

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate on the bill as amended?

Hearing none, the bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill, as amended, pass?

The bill (S. 3696), as amended, was passed.

Mr. SCHUMER. I finally ask that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. That, by the way, just to note, is the deepfakes bill. It passed right now, as opposed to a few minutes ago.

#### PREVENTING THE FINANCING OF ILLEGAL SYNTHETIC DRUGS ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee be discharged from and the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 1076.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1076) to require the Comptroller General of the United States to carry out a study on the trafficking into the United States of synthetic drugs, and related illicit finance, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (H.R. 1076) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, that was the fantanyl bill led by Senators CORTEZ MASTO and ROSEN that I mentioned a few minutes ago.

#### ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, JULY 24, 2024

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, now, finally, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 10 a.m. on Wednesday, July 24; that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; that following the conclusion of morning business, the Senate proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Way nomination; further, that notwithstanding rule XXII, the cloture vote on the Way nomination occur at 3:15 p.m. and the cloture votes on the Landy and Taylor nominations occur at 5 p.m. in the order in which cloture was filed; further, that the Senate recess from 11:45 a.m. until 3 p.m.; fur-

ther, that if cloture is invoked on any of the nominations, the confirmation votes occur at times to be determined by the majority leader in consultation with the Republican leader.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. Finally, as a reminder, tomorrow at 2 p.m., Binyamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of Israel, will address a joint meeting of Congress. Senators should gather in the Senate Chamber at 1:20 p.m., and we will proceed to the House Chamber at 1:30 p.m.

#### ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it stand adjourned under the previous order following the remarks of Senators WELCH and SANDERS.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

#### ISRAEL

Mr. WELCH. Madam President, in recent weeks, the attention of the American people has been on the rapidly evolving campaign for the Presidency issues. But while our national media and the focus have shifted, it is important that we do not lose sight of the crisis in Gaza, where innocent people have suffered one calamity after another.

Also in recent weeks, thousands of defenseless, homeless people sheltering in schools, including one located in an area reportedly designated by the Israeli military as a humanitarian safe zone, have been targeted by the Israeli military with missiles supplied by the United States. Regrettably, scores have been killed, and hundreds have been wounded.

What little is left of Gaza's demolished hospitals have no capacity to properly treat injuries. Children are particularly vulnerable in this conflict. Thousands of children have been killed. Thousands have sustained severe injuries that require surgery or advanced medical care, and many suffer from other life-threatening illnesses, like cancer, that are going completely untreated. In the past 9 months, only 19 of these children have been allowed to leave Gaza, and that is shocking.

Today, my colleagues and I sent a letter to the Ambassadors of Israel and Egypt calling on them to work together, with the full cooperation of the United States, so that these children can leave Gaza and get the medical care they desperately need, and I urge their governments to do that. Gaza's children have paid far too high a price in this war.

Negotiations for a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas have been on again and off again. Each time we hear of a

possible breakthrough, one side or the other makes a new demand, and then weeks pass without further word of progress, and the suffering continues. I hope soon they will reach agreement on a cease-fire.

In the meantime, it is hard to imagine the depth of misery suffered by the Palestinian people. It is also hard to imagine the depth of misery suffered by the hostages trapped underground for 9 months, subject to constant psychological and physical abuse by their captors.

I have spoken many times about the war in Gaza. It was a war, in my view, poorly conceived, with vague goals that were nothing more than slogans— not unlike our own failed wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Prime Minister Netanyahu was warned not to repeat our mistakes, but instead of heeding that advice, he has pursued a scorched-earth strategy that has destroyed Gaza and killed tens of thousands of people who had absolutely nothing to do with the atrocities committed by Hamas on October 7. Two million destitute people are homeless, suffering from acute hunger, and facing the real possibility of death at any moment.

Mr. Netanyahu and—I use this word intentionally—his extremist Ministers have divided the Israeli people, divided the American people, and damaged Israel's standing on the global stage.

Mr. Netanyahu's war has been carried out with our war planes, our tanks, our guns, our bombs, missiles, and bullets. It has been carried out in a manner shockingly inconsistent with the principle of proportionality, a central element of international humanitarian law that is designed to protect the innocent—international law that Israel and the United States are both bound to respect.

The counterresponse that we hear is that because Hamas fighters hide in tunnels and use civilian houses and buildings to carry out their attacks, anything is a legitimate target—even, apparently, if it means killing 50 Palestinians and wounding 100 in order to kill 1 Hamas combatant.

Of course, Israel has the right to go after those involved in the October 7 attacks. I support that. Hamas mercilessly slaughtered 1,200 innocent Israelis, and the perpetrators of those atrocities must not escape punishment. But that does not give Israel the right to use weapons supplied by the United States to kill 30 times the number of innocent Palestinians as though their lives are worth nothing. That is wrong.

Meanwhile, in the West Bank, attacks against Palestinians by Israeli settlers—illegal Israeli settlers—have skyrocketed, and hundreds have been killed.

Last week, the International Court of Justice ruled that Israel's decades-long occupation of the West Bank violates international law and amounts to annexation. The court called on Israel to cease new settlement activities, which

is also the policy of the United States, and called on it to end the occupation.

As often happens, people's attention fades or shifts to other priorities close to home. That is understandable, but that is also why it is important to remember—to remember that the bombs keep falling, and an appalling number of civilians keep dying in Gaza in a war that has gone on far, far too long; to remember that this war, in which the United States is complicit by providing these arms, was orchestrated by a Prime Minister who has no strategy—no strategy—for peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

A Prime Minister who has no vision for the future, who has acted deliberately to undercut U.S. policy at every turn, and still, he is invited here to this Congress.

I will not be attending Prime Minister Netanyahu's address tomorrow. While I welcome a constructive discussion on how to end this conflict and achieve lasting peace and security for Israelis and Palestinians, I am not interested in participating in a political stunt.

We, the United States, have a moral responsibility to do everything we can to help end this war and prevent further loss of innocent lives, and that includes holding our allies and partners to the same standards that we expect of ourselves and the rest of the world.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I want to commend my fellow Vermonter for his remarks. I wanted to say a few words on the same subject.

Madam President, tomorrow, Wednesday, will be a unique moment in congressional history. Throughout the many years of our country, leaders from dozens of countries with all kinds of political backgrounds and persuasions have been invited to address a joint session of Congress. To the best of my knowledge, however, tomorrow will be unique. In bringing Prime Minister Netanyahu to address a joint meeting of Congress, it will be the first time in American history that a war criminal has been given that honor.

Frankly, this invitation to Netanyahu is a disgrace and something that we will look back on with regret. With this invitation, it will be impossible, with a straight face, for the United States to lecture any country on Earth about human rights and human dignity.

As you well know, along with the Hamas leader, Yahya Sinwar, and several others, Prime Minister Netanyahu has been credibly accused of war crimes by the International Criminal Court, the ICC. That Court may soon issue arrest warrants for Sinwar and Netanyahu.

The case against Sinwar and his Hamas accomplices is clear. They were organizers of the horrific October 7 terrorist attack on Israel that began this war and involved the mass murder of

1,200 innocent men, women, and children, the taking of hostages, and sexual violence. These war crimes are well documented, and very few people would dispute the merits of these charges.

The ICC's prosecutors' charges against Netanyahu are also well founded. The charges focus on the starvation of civilians as a method of war, as well as intentional attacks against the civilian population. Specifically, the prosecutor says that Netanyahu is responsible for "depriving [civilians] of objects indispensable to their survival, including willfully impeding relief supplies as provided for under the Geneva Conventions."

A separate U.N. independent Commission of Inquiry likewise found that both Hamas and the Israeli military have committed war crimes since October 7, leading to widespread civilian deaths. The Commission said the Israeli military's "intentional use of heavy weapons with large destructive capacity in densely populated areas constitutes an intentional and direct attack on the civilian population, particularly affecting women and children."

I think we all agree that Israel had the right to defend itself against the horrific Hamas attack on October 7, but Netanyahu's extreme, rightwing government has, since that attack, waged what amounts to a total war—a total war—against the entire Palestinian people, making life unlivable in Gaza and killing tens of thousands. These actions have trampled on international law, on American law, and on basic human values.

I understand that the mass media and many of us in Congress have been preoccupied in recent weeks with the awful assassination attempt against former President Trump and the changes at the top of the Democratic Presidential ticket. But while all that is going on, it is absolutely irresponsible for us to turn our backs on one of the worst humanitarian disasters in modern history, especially when that disaster has been aided and abetted by U.S. taxpayer dollars and weapons. In other words, it is not just the Israeli Government; it is us and our money and our weaponry as well.

Let us be clear. Let us be very clear as to what is going on in Gaza right now. Since this war began, among a population of 2.2 million people, at least 39,000 Palestinians have been killed and 89,000 injured—60 percent of whom are women, children, or elderly people. Most observers believe that the death toll is much higher because thousands of people remain buried under the mountains of rubble; their bodies have not yet been recovered.

Some 1.9 million people, out of a population of 2.2 million, have been driven from their homes, 90 percent of the population. Take a deep breath—90 percent of the population driven from their homes. The vast majority of these desperate and poor people have now been displaced not once, not twice,

but, in some cases, four or five times, herded around like cattle. Just yesterday—yesterday—Israel announced another evacuation order for Khan Yunis, and 150,000 people were forced to flee on a moment's notice just yesterday.

When we talk about housing in Gaza, it is not just that people have been displaced time and time again. More than 60 percent of Gaza's housing has been damaged or destroyed, including 221,000 housing units that have been completely destroyed. Where are these people going to go to if and when this war ever ends? And with that housing destruction, more than a million people remain permanently homeless. Entire neighborhoods have been wiped out. Today, more than a million Palestinians—almost half of the population of Gaza—are living in tents trying to find shelter, trying to find protection from the intense summer heat in that area.

But it is not just the housing that has been destroyed. Gaza's civilian infrastructure has also been devastated. Water and sewer systems have been made inoperable—and the result: Raw sewage is running through the streets of Gaza, spreading disease, and there is very little clean water. Many roads are impassable, and there is virtually no electricity now in Gaza.

But it is not just the housing that has been destroyed, not just the infrastructure that has been destroyed. Gaza had 12 universities, schools of higher learning. Every single one of those universities has been bombed, and 88 percent of all school buildings have been damaged. In other words, under Mr. Netanyahu's leadership, the entire educational system in Gaza has been annihilated. In fact, 540 people have been killed while sheltering—sheltering—in U.N. schools.

But it is not just the housing that has been destroyed, not just the infrastructure of Gaza that has been destroyed, not just the educational system which has been destroyed. At a time when almost 90,000 people are dealing with war-related injuries in Gaza—including many, many children who have lost their arms and their legs or are suffering all kinds of diseases—the healthcare system in Gaza has been systemically obliterated. Madam President, 21 of Gaza's 36 hospitals are completely out of service, and the remainder can only partially function. The World Health Organization has recorded more than 1,000 attacks on healthcare facilities since October 7. As a result, disease is spreading due to shortages of clean water, sanitation, and hygiene. Cases of hepatitis, dysentery, and other infections are on the rise. And cases of polio have now been detected.

Malnourished women struggle to breastfeed their newborns. Formula is inaccessible and even when available cannot be used without reliable sources of clean water. So the tiniest children and their mothers suffer as well, as a result.

But it is not just displacement of 1.9 million people. It is not just the mass

destruction of housing. It is not just the obliteration of the infrastructure. It is not just the destruction of the educational system. It is not just the annihilation of the healthcare system in Gaza that we are seeing. It is even worse than that.

And I hope that my colleagues who attend Mr. Netanyahu's remarks on Wednesday remember this as they rise time and time again to give him standing ovations. As a result of Israeli restrictions on humanitarian aid, people in Gaza are now starving to death. So remember when people stand up and applaud, children, women, innocent people in Gaza are now starving to death. According to the best available research, drawing on leading experts from the U.N. and other aid organizations around the world, some 495,000 Palestinians face starvation. These groups estimate that more than 50,000 children require treatment for acute malnutrition and are at risk of starving to death. At least 30 documented—I suspect it is a lot higher number than that—have already starved to death. So when you stand up and applaud that guy, remember the starving children that he has created.

But even those who get the lifesaving care they need, the children will carry the scars of this disaster for the rest of their lives. As every psychologist will tell you, a child's brain develops fastest in the first 2 years of life, and childhood malnutrition does lifelong cognitive and physical damage. That is what Netanyahu is doing to the children of Gaza.

And I would ask my colleagues to stop for a moment and also think about the psychological damage this war has done to the children there. Imagine being a child living with the constant buzzing of drones above your head, wondering whether those drones are going to rain fire and bullets onto your home, wondering if they might strike you at any moment.

Imagine being a little 5-year-old witnessing your relatives killed, your neighborhood destroyed. Think about being a 10-year-old going hungry night after night and searching around for water and for food to survive. Think about being pushed from one place to another not knowing where you will be tomorrow, carrying your little water, your few belongings through streets running with sewage and amid piles of rubble and trash.

That is what Mr. Netanyahu, the man Congress is honoring tomorrow, has done to the children of Gaza. According to the U.N. and virtually every humanitarian organization functioning in Gaza, Israel has intentionally blocked humanitarian aid—including food, water, and medical supplies—from reaching the desperate people of Gaza.

And let us be clear: There is no—no—excuse for this. Blocking humanitarian aid, killing aid workers, and creating the conditions for starvation—these are not only acts of extreme cruelty,

but they are clear violations of both U.S. and international law. They are war crimes. They are war crimes. And Netanyahu heads the government that has enacted these policies.

So, tomorrow, when Netanyahu comes before Congress, I hope that, for one second, the Members who attend will focus—just for a second—on the starving children in Gaza. I hope, while they applaud, that they will think about the hundreds of aid workers killed, the dozens of hospitals bombed, the housing destroyed, and the universities obliterated.

When Mr. Netanyahu rises to speak tomorrow, I also hope that my colleagues remember that all this death and destruction is not just the unfortunate byproduct of a brutal war. Revenge and destruction are the explicit policy of Netanyahu's extremist rightwing government.

Two days into the war—2 days—after October 7, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said:

I have ordered a complete siege on the Gaza Strip. There will be no electricity, no food, no fuel, everything is closed. We are fighting human animals and we are acting accordingly.

And that is exactly how they have pursued this war. They define the Palestinian people as human animals, and, tragically, they have acted consistent with that view.

Let us remember and understand that the Israel of today is not the Israel of the past. It is now run by a rightwing extremist government.

National Security Minister Ben-Gvir, the man who oversees the police, has long advocated for the forcible expulsion of Palestinians from the region.

Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, the man responsible for the occupied West Bank, is also an extreme racist and has called for the expulsion of Palestinians from the land. He has called for segregated hospital wards for Jews and Arabs because "Arabs are my enemies." And that is the man who is in charge of the occupied West Bank. And that is the current Israeli Finance Minister as well.

It should come as no surprise that this extremist government, in addition to destroying Gaza, has overseen record Israeli settlement in the occupied West Bank, in violation of international law and commitments to the United States. Israeli forces and vigilante settlers have killed more than 500 Palestinians in the West Bank since October 7, including 131 children.

Just last week, the International Court of Justice issued a ruling on the Israeli occupation of the West Bank. A panel of 15 accomplished judges from around the world confirmed what most of the world has long known: that occupation is illegal and must end.

I know that there are some here in Congress—not many, but some—who have condemned Netanyahu and his extremist government. But condemning Netanyahu is not enough. We cannot condemn a Prime Minister, who the

ICC considers to be a war criminal, while at the same time continuing to provide his government with tens of billions of dollars in military aid. That is hypocrisy at its worst.

Just today, I am happy to say, seven major trade unions here in the United States, including the Association of Flight Attendants, the American Postal Workers Union, the International Union of Painters, the National Education Association, the Service Employees International Union, the United Auto Workers, and the United Electrical Workers—some of the largest unions in America, representing some 6 million workers—sent a letter to President Biden calling on him to immediately halt all military aid to Israel.

And they are absolutely right. Netanyahu is a rightwing extremist and a war criminal who has devoted his career to killing the prospects of a two-state solution and lasting peace in the region. He should not be welcome to the U.S. Congress.

On the contrary, his policies in Gaza and the West Bank should be roundly condemned and his rightwing extremist government should not receive another nickel from U.S. taxpayers.

I yield the floor.

#### ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until Wednesday, July 24, 2024, at 10 a.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:37 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, July 24, 2024, at 10 a.m.

#### NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

##### MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

LISA T. BALLANCE, OF OREGON, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION FOR A TERM EXPIRING MAY 13, 2027. VICE FRANCES M.D. GULLAND, TERM EXPIRED.

##### NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

MATTHEW JAMES MARZANO, OF ILLINOIS, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION FOR THE TERM OF FIVE YEARS EXPIRING JUNE 30, 2028. VICE JEFFREY MARTIN BARAN, TERM EXPIRED.

##### DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

DAVID SAMUEL JOHNSON, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR TAX ADMINISTRATION, DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY, VICE J. RUSSELL GEORGE, DECEASED.

##### DEPARTMENT OF STATE

GABRIEL ESCOBAR, OF TEXAS, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF PARAGUAY.

##### NATIONAL INDIAN GAMING COMMISSION

PATRICE H. KUNESH, OF MINNESOTA, TO BE CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL INDIAN GAMING COMMISSION FOR THE TERM OF THREE YEARS, VICE E. SEQUOYAH SIMERMEYER, TERM EXPIRED.

##### IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT AS THE CHIEF OF THE NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU AND APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 601 AND 10502:

*To be general*

LT. GEN. STEVEN S. NORDHAUS