

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 75.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of the following named officer for appointment to the permanent grade indicated in the Regular Air Force under the United States Constitution, article II, section 2, clause 2: to be Major General, Lt. Gen. John D. Caine (Retired).

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 75, the following named officer for appointment to the permanent grade indicated in the Regular Air Force under the United States Constitution, article II, section 2, clause 2: to be Major General, Lt. Gen. John D. Caine (Retired).

John Thune, John R. Curtis, Mike Rounds, John Cornyn, Ted Budd, Kevin Cramer, John Hoeven, John Barrasso, Joni Ernst, Markwayne Mullin, Tom Cotton, Pete Ricketts, Dan Sullivan, Tommy Tuberville, Todd Young, Roger F. Wicker, John Boozman.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 74.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of the following

named officer for appointment as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and appointment in the United States Air Force to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., sections 152 and 601: to be General, Lt. Gen. John D. Caine (Retired).

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 74, the following named officer for appointment as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and appointment in the United States Air Force to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., sections 152 and 601: to be General, Lt. Gen. John D. Caine (Retired).

John Thune, John R. Curtis, Mike Rounds, John Cornyn, Ted Budd, Kevin Cramer, John Hoeven, John Barrasso, Joni Ernst, Markwayne Mullin, Tom Cotton, Pete Ricketts, Dan Sullivan, Tommy Tuberville, Todd Young, Roger F. Wicker, John Boozman.

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

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

NOMINATION OF MIKE HUCKABEE

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I am delighted that, today, the U.S. Senate is going to confirm Governor Mike Huckabee to be our U.S. Ambassador to Israel.

Governor Huckabee is a fierce friend to one of our closest allies. He is the right leader to have this very important job. This is a man who has visited Israel more than 100 times. He knows its people. He knows its purpose. He knows its potential. He also knows its promise. That is why I am sure that he will receive bipartisan support today.

His confirmation will strengthen the unbreakable bond between America and Israel. It is a bond that is stronger than ever under President Trump. Security is the backbone of our special relationship, and shared values are our moral bedrock. Liberty, faith, and opportunity—those are our shared beliefs. That is why America has always supported Israel.

Historically, in 1948, America recognized the creation of Israel 11 minutes after its birth. America was the first Nation to recognize a free and democratic Jewish State. We have stood shoulder to shoulder with the people of Israel ever since.

President Trump's record is proof of America's unwavering support. His first term delivered historic progress. He forged the Abraham Accords and shattered decades of deadlock to bring peace and prosperity to the Middle East. He moved the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, as promised, which is Israel's eternal capital. President Trump recognized Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights. He stood firm against Iran. The nomination and confirmation of Governor Huckabee improves on that stellar record.

Today, the threats facing the United States and Israel are growing, menacing. Iran is racing to nuclear weapons. Iran's hired henchmen attack Israel from all sides. Hamas continues to wage war against Israel, and it continues to hold innocent hostages captive. The Houthis in Yemen are launching drone attacks against Israel. Israel's right to defend itself is not up for debate. America's security assistance to Israel is not a handout. It is necessary to keep Israel safe, and it is necessary to stop terrorism. Republicans understand that. We back Israel unequivocally. Yet Democrats in this body are wavering.

Last week, Senator BERNIE SANDERS of Vermont tried to cancel \$8.8 billion in weapons transfers to Israel. He failed. Every Republican voted with Israel, but 15 Democrats voted against Israel. This isn't the first time this year that Senate Democrats have stood against Israel. Today, there is a loud pro-Hamas fringe, and they are trying to hijack the Democrat Party. It isn't just happening in the Senate; it is happening around the country; it is happening by campus radicals on our Nation's college campuses. This is worse than bad politics. This is dangerous policy.

We are at an inflection point in history. Hamas launched a brutal attack against Israel on October 7 of 2023. It was the deadliest single-day attack against the people of Israel and the Jewish people since the Holocaust. Israel continues to fight for its safety and its survival. Faced with this reality, Democrats are still abandoning Israel, and that puts both Israel and America at risk.

Here are the facts: Israel is a democracy; Hamas terrorists are butchers. Israel shields its citizens; Hamas uses its citizens as human shields. Israel sends food to Gaza; Hamas steals the food and starves the people. That is why the Palestinian people are protesting against Hamas. Hamas faces the most serious challenge to its rule in 18 years. Israel fights terror. It has every right to defend itself. America has chosen a side. We stand with Israel. Our support is unwavering. It is unbreakable—no apologies made. Peace in the Middle East starts with supporting Israel, not appeasing our adversaries.

The roadblock to peace continues to be Iran. President Trump is restoring

maximum pressure on the Iranian regime. President Trump is choking off Iran's oil sales with strong sanctions. President Trump is hammering the Houthi terrorists who attack our troops. President Trump has reversed Joe Biden's foolish arms embargo on Israel. This is going to help Israel win the war, and it will help bring home the hostages. President Trump is slapping down sham kangaroo courts that target Israel simply for defending itself. This is leadership. This is moral clarity.

The Senate is moving to confirm Governor Huckabee in spite of Democrat efforts to slow it down. We are right to do that. America and Israel share urgent challenges. We also share a sacred cause. Governor Huckabee is the right man at the right time with the right values to carry forward that cause.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would like to comment on the statement on Israel just made by my friend and colleague from the State of Wyoming.

I am proud of the fact that President Harry Truman was the first President to recognize Israel's right to exist, and I certainly concur with that sentiment to this day. The creation of the State of Israel after World War II was almost inevitable if this group of people were to exist.

The Holocaust was a reminder of the prejudice against many of the Jewish faith and the enduring struggle which they have been engaged in for decades, if not centuries.

It was the right thing to do.

There have been times in history when Israel stood with us when we desperately needed their help, and there have been times when we have disagreed with their policy. That has never diminished, for me personally or for our Nation, our commitment to Israel's right to exist and our commitment to the values that Israel stands for in the Middle East and around the world.

What happened on October 7 was horrific—horrific. Some 1,200 innocent Israelis were killed, butchered, murdered by terrorists under the flag of the Hamas movement. And, unfortunately, they took hostages as well. I don't know the exact number, but I believe it was over 250 hostages who were taken. Some still remain in captivity under the control of Hamas.

Israel is defending itself, and it has a right to do that. Israel certainly has a right to exist, and no terrorist organization on its border should be allowed to do so with impunity.

My concern—and it was expressed graphically, dramatically, in last Sunday's "60 Minutes" program. I commend that program to those who would like to see what is happening on the ground in Gaza.

It is estimated that 50,000 people have been killed or seriously wounded

among the Palestinians. That goes way beyond any members of Hamas or any terrorist organization. They are innocent people, the Palestinians in the Gaza area, who are simply trying to exist. They are fighting every possible element, not only an act of war with armaments killing innocent people, a large number being women and children, but also the fact that they are restrained from leaving that area and going to surrounding countries, which don't want to see the controversy exported to their borders.

Secondly, there is the simple question of humanitarian assistance for the people in Gaza. There is a disparity in the reports from the area. Some report that the humanitarian aid is being held back from the Palestinians—innocent Palestinians—to the detriment of their hospitals and feeding their people. Some suggest that a famine is underway in some parts of Gaza.

I don't have any personal knowledge, but, I will tell you, the scenes that were depicted last Sunday on "60 Minutes" are heartbreaking.

Two doctors from Chicago had gone there risking their lives to volunteer to try to save the children and those who have been the victims of Israeli bombing. And I am sorry to say they have not been as successful as they would have liked to have been. But they reported to us graphically what is going on there with the lack of medical supplies, the lack of hospitals and basic food and sustenance that is needed by the people in that area.

By every single measure, this war has to end. If it is going to continue until every Hamas terrorist is killed, I am afraid there will be thousands and thousands of innocent Palestinians lost in the process. Why? Because the Hamas soldiers hide themselves among the general population and use them as their shield. It is a dastardly, deadly strategy which has cost so many lives.

Those of us who voted to restrain the weapons that were going to be sent by the United States to Israel did it with the understanding that there were particular weapons—for example, the detonation bombs that weigh a ton or more—that could kill innocent people and have, over and over again.

This war must come to an end. This cease-fire should be resumed, and the hostages returned immediately—all hostages returned immediately. I am not making any excuse for Hamas, but I have to tell you, after meeting with the doctors who have been there, it breaks my heart to think this continues every day, and innocent people are in the midst of this gunfire and losing their lives.

Whatever your cause may be, wherever you stand politically, we should all keep them in mind as we decide what our future course of action will be.

TARIFFS

Mr. President, on a separate topic, I want to address the Trump tariff tax—Trump tariff tax. It started this week.

It is already changing not only the economy of the United States but the world. It has been a reckless undertaking, creating pure chaos.

I received a phone call yesterday from a business leader. I won't identify him, but he was desperate. He said to me: President Trump and his people don't understand a supply chain. I am not selling T-shirts, he said. I am selling sophisticated products that require chemicals and electronics that are rare to find. And, sadly, some of the minerals which are desperately needed in my production effort are virtually controlled by China.

Well, naturally, with the battle over the tariffs underway, China has decided to cut off American manufacturers from the availability of those critical chemicals, and that means restraining the production in the United States of some very important and worthwhile products.

He said to me: What am I supposed to do?

I said: I don't know.

I don't know if anybody in this administration has thought through what they have started.

We clearly may reach a point soon—and I hope it happens—where Donald Trump says: Fine, I want to declare victory. We are going to reverse course. It is going to be business as usual between the United States and the world.

I think it is highly unlikely that he will do it, but anything is possible with this man.

This much I do know: The damage Donald Trump has done to the international reputation of the United States is immeasurable. You see the leaders in these countries and what they are saying. They thought that they were close friends and allies of the United States, and now they appear to be adversaries, and there is a strategy underway to punish them.

Canada, for goodness' sake? Is that what the last election was about—our relationship with Canada? I consider Canada not only a good neighbor but a great neighbor, an ally of the United States, a partner of the United States, over and over again, when we have engaged in conflict. And to say now that we are virtually in an economic war with Canada is unimaginable. What is going on with this administration?

And, of course, there are many other countries as well.

The European Union will never be the same in terms of its relationship with the United States. And I can't blame them at all. They are basically saying: We cannot trust the United States' leadership, if Donald Trump can do this to us, in a matter of weeks, as the new President of the United States.

We have seen the tariff in China go from 34 percent to 104 percent, and the Chinese are going to make us pay for that, as they have promised they would.

I am not surprised. If the shoe were on the other foot, that is exactly what