

water and fuel and medicine to the million or more people in Gaza who need essential supplies. That should be our focus. There are people now facing hunger, they are facing incredible desperation, and we cannot—cannot—turn our backs on them.

If you think this is going to be good for Israel, if you think that the suffering of the Palestinian people long term is good for Israel, I think you are sorely mistaken.

The world is looking at us, and the world understands that what Hamas did was terrible, but they don't want to see our great country turn its back on innocent women and children. That, in my view, is not what this country is about.

This is a tough issue. There have been four wars there in the last 15 years. It ain't going to be solved tomorrow. But while we do our best to support Israel and destroy Hamas, please, let us not turn our backs on the suffering people in Gaza.

This is not what we should be doing, not what Congress should be doing, and therefore I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. So I hoped my colleague would change his position if he just read what I said. The bill doesn't say that money can't go to Gaza; it says that no funds will be authorized for the territory of Gaza until the President certifies to Congress that these funds can be spent without benefiting terrorist organizations. I don't know how anybody can disagree with that. It says that no funds are authorized for expenditure in the territory of Gaza through any United Nations entity or office unless the President can certify that it is not encouraging or teaching anti-Israel and anti-Semitic ideas and propaganda.

So this doesn't say money can't go to Gaza and help Gazans. This bill says the President has to ensure that this isn't happening and rice bags are not being filled with bullets and we are not having the PLO give money to terrorists who killed American citizens or their families. That is all this says, is that the money cannot go for the benefit of Hamas. So if you disagree with what this says, then you are saying money can go to Hamas. I don't know how else you can disagree with it. This is so basic.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. The thing is that hundreds of thousands of women and children are living in desperation today. And nobody in the world can guarantee that a bottle of water may not go to somebody connected to Hamas. If you are insistent upon that, what you are really saying is, no money for Gaza.

So, with that, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Senators, I am going to ask that you direct your comments and questions to the Chair.

The Senator from Vermont, you were recognized. Thank you.

The Senator from Florida, you are now recognized.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Madam President, let us just remember, what we are talking about is, this is not against sending money to Gaza. It is saying we have—if we are going to send money, it cannot go for the benefit of individuals who murdered babies, raped teenage girls, and shot people in their sleep. I mean, I don't know how anybody can ever support giving money to Gaza when you know it is going to go to Hamas if you are not careful. And that is exactly what this administration said.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

#### BORDER SECURITY

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, I know that we are all watching what is happening with Israel and then also looking at how that affects our national security. And in doing this, one of the things we have paid attention to is what is happening at our southern border.

As you look at the numbers there, it really is quite frightening to see how people from all across the globe are coming to our southern border. Indeed, last year, we had individuals from 176 different countries that came to our southern border. Among this number, there were hundreds of gang members, there were thousands of convicted criminals, and there were individuals of interest—names of interest—that our Border Patrol watched, and, indeed, there were people on the Terrorist Watchlist.

Last year, in 2023—that is, our fiscal 2023—there were 151 apprehensions of individuals on the Terrorist Watchlist. Now, this number is really quite a dramatic increase. In 2022, there were 98 individuals on the Terrorist Watchlist who were apprehended at the southern border. In 2021, there were 15. And in 2019, there were zero—not a one.

Now, as you look at these numbers and as you look at what is happening here, it is natural to think: What has caused this uptick in terrorists that are coming to our border? If you are going to be honest about these numbers, what you would have to do is say: OK, what has changed from 2019 to 2021 and 2022 and 2023? And in a sane world—which maybe this is not a sane world right now—it would lead you to look at this administration's border policies: the ease with which people can come to the border, raise their hands, and claim asylum; the way the cartels have expanded around the globe as global businesses, indeed, moving human trafficking from having been a \$500 million-a-year business in 2019 to today, this year, \$150 billion—“billion”

with a B. Those are the numbers that we are dealing with.

And for terrorists who want to get in this country—and I would say it is not

a stretch to think they are coming here to do us harm—maybe they are saying: It is the easiest way. You can claim asylum. You can grab a child and say you are bringing your child to America for a better life.

But the numbers are not my numbers. They are not Republican numbers. They are not Senate numbers. These are the numbers that come from the Department of Homeland Security. This is what they have logged.

Now, the other thing that we have to look at is that in fiscal year 2022, DHS reported that 2.4 million individuals tried to force their way across the southern border. And, indeed, we have to say that. And, in that, we also have an additional 600,000 “got-aways.” Those are the ones who can be seen on surveillance but they can't get to.

Those are pretty hefty numbers, and those are the 2022 numbers. In 2023, the numbers are even above that. It is impossible to control an influx of this magnitude, which means it is also impossible for us to control the collective threat that this poses to our country. Because, in those “got-aways,” how many are terrorists? How many are gang members? How many are drug traffickers? How many are sex traffickers? How many of those “got-aways” are coming to inflict harm on our cities, our towns, our communities, and our citizens?

Now, what has concerned me and what concerns so many Tennesseans—and I hear it regularly—last night, I did a cell phone townhall, which I enjoy doing and hearing firsthand from Tennesseans, spending an hour taking questions, answering their questions. And what really bothers so many of them is our President and his administration's unwillingness to acknowledge the very existence of the threats that that open border brings to us. It jeopardizes our safety and our security and, I would say, even the security of our allies.

We have got a lot of adversaries in this world. We all know that. When you look at Russia, China, Iran, North Korea, we know we have got adversaries. You look at what is happening with Hamas in Israel, in those horrific attacks there. And we can say our adversaries may be sadistic, but they are not stupid. They know the border is open.

They know that we are practicing—this administration is practicing—a foreign policy of appeasement. And maybe that is the reason that even this month what you saw was 2,000 Chinese, 100 Russians, 35 Pakistanis, and 30 Iranians coming to our southern border; coming in the country illegally; coming, saying they are claiming asylum.

Does this make us safer? No, it doesn't, when you do not know who is coming into this country and their intent.

Now, Hamas has noted the confusion in our foreign policy and the lack of clarity. They saw it when President Biden withdrew troops from the

CENTCOM area. They saw it. So what we did when we withdrew those troops was, effectively, to leave Israel surrounded by their worst enemies.

They have also noted Biden's record of appeasing hostile regimes. When Biden chose not to enforce—and this is important to note—this administration, this National Security Director, this President chose not to enforce oil sanctions against Iran. They did this knowing this would end up benefiting Hamas, Hezbollah, and the terrorist groups that are the proxies for Iran.

The President also knew that \$6 billion in a ransom payment would free up even more money for terrorist groups, more money for Hamas, more money for Hezbollah. That is the hallmark of this administration: looking the other way, appeasing Iran, and doing it at cost to the American people. Since 2021, President Biden has funneled \$730 million to the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees.

Now, this agency, which has been around for decades, what they have become is a ferociously anti-Semitic organization that has a long history of employing people that—guess what—they are associated with Hamas. And Hamas has a history of stealing money from this agency and using the agency's facilities to store weapons.

Now, does that sound like humanitarian aid? Does that sound like money going to the purpose for which it was given? Of course not. And that is why, in 2018, President Trump halted the funding to the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees.

Well, President Biden comes in and guess what he does. He turned that spigot back on, running wide open, even though he knew it was pretty much as good as writing a check to Hamas, a terrorist organization. And, by the way, we declared and recognized Hamas as a terrorist organization. We as a country did this in 1997.

So, you know, there are things we can do. And I have introduced legislation to halt funding to the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees until Iran is expelled from the U.N. and until we investigate their crimes—what they are doing with this money, how it leads to death and destruction—because they are giving it to these terrorist organizations.

Iran gives Hamas about \$100 million a year—\$100 million. They also provide them with the weapons and armor and ammo and with supplies and training. We also know that Hamas has grabbed aid this week for State kits, medical supplies, food. It is not going to the people, the Palestinians; it is going to Hamas for their efforts.

Now, in the first 2 weeks of fiscal year 2024, Border Patrol captured 30 Iranians, as I said a few minutes ago. Now, they were trying to come across the southern border; two of them, Terrorist Watchlist. Now, this is this month. This is in the last couple of weeks. And we have gotten reports of

at least two more Iranians on that Terrorist Watchlist that have tried to come in.

So since last Monday alone—Monday a week ago—we have had 19 Iranians and 17 Syrians that tried to sneak into this country over the southern border.

So I would just ask my colleagues, my Democratic colleagues: Why do you think the terrorists—why do you think these people feel so emboldened? Whether it is the Iranians, the Pakistanis, the Russians, the Chinese, why are they flooding to our border to gain illegal entry into our country to evade our immigration laws, to fly under the cloak of darkness and get in here on U.S. soil? Why are they emboldened? Does this not worry you? Does this not cause you to say it is an imperative that we secure this border?

You know, right now, as we have looked at what is happening around the globe and, specifically, as we look at what has happened in Israel, you have got 1,400 Israelis who are dead; you have got 31 Americans who are dead; you have got individuals from dozens of other countries around the globe who are dead, who are injured, who have been taken hostage and have faced a horrific circumstance. We cannot let this pattern of neglect continue in our country. We cannot continue to make our Nation and our citizens vulnerable. We cannot let attacks happen on our soil. It is time that we close that southern border.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—  
S. RES. 413

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, I want to read here, briefly, from the law of the United States of America. This is the existing law; I am not trying to pass a law today. And it says: section 212(a)(3)(B), subsection—I am not going to read the whole number. The law of the United States Immigration and Nationality Act mandates that you are ineligible to enter into the United States if you endorse or espouse terrorist activity or persuade others to endorse or espouse terrorist activity or support a terrorist organization.

What that basically means is, if you are a supporter of a terrorist group or you encourage others to support the actions of a terrorist group—a designated terrorist group—the statute defines what that is, you are not supposed to get a visa.

And so it is reasonable to conclude that if you are already in the country—understand what I am talking about, I am not talking about American citizens; I am talking about someone who is a foreign national and that person is in the United States on a visa and that person is out there defending or encouraging others to defend and take the side of a terrorist organization, like, for example, Hamas or maybe Hezbollah or somebody else—if they

are not supposed to have a visa to come into the country, once they are already here, if they do that, they should lose that visa. That is applying existing law.

And so what I am going to come here on the floor and try to do today is pass something that I, frankly, thought was common sense, doesn't go any further than this, that basically urges—it is not even a new law. It is in the resolution. It basically says the Senate is asking the Biden administration, if they come across anyone who is here—a foreign national on a visa who supports Hamas—that that person's visa should be canceled, and they should be removed from the country through the proceedings involving removal.

That is what this resolution does. It, obviously, does things like condemns anti-Semitism and condemns the horrible attack from Hamas. But all it basically says is if you are a foreign national in the United States, you are here on a visa as a visitor and you support Hamas or you encourage others to support Hamas, you should lose your visa and you should be gone. That is what I hope to be able to do here today.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to consideration of S. Res. 413, which is at the desk; further, that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. WELCH. Madam President, reserving the right to object, I want to make it very clear that there are 100 Members of the U.S. Senate who absolutely condemn the brutal attack by Hamas on innocent Israeli citizens; that absolutely condemn the kidnapping of Israeli citizens and some Americans; who absolutely condemn the vicious “kill Jews” philosophy of Hamas. And all of us have an opportunity—which I think all of us are going to take—to stand by Israel when it comes to going after Hamas.

I hope all of us are also going to do everything we can to encourage that every precaution that can be taken to protect innocent Palestinians be taken because they, too, have been kidnapped by Hamas, who cynically use them as human shields.

But I read the resolution of my colleague from Florida. This is not about enforcing the existing law. This is about compromising a constitutional right that Americans have enjoyed since the inception of our country. It is the First Amendment.

And it may be something that people in this body may object to, but when a person is in the United States, they enjoy the protections of our magnificent founding document to be free from unlawful searches and seizures and, certainly, to be able to say things that we may find repugnant. There have been many things that have been said that are repugnant.