

Res. 38 and the Senate immediately vote on passage of the joint resolution, the objections of the President to the contrary notwithstanding; further, that following disposition of the veto message, the Senate resume executive session to proceed to the consideration of Executive Calendar No. 518, Ronald Keohane to be Assistant Secretary of Defense.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it stand adjourned under the previous order following the remarks of Senator RAPHAEL WARNOCK, the Senator from Georgia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCHUMER. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

PEACE

Mr. WARNOCK. Madam President, I rise tonight in anguish and in sorrow over the heinous and horrific attack by Hamas on the people of Israel on October 7 and also in response to the catastrophic humanitarian nightmare unfolding on the ground in Gaza right now, leaving over 100 Israeli hostages and hundreds of thousands of Palestinians suffering and tens of thousands—including many women and children—already dead, with no end in sight.

While much can be said about the geopolitics, perhaps because I am a pastor, I see first and foremost the people. On all sides of this awful and ugly, deadly conflict, I see the children of God. All of us are children of God. I especially see the children.

The haunting and penetrating witness of that ancient woman of the Jewish Scripture speaks to me in this moment. A voice is heard in Ramah, the sound of mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children, and she refuses to be comforted, for they are no more.

I hear Jewish mothers and fathers and Palestinian mothers and fathers weeping for their children, and the question is, What would we do if we truly believed that all of the children are truly our children? What would each side do if they could look into the eyes of the children on the other side and see in those children's eyes what they see when they look into the eyes of their own?

When we come to see that the safety of other people's children is inextricably connected to the safety of our own, we will do so much more to ensure that all children are safe. When we come to see that the health of other people's children is inexorably related to the health of our own, we will do so much more to ensure that every child can eat. When we come to see that the

future of all children is tied to our children's future, we will ensure that every child can learn, play, imagine, and grow. We will hasten toward that path that leads to peace.

In that spirit, I rise tonight to explain why I think we have reached an inflection point in this conflict, one that demands all involved redouble our efforts to get a cease-fire and ultimately a just and sustainable peace.

I do not mean to suggest that any of this is simple. Indeed, if it were simple, it would have been resolved a long time ago. The issues of the Middle East are complicated. They are age-old and seemingly intractable. We live in a dangerous world, rife with conflict and replete with enemies who do not want to see peace.

October 7 was a tragic reminder. Hamas, a brutal terrorist organization that has the total destruction of Israel etched in its charter documents and ensconced in its mission, perpetrated the most devastating attack we have seen on the Jewish people since the Holocaust. Some 787 civilians were killed, more than 1,100 if you count security personnel. Unbridled brutality and cruelty were visited upon seniors and women and children. Among those taken as hostages were young people simply enjoying a concert. Rape and sexual assaults were used as a weapon of war. Such depraved and immoral acts are rightly condemned by all who believe in human dignity and freedom.

Our ally Israel lives in a dangerous neighborhood, and it has a right to defend itself. That is why I was proud to support the national security supplemental in the Senate. It needs to pass in the House. It provides \$5.2 billion for missile defenses like the Iron Dome, but it also provides \$9 billion in humanitarian aid for the people of Gaza and in other places.

Moreover, it supplies urgently needed aid to Ukraine—a sovereign, democratic state viciously attacked by Putin's Russia. We stand with Ukraine. Their vital national security interests are tied to our own.

Putin, the old KGB agent with fond memories of the old Soviet Union, will not stop his murderous march with Ukraine. He will threaten other NATO allies. Because of NATO's article 5 protection, which states that an attack on one is an attack on all, that could well draw us in.

Last week, I participated in the Munich Security Conference. While we rightly urged our allies to put more skin in the game, as they should, to increase their own commitment to their own security—and to be sure, some of them are stepping up—the truth is, there is no replacement for American leadership in the world.

We, alongside our allies, must stand with Ukraine. In a broken and dangerous world like ours, evil has to be constrained, tyranny rejected sometimes by force. I would rather send military support to Ukrainian soldiers in their valiant defense of their home-

land and of Europe today than send American soldiers to that fight tomorrow. It is not only the right thing to do, it is the smart thing to do for our own national security interest.

If we are speaking of Ukraine or Israel, ultimately the aim must always be peace—a sustainable peace, a just peace, the kind of peace that must be rigorously pursued with both a tough mind and a tender heart.

I pray for peace for the people of Ukraine, for the suffering people of Sudan, for Israeli children and Palestinian children. They are all children of God.

I think of the story of 13-year-old Ariel Zohar, an Israeli teenager who lost both of his parents and his two older sisters when Hamas attacked Kibbutz Nahal Oz just 2 months before his bar mitzvah. Ariel just happened to be out for a run, and he sought shelter with a kibbutz security guard. That is the only reason—the only reason—young Ariel survived. May God bless the memory of Ariel's family and the security guard, who also died at the hands of Hamas. He survived, but a 13-year-old child must now live with this trauma. It is a trauma that I know Jewish people in Georgia and around the world are living with every day.

The tragic irony is that in the wake of October 7, anti-Semitism has actually gone up. In this country, anti-Semitism has gone up. All of this is now witnessed through the prism of a people who have never truly felt safe in the world, people who carry the burden of history—centuries of it—in their bones.

I got a sense of it in recent weeks as I sat with the families of hostages being held by Hamas. I sat with those families, who were stunned by the nightmare of their reality, people who have no idea when or how their family members might return.

I recall meeting with one father who was lamenting what had happened on October 7 to his daughter and his son-in-law when they were attacked by Hamas. Beyond his grief, here is what he wanted to know. He wanted to know: Does anybody other than us understand? Do they get it? Can they see what we see, hear what we hear, feel what we feel?

And as he said that with such pain and pathos in his voice, he was speaking about his own family, but he just as well could have been speaking for the family of 13-year-old Donia Abu Mohsen, a Palestinian girl who lost her parents and two brothers in an Israeli missile strike in south Gaza and had to have her leg amputated. And while she was recovering in the hospital, she was tragically killed by another Israeli airstrike while in the hospital.

May God bless the memory of Donia and her family. Donia is one of more than 12,000 children and tens of thousands of defenseless Palestinians who reportedly have been killed since Israel has been prosecuting its war against Hamas.

There is an acronym used in Gaza: WCNSF, wounded child with no surviving family. According to media reports, an estimated 17,000 Palestinian children fall under that category: wounded child with no surviving family. And another 2 million Palestinians have been displaced by the effort to rid the world of Hamas.

When I meet with my Palestinian and Muslim constituents in Georgia, members of our human family, I also hear them wonder: Does anybody other than us understand? Do they see what we see? Do they hear what we hear? Can they feel what we feel? Does anybody care?

The staggering loss of Palestinian lives should deeply trouble all of us, but equally concerning is the serious humanitarian catastrophe that is unfolding in Gaza before our very eyes. Earlier this week, the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said during a briefing that about one quarter of the population in Gaza—576,000 people—are “one step away from famine” and facing a “grave situation.” Diseases like hepatitis A and digestive illnesses are spreading rapidly in overcrowded, makeshift camps, and this is made worse by a lack of access to clean water or sanitation systems.

Families right now are huddled in makeshift tents and other shelters, exposed to the winter elements, with everything they can carry on their backs. The medical system in Gaza has collapsed, with only a handful of hospitals still partially functioning.

On average, reportedly, more than 10 children have lost one or both of their legs every day since October 7, with many of those amputations performed without anesthesia. Pregnant women in Gaza have experienced a 300-percent increase in miscarriages.

And, most recently, the Netanyahu administration has once again ordered displaced Palestinians—women, children, seniors, regular civilians already pushed out of their homes by war—to evacuate territory they were told would be safe after fleeing previous offensives by the IDF in northern Gaza.

If Mr. Netanyahu advances military operations into Rafah, the question is: Where are these people supposed to go? What will be the human consequences?

World-class epidemiologists tell us that with an escalation of the war into Rafah, as many as 85,000 Palestinians could die from injuries and disease over the next 6 months—85,000 on top of the already mounting death toll. I submit that such a move would be unconscionable and morally indefensible.

But what do we do about Hamas, a terrorist organization bent on Israel's destruction? Let me be clear: Israel would be better off, the Palestinian people would be better off, the world would be better off without Hamas. But Hamas is more than a terrorist organization. It is an ideology. It is a mindset. It is a way of thinking that sits in a place deeper than the tunnels beneath Gaza. And if the legacy of

Hamas's violence on October 7 becomes continuing and escalating indiscriminate violence in turn, then the destructive ideology of Hamas will have won the day.

We must not let them win. We must be careful not to create, through indiscriminate killing, that which we seek to destroy. We must find a more excellent way. With a tough mind and a tender heart, we must find that way that leads to peace.

We are at an inflection point, a place where two ways meet, and time is running out. I call upon Israel and Hamas to come to a negotiated cease-fire, with the immediate release of hostages and opening of humanitarian corridors so that food, medicine, water, and other supplies can be delivered to the people of Gaza with the fierce urgency that the situation demands. I am heartened by the quiet, steady work of the Biden administration and our regional partners in this effort, and I urge that it continue in earnest.

Furthermore, we must reaffirm our unwavering commitment to a two-state solution. The people of Israel deserve to live in peace and security alongside their neighbors. I agree with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who said that “Israel's right to exist as a state in security is incontestable. The whole world,” he said, “must see that Israel must exist and has the right to exist.”

The dignity of self-determination is among the values he was seeking to uphold. Israelis deserve it. So do Palestinians. Two peoples, two states, living alongside one another in freedom and in peace—that must remain our North Star.

And if we would be true to our values, we must call to task any politician who would reject that right to self-determination, especially if that rejection comes while, at the same time, one is engaged in massive and indiscriminate bombing of the very same people.

From the ugly and dangerous specter of it all, the world cannot and must not turn away. With the Muslim holy days of Ramadan around the corner and the Jewish Passover shortly thereafter, we are at an inflection point, a place where two traumatized peoples meet. As a Black man who stands in Dr. King's pulpit, I know a little something about trauma. I know that while our trauma informs us, it must never define us. We are more than what has happened to us. We have within our capacity the strength to write a new story.

We must pursue peace, seek justice, embrace mercy, and struggle for human dignity with all of our might. The children on each side and all of our children are counting on us to do no less. I would wonder what we would actually do if we truly believed that all of the children are our children. As a parent with small children, I wonder what would each side do if they could look into the eyes of the children on the other side and see in those chil-

dren's eyes what they see when they look into the eyes of their own.

Perhaps this is what the prophet Isaiah was getting at when he put forth his extraordinary vision, and I lift it up.

The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.

Honestly, I never quite understood what Isaiah meant. It seems too idyllic and other-worldly even for the preacher. But perhaps the prophet is saying something much more practical than we think.

To be sure, peacemaking is not easy work at all, by any stretch of the imagination. But perhaps when we allow our children and our love for our children, our concern for their future, and our children's inextricable connection to all other children to lead us—when we allow the children to lead us—we will find ourselves on the path that leads to peace.

So, tonight, I pray for a world where Israeli mothers and fathers and Palestinian mothers and fathers can put their children to bed in peace, say their bedtime prayers, and awaken to a world where they are finally safe.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 8:08 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, February 29, 2024, at 10 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING AIR NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12212:

To be brigadier general

COL. TODD D. MILLER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be brigadier general

COL. DAVID W. KELLEY

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be brigadier general

COL. RONNIE D. ANDERSON, JR.

COL. BRYAN L. BABICH

COL. JEREMY A. BARTEL

COL. JAMES T. BLEJSKI, JR.

COL. W. M. BOCHAT

COL. ROBERT G. BORN

COL. KIRK E. BRINKER

COL. ROBERT S. BROWN

COL. KEVIN S. CHANEY

COL. KENNETH C. COLE

COL. KEVIN L. COTMAN

COL. JOHNATON L. DAWBER

COL. DAVID P. ELSER

COL. JOSEPH M. EWERS

COL. EUGENE J. FERRIS

COL. RONALD L. FRANKLIN, JR.

COL. ROGELIO J. GARCIA

COL. PETER C. GLASS

COL. JOSEPH C. GOETZ II

COL. PHILLIP J. KINIERY III