

power to advance his agenda of annexing the West Bank for Jewish settlers and evicting Palestinians from the area. With Prime Minister Netanyahu's implicit support, Smotrich has steadily shifted control of administering the West Bank to his handpicked cronies in the Defense Ministry.

The Israeli activist group Peace Now has assessed that 2024 has been the "peak year" for Israeli land seizures in the West Bank.

As Finance Minister, Smotrich has abused his power by freezing distribution of Palestinian tax revenues as leverage to force the annexation of Jewish settlements. These tax revenues constitute almost all of the Palestinian Authority's budget, including its police and security personnel.

Earlier this month, Smotrich released some funding back to the Palestinian Authority in exchange for the authorization of five Israeli settlements that had been built illegally. This is extortion, plain and simple, and it has been condemned by U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan.

I highlight these far-right Cabinet leaders because their extreme personal and political agendas are impacting the government's military decisions in Gaza, whether through threats or cajoling, Ben-Gvir, Smotrich, and others have pushed the government into prosecuting the war and governing Israel the way they see fit.

In announcing his resignation last month, Mr. Gantz told the press that he had "become exasperated with Netanyahu for agreeing on one thing in the wartime cabinet and then doing the opposite because of pressure from his far-right coalition partners." In his resignation speech, Gantz lamented that "faithful, faithful strategic decisions are met with hesitation and procrastination due to political considerations. Unfortunately, Netanyahu prevents us from progressing to real victory."

These dynamics caused former Prime Minister and Defense Minister Ehud Barak to publicly warn that "[this war] appears to be the least successful war in history due to the strategic paralysis in the country's leadership."

Prime Minister Netanyahu is beholden to the far right. He needs his rightwing partners to stay in his coalition, and in turn, they cannot abandon him because he is their best chance to accomplish the objectives of their nationalist agenda.

Until there is a change in the direction of Israel's leadership, the far right will continue to drive Israel's security and the war in Gaza into the ground.

The failings of the Netanyahu government are not just a matter of bad strategy or the Prime Minister's willingness to rely on radical political partners to stay in power, it is also his own opposition to a two-state solution. As has been clear for decades, Prime Minister Netanyahu is unwilling to recognize that a two-state solution is

the only viable path to peace and security for Israel. He has been thwarting this option since his first term as Prime Minister in 1996.

One of Mr. Netanyahu's most reliable assets for preventing a two-state solution has been Hamas. As far back as 2012, Netanyahu told Israeli press that "it was important to keep Hamas strong, as a counterweight to the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank." He knew that by empowering Hamas in Gaza, a two-state solution would never be possible. In fact, between 2012 and 2018 alone, Netanyahu allowed an estimated \$1 billion to flow into Gaza, at least half of which reached Hamas.

According to the Jerusalem Post, in a private meeting with members of the Likud Party in 2019, Netanyahu explained his rationale as this:

The money transfer is part of the strategy to divide the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. . . . In that way, we will foil the establishment of a Palestinian state.

This open hostility to a two-state solution has only hardened in the aftermath of October 7. In February, Netanyahu bragged:

Everyone knows that I am the one who for decades blocked the establishment of a Palestinian State that would endanger our existence.

And in just the last week, he led the Knesset in passing resolution that rejects a two-state solution.

Mr. Netanyahu has never been shy about his desire to prevent a two-state solution. His record is now clear beyond a shadow of a doubt. We should not be surprised that he continues to stand in the way of peace.

With this troubling record laid out, I feel compelled again, as a friend of Israel, to say that Prime Minister Netanyahu has put Israel on a disastrous path. His leadership is eroding Israel's security, health, and democracy.

In March, I came to the floor to call for new leadership for both the Israeli and Palestinian people. I stand by that call. Ultimately, these are decisions for the Israelis and the Palestinian people.

But while Prime Minister Netanyahu continues to lead his nation, I urge him to return to the cease-fire framework he agreed to in May with the Biden administration. This plan includes a sensible and phased approach to bring the hostages home, increasing lifesaving humanitarian assistance to Gaza, and a realistic approach to day-to-day security and governance in Gaza.

Israel will not find the long-term security and peace it wants by indefinitely reoccupying the Gaza Strip. In addition, the Prime Minister, working with the United States and other regional allies and partners, must achieve a diplomatic solution on the Israeli-Lebanon border. Now is not the time to risk opening a second, potentially more dangerous, confrontation with Hezbollah that could spill over into a larger regional war.

Further, Mr. Netanyahu should immediately disavow the far-right mem-

bers of his Cabinet and stop their efforts to inflame violence in Gaza and the West Bank that is making a two-state solution all but impossible.

Finally, President Netanyahu must accept the legitimacy of a two-state solution, where the State of Israel and a demilitarized Palestinian State can exist side by side in peace and security. This plan is difficult and will require a buy-in from Israel, the Palestinian people, Arab neighbors, and the international community, but it is necessary and essential. The inability to embrace a two-state solution has profound consequences for the State of Israel, its security, its standing in the world, and its ability to remain a democracy.

As I prepare to join my colleagues in listening to Prime Minister Netanyahu's address tomorrow, I remain deeply skeptical of his leadership and willingness to change course, but I hope he will finally listen to his friends and allies who only want the best for Israel.

The United States is Israel's oldest friend. But as a friend, we must insist that Prime Minister Netanyahu fundamentally change the path he has put his country on. The eyes of the world and history are upon it.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

KOSA-COPPA

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, this week the Senate is taking a historic step in the fight to protect children online by bringing the bipartisan Kids Online Safety Act to the floor.

Last Congress, Senator BLUMENTHAL and I introduced KOSA following disturbing reports that Meta leadership knew its platform Instagram is toxic to teenage girls, causing rising rates of eating disorders and mental health issues, but Meta downplayed these harms in public.

During a series of five subcommittee hearings, we heard testimony from social media companies, advocates, and parents on the repeated failures of tech giants to protect kids, to protect them from pro-suicide content, from drug dealers, from sexual predators, from eating disorder content, from human traffickers, and so much more.

For years, the Big Tech giants refused to meaningfully address these problems, but that changes with KOSA, which will finally hold them accountable.

Congress has not passed a major law to protect children online since 1998, and a lot has changed in the last 25 years. But this moment would have been impossible without the hundreds of parents, including many who have tragically lost their children to social media harms. They have traveled to Washington over the past several years to share their heartbreaking stories and to demand action to protect our children. Senator BLUMENTHAL and I could not have accomplished this without their voices, and I want to thank

all of our friends and our allies for their work in getting this bill to the floor. One thing is certain: Moms on a Mission have always proven to be an unstoppable force, and, indeed, they are.

I also want to thank Leader SCHUMER, Commerce Committee Chair CANTWELL, Ranking Member CRUZ, and our 68 Senate cosponsors for helping us get here.

Once the Senate formally passes KOSA, our work is not done. We must ensure that the House quickly passes this bill and sends it to the President's desk.

RECOGNIZING THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
BASEBALL TEAM

Mr. President, recently, my fellow Tennesseans have had a lot to celebrate. Late last month, the Tennessee Volunteers baseball team made history, defeating the Texas A&M Aggies in the college World Series to win the program's first national title. This is a tremendous accomplishment for the incredible players and coaches, for the University of Tennessee, and, indeed, for our entire State.

But for those of us who followed the Vols' historic season, this national championship came as no surprise. In total, they tallied 60 wins this season, becoming the first team in the Southeastern Conference to ever reach this milestone. UT had 5 players who hit 20 or more home runs this season, the first time that has ever happened in NCAA history. And along the way to the College World Series, the team won both the SEC regular season and the SEC tournament title, becoming just the fourth program in history to capture all three titles in the same season.

It is no exaggeration to say that this team is one of the greatest in college baseball history, a testament to players, coaches, and staffs' hard work on and off the field. That is why I introduced a resolution, alongside Senator HAGERTY, joined by Tennessee's entire House delegation, to officially congratulate the student athletes, coaches, administrators, and fans on a truly incredible season. I know Tennesseans will remember the Vols' historic 2024 season for many years to come.

SECRET SERVICE

Mr. President, on Saturday, July 13, our Nation narrowly avoided a catastrophe with the failed assassination attempt of President Trump in Butler, PA. In the wake of this disturbing attack, I am grateful that President Trump is safe and recovering and join Tennesseans and Americans in praying for the two victims who were critically injured.

Tragically, our Nation lost a hero in the attack. Corey Comperatore, a rally attendee, was killed while protecting his wife and daughter from gunfire.

This assassination attempt was a shocking act of political violence, and one Agency more than any other was responsible for preventing it; that is the Secret Service. But as reports continue to pile up about the Secret Serv-

ice's failures leading up to the attempt, I know Tennesseans and Americans have so many questions: How was the shooter allowed on the structure so close to the rally with a clear line of sight to President Trump? And why were there no agents on that roof? How is it possible, as Senators learned in a briefing with Secret Service and the FBI last week, that Secret Service agents knew about a threat before President Trump walked on stage, yet they did nothing to prevent him from going on stage? How was the shooter allowed to scope out the rally grounds with a range finder, a device that is often used by snipers to measure the distance to a target, even after he was spotted by law enforcement? Why was the assassin able to fly a drone and take footage of the rally grounds just before the speech? And why, as the Agency has finally acknowledged—after initially denying it—why did the Secret Service turn down previous requests from President Trump's security detail for more resources to protect him?

To be sure, many Secret Service agents bravely put their lives on the line to get President Trump to safety following the assassination attempt. We are grateful for them.

But as a whole, the Agency failed its sole objective, which was to protect the protectee, in this case former President Trump.

Yet Secret Service Director Cheatle has repeatedly refused to explain why this tragedy happened on her watch. When my colleagues and I pressed her for answers last week, she ran away. And during the House Oversight hearing on Monday, she continued to stonewall, repeatedly claiming that she is unable to provide answers while her Agency investigates the operational failures leading up to the assassination attempt.

This is inexcusable. While Director Cheatle has finally done the right thing and resigned, Tennesseans and the American people still deserve answers about how her Agency let President Trump come within inches of being killed by an assassin's bullet.

The Secret Service has the duty to send another representative equipped to answer these questions when the Senate Judiciary Committee holds its hearing on the circumstances that led to the attempted assassination of former President Trump. While we await answers, there is one thing we do know: If Director Cheatle had done her job and upheld her Agency's "zero fail mission," this tragedy would never have happened.

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 Colleen Duffy Kiko, of North

Dakota, to be a Member of the Federal Labor Relations Authority for a term of five years expiring July 29, 2027. (Re-appointment)

VOTE ON KIKO NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Kiko nomination?

Mrs. BLACKBURN. 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. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN), the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH), the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT), and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) would have voted "yea" and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) would have voted "yea."

The result was announced—yeas 82, nays 6, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 214 Ex.]

YEAS—82

Baldwin	Graham	Romney
Barrasso	Grassley	Rosen
Bennet	Hagerty	Rounds
Blackburn	Hassan	Rubio
Booker	Hawley	Sanders
Boozman	Heinrich	Schatz
Braun	Hickenlooper	Schmitt
Britt	Johnson	Schumer
Brown	Kaine	Scott (FL)
Budd	Kelly	Shaheen
Cantwell	Kennedy	Sinema
Capito	King	Smith
Cardin	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Carper	Lankford	Sullivan
Casey	Lujan	Tester
Cassidy	Lummis	Thune
Collins	McConnell	Tillis
Coons	Moran	Tuberville
Cornyn	Mullin	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Murkowski	Warner
Crapo	Murphy	Warnock
Cruz	Murray	Welch
Daines	Osoff	Whitehouse
Duckworth	Padilla	Wicker
Durbin	Paul	Wyden
Ernst	Peters	Young
Fischer	Reed	
Gillibrand	Ricketts	

NAYS—6

Blumenthal	Hirono	Merkley
Butler	Markey	Warren

NOT VOTING—12

Cotton	Hyde-Smith	Menendez
Cramer	Lee	Risch
Fetterman	Manchin	Scott (SC)
Hoeben	Marshall	Vance

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BUTLER). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made