

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHATZ. 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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 Senator from Hawaii.

#### GAZA

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, the mass starvation and death sweeping through Gaza is a moral tragedy and a strategic abomination.

What started as a war with a just cause—to go after Hamas for the unspeakable atrocities it committed on October 7 and bring home the hostages—quickly turned unjust and immoral.

Now, everybody knows how complicated and fraught the Middle East is. Everyone knows that navigating this generations-long conflict requires nuance and depth and a historical understanding in order to try to get it right. Everyone knows that smart and sincere and decent people can disagree on this issue. But what is happening today is entirely different. There is no excuse for this horrific suffering. It is not making Israel or Israelis or Jews any safer, nor is it helping to bring home the 50 remaining hostages who have been in brutal captivity for almost 2 years.

The fact that this catastrophe was preventable is precisely what makes it so indefensible. People have been warning for months that the Israeli Government's actions would result in exactly this kind of tragedy, where children are dying by the dozens and hundreds of thousands of people have been starving for days.

The Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, which Israel scrambled to set up 2 months ago, has failed. According to the BBC, where there used to be 400 U.N. aid distribution sites all across Israel and Gaza, there are now just 4 run by the GHF. As a result, a third of Gazans—a third of Gazans—are going multiple days in a row without eating.

The World Health Organization reports that at least 63 people—many of them children—have died from malnutrition this month alone, and more than 1,000 Palestinians have been killed while seeking aid at GHF sites, according to the U.N.

In May, the GHF's first executive director resigned, saying:

It is clear that it is not possible to implement this plan while also strictly adhering to the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence.

Whether you believe this organization was set up to fail intentionally from the start or, more charitably, that the Israeli Government established it without understanding that it couldn't succeed, it doesn't matter. What is plainly obvious now is that it is not working.

You don't have to be some leftwing organization or get your data from the Hamas government to acknowledge that the GHF is failing at its fundamental mission of feeding people, which raises the question, why?

Here we have an Israeli security apparatus that can and did synchronize an attack of exploding pagers across an entire country. They can reach and gather intelligence from the high command of their greatest adversaries. The IDF is widely viewed as punching way above its weight in almost every way. Yet Israel is asserting that, given all of those capabilities, the one thing they can't do is facilitate aid distribution. That is too hard for them.

Food and medical assistance routinely get into conflict zones around the world—Yemen, Sudan, Syria, Iraq, the Democratic Republic of Congo. Gaza should not be any different.

What is different are the stated goals of the extremists in the Israeli Government:

The only way to win the war and bring back the hostages is to completely stop the "humanitarian" aid, conquer the entire Gaza Strip, and encourage voluntary migration.

That was the National Security Minister of the Government of Israel—completely stopping humanitarian aid, conquering the entire Gaza strip, and encouraging migration. These are their words; these are not my words.

As the starvation takes hold, their response is to deny that it is even happening. There is no starvation in Gaza. Who said that? The Prime Minister of Israel.

Ben Gvir added—I have to collect myself before saying what Ben Gvir said:

If they were hungry, they would have returned the hostages home.

"If they were hungry, they would have returned the hostages home." It is worth pausing on that for just a moment. Too many people in the Netanyahu government make no distinction between the actual enemy that is Hamas and innocent civilians.

The idea that a desperate mother, malnourished herself and out of breast milk for her infant, or a 7-year-old running to the front of an aid line to get whatever scraps he can for himself and his siblings—the idea that these people are in charge of which hostages are released and when, that they suddenly are being held to account for the actions of Hamas on October 7, is preposterous. It is another example of the casual dismissal of civilian death and suffering as if it is an inevitable consequence—war is hell and all of that. But what possible explanation is there for letting infants and 2- and 3-year-olds starve? What tactical advantage is being gained?

Standing up for our shared humanity, whatever our other differences and preferences, should not be a matter of controversy, but too often, when someone is critical of Israel and they are a Jew, they are characterized as a self-hating Jew. And if someone is critical

of Israel and they are not a Jew, they are characterized as anti-Semitic.

I want to be crystal clear. Anti-Semitism is among the oldest and most vile prejudices that exist. It is real, it is scary, and it is on the rise in the United States. It should be fought at every turn—left, right, and center. Anyone who simply waves it away or denies the urgency of addressing it is either not paying attention or lying.

But criticizing the conduct of this war; criticizing Minister Ben Gvir, who talks about ethnic cleansing; criticizing the withholding of aid; criticizing the excessive tolerance for civilian casualties; criticizing Prime Minister Netanyahu's apparent willingness to cling to power at the expense of Israel, Israelis, and Jews everywhere—that is a separate matter. Everybody gets to do that, just like Americans get to criticize their President without hating America or the people within it. People are more than their governments.

The Government of Israel is behaving terribly. The conduct of this war is indefensible. And it is not in spite of my Jewishness and my Judaism that I say that; it is because of it.

There are a lot of people, including people I know personally—and I believe this—who believe in the sacred idea of Israel.

They are good people, and this cannot be about vanquishing one side of the political spectrum, whether that is the left and center left or the right and the alt right. This is about grounding ourselves in a very basic principle, which is, whatever else we are fighting about, can we please hold the children harmless?

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

#### WAIVING QUORUM CALL

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum call with respect to the Gaiser nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant executive 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. 182, Thomas Gaiser, of Ohio, to be an Assistant Attorney General.

John Thune, Eric Schmitt, John R. Curtis, Tim Scott of South Carolina, Bill Cassidy, Jon Husted, Steve Daines, Marsha Blackburn, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Ron Johnson, John Barrasso, Tim Sheehy, Roger F. Wicker, Mike Rounds, Bernie Moreno, Pete Ricketts, Jim Justice.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the mandatory

quorum call under rule XXII has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Thomas Gaiser, of Ohio, to be an Assistant Attorney General, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 53, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 449 Ex.]

#### YEAS—53

Banks	Graham	Moreno
Barrasso	Grassley	Mullin
Blackburn	Hagerty	Murkowski
Boozman	Hawley	Paul
Britt	Hoeben	Ricketts
Budd	Husted	Risch
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Cassidy	Johnson	Schmitt
Collins	Justice	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Lankford	Sheehy
Cramer	Lee	Sullivan
Crapo	Lummis	Thune
Cruz	Marshall	Tillis
Curtis	McConnell	Tuberville
Daines	McCormick	Wicker
Ernst	Moody	Young
Fischer	Moran	

#### NAYS—47

Alsobrooks	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Baldwin	Hirono	Sanders
Bennet	Kaine	Schatz
Blumenthal	Kelly	Schiff
Blunt Rochester	Kim	Schumer
Booker	King	Shaheen
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Slotkin
Coons	Lujan	Smith
Cortez Masto	Markey	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warnock
Fetterman	Murray	Warren
Gallego	Ossoff	Welch
Gillibrand	Padilla	Whitehouse
Hassan	Peters	Wyden
Heinrich	Reed	

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RICKETTS). On this vote, the yeas are 53, the nays are 47.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

#### LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, it is July 30—my older daughter's birthday—but we are approaching a season that Senators and our staffs alike look forward to each year with some anticipation, which is going back home, talking to our constituents—more importantly, listening to our constituents, hearing what is on their minds, and determining how we might do our jobs better.

I sometimes, tongue in cheek, refer to Washington, DC, as a forward operating base in hostile territory, but the truth is, many of the most important battles that are fought in our country are fought out here on the floor of the U.S. Senate. But, as we look ahead to next month, it is worth taking stock of where we have come in the first half of the 119th Congress, in the first 6 months of President Trump's tenure as President of the United States—certainly, in his second term, obviously—which has been an amazing record of accomplishment if you look back at it.

We have confirmed President Trump's Cabinet at a record pace—no

thanks to our Democratic colleagues who have reflexively or, you might even say, mindlessly opposed each and every nominee of this President, with maybe one exception. That would be the Secretary of State, Senator RUBIO.

In the process of obstructing all of these nominees and forcing us to burn valuable floor time by not agreeing to any voice votes or to the expedited consideration of noncontroversial nominees, they have forced us to burn valuable floor time, during which we might have taken up other important bipartisan matters. Nevertheless, we have done important things—unfortunately, alone on this side of the aisle, without any support from our friends across the aisle—like extending the Trump tax cuts from 2017 and making them permanent, addressing the looming debt ceiling to prevent a national default. We have secured many other important wins for border security and law enforcement through the One Big Beautiful Bill.

We also passed our first rescissions package, codifying many of the most important spending reforms identified by the Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE.

While these accomplishments are not insignificant, we are just getting started.

As I mentioned, our Democratic colleagues here in the Senate have reflexively and mindlessly opposed President Trump's nominees, but we have confirmed 107 of them while 147 lower level but critical nominees are still waiting to be confirmed by the Senate—147. These include many Ambassadors to key allies around the world that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee has voted out of committee. They are waiting for their day on the Senate floor.

To date, Senate Democrats have allowed voice votes or given unanimous consent on exactly zero—zero—of President Trump's civilian nominees. This is the only time in recorded history that the minority party has refused to do so on any nominees at this point in a Presidency, and it is shameful. It is inexcusable. They are not hurting Republicans; they are not hurting President Trump. They are hurting the American people because these are people who will serve in critical positions that require Senate confirmation not only here in the United States and the administration but around the world in representing the United States at Embassies all across the planet.

Senate Democrats' partisan obstruction is making our country less safe; it is making American foreign policy less effective; and it is ceding the field to our adversaries, who have no problem putting their representatives in these countries which currently lack American Ambassadors.

I, for one, believe that if our Democratic colleagues do not relent on this needless and mindless obstruction, Senate Republicans will have to con-

sider what additional steps we need to take in order to expedite this process.

There is precedent for this. Back in 2017, when Neil Gorsuch was nominated for the U.S. Supreme Court, our Democratic colleagues refused to grant cloture or closing off debate by giving 60 votes for that purpose. It forced Republicans to change the Senate rules to lower that threshold from 60 down to 51, which had always been the longstanding tradition. Even in spite of the possibility of requiring 60 votes, it simply had not been required previously.

And when Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada was majority leader, the Democrats changed the threshold for cloture on all other Federal judges from 60 to 51. So in 2017, in order to break that logjam on Supreme Court nominees, Republicans returned the favor.

I believe that some similar process by which we set a new precedent on the President's nominees may be necessary before we leave this Chamber, before we leave the Senate and Washington, DC, this month.

The President must have his team in place. Again, our Democratic colleagues seem unwilling to accept the fact that President Trump actually won the election, receiving a mandate from the American people. Why else would they obstruct all of his nominees and force us to burn valuable floor time by not agreeing to any sort of expedited process, force us to burn all this valuable floor time just to confirm 107 nominees and leave 147 waiting?

It is not fair to the American people because these people are supposed to serve in important positions of responsibility on their behalf. It is not fair to President Trump, who has been denied his team. But it is also not fair to the people who agree to serve in these important Senate-confirmed positions, many of whom have had to sell their businesses, go through a rigorous ethics and legal background scrub, and are simply waiting, day after day after day, will they or won't they, will they or won't they vote to confirm me to this position, which, for many of them—maybe all of them—is an honor of a lifetime.

So we owe it to the American people. We owe it to President Trump. We owe it to these nominees who have volunteered to serve their country to vote on these nominees without further delay.

There is more work to do. In addition to confirming President Trump's nominees, another task that awaits the Senate upon our return is the National Defense Authorization Act. This is the necessary authorization that Congress passes each year to support our men and women in the military, to make sure that we remain the preeminent military strength in the world, and, as President Trump has said time and time again, to make sure that our main national security policy is peace through strength.

We don't want to fight any unnecessary wars, but the best way to avoid