

year. I am glad there was no appetite in the Capitol for saddling the Nation with a harmful and unnecessary government shutdown.

The short-term funding legislation produced by the Speaker of the House was an important step toward fulfilling Congress's responsibility to pass full-year appropriations, and work continues toward restoring the sort of regular order appropriations process that Senators on both sides of the aisle have set as our goal.

But the Senate convenes today with some extremely important outstanding business that we need to address this year. In a few short weeks, we need to deliver on several urgent national security priorities. For starters, a number of our colleagues are hard at work on the conference report of the National Defense Authorization Act. This is Congress's primary opportunity to shape America's national security priorities and set the course of strategic competition with major adversaries.

We need to empower our Armed Forces with a clear directive for the many challenges they face. We need to prepare them to deter and fight future wars, not drag them into political culture wars. We need to focus our military on geopolitics, not climate politics.

But at this especially dangerous moment, we also need to deliver supplemental resources to help both America and our partners defend against linked threats from our biggest adversaries: Russia, Iran, and China.

Make no mistake, the PRC is not deterred. Beijing didn't take a Thanksgiving break from its historic military buildup, its threats to the freedom of navigation in international waters, or its efforts to meddle in Taiwan's domestic politics.

Russia is not deterred. Putin hasn't eased off on his brutal conquest of Ukraine.

Iran is not deterred. The world's top state sponsor of terrorism has continued to underwrite an alarming surge in attacks on U.S. personnel in Iraq and Syria since the barbaric attacks of October 7.

Hamas is not deterred. Even during a temporary pause in fighting, terrorists are clearly determined, with Iran's help, to wipe Israel off the map "from the river to the sea."

America needs to stand with our friends and stand up to our aggressors, and Senate Republicans have been working for weeks to ensure that supplemental legislation includes robust investments in the hard power and defense industrial capacity we need to confront them head-on.

But on this side of the aisle, we also recognize that national security begins here at home. Last month's total southern border encounters marked the busiest October in decades of CBP records, and the harsh reality of the Biden administration's border crisis continues to impact millions of Americans in cities across the country.

So I am thankful that Senator LANKFORD, Senator GRAHAM, and Senator COTTON have been working diligently to produce legislation to address this crisis head-on. Senate Republicans have been laser-focused on actually fixing our broken asylum process, not just pouring more money into a system that is simply not working, and our Democratic colleagues would do well to take these efforts seriously.

The bottom line is simple: We don't have the luxury of addressing glaring threats to our national security one at a time. Crises don't solve themselves just because Washington can't muster the political will to address them.

Unfortunately, Senate Democrats have already suggested they want to condition urgent resources for one of our top security priorities on not addressing another one. Apparently, our colleagues are considering putting support for Israel on the chopping block unless we promise not to fix the border crisis they helped to create.

So, Madam President, this sort of cynical, shortsighted politics has denied the American people real border security too many times. The challenges facing America are connected, and the time to address them—each of them—is now.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant executive clerk read the nomination of Jeffrey M. Bryan, of Minnesota, to be United States District Judge for the District of Minnesota.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois.

THANKSGIVING

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I am going to follow the lead of the Democratic leader, who noted what he did last week.

I was fortunate enough to be part of a family reunion of the Durbin family, honoring my sister-in-law Lorraine on her 90th birthday. She is a wonderful person and a mother of 10—9 boys and 1 girl.

We all gathered to enjoy Thanksgiving, the inevitable birthdays during that period of time, as well as anniversaries—63 Durbins. Somehow, America survived. We all came together for a wonderful week. They are wonderful people. I am so happy to be part of the family and to give honor to my sister-in-law Lorraine.

I would just say that, when it comes to the rewards of life, there is hardly anything that can match a loving family, and I have that.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Madam President, secondly, I would like to say, in response to Senator MCCONNELL, yes, we need to come together on a bipartisan basis to not only deal with bringing order to the border but, also, the issue of immigration. If we are going to hold up assistance to Israel and Ukraine until we try to solve the intractable problems and challenges that we have faced for over 30 years—because that is the last time we passed immigration reform—that is an unreasonable burden.

We can do things together so long as there are people of good will at the table of both political parties, but to say we are going to hold back military assistance from Ukraine and Israel until something is accomplished which we have sought to do for over 30 years may not be realistic. Let's be honest about it.

We want to make sure that the people that we support, our allies and those we have fought beside, will have the resources they need to be successful. We want to stop Vladimir Putin. We want to stop the terrorists who attacked Israel on October 7. Let's not create political hurdles of our own making and make that next to impossible.

ISRAEL

Madam President, over the recess, we saw some hopeful steps in the violence in Israel and Gaza. After more than 6 weeks of what must have been unimaginable horror, nearly 40 hostages were released by Hamas, with another 10 or so still, hopefully, to be released even today. These innocents should never have been taken in the first place, and it is long overdue that any still being held are released. This includes a young man with ties to our State named Hersh Goldberg-Polin, who was horribly injured during the October 7 terrorist attack by Hamas and subsequently taken hostage. I have spoken to his family, and I know you have as well. It is heartbreaking to think what they are going through.

The agreement to release some of the hostages included a pause in fighting to allow for desperately needed humanitarian supplies to help innocent Palestinian civilians. We must remind ourselves that it is the Hamas terrorism we want to eradicate. Unfortunately, thousands of Palestinian people are being caught in the crossfire.

I hope we can build upon this deal to negotiate the release of the remaining hostages and bring an end to the violence in a way that removes Hamas from power, allows the rebuilding of Gaza, and provides real progress toward a viable two-state solution.

A two-state solution will require political leadership and courage from all parties. I was really pleased to read President Biden's clear thinking on this in the Washington Post recently. He wrote:

This much is clear: A two-state solution is the only way to ensure the long-term security of both the Israeli and Palestinian people. Though right now it may seem like that future has never been further away, this crisis has made it more imperative than ever.

The President gets it. It isn't just a military victory that will bring peace to the Middle East; it is a final resolution of a battle which has gone on for decades.

In the meantime, I also want to call on both sides to take another step in protecting innocent civilians—in this case, the reopening and operation of key Gaza hospitals under the supervision of a credible, neutral third party.

Some of you may have heard me speak a few weeks ago about what Chicago area volunteer doctors—also the Presiding Officer's friend—described as conditions in these besieged hospitals: amputations of the limbs of children without anesthesia, relying only on Tylenol for pain relief, and using vinegar instead of disinfectants to clean and heal wounds. Those are the desperate situations those hospitals have reached. Needs have only grown since I made that speech, with dozens of premature babies recently evacuated to Egypt for lifesaving care. All of this was, of course, complicated by Hamas's depraved use of hospitals to mask its activities.

Let's be clear. Innocent Palestinians are also hostage to Hamas, whose members clearly don't care about those people in Gaza. But with the securing of these critical medical facilities, it is now time for both sides to agree to do something that seems so obvious, I dare not state it, but I will: Hospitals should be off limit to fighting. That is the only way they can be able to effectively function again. A neutral third party, such as the United Nations, could monitor these hospitals to ensure that they are only used to treat patients and that supplies go only and directly toward medical care.

The other week, several Senators had a call with doctors involved in the humanitarian response in Gaza. The Senator presiding was one of the sponsors. They reminded us not only of the dire medical needs of those injured in the fighting but also the ongoing and future medical needs, including hundreds of upcoming births, that demand functioning hospitals.

In the days ahead, I am going to reach out to U.N. Secretary General Guterres about implementing the idea of neutral third parties guaranteeing the integrity of the hospitals that still remain.

This leads me to the President's emergency supplemental request. I was glad that Congress avoided another manufactured government shutdown crisis just days before Thanksgiving. I could not help but think of how history will judge this Congress, which has distinguished itself with bandaid budgets keeping our lurching economy at bay and not helping us move forward on

critical issues that American families really care about.

Why don't we do something about the cost of prescription drugs? Why don't we deal with the banning of assault weapons, which the overwhelming majority of Americans support? We could do things that would make the streets safe and people safer in their homes and make life more enjoyable and affordable, but instead we lurch from one manufactured political crisis to the next. It is time for us to act like Senators instead of political squabbling.

But that does not end our responsibility to deal with national security and humanitarian needs in Israel and Gaza to Ukraine. After all, where did Hamas leaders turn up shortly after their despicable attack on Israel on October 7? You guessed it—sitting down with Vladimir Putin in Moscow. What nation helped supply weapons and training to Hamas? What nation is helping Russia with weapons to fight in Ukraine? Iran. Who hopes distractions and divisions over the Middle East distract the West from the war in Ukraine? Vladimir Putin.

A few months ago, Ukrainian President Zelenskyy, in the Senate Chamber just a few steps away from this Chamber, starkly told the Senators of both parties who gathered that if the United States stops its aid to Ukraine, Russia will win the war. He said it not once but twice to make it clear.

If Russia wins in Ukraine, it would be naive to think they will stop there. The costs to the United States in repelling further Russian aggression will only continue to multiply.

The other day, I was reflecting on a walk I took in Maidan Square in Kyiv with the late Senator John McCain in 2014, with a visiting congressional delegation. McCain led a bipartisan delegation there just after Russia seized Crimea.

After Kyiv, we were supposed to go to Donetsk in Eastern Europe, but we had to cancel, as Russia was already destabilizing the region in preparation for its land grabs.

John McCain and our delegation walked somberly in Maidan Square in Kyiv, through the makeshift shrines to those who lost their lives fighting for democracy, the freedom movement that so threatened Putin.

I cannot help but wonder what John McCain would say today—or Ronald Reagan, who called the Soviet Union an "evil empire"—as many in their party in Congress hesitate to stand up to Putin and advance American security interests.

Let's not make a mistake that could cost the world and generations in the future by not advancing this critical supplemental funding request before the end of this calendar year.

I urge my colleagues to support President Biden's national security supplemental request to aid Ukraine, Israel, the Indo-Pacific, and humanitarian crises around the globe, including Gaza.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Texas.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I confess, it was great to be back home last week for Thanksgiving in Texas. Like so many other families, I got together with my family and enjoyed that time together. But now we are back here in the Nation's Capital with a lot of work to do.

The end of the year is always a busy time here in Congress, and this year is no exception even though the usual appropriations process has been kicked over to January 19. Because the majority leader has not scheduled earlier votes either on the Israel aid, which was passed by the House some weeks ago and has been sitting here in the Senate with no action—the majority leader has announced his intention to put a \$106 billion package benefiting Ukraine, Israel, and also the Indo-Pacific.

For the record, I support the efforts to make sure the brave Ukrainians can continue to fight and defend their country against the invasion of Putin's Russia. I certainly support Israel's right to defend itself against Hamas terrorists, a proxy for the No. 1 international state sponsor of terrorism—Iran. Of course I support our efforts to deter President Xi from doing what he said he intends to do, which is to take Taiwan one way or the other at a time of his choosing.

Well, fortunately, we aren't staring down the barrel of a spending deadline, so there are no threats of a government shutdown, but we do have these very important issues to attend to.

First, Congress needs to do something that we have done for 62 consecutive years, and that is, finally pass the National Defense Authorization Act.

Just before Thanksgiving, the Senate finally voted to begin that formal conference process to work out the differences between the House and the Senate. Our colleagues on both sides of the Capitol are now hard at work trying to iron out that agreement so we can pass a strong National Defense Authorization Act and send it to the President for his signature.

I started off my remarks talking about the challenges we face and our allies face around the world. Nothing would be more disappointing to us but more emboldening to our adversaries than our failure to deal with this necessary task, which, as I said, we have done for 62 years previous.

The second thing we need to do is to address the supplemental funding bill the President has proposed.

Again, I am a little mystified why the majority leader decided not to take up the Israel funding that was passed several weeks ago. I understand he doesn't like the pay-for the House has proposed, but I think one logical thing to do would be to propose a different pay-for and to put it on the Senate floor so we can talk about it, vote on