

shipping 11 more terrorists from Gitmo back to the Middle East to a country that is reportedly expelling former terrorist detainees into the wilds of Yemen; that is, until Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad launched their savage massacre of Jews on October 7. Apparently, the administration has bowed, at least temporarily, to the political inconvenience of releasing radical Islamic terrorists into the wild.

The American people don't need a barbaric attack on Israel's civilians to remind us that radical Islamic terrorists are targeting us, murdering our allies, and sowing chaos around the world. The growth of terrorist threats worldwide on President Biden's watch is an indisputable fact, and his administration's abject lack of a coherent counterterrorism strategy is a damning failure.

The President may have removed the Iran-backed Houthis from the terrorist list, but the Houthi terrorists didn't get the memo. The Shia Houthi terrorists and the al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula Sunni terrorists of Yemen are both—both of them—on the march, working to extend the chaos and violence Hamas is sowing in Israel and Gaza across the entire region.

The White House may have thought they could maintain shoestring partnerships and counter exploding terrorist threats in critical regions, but Russia's inroads to supplant U.S. influence in the Sahel and North Africa tell a different story. They may have bet the farm that over-the-horizon counterterrorism operations could replace an active coalition presence in Afghanistan, but the resurgence of groups like ISIS-K and al-Qaida suggest otherwise.

How many counterterrorism strikes has the U.S. military conducted in Afghanistan since the withdrawal? The current state of affairs benefits those who wish America and our allies harm. From the administration's paralyzing fear of escalation to its desperate pursuit of detente with the world's top terror sponsor, the status quo gives our enemies cover.

And had the Biden administration's plan to export another 11 terrorists from Gitmo actually gone ahead, it might very well have swelled their ranks. We don't have to imagine it. We saw what happened when the terrorists detained at Bagram Air Base in Kabul were sprung loose. We have seen repeated terrorist jailbreaks in Syria as well.

And in light of recent reporting, we know that 50,000 ISIS suspects and their families are detained by U.S.-funded nonstate actors in that country, at the epicenter—the epicenter—of terrorist unrest.

The Biden administration might genuinely believe that outsourcing its responsibility to hold and prosecute those who wish America harm would be more humane or that it would make America safer, but they would be dead wrong on both counts. Relying on proxies to detain tens of thousands of low-

level suspects in alarming conditions risks inviting a whole new generation of terrorists to put America in their crosshairs.

Administration officials cannot credibly signal virtue by releasing hardcore terrorists from Gitmo while quietly relying on proxies to detain low-level terrorists in such conditions. The men who await justice at Gitmo are the worst of the worst. Recidivism is a serious concern. And the Democrats working breathlessly to close America's terrorist detention facility don't have a serious plan to address it. They make it harder to strike terrorists and harder to detain them at the same time. In fact, the administration is now trying to block any constraints on their ability to empty Gitmo from the coming year's NDAA.

If any of our colleagues are tempted to indulge the administration's obsessive quest, I would encourage them to request briefings on the nature of the threat before they do.

The President's dangerous weakness in the face of hardened killers is well documented, and his plan to let some of the masterminds of terrorist violence against Americans off the hook is only the most enduring example.

#### FARM BILL

Mr. President, now, on one final matter, it is no secret that American farmers face a lot of uncertainty: unstable markets, volatile weather, and a projected record drop in farm income. All these things make a job that is inherently difficult even more precarious.

As one producer in my State put it, "Farming is risky and margins are tight."

Certainty and stability oil the engine of American agriculture, which is why farm families in Kentucky and the rest of rural America look to the farm bill to provide support and safeguard our food supply. Unfortunately, with the farm bill's September expiration fast approaching, Senate Democrats don't seem to be in any rush to address farmers' immediate needs.

The Agriculture Committee's majority has yet to introduce a bill, set a markup, or secure a single minute of floor time with the Democratic leader. The committee has a long tradition of bipartisanship. There is no reason our colleagues can't show some good faith and start working to advance serious legislation. It is time to get to the table.

Yesterday, Ranking Member BOOZMAN put forward a Republican farm bill framework that would give our colleagues a good place to start. The ranking member's plan reflects the actual reality of owning and operating a farm today, and it addresses the biggest bone of contention among American producers: less fluff and more farm in the farm bill, from bolstering the farmer safety net, to expanding our competitiveness in world markets, to providing new producers with means to get off the ground.

I have served on the Agriculture Committee my entire time in the Sen-

ate. I know drafting this legislation is certainly not easy, and I am grateful to the ranking member for his work on this important issue. I hope that my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will look to this framework for guidance as we work to deliver certainty and stability to America's farmers.

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.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, as a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee and a resident of a State whose literal lifeblood is agriculture, the farm bills that Congress takes up every few years are one of my top priorities.

I have had the chance to help craft four, now, farm bills during my time in Congress, and my No. 1 goal is always to ensure that each bill accurately reflects the needs and priorities of the men and women on the ground, the ones who are doing the hard work of feeding our country.

As I travel around my State of South Dakota, I always take special note of my conversations with agriculture producers, and many of the bills that I introduce for inclusion in the farm bill are based on these conversations.

The current farm bill will expire later this year. With deadlines approaching and updates needed to a number of farm programs, Congress needs to focus on advancing the next farm bill.

This is all the more important given the headwinds farmers and ranchers are currently facing. With net farm income projected to decline by 25 percent this year and with input costs projected to hit a record high, it is especially important that we make sure farmers and ranchers have the support they need to carry on with their vital work.

Last month, the House Agriculture Committee marked up its draft of the next farm bill, and the bill passed the committee with the support of not just Republicans but several Democrats as well. Yesterday morning, Senate Agriculture Committee Ranking Member JOHN BOOZMAN released his farm bill framework to build off the House's work and hopefully move this process forward in the Senate.

Progress in the Senate has been hamstrung by Senate Democrats' insistence on prioritizing things like climate over the needs of farmers and ranchers. I am hoping that the recent efforts by the House, along with Senator BOOZMAN's framework, will move deliberations along and refocus our efforts on farmers and ranchers instead of Democrats' climate obsessions.

In preparation for this next farm bill, I introduced a number of pieces of legislation that I hope to get included in

the final bill. These bills are based on the conversations I have had with farmers and ranchers as I travel throughout South Dakota as well as events I have held to hear from ag producers about their priorities for the farm bill.

I am very pleased that the framework Senator BOOZMAN has put out contains measures from a number of the bills I introduced. That includes elements of my Conservation Reserve Program Improvement Act—legislation I introduced to make the Conservation Reserve Program a more effective option for producers—as well as my CRP Flexibility Act, which would provide additional drought flexibilities for CRP contract holders.

It also includes my Crop Insurance for Future Farmers Act, which I introduced with Senator KLOBUCHAR to help make crop insurance more affordable for young farmers, as well as measures from my Expediting Forest Restoration and Recovery Act and my Rural Internet Improvement Act.

It includes a section modeled off my bipartisan Strengthening Local Processing Act to increase the processing options available to livestock producers and expand small meatpackers' capacity.

Importantly, this framework would make improvements to the Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage Programs, which are essential elements of the farm safety net.

I am tremendously grateful to Senator BOOZMAN for his work on this framework and his efforts to move the farm bill process forward.

I hope that my Democratic colleagues will approach pursuing a bipartisan agreement on this legislation with a new seriousness. As I said earlier, their focus on nonfarm priorities has slowed progress on this farm bill. I hope the House's recent work and Senator BOOZMAN's efforts will encourage them to focus on what should be in the substance of any farm bill—namely, the farm.

I yield the floor.

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. LANKFORD. 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.

The Senator from Oklahoma.

#### BORDER SECURITY

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, if everyone here in this Chamber is watching the news of late, in the last 24 hours, the FBI scooped up eight citizens from Tajikistan that were in the United States and arrested them on immigration violations, but they were also suspected terrorists that were in the United States. They were in Philadelphia; they were in Los Angeles; they were in New York City; and they were

individuals that had direct connections to terrorism. And they were here because they illegally crossed our southern border and were waved in.

This is an issue that I have been on this floor at this desk speaking about for 2 years now. The population that is crossing our southern border has dramatically changed in the last 2 years.

No longer it is just about everyone from the Western Hemisphere. Now we have very large numbers of people from places like Tajikistan, from West Africa, from China, from Russia, from Pakistan, from other specific places that are known areas of terrorism, and we have people in the thousands that are crossing our borders that we don't know who they are, from places that we typically don't have people illegally crossing.

This group of individuals are called special interest aliens; that is, they are not on our Terror Watchlist, but we don't know why they are here or how they got here or the process that they came to come to the United States across our southern border illegally is unusual, different, or is directed by a crime organization outside of Mexico—special interest aliens.

Last year, we had 70,000 people that fell into the category of special interest aliens. This year, so far, we have had 53,000 people that were special interest aliens. These eight individuals that were arrested yesterday were part of that group of special interest aliens: illegally present here, not vetted on our southern border but released on their own recognizance, and now, with an announcement yesterday from the FBI, a connection to terrorism, specifically ISIS terrorism.

In the past several months, the FBI has also picked up al-Shabaab terrorists in the United States that had crossed on our southern border, that were listed as special interest aliens, and that have now been picked up.

We are literally living on borrowed time. This is the issue that I have brought up over and over again to this body to say we need to pay attention to this issue of what is happening on our southern border.

Now, currently the administration has put in place a new Executive order to try to lower somewhat the number of people that are coming across, but the way they are doing it is by turning around people from the Western Hemisphere, but folks from other areas like Tajikistan, those folks are still coming through. Some are being detained, but a large number are actually being released on their own recognizance as special interest aliens. We don't have information on a direct tie to terrorism at the time they are at the border so they are being released.

The bill that I brought to this body would have changed the way we did screening dramatically, would have taken all of these issues about terrorism from the end of the process and moved it to the beginning so that we are not releasing people and then trying to figure out if we can chase them.

Right now, what is really happening day-to-day is that individuals that are crossing our border, we are hoping that the FBI can pick up any information on them after they are already released into the country.

Remember, there were 70,000 individuals like this last year, 53,000 so far this year, and we are hoping the FBI is able to discern they are a terror threat before they carry out an act of terrorism. That is exactly the wrong way to do this.

We need to enforce our southern border with more than just some action to be able to reduce what is happening. We should not be living on borrowed time every day awaiting the next terrorist attack in the United States because our border was open.

What have we done in the past? Well, last year we deported four Tajiks—last year, four. Now we are in the process of deporting another eight. We don't know what the numbers are here. And at the end of the day, that is a very bad spot for us to be in as a country.

I don't want the United States of America living on borrowed time, awaiting the next terrorist attack because we were not paying attention and enforcing our own southern border.

We need to be able to wake up on this.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). The Senator from Arkansas.

#### FARM BILL

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, prior to breaking for the Memorial Day recess, the House Agriculture Committee did something few beltway pundits thought was possible. The committee approved, in a bipartisan manner, a farm bill that meets the needs of farmers, ranchers, foresters, rural communities, and consumers across America.

I commend Chairman GT THOMPSON for his stewardship of this bill through an open process that let every committee member have a say in the bill.

Likewise, I wanted to express my appreciation for each of the Members that voted to advance this legislation out of committee. Chairwoman STABENOW also recently released her farm bill framework, putting the Senate majority's priorities on paper and advancing the discussion forward.

Cumulatively, these efforts exhibit the first real progress toward passage of a new farm bill since the process began 2 years ago. This week, Republicans on the Agriculture Committee are building on that momentum by releasing our farm bill framework.

We believe that our framework reflects the Chamber's shared commitments across all 12 titles while putting more farm in the farm bill, something we have been calling for since the onset.

Let's talk about what that means. It means we direct additional resources to the tools that farmers rely on and they are calling for us to invest in, while ensuring we do no harm to our