

followed through with the disastrous retreat that torched American credibility and left 13 servicemembers dead.

The administration pinned its hopes on the mistaken idea that because the U.S.-led coalition had made tremendous progress in keeping terrorist threats under control, we could continue to do so from over the horizon. So how is that going? Despite assurances from the Secretary of Defense that over-the-horizon operations would not suffer from a lack of human intelligence after the U.S. withdrawal, the administration hasn't conducted a single strike—not one—against ISIS-K, the terrorists responsible for the Abbey Gate bombing, among other atrocities, since 2001. Of course, that is not because the terrorists have been quiet. In fact, by one analysis this year, ISIS-K planned 21 external plots or attacks in 9 countries in the previous 12 months alone, compared to just 3 between 2018 and the spring of 2022.

The ODNI annual threat assessment was forced to acknowledge that “terrorists will maintain an interest in conducting attacks . . . against U.S. persons, allies, and interests worldwide.” Indeed, America's retreat from Afghanistan has invited violence elsewhere, from the resurgence of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, to the AQAP in Yemen, to al-Qaida affiliates across the Sahel. And then there is Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Hezbollah and the Houthis and Iraqi terrorist groups, all of whom have been trained and equipped, aided and abetted, by the world's most active state sponsor of terror—Iran.

Hamas's attack on October 7 is described as Israel's September 11. Relative to population, it was actually September 11 15 times over. It was the deadliest day for the Jewish people since the Holocaust, and it wouldn't have been possible without the involvement of Tehran.

The chaos stemming from this genocidal assault and the violent choreography by the IRGC of attacks on Israel and U.S. interests across the region are evidence of the failure of this administration's passive, accommodating approach to Iran and its terrorist proxies.

America's weakness and hesitation will not deter our adversaries. Withholding critical assistance from partners on the frontlines will not defeat them. This is true in Israel just as it is true in Ukraine.

There is no doubt that allies, partners, and adversaries in Asia and elsewhere are watching a tentative America pull its punches. They are questioning our resolve and our commitment to our friends.

If we are unwilling to change Iran's calculus and compel an end to attacks on American forces in Iraq and Syria or international vessels on the high seas and if we are unwilling to stand with partners like Israel or Ukraine, can we be trusted to stand up to the PRC?

Twenty-three years ago, a dangerous world struck America here at home.

We must not wait for today's threats to do the same.

BIDENOMICS

Mr. President, on another matter, since President Biden took office, consumer prices have increased more than 20 percent. That is the hard truth of the monthly inflation report, and it is worth remembering where it came from.

Vice President HARRIS has said:

“We are very proud of Bidenomics.”

Well, she should be. After all, it was the Vice President herself whose vote here in the Senate helped send our economy into a historic inflationary spiral. Back in March 2021, she cast the tie-breaking vote on the motion to proceed to the so-called American Rescue Plan, and in August 2022, she did the same for passage of the so-called Inflation Reduction Act.

Sure enough, the Vice President is rather proud of this record. The way she tells it, “Through all our work, President Biden and I are building an economy that works for working people.” But does it really? Does it really work for working people? If you ask some of the folks I talked to last month, you would likely hear a different story.

Two years on, high prices in the wake of the Inflation Reduction Act are still forcing working Americans to make tough choices. A mother in North Carolina told a reporter recently:

Sometimes I have to choose whether I am going to pay the light bill or pay all the rent or buy food or not let my son do a sport.

Surging prices are especially challenging for seniors on a fixed income. One Pennsylvania retiree observed recently that she was “down to eating ramen for lunch, which I never ate in my life until recently. If it is not marked down, I just don't eat it. I haven't eaten beef since I don't know when. I can't afford it.”

This is the economy that Vice President HARRIS has said is working for working people. This is Bidenomics in action—or perhaps it is time to give the economy the Vice President is so proud of a new name.

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. 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.

23RD ANNIVERSARY OF THE SEPTEMBER 11, 2001, ATTACKS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, before I begin, I want to take a moment to acknowledge what today is: 23 years ago, terrorists flew planes into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon and 23 years since a heroic group of Americans prevented even greater tragedy by bringing down a fourth hijacked plane

before it could crash into another target.

As on every September 11 since that black day, we remember the heroes who rose up—at the World Trade Center, at the Pentagon, and in that bare field near Shanksville, PA—and we mourn all those who were lost.

My prayers, as always, are with the families of all those who still grieve their fallen loved ones and with all those whose calling is to respond to danger and stand between us and terror.

2024 ELECTIONS

Mr. President, there has been a dizzying amount of change in the Democrat Party over the past couple of months. First, and obviously, there was the replacement of President Biden with KAMALA HARRIS on the ticket. Democrat voters who had gone to the polls in the primaries and cast a vote for President Biden were informed that, in fact, the delegates they had chosen would be supporting Vice President HARRIS instead.

That was a big change but not the only one. There is also the new Democrat nominee's attempt to reinvent herself. It began 5 short years ago since KAMALA HARRIS was running for President in the Democrat primary as a leftist. She endorsed, among other things, a ban on fracking, taxpayer-funded gender reassignment surgeries for detained immigrants, decriminalizing drug possession, decriminalizing illegal border crossings, mandatory buybacks of certain guns—and I could go on.

Of course, none of that was a big surprise. After all, then-Senator HARRIS—a supporter of a government takeover of healthcare and the budget-busting Green New Deal—regularly made lists of most liberal Senators. But what is surprising is the apparent 180-degree flip she has made in the past—well, let's say, 7 weeks or so in this campaign.

She opposed a border wall; now she apparently supports one. She supported a ban on fracking; well, now she opposes one. She supported Medicare for All—the Federal takeover of healthcare—and now says she won't push for it if she is President. She supported mandatory gun buybacks; now she won't push for them. She supported an electric vehicle mandate; and now, apparently, she doesn't.

I could go on, on that list. It is amazing what a brief 7 weeks or so can do or perhaps I should say it is amazing what getting nominated for President can do. But it seems that despite her apparent move to the center, progressive voters should not be alarmed.

A far-left compatriot of the Vice President, the senior Senator from Vermont, whose Medicare for All government healthcare takeover she co-sponsored, was asked on “Meet the Press” last weekend whether he thought Vice President HARRIS was abandoning her progressive ideals. “No,” he answered, “I don't think she's abandoning her ideals. I think she's

trying to be pragmatic in doing what she thinks is right in order to win the election.”

“I think she is trying to be pragmatic and doing what she thinks is right in order to win the election.”

Well, nothing like saying the quiet part out loud. I suspect he is right, and I suspect that one of the Senate’s most liberal Senators could quickly become one of the Nation’s most liberal Presidents.

I think it is fair to say we have gotten a taste over the last 4 years as to what government under KAMALA HARRIS looks like, and so far it mostly looks like a historic inflation crisis, a raging border crisis, and uncertainty on the global stage.

When I say the past 4 years have looked like a historic inflation crisis and a raging border crisis, I do mean the past 4 years. Inflation started spiking within 2 months of President Biden and Vice President HARRIS taking office, thanks in large part to Democrats’ American Rescue Plan’s spending spree, a spending spree, I might add, for which KAMALA HARRIS cast the deciding vote. And almost 4 years later, inflation is still above the Federal Reserve’s target inflation rate. Americans are now paying a staggering \$13,000 more a year just to maintain the same standard of living they enjoyed when President Biden and Vice President HARRIS took office—\$13,000.

Vice President HARRIS recently said in her speech at the Democratic National Convention that her administration would work on lowering the cost of everyday needs like groceries. Well, why hasn’t she tried that already? She is not an outsider coming into office. She has been in office for the past 4 years. If there was something she thought she could do to bring down prices, why hasn’t she done it already?

And Democrats’ nearly 4-year inflation crisis has been matched by the Biden-Harris border crisis. Border numbers started spiking almost immediately after President Biden and Vice President HARRIS took office after they sent the message on day one that border security was at the bottom of their priority list. The ensuing crisis has raged for almost the entirety of the Biden-Harris administration until fears of losing reelection prompted President Biden to at least take some too-little-too-late action this summer.

I could go on and talk about the Biden-Harris administration’s disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan or the deep uncertainty on the world stage that has characterized their tenure. I could also talk about the ways that they are putting us on track for an energy crisis, but I will stop here. Suffice it to say, after the past 4 years, no one has to wonder what Democrat governance would look like, and I hope our country and American families will be spared another 4 years of it.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip.

PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I watched the debate last night. It was

memorable. It was not a good evening for the former President of the United States. I have had more than one person tell me that the people who were watching laughed out loud when he started his rant about immigrants eating dogs and cats. It is an indication, I am afraid, that the former President Donald Trump, when it comes to the issue of immigration, is unhinged. You never know what he is going to say next.

But I think that Vice President KAMALA HARRIS made it clear in her explanation that it was within the grasp and power of former President Donald Trump to do something about the border crisis and the immigration crisis and that he not only failed but he designed a strategy to sabotage efforts on a bipartisan basis to do something.

Specifically, I can recall—and you can as well—that we were told that there was a bipartisan effort underway to write a border bill. Senator LANKFORD, a conservative Republican from the State of Oklahoma, joined with Senator CHRIS MURPHY of Connecticut, a Democrat, to put together, with months of effort, such a bill. We were told hands off. Step away. Let them do this. Let them put something on the floor that is meaningful and is bipartisan and has a chance of passing both the Senate and the House. We were underway, and such a piece of legislation was constructed.

But what happened at the last minute? At the last minute, Donald Trump, very publicly, stepped forward and said: I want to stop this bill from passing. I want the bipartisan bill not to pass, and you can blame it on me, he said. You can blame it on me. He stopped the bipartisan effort to pass a bill that would have been helpful to the border in reducing the number of people who have been coming across that border.

The Border Patrol Agency—men and women who risk their lives every day in service of this country on the border—endorsed this bipartisan bill. It was an indication that we finally—after 30 years of trying—may be on the right track when it comes to immigration, at least when it comes to the border crisis. And who stopped it? Donald Trump stopped the immigration reform bill—the bipartisan effort—and publicly admitted it and took credit for it. You didn’t hear that last night, did you? No, but there was a lot of complaining about the immigration issue and the border.

The simple reality is this: President Trump singlehandedly, personally, threatened those who were going to vote for such a bill. If I remember, only seven Republicans finally did. I wish more had. It wasn’t a bill I would have written, but I was prepared to accept it as a final effort for a bipartisan compromise.

So I would say to those who watched the debate and wanted to have raised the issue of immigration, they still need an answer as to why Donald Trump stopped the only bipartisan ef-

fort in recent memory in the U.S. Senate.

23RD ANNIVERSARY OF THE SEPTEMBER 11, 2001, ATTACKS

Mr. President, today marks the 23rd year since one of the darkest days in our country’s history, the attacks of September 11, 2001.

I can vividly recall that day. I was in this building—just a few feet away—in a room for a morning meeting. We happened to notice on the television set that was playing in the room there that there was some news about a tower—tall building—in New York being struck by an airplane. We didn’t know much more about it. Then the second plane went into an adjoining tower, and we knew that something was wrong, dreadfully wrong. Then we looked out on the Mall, down the Mall from the Capitol Building, and saw black billowing smoke coming from the Pentagon. That image is seared into my mind, and that day will forever be imprinted on our Nation’s collective memory.

Twenty-three years after that devastating day, we still mourn the 2,977 innocent lives lost at the World Trade Center in New York, at the Pentagon in Virginia, and in a field near Shanksville, PA. That includes 343 heroic members of the New York City Fire Department, 71 law enforcement officers who died at the World Trade Center, and 55 military personnel who died at the Pentagon.

Last weekend, the “60 Minutes” television show rebroadcast the show on the fire department heroes from the city of New York. There were personal interviews of men who were at the scene and watched their comrades—dedicated firefighters—not only risk their lives but willingly give their lives to try to rescue the victims of September 11. It is a heartbreaking episode and one every American should see if you want to know what heroism looks like. It was an extraordinary effort by all involved and many others who weren’t part of that program.

We continue to reflect on how these acts of pure evil have forever altered our sense of security and safety and how we must remain faithful to the Constitution while protecting the American people.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. President, on a separate topic, we are 3 weeks away from our annual deadline to fund the government, one of the most essential tasks of Congress. It is hard to imagine just weeks before the Presidential election that the Republican Speaker of the House would risk a government shutdown and really guarantee an image of chaos in his service to this country.

Here in the Senate, under the leadership of Appropriations Committee Chair PATTY MURRAY of Washington and Ranking Member SUSAN COLLINS, a Republican of Maine, we passed 11 out