

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

home and abroad and allows Hamas to wreak havoc in Israel.

Now is the time for strong American leadership, one that understands the threat a war waged by Iran-backed proxies is to our own national security here in the homeland. With Americans still being held hostage by Hamas and the death toll of our fellow citizens continuing to rise, this moment demands clarity from our elected officials. Not only today but in the coming days and months, as Israel fights to secure their most basic human right—the right to life—the United States must stand resolute in our support.

May God bless the families who have lost a loved one, and may God bless Israel as she defends herself from Hamas's brutal attacks.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

ISRAEL

Mr. BUDD. Madam President, I rise today to express my total and complete support for the State of Israel.

On October 7, Hamas terrorists launched an unprovoked and despicable series of terrorist attacks inside of Israel. The level of barbarism that we witnessed was nothing short of evil incarnate with the mass slaughter of innocent civilians and unspeakable violence against women, children, and the elderly. It was the deadliest massacre of the Jewish people since the Holocaust. These crimes against humanity were also visited upon our American citizens as well. At last count, 30 Americans were murdered by Hamas, and others are currently being held hostage.

We pray for comfort for the families of those who were killed, and we continue to pray and work for the safe return of those who are unjustly being held by the terrorists.

Compounding these atrocities are the reactions in some parts of the world and even here in our own land, like the sickening anti-Semitic protests in city streets and on university campuses. These vile demonstrations celebrated, they justified, and they endorsed this violence. Simply put, there can be no place in our country for anti-Semitic bigotry.

But we have also seen some politicians—some who work in this very Capitol—express a cynical moral ambiguity, blithely declaring that both sides are at fault, explaining away the motives of the terrorists while preaching restraint from the nation that was attacked.

So, to those who need a reminder, there is a stark difference between the two sides here.

Israel is the Middle East's only democracy. They have been a force for stability in a region historically beset by chaos. They have been one of America's strongest friends in good times and in bad. When faced with attacks, they go out of their way to avoid civil-

ian casualties, sometimes at the cost of their own Israeli lives. Israel is an unmistakable force for good.

Then you have the terrorists of Hamas. Their founding charter calls for the destruction of the State of Israel. Their largest benefactor, Iran, lends its materiel and financial support to this cause of their destruction each and every day. They intentionally target civilians—they fire rockets into crowded markets—and they preach the sort of hate that triggered the Holocaust.

Make no mistake, the only word to describe all of this is "evil." And, unlike the Holocaust, we have seen this evil in realtime. We have seen it with our own eyes.

Evil is surrounding a music festival full of innocent young people and systematically hunting them down and slaughtering them on the side of the road. That is evil. Evil is kidnapping elderly women out of their homes and threatening on the internet to murder them. And evil is beheading and burning babies in front of their mothers and fathers.

The line between morality and depravity, right now, is as bright as it has ever been. As a country, we must not avoid the reality that this is good versus evil, because if we try to turn away from evil, if we try to deny that it is evil, or to beg for context to explain away the evil, then we do a disservice to our credibility, and we stain the soul of a nation.

We must stand shoulder to shoulder with the State of Israel. We must provide them with everything that they need to secure the safety of their nation and eliminate the threat of terrorism.

So I call on the Biden administration to project unequivocal strength to the forces of evil in our world. In this struggle between good and evil, America must lead the forces of good. And we must not fail.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ROSEN). The Senator from North Dakota.

ISRAEL

Mr. HOEVEN. Madam President, the images that have been emerging from Israel in the aftermath of the Hamas terrorist assault are shocking in the extreme. Our hearts are with the Israeli people in the wake of these atrocities, and all of us here in America need to stand strongly, firmly, and united for our friend and ally, Israel.

Here in Congress, there is strong bipartisan support to stand with Israel against Hamas. But what does that mean? What does that mean to stand with Israel? Of course, it means providing military aid. And, of course, it means providing diplomatic support.

I am pleased to cosponsor a bipartisan legislation from the Foreign Relations Committee under the leadership of Chairman CARDIN and Ranking Member RISCH that expresses the Sen-

ate's support for Israel against terrorism.

But today, standing with Israel also means standing against the largest state sponsor of terror in the world, and that is Iran.

For too long, the United States has negotiated with Iran and made concessions. Such policies have not brought peace.

Many of my colleagues and I have warned for years that giving money to Iran, letting Iran sell oil, and giving Iran access to weapons would destabilize the entire region. And, sure enough, over the last decade, we have watched Iran extract concessions in one negotiation after another while creating chaos in Yemen, Syria, Lebanon, and beyond. And now we see the hand of Iran behind Hamas and this horrific assault on Israel.

So we must do all we can to support Israel, to help Israel—help Israel defend itself and ensure that it doesn't suffer another attack like this at the hands of Hamas. But also, to stand with Israel, we must undercut Iran's ability to work through its proxies like Hamas and Hezbollah that pose such a danger to the Israeli people and others as well. Concessions and waivers to the Iranian regime provide the resources for Iran to develop an infrastructure of terror across the Middle East, and the cash flow to Iran must be cut off.

To start with, we must refreeze the \$6 billion that the regime gained access to following negotiations over the release of U.S. citizens from Iran.

I am part of the legislative efforts to do just that, including bills from Senator COTTON, Senator MCCONNELL, as well as legislation authored by Senator MARSHALL and Senator TIM SCOTT.

Ultimately, we must return to a policy of maximum pressure—severe sanctions, maximum pressure that holds Iran accountable for its actions, its actions as the largest state sponsor of terror in the world.

This means a return to the sanctions without waivers. This means leading a global effort to isolate Iran, choke off its sources of financing, and deny the regime the resources required to dominate the region. And this also means making every effort to recognize the rights and the freedoms of the people of Iran, including the right of the Iranian people to choose their own future. We must take these steps.

At the same time, we must always do all we can to ensure that we provide strong, unwavering support to our closest friend and ally in the region, Israel.

Now, we need to move quickly to provide military support for Israel in its fight against Hamas. Also, as I said, our policy on Iran needs to change. We need to exert maximum pressure. That means severe sanctions without waiver.

Maximum and unrelenting pressure on Iran helps Israel, helps the United States, and provides the best chance for minimizing bloodshed both now and in the future.