

little Valentine's Day gift: their initial "maximum fair price" offer for each selected drug. Calling this price-fixing scheme a negotiation is like calling a bank robbery a transaction. In any fair negotiation, either party has the ability to walk away from a deal they don't like. But in this case, if a drug company fails to agree to the "maximum fair price" determined by unelected bureaucrats in a government Agency, the company has two options: They can agree to pay an excise tax capturing up to 1,900 percent of the drug's daily revenue; if not, the IRA would force them to withdraw entirely from participation in the Medicaid and Medicare programs.

So, unsurprisingly, multiple drugmakers have sued the Federal Government over the IRA's price-fixing racket. The companies have argued that the IRA's requirements constitute an uncompensated taking of property in violation of the takings clause.

In response, my colleague from Vermont, Senator SANDERS, decided to call the CEOs of all these companies to testify before the Senate HELP Committee, and the timing is no coincidence. As a recent editorial pointed out, "Mr. SANDERS doesn't want to negotiate, or conduct actual oversight. He wants to keelhaul the CEOs as punishment for suing the government."

Of course, the ultimate victims are not the innovators but the patients who will never receive lifesaving treatments. By one estimate, the incentives eliminated by this scheme would have delivered nine times as much funding for cancer research as then-Vice President Biden's own 2016 Cancer Moonshot Initiative provided.

The simple truth of the matter is that socialism doesn't work. The government can't wave a magic wand and make prices go down. And expressing anger about prices to a CEO won't lower prices either.

So perhaps instead of holding show trials on high prices, Washington Democrats might reconsider how their own reckless taxing and spending policies have created an economy that is failing innovators, patients, and working families alike.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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.

IRAN

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, the Nation received tragic news on Sunday morning. Three American soldiers were killed in an attack by an Iran-backed militia against Tower 22, a base in northeast Jordan that sits near the border of Syria and Iraq. More than 40 servicemembers were also injured in the attack with 8 requiring evacuation.

Families of the fallen and injured are in our prayers, as are the families of the two Navy Seals who were lost at sea off the coast of Somalia earlier this month, during a dangerous nighttime raid to interdict Iranian missile parts being shipped to the Houthis in Yemen.

We owe all of these military members a tremendous debt of gratitude.

There will no doubt be an investigation into how the drone that killed our soldiers on Sunday was reportedly mistaken as a friendly drone. But with more than 165 attacks against U.S. troops over the last several months, the risk of a U.S. fatality has been very high, and the half measures so far pursued by the Biden administration have failed to stop us from reaching this tragic milestone.

That is because the Biden administration's posture is missing a key element. It is possible to deter an adversary from taking certain actions by having the military capabilities to deny their success or to impose a crippling response. But having the military might alone isn't sufficient for a credible deterrence. These capabilities must be—have to be—backed up with a clear willingness to use them.

So when the Biden administration repeatedly asserts that we don't want to escalate with Iran, that we don't seek a war with Iran, the Iranian regime sees that as permission to set loose its terrorist proxies. It is unquestionably true that we would prefer to avoid escalation in the region. I am not here to call for war with Iran. And if the ayatollahs in Iran are to be believed, they say they do not want war either.

But if every diplomatic admonishment and so-called proportional response to the Houthis or Iran-backed militias comes with a caveat that we are not seeking to escalate, it is interpreted as "we won't escalate." This is not the language of deterrence, and it neuters the ability of our counterstrikes to compel any change in behavior.

So what should this administration do in response to the 165-plus attacks against U.S. forces in Iraq, Syria, the Red Sea, and now in Jordan? First and most importantly, keep all options on the table. Let the Iranian regime guess the lengths to which we will go to protect our troops from attacks, combat terrorism, uphold our freedom of navigation in the Red Sea, and help our ally Israel. Second, the President, as Commander in Chief, needs to take decisive action and articulate his strategy to the American people. I will defer to our military leaders on what measures will send the clearest message to Iran that its days of enabling attacks against U.S. military targets are numbered.

But there is no question that we need something more compelling than the President's handful of airstrikes, which have clearly done nothing to deter Iran and its proxies. When the stakes are this high and American lives are on the line, half measures will not cut it.

When it comes to President Biden's handling of Iran, a course correction is long overdue. First, there was President Biden's attempt to reinstate the Obama administration's flawed Iran nuclear deal. Then there was the Biden administration's attempt to unfreeze \$6 billion in Iranian assets as part of a deal to free American prisoners. Thankfully, the administration ultimately refroze those funds in the wake of Hamas's October 7 attack against Israel, but unfreezing them in the first place was a serious mistake.

It isn't just this kid-glove treatment that has emboldened and enabled Iran; the President's disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan on a timeline announced to our enemies seriously dented perception of America's resolve.

Then there are things like the President's decision to restart funding to United Nations' Relief and Works Agency, otherwise known as UNRWA. New intelligence has confirmed what we had long suspected, and that is that roughly 10 percent of UNRWA workers in Gaza have ties to Islamist militant groups. Worse, at least 12 members actually participated in Hamas's October 7 attack, with two kidnapping an Israeli woman, two raiding an Israeli kibbutz, and another providing ammo to Hamas terrorists.

President Trump stopped sending taxpayer dollars to UNRWA in 2018 in response to reports that its staff held affiliations with Hamas and promoted anti-Semitism in classrooms. So why in the world—why in the world—would the Biden administration restart this funding without certifying it wouldn't be used to support terrorism? Another unforced error that has harmed our credibility in the eyes of our adversaries.

So what happens next?

President Biden needs to demonstrate resolve and leadership in bringing a swift end to Iran's campaign of terror. He must forcefully respond to Iran and show that the United States will be unwavering in defending our national interests, especially our troops.

He needs to seriously reconsider the reported plans to withdraw U.S. troops from Iraq and Syria based on an arbitrary timeline rather than security conditions on the ground, which will only be interpreted as a retreat by Iran and its terrorist proxies.

It would also be nice if he stopped stifling American energy and unfroze the liquified natural gas export approvals he recently halted so that our allies aren't forced to turn to countries like Russia and Iran for energy supplies.

This is a critical time. The eyes of the world and particularly the eyes of our adversaries are on our President. I hope—I sincerely hope—he will step up to meet the challenge.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHMITT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

The Senator from Missouri.

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE KANSAS CITY  
NATIONAL SECURITY CAMPUS

Mr. SCHMITT. Mr. President, I rise today in recognition of the Kansas City National Security Campus and the important role it plays in strategic deterrence on the occasion of its 75th anniversary.

I stand here today at the desk of President Harry S. Truman. In 1946, President Truman established the Atomic Energy Commission, and in 1949, Kansas City was selected as the location to produce nonnuclear components for our nuclear arsenal. For 75 years, the Kansas City National Security Campus has been the primary site within the Nuclear Security Enterprise for procuring and producing—say that a few times—nonnuclear parts and components for nuclear weapons.

As the United States continues to advance nuclear modernization programs, the Kansas City National Security Campus plays an essential role in America's national security, helping to ensure the nuclear stockpile is safe, secure, and reliable.

More than 6,000 hard-working Missourians go to work day in and day out, and the importance of their contribution to our country and its defenses cannot be understated. They make 80 percent—80 percent—of the nonnuclear components for the weapons in our national nuclear arsenal. In addition, they support proliferation deterrence, supply chain security, and our overall responsiveness to global threats. Kansas City National Security Campus is not only improving the reliability and modernity of our arsenal, they are making it more efficient too.

The U.S. nuclear stockpile remains the bedrock of our strategic deterrence, and the security and stability it provides to our country's defense is paramount. It is not an exaggeration to say that this is the most important moment for our nuclear arsenal in generations, and the Kansas City National Security Campus is at the center of it all.

At a time when the People's Republic of China is rapidly growing and modernizing its own arsenal, Kansas City National Security Campus and the critical role it plays in our defense is more important than ever. Never in our history have we faced so dangerous a threat as communist China, founded on the belief that the power to govern comes not from the people but from the barrel of a gun. We must therefore meet their strength with our own, and Kansas City National Security Campus is making our country and its defenses stronger each and every day.

I am deeply proud—and there are many of them here today—to represent the State of Missouri and the folks from that campus in the U.S. Senate

and to represent the dedicated workforce of the Kansas City National Security Campus. They are central to our Nation's security.

I could not be more pleased to recognize the Kansas City National Security Campus and its 75 years of contributions to national security. Some of the facility's leadership is with us today in the Gallery, and I thank them for their service.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

NOMINATION OF KAROLINE MEHALCHICK

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise this morning to share my strong support for the judicial nominee that we are about to vote on, Judge Karoline Mehalchick. Judge Mehalchick has been nominated to serve on the Middle District Court of Pennsylvania. That is one of our three Federal judicial districts. Upon confirmation, she would sit in the Federal courthouse in my hometown of Scranton, PA, where she has already been serving with distinction for over 10 years as a Federal magistrate judge.

Born and raised in Lackawanna County, Judge Mehalchick went on to attend and graduate from the Schreyer Honors College at Penn State University before heading to Tulane Law School in Louisiana.

Fortunately for Pennsylvania, Judge Mehalchick returned home after graduation and served as a law clerk for the Honorable Trish Corbett on the Court of Common Pleas of Lackawanna County. From there, she worked as an associate and partner at the law firm of Oliver Price & Rhodes in Scranton, before being appointed as a U.S. magistrate judge for the Middle District of Pennsylvania in July of 2013.

In 2021, she was appointed chief U.S. magistrate judge in the Middle District, and upon her appointment, the then-chief judge of the Middle District Court, Judge John Jones III, commented that she has been an "exemplary and hardworking jurist" and that he had "every confidence that she will . . . serve with distinction." I think his confidence was well placed, based upon her service.

Judge Jones, the then-chief judge of the Middle District, was nominated by President George W. Bush and confirmed by the Senate some 20 years ago.

Judge Mehalchick has proved to be a strong leader in both the Middle District and across the Nation, during her time on the bench. She has served as cochair of the Middle District's Prisoner Litigation Settlement Program and presided over the Scranton CARE court. She has also served on the magistrate judges' advisory group of the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts and was appointed in 2021 by Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts to serve on the Judicial Conference Committee on Codes of Conduct.

Her reputation and commitment to the Middle District are further high-

lighted by the numerous letters of support that she has received from fellow members of the judiciary. The former chief, Judge Jones, as I mentioned earlier, in another statement of support, spoke of Judge Mehalchick's "exemplary character," her hard work, impressive temperament, "brilliant" writing, and dedication to the rule of law. This former chief judge further wrote:

The greatest appellation that I can award to a fellow jurist is that she is a "judge's judge." This fits Judge Mehalchick perfectly.

Another retired judge, Thomas Vanaskie, who served on both the District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit said as follows:

[Judge Mehalchick] has the legal acumen, personal discipline, exceptional work ethic, sense of fairness, and compassion to be an outstanding member of the Federal judiciary.

Her nomination has garnered support even beyond the legal community throughout Pennsylvania. The president of the Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce, Bob Durkin, wrote about the "first-rate judiciary of the Middle District" and highlighted how Judge Mehalchick "has been a critical player in this institution," and that her confirmation "will further strengthen and bring honor to that bench."

Judge Mehalchick has dedicated her career to the people—the people—of the Middle District, from her legal practice and judicial service to her community work with organizations such as the Ballet Theatre of Scranton.

Throughout her legal career and particularly during the past decade, sitting as a U.S. magistrate judge, she has undoubtedly demonstrated that she has the temperament and experience to faithfully serve the people of the Middle District.

I am pleased that the Senate is moving forward with her confirmation vote today. I urge my colleagues to vote yes on her confirmation.

I yield the floor.

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Kirk Edward Sherriff, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of California.

NOMINATION OF KIRK EDWARD SHERRIFF

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today, the Senate will vote to confirm Kirk Sherriff to the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California.

Born in Berkeley, CA, Mr. Sherriff received his B.A. from Columbia College at Columbia University and his J.D. from Harvard Law School. After completing law school, Mr. Sherriff