

Now, the Senate's supplemental package remains on hold because our Republican colleagues have insisted that they need an immigration proposal to pass. While immigration is important, it is a separate issue from foreign aid to Ukraine and Israel and humanitarian aid to Gaza and the Indo-Pacific. It is a difficult issue we have debated and never come to a conclusion on for decades. It is extraneous to this debate.

Some of our Republican leaders say: Well, that is what the public wants.

Yes, the public wants border, but it is unrelated to Ukraine. Our Republican friends are saying they will defend democracy only at a price unacceptable to Democrats, and the price is forcing Congress to accept radical immigration policies that come straight from Donald Trump.

One Republican Senator said yesterday—listen to this. He said:

This is not a traditional negotiation, where we expect to come up with a bipartisan compromise on the border. This is a price that has to be paid in order to get the supplemental.

No compromise—why are we sitting down and talking if there is never going to be a compromise? What that Republican Senator said, Mr. President, is the textbook definition of hostage-taking.

I want to be clear. First, Democrats want to deal with the problems of immigration and the border. We have been trying for years. But—I also want to be clear—if Republicans had not brought up immigration, an important but separate and partisan issue that has been debated for decades, Ukraine funding would not be in danger right now.

This mess was created entirely by hard-right Republicans, and, alarmingly, Republican leadership has gotten behind them. And most of those hard-right Republicans who say we must have border don't want to vote for aid for Ukraine, in any case.

If funding for Ukraine fails, it will not be a bipartisan failure. It will be a failure solely caused by the Republican Party and the Republican leadership because it was a decision of that Republican leadership, pushed by the hard right, many of whom want Ukraine to fail, to make border a precondition to supporting Ukraine.

Let me say that again because the logic is perfectly clear and irrefutable. If funding for Ukraine fails, the failure will solely be on the Republican Party because it was the decision of the Republican leadership, pushed by the hard right, many of whom want Ukraine to fail, to make border a precondition to supporting Ukraine.

Now, even though we warned Republicans about the dangers of injecting partisan border issues which threaten to derail aid to Ukraine, we sat down at the negotiating table in good faith. We said from the get-go we would be willing to compromise. Everyone would like to come to a compromise on bor-

der—a bipartisan compromise, a real compromise, not one side demanding everything, as that one Republican Senator said.

For 3 weeks, Democrats have tried to be reasonable with our Republican colleagues to see if we can find some common ground on immigration. Some days, these negotiations look promising. We have been more than willing to show compromise. But, sadly, each time we try to meet Republicans at the middle, they have been moving the goalposts back, proposing nasty policies like indefinite detention for asylum seekers and sweeping powers to shut down our entire immigration system, which has been a hallmark of America for centuries.

After Speaker JOHNSON said last week that only policies along the lines of H.R. 2 can make it through the House, Republican negotiators here in the Senate gave up even pretending to show compromise. That is why the negotiations broke off Friday night. Republicans pulled the goalposts way back and proposed many items plucked directly from H.R. 2 or very similar to it—the same H.R. 2 that got not a single Democratic vote here in the Senate, the same H.R. 2 that couldn't even pass on the House floor, when it is attached to Ukraine, because it needs Democratic votes to pass it because 30 Republican Congressmen won't vote for any Ukraine aid. So despite Democrats' best efforts, negotiations have been going in circles.

Look, we want to find a way to solve immigration with our Republican colleagues. We know this is an important issue. We have many Members who represent border States and border communities. But if Republicans are holding up aid to Ukraine because they want us to work with them on border, the onus is on them to present to us a realistic, bipartisan proposal that can actually pass the Senate, with aid to Ukraine as well. And we need a bipartisan proposal that can get the broad support of Democrats, not just one or two while the rest of us are strongly in opposition.

Again, if Republicans want to bring up immigration right now, right in the middle of trying to pass aid to Ukraine and other issues, the onus is on them to present serious bipartisan proposals that can get broad support from Democrats, not just one or two Democrats. And if Republicans are unable to produce a broadly bipartisan immigration proposal, they should not block aid to Ukraine in response.

They should not be resorting to hostage-taking, as the Senator from Texas seems to be admitting. That would be madness—utter madness. It would be an insult to our Ukrainian friends, who are fighting for their lives against Russian autocracy, and it could go down as a major turning point where the West didn't live up to its responsibilities and things turned away from our democracies and our values and toward autocracy.

Ronald Reagan would be rolling in his grave—rolling in his grave—if he saw his own party let Vladimir Putin roll through Europe.

So, once again, I urge my Republican colleagues to think carefully about what is at stake with this week's vote. What we do now will reverberate across the world for years and decades to come, and history—history—will render harsh judgment on those who abandon democracy for Donald Trump's extreme immigration policies.

ASSAULT WEAPONS

Mr. President, now, on the assault weapons ban UC, tomorrow, I will come to the Senate floor with my Democratic colleagues to ask unanimous consent to pass the assault weapons ban.

If Republicans do not object to our unanimous consent request to pass the ban, the Senate can then pass a tried-and-true measure to reduce mass shootings and gun deaths in America.

When I led the fight for the assault weapons ban in 1994 in the House—along with our late colleague, Senator Feinstein, who led the charge in the Senate—it passed with bipartisan support because both sides recognized the need to rid our streets of these weapons of war.

After the ban went into effect, the numbers proved the obvious: Banning deadly assault weapons saves lives, plain and simple. The number of deaths from mass shootings and gun incidents both fell after the ban took effect.

Today, a decade after the expiration of the assault weapons ban, gun violence is running rampant in America. Families can no longer enjoy a night at the bowling alley or go out to dinner without fear of a gunman with an assault rifle. People can no longer stop by the bank in the morning or spend a Saturday at the shopping mall without that thought in their heads that maybe there is some gunman out there with an assault rifle.

That is why Democrats will come to the floor tomorrow to try and pass the Assault Weapons Ban and other gun safety legislation. And I hope my Republican colleagues find the courage to stand with us, stand with the American people, and stand with families and kids who are sick and tired of living under the threat of gun violence.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Republican leader is recognized.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, the Senate has spent months considering

supplemental action to meet serious, connected threats to America's national security.

As I have said from the outset, our work needs to address four urgent challenges: Putin's war on a sovereign democracy in Europe; the terror campaign against Israel and U.S. forces in the Middle East; China's aggressive escalation against Taiwan and peaceful nations in the Indo-Pacific; and the Biden administration's continuing failure to contend with the crisis at our southern border.

Senate Republicans' focus on securing the border didn't just begin this fall. We have watched for 3 years as the border descended into chaos on President Biden's watch. And for 3 years, we have urged his administration to fulfill even its most basic responsibility to enforce our immigration laws.

Anyone who suggests that Senate Republicans are injecting the issue of border security into this discussion at the last minute either isn't serious or hasn't been paying attention.

Continuing to pretend that upholding American sovereignty is any less urgent than helping our allies and partners defend theirs is reckless. Borders in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona are every bit as inviolable as those in Ukraine, Israel, and the Indo-Pacific. And the sooner our Democratic colleagues realize it, the sooner we can deliver on urgent national security priorities.

Now, needless to say, America's adversaries aren't waiting for us to get serious about our own security. In the South China Sea, for example, the PRC is increasingly using aggressive posturing and outright force to disrupt peace, stability, and lawful maritime commerce.

Beijing now greets lawful passage in international waters with threatening, unsafe conduct and hyperventilating bluster and continues to undermine the long-established territorial claims of sovereign nations throughout Southeast Asia.

Unfortunately, China is not the only adversary stepping up its aggression in the maritime domain. Iran and its network of terrorists continue to illustrate the failures of the Biden administration's deterrence in dangerous detail. On Sunday, a U.S. Navy destroyer and Israeli-flagged commercial vessels came under fire from the same Houthi rebels this administration had inexplicably taken off—off—its list of terror organizations when it took office. This was, of course, a concession to Iran.

Of course, terrorist violence at sea is only the latest in a laundry list of Iran-backed attempts to kill Americans in the region since October 7. At least 77 times, Tehran's proxies have used lethal force against U.S. personnel in Iraq and in Syria, just since October 7.

By any objective standard, the Biden administration's response has been woefully inadequate. Tehran remains

demonstrably undeterred. As President Obama's former Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta put it last week: "I would be much more aggressive."

So effective deterrence requires both capabilities and credibility. And America can't hope to deter our adversaries if we signal hesitation and fear of escalation.

Consider the enemy we are up against. One of Hamas's top terrorists in Gaza told the media recently that the slaughter of Israelis on October 7 was "just a rehearsal"—a bloody rehearsal that left 1,200 innocent people dead and hundreds more in terrorist captivity.

These savages—savages—mean what they say about erasing Israel from the map. But this is not just Israel's fight. Today, at least eight Americans are still being held hostage in Gaza. And if Iran and its proxies get their way, there will be more Americans killed and captured.

This is not—not—a time to go soft on terror. This is not a time to put constraints on Israel. This is a time to support your friends and stand up to your adversaries.

As the Senate considers urgent national security for priorities, our adversaries in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East are watching closely what we do.

ANTI-SEMITISM

Mr. President, now, on another matter, in the 59 days since October 7, an alarming surge in anti-Semitic hate has swept the world. And the United States, unfortunately, has not been exempt.

On Sunday, an angry mob descended on a Philadelphia restaurant co-owned by an Israeli-born Jew. Protesters demanded that customers boycott it, and outrageously charged the business and its proprietors with genocide.

Unfortunately, this is hardly an isolated incident. Across social media, leftwing activists have whipped followers into a frenzy about proclaiming the urgent need to boycott hundreds of American businesses for the alleged crime of supporting Israel's right to exist.

They have committed acts of violence and vandalism, including against the homes of Members of Congress.

Anti-Semitic online mobs are insisting that organizations that do business in Israel are complicit in ethnic cleansing.

Unfortunately, these situations seem most often to flare up on the campuses of elite universities. This week, a prominent Harvard alumnus penned an open letter to Harvard's president cataloging that institution's continued insanity when it comes to Israel's right to self-defense.

At Princeton, a faculty group recently signed a letter invoking academic freedom as a shield for students around the country to have parroted terrorist propaganda. Of course, in the same document, the professors found room to hurl their own accusation of "apartheid" at Israel.

American higher education has become the epicenter of an alarming wave of hatred toward Jews. Luckily, there are glimmers of hope. At Franciscan University in Ohio, administrators created an expedited transfer process to welcome students facing anti-Semitic threats at other schools. Catholic friars in rural Appalachia are eager to accept Jewish students that the Ivy League is failing to protect.

But, unfortunately, stories like these are few and far between. It's especially alarming to see anti-Semitic hatred bleeding into secondary education as well.

Last month, an organization known as The People's Forum helped organize a massive anti-Israel protest and walk-out at schools in New York City. The group, which has direct ties to both domestic radical activists and state propagandists in Beijing, is creating toolkits and posters to facilitate such events at other schools.

As I have said before, I am a strong supporter of freedom of speech. Our Nation gives hateful people the right to say appalling things. But it also gives people with a moral compass the right to condemn them in the strongest possible terms.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. 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.

The Republican whip.

BIDENOMICS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, \$11,434—that is how much more a typical family has to spend today to maintain the same standard of living they had at the beginning of the Biden administration—\$11,434. That is a lot of money. Needless to say, it is money that a lot of Americans don't have.

Nearly 3 years of high inflation has taken its toll. Americans are exhausted from constant price hikes, and they are struggling to keep pace with the huge increase in their cost of living.

One recent news story noted:

Since early 2020, prices have risen about as much as they had in the full 10 years preceding the health emergency.

Let me just repeat that.

Since early 2020, prices have risen about as much as they had in the full 10 years preceding the health emergency.

In other words, we have had 10 years of price increases packed into the last 4 years. The lion's share of those increases has occurred during the Biden administration. Since President Biden took office, the price of groceries has risen by almost 21 percent, gas prices have risen by 54.8 percent, electric bills are up almost 25 percent, car repairs and maintenance are up 26.5 percent, rent is up 18 percent, and the list goes on. Unfortunately, at this point, it is