

is no serious accounting of the global threats to America's interests and our allies today that concludes they can be dealt with one at a time, at our leisure.

The enemy gets a vote.

The demand for a U.S. military that can meet simultaneous challenges is acute, and we ignore it at the peril of the entire American-led international order that underpins our security and our prosperity.

Today, when President Biden addresses the U.N. General Assembly, we will no doubt hear about the grave challenge these interconnected threats pose to America and the entire world. But the President's concern will carry little weight without explicit commitments to the sort of hard power necessary to address them. The President will insist that his leadership has "produced results." That is true—just not good results. For years, by its neglect of the urgent requirements of the national defense, its anemic—defense budget requests, and its ongoing preference for micromanaging allies over confronting adversaries, the Biden-Harris administration has compounded the challenges that we face.

What the Commander in Chief is reckoning with this week is the product of nearly 4 years of failing to check Iran and to prepare adequately for great power competition—4 years of appeasement, hesitation, naive and desperate nuclear diplomacy, as well as outright retreat.

It is, indeed, too late to undo this administration's record of net cuts to defense investments. Likewise, it is too late to roll back the disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Here in the Senate, after weeks of partisan show votes, it is now too late for the Senate to discharge a fundamental obligation of this body—to provide for the common defense—and debate the annual Defense authorization and appropriations bills before the election.

It is not, however, too late to stop treating Israel as an escalatory regional force in need of finger-wagging micromanagement and, instead, like a sovereign democracy encircled by the forces of the world's most active sponsor of terror. It is not too late to stop responding to proxy violence with the sort of unwavering force necessary to change Iran's calculus—and, for that matter, Russia's and China's as well.

It is not too late to show our adversaries that, in their race to undermine America's global influence and threaten its global interests, they will meet determined opposition.

U.S. SUPREME COURT

Mr. President, now on another matter, about halfway through President Biden's term, he leveled some rather weighty accusations at the opposition party. He said Republicans "do not respect the Constitution" and "do not believe in the rule of law." Well, that was pretty rich coming from someone who was already exploring the possibility of resurrecting one of the most

flagrant affronts to the Constitution in American history.

After less than 100 days in office, the President had formed a faux academic Commission to revisit a plan to toss out the separation of powers and pack the Supreme Court. This idea had been dead and buried since the 1930s, when it proved so inconceivable to even the most loyal New Deal Democrats that it almost tore President Roosevelt's administration apart. And just months after convening, the President's own Commission concluded that structural changes would—listen to this—risk irreparable damage to an independent judiciary. That was the President's Commission.

The Commissioners warned that "in recent years, we have seen democratic governments 'regress' or 'backslide' with respect to judicial independence. This has come about through electoral majorities using their power to restructure previously independent institutions, including courts, to favor the political agendas of those governments."

Now, this didn't entirely chasten Washington Democrats. And even though they haven't yet gone forward with a nearly 90-year-old old plan to turn the Nation's highest Court into a fief of the Presidency, the campaign to undermine judicial independence is alive and well right here in the Senate.

Vice President HARRIS, for her part, has yet to disavow her own openness to taking truly radical steps. In 2019, then-Senator HARRIS said:

We are on the verge of a crisis of confidence in the Supreme Court. We have to take this challenge head on, and everything is on the table to do that.

"Everything is on the table"—including, as she confirmed just this summer, packing the Court. The Vice President endorsed the President's call for "imposing term limits for Justices' active service." It would be difficult to draw up a more devastating blow to public confidence in the independence of a co-equal branch of government than subordinating it to the election cycles of another.

On a laundry list of issues, Vice President HARRIS's flip-flops have left voters wondering where she stands. But this particular one is no secret. The Democratic nominee for President of the United States wants to reanimate a dangerous, long-rejected attack on traditional independence, an idea the American people would do well to send back to the ash heap where it belongs.

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.

BROADBAND

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, as a Senator from a rural State and a former

chairman of the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, expanding broadband access to rural areas has long been a priority of mine. I have done a lot of work on this issue, which is precisely why I was so concerned when the infrastructure bill proposed \$42 billion for rural broadband to be funneled through the Commerce Department's National Telecommunications and Information Administration, or NTIA.

I was doubtful whether NTIA was capable of administering \$42 billion, given its previous struggles to administer a fraction of that amount of money. And, unfortunately, those concerns have turned out to be well-founded.

The Biden-Harris administration's signature broadband initiative and Vice President HARRIS's tenure as broadband czar have been nothing short of a disaster. It has been nearly 3 years since the \$42 billion Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment, or what we call the BEAD program, was established at the National Telecommunications and Information Administration to provide broadband access to unserved communities. Three years. And in all that time, the program has not connected a single household to the internet.

Let me say that again. It has been nearly 3 years—and to be precise, 1,044 days—since the BEAD program was established. And in all of that time—over 1,000 days—the program has not connected a single household to the internet. A logical question would be: Why? Please, tell us why?

Well, it is a story—a sad story—of government inefficiency and progressivism run amok. Instead of focusing on delivering broadband services to unserved areas, the Biden-Harris administration loaded down the BEAD program with a liberal wish list of requirements that were never envisioned by Congress and have obstructed broadband deployment: climate change mandates, prioritizing government-owned networks over private investment, biased technology mandates, prioritizing the use of union labor, attempts to impose price controls in direct violation of the law, DEI hiring priorities.

What should have been a straightforward application and approval process for building networks has become a literal morass. Why, oh why, Mr. President, should rural telecoms in South Dakota be talking about climate change mandates in building out broadband networks to serve underserved people in rural areas of the country?

As if the list of woke requirements weren't enough, it has been matched by massive inefficiency from the administration.

One State official who recently testified before the Energy and Commerce Committee in the House had this to say about the program's implementation:

States face a common issue—navigating the complex BEAD process. NTIA's functional requests are akin to building a plane while flying it without having the necessary instructions to be successful. NTIA has provided either no guidance, guidance given too late, or guidance changing midstream, all with a lack of appreciation for State operations and costs and the needs of our telecommunications providers.

Another official from another State described BEAD as—and I quote again—"the most burdensome Federal program" she has ever imagined. The most burdensome Federal program she has ever imagined. And worse yet, ever had to manage.

Given all this, I suppose it is no surprise that not only has broadband not reached even one household through the BEAD program, but construction projects haven't even begun. Current expectations for the start of construction on various BEAD projects range from sometime next year to sometime in 2026–2026. We are already at 1,044 days since this program was enacted. Not a single dollar has been allocated out of the \$42 billion.

Well, if this is what things look like with Vice President HARRIS as broadband czar, I shudder to think what things would look like if she were in charge of the entire Federal Government.

This isn't the first time I sounded the alarm on the implementation of the BEAD program and the burdensome and extra legal requirements the Biden administration—the Biden-Harris administration, I should say—has imposed. I have been joined in this by Commerce Committee Ranking Member Senator CRUZ, who shares my concerns, as well as other committee Republicans who share those concerns as well. I would like to see some of my Democratic colleagues taking a closer look at BEAD implementation and broadband implementation more generally.

As the BEAD program makes very clear, you can throw a lot—a lot—\$42 billion a lot—a lot of taxpayer money at a problem and still not get results. I would like to see the Commerce Committee conduct a lot more oversight of the programs and Agencies under its jurisdiction.

It has been more than 1,500 days since the last Federal Communications Commission oversight hearing at the Commerce Committee—the committee, the principal committee of jurisdiction over the FCC.

In fact, we haven't had a single FCC oversight hearing since Democrats took control of the Senate back in 2021. And despite the ongoing failure of the BEAD program at the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, we haven't held a single hearing on NTIA yet in this Congress. While I understand that highlighting the failure of the Biden-Harris administration's signature broadband initiative is probably not high on Democrats' priority list, our obligation to the American people and our concern

for the millions of Americans without broadband access should put BEAD oversight at the top of the Commerce Committee's agenda.

Mr. President, the BEAD program's failure certainly highlights the fact that Vice President HARRIS has been no more effective as broadband czar as she has been as border czar. It also points to a larger problem—larger problems—with progressivism, like big promises, poor results, and the prioritization of liberal social fantasies over the needs of the American people. I suspect that if "Broadband Czar" HARRIS becomes President HARRIS, the BEAD program will not be the last disastrous government program we see on her watch.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PADILLA). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. BRITT. 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 remarks of Mrs. BRITT pertaining to the introduction of S. 5150 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mrs. BRITT. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

#### FARM BILL

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about the dire state of our American farm economy and our farmers.

American farmers and producers are the backbone of our Nation's agricultural economy and food security. Despite their critical role in our lives to feed, clothe, and fuel not only the United States but the entire world, our farmers are struggling to survive, and that is an understatement.

The current state of the agricultural economy is bleak and on the verge of collapse. We have problems all over the world. We have problems in our country. There is nothing more important—nothing more important—that we should be addressing than our food supply here in this country.

Costs for farmers are rising. Commodity prices are falling. Our farmers cannot break even, much less make a profit. According to the USDA, net farm income this year is projected to decline 4.4 percent from 2023—decline. That is a disaster.

This follows a shocking—listen to this—a shocking 19.5-percent decline in 2022. Not one business in this country can survive with this kind of decline, and our farmers and our farms are no different.

This means producers' income has plummeted 23 percent in just 2 years—23 percent. These figures represent over \$40 billion in lost revenue for America's hard-working producers. This is the largest 2-year decline ever in our farm income—ever in the history of this country.

Right now, our row croppers, especially, are facing considerable financial hardship. According to the American Farm Bureau Federation, row croppers had a \$27.7 billion decline in cash receipts since last year.

In Alabama, my State, our producers are yielding bumper crops of cotton, peanuts, corn, and soybeans; and yet they can't profit due to rising costs of production. Our catfish producers are in the same boat. Rising input costs and falling fish prices are threatening to put them out of business.

A multitude of factors that producers have no control over are impacting their bottom lines, and I want to talk about one of them. This miraculous, this world-saving Inflation Reduction Act that we passed a few years ago was supposed to save our economy—supposed to save a lot of workers. Do you know what it has done to our farmers? It has almost put us out of business.

The Inflation Reduction Act started a tax credit for imports and exports. Unfortunately, all the tax credits are going to people and countries and farmers from overseas, Brazil and China.

It was supposed to go to our farmers. No, it is not going to do that. For some reason, this administration has given all the tax credits to the farmers from other countries, and our farmers are struggling.

The Biden administration has control—has total control—over our farm economy, but you haven't heard a peep out of them—not one peep—about our farmers. And this is a disastrous year coming up.

And, right now, we are harvesting our crops, and they are bumper crops.

The issues plaguing American producers are directly linked to the harmful policies, as I just said, from the Biden-Harris administration. This includes the lack of domestic energy production, skyrocketing inflation, which comes from the Inflation Reduction Act, and endless—endless—environmental hurdles.

Let me say something about conservation and all the things that happen in our environment. There is nobody—and I mean nobody—on the face of the Earth that takes care and is more conscious of environmental problems than our farmers, because they make a living off our land. But we are putting so many regulations on them, we are closing our farms down and running them overseas. We are going to have a national security threat because all of our food is going to come from foreign countries.

Farmers are experiencing rising costs of labor and increase in prices for feed, fertilizer, and pesticides. And I am not going to sugarcoat it: America's agricultural producers are facing a very tough road ahead. It is something nobody—the media, this building, the building on the other end, the House of Representatives, nobody is even talking about it.

Folks, if we can't eat, if we don't have food to eat, we are done.