

world that President Biden is leaving behind—there are no two ways about it; let's not be mealy-mouthed—it is a world full of chaos. A band of malevolent nations—China, Russia, North Korea, Iran, Venezuela, and others—that band is redrawing borders, threatening neighbors, stealing intellectual property, sowing chaos, and threatening the global stability. Unchecked, their aggression emboldens other foes of freedom, and it triggers evermore destabilizing conflicts.

So what is to be done? I know there is a natural tendency to withdraw from the world, to give up on our leadership responsibilities, to give up even on what I would characterize as our own security interests. And, understandably, right now there is a natural impulse to withdraw, certainly, from our global leadership role. It all just seems so daunting right now.

We have domestic problems, of course, but we cannot ignore the costs of such a divestment, costs which are manifesting themselves at this very moment. Abandoning our allies and partners will empower and embolden authoritarian powers, such as China, Russia and Iran and others around the world.

Leadership comes with a price. It also comes with rewards, as we have learned throughout our history.

I look forward to working with President Trump and the many talented members of his incoming administration to reverse years—years—of disastrous policies, to restore deterrence against tyrants everywhere. We must be smart. We must be economizing in our global engagement, and I believe President Trump and the team he is building understand that.

We must continue to rebuild our defense industrial base across the country. Restoring our military readiness from artillery and submarines to semiconductors is critical—not promoting war but instead deterring conflict and furthering America's global interests, many as they are.

We must continue to persuade our allies to increase real investment in their own defense. The American people can do a lot, but we can't do it all. Our partnerships with European and Indo-Pacific nations must remain firm, but our allies also must understand that we can't bear the burden of defending the entire globe alone. We need to use our diplomatic leverage, maintain a strong military, and stand with our allies and partners.

A final piece is economic innovation here at home, something I have been working a lot on in my capacity as the U.S. Senator for Indiana. At a time of technological transformation, the United States cannot just be resilient; no, we must continue to lead. All of these pieces are critical to American foreign policy as we move forward. It is time to turn the page on the last 4 years, time to restore deterrence, and time to get back to peace through strength.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. RICKETTS. Madam President, I have always said that keeping people safe is one of the most fundamental roles the government plays: keeping people safe.

For 4 years, the Biden-Harris administration has failed at this most fundamental mandate the government has. About a month ago, the American people delivered a message that they were no longer going to stand for a government that was failing to keep them safe. The Biden-Harris appeasement-first foreign policy strategy has made America weaker and less safe. The world that the Biden administration is leaving is a more dangerous place today than it was 4 years ago when they took over.

Weakness and appeasement have defined the current administration, starting with their disastrous pullout of Afghanistan. That pullout in Afghanistan cost American lives, including a Nebraskan, Marine Cpl Daegan Page. We also left behind Americans, unbelievably, and we also left behind our Afghan security partners—abandoned them—in addition to the billions of dollars of American equipment, through this poorly executed debacle.

Since then, we have seen foreign policy fumbles and flip-flops that have left our allies questioning our commitment and, worse yet, has the bad guys—Russia, China, Iran, North Korea—questioning our resolve.

The most disturbing example of this is Iran. Under the Trump administration, they knew that the way to deal with a dictator—like we had in Ali Khamenei in Iran—is through strength and imposing sanctions.

The sanctions the Trump administration imposed took Iran's foreign reserves down from \$122.5 billion to less than \$14 billion dollars. And what did that mean? Well, that meant that they couldn't fund the terrorism around the world that they have been doing for the last 4 years.

When you cut off their money supply, they couldn't give it to Hamas or Hezbollah, and so those terrorist organizations were going broke. They didn't have the resources to be able to fund that terrorist group. And then came along Joe Biden.

Joe Biden and his administration relaxed the sanctions on Iran through a naive policy that, somehow, if we just give them enough money, they are going to be nice to us. But that is not the way it works with dictators.

It enabled Iran to generate \$100 billion in oil money, and that has consequences. It was because of this appeasement-first policy and giving money to Iran that Hamas had the ability to attack our ally Israel on October 7; and how Hezbollah has since attacked Israel, as well; how the Houthis have been able to shoot at ships in the Red Sea. Iranian proxies—like Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis—have been emboldened by

Biden's appeasement-first policy. This is what is causing the chaos we are seeing right now in the Middle East.

And while these attacks may seem far away, we must remember that Iran not only chants "Death to Israel"; they chant "Death to America."

Over 40 Americans were killed on October 7. Three American servicemembers were killed by Iranian proxy drone attacks in January. The Houthis continue to shoot at American ships in the Red Sea. Islamic terrorists have crossed our open border. And for crying out loud, Iran is trying to kill President Trump. And what has the Biden administration done? Nothing. Absolutely nothing. There has been no price for Iran to pay for all of this.

Our adversaries, they see this and understand the weakness. The Chinese Communist Party has been emboldened. They have repeatedly violated our sovereignty. Spy balloons have been allowed to travel across our country, spying on our sensitive military installations. We have seen the espionage operations set up in New York City. And fentanyl has been killing Americans across our country. And while it may be coming across the southern border, the precursors are being made in China.

We have also seen what Vladimir Putin has done when Russia invaded Ukraine.

Our freedoms, our way of life depend on peace. And how do we maintain peace? We maintain peace through strength. That is what the American people chose a month ago when they elected President Donald Trump.

Under President Trump's first administration, we saw the dismantling of the ISIS caliphate and historic peace deals in the Middle East—the Middle East's first peace agreement in 26 years. And, by the way, that should have been cause for a Nobel Prize to be awarded to President Trump, but the Nobel Prize committee didn't see it that way. They couldn't bring themselves to acknowledge the great work that President Trump did.

By returning President Trump to the White House, the American people are sending a clear message: There is a new sheriff in town.

The Biden-Harris age of appeasement is ending. The resurgence of American strength is about to begin, and I am excited to see what the future holds.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ROSEN). The Senator from Wyoming.

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Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I spent Thanksgiving in the Middle East with 400 members of our Wyoming National Guard. These heroes come from, actually, 40 different hometowns all across the Cowboy State—small towns, our larger towns, east, west, north, south. I spend every Thanksgiving with deployed Wyoming troops. I go to thank them—to thank them for all they are doing to keep all of us safe and free.

Most Americans celebrate Thanksgiving surrounded by their loved ones.

These soldiers spent Thanksgiving not with family and neighbors but in the neighborhood of America's enemies.

Our enemies today are much more dangerous, aggressive, menacing, and powerful than they were just 4 years ago. For the past 4 years, Americans have seen the current administration surrender, squander, and sell out our Nation's strategic advantages.

This administration stopped enforcing sanctions on Iranian oil sales that allowed Iran to sell discounted oil to China. Iran got richer and more menacing as a result of all the money they got, and China got more powerful by being able to buy cheap energy.

Well, the Wyoming soldiers that I had a chance to visit, they are strong, they are tough, and they are brave. The thing that is so interesting, though, is I believe they are being failed by a Congress that hasn't done its job. It is incumbent upon Congress to make sure that all of these soldiers, each and every one of them, is fully equipped to protect our freedoms.

The Senate should have passed the bipartisan National Defense Authorization Act months ago. It increases troop pay, modernizes our military. It also refocuses our forces on specific military hard power, instead of this politically correct woke policy that the military has been working under for the past several years.

Right now, high prices are crushing military families. Prices are 20 percent higher right now than they were 4 years ago. And, as a result, one in seven servicemembers today—today—relies on food stamps or food banks just to support their families. This, of course, has a direct impact on our problems in terms of trying to recruit more and more members into our military. The pay raise means that a stronger military and a stronger America will be there on the world stage.

Now, as for military modernization, we need to overcome 4 years of weakness. The current administration has failed to keep us safe. It allowed 10 million illegal immigrants to cross over our southern border. It allowed a Chinese spy balloon to fly across America. It led a deadly and disastrous retreat from Afghanistan. And it slashed away America's hard power.

Under the Democrats, America became a nation in retreat. Well, the National Defense Authorization Act reverses that. It equips our military. It equips them to meet the challenges of a dangerous world. So why hasn't the Senate—this body right here that is here today in session—why hasn't it yet passed the National Defense Authorization Act? Well, the problem isn't the product; it is the process.

In the final weeks of their majority, the Democrats in the Senate have prioritized voting to confirm radical judges rather than protecting our Nation's security. As one Democrat Senator said last month, Democrats are "hell-bent," he said, on getting liberal judges confirmed.

Why can't Democrats show that same level of passion for supporting our troops? Democrats' dithering and delaying—it is downright dangerous. It sends a terrible message that America's deterrence isn't credible.

And as a result of the November elections, that is about to change. The Senate is going to change. The American people voted for change. They voted to return to a nation that is safe and strong.

In less than 60 days, America will once again have a President and a Senate majority that prioritizes making America safe and strong again.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

#### ALASKAN ENERGY

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam President, my colleagues have been down on the Senate floor for the last hour talking about the world that the Biden-Harris administration left us in terms of national security, and it is a really important topic. It is a much more dangerous world, and it also impacts not just what is going on globally but at home as well, particularly in a State like mine where the Biden-Harris administration has literally been at war with Alaska because we have a lot of resources.

Now, you are thinking, Well, why would that happen? So when you are governing, as this administration demonstrated to the American people and Alaskans, you make choices. You make choices. President Biden's choices involved: Do you support hard-working Alaskans, particularly in the energy sector or do you support anti-American dictators, particularly when it relates to America's energy?

And the choices, unfortunately, in the last 4 years is, when this administration was thinking about, Hey, where do I get my energy—Americans need energy. Our allies need energy, particularly after the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. We told all our allies: Hey, get off Russian oil and gas. OK. Where should we get it? Well, we should get it from places like Alaska, hard-working Alaskans, not from dictators like in Venezuela or Iran.

But the choice that this President made almost every time was about selecting dictators over Americans, over Alaskans, when it comes to energy.

Now, this is particularly true as it relates to the policy the Biden-Harris administration undertook with regard to Iran. Think about what they inherited. The Trump administration's Iran policy was very effective. What was it? No. 1, maximum pressure on the Iranian energy sector.

When President Trump took office, under the Trump administration's sanctions, Iran's oil exports were reduced in 2020 to about 200,000 barrels a day from 2.7 million barrels a day. This was crushing them. Their foreign reserves, Iranian foreign reserves, went to about \$4 billion in foreign reserves by the end of the Trump administra-

tion. That is not a lot at all. This was working.

The Trump administration's policies in the Middle East, particularly as it relates to Iran, also involved taking out the world's No. 1 terrorist, Soleimani.

By the way, a lot of people now commend President Trump for that. I remember the classified hearing we had here in the Senate right after that happened. So many of my Senate Democrat colleagues were criticizing Mike Pompeo and others for killing General Soleimani, which was a huge gift to countries around the world because he was the No. 1 terrorist in the world.

And, of course, the Trump administration launched the Abraham Accords. The Presiding Officer and I went to a number of the Abraham Accord countries together prior to the October 7 attacks, where the opportunities for peace had been growing prior to the October 7 attacks.

So that was the Trump administration's policies with regard to Iran and energy. What did they do when the Biden administration came in? They made choices, and the choices were to appease Iran. The choices were to lift sanctions on the Iranian oil and gas sector. When they lifted these sanctions over the last 4 years, this has dramatically enriched Iran. They almost have \$100 billion in oil revenues now—again, choosing dictators over Americans and Alaskans.

And, of course, Iran, what did they use this money for? To train and equip and supply the Houthis, Hezbollah, and Hamas.

So what happened domestically? I will tell you what happened domestically. In my State, the great State of Alaska, that has got minerals and oil and gas for our Nation, for our allies, for Alaskans in huge abundance, the Biden-Harris administration came in, and they said: We are going to shut down Alaska. We are going to lock up Alaska. We are going to prefer energy from our adversaries than from our own country, and that is what they did. Sixty-eight Executive orders and Executive actions in the last 4 years—68—exclusively focused on shutting down my State.

I don't think there has ever been a Federal Government that focused on one State to crush them more than the Biden administration did to the great State of Alaska.

So as I mentioned, this is all about choices. I wrote an op-ed in the Wall Street Journal a couple month ago saying the Biden-Harris administration sanctions Alaska more than it sanctions Iran. It sanctions hard-working Alaskans more than it sanctions the terrorists in Iran. That is fact. That is what has happened when you have an administration that goes on bended knee all over the world—Venezuela, Iran, Saudi Arabia—begging for oil when you are shutting it down in our own country, particularly in my State.

So this is what we got—4 years of this—sanctioning a State, sanctioning