

they slaughtered 1,400 Israelis, brutally, many in their bed—children, elderly, disabled—it didn't matter. Whether they were college students at a concert, whether they were people traveling down a highway, or whether it was children, literally, on their playgrounds, they murdered them where they stood. And then they took hostages and retreated back into Gaza, for some reason assuming that Israel and the world would just not notice their barbarism.

Well, the world certainly noticed, and, as Americans, we obviously all lived in the shock and horror of the event with the Israelis and the rest of the world. Thirty-one Americans died in that attack, and 13 are missing, presumed to be hostages inside Gaza. Many of those individuals were killed simply because they were Jewish—period.

The pain of that has struck all of us over the course of the past several weeks now, and we have watched Israel rightly respond to the acts of terrorism, as we have as a nation, as well, when we were attacked on 9/11. We mobilized our forces. We identified al-Qaida, and we identified those who were harboring al-Qaida in Afghanistan and the Taliban and determined that type of attack would not happen again. And we, as a nation, determined we were not only going to stop the capabilities of al-Qaida to be able to attack us, but we were going to preemptively respond if we were attacked again. Our first goal, though, was to be able to prevent that kind of attack from coming at us again.

Israel is entirely right when they have been attacked by a terrorist organization to be able to say: That organization cannot do that to our Nation again and to our people again.

The United States has responded by sending two carrier strike groups to the Mediterranean, to literally park off the coast of Israel, to give a clear signal to Lebanon, to Iran: Do not engage in this.

We understand fully, as most of the world does, that Hamas is funded by Iran. And while many in the Muslim world, in the Arab countries continue to be able to speak out on behalf of Palestinians, they also understand that 70 percent of the funding for Hamas comes from Iran.

The weapons systems that Hamas has right now were fully funded by Iran, and the weapons systems in Lebanon, by Hezbollah, where they have been attacking Israel from the north, were fully funded and created and, many times, shipped directly from Iran.

Iran is the destabilizing force in this entire region, and we, as Americans, have made very, very clear that we understand that Iran is the one who funded this, who supplied the weapons systems, who supplied the training and the munitions. Iran is the one who continues to destabilize that region.

As Americans, we clearly speak out for the protection of all civilians in

every nation around the world and in every conflict in the world, but we were also very clear that Israel did not initiate this battle in the last 2 weeks. Hamas did, and they pulled their hostages back into Gaza, as they continue to be able to hide them among the civilian population. It is a painful peace for us to be able to see internationally. For us in Oklahoma, we are like many others that are in this Chamber as well. It personally affects many families in Oklahoma. Israel is a nation so small that there is no one that has not experienced the pain of a friend or relative, someone whom they work with, they know people who have been directly attacked. But in my State of Oklahoma, we are in the same condition. Many people that I interact with talk frequently about family, friends that live in Israel or that travel back and forth.

Quite frankly, last weekend, I worshipped with a Jewish congregation on Shabbat and heard the dialogue from many people about their travels back and forth and family and friends and what they personally experienced as a family based on this terrorist attack. Quite frankly, my State of Oklahoma has a very close bond with Israel, as the United States has a very close bond, close enough that we had many Oklahomans that were currently in Israel during that time of the attacks, and our office actively worked to be able to get many of those out, since many flights have been canceled out of Tel Aviv.

So we have actively worked to be able to get many of those individuals back home to Oklahoma, and they have quite a story to tell, as you would assume.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. LANKFORD. Madam President, the pain of this, though, is also something that we should pay attention to. We, as a nation, not only remember 9/11 and our response, but we also remember 9/11 was instituted by 20 people that were illegally present in the United States. We should not fail to remember that fact as well.

Recent statistics coming across our southern border identified in the last 2 years—just the last 2 years—we have had 70,000 individuals that have been identified as what they call special interest aliens. These are individuals that came between the ports of entry, that were running through to try to evade being captured. They are identified as special interest aliens because they have this designation: They potentially possess a national security risk to the United States or its interests. So they are identified as a special interest alien.

As I mentioned, we have had more than 70,000 of those that have crossed between our ports of entry just in the last 2 years. These are individuals from Syria, from Iran, from Iraq, from Pakistan, from west Africa, from locations

where terrorism is known to exist, and we don't have any criminal history of those individuals.

If you are thinking, I am glad we picked them up between ports of entry, well, let me finish the story for you. Most of those 70,000 special interest aliens were identified between the ports of entry and then were released into the country under Biden's policy on how he handles immigration currently. Those 70,000 individuals that were identified as potentially possessing a national security risk to the United States or its interests are in the United States right now.

Just in the past week, four individuals from Iran were picked up, multiple Syrians were picked up between our ports of entry and then released, awaiting a hearing in the future. And in current status right now, that hearing will be 8 to 10 years in the future. They are unmonitored. They are wandering around within our borders awaiting a hearing 8 to 10 years from now in the future, after being identified as a special interest alien.

We grieve for Israel, but for some reason, there are some in this body and in the White House that will not pay attention to our own national security issues and the obvious exposure that literally everyone in the country can see.

I can raise this issue with 100 people on the street outside this building, and all 100 would say, Oh, yeah, that is a risk. But for some reason, we can't get serious in this body to be able to take on the same thing, just to identify what are we going to do with individuals that are considered special interest aliens. Are we really going to just process them at the border and release them into the country? Or are we going to enforce our own sovereignty as just about every other nation does in the world? What are we planning to do on this?

I would just say, for the basic function of our national security, we should enforce our borders, and we should not just release special interest aliens out into the country, as has been done for now the last 2 years by the numbers of 70,000-plus.

So I would hope this body would get serious about dealing with issues like asylum, parole, and all the different features that have been used to release these individuals into the country, that we could fix that before we have the next 9/11 in our country.

ISRAEL

Mr. LANKFORD. Madam President, one last comment just based on news that is continuing to flow out.

All of us are absolutely heartbroken—absolutely heartbroken—at a hospital that had a major explosion from a rocket in Gaza. The initial reports came out just immediately: This must have been the Israelis that attacked a hospital. And many countries around the world immediately made

statements that the Israelis bombed a hospital.

Meetings were canceled with President Biden while he was in the region because the Israelis had bombed a hospital—until the facts and information actually came out. Now, less than 24 hours later, we have overhead that can identify the movement of different rockets that we are able to see. We have information that is now out in the public, and the President has confirmed that was not an Israeli strike on that hospital; that was a rocket that was launched from inside Gaza that went errant and then landed in Gaza directly on the hospital, killing almost 500 people.

It was literally a terrorist attack on Israel that, instead of hitting innocent civilians in Israel, it hit innocent civilians in Gaza.

It is still just as tragic for all of those families, but I would call on all the nations that immediately condemned Israel for attacking a hospital to immediately turn that to condemn Hamas for attacking civilians and for launching rockets to kill civilians in Israel that actually killed Palestinian civilians in Gaza, that for every nation that falsely accused Israel of this horrible attack, that they would see the evidence and they would instead turn and try to speak to Hamas to stop their terrorist attacks.

That is something every nation can do, to stand up for the life and the value of people and of civilians. I would call on them to be able to do that even today.

With that, I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

ISRAEL

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, I join with my overwhelming bipartisan majority of Senators and House colleagues in delivering a message of unwavering support for our friends in Israel. And I want to congratulate my friend, the senior Senator from Oklahoma, for his very fine speech just now and to associate myself with every single remark that he made, and I congratulate him on making it so eloquently.

We have all seen the devastation from Hamas's brutal attacks. We need to send this clear signal from both sides of the aisle and both ends of this building: Israel has the right to self-defense, just as we in America deserve a right to self-defense, and Israel is entitled to our full support. The weeks ahead will require decisive action from Congress and decisive action from the White House. We must ensure our allies are armed to the teeth as they enter what amounts to a Hamas fortress across the border in Gaza.

They must also receive the tools they need to keep Hezbollah in the north and the Palestinian-Islamic jihad at bay. And we must stand united against Hamas's patron, the Islamic Republic

of Iran. Israel needs more Tamir interceptor missiles for the Iron Dome system. They need them immediately. We have several hundred in inventory, and the administration should use its draw-down authority immediately to send these missiles without delay. We need to pass a supplemental appropriations bill to accelerate Tamir production in Israel, even as the United States builds our own Tamir manufacturing capability here in the United States by 2025.

Congress should also support the delivery and production of more precision-guided munitions and ammunition for Israeli ground forces, as well as expansive intelligence sharing. And there are many questions about intelligence failures and shortcomings leading up to this terrorist attack.

This episode, again, highlights that our national defense is far behind where it should be. Some of us have been raising this point for a long time. I have been making this point long before I was able to become ranking member of the Armed Services Committee.

The administration needs to send Congress a funding request that fully resources the U.S. military for a rapidly worsening threat environment in Israel and the Middle East and Ukraine and Europe and in the Western Pacific.

For over seven-and-a-half decades, Israel has made every effort simply to be a peaceful democracy in a dangerous area of the world. Hamas wants to end the nation of Israel. That is part of their charter. It is in writing. That is their goal.

And, you know, our fellow American citizens are also victims of the Hamas violence. We have lost more than 20 fellow Americans to these terrorists, and, of course, we know that some are being held captive. Millions of Americans are praying today that they come home.

The people of Israel know that there can be no return to the pre-war status quo. The pre-war status quo, the pre-October 7 status quo is over. Israel must now destroy Hamas, no matter how long it takes.

As it pursues this goal, no nation should give Hamas terrorists safe haven. Iran should not give Hamas terrorists safe haven. Tehran's support for this war makes one thing clear: We successfully deter bad actors only through unmistakable signals of American strength. We need to return to the maximum pressure policies of the previous Trump administration, and we can match that financial pressure with a heightened defense posture in the region.

We must also examine why Iran and its proxies believe they can get away with this heinous massacre. We know, for example, that the Biden administration's Iran policy—and this pains me to say, Madam President—the Iran policy was led by individuals who were actually part of an Iranian Government information operation. One of those individuals has been relieved. Another of those individuals, Dr. Ariane

Tabatabai, inexplicably remains in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. Thirty Senators have joined me in a letter asking for answers on this. We need answers now on why this is still allowed to happen and what steps the administration will take to remediate it.

We should support the continued Arab-Israeli peace efforts, which President Trump initiated through the Abraham Accords. While I disagree with many of the Biden administration's Middle East policies, I strongly support the recent Saudi-Israeli peace initiative. Hamas clearly hopes their terrorist attacks will grind this process to a halt.

I am grateful that many of our Arab partners, in the face of extreme pressure and hardship, still see the true nature of Hamas today. They understand that Hamas is an Iranian-backed terrorist organization who wants to wipe Israel off the face of the map. Many of our Arab partners have fought and defeated similar organizations like Hamas within their own borders.

So I urge the Biden administration today to emphasize the shared Arab-Israeli interest in Hamas's defeat so that Arab-Israeli peace efforts can continue to progress.

Finally, let me say this. I can state with confidence that the people of my State are with Israel. My office has received a remarkable outpouring of support for Israel from the people across Mississippi. We express that support in word and deed.

The three flagship Navy corvettes of the Israeli battle fleet were built by the skilled craftsmen of our Mississippi shipyards. Think about that. Mississippi-made hulls, carrying the flag of the Star of David, are being used to protect the Israeli people from further attack. It is just one example of our common cause.

With the people of Mississippi and with the overwhelming majority of Senators on both sides of the aisle, I call upon all of us to stand united in support of an Israeli victory.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

ISRAEL

Mr. MARSHALL. Madam President, let my message to Israel be clear: America stands with you and your right to defend yourself from this unspeakable evil perpetrated by Hamas.

From my earliest memories, my mom, my Sunday school teachers told me that we support Israel. And as you go through your faith journey, as you go through your education, you learn why your mom and your Sunday school teachers said: We support Israel. I looked no further than my own bedroom wall to see Moses's Ten Commandments there that my mom had put for my brother and myself to look at every day when we awoke in the morning.

We learned later that Moses was indeed the greatest lawgiver; that this