-wanted terrorists for attacking the U.S. Embassy in Kabul and hotels full of civilians, among other crimes.

It is also worth noting that the son of the Taliban's leader and so-called emir blew himself up in a suicide attack against the Afghan Government in 2017. Evidently, he thought the Taliban was a terrorist organization, even if some around Washington shrink from that label.

Finally, the third criterion for a foreign terrorist organization is that its terrorism must threaten the security of Americans or our national security.

With an estimated 100 Americans and thousands of green card holders currently trapped in Taliban-occupied Afghanistan, I would say the answer to that question is also obvious. It would still be obvious even if we didn't face an active hostage situation since the Taliban still provides safe haven to al-Qaida, who murdered thousands of Americans on September 11, 2001.

Despite the Taliban's empty promises that it would never again help al-Qaida, a recent United Nations report found that "the Taliban and al-Qaida remain closely aligned and show no indication of breaking ties." Al-Qaida continues to pledge allegiance to the Taliban, and its regional affiliate even operates under the Taliban banner in Kandahar. Now, that is a national security threat to America, if there ever was one.

So, to summarize, the Taliban is run by terrorists, it associates with terrorists, and it engages in terrorism. The Biden administration's refusal to call a spade a spade is a grave insult to the memory of the Taliban's victims and the tens of thousands of Americans who fought against it. It is worth remembering how many American lives the Taliban took, how many American warriors they maimed, and how many families they have shattered. That is terrorism.

So I will be asking unanimous consent for my bill, which would require Secretary Blinken to call the Taliban what they are—not a potential partner for Joe Biden, not a threat to inclusivity, but a terrorist organization.

Therefore, Madam President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 2770, which is at the desk; I further ask that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, reserving the right to object, how quickly my colleagues forget that it was President Trump who entered into negotiations with the Taliban. It was President Trump who entered into an agreement with the Taliban that committed the United States to withdraw our forces. It was President Trump who sold out women and girls in that country by refusing to put their interests first at that negotiating table. It was President Trump who elevated the Taliban in the international community by putting them face-to-face with our negotiators.

It is important to note, as to the specific request that is being made by the Senator from Arkansas, that right now, the Taliban is already designated as a designated global terrorist entity under Executive Order 13224. So they are already designated as a terrorist entity.

There are specific problems with this designation. First, I don't think it is a great idea for us to be designating FTOs by statute. There is a reason why we generally allow the administration to do this. But maybe more importantly, what comes with an FTO is the withdrawal of humanitarian organizations from the country at hand. We know that because we saw it in Yemen. When President Trump designated the Houthis as an FTO for about a week, humanitarian organizations started pulling up their stakes. Right now, there are 18 million Afghans who are in need of lifesaving humanitarian assistance. This is not the moment to take a step that will cause Afghans to starve.

The second reason not to do this this way is because, whether we like it or not, we are in communication through intermediaries with the Taliban to get our people out, to get our partners out. There are flights leaving on a regular basis. And to designate them as an FTO, in addition to the existing designation that the Taliban has as a specially designated global terrorist entity, is to risk our ability to continue to bring our people out.

We should be joined together as a Senate, despite the views we have on whether we should have stayed or left

Afghanistan, in our support for the Afghan people by making sure that we do not take steps to cut off humanitarian assistance to people in need and our belief that we should be supporting this administration in their effort to continue to get our partners out.

This designation done this way will risk both of those initiatives, and for that reason, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. COTTON. Madam President, I share my colleague's grave concerns about the humanitarian disaster in Afghanistan. I share his concerns about the fate of Americans and green card holders and their families and Afghans who fought alongside our troops who were also left behind in Afghanistan. Both of these crises—the humanitarian crisis and the crisis of Americans left behind Taliban enemy lines—are the responsibility of Joe Biden for his hapless, disorganized, chaotic execution of the withdrawal from that country.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON STRICKLAND NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Strickland nomination?

Mr. HEINRICH. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California Mrs. (FEINSTEIN) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 52, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 368 Ex.]

YEAS—52

|              |              |            |
|--------------|--------------|------------|
| Baldwin      | Hickenlooper | Reed       |
| Bennet       | Hirono       | Rosen      |
| Blumenthal   | Kaine        | Sanders    |
| Booker       | Kelly        | Schatz     |
| Brown        | King         | Schumer    |
| Cantwell     | Klobuchar    | Shaheen    |
| Cardin       | Leahy        | Sinema     |
| Carper       | Lujan        | Smith      |
| Casey        | Manchin      | Stabenow   |
| Collins      | Markey       | Tester     |
| Coons        | Menendez     | Van Hollen |
| Cortez Masto | Merkley      | Warner     |
| Duckworth    | Murkowski    | Warnock    |
| Durbin       | Murphy       | Warren     |
| Gillibrand   | Murray       | Whitehouse |
| Graham       | Ossoff       | Wyden      |
| Hassan       | Padilla      |            |
| Heinrich     | Peters       |            |

NAYS—45

|           |            |           |
|-----------|------------|-----------|
| Barrasso  | Crapo      | Inhofe    |
| Blackburn | Cruz       | Johnson   |
| Blunt     | Daines     | Kennedy   |
| Boozman   | Ernst      | Lankford  |
| Braun     | Fischer    | Lee       |
| Capito    | Grassley   | Lummis    |
| Cassidy   | Hagerty    | Marshall  |
| Cornyn    | Hawley     | McConnell |
| Cotton    | Hoeven     | Moran     |
| Cramer    | Hyde-Smith | Paul      |

|         |            |            |
|---------|------------|------------|
| Portman | Scott (FL) | Tillis     |
| Risch   | Scott (SC) | Toomey     |
| Romney  | Shelby     | Tuberville |
| Rubio   | Sullivan   | Wicker     |
| Sasse   | Thune      | Young      |

## NOT VOTING—3

|      |           |        |
|------|-----------|--------|
| Burr | Feinstein | Rounds |
|------|-----------|--------|

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The Senator from Wyoming.

## BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I come to the floor to talk about the growing list of disasters that is occurring in this country and around the world as a result of the actions of President Biden.

The most recent disaster is President Biden's surrender of Afghanistan to global terrorists. For two decades, Americans fought and died in Afghanistan, and they did it to keep our country safe and free. On Thursday, August 26, the United States lost 13 servicemembers in Kabul, Afghanistan. It was the deadliest single day for our military in more than a decade. One of those fallen heroes, 20-year-old Rylee McCollum, was from Wyoming.

Despite heroic sacrifice by our servicemembers, the Taliban, today, is stronger than ever. The Taliban controls more territory than it did on September 11 of 2001, 20 years ago. Afghanistan is, once again, a safe harbor for terrorists.

This disaster happened because President Biden paid more attention to the calendar on the wall than he did to the conditions on the ground. President Biden wanted symbolism. Well, we got symbolism. We got the symbol of terrorists. It is the one they wanted. It is the symbol of helicopters flying, leaving the roof of the U.S. Embassy in Afghanistan—something that President Biden promised the American people they would never see, but there it was for the world to see.

The entire world also witnessed desperate Afghan citizens. They were plummeting to their deaths as they tried to hang onto planes that were leaving from the airport. President Biden was so eager to pull our troops out of Afghanistan by an arbitrary date that he left hundreds, if not thousands, of American citizens trapped—hostages behind enemy lines. President Biden abandoned the strategically located Bagram Air Base. It is the one base that could have evacuated people safely.

The Biden administration even gave the Taliban a list of American citizens. I mean, can you imagine that? The administration gave the Taliban—the terrorists—a list of American citizens, green card holders, Afghan allies, people we wanted to get out of the country. To me and many Americans who heard that this happened, we saw it as a kill list—a list that the terrorists

would use against American citizens and our allies on the ground—and we may never know how many are captured or tortured and are killed.

We could have left Afghanistan with our honor intact. Instead, our enemies are now emboldened, and our friends are furious—furious at us. Billions and billions of dollars' worth of American military equipment and military secrets are now in the hands of the Taliban. Joe Biden has armed the Taliban beyond its wildest dreams. The Taliban has seized more than 600,000 American weapons. This includes over 2,000 armored vehicles, like Humvees, MRAPs, and even American tanks. They also have at least 40 aircraft, including Black Hawk helicopters and drones. The Biden administration has no plan either to get these weapons back or to destroy them where they sit on the ground.

President Biden has surrendered America to the terrorists, and now I believe they are coming for us.

Yet Afghanistan is just one of President Biden's many failures. On issue after issue, this President has displayed complete incompetence.

For instance, President Biden has displayed gross incompetence and mismanagement at our southern border. On President Biden's first day in office—on the very first day—he flipped on a green light at the border, and he laid out the welcome mat. He shut down the construction of the border wall even though it had been fully paid for. He illegally ended the very successful "Remain in Mexico" policy, and he stopped all deportations. Ever since then—ever since that day 1 of his administration—illegal immigration has been at an alltime high.

Over the last week, we have seen more than 10,000 illegal immigrants crowding under a single bridge in Del Rio, TX. Since President Biden became President, more than a million illegal immigrants have crossed into our country. That is more than twice the population of Wyoming. Some of these illegal immigrants carry deadly disease; others carry illegal weapons. Since Joe Biden became President, our border agents have seized enough fentanyl—it is a deadly drug—to kill every American man, woman, and child.

The Joe Biden border crisis is—and the word is important to hear here—"unprecedented." That is not my word. It is a direct quote from the Secretary of Homeland Security. Joe Biden's Secretary of Homeland Security, a few weeks ago, was caught on tape. He told our Border Patrol officers that the border situation "cannot continue."

He went on to say:

If our border is our first line of defense, then we are going to lose. . . . This is unsustainable.

Again, this is coming from President Biden's Secretary of Homeland Security.

Yet Democrats in Washington want to double down on this open border pol-

icy. Senate Democrats have tried to give amnesty to over 8 million illegal immigrants. Now, they have failed, but if they had been successful, it would have been the largest amnesty for illegal immigrants in our Nation's history. Well, that sends a very loud message to people all around the world. It says, if you come here illegally, the Democrats are sure going to try to give you government benefits and maybe even citizenship. This message from this White House and the Democrats only strengthens the magnet for people to come here illegally.

Under President Biden, we have chosen chaos on the border, and we have chaos also in Democratic-governed cities. Over the past year and a half, we have seen an unprecedented rise in murders, in shootings, and in violent crime in Democratic-run cities. Last year, the murder rate went up by a third. This year, it is up again. Nearly all of the increases are in cities run by Democrats.

Last year, in Democratic cities, what did they do? Well, they cut more than \$1 billion off the funding for our police, for law enforcement—for the people who are there to keep the cities and the streets safe. As a result, crime is out of control, and working families are scared.

There is also something else that is worrying families all across America, and those are the skyrocketing costs they have to pay every time they fill up their tanks or when they go to the grocery stores. At a time when our economy should be booming, the purchasing power of people's paychecks is getting eaten away. Gasoline is now nearly a dollar more a gallon than it was when Joe Biden took office. Now it costs about \$25 more to fill up your vehicle. It costs about \$25 more for a weekly trip of shopping at the grocery store. So \$25 for gas and \$25 for groceries is \$50 a week. That is over \$2,000 a year in lost buying ability—lost power of the paycheck—for American families.

Inflation is happening because of excessive Democratic borrowing and spending. Gas prices are also rising because President Biden is restricting American energy. He has killed thousands of good energy jobs. He took an ax to the Keystone XL Pipeline. He stopped all new oil and gas leases on Federal land. It is no surprise to Americans that the price of energy is going up.

And what is President Biden's solution to this? Well, he wants to raise taxes on energy produced in America. He doesn't want Americans to explore for energy and oil in the United States. No. His National Security Advisor, last month, actually asked foreign oil-producing countries, including Saudi Arabia and Russia—this is the National Security Advisor—to pump more foreign oil to lower the price of gas. And you say: How do you know that? Well, it was on the White House's website, right there for the world to see. The