

days ago, President Obama used the same breath to express his horror at both Hamas violence and a supposed Israeli “occupation” of Gaza. In reality, the only force that has occupied Gaza since 2007 is Hamas, not Israel.

The former President also said “all of us are complicit to some degree.” That is simply false. Responsibility lies with the terrorists.

So perhaps President Obama has forgotten the bloody campaign to defeat ISIS over which he presided or the destruction of cities like Mosul and Raqqa in pursuit of medieval Islamic tyrants who terrorized innocent civilians.

I don’t recall President Obama doubting the righteousness of American efforts to support local partners in rooting out terrorists in Iraq and Syria. Where is that moral clarity in the face of Hamas?

Unfortunately, that brings me to the growing number of many of our Senate colleagues who have called for a ceasefire in today’s terrorist war. I would remind our colleagues that Israel had negotiated a ceasefire with Hamas over the summer, and we all saw where that led on October 7. Returning to any such arrangement right now would be amnesty for these butchers—the butchers of innocent Israelis and Gazans alike.

Once again, let’s remember who the aggressor is. Hamas is blocking citizens from leaving Gaza City. Hamas has intentionally put its weapons caches inside schools, hospitals, and mosques, and its firing positions in the midst of civilian populations. Hamas has poured countless billions of dollars in humanitarian assistance into its terror tunnels.

These people are not freedom fighters. They do not want peaceful coexistence. They are savages—savages—cut from the same cloth as ISIS and al-Qaida. There is no room for moral equivalency. The distinction between good and evil here is blindingly obvious.

Fortunately, some do recognize this. The Vice Chancellor of Germany, a member of his country’s Green Party, didn’t have any trouble finding the moral clarity this moment requires. In an address to the nation last week, he said:

Hamas does not want reconciliation with Israel, but the extermination of Israel. And this is why it is pivotal to make it clear that Israel’s right to exist must not be relativized. Israel’s security is our obligation.

American politicians who cannot bring themselves to acknowledge the same should really be ashamed of themselves.

This weekend marked 44 years since Iranian revolutionaries overran the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and took 66 Americans hostage. Today, Americans are once again held hostage by forces aligned with Iranian tyranny. Many more Israelis are held alongside them, and Israel deserves the time and space and support it needs to bring these terrorist captors to justice.

In the days immediately following October 7, I warned that President Biden would be pressured to withhold this support, and that familiar and morally bankrupt calls for ceasefire would threaten Israel’s ability to see its defensive operations through. And so here we are, nearly a month later, watching the movement to grant Hamas amnesty reach the highest levels of our government.

War is a bloody business. That is the reality Israel faces. We should be careful before second-guessing their efforts to get innocent Israelis—and Americans—home safely and to destroy Hamas’s ability to wage war.

CRIME

Madam President, on another matter, while the United States and our allies face terrorist and authoritarian violence abroad, the American people continue to face waves of unchecked violence here at home.

Just last month, a member of our colleague Senator BRITT’s staff was robbed at gunpoint right outside of her apartment building. Thankfully, this young woman was not injured.

But stories like hers have become all too common in our Nation’s Capital. According to Washington Metropolitan Police, robbery in the city has increased by 70 percent this year—70 percent. Motor vehicle theft is up 101 percent.

And, in the midst of rising violent crime, a particularly alarming spate of anti-Semitic violence has come to a head in the wake of October 7. In New York City, authorities have recorded 66 anti-Semitic hate crimes in just the last month.

On October 14, exactly 1 week after Hamas’s deadly attack, a 29-year-old woman was beaten on the subway in Manhattan. The attacker reportedly told the victim that the reason for his attack was because “you are Jewish.”

A Jewish deli in the city was vandalized with multiple images of the swastika symbol.

And, of course, murderous threats against Jewish students at Cornell University have prompted an FBI investigation.

In just the first 2 weeks after October 7, the threat of anti-Semitic violence against American Jews nearly quadrupled. The American left has gone out of its way to downplay the threats they face with everything from “both sides” statements to outright incitement.

All Americans deserve to feel safe in their homes and in their communities. It is long past time for Democrats to take the historic waves of violence in America seriously.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The senior Senator from Illinois.

UKRAINE

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, 7 weeks ago, on September 21, the U.S. Senate, on a bipartisan basis, gathered with Ukrainian President Zelenskyy in the Old Senate Chamber. We don’t often use that Chamber. It is often used for incidents that become embed-

ded in history, and this was one of them. It was a historic moment.

Many things were said about the courage of the Ukrainian people and the heroism of the troops fighting Russian President Vladimir Putin’s unjust war, but I recall one particular plea made by President Zelenskyy—and he repeated it. So it was clear he wanted us to remember. I will stress here what he said:

Without the continued financial support of the United States and NATO, we will lose this war.

He was unequivocal.

Secretary of Defense Austin told me clearly at last week’s Senate Appropriations Committee hearing that he agreed with Zelenskyy.

Secretary of State Blinken added that such assistance is critical in thwarting not just Putin but aggressors around the world who are watching and gauging our sustained commitment.

I agree completely. Looking at the world today, I do not believe it is a stretch to say that freedom is currently under siege and fighting for its future. Right now, several democracies across the globe are fighting against tyrannical powers—in some cases, autocratic governments; in others, terrorist organizations—that seek to undermine the global order. But this much is clear: Democratic values are under siege, and the United States and our generation have a responsibility to act.

Two weeks ago, President Biden requested \$106 billion in supplemental funding for national security. This includes money to help supply Ukraine with weapons to continue its valiant fight against Russian aggression. It includes money to help Israel defend itself against Hamas, which, on October 7, perpetrated the largest attack against Jewish people than on any single day since the Holocaust. And, importantly, it also includes billions of dollars to support humanitarian needs across those conflict zones around the world, including the crisis in Gaza, because, as important as it is to support nations like Ukraine in their struggle against tyranny, it is equally as important to support innocent citizens who so often become collateral damage and bear the brunt of suffering during periods of conflict.

At the Appropriations Committee hearing last week, Secretaries Blinken and Austin underscored the necessity of this funding request. They made clear that it is critical to deliver the urgent national security priorities as laid out in the President’s request.

These challenges facing the world are interrelated. So it is important that we deliver aid in one unified package that speaks to America’s values abroad.

I asked Secretaries Blinken and Austin about the recent visit by the terrorist organization Hamas leadership to—believe it or not—Putin in Moscow. Secretary Blinken was blunt: Putin is allied with any effort that may distract the United States from the war in

Ukraine or that undermines democracy and the rule of law.

The Secretary added that other malign actors are watching closely to assess America's reaction and resolve. That is why one comprehensive supplemental that can address all of these interconnected global needs is the only way forward.

When asked about the United States' role in the world, President Biden explained that we have not only the financial responsibility but the moral responsibility to support democracies worldwide.

I agree. Right now, the global community faces profound challenges, the outcomes of which will reverberate to every corner of the world for decades to come. As a global superpower, America has an essential role to play in defending freedom. It is not only the right thing to do; it is the smart thing to do.

Last week, the House provided a Republican-led plan to provide billions of dollars only to Israel, tragically ignoring this call for leadership.

Madam President, I just challenge everyone to take a look at how Republicans put together this package—even this package of aid to Israel. The House bill would cynically cut funding from the Internal Revenue Service that is being used to help auditors catch wealthy tax cheaters in America. The House Speaker wants to cut that.

The Presiding Officer and I represent thousands of Illinoisans, good families who know their tax obligations. They are not happy about them, but they face them and deal with them honestly. Only a handful of people are misusing their power and money to avoid tax responsibility. We need to stop that. They need to pay their fair share of taxes, particularly the wealthy among us.

So how does the House Republican leadership pay for aid to Israel? It eliminates auditors from the Internal Revenue Service who are trying to catch these tax cheaters.

What are they thinking?

Incidentally, that means that the auditors are not recovering the money for our Treasury that is owed to it, and they add to the deficit. This bunch of fiscal hawks, given the chance for a first real act of the new Speaker, decide to find a way to avoid holding tax cheaters responsible and adding to the national deficit. They need some work over there. That bill is a nonstarter that Putin must be enjoying.

Protecting our national security interests and defending American values will take a bipartisan effort, not political games. As such, I urge my colleagues to swiftly pass this funding package and help reassure the global community, as long as there is a United States of America, we will be standing for freedom across the world.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNIZING THE DEAN WELSH VFW AUXILIARY POST 4370

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, this week is the week that we honor veterans, on what we call Veterans Day, so in honor of Veterans Day, I would like to spotlight one Iowa community's exemplary support of our veterans and Active-Duty military.

This is a town of 2,000—Britt, IA—in North Central Iowa. This year, Britt's Dean Welsh VFW Auxiliary Post 4370 received the Veterans and Family Support Award. This annual award from the national VFW recognizes select local auxiliaries for their exceptional work for our servicemembers.

This community's now-far-reaching efforts started with a phone call. A volunteer with the Britt VFW auxiliary was talking to her granddaughter, who was serving on the USS *Oscar Austin*. She mentioned that some of her fellow crew members hadn't received care packages. Within 1 week, Britt residents shipped 39 packages to that crew of the USS *Oscar Austin*.

That was 11 years ago. Now, a decade later, the Britt VFW is sending care packages to crew members on the USS *Fitzgerald*, USS *John McCain*, USS *Chafee*, and Iowa National Guard units deployed to Kuwait and to Poland. They are also preparing to send packages to the USS *Carl Vinson*. Volunteers fill these packages with various items, including beaded American flag key chains that they make by hand. Britt VFW members gift thousands of their key chains to veterans they cross paths with throughout the year, whether at community events or even in their daily lives.

Britt VFW's example should be a reminder to all of us of the importance of honoring our veterans and servicemembers, and we will be doing that this weekend.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ISRAEL

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, today, the United States is facing perhaps the greatest range of security threats both here at home and abroad that we have seen in a long time. Here at home, of course, our southern border has become a major security liability that is being exploited by terrorists, drug traffickers, and, of course, human smugglers. In the Middle East, our close ally Israel is defending its right to exist following a brutal and

unprovoked attack by the terrorist group Hamas. In Europe, Ukraine continues to defend itself in the wake of Russia's unprovoked invasion, which was nearly 2 years ago. In the Indo-Pacific, China's aggressive, belligerent behavior has threatened the stability of the entire region and the future of Taiwan. So there is a lot at stake, and the eyes of the world are firmly on the United States of America.

You know, I know sometimes people say: Well, we don't want the United States to be the world's policeman. And certainly that is true. But the fact is that there is no other nation that can actually lead the democracies in the world to a greater path of security and safety. We know that when the United States does not lead, then that is perceived as a sign of weakness and a lack of resolution, and that, I think, has contributed to where we find ourselves today with this tremendous array of diverse threats.

So there is a lot at stake, and the eyes of the world are on the United States. Terrorists and dictators, from Kim Jong Un to President Xi in China, to Vladimir Putin, to the Supreme Leader in Iran—all of them are watching to see how the United States responds when our friends and our allies become victims of authoritarian aggression. Will we brush these conflicts aside as meaningless, regional quarrels or will we lock arms with our friends and allies and commit to defeating evil in all its forms?

I am glad that the overwhelming consensus in Congress is that the only possible option is to respond with strength. Last week, the House of Representatives passed a bill to strengthen America's support for Israel while cutting wasteful government spending. That legislation provided \$14.3 billion in aid to Israel.

I am disappointed that President Biden, first thing out of the chute, threatened to veto the bill. Senator SCHUMER went so far as to call it a joke. So \$14.3 billion for Israel while it is under perhaps an existential threat by Iran and its proxies, and the majority leader of the U.S. Senate calls that \$14.3 billion a joke? I don't think there is anything funny about the strong desire that most of us have to support our ally while protecting the long-term financial health of our country.

The Nation's debt has skyrocketed over the last few years and now exceeds \$33.6 trillion. The interest on that debt alone will cost American taxpayers more than \$677 billion this year alone. Increasingly, we are seeing the amount of money we have to pay to the bondholders that own our debt creep up to approach the amount of spending we provide for the Department of Defense. And we know this is going to get worse and worse until it gets better. Congress simply cannot continue to spend and spend with no regard for the consequences.

Years ago, Admiral Mullen, who was Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff,