

being done with Iran through the Russian negotiations while Russia is currently pummeling Ukraine. I wish I could tell you that is even the worst part of this deal.

Iran has a couple of things that they need to be able to get to a nuclear weapon. The two things they need are time and money. They have the technology. They have the know-how. They have the facilities. They have the advanced centrifuges. They just need time and money. My frustration with the Iranian nuclear deal that was done under the Obama administration was that it gave them both time and money. It set a 10-year window where they couldn't have nuclear material that could be usable for a nuclear weapon, but it allocated \$100 billion in relief of sanctions to the Iranians—\$100 billion to the Iranian regime.

Now, I have no beef with the Iranian people. They are remarkable people, extremely well educated, but they live under the thumb of a horrible regime.

What did the Iranian regime do with the \$100 billion that they were given?

Well, we saw the advance of the war in Yemen that happened as the Iranians were supplying the Houthis to be able to attack the Saudis and the Emiratis. We saw what happened in Lebanon with the support for Hezbollah to be able to attack Israel and to continue to destabilize. We saw what the Iranians did in Syria, supporting Bashar al-Assad and becoming his army in many areas across Syria, and that ruthless dictator is still there today because of Iranian support, because of the \$100 billion that was given to Iran so they could prop up Assad and so he could stay in place. That is what happened with the \$100 billion that Iran was given last time.

Then, the Trump administration came in and took away that and imposed maximum pressure on the Iranians, walked away from the deal, and said: We are not going to give the largest state sponsor of terrorism in the world billions of dollars of access to capital; that seems like a terrible idea.

And I can assure you, the people of Syria understood that was a terrible idea.

But now, what? President Biden has reopened negotiations, as I mentioned before, by using Russia as our proxy to be able to negotiate this. Today, we had negotiators that were brought on by the Biden administration, who are former negotiators under the Obama administration, to renegotiate this deal, who have quit the negotiating team and who have said that this negotiation is going so badly that they will not be a part of it, and they walked away.

We don't know everything that is in this deal, and I would say to you, quite frankly, I am not encouraged by what bit of rumors that I am hearing in this deal. I am hearing that this deal puts us back into the timetable that was done years ago under the Obama administration to give the 10-year win-

dow, that we are back into that same window that allows them to move to a nuclear weapon at an end-time period, that it doesn't challenge their terrorist activities, that it doesn't challenge their missile development.

Literally, they are developing ballistic missiles designed to carry a nuclear warhead, and that is not part of this agreement, apparently, to restrict their development of a missile capable of carrying nuclear material, as long as they don't actually work to develop that nuclear material.

It releases sanctions to them. So, again, they get billions of dollars. And in the negotiations we hear, at this point, it lifts sanctions on the entities in Iran that took away the property and the homes from Iranian Jews in 1979, which we have had sanctions on. We understand it takes the sanctions off of those responsible for the Beirut bombing in 1983 that killed 243 Americans, mostly marines.

We also understand that it changes the status of Iran from being recognized as a state sponsor of terrorism—even though they are—and that there is a negotiation to take the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps off the list of a foreign terrorist organizations.

Are you kidding me?

This is not a good deal for the peace of the region. This does not prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear power. This continues to destabilize our relationships with our allies in the region, as Saudi Arabia and the Emiratis and the Israelis and everyone stare at the Americans and say: Why in the world would you make this deal that would allow Iran to become a nuclear power in the days ahead?

Let me tell you, this is personal for many American families who lost a loved one in the battle in Iraq, when Iran engages the Iranian Revolutionary Guard to provide lethal equipment to the Iraqis so they could kill more Americans. Many Americans died in Iraq because of Iranian actions.

On March 11, 2020, Technical Sergeant Roberts from Owasso, OK, was killed in Iraq when an Iran-backed militia group, equipped by Iranians, supported by the regime, arbitrarily launched rockets at American forces in Iraq, killing Technical Sergeant Roberts.

Listen, this is personal for a lot of families. This is not some theoretical negotiation. This is a problem.

Why we would say to the Russians, "Negotiate on our behalf," while they are slaughtering Ukrainians and we are sanctioning those same Russians. Makes no sense. But a deal that lifts the sanctions on the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, on those that killed Americans in 1983 in Beirut, to give access to missile technology and to look away from their terrorist activities with Hezbollah and Hamas and in Yemen and in multiple other places in the world is not a deal Americans should make.

Mr. President, walk away from this. There is a reason that your own staff is

walking out of the conversation—because you are headed the wrong way.

CHINA

Madam President, this body is also in the process of negotiating issues with China.

I have had quite a few folks from Oklahoma who have caught me and have said: Hey, while the world is focused on Russia and Ukraine, have we taken our eye off the ball in China?

I would pray we have not, and I continue to be able to encourage our Pentagon and officials across our government to not lose focus on Taiwan and to not lose focus on what is happening in trade agreements.

Right now, the Senate is actually negotiating a bill dealing with China, and I have to tell you I didn't support this bill and don't. It is a quarter trillion dollars in new spending—a quarter trillion. It is enormous in size, but the basic philosophy is, the Chinese have a state-controlled system for how they are putting out semiconductors and research; so we should do that in America and invest a quarter trillion to try to keep up with them in the way they are doing it.

Can I tell you? The United States and our free market system have raised up the greatest entrepreneurs the world has ever known in areas of research. There are quite a few areas wherein we have government and private sector cooperation, both in disease research and in technology. There are all kinds of research that have happened that have been very successful in transitioning into marketable products. Yet a quarter trillion dollars is a big number and philosophically shifts us into a very different structure of trying to be able to "keep up with the Chinese."

Now, I do have to grant that the Senate bill is much better than the House bill. The House put together a bill dealing with China that is classic House of Representatives at this point. They sent over a bill to us that they called their China bill, but it actually uses the word "climate" in it more than it uses the word "China" in it. It actually authorizes \$4 billion a year into the U.N. Green Climate Fund, which actually gives grants to Iran, China, and North Korea to help with their green transitions.

The House bill—also, again, their China bill—has a whole section in it on providing access to financial institutions for marijuana. Now, if you are wondering why marijuana banking is ending up in the China bill, so am I. The only thing I can come up with is, if you are nervous about China, smoke some weed, and you will be more relaxed, I guess. I am not sure why that ends up in the China bill—to have a whole marijuana section in the United States on it.

A meaningful China bill would focus in on critical minerals, which neither bill does. All of us see the supply chain issues that are happening with China right now. We all see it, but neither bill actually deals with the serious

issues that we have with critical minerals and rare Earth minerals. As to some of the areas on critical minerals, China has access to 85 percent of them, and we are not responding to that. That is a problem.

The bill itself—the quarter trillion that is spent—actually exposes us even more to Chinese debt. Ironically enough, to be able to pay for this bill, we are going to have to borrow money from China to compete with China. I find that a little ironic.

It doesn't address the Belt and Road Initiative. As China continues to be able to expand around the world by putting in airports, by putting in ports, and to be able to do its expansion through its own system, we are not addressing that nor even trying to focus in on just keeping a list. I even asked for the ability just for us to keep a list of all of the places into which China is actually expanding, and that is actually not included in the bill.

Another area, like internet freedom for the people of Hong Kong, who are living under the oppression of China, is not included.

Countering the Chinese influence in multilateral organizations, like the U.N., the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund, as China moves to put key positions in place so they control these multilateral organizations—there is no push in this bill for this.

There is no push to be able to push the Chinese off our college campuses, as they move Confucius Institutes onto our campuses in order to plant the Chinese influence on those campuses.

It also doesn't deal with something as basic as agriculture. Now, why do I bring up agriculture? Because the Chinese are purchasing land all over the United States, especially in my State, as they snap up private land and start to do activities there wherein they own that land, control that land, and develop it. There are no CFIUS restrictions that deal with Chinese espionage dealing with agriculture at all, and this bill doesn't address that. I see that as a problem.

We need expansive, very engaged issues to be able to deal with China. China is on the move. They are becoming more and more aggressive. They continue to be more and more aggressive as they deal with a multitude of issues—everything from agriculture and all the way through biotech engineering, chemistry, the ownership of intellectual property, the theft of intellectual property. They continue to be able to move across our supply chain to be able to dominate things worldwide. We need to address that. This fails to do those critical things.

Now, does it take some steps? Yes, it does, but we are not even debating the other issues. We are not even discussing them. We are conferencing with a House bill that focuses more on climate than it does on China and that focuses on marijuana banking more than it does on the supply chain. We

have got to get serious on these issues for the sake of our children and our freedom in the days ahead.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

NOMINATION OF ALVARO M. BEDOYA

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, I rise this evening to urge my colleagues to oppose the nomination of Alvaro Bedoya to be a Commissioner of the Federal Trade Commission.

Recently, the Commerce Committee deadlocked on this nomination, with all Republican members voting no and all Democratic members voting yes. So it will take a discharge petition here on the Senate floor to move Mr. Bedoya's nomination further. If our Democratic colleagues are successful, Mr. Bedoya will become the fifth tie-breaking Commissioner of the FTC.

Let me just observe, as someone who has been on the Commerce Committee for years and years here in the U.S. Senate, that the Federal Trade Commission, which is where Mr. Bedoya would become a member, has always approached issues and addressed the public in a spirit of bipartisanship.

Unlike with the Federal Communications Commission, the FCC, where we are used to the vote being 2 to 3, in a very partisan manner—that is the FCC for you—we haven't had that, over time, with the Federal Trade Commission. The Federal Trade Commission has had a tradition of bipartisanship. They have had a tradition of issuing policy statements with all five of them participating and issuing statements to the Commerce Committee, before testimony, with the one statement speaking for the entire Federal Trade Commission.

Mr. Bedoya's records show that he would bring that sort of partisanship that we have had at the FCC to the Federal Trade Commission, and I hope we can avoid that. As a matter of fact, Mr. Bedoya has publicly supported eliminating the longstanding bipartisan policy statements, and he has advocated for excluding minority party Commissioners from Agency investigations. This would be a troubling step for a Commission that has been bipartisan.

Mr. Bedoya has a long history of divisive social media statements. For example, he called for the elimination of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency. He has called for the elimination of ICE. That is how extreme and out in left field this nominee, Alvaro Bedoya, is. He has called on local law enforcement agencies not to cooperate with ICE. So, if you are a local police department, just don't cooperate with the Federal Agency in charge of immigration and customs enforcement. He has accused Cabinet-level Departments of committing human rights abuses. He has even demanded that several of our colleagues here in the U.S. Senate resign.

He is a hothead, plainly said—more appropriate for a talk radio host of the

far left rather than the fifth vote on the Federal Trade Commission.

Additionally, as the Judiciary Committee continues to consider a Supreme Court nomination, I think it is instructive to recall that, in the fall of 2020, this nominee, Mr. Bedoya, urged Senate Democrats to boycott the Judiciary Committee's hearings on the nomination of Amy Coney Barrett to serve on the Supreme Court.

Now, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle would be outraged if Republican members of the Judiciary Committee actually refused to attend the committee's hearings which occurred last week. This is exactly what Mr. Bedoya, the FTC nominee, called on the Democrats to do just 18 months ago. Clearly, he is out of the mainstream.

This is not the temperament we need to send to the FTC, particularly at a time when the Agency's current leadership has pursued a more partisan agenda as of late. We need to get away from that trend.

Then, beyond temperament, Mr. Bedoya has demonstrated a lack of experience and a lack of knowledge on the major policy areas that he would be responsible for regulating as an FTC Commissioner. Although the FTC is the Nation's premier regulator of consumer privacy, Mr. Bedoya's experience on the topic of privacy comes from his time on the staff of the Senate Judiciary Committee. There, he largely dealt with issues of government surveillance, which falls outside the FTC's jurisdiction. So even the limited experience Mr. Bedoya has gives him no help in dealing with Federal Trade Commission issues.

Through the Commerce Committee's vetting process, Mr. Bedoya has also shown a limited knowledge of the competition and antitrust issues that are at the heart of today's major policy debates at the FTC.

I don't want the FTC to lack a tie-breaking vote forever—that is not the reason every Republican on the Commerce Committee voted no—but I do want the Agency to be able to tackle these important issues: to rein in Big Tech's dominance of so many marketplaces; to support a 21st century economy that spurs innovation; and to protect consumers from fraud and other unfair and deceptive business practices. I want the FTC to return to its traditional standing as an Agency driven by bipartisanship and as an Agency that can be counted on to use its broad authority with a steady hand and a measured approach.

I do not believe Mr. Bedoya is the right person to do this. I do not believe someone with his temperament and lack of experience and lack of knowledge about the issues will be able to put the Federal Trade Commission back on track.

For those reasons, I urge my colleagues to support any effort to discharge Mr. Bedoya's nomination from the Commerce Committee to the Senate floor.