

productive towards a mutually agreed-upon cease-fire and the safe return of all the hostages. Recent developments like the deaths we saw today in Gaza City will likely make that more difficult, but diplomatic efforts must continue—even after this conflict—to ensure a lasting peace.

That is why I have backed efforts to reiterate America's longstanding policy of support for a two-state solution and will rebuff any statements by Netanyahu or his government that reject Palestinian sovereignty. It is why it is important to me that we don't just talk about fighting the enemy and winning the war but that we also talk about facing the hatred, the Islamophobia and anti-Semitism that have been on the rise in the wake of this conflict and doing the work of peace, creating a future that ensures dignity and security for both Palestinians and Israelis alike.

I want to close by saying a bit about what is happening here in America and in my home State of Washington. Because while this war may be happening across the world, it has been painful for our Arab and Jewish communities at home. They are seeing not just horrific news—including sometimes about relatives and friends—but also a horrific rise in anti-Arab and anti-Semitic violence.

Synagogues in my State have faced bomb threats. A 6-year-old Palestinian boy in Illinois was stabbed to death. And across the nation, there have been other disturbing reports of violence and threats against people perceived to be Arab, Muslim, or Jewish. It is heartbreaking, and it is incumbent upon all of us to stand against that hatred.

Our North Star has to be valuing the humanity in others and listening to the humanity in ourselves. That is my message today, and it is a message I am going to keep working to see put into action.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session.

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

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S DENTAL HEALTH MONTH

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I rise today to recognize February as National Children's Dental Health Month. Since 1981, this month has given us the chance to acknowledge the importance of dental health for children, recognize the progress we have made on this front, and renew our commitment to ensure that all children in our country have access to quality, affordable dental care.

Oral health is an aspect of health that is often overlooked, despite its critical role in the overall health of a person. As former U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop once said, "There is no health without oral health."

In my state, like many others, we have witnessed firsthand the consequences of neglecting oral health in young people. One story that has shaped my view on this issue is that of Deamonte Driver, a 12-year-old Prince George's County resident who tragically died in 2007 due to a lack of comprehensive dental services. Deamonte's death was particularly heartbreaking because it was entirely preventable. What started out as a toothache turned into a severe brain infection that could have been prevented by an \$80 extraction. After multiple surgeries and a lengthy hospital stay, sadly, Deamonte passed away, 17 years ago this month.

Stories like this underscore the need for access to affordable oral health care for all Americans, particularly vulnerable and underserved communities.

While trends over the past several decades show promising reductions in tooth decay among young children, tooth decay remains one of the most common chronic diseases of childhood. About 1 in 4 preschool children experienced tooth decay in primary teeth and at least one in six children aged 6 to 11 years experienced dental tooth decay in permanent teeth. It is also important to note that neglecting oral health at a young age increases the need for more advanced and expensive dental services, which are even less accessible than more standard types of dental care.

There is a persistent pattern of oral health disparities, as children from lower-income and minority racial and ethnic groups generally experience more disease and have less access to treatment.

Children from low-income households are twice as likely to have cavities, compared with children from higher-income households. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, for children aged 2 to 5 years, about 33 percent of Mexican-American and 28 percent of non-Hispanic Black children have had cavities in their primary teeth, compared with 18 percent of non-Hispanic White children. For children aged 12 to 19, nearly 70 percent of Mexican-American children have had cavities in their permanent teeth, compared with 54 percent of non-Hispanic White children.

In its most recent Oral Health in America report, the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, one of National Institutes of Health, identified disparities as one of the primary challenges facing oral health in the United States. Last year, I held a hearing in the Senate Finance Health Care Subcommittee to focus on these issues. The hearing highlighted disparities in access to oral health care, which have persisted and have serious consequences for children, adults, families, and communities. I was proud to have Dr. Warren Brill, a distinguished pediatric dentist from Maryland who has long provided care to low-income children and provided valuable insights for our conversation, serve as a witness.

Poor dental health can have lasting impacts on children. Tooth and gum pain can impede a child's healthy development, including the ability to learn, play, and eat nutritious foods. Children who have poor oral health often miss more school and get lower grades than children who have good oral health.

While it might be easy to view oral health as an afterthought, it is clear that the issues resulting from a lack of care can have wide-ranging, serious impacts, especially when access to care is a struggle from a young age. Poor oral health can contribute to severe outcomes like the tragic story of Deamonte while also manifesting in broader disparities across racial and ethnic groups.

Since the loss of Deamonte, I am proud to say that we have made significant progress in improving access to pediatric dental care in our country and in my state. In 2009, Congress reauthorized the Children's Health Insurance Program, CHIP, with an important addition: a guaranteed pediatric dental benefit. Research shows that CHIP generally offers more comprehensive benefits at a much lower cost to families than private coverage.

Additionally, the Affordable Care Act, ACA, has significantly improved access to affordable dental care for millions of Americans by requiring most insurers to cover essential health benefits. I was particularly pleased that pediatric services, specifically pediatric dental care, were identified as part of the ten categories of healthcare services included in the EHB package. As a result, pediatric dental insurance coverage is available for purchase on all State-based insurance marketplaces and the federal marketplace. The dental coverage offered through ACA plans in all States covers a minimum set of benefits to ensure children have coverage for essential dental services.

Expansion of dental insurance coverage has enabled early intervention for more children from low-income households. Today, 9 in 10 children in the U.S. have dental insurance. Dental care is also a mandatory benefit in Medicaid for children since it is provided through the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment Program. Still, research has found that although State Medicaid programs cover children's dental services, fewer than half of all publicly insured children get the recommended care.

This figure demonstrates that there is more we can do to ensure children are receiving proper dental care. This effort is a priority of mine and an area where I believe we can make tangible changes to the lives of many Americans.

For several Congresses, Senator STABENOW and I have introduced the Ensuring Kids Have Access to Medically Necessary Dental Care Act. Our legislation would eliminate lifetime and annual limits for dental care for children under CHIP. The bill would also require

States to provide “wraparound” CHIP dental coverage, meaning CHIP would cover dental services for eligible children who are not enrolled in CHIP. Currently, if a child is eligible for CHIP but instead has coverage under a group health plan or employer-sponsored insurance, States have the option of providing dental-only coverage to this child through CHIP. This bill requires that dental coverage be offered.

In recent years, dentists nationwide have seen a significant decrease in operating room access for dental procedures. This problem has primarily impacted children and adults with disabilities who are in need of urgent dental care and cannot access it in an office-based setting, necessitating care in an operating room. Earlier this Congress, Senator BLACKBURN and I sent a letter to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services urging them to include the recently established code for dental surgical services in the 2024 Medicare Hospital Outpatient Prospective Payment System. Thankfully, the code was included in CMS’s final rule to expand access to these critical procedures and shorten the waitlists to receive care under general anesthesia in operating rooms.

While ensuring dental coverage for our young people is the most direct way to support their oral health, it is also important to keep in mind that providing dental coverage for adults also improves outcomes for their children. A 2021 study found that Medicaid adult dental coverage was associated with a reduction in the prevalence of untreated tooth decay among children after parents had access to coverage for at least one year. The study found that all children saw improvements in oral health, and non-Hispanic Black children experienced larger and more persistent improvements than non-Hispanic White children. A Medicaid dental benefit for adults would enhance the progress for children and provide much needed dental care and improve oral health outcomes for adults.

That is why I am proud to have introduced the Medicaid Dental Benefit Act, which would extend comprehensive dental health benefits to tens of millions of low-income Americans on Medicaid. The legislation would provide States with a 100 percent federal match for the dental benefit for three years. This investment of federal funds would support states to set up or improve their dental benefit and assist in provider education and outreach efforts to better connect enrollees to oral health care.

Oral health is a crucial part of overall health, and it should be a priority for Americans from a young age. Dental care should not be a luxury or reserved for the most privileged. Access to quality, affordable care is not only important in the fight against tooth decay and related complications, but also plays a valuable role in combatting the health disparities that plague our communities. As we recognize our

progress on this issue, we must commit to expanding access to oral health services. I urge my colleagues to join me in this effort.

S.J. RES. 60

Madam President, we are shortly going to be voting on a motion by Senator PAUL in regards to the F-16 sale to Türkiye. Recently, the administration noted an F-16 sale to Türkiye to modernize its F-16 air capacity.

I understand my colleague from Kentucky’s concern about President Erdogan’s record. I share some of those concerns. The State Department’s most recent human rights report on Türkiye found significant issues, including credible reports of: forced disappearances, torture, arbitrary arrests, and continued detention of tens of thousands of persons, opposition politicians, former members of parliament, lawyers, journalists, and human rights activists.

In addition, Türkiye has targeted U.S. partners in the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces and supported Azerbaijan in its brutal war last year to conquer Nagorno-Karabakh.

This is unacceptable, and I have not hesitated to make it clear that Türkiye needs to change course. I have consulted closely with the highest levels of the Biden administration about this transition over several months.

I believe they share my concerns, and I believe we are making progress. And our former colleague Ambassador Flake is engaging regularly on these issues with the government in Ankara.

So I want to be clear, my approval of the Biden administration’s sale of the F-16 aircraft to Türkiye was not a decision I came to lightly as the chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

It was contingent on Turkish approval of Sweden’s NATO membership. That condition has been met. Türkiye’s parliament ratified Sweden’s NATO membership bid. This comes at a critical time.

(Mr. BOOKER assumed the Chair.)

President Putin is continuing his brutal war in Ukraine and threatening NATO and all of Europe. Given the stakes, not only is Sweden’s membership vital to NATO, so is Türkiye’s.

Türkiye is a key to the defense of the southern flank of NATO. It is host to a major U.S. military presence. And Türkiye’s F-16 fleet contributes to NATO, including in the Black Sea, which is critical to our national security.

That is why it is in the national security interest of the United States and our allies for Türkiye to upgrade its aging F-16 fleet to a more capable model, a model that is compatible with the United States and NATO partners. That is exactly what this sale will do. It will usher in an important new chapter in our relationship with Türkiye.

Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to reject the resolution being offered by my friend from Kentucky and allow this sale to go forward. It is in our na-

tional security interest. It is in the security interest of our allies. It will strengthen NATO and strengthen our resolve against Russia’s aggression in Ukraine.

I yield the floor.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, the United States and Türkiye have an important and complex relationship, and I have been repeatedly outspoken about my concerns regarding Ankara’s actions under President Erdogan. These include President Erdogan’s ongoing attacks against our Syrian Kurdish allies, his aggressive actions in the Eastern Mediterranean, and the role he played in supporting Azerbaijan’s military assaults against Nagorno-Karabakh. The Biden administration recently briefed me on these issues and provided some answers around my concerns.

Though I have been glad to see that President Erdogan has ceased the incursions by military aircraft into Greek airspace, the administration informed me that they continue to monitor this matter closely in order to encourage the ongoing dialogue between Greece and Türkiye. Additionally, I received assurances from the administration that it will continue to warn Azerbaijan against taking further military action against Armenia and that they will work with Türkiye to prevent any further escalation of that conflict. I remain deeply troubled by President Erdogan’s attacks against the Syrian Democratic Forces—SDF—in Northeast Syria; however, the administration assured me that they continue to voice their strong objections to these attacks, including the threat posed to U.S. forces working with the SDF, and reaffirmed their ongoing commitment to supporting this crucial partner, who has served as the tip of the spear in our campaign to defeat the Islamic State. The administration told me that they would more clearly communicate that commitment to the SDF to allay concerns that have been expressed about a reduced American commitment to our partnership.

While Türkiye’s ratification of Sweden’s NATO membership was long delayed, it has been a welcome step forward and an important signal to the NATO community. I hope that this step indicates a broader realignment of Türkiye’s actions with U.S. national security interests and serves as a platform upon which we can address these other lingering issues in the bilateral relationship. It is for these reasons that I will be opposing S.J. Res. 60, which would disapprove of the sale of 40 F-16s and other defense articles and services to the Government of Türkiye. I will continue to stay in regular communication with the administration regarding their assurances on these and other key issues. It is clear that we must keep a close watch on Türkiye in the weeks and months ahead; actions speak louder than words.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, I rise today in respect to S.J. Res. 60, which, as I understand it, will be up for vote here fairly quickly. And I rise in opposition to S.J. Res. 60. S.J. Res. 60, in essence, says that we would not keep the commitment that we have made to sell or refurbish the F-16 jets to Türkiye.

I am not here to tell you that Türkiye is the best partner that we have had. Indeed, as former chairman and now ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee, I deal and have to deal with them regularly on a lot of issues. They are an ally in NATO. NATO, as we all know, is the strongest political and military alliance that has ever been created on the planet, and Türkiye is a member of that alliance.

To be honest with you—and I tell them this face-to-face—they are not acting like a partner; they are not acting like an ally, and there are a long list of complaints that we have in that regard.

This actually started with defense missiles that they wanted to buy, and we offered them the Patriot missiles, as we do to all of our NATO allies, and, indeed, instead, they chose to purchase Russian S-400 missiles.

At the same time, they had purchased, or were in the process of purchasing, four F-35 of ours—which everybody wants, understandably. But at the time that they bought the S-400s, I told them they can't have S-400s in the same country as F-35s. If they are going to do business with Russia, so be it, but there are consequences for that.

So as a result of that, I put a hold on the F-35s, and I was followed by the other three corners and that hold was successful and the F-35s have not been transferred to Türkiye. And that was the fight we had with them over the S-400s.

We have made them a number of reasonable offers to try to resolve this, but they have not accepted any of those offers, and the result of that is they still got the S-400s, and we still got the four F-35s, which are going to stay here until the S-400s leave the country.

So the next thing that happened was they came to us and said, well, their F-16s were aging. They needed to be refurbished, and they needed a number of new F-16s.

About that time, they decided to put a hold on Sweden and Finland entering NATO. And as we all know, Finland and Sweden really, really wanted to enter NATO shortly after the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, and everybody in NATO agreed with that, with the exception of Türkiye and Hungary.

Both used the accession to NATO by those two countries as a way to use leverage against other countries within NATO on some parochial disputes that they have. That is not the way you do business as an ally. When your allied, yes, you will always have issues that you have to deal with other allied countries, but you don't use the security of the whole. You don't use the

good of the whole as a bargaining chip to try to get a leg up on those.

So the result of that was for a long, long time, Türkiye held up the accession of those two countries into NATO. As a result of that, I held up the F-16 purchases that they wanted to make.

Negotiations went on for a long time. We were made promise after promise. The promises were broken. But, finally, they did roll over earlier this year, late last year, and allowed the accession of both Sweden and Finland. The result of that was that we agreed that we would do what they wanted to do with the F-16s.

This particular resolution, the S.J. Res. 60, really undoes that agreement, and I can fully understand Senators being upset with Türkiye for this and a long list of other complaints that we have. But a deal is a deal and we made this agreement and they kept their side of the bargain—admittedly not very timely, but they did keep their side of the bargain. And now Finland is in, and Sweden is about to come in so that will be the state of play.

I would urge a “no” vote on this simply because it is imperative to the United States, when we give our word on something, that we keep our word, and so that is where we are.

Having said that, I have urged Türkiye on a number of occasions to examine their conscience and really think about what their commitment means to NATO. That commitment to NATO all the rest of us have is very, very strong, and Türkiye and Hungary have not been behaving the way the rest of us in the coalition behave.

One of the most troubling things to me is both of them hold hands with Putin under the table, and that is a very, very bad state of affairs as far as what is going on in Europe, as far as NATO's relationship with Russia, and just the overall situation.

So although we have a lot of things to complain about with Türkiye, on this particular occasion, I am going to urge that we defeat S.J. Res. 60 and actually keep the agreement that we made regarding the F-16s.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, what we have here is a clear case of quid pro quo. If Türkiye releases its hold on Sweden's membership in NATO, then Türkiye gets America's F-16s.

You may remember the last time we had a famous case of quid pro quo here. Boy, everybody was all up in a lather, and they said that we had to impeach Donald Trump because it is a quid pro quo. Apparently, it depends on what the quid is and what the quo is.

Quid pro quo, though, is actually more the norm than it is actually the exception. The speakers you have seen here today were adamantly against Türkiye and adamantly against them getting the F-35 because they possess a Russian defensive weapon system that may well allow exploitation and allow Americans to become more vulnerable.

But now they are adamantly for it because it got Sweden into NATO. Thank God Sweden is in NATO. We can all rest easy.

Rewarding Türkiye with the sale of \$23 billion of F-16 fighters, though, has some repercussions, and we should think about it before we do it. I maintain that there are deep concerns about the sale as it was initially proposed in 2021, and I have maintained my opposition given Türkiye's dismal human rights record, its unreliable behavior as a NATO ally, and its disruptive military actions in the Middle East, the Caucasus, and the Eastern Mediterranean.

Congress must not serve as a rubberstamp for President Biden's side deals. The quid pro quo to expand NATO should not come at the expense of rewarding the alliances most embarrassing member.

President Biden pledged to center U.S. foreign policy on the defense of democracy and the protection of human rights. But Biden's own State Department issued a human rights report for Türkiye in 2022 which identifies significant human rights issues, including arbitrary killings, suspicious deaths of persons in custody, forced disappearances, torture, arbitrary arrest, and the continued detention of tens of thousands of persons, including opposition politicians, former members of Parliament, lawyers, journalists, human rights activists, and even an employee of the U.S. Mission.

It doesn't sound like one of our best allies. The Human Rights Foundation of Türkiye, a nongovernmental organization operating out of Ankara, reports that some 1,130 individuals were subjected to torture and other forms of mistreatment while in custody or at extra-custodial places—meaning not jails, some, you know, out-of-the-way place that no one can see where the torture happens—and this sadly also includes the torture of children.

In March 2023, it was reported a 14-year-old boy on his way home in southeast Türkiye was stopped by the police with no justification. He was subsequently abducted and subjected to torture. The police beat him with their guns and, according to the boy's lawyer, tried to force him to say: I am a Turk, a curse upon the Kurds. When he refused, the police instructed him to memorize the Turkish national anthem by the next day, threatening to shoot him if he failed to do so. The police then bound his hands and threw him into a swamp, before local villagers, hearing his cries for help, rescued him and brought him to the hospital.

The State Department's report also identifies—our State Department—identifies severe restrictions on the freedom of expression and assembly in Türkiye, violence and threats of violence against journalists in Türkiye, increased censorship, criminal liable laws, and unfortunately much more.

Since 2014, it is estimated that more than 160,000 people were investigated

for insulting Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and more than 35,000 went to trial.

Imagine if it were a crime in the United States to criticize the President how many people would be in jail.

Of these trials, 12,881 individuals were convicted and 3,625 people—including 10 children—were sentenced to prison.

While Erdogan is imprisoning men, women, and children for insulting him, he is openly praising Hamas.

So these people come to the floor and they say: Oh, we were against giving the planes to Türkiye before we were for giving them. And we don't like that Türkiye gives to Hamas, but we are playing real politics here because we want Sweden in NATO, and whether Türkiye gives money to Hamas, we are going to turn a blind eye. That, to me, is a quid pro quo not worth taking.

After Hamas's brutal October 7 attack on Israel, Erdogan defiantly claimed: Hamas is not a terrorist group; it is a liberation group.

Do you think we should be sending our best weapons to a country that said, after one of the worst terrorist activities in modern history, October 7, Hamas is not a terrorist group?

Should we be sending our prized F-16s to a country that says Hamas is not a terrorist group; it is a liberation group—mujahideen—waging a battle to protect its lands and people? No. They went to a concert and killed young people, and we are going to send our weapons to them? Why? Because we made a quid pro quo. We got Sweden in NATO, so we are going to look the other way with Türkiye giving money and support to Hamas.

This is the type of government we want to send our weapons to? Shouldn't the United States require countries to reflect our values before we send them billions of dollars' worth of advanced weapons? Shouldn't we demand that a NATO ally in particular at least respect the rule of law and basic human rights? President Biden certainly doesn't seem to think so.

The United States cannot proudly proclaim human rights to be at the center of our foreign policy while it arms a country that commits gross violations of human rights.

I also remain deeply concerned about the negative strategic implications of this proposed sale given Türkiye's reckless military actions in recent years.

Just last October, a U.S. F-16 shot down a Turkish combat drone in Syria that was operating dangerously close to U.S. forces. Ironically, this sale provides Turkey with 40 brandnew F-16s and modernizes an existing fleet of 79. We are giving them the weapons system that we just used to shoot down their drone.

Why was a Turkish drone operating so close to U.S. troops? It was targeting the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, whom we have supported for years to fight against ISIS. Türkiye

views the Syrian Democratic Forces as terrorists, so in the eyes of our NATO ally, our partners in Syria are their enemy and legitimate terrorists.

Does something seem a bit confusing here? They are shooting against people we consider to be our allies in the war against ISIS. They have drones up close to us, so we have to shoot down their drones. And we are sending them our modern planes and updating their fleet. The American taxpayers are paying to arm and train these Syrian Democratic Forces, and the Biden administration is giving Turkey advanced fighter jets that will inevitably be used to shoot and kill these same people. This utter lack of strategic foresight has unfortunately become commonplace in Washington foreign policy.

This was also not the first time that U.S. forces were threatened by Türkiye's reckless military actions in Syria. In November of 2022, a Turkish drone strike on Syrian Democratic Forces put U.S. soldiers at significant risk, leaving the Pentagon to call for an "immediate de-escalation."

In October 2019, U.S. forces came under Turkish artillery fire which sources claimed was a deliberate effort to push American troops away from Syria's northern border. The shelling was purportedly so severe that U.S. personnel considered firing back in self-defense.

This is our ally. We are sending these people F-16s who have been shooting at us and shooting at our other allies.

There is also the fact that Türkiye—and this is not an insignificant fact—Türkiye bought the S-400 air and missile defense systems in 2019 from Russia despite strong U.S. protest. That decision prompted the Trump administration to remove Türkiye from the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter Program.

At that point, the leadership on the Republican and the Democratic side were opposed to the F-35 Program. They have now only switched their minds because of the quid pro quo. They have been given membership for Sweden, they salivate over making NATO bigger, and they do that in exchange for now sending these weapons to Türkiye.

But there are concerns that the S-400 could expose classified F-35 stealth capabilities to Russian intelligence gathering.

You see, when you have missile defense, you are gathering defense on the plane that is flying towards you. If you own both the planes and the defense system, you can coordinate with them to learn more about the vulnerabilities of the planes that might be attacking your defense system. The same is true with the F-16.

So this is strategically and militarily, No. 1, a huge cave-in to the Turks, but it actually puts our soldiers and our pilots at risk because now we are exposing the F-16, one of our planes, to the S-400, the Russian weapons system, and allow the inter-

matching of the two, and this will inevitably put our pilots more at risk.

The risk of the S-400 serving as a Russian Trojan horse to compromise NATO's most advanced stealth fighter was clear to everyone in the alliance, but Türkiye proceeded nevertheless. President Trump subsequently imposed sanctions on Türkiye's defense procurement agency, which the Biden administration has kept in place.

Nobody has really reversed themselves and said Türkiye is behaving and deserves a plane because they have switched course. Everybody is just saying Türkiye gets what they want because Türkiye used a form of extortion. You can call it "quid pro quo"—that sounds better than "extortion"—but basically Türkiye said: We are not going to let Sweden into NATO unless you give us more planes.

It looks like extortion works. This actually reinforces bad behavior. What will Türkiye do the next time they want something? They will simply act like a bad ally and hold up something we need in order to get something they want.

So both the Trump and Biden administrations don't trust our supposed ally Türkiye to keep the F-35 capabilities secure, but now we are giving them the F-16. Perhaps Congress should examine some of the ways in which Türkiye has used F-16s recently.

The Armenian Ministry of Defense claims that on September 29, 2020, in support of Azerbaijan's war to conquer the Nagorno-Karabakh region, a Turkish F-16 shot down an Armenian Su-25 attack aircraft in Armenian airspace. Türkiye has stood closely by its Azerbaijani ally in its efforts to subjugate the region, providing combat drones, military equipment, training, and, if we are to believe the Armenian Government, direct combat support.

So the planes we give to the Turks, the F-16s, are actually being used in another war with Armenia. I have not heard of any debate on which side of that war we are supposed to be on—Azerbaijan or Armenia—but your weapons will be going in the middle of that war as well.

The war in 2020 and Azerbaijan's subsequent military operation in 2023 killed thousands and created a humanitarian disaster, forcing more than 100,000 people to flee—more than three-quarters of the population of that region.

Türkiye also continues to be an unreliable ally within NATO. Not only did Türkiye blackmail the alliance by delaying Sweden's NATO bid to extract concessions, the Turks continue to regularly threaten Greece, another NATO ally. In 2022, Turkish fighter jets and unmanned aerial vehicles violated Greek airspace more than 10,000 times. President Erdogan continues his hostile rhetoric, threatening to hit Athens with missile strikes and claiming that Turkish forces may land in Greece "suddenly one night." It sounds like the unstable ramblings of a leader who

doesn't deserve to have our most advanced fighter jets.

Last August, Mesut Hakki Casin, an adviser on security and foreign policy to Erdogan, claimed that "the Mediterranean Sea belongs to us, and no one should even think about raising a sword against us there. They [Greece, Cypress, and their allies] better not forget this."

These are the people banging the drums for war with another fellow NATO ally that we are sending these weapons to. Without a hint of remorse on their side, they just held us hostage over Sweden. Sweden gave in. Quid pro quo. You get your jets.

These statements from Türkiye sound more like the bombastic threats from North Korea's dear leader than a NATO ally.

Do we really think giving Türkiye more fighter jets will modify their behavior? Actually, withholding them was the only chance of modifying their behavior. This sale will only embolden Türkiye to continue its disruptive actions at the expense of American interests and regional stability. What do we get in return? Greater risk to U.S. troops in Syria, instability in the Caucasus, continued threats to Greece, and the privilege of defending Sweden.

While NATO is supposed to be a collective security agency, the reality is that if Sweden were ever attacked, it would be American forces doing the majority of the fighting—unless anyone truly thinks Turkish F-16s will come to their aid.

The \$23 billion sale is reckless. It fails to advance the security of the American people and does nothing to alter Türkiye's immoral human rights record, its unruly behavior within NATO, or its irresponsible actions in the Middle East, the Caucasus, and eastern Mediterranean. I urge my colleagues to vote in support of the joint resolution of disapproval to reject this disastrous deal.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to respond for up to 2 minutes, please.

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

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, first of all, I want the record to be absolutely clear. This is not a gift to Türkiye; this is a sale to Türkiye. They are going to pay for the munitions they are going to get, the aircraft they are going to get.

As I stated when I started out, Türkiye is very, very less than a desired or good ally in the current NATO framework, and certainly, as I said, we have a long list of complaints with them.

One thing I think that I would disagree with my good friend from Kentucky—the accession of Sweden and Finland to NATO was a huge, huge matter. It wasn't something that was just a parenthetical thought. It added 800 miles of direct border against Russia, which is what NATO was created to

push back against. And the same thing with Sweden. Sweden has a very, very robust defense system itself.

With all due respect to my friend from Kentucky, I wouldn't put this in the vein or argument that we are going to come to the defense of Sweden. Sweden is going to come to the defense of NATO and in a very, very robust way.

Yes, we wanted them, and yes, that is exactly why I withheld the F-16 sale and refurbishment—so that we could get those two. It was extremely important.

Also, my good friend has reiterated some human rights violations that this country has. I would remind my good friend that Russia does the same thing. I have a resolution that came out of the Foreign Relations Committee that is on the floor that reiterates all those human rights and condemns Russia for those exact human rights things that my good friend reiterated, but he has a hold on it. There is one hold on that piece of legislation, and it is from the Senator from Kentucky, which I would respectfully request that he lift.

In any event, I am not here to defend Türkiye or the other things that they do. What I am here to do is to defend the importance of NATO, the importance of adding Finland and Sweden to NATO, and the fact that negotiations are the way these things get done.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. The difference between Russia and Türkiye is no one is offering to sell F-16s to Russia. I am not for selling F-16s to Russia; neither am I for selling F-16s to Türkiye.

This is a clear case of quid pro quo. All of the folks who are now for it were against it just months ago. The reason they have changed their opinion is they have been given something. Türkiye extorted us. Türkiye said: If you want Sweden to be in NATO, you have to give us these planes.

So they gave up Sweden in exchange for getting the planes. It doesn't change any of the facts. The facts are these: Them having F-16s and Russian S-400s allows them to steal some of our technology, to match the technology of our fighter jets against a Russian defense system and potentially give that to Russia.

This is a problem. It has been a problem. It hasn't changed. These are the same problems that opponents of this were mentioning over and over and over again. That is why for 2 years they have been opposed to this. They have flipped. They have sold their opposition to Türkiye for admission for Sweden. It is a quid pro quo. It is a trade.

They made a trade, but publicly they will have to acknowledge they made a trade and they think somehow it is more important to sell these planes to Türkiye than it is to protect the integrity of the technology of these planes against Russian military systems.

MOTION TO DISCHARGE—S.J. RES. 60

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I move to discharge S.J. Res. 60 from the Foreign Relations Committee.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to discharge from the Committee on Foreign Relations, S.J. Res. 60, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval of the proposed foreign military sale to the Government of Türkiye of certain defense articles and services.

VOTE ON MOTION TO DISCHARGE

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I yield back my time, and I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to discharge?

Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT).

The result was announced—yeas 13, nays 79, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 62 Leg.]

YEAS—13

Braun	Paul	Warren
Fetterman	Peters	Welch
Lee	Sanders	Wyden
Markey	Scott (FL)	
Menendez	Stabenow	

NAYS—79

Baldwin	Graham	Padilla
Bennet	Grassley	Reed
Blackburn	Hagerty	Ricketts
Blumenthal	Hassan	Risch
Booker	Hawley	Rosen
Boozman	Heinrich	Rounds
Brown	Hickenlooper	Rubio
Budd	Hirono	Schatz
Butler	Hoeven	Schmitt
Cantwell	Hyde-Smith	Schumer
Capito	Johnson	Shaheen
Cardin	Kaine	Sinema
Carper	Kelly	Smith
Casey	Kennedy	Sullivan
Collins	King	Tester
Coons	Klobuchar	Thune
Cornyn	Lankford	Tillis
Cortez Masto	Lujan	Tuberville
Cotton	Lummis	Van Hollen
Cramer	Marshall	Vance
Crapo	McConnell	Warner
Cruz	Merkley	Warnock
Duckworth	Mullin	Whitehouse
Durbin	Murkowski	Wicker
Ernst	Murphy	Young
Fischer	Murray	
Gillibrand	Ossoff	

NOT VOTING—8

Barrasso	Daines	Romney
Britt	Manchin	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Moran	

The motion was rejected.

(Mr. FETTERMAN assumed the Chair.)