

A bill (H.R. 7109) to require a citizenship question on the decennial census, to require reporting on certain census statistics, and to modify apportionment of Representatives to be based on United States citizens instead of all individuals.

Mr. SCHUMER. In order to place the bill on the Calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I would object to further proceeding.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the Calendar.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader.

ISRAEL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I would like to begin my remarks today with a quote: The idea that we would cut off military aid to an ally—our only true, true ally in the entire region—is absolutely preposterous. It's just beyond my comprehension why anyone would do that.

Five years ago, then-Candidate Biden was saying the right thing about America's commitment to the Jewish State of Israel. Unfortunately, today he is doing the complete opposite. The President and his administration are withholding critical military assistance from Israel as it fights to restore its security against savage terrorists, and they are refusing to answer basic questions about it.

Last week, the Speaker of the House and I sent a letter to the Biden administration, pressing for specific details on which weapons were being withheld and why they were being withheld. And while we waited for an answer, the Secretary of State spent the weekend dodging requests for any serious rationale driving the President's decision.

Now, it is no secret that the administration is under immense pressure from the anti-Israel left. It is evident in the words of some of our own colleagues. Members of this body have urged the President to "be more aggressive with the Israelis." They have demanded that "not one penny go to support America's ally unless Israel yields to their view of what's acceptable in self-defense." And, of course, they have even engaged in grotesque political interference, calling for regime change in a sovereign democracy.

The Intelligence Committee is holding a hearing tomorrow about foreign interference in our politics and elections, and yet too many of our Democratic colleagues can't seem to resist the temptation to put their fingers on the electoral scales of other democracies.

Far too many Washington Democrats have indulged in what I call the "Bibi derangement syndrome," an absurd trope that is setting a dangerous precedent.

Some of our colleagues talk about an Israeli Government dominated by shadowy, far-right forces. That government

literally does not exist. Israel is led by a coalition, a national unity government. And its war cabinet, which includes members of multiple political parties, is distinguished by the absence—the absence—of the most conservative members of the coalition.

By all accounts, support for military operations in Gaza and against Hezbollah in Lebanon transcends Israeli politics. But here in Washington, Democrats want to pretend that what they are objecting to is merely the will of a Prime Minister they don't like.

Some of our most senior Senate colleagues, including the chairman of the State Foreign Operations Subcommittee, just this weekend have even demonstrated an eagerness to assign political blame within Israel for the failure to prevent the October 7 attacks. Well, that will be the job of the people of Israel, and it will come after they finish restoring their security against the terrorists wearing Israeli and American blood.

But let's make one thing absolutely clear: If the Biden administration continues to hector and impede our ally's progress toward this goal, a share of the blame for Hamas's success may well come to rest right here in Washington. Of course, there is already plenty of blame to go around among the Western institutions that have fallen into predictable patterns of dangerous, anti-Israel bias in the months after October 7, from the media that rushed to fit the deadliest attack on Jews since the Holocaust into tidy, artificial narratives of moral equivalence and "cycles of violence" to the prominent international organizations that continue to elevate and legitimize outright terror propaganda.

Just a few days ago, the United Nations finally admitted that the figures on Palestinian casualties it had held up for months as objective truth had been grossly overstated. As a spokesman put it, "In the fog of war, it's difficult to come up with numbers." No kidding. It is especially difficult to get accurate data when you rely exclusively on the word of Hamas.

Unsurprisingly, just days after announcing its revised numbers, the U.N. backtracked yesterday and resumed taking the Hamas-run Ministry of Health in Gaza at its word. But remember, the U.N.'s affiliation to terrorists isn't limited to data gathering, is it? Employees of the U.N.'s relief and work agency, UNRWA, quite literally participated in the October 7 attack.

So why don't we talk about the facts. In the last 9 days, the terrorists controlling southern Gaza have attacked a major entry port for humanitarian aid from Israel six times—six times. This is not an accident. And if terrorists strike the absurdly inefficient and costly floating pier, that won't be an accident either.

The true obstacle to peace and stability for the people of Gaza is loudly identifying itself. Hamas is showing us

precisely why it can play no part in the future of Israelis or Palestinians, and a true ally would give Israel the time, space, and support it needs to eliminate the terrorist threat.

But that is not what we have seen from the Commander in Chief. By limiting Israel's options, the President is giving the terrorists a lifeline. Does the Biden administration really expect Hamas to capitulate at a negotiating table when our conditions on Israel help terrorists survive on the battleground? And does the President think exhausting an arsenal of expensive, low-inventory interceptors is changing Iran's broader calculus?

The lesson from repelling Iran's direct drone and missile attacks on Israel or commercial shipping vessels isn't that we can't intercept them; the lesson is that we still haven't managed to compel Iran to stop doing it and that we ought to be doing much more to rebuild our stocks and capacity to produce air and missile defenses as well as the long-range weapons that can credibly threaten what Iran and other adversaries hold dear.

This isn't new criticism, and it isn't a new problem. An emboldened Iran, an unchecked network of proxies, and brazen violence against Israel, America, and the global economy—the President's choices have magnified these threats. He has invited them with retreat, with hesitation, and with appeasement.

Today, the United States has effectively allowed itself to be deterred by a second-rate terrorist power, and the world is taking note. Our credibility is not divisible. Our failure to meet one challenge compounds the others we face.

But the path forward is not a mystery. As I have said repeatedly: rebuild our military power, stand with our allies, deter our adversaries, and do it today.

ANTI-SEMITISM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, now on another matter, last month, I suggested the administrators at schools like Columbia—where nests of anti-Semitism were festering and growing—ought to follow the lead of Princeton, where trespassers were quickly arrested and removed by law enforcement. Unfortunately, Princeton may not be setting such a shining example after all. The school has apparently decided that perpetrators on campus shouldn't bear actual consequences.

Yesterday, at the urging of "several" academic and department chairs, Princeton announced they would forgo traditional discipline and instead let the student radicals who tried to occupy campus buildings participate in a "restorative justice process."

You might be forgiven for having absolutely no idea what that means—none. But the bottom line is, these students will be allowed to graduate in the coming weeks. After all, what is a little call for intifada between friends?

When Henry David Thoreau famously chose jail as a consequence for his civil disobedience, he explained it this way:

Under a government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also a prison.

Apparently, the post-modern prisoner of conscience see things a bit differently. So that is my suggestion for the folks pushing restorative justice at Princeton: Make these student radicals read Thoreau. Let them and their faculty enablers indict themselves with a comparative cheapness of their violent play-acting.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. 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.

VLADIMIR KARA-MURZA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, last week, we learned the most recent winners of the Pulitzer Prize. I am pleased that among this year's winners is a friend of mine who made it his life's work to help bring democracy and freedom to his home country of Russia: Vladimir Kara-Murza.

This is a photograph of him in Moscow at an earlier time.

Vladimir Putin's government has tried to kill this man repeatedly, to silence him in the uniquely Vladimir Putin way—poison him—but each time, Vladimir survived and continued his work, including writing a regular column for the Washington Post about the need for change in Russia.

While he and his family became residents of the United States, he insisted on maintaining his home in Russia. Two years ago, he came to see me before returning to Russia. I will never forget asking Vladimir about his decision to return. He was unequivocal. He felt he had to return. His aspirations were simple. He believed in a better future for Russia, one in which Russians could live in a free and prosperous society and be at peace with their neighbors.

Unsurprisingly, shortly after he returned to Russia after visiting with me, Vladimir Putin had him arrested and jailed. But Kara-Murza has remained steadfast in his opposition to Putin. He continues his writings from Putin's gulag—deeply thoughtful pieces that offer a different vision of Russia's future. For example, the titles of recent pieces he has written include "Even from a Russian prison, I can see Putin's weakness" and "I am proud to have spoken out against Putin's crimes in Ukraine." It was this powerful writing that won him international recognition and a Pulitzer Prize.

I want to congratulate him and to thank his family for their courage on

receiving this prestigious award. Most importantly, I want to remind him that what he is doing is not ignored, nor forgotten.

To Vladimir Putin, I say: Your folly in Ukraine and domestic repression cannot hide the light of Kara-Murza's moving words.

ISRAEL

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on a different subject, I want to speak on President Biden's recent decision to withhold certain offensive U.S. weapons from Israel that might be used in an assault on Rafah.

I support President Biden.

It is not, as some have characterized, a failure to support Israel in a dangerous region after a genuinely horrific Hamas attack—and October 7 was such an attack. It is instead a warning from one of the most pro-Israeli U.S. Presidents to an ally that a full-scale assault on Rafah could not only add to the already catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza but undermine any long-term stability in the region.

Let me also remind those critics that President Biden recently helped coordinate, with the use of American forces, a dramatic defense of Israel against an Iranian assault.

Anyone who doubts Joe Biden's commitment to Israel is misguided. But he has reached his limit with Prime Minister Netanyahu and his response in Gaza and focus on his own political survival more than anything else.

His blunders protecting civilians and allowing the flow of aid were noted in the national security memo reported to Congress last week. Let me elaborate. Last week, several of us met with the Jordanian King, Abdullah II—a deeply thoughtful leader who knows the region well. He is a key ally of the United States, and he has made peace with Israel. He, like Middle East expert Tom Friedman, argued that simply leveling Gaza and furthering the humanitarian crisis without a long-term strategy for peace is no strategy at all for Israel. A path forward can only happen with the support of Arab nations in the region.

President Biden has been urging Prime Minister Netanyahu to offer this broader vision, one that likely includes normalization with Saudi Arabia and eventual peace with a Palestinian State—a vision that could be undermined with a massive assault on Rafah.

As Tom Friedman posed to Netanyahu in a recent column, "What do you want more—Rafah or Riyadh? Do you want to mount a full-scale invasion of Rafah to try to finish off Hamas—if that is even possible—without offering any Israeli exit strategy from Gaza or any political horizon for a two-state solution with non-Hamas-led Palestinians?"

Shortly after the horrific attack on October 7, I warned our Israeli friends to learn from our mistakes made in the fog of rage and pain after September 11.

You do not want ill-thought occupation of Gaza to become your Fallujah, and, as also learned in Iraq, one needs the trust of the local civilian population to help counter terrorist groups.

We were speculating recently on how many innocent civilians have been killed in Gaza in an effort to eliminate Hamas. The number is staggering. This is another reason President Biden reached his limit with Netanyahu. The devastating civilian toll in Gaza is not only a moral and humanitarian problem; it is a strategic failure.

More than 40 years ago, an American President was furious about the photos of civilians killed by Israeli shelling in Lebanon. That President then called Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, dressed him down sharply, and told him the excessive assault had to end. Over the course of this President's term, he used the power of U.S. weapons sales, including delaying or withholding certain warplanes and arms, to influence Israeli war policy as well as to criticize Israeli actions in the region at the U.N. Security Council. That President was Ronald Reagan.

Reagan wrote in his diary about the difficult call with Begin:

I was angry. . . . I told him it had to stop or our entire future relationship was endangered.

So I urge those who are resistant and vocal about President Biden's actions to reflect on Ronald Reagan's similar moves to help our Israeli allies from making strategic, tragic mistakes four decades ago or reflect on the words of former Mossad Chief Meir Dagan, who before his death concluded that Israel over the years "achieved a long string of impressive tactical successes but also disastrous strategic failures."

I have long supported a two-state solution for Israelis and Palestinians. In fact, out of the devastating Yom Kippur War came an unimaginable yet lasting peace between Egypt and Israel. It can happen.

So with the right leaders on both sides, it can be done, and we have a responsibility in the United States for a renewed push on all sides towards this goal—one in which Israeli and Palestinian children can once and forever live in safety, peace, and dignity.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Courtney Diesel O'Donnell, of