

Nation was founded on Judeo-Christian values. It is what defines the United States of America in so many ways. And to our faith partners in Israel, we are grateful for that heritage and culture that they passed on to us.

But what I have learned as a Member of Congress, I need to pass on to every person in America—how important Israel is as an ally. In so many ways, they are the eyes and ears for America in a very, very troubled land. No doubt, their efforts have prevented the deaths of tens of thousands of Americans by thwarting terrorist attacks from our enemies. We are so blessed to share military technology that is saving American lives as well. Indeed, Israel has been one of our greatest, most staunch allies.

Today, we need to face the truth. We need to tell the truth. Hamas is a terrorist organization, and it only knows one language: death and destruction. Hamas's sole purpose is to radicalize its people, serve as a breeding ground for terrorism, and entirely eradicate Israel and other freedom-loving people like Americans.

The actions of Hamas over this last week serve as an illustration of their principles. Look, Hamas has no interest in dialogue, only in destruction. Hamas does not want peace, they want punishment. Hamas wants war, not co-existence. Hamas is a terrorist army with a track record of unspeakable brutality and a commitment to wiping out not just Israel but America as well. This terrorist organization knows only one language: death and destruction.

But the head of the snake is Iran. That is part of the truth that needs to be told. Iran is the head of the snake and Hamas is just a puppet fulfilling the prophecy of its leader. Hamas fighters and other terrorist groups are inspired, encouraged, and empowered by Iran to continue committing more brutal, more savage, and more devastating terrorist attacks around the globe.

Look, I think there is no doubt in my mind that Iran planned, they funded, they armed, and they authorized the brutal murders of babies, burning women alive in the streets, and killing 30 Americans. This blood—the blood of American citizens—is on the hands of Iran and Hamas. As we go forward over these next weeks, these next months, we need to realize that all the blood being shed belongs on the hands of Iran.

I would ask the White House to strongly condemn Iran's actions and disavow their terrorist regime. We need to stop empowering Iran. We need to stop encouraging them to develop nuclear weapons and making it possible to do that. We need to turn off their spigots. Right now, Iran is selling \$1 billion of oil every week to pay for wars like this.

Under this administration, Iran's reserves have gone from \$6 billion to \$60 billion. We have to stop turning our heads to the sanctions. We need to dou-

ble down on our sanctions. We need to stop the funding from Iran, this head of the snake.

Lastly, we need to make sure that all the other puppets of Iran know that if they engage further in war with Israel, as my dad would say, there will be hell to pay. This seems complicated to many people, but I think that is why it is so important that the United States outline exactly what our priorities are as we undertake these next several weeks.

No. 1, first and foremost, should be a focus on getting American citizens back home safely and to free American hostages. Every day that we wait, every day that goes by, American hostages are being terrorized. They are being tortured by Hamas. It goes without saying that we need to cut the head off the snake, which is Iran.

As I really ponder what is ahead of us here in the near future, I think about what one of my boyhood heroes said, Dwight David Eisenhower, 34th President of the United States. This is what President Eisenhower said:

I hate war as only a soldier who has lived it can, only as one who has seen its brutality, its futility, and its stupidity.

I, too, hate war. This is not going to be pretty for the next several weeks and, I am afraid, months even.

We need to be clear about what Israel is up against. Their opponents, they are worse than animals. They are using women and babies as human shields and harboring hundreds of hostages.

I support Israel, and I understand and encourage their need to fight fire with fire when it comes to decimating this threat. The existence of Hamas is a clear and present danger to the United States, to Israel, and the entire free world. There is no safe Israel; there is no safe world; there is no safe America as long as Hamas lives in the Gaza Strip.

Again, I just pledge my support to the people of Israel.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

ISRAEL

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam President, I join my colleague from Kansas and many others who are going to be on the floor today in full and total support of one of our most steadfast allies, the State of Israel. I also stand here today to strongly condemn—condemn in the strongest terms—the terrorist attacks perpetrated on Israel by Hamas.

Since the initial attack on October 7, we have lost 31 American citizens. Other Americans remain unaccounted for and are being held hostage. More than 1,400 Israelis have been killed, and countless families have been left without a home and without their loved ones.

This is an unacceptable tragedy and recalls far too familiar memories of terrorist attacks in our own Nation's history. We remember vividly the dev-

astating and hostile attacks that ISIS deployed and can clearly see the parallels between their terroristic actions and the wrath that Hamas is now perpetrating. Now is the time to unabashedly and unapologetically support Israel, and I do.

It is also time to support Israel's right to defend themselves and their people. The United States and Israel has a long, long history of demonstrating mutual respect and allegiance to one another.

It dates back to 1948, when President Truman became the first world leader to recognize the Jewish State. Since then, Israel has displayed unmatched loyalty and provided critical support to our country in the Middle East. Israel has stood beside us in some of our darkest hours, and now, as friends do, we will do the same for them.

It is imperative that Congress take action now and provide the support that Israel needs in the face of these terrorist attacks, both to properly defend themselves but also to provide the humanitarian resources needed for those whose lives have been decimated by a group that shows no mercy toward civilians, many of whom are women and children.

Our country must do all that it can within our power to rescue American hostages and return them to safety. This has to be met with increased urgency because time is of the essence. I am afraid the longer we wait, the sadder the stories, especially for those hostages who are in severe need of medical attention.

We must also make certain that the \$6 billion in frozen assets that the Biden administration planned to send to Iran in September remains frozen.

It is incomprehensible to me that the Biden administration made the announcement that they were going to unfreeze \$6 billion to Iran and that they would do that on September 11 of this year. Additionally, it is imperative that the Biden administration finally strengthens and enforces U.S. sanctions on the Iranian regime, which is raking in billions of dollars—the Iranian regime is raking in billions of dollars—in illicit oil sales.

It is past time to get tough on Iranian oil and to stop the regime from skirting our U.S. sanctions. Iran is selling 1.4 billion barrels of oil per day this year and using these proceeds to fund what we just saw over the last several weeks—these murderous actions of terrorist groups throughout the region—and they fund their own military at the same time.

It should surprise no one that Iran, the world leader in state-sponsored terrorism, was heavily involved in this attack and that they continue to support the unjustifiable actions of Hamas.

The leaders of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee have put forth a resolution, of which I am an original cosponsor and support strongly, as do many of us. This resolution declares that Congress will stand with Israel. It

reaffirms Israel's right to self-defense. It condemns Hamas and Iran and calls on the Biden administration to further impose sanctions on Iran.

With the support of 99 Senators, once passed, this will send an almost unanimous message to the world that acts of terrorism and violence will not be tolerated or go unpunished.

I have been encouraged by President Biden's response following the attacks on Israel. However, President Biden's time in office has been defined by a level of, in my view, passiveness and ambiguity that has emboldened our adversaries, and it has lacked the strength that is required of a superpower. That being said, this is not the time to fight amongst ourselves.

One of our strongest allies is under attack, and a nation as strong as ours must display a united front as well as call these attacks on Israel exactly what they are, an act of terrorism.

There is no doubt that the continued assault on Israel creates a seismic shift in our foreign policy. Just a few weeks ago, on this very floor, I warned about the uneasy closeness that was cultivating between our adversaries. Nations that shun our values and reject democracy are finding refuge with each other and stand in direct opposition to our ideals and our way of life. The connection between these countries—Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea—cannot be ignored and only further underscores the importance of strengthening our own military capabilities. We need to be providing military aid for Israel that will serve to not only reinforce our allies but also invest directly back in our own defense. We will serve to reenergize our defense industrial base by restoring the arsenal of democracy that defines our leadership as the United States of America.

Moving forward, we must act decisively and lead in the way that America has done before in times of emergency and adversity. This is the United States of America, the greatest country on Earth. We have the capacity and the obligation to defend our allies as they face unjustified aggression from adversaries.

These attacks on Israel are brutal beyond comprehension and have led to the slaying, as I said before, of innocent families, women, and children. It is incumbent upon us to show steadfast support for Israel and to reiterate how military aid from the United States is in the best interests of both of our nations.

The world is watching and expecting the United States to lead. I encourage my colleagues to recognize the magnitude of this moment, which many of us have been expressing here on the floor today, and join together in our unwavering support of Israel.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

ISRAEL

Ms. ERNST. Madam President, I just returned from a mission to the Middle

East, where I had the unique opportunity to lead a bipartisan delegation to the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Jordan, and Israel. We had planned this visit long before the heinous attacks by Iran-backed Hamas, with the goal of strengthening the Abraham Accords and our relationships in the region.

In the UAE, I led a discussion with their Crown Prince and President about increasing cooperation between our two countries to further security, peace, and prosperity. I left feeling more determined than ever to intensify our efforts to advance growth across the Middle East and beyond.

In Saudi Arabia, I met with Muhammed bin Salman, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom. During this visit, we discussed the prospect of an Israeli-Saudi peace deal to further the dream of a thriving and integrated Middle East.

The delegation left that very meeting optimistic that the Crown Prince was dedicated and committed to this dream—a dream, for many of us, like myself, who served in the region after 9/11, a dream that was rocked the next morning when we heard the news that Israel was at war once again.

At this moment, there was no question what my bipartisan delegation needed to do. It was our job to ensure our ally Israel understood clearly that America is and will always stand shoulder to shoulder with her.

Our delegation was briefed at the highest levels as we completed our visit in Saudi at the Prince Sultan Air Base, where we witnessed integrated air and missile defense systems in action, something my bipartisan DEFEND Act helped to ensure.

We continued into Bahrain the next morning to meet with the Crown Prince and Prime Minister. Once again, a meeting that was intended to be another step on the path to regional security took a very different turn. The Crown Prince provided his insight into the current situation in Israel and his assessment of the causes and potential scale of the conflict. He also spoke of a peaceful future and highlighted the longstanding relations between Bahrain and America, noting the history of bilateral ties and his commitment to achieving mutual aspirations.

Our final stops in Bahrain included the U.S. Naval Support Activity and Task Force 59, which integrates unmanned systems and artificial intelligence to help ensure maritime security and to deter Iran's illegal activities in the Gulf.

The situation in Israel continued to degrade, and I made the decision that we were ultimately going to accomplish what we set out to achieve. Despite all attempts to stop us, I led our bipartisan delegation to Jordan in preparation for a cross-border drive into Israel.

Upon our previously unscheduled arrival, we met with His Majesty King Abdallah II of Jordan, where he painted a dire picture of regional escalation

and the need for stability in the West Bank. He was open and honest about his concern that Iran would capitalize on the chaos by using their other proxies to further escalate the conflict. He discussed the tensions within Jordan and the need for the United States to once again lead and establish peace through strength.

The King's clear-eyed insight into the savage nature of Iran-backed Hamas was chilling, and his concern for escalation was felt by every member of our delegation.

It was clear that what we were about to walk into was chaotic and uncertain and not for the faint of heart. But, in unity, our bipartisan delegation pressed on, and on October 10, we set foot in Israel.

We first met with Eli Cohen, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and received an update on the war. Here, we heard, for the first time, the true nature of the atrocities that the Hamas savages were conducting—rape, beheadings, dragging bloody bodies into the streets—and among those dead were American citizens. The Israeli Foreign Minister made it very clear that the threat Hamas poses to civilization is no less than what the United States faced with ISIS in Iraq, where I served, and in Syria, and I couldn't agree more. These terrorists are monsters, and they deserve nothing short of destruction.

We then spoke with the family of Chaim Peri, an 80-year-old peace activist and father of five who was kidnapped from his home during the invasion. We heard firsthand accounts of the inhumanity of the attack: the destruction of their home, the violence his family endured, and, ultimately, that one of his sons was murdered in defending the family.

Shaken but not deterred, the delegation carried on to Tel Aviv, where we met with Opposition Leader Lapid, the Minister of Strategic Affairs Ron Dermer, and, ultimately, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. We heard increasingly graphic accounts of torture and mutilation of civilians. We ultimately witnessed a nation that was and is truly in an existential fight for survival against a psychopathic terrorist organization whose stated goal is destruction of the State of Israel and killing as many Jewish people as possible.

Let me tell you, there was no daylight between the political factions in Israel on what needs to be done. The complete and total destruction of Hamas is the greatest near-term priority for Israel. Reestablishing deterrence against all others who seek the destruction of Israel is critical.

I am here to say that, in these goals, the United States must not waver in our commitment to our greatest ally in the Middle East. Now is not the time for weak-kneed leadership and ongoing appeasement of the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism that risks the lives of Americans and our allies at