

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.

We stand with Israel.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

ISRAEL

Mr. TILLIS. Madam President, I come here to join my colleagues to talk about the events of the past 10 or so days in Israel and the horrible attacks.

I want to talk a little bit about two visits that I have made there over the past year or so, the most recent one back in February. But I want to start with holding our Members accountable here on Capitol Hill.

This was posted on social media, and it reads like false statements that we have seen from Hamas and other groups that want to foment hate and death in the region. It reads like this: Israel just bombed the Baptist Hospital building, killing 500 Palestinians—doctors, children, patients—just like that.

That was within an hour or two of the bombing. Before we knew anything, before any of us could have possibly had a secured briefing, before we had gotten an assessment from the President of the United States or any of our intelligence sources here, before we could go down to the SCIF and actually understand the details, that statement was made.

You would think that would come from a member of Hamas, but it came from a Member of our Congress. If that Member of Congress wants to take responsibility for the protest that we now see in Beirut—good on you, in Jordan, in Amman, and in Egypt. This sort of leadership or failure of leadership has no place on Capitol Hill.

Now I want to talk about why I think Hamas is evil and why Iran is a part of this and why this is not surprising that the very details of this attack took place.

Earlier this year, in February, I was in—well, let me back up. A couple of years ago, I was in Israel, and we went down to the Gaza Strip. We saw a tunnel head. We actually walked into a tunnel that was discovered by the Israelis. We went to a Patriot battery or an armed dome battery that every day is prepared to shoot down missiles because that always happens. Before this attack, it happened almost on a daily basis. I have literally been in Israel when I am having lunch, in northern Israel—this was near the Golan Heights—and I am asking somebody to pass a plate of food, and a bomb goes off. And the people living in this kibbutz did not even miss a beat. Every day they have to live with this stuff.

So now, down in Gaza, we see the tunnel system that is in Gaza. If you go north to the Lebanese border, you will see an entire network of tunnels that the Israelis identified just in time. It had been a project, it was estimated to be, 10 years in the making, funded by Iran. Hezbollah is in Lebanon. Hamas

is down in the Gaza Strip. They had developed these tunnel networks, and they were prepared to do the same thing in northern Israel that we saw in southern Israel over the past week and a half. They even want to design this to strike fear and terror in the Israeli people. They want them to think—they want their children to think that they are going to pop out of the ground and kidnap them and kill their parents. This is a part of the terror that they want the Israeli people to live with every single day.

The Iranians were absolutely responsible for funding Hamas to build that tunnel network in northern Israel, and they do the same thing with Hamas in southern Israel.

Ladies and gentlemen, first off, this has to end. Let us work with facts. If Israel doesn't abide by the rules of war, then we should hold them accountable. But what we are finding out now from additional intelligence sources is that it does appear as though this was not an Israeli strike; that it was probably a failed missile launch from Hamas.

Well, let the facts lead where they may, but here is what I do know: This congressional Member and others, before they can actually stand up to the Palestinian people—who I believe the majority of whom are good people who want to live free and live in democracy—they have to recognize that Hamas is evil, every single one of them. From their leadership down to their rank and files to the ones who flew the ultralights in to the people who came out of the tunnels and murdered over 1,200 people, they have to be held accountable. Their funder has to be held accountable. Their strategists in Iran have to be held accountable.

We in the United States have to stand by Israel and by freedom-loving Palestinians and freedom-loving members of the Middle East, but we cannot let this go. We cannot let this evil go unchecked.

We have to stand by Israel, and we have to make sure that we do everything we can to educate the American people on the facts and disabuse them of any notion that this congressional Member or anyone else has any place in communicating that misinformation to the American people and across the world. And the violence that can come from making people believe that, they have to own.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

ISRAEL

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President:

Today, our fellow citizens, our way of life, our very freedom came under attack in a series of deliberate and deadly terrorist acts . . . Thousands of lives were suddenly ended by evil, despicable acts of terror . . . These acts of mass murder were intended to frighten our Nation into chaos and retreat.

These were the words of former President George W. Bush speaking to the Nation on the evening of Sep-

tember 11, 2001. But they could have been repeated word for word by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the wake of the heinous terrorist attacks by Hamas that left more than 1,400 dead in Israel on October 7.

As Americans, we know the horror of living through the mass murder of our fellow citizens in a shocking terrorist attack; to be overcome with these intertwined feelings of insecurity and fear, fury, and grief; to be filled with the deep righteous desire for justice and retribution a need to reconcile the moral universe by making the perpetrators of these crimes pay a heavy price. And we know that, even as the impulse to avenge may subside, there remains a need to deter, to show your enemies that aggression against us will be met with overwhelming force.

Nine days after September 11, President Bush presented an ultimatum to Afghanistan's Taliban government:

[H]and over the terrorists, or . . . share in their fate.

The United States moved swiftly to mobilize the support of the international community and the overwhelming capabilities of the U.S. military to destroy al-Qaida and wrest control of Afghanistan from their Taliban hosts. It was a just mission. Neither America's security nor the moral order of the world could have been preserved if the Taliban remained in power, having made possible al-Qaida's training and planning to execute the September 11 attack. Americans rallied around the invasion of Afghanistan—so did the world.

In thinking back on those early days in the fall of 2001, America was looking for partners, not second-guessers or critics. We would not have taken kindly to lectures about how we should go about meting out justice or keeping our Nation safe. Either you were with us or you were against us. With 3,000 Americans dead, that was our mindset, and it was an entirely understandable one.

Israel must seek justice for the 1,400 of its citizens murdered by Hamas on October 7. Israel must bring to justice those who planned and executed the attacks, and it must seek to destroy Hamas as an armed group or, at the very least, destroy its capability to carry out terrorist violence against Israelis. Israel must defend itself, just like we had to do in 2001. This is the state's obligation to its people.

And I, for one, will be there to support Israel, just like our friends were there for us 20 years ago. And I, for one, am glad to see this body, the U.S. Senate, coming together—Republicans and Democrats, who fight over a lot of things—in our joint show of support for Israel's defense.

But here is what I also believe. I believe that part of the way that we support Israel is providing them with funding and with arms in order to destroy Hamas's military capabilities, but I also believe that we should be sharing the lessons that we learned