

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

ISRAEL

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, following Hamas's brutal attack against Israel on October 7, some 5 months ago, Republicans and Democrats came together, along with the President of the United States, and declared our support for Israel. We all condemned the Hamas terrorists, as well as Iran, which is the main support for this proxy of the number one state sponsor of international terrorism.

We all watched in horror at the videos we saw of Hamas attacking innocent men, women, and children, and we all vowed to stand in solidarity with Israel as they did whatever they needed to do to defeat this evil.

As time passed, it seems like the roar of support among some of our friends across the aisle, including the Senate majority leader, has softened, to say the least. Some of our colleagues have even gone so far as to cast blame on Israel for the violence that is unfolding in the Middle East. They are blaming the victim, not the perpetrator. More than two dozen Senate Democrats have even joined with liberal activists to demand a cease-fire.

The quickest way to a cease-fire is for Hamas to lay down its weapons, but we know they are not going to do that because they are committed to the eradication of the State of Israel. "Wipe them off the face of the planet" is their goal.

This once rock-solid support on a bipartisan basis has slowly eroded, and it reached a new low last week when the Senate majority leader came to the floor to excoriate not Hamas, not Iran, but Israel and its leadership.

Israel, we know, is our single closest friend and ally in the Middle East, one of the very few democracies. Yes, they have messy politics. By the way, we have messy politics, too, here in this country, but we respect—we should respect—the sovereignty of that nation and their ability to make hard decisions on their own behalf without being lectured by the President of the United States and by the Senate majority leader.

The majority leader criticized Israel's response to the October 7 attack. He condemned Prime Minister Netanyahu's leadership, and he called—get this—he called for an election in Israel to replace him. In my time in the U.S. Senate, I have never seen anything quite like this. The majority leader's comments mark a sharp departure from his previous stance solidly in support of Israel. And, unfortunately, I presume for political reasons, he has decided to undermine our support on a bipartisan basis for Israel and to make it a partisan issue and to attack the leader of a sovereign ally and one dealing with the horrific aftermath of a terrorist attack.

Can you imagine, in the wake of 9/11, if our closest allies had called upon the American people to change our Presi-

dent to align with their political preferences? We would have been insulted. We would have been offended and completely outraged. The suggestion that the leader in a foreign country knows the needs of a country better than its own citizens is appalling.

On top of that, it undermines Israel's most critical job at this moment, which is to eliminate the terrorist threat against its own people. This is not like al-Qaida, thousands of miles away across an ocean. This is in the backyard of Israel. By browbeating Israel and criticizing its leaders, the majority leader has undermined the trust and confidence Israel needs in our commitment to continue to help them complete this job of eliminating the terrorist threat.

Yes, innocent people are getting hurt, but that is not the fault of the victim. That is the fault of the perpetrator of this violence. And, yes, maybe some of us would like to see different tactics chosen on the battlefield, but that is not our call. We have to trust our friend and ally Israel to make the best decisions in defense of its own sovereignty and its own existence. And, yes, we can all have private opinions about how they are going about it.

But the truth is America's role in this conflict should not be confused. We should not be saying: Well, on one hand, we support Israel. On the other hand, we think they are being too tough on Hamas.

We need to support our closest friend and ally in the region. It is just that simple. It is the choice between good and evil.

If you watch the videos of Hamas's attack against Israeli civilians on October 7—as I know the Presiding Officer has, and all of us have been exposed to it—you will recoil in horror as babies are killed, where women are sexually assaulted. I, actually, for the first time in my life, saw a video of a Hamas terrorist behead an innocent Israeli civilian—behead.

That is what we are dealing with. That is what Israel is dealing with.

There should not be confusion. We should be approaching this with complete clarity. For those of us who said we stand with Israel, we ought to lock arms on a bipartisan basis and reaffirm their right to exist and their right to make choices for their nation and their people, and we ought to support them as they go through what has to be a horrible experience for Israel.

It is not just Hamas. Again, as the Presiding Officer knows and we know, in Lebanon, in the northern part of Israel, Hezbollah—another proxy for Iran—is shooting into Israel and attacking Israeli Defense Forces. We know that Houthi rebels in Yemen are also supported by Iran. Iran is the octopus. Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis are the tentacles or the proxies they use to do their evil. Then there are the Shia militias who have attacked American troops hundreds of times in Iraq and Syria.

There should not be any confusion about this. There is the right side and the wrong side. There is the good, and there is the evil. America stands with Israel. The vast majority of Americans feel exactly as I do. We should trust the people of Israel to make decisions, certainly, about their own leaders.

I mean, we don't like it when foreign countries try to interfere with our elections. What is the speech of the majority leader but an attempt by a leader of a foreign government to interfere with their elections? We need to maintain our position that Israel has a right to defend itself against Hamas, against Hezbollah, against any Iranian proxy or any entity or country or group that wants to destroy the Jewish State.

So I regret the fact that this has become, it seems, like a partisan issue. This is the last thing that our Israeli friends and allies would want. They don't want this to be partisan politics because we know what happens here when things become partisan. One side supports an action, and the other side reflexively opposes that action. We can't afford to play politics with the U.S.-Israel alliance. Our support for Israel must remain unwavering regardless of whom they choose for their own leaders. We must support democracy. We must support sovereignty. We must support the enduring bond and the common values shared between our two countries.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. ROUNDS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 5 minutes, followed by Senator TESTER for up to 10 minutes prior to the scheduled rollcall votes.

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

S.J. RES. 62

Mr. ROUNDS. Mr. President, in November of 2023, the Biden administration released a new rule to allow for beef imports from Paraguay, a country that has historically struggled to contain outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease in their cattle herds.

The United States has been blocking beef imports from Paraguay since 1997. Paraguay last reported cases of foot-and-mouth disease in 2012. The USDA's decision to resume Paraguayan imports relies on an analysis that was completed in 2018, but American inspectors have not conducted a site visit to Paraguay since 2014.

American producers work tirelessly to produce the safest, highest quality, and most affordable beef in the entire world. Our consumers should be able to confidently feed their families beef that has met the rigorous standards required within the United States. The United States has not had a case of foot-and-mouth disease since 1929. We want to keep it that way by reversing this rule until a working group has had an opportunity to evaluate the threat to food safety and animal health posed

by Paraguayan beef with an updated analysis.

In other words, what we are asking for is for the Department of Ag here to protect our food supply for consumers by making certain that they use the most updated information possible before they allow Paraguay to begin importing beef here.

Foot-and-mouth disease is something that we have literally eradicated, but if it ever gets back into the country, it can be transferred to human beings, and it can be transferred to human beings back to livestock. It is contagious. We just simply ask that they update this study before they allow this to occur.

Today, we have two votes in a row. The first vote is not on this particular issue, but the second vote is. I would ask my colleagues for an affirmative vote to delay this rule—to stop this rule and delay it—until such time as we have an appropriate and timely review.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I first want to express my appreciation to the good Senator from South Dakota, Senator ROUNDS.

You know, Senator ROUNDS comes from South Dakota, and I come from Montana. These are both States where we raise a lot of beef. If you come from a State like that, you understand how catastrophic lifting the ban on Paraguayan beef is. It is not a good idea. In our States, lifting this ban is not supported by Democrats, and it is not supported by Republicans. The reason is pretty simple. The impacts that lifting this ban have on operations—ranching operations—and on our food security is real, and it is very, very, very serious.

This Congressional Review Act vote that we are going to take—the second one in this order—will overturn the Biden administration's decision to lift that longstanding ban on beef imports from Paraguay. The truth is, the administration butchered this decision. I have serious concerns if Paraguay does not currently meet the animal health standards that are in place to warrant access to our markets. Congress must step in and stop this decision in order to protect the American producer and the American consumer.

Our ranchers in this country—I like to say our Montana ranchers—raise the best beef in the world. In fact, there is a bumper sticker that says, “Montana makes beef, and beef makes Montana,” and that is a fact. And it is true all over this country. Our ranchers do it by holding themselves to the strictest standards when it comes to managing and maintaining their herds. Paraguay simply doesn't meet those same high standards. They have a history of foot-and-mouth disease, and lifting this ban poses a real threat to our food supply.

Look, while the chances of a foot-and-mouth disease outbreak to some may appear low, the effects of just one

outbreak can be devastating. The cost to ranchers for our economy is estimated to be as high as \$200 billion. And you say: Why could that happen? I mean, how could it happen? It is just a little bit of meat coming into the United States. Well, the fact is, this is highly contagious. What happens if a cow contracts this disease is—it is like pouring acid over their nose, over their udders, over their feet; it blisters the mouth, the feet, the udders; and, quite frankly, it goes through a herd like wildfire. It puts people out of business, and it impacts our food security.

Senator ROUNDS talked about this, but the USDA has to get more recent data and thorough data to show that Paraguayan beef is safe and healthy. It should be available behind the meat counter with the information that we have now because, as Senator ROUNDS pointed out, we haven't had inspectors there in 10 years, and there were only four there when they were there. Things change.

Look, this isn't about one single country. The fact is, I know Paraguay is a great ally, and I think the State Department is having a lot of influence on this decision because of that ally. I appreciate countries that have the same values as us, but the fact is, we do not have the animal health standard in place—it is a broken process—and we need to have better standards if we are going to be bringing beef from anywhere. This is about keeping our consumers safe. It is about protecting America's cattle herds so that ranchers don't have to fear an outbreak of this disease because, if it happens, they are done: generational ranchers, done; our food supply, put at risk.

If you want to know who is supporting this Congressional Review Act, they are folks who typically don't always get along together—the NCBA, U.S. Cattlemen, R-CALF USA, the Livestock Marketing Association, the National Farmers Union, and the American Farm Bureau. This shows the kind of broad-based support for the CRA that Senator ROUNDS and I are doing on this issue. Rural America sees this as a real problem. This united front shows just how important protecting our cattle herds and our food supply is to American farmers and ranchers.

I want to be clear: I share my colleague's concerns about what is going on in China and Russia right now. I understand the importance of strengthening alliances with partners all over the world, including Paraguay, but I am telling you we shouldn't do it on the backs of hard-working American ranchers. We shouldn't do it on the backs of threatening our food security.

I understand that many folks back here have never gone through a calving season; they have never had to fix a fence; they have never had to manage grass; they have never had to butcher a cow. But I am going to tell you, I see firsthand every day the kind of work these folks put in, and they don't need

something that is totally out of their control putting them out of business and putting our food supply at risk. That is why this is critical. Congress needs to step up, do the oversight, pass this Congressional Review Act, and put the ban back on Paraguayan beef. It is really important. I would urge all of my colleagues to support this common-sense solution to protect our Nation's food supply and do right by American ranchers.

In closing, I will just say this: The way we adjudicate animal health standards in foreign countries that want to export beef to us—that system is broken. It is broken. Congress has an opportunity today to provide real oversight and jump-start the conversation about how much we need on these reforms, and it starts with this Congressional Review Act.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the scheduled vote occur immediately.

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

VOTE ON RODRIGUEZ NOMINATION

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Rodriguez nomination?

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. 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. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) and the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. MULLIN).

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 48, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 100 Ex.]

YEAS—50

Baldwin	Heinrich	Rosen
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Sanders
Blumenthal	Hirono	Schatz
Booker	Kaine	Schumer
Brown	Kelly	Shaheen
Butler	King	Sinema
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Smith
Cardin	Lujan	Stabenow
Carper	Markey	Tester
Casey	Menendez	Van Hollen
Coons	Merkley	Warner
Cortez Masto	Murphy	Warnock
Duckworth	Murray	Warren
Durbin	Ossoff	Welch
Fetterman	Padilla	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Peters	Wyden
Hassan	Reed	

NAYS—48

Barrasso	Ernst	Marshall
Blackburn	Fischer	McConnell
Boozman	Graham	Moran
Braun	Grassley	Murkowski
Britt	Hagerty	Paul
Budd	Hawley	Ricketts
Cassidy	Hoeven	Risch
Collins	Hyde-Smith	Romney
Cornyn	Johnson	Rounds
Cotton	Kennedy	Rubio
Cramer	Lankford	Schmitt
Crapo	Lee	Scott (FL)
Cruz	Lummis	Scott (SC)
Daines	Manchin	Sullivan