

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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 PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The majority whip.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent to speak as if in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection.

TRUMP RALLY SHOOTING

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, some events in our lives make such an impression that we can recall exactly where we were and what we were doing when we reflect on learning about them. On November 22, 1963, I was a sophomore at Georgetown University here in Washington, DC, when the news broke that President John F. Kennedy had been shot in Dallas, TX. I was in the library, and the news spread through that quiet room like wildfire. We all stopped what we were doing and went outside and stood in the street and listened to the car radio's report of the news that was just tragic news, of course, that President Kennedy had given his life.

It has been more than 60 years since the assassination of President Kennedy and 43 years since President Reagan was shot. A week and a half ago, Americans were shocked to witness on live television an assassination attempt against former President Donald Trump as well as the murder of Corey Comperatore at a Pennsylvania political rally.

We should all take a moment to reflect on Mr. Comperatore's family loss. His wife reported that when shots were ringing out, he shielded his wife and children with his body. It is an amazing scene to think that at that moment—that emergency moment—he thought of others to protect them. They have been in my thoughts since the tragic events of that Saturday afternoon.

We have a responsibility in Congress to learn how the Secret Service failed to protect former President Trump on July 13. We need to do this on a bipartisan basis; keep politics out of it.

The Judiciary Committee, which I chair, has jurisdiction over the Secret Service. Tomorrow morning, the Judiciary Committee, along with the Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committees, will receive a classified briefing on the shooting. I hope that we learn more since the hearings that occurred in the House of Representatives.

Next Tuesday morning, the Judiciary Committee and the Homeland Security Committee will hold a joint, bipartisan hearing on the assassination attempt, where we hope to learn more from the FBI and the Secret Service.

We need to ask probing and important questions and do it in a respon-

sible way that avoids the kind of incendiary language that has become all too common in our country. It is irresponsible for a Member of Congress to accuse the opposing political party of being “flat out evil and . . . [trying] to murder President Trump,” but a Member of Congress actually said that. Another Member said, “Joe Biden sent the orders.” Can you imagine? Those kinds of statements are so irresponsible, mean-spirited. They don't belong as part of the national debate.

As a country, we have become desensitized to toxic and violent rhetoric that some politicians have embraced as standard fare. We should all be disturbed by the April poll from Marist which found that “one in 5 U.S. adults believe Americans have to resort to violence to get their country back on track.”

I have said this repeatedly, and it bears repeating: Political violence is never acceptable. It is never the answer. Political parties should not elevate leaders who say these things that are so irresponsible.

Candidates should encourage Americans to exercise their constitutional right to speak and vote, not open a rally with an official declaring: If we lose this election, it is going to take a civil war to save this country.

As the most powerful democracy in the world, the eyes of our allies and rivals are always on us. Our political discourse should reflect our solemn responsibility to encourage free and fair elections not just abroad but at home because, in the land of the free, everyone should feel safe expressing their political views and participating in this country's most sacred and fought-for legacy, a free and fair democracy.

ISRAEL

Mr. President, later today, Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu will address a joint session of Congress. I believe this invitation to speak was ill-timed and one which the Prime Minister should have had the good sense to decline. But if there is one thing we know about Prime Minister Netanyahu is that he never misses an opportunity to further his political agenda.

Let me be clear: There are nations and proxy groups that seek to destroy Israel, and that is not something we can or ever should take for granted. We have seen this with the horrific slaughter by Hamas on October 7, the subsequent Iranian missile barrage, the ongoing attacks by Hezbollah, and the continued holding of innocent Israeli hostages, including Hersh Goldberg-Polin with ties to my State of Illinois. That is why I have long supported helping Israel in its self-defense.

But let me also make clear that support for Israel's right to exist is not a blank check for extremist policies of Prime Minister Netanyahu.

Even before the October attack, Netanyahu was pursuing a deeply troubling agenda compelled by his self-interested desire to hold together his far-right coalition and avoid legal problems.

He enabled illegal settlement expansion, entertained outrageous proposals to annex the West Bank, advance policies that would have undermined Israel's judicial independence, and ignored any long-term vision for peace with the Palestinians.

Pressure from Israel's friends, including President Biden, to rethink those policies were often brushed aside or manipulated to create domestic political support in Israel.

Tragically, it has been clear for years that neither the current Israeli nor the current Palestinian leadership have a vision of political will to find a lasting peace for two people—with tragic consequences.

Shortly after the October 7 attack by Hamas, many of us warned our Israeli friends to learn from our own mistakes we made in the fog of rage and pain following September 11, 2001. But I fear these lessons have been lost upon Netanyahu, and the cost for Israel and Palestinians alike has been heartbreaking.

Netanyahu has failed to create a postconflict plan, has ignored increased settler violence in the West Bank and extremists blocking humanitarian aid from entering Gaza.

When I think about the right of Israel to exist, it is pretty clear to me, start to finish, that is the basic foundational position to take: the right to defend themselves, of course. October 7 was proof positive that that is necessary.

But you take a look at the course of the war in Gaza ever since: 39,000 innocent Palestinians have died; 90,000 have been injured. The scenes that come back to us from what is happening in Gaza are heartbreaking. To think that these children are dying of famine and starvation because they have stopped the shipments of humanitarian aid into Gaza in a regular, orderly way, that is unacceptable.

In the end, I fear the devastating civilian toll in Gaza will not only be judged a moral and humanitarian calamity but a likely strategic failure by the Israelis as well.

I have long supported a two-state solution for Israel and Palestinians. In fact, out of the terrible Yom Kippur war came an unimaginable, yet lasting, peace between Egypt and Israel.

So with the right leaders on both sides, it can be done. And the United States has a responsibility for a renewed push on all sides toward this goal, one in which Israel and Palestinian children can once and for all live together in peace and dignity.

A pending cease-fire that would see hostages released, humanitarian aid increased, and eventually lead to a desperately needed outcome seems finally within reach.

Last night, at the invitation of BEN CARDIN, our colleague from Maryland, I met with some of the hostage families here in the Capitol. I cannot imagine what it must be like, many of them wondering if the person whom they

love—their sons, their daughters, their wives, their friends—are even alive today. Unimaginable.

We have to bring this to an end. And a cease-fire agreement with Hamas is the only way to get that done.

Instead of stirring the same old pot, I urge Prime Minister Netanyahu to share such a vision for the future when he speaks to the U.S. Congress today.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. 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 PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRUMP RALLY SHOOTING

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, the attempted assassination of President Trump 11 days ago at a peaceful rally in Pennsylvania shook the Nation. I am very thankful that he was not seriously harmed. I am grateful also for the law enforcement personnel who rushed in to cover the President when the shooting started. But, as every American knows by now, the events of July 13 should never have happened.

There was not just one but a number of apparent security breakdowns—notably, a failure to secure the roof before the rally. While we are grateful for the fact that President Trump was not killed, the security failures resulted in the death of one innocent American and serious injury to two others.

It is appropriate that the Secret Service Director resigned yesterday in the wake of this tragedy, but there is more work to be done. Multiple investigations are currently being conducted—several of them here in Congress—to identify everything that went wrong that Saturday and to explore ways to ensure that it never happens again.

Among other things, we obviously need to take a hard look at what needs to be done at the Secret Service. I have no doubt that there are many dedicated agents serving there, including those who heroically dived to cover President Trump when the shooting started, but the fact is that the Secret Service has been beset by problems for a number of years now, including staffing issues and a number of previous security failures. It is time to fix these problems once and for all and ensure that the Secret Service is fully prepared to fulfill its mission. We also need a new Secret Service Director committed to making reform of the Agency a priority.

Events like the ones of July 13 always horrify because they demonstrate the worst of which human beings are capable, but they also often give us a glimpse of the very best, and that was certainly true in Pennsylvania. There was Corey Comperatore, the volunteer firefighter who died protecting his fam-

ily; the emergency room physician and others who attempted to render medical assistance; the everyday Americans who stepped in to help their fellow rally-goers.

If there is one thing we can take from the events of July 13 other than the immediate practical need of addressing security failures, it is a renewed determination to live our lives in such a way that we, too, at the time of our testing, would be among those whose responses were to help and protect their fellow man.

Soon after surviving the attempt on his life, President Trump said:

In this moment, it is more important than ever that we stand United and show our True Character as Americans.

That is a call that we should all heed. That doesn't mean, of course, that our disagreements suddenly disappear, but it does mean that we recognize and remember that most Americans, regardless of where they land politically, want what is best for the country's future, and I hope that out of this tragedy can come a renewed sense of what unites us.

Amid the outpouring of shock and concern after the attempted assassination, there were those who actually made remarks lamenting that President Trump wasn't killed, and it is disturbing that our discourse and our regard for the value of human life have deteriorated to such an extent that there would actually be people wishing bodily harm on a political candidate simply because they don't like his politics. In the midst of our real and valid disagreements, I hope we can remember the people beneath the politics and emerge with a greater respect for our fellow Americans.

My thoughts and prayers continue to be with those injured on July 13 and with the families of the injured and deceased, and I pray—I pray—that the events in Butler, PA, will never be repeated.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

JOINT MEETING OF CONGRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY, BINYAMIN NETANYAHU

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, this afternoon—in just, actually, a few short hours—Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu will deliver an address to a joint session of Congress.

As his country faces multiple attacks on multiple fronts—an existential threat, actually—Prime Minister Netanyahu has come to the United States to affirm the strong relationship between his country and ours and to highlight the stakes of this war.

This joint address comes at a critical time, and I am absolutely stunned and

profoundly disappointed that the Vice President of the United States has decided to boycott participating in this particular speech. As we all know, it is traditional that the Vice President, as the President of the Senate, and the Speaker sit behind the invited speaker—in this case, Prime Minister Netanyahu.

I remember several years back, when Prime Minister Netanyahu was last here, that the Vice President and the Speaker both sat in those chairs, recognizing the importance of lending that dignity and sense of gravity to the proceeding. But Vice President HARRIS can't be bothered with any of that. She is blaming her decision on a scheduling conflict even though the date of this speech was announced in early June. The only other item on the Vice President's schedule is a speech to a sorority convention in Indianapolis. The world is on fire—we have never seen a more dangerous environment since World War II—and the Vice President can't be bothered to show up at the Nation's Capitol, in the House Chamber, and demonstrate the respect and courtesy that we thought was a given—but apparently not in this case.

Not only has the Vice President chosen to skip this address, so has the Senate's President pro tempore, Senator MURRAY. We learned this morning, the majority whip, Senator DURBIN, is boycotting this address as well. I think it is absolutely disgraceful that the most senior members of the Democratic Party have chosen to give the Heisman to one of our closest allies in the Middle East—the only democracy in the Middle East that is fighting for its very existence. Why would they do something like this? Well, it is pretty obvious. It is pandering. It is pandering to the most radical elements of the Democratic base.

I am proud of the deep friendship between the United States and Israel. Our national security is tied up in the national security of Israel. We know Iran, the No. 1 state sponsor of terrorism, wants to wipe Israel off the map, like Hamas, which is a proxy for Iran, like Hezbollah, like the Houthis in Yemen, which all are determined to destroy the nation of Israel. So it has never been more important for the United States to stand shoulder to shoulder with our ally and friend against these unprovoked attacks by terrorist groups against innocent civilians.

There were 251 hostages taken on October 7—innocent civilians—in addition to all of the thousand-plus individuals who were murdered. Eight of the current hostages are American citizens, and the Vice President can't be bothered to show up? It is disgraceful.

ELECTION DAY

Mr. President, on another matter, election day, November 5, is only 104 days away. On November 5, the voters will head to the polls to chart a new direction for our country.

The Presidential race, of course, has garnered the most attention given the