

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

we would be saying too: You can't push us around. We are a sovereign nation.

So what is the difference here between making a speech on the floor of the Senate and actually doing something to impact this tariff war that Donald Trump has started? The difference is four—four Members of the U.S. Senate on the Republican side.

If any four will step forward and say: Enough. We have a constitutional opportunity and responsibility when it comes to tariffs and our dealings with foreign countries, and we, as four Republicans, will join with the Democrats in engaging in a bipartisan discussion over how to go forward from here. If they don't step up—if four Republicans don't step up—then Donald Trump will continue this tariff war at the expense of American businesses and American workers and American taxpayers and our reputation in the world. That much is at stake.

Herbert Hoover signed the Smoot-Hawley law, which imposed tariffs on the world in June of 1930, and then President Hoover went fishing. President Trump signed off on these massive tariffs and went on to play golf at Mar-a-Lago. I don't get it.

This is the most serious economic and trade situation we have faced in modern times. Businesses are desperate looking around at how to resolve this in a fashion to keep themselves in business and to employ critical employees. This is the moment when we should be gathering together and talking about, specifically, where we are headed. But the best I can tell is that we are putting at risk our constancy, our reliability, and the trust of nations all around the world because of this undertaking.

If the President Trump tariff tax continues unabated, it is going to destroy this economy—period, end of quote. We are dealing with many people who feel that we are already in a recession or headed to one quickly.

Will there be four Republicans who will step up and say: Stop. We cannot do this without some thoughtful consideration of what impact it is going to have on our economy?

If four of them will step up in the House and four in the Senate, we can make history together on a bipartisan basis and come up with something that is thoughtful and avoids this terrible chaos and the reckless conduct of this administration to date.

President Trump has played many roles in his career. He played a billionaire real estate mogul on the hot, hit reality show "The Apprentice." On January 6, 2021, he played a cheerleader, ramping up an angry mob of insurrectionists to storm the U.S. Capitol. But his latest role may be the most outlandish. He calls himself a doctor.

On Thursday, after the President's so-called "Liberation Day" of tariffs, he took to social media to announce to the world:

THE OPERATION IS OVER! THE PATIENT LIVED, AND IS HEALING. THE

PROGNOSIS IS THAT THE PATIENT WILL BE FAR STRONGER, BIGGER, BETTER, AND MORE RESILIENT THAN EVER BEFORE.

That was reported by the President after his so-called "Liberation Day" of tariffs.

The "operation" in his twisted metaphor, of course, was Trump's tariff tax, a 10-percent tariff on imports from almost every nation in the world, and the "patient" is supposed to be the U.S. economy.

If this is Dr. Trump's idea of a successful operation, he should be sued for medical malpractice. He is playing a dangerous game and, this Trump tariff-tax gambit could push our country into a desperate recession.

Small businesses in Illinois—and large ones as well—have reached out to our office, concerned that the uncertainty brought on by this administration could leave them no other choice but to cut jobs due to increased costs. Some have even said their businesses would go under due to these tariffs—their life's work rendered to nothing.

Nobody knows what this administration wants to get out of these tariffs. They have yet to specify what they want from other countries. And why would any country want to do business with the United States again if trade agreements can be violated so willfully?

After threatening a 34-percent tariff on China, Trump raised it to 104 percent. And just this morning, China announced a retaliatory 84-percent tariff on American goods starting tomorrow. This is going to devastate our economy. In Illinois, it will hurt our farmers who export thousands of tons of soybeans, American corn, pork, and more to China.

Unsurprisingly, the markets have responded with shock and panic. I know that half of the American people don't own stock or really follow what is happening in the stock market closely, but many do. And this, I can say: In the week after Trump's self-destructive announcement, the S&P 500 dropped by nearly 19 percent—19 percent—from its last high on February 19, creeping eerily close to bear market territory.

Last week's drop wiped out more than \$5 trillion of total wealth. Overnight, many Americans watched their retirement accounts plummet—what a sinking feeling to see that happen in such a short period of time.

Americans who scrimped and saved their whole working lives for their retirement, who worked multiple jobs and made sacrifices to ensure they would have enough to live comfortably in their golden years, have been stunned by what has happened in just a matter of days with the Trump tariff tax.

And add tanking our economy and hurting working families in the process to a long list of inexplicable decisions by the Trump administration.

Donald Trump was bad as a TV real estate mogul, he was bad as a cheer-

leader on January 6, and he is bad as a doctor, with his failed Trump tariff tax operation.

GAZA

Finally, Mr. President, on a separate topic that I mentioned earlier, if you tuned in to "60 Minutes" in the last few weeks, you were reminded of the horrors that continue in Gaza.

I do believe I will put this statement in the RECORD, but I want to commend two doctors from Chicago who have volunteered and risked their lives to go to Gaza.

Dr. Lisa Thornton, a pediatric rehabilitation expert from Chicago, and orthopedic surgeon Dr. Samar Attar volunteered for the Syrian American Medical Society. They know the horrors of war, and they reported it accurately on that program.

Urgent medical and humanitarian supplies that had increased during the first phase of the cease-fire must be maintained and allowed in once again, and this ghastly 18-month war must finally come to an end.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). The Senator from Arkansas.

NOMINATION OF MIKE HUCKABEE

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, today, I urge my Senate colleagues to confirm Gov. Mike Huckabee's nomination to be the next U.S. Ambassador to Israel.

I have had the privilege of knowing Mike, his wife Janet, and his children John Mark, David, and Sarah, for many years.

Mike's exemplary character, steadfast faith, and lifetime of servant leadership make him the right choice to represent the President in Israel, particularly at this critical moment.

A friend, patriot, and fellow Arkansan, Mike graduated from Ouachita Baptist University with a degree in religion before attending Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

As minister at Immanuel Baptist Church in Pine Bluff and, later, pastor at Beech Street Baptist Church in Texarkana, Mike led congregations toward Christ-centered lives of faith, service, and charity. Throughout his time in ministry and, later, as president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, Mike encouraged others to grow in their faith by dedicating himself to spreading the good news of the Gospel to all.

For some unknown and largely inexplicable reason, Mike left the pulpit and entered politics. Mysterious are the ways of the Lord indeed.

As Governor of Arkansas for more than a decade, Mike led the Natural State toward a stronger, more prosperous future by building coalitions and gathering support from both sides of the aisle. Governor Huckabee cut taxes, created jobs, improved infrastructure, reformed education, and improved healthcare for all Arkansans. Mike was a solution-oriented, pragmatic leader who left a lasting legacy for generations of Arkansans and their families. Word on the street is he even