

that knows its property is secure and will not be surreptitiously confiscated by government action can fully engage in developing the innovation that drives markets.

Today, in stating my objections, this is all I am asking for. I have no concerns with this individual in particular; rather, with the authority that she might wield and the assurances I am wanting to receive from the administration on that authority, some assurance that this administration will not unilaterally wipe out intellectual property protections that have resulted in the vast majority of COVID-19 remedies the U.S. currently enjoys and have also served millions of others globally. These are the things that are on the table. All I want is some assurance from the administration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent, notwithstanding rule XXII, if applicable, at a time to be determined by the majority leader in consultation with the Republican leader, that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Executive Calendar No. 547, Maria L. Pagan, of Puerto Rico, to be a Deputy United States Trade Representative (Geneva Office), with the rank of Ambassador; that there be 10 minutes of debate, equally divided in the usual form on the nomination; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to vote without intervening action or debate on the nomination; that if the nomination is confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with to intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nomination; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. LEE. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, there has been an objection. Let me be very brief. We have a lot to do still tonight.

As the new COVID variant surges around the globe and threatens Americans here at home and millions around the world, the United States needs to do everything possible to get shots in arms, including having the right people in Geneva to find solutions to the availability and distribution of vaccines.

COVID continues to be a deadly crisis, and we should be working in every way possible to make sure that the Biden team has a group that can reach agreement on a TRIPS waiver and any other trade-based solutions.

I look forward to continuing efforts to talk with my colleague from Utah. This is urgent business. We have to get it worked out.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. To reiterate here, all I want is some assurance. I appreciate my friend and colleague from Oregon understanding my basic concern here. It is not an unreasonable concern. All I want is some assurance from the administration that it is not going to wipe out intellectual property protections. That wouldn't be right. They know it is not right. They give me those assurances, we can move on.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 6256

Mr. RUBIO. I think this is an issue that has been talked about. There is a lot of interest in it and rightfully so.

In China, even as I speak to you now, human beings working as slaves because of their ethnicity and their religion, Uighur Muslims, are in factories making products that people will buy this holiday season and throughout the year.

I think it would be shocking to most Americans. I think it would be shocking to all of us to know that even as I stand here now, there are products in this very Chamber in the Senate that were touched by and made by the hands of slaves. It is a horrifying, horrifying human rights situation—fully sanctioned, as we now know, by the Government of China, the Communist Party of China.

We know this, by the way. The New York Times had access to these documents for a long time—and they were finally revealed—that show that this plan to use slave labor went to the highest levels of that Communist Party.

I think it is also appalling that it reveals the level of dependence this country has and the need we have to rebuild our industrial base in this country and in allied nations. It is appalling because it is a fact that we are so dependent on China in our supply chain, that many have asked us to look the other way, to not complain about this, to not pass a bill about this because it would disrupt supply chains, when what they really mean is it would disrupt the bottom line, their profits.

I don't need to explain to anybody how this works. You can make a lot of money if you don't have to pay your workers or you pay them very little. It allows you to undercut your competition.

So the fact that we have major American corporations and, for that matter, national corporations and multinational corporations that are making money, whose profits are driven by the fact that slaves are building and

making the materials they sell to us, is a horrifying reality.

We have worked on this in a bipartisan way for 2 years, and we have, fortunately, now reached a point—and, as you recall, I was here 2 weeks ago objecting to an amendment package on the NDAA to force action. I want to recognize Congressman MCGOVERN, our House counterpart, and, obviously, the junior Senator from Oregon, who is going to speak in a moment here in the Senate. It has been a bipartisan effort.

We passed legislation on this last year. Differences between the House and Senate kept it from becoming law. We passed it unanimously out of the Senate earlier this year, but there were differences between our approaches. And since that time, where the amendment packet was objected to on the Defense bill, the House has passed not one but two versions of this bill.

We are now in possession of one of those two versions, and it is a version that doesn't have any objections here in the Senate either.

I wish we didn't have to pass this bill. There have been some in the hallway who have suggested—I don't know if the right word is congratulations, but commenting on how far we have come. And my argument is that this is nothing to be happy about because, even when we pass this bill, there will still be people working as slaves.

I wish that this did not even exist, but it does, and we must address it. So we are now virtually just a couple of moves away, and it may not happen today, unfortunately, for reasons you are about to learn unrelated to this. But we are a couple of moves away from being able to send this to the White House for the President to sign and for it to become law.

I think it would be a powerful statement to make but also impactful. A bill that says if you make things—if you are a company that makes things or sources material—from these parts of China, you are going to have to prove that slaves didn't make it before you can bring it into this country. And I hope that if we can do that here, that other countries around the world will follow suit.

If I may, Madam President, I wanted to yield to the junior Senator from Oregon, who has worked side by side with us on this and has been a key part of this, to issue his comments on it as well.

Mr. MERKLEY. I join with my colleague from Florida, Senator RUBIO, in calling out genocide in China. It is a terrible term describing horrific acts in which humanity assaults humanity.

Just 7 weeks from now—7 weeks from this Friday—there is going to be the opening ceremonies of the Olympic Games in China, and there is going to be fancy dances by minorities from across the country. And China will be saying to the world: See what a beautiful country we have, with all this diversity, including people from Xinjiang Province, the Uighurs.

Behind those fancy performances in the opening ceremonies, there is a very, very ugly truth. That ugly truth is that the Chinese Government is committing genocide against the Uighur population. More than a million Uighurs are enslaved, and they are enslaved to produce products for the world for the profit of China.

And I don't think anyone in America wants us to be complicit in genocide by buying these products. That is what this bill is all about.

It is to say: Companies, when you produce things in Xinjiang, make sure that the supply chain is investigated and is untainted by these horrific acts.

This is bipartisan. This is bicameral. This is the best of the American spirit. And so I strongly, strongly support passage of this act. We passed it before. As my colleague just mentioned, we passed it unanimously. And now we have a version that has been worked out with the House version. It is ready to roll.

So, colleagues, let's get this done as a powerful statement of where America stands on human rights, a powerful statement that we are against genocide, a powerful statement that, when it comes to these human rights principles, we stand together—Democrat and Republican, House and Senate.

I extend my appreciation to our colleagues in the House, Congressman SMITH and Congressman MCGOVERN. We all worked together on the Congressional-Executive Commission on China. We held a series of hearings to understand better not just the horrific acts that are occurring in Xinjiang but also horrific acts that are happening in Tibet and Hong Kong. But this bill focuses on the genocide against the Uighurs. Let's get this done. It matters. Let's act now.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 6256, which was received from the House; 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, first, let me thank the Senator from Florida and the Senator from Oregon for the really important work that they have done on the underlying legislation.

It is of critical importance that this Senate stand together, Republicans and Democrats, against the ongoing genocide that is occurring in China today.

And I will say that, despite all the news about division in this Chamber, the coming together around China policies, the coming together between par-

ties over the course of 2021 with respect to the threat that China presents to the United States and the global world order and the threat they present to human rights, both domestically and externally, I think, is important.

I support the underlying legislation, but I also want to make sure that we have the personnel in place that can effectuate the policy. Good policy occurs when the Congress steps up and hands the executive branch a tool that they can use, but we need craftsmen who can effectuate that tool set.

Pending on the calendar today, I would argue, are over a dozen nominees who would be in charge of implementing policy in and around China: the Assistant Secretary for International Organizations; the Assistant Secretary for Near East Affairs; the Assistant Secretary for Population, Refugees, and Migration; Ambassadors to Bangladesh, Brunei, Japan, Sri Lanka, Vietnam—all pending on the calendar today.

But perhaps the three most important nominees who will implement the policy that Senator RUBIO and Senator WYDEN are bringing forward today are these: first, the nominee to be the Ambassador to China, Nicholas Burns; the nominee to be Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs, who would oversee this new policy, Ramin Toloui; and, lastly, the Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom, obviously critical to the plight of the Uighurs, Rashad Hussain.

In particular, Ambassador Burns is uniquely qualified for this post, having been Ambassador to NATO and Ambassador to Greece. At his hearing, he made clear how he would view the Chinese behavior in Xinjiang Province. He said the PRC's genocide, its abuse in Tibet, its smothering of Hong Kong's autonomy and freedoms, and its bullying of Taiwan are unjust and must stop.

Having an ambassador in China in place, having an Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs, and having an ambassador working every single day on international religious freedom, hand in hand with this new legislation, gives the tools and the legislative authority necessary to get the United States moving toward the right side of human rights in China.

So with that, I would ask the Senator from Florida to modify his request to include the following request.

I would ask unanimous consent that, notwithstanding rule XXII, if applicable, at a time to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with the Republican leader, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations: Executive Calendar No. 525, Nicholas Burns, of Massachusetts, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the People's Republic of China; Calendar No. 626, Ramin Toloui, of Iowa, to be an As-

sistant Secretary of State (Economic and Business Affairs); Calendar No. 619 Rashad Hussain, of Virginia, to be Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom; that there be 10 minutes for debate, equally divided in the usual form on the nominations en bloc; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to vote without intervening action or debate on the nominations in the order listed; that if a nomination is confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nominations; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the modification?

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. RUBIO. Reserving the right to object, as modified, that would mean the passage of the Uighur slave labor measure, which has unanimous support, and would put us on the precipice and on track to confirm nominees—Ambassadors to China and important Secretary of State posts and also the Ambassador for International Religious Freedom—I would have no objection to that modification.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The request has been modified.

Is there objection to the request as modified?

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, let me just say at the outset, I strongly, strongly, strongly agree with my colleagues—Senator RUBIO and my friend from Oregon Senator MERKLEY—that the United States has to fight genocide and the scourge of forced labor taking place in Western China and elsewhere around the world.

As the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, one of my special priorities—one that we worked on for quite some time—has been to tackle this issue of forced labor. It goes back to work that Senator BROWN and I did in 2015 to close an unjustifiable loophole that allowed an exception to the ban on products made with forced labor. Not only is it morally abhorrent, it is also a major trade rip-off that undermines American workers.

On the Finance Committee, we believe that the Senate needs to look at every opportunity to protect good-paying American jobs and help workers and their families get ahead. That means that the Senate has got to be prepared to tackle multiple challenges at once.

Right now, the urgent issue for so many American families is the potential expiration of child tax credit payments on January 1. Families received their sixth child tax credit payment today. It could be the last if this body does not act.

Families have come to depend on these payments to cover the essentials like rent, groceries, heat, and clothing for their kids.

Just recently, I was home in Oregon, and I asked people what they spend the child tax credit on, and they said: “Ron, we spend it on things like shoes.”

And in our part of the world, it gets cold; it gets wet. We are not talking about luxury; we are talking about shoes for children.

Food insecurity among families dropped by about 25 percent since these child tax credit payments began. Child poverty has been cut nearly in half.

This program, in my view, is like Social Security for kids and vulnerable families. We never let Social Security checks for vulnerable seniors lapse.

For anybody who questions how valuable this program has been to American families, I want to just very briefly touch on a few messages that we have gotten from parents in a cross-section of communities across the country about how the child tax credit has helped them:

A parent in Kentucky: “It helped me with fuel for my car and provided me enough to buy my daughter a few things she needed.”

A parent in New York: “It’s helped take the burden off our family. My husband lost his job during COVID but since found another job, but the gap of the job loss was heavy.”

A parent in Alabama: “I was able to buy my daughter her school clothes.”

A parent in New Hampshire: “It has helped me tremendously especially when school was starting.”

So the message from American parents, from sea to shining sea, is the child tax credit has been vital to so many American families and lowering the cost of raising a family, ensuring they can provide that basic level of security all children deserve.

So at this point, I would ask, would the Senator from Florida modify his request to include the adoption of my amendment that is at the desk to extend the child tax credit for 1 year and pass the bill as amended?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the further modification?

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. RUBIO. Reserving the right to object, as I understand this further modification, it would say let’s take a bill that is meaningful on an important global issue, something—an important human rights issue that everyone here supports, that we can pass right now, today, and send it to the President and he can sign it tonight or tomorrow morning and it becomes law because everyone supports it, using this process we are using here, and in addition to that, set up votes on two nominees and an Assistant Secretary, at a time when speech after speech out here has been about how we are not getting to these nominees and Assistant Secretaries—so

we can do all that but only if we add to it something that has bipartisan opposition; that, no matter what, at least 50 people here are against. It cannot pass unanimously, and even if it could and it did pass, we would have to send it back over to the House, not to the President, and the House isn’t even in session until January 10.

That doesn’t sound like a good arrangement to me, and it is something that I would have to object to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Is there objection to the original request?

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, I listened carefully to my colleague from Florida, and because of his objection, there isn’t going to be an opportunity for the Senate to take two bold steps tonight.

I already indicated—made it very clear—that I am completely sympathetic to my colleague from Florida, my colleague from Oregon, to the fight against genocide and forced labor. They got me at “hello” on their proposition.

I also feel incredibly strongly—incredibly strongly—about our vulnerable children and our vulnerable families who are going to be cut off from an essential lifeline unless the U.S. Senate acts.

And, unfortunately, because of the objection from my colleague from Florida, we are not going to have a chance to take two bold steps tonight. That is what I am for. That is what I believe the American people are for.

You bet we are against forced labor. You bet we are against genocide. But we also have had a long tradition of standing up for vulnerable kids, vulnerable families, and tonight we could have obtained two bold objectives here in the U.S. Senate.

I think it is unfortunate that my colleague from Florida is unwilling to do that. Vulnerable families are going to be hurt as a result of the objection. I just want the Senate to know there was another way. There was another way we could have stood with the effort to deal with genocide and forced labor and protected families. They weren’t mutually exclusive. We could have done both. I think it is unfortunate the Senate is not doing it.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

CHINESE POLITICAL PRISONERS

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, in 1948, the world came together to adopt the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights to declare with one voice that every single person on Earth is “born free and equal in dignity and

rights.” They declared that “no one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile”; that “everyone has the right to freedom of thought” and everyone has a right to “freedom of opinion and expression.”

This is Yu Wensheng, a human rights lawyer based in Beijing. His rights are being denied to him because he is arbitrarily detained after being arrested for exercising freedom of expression and freedom of opinion.

Yu has a history of ruffling feathers in Beijing. He is known for criticizing the Communist Party, for supporting the “Yellow Umbrella” movement for rights in Hong Kong, and for taking on politically sensitive cases. Beijing has retaliated by destroying his legal career and making it impossible for him to practice law.

Yu Wensheng has been in Chinese custody since January of 2018 because he dared to publish an open letter calling for political reforms, such as holding fair elections.

The day after he published that letter calling for fair elections, law enforcement officers, including police and armored vehicles, confronted him while he was walking his son to school and forced him into a police vehicle on suspicion of “picking quarrels and provoking troubles.” Police had no regard for his son’s safety at that moment. Authorities later added the charge of “inciting subversion,” a charge often used against human rights advocates and typically carrying a sentence of up to 5 years.

Two years would go by before Yu was allowed to speak to his wife; 2 years before he was allowed to speak to his son; 2 years before he was allowed to meet with his defense lawyers. During those 2 years, he was secretly tried and convicted. In June of 2020, he was sentenced to 4 years in prison—all without any defense lawyers present, without his family being even informed.

He suffered greatly during this incarceration. He was beaten up by a group of inmates and sustained injuries to his head. His right hand suffered nerve damage—damage that occurred in a previous detention—and is now shaking so violently, he can barely use it. He has had to learn to write with his left hand.

His appeals have been denied. He was sent to serve his sentence in a prison 600 miles away from Beijing despite repeated requests from his wife that he serve out his sentence closer to home so his family could visit.

That type of action is the exact opposite of the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights, that declaration that no one should be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention, or exile. This man was subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention, and exile simply for expressing the opinion that there should be fair elections. He is not alone.

Today, I will also highlight a Chinese journalist. Her name is Haze Fan. She worked in Beijing for Bloomberg, covering global business issues. Before