

Prime Minister Netanyahu said this week, President Trump is the “greatest friend Israel has ever had in the White House.”

We celebrate this good news. We are also keeping an eye on alarming news; the news is the rise of anti-Semitism around the world. A prime example is the International Criminal Court. It is a kangaroo court.

Last year, it issued arrest warrants for Israeli officials. One of those officials is Prime Minister Netanyahu. The charges, of course, are bogus. The Senate had an opportunity last week to fight back. Senator TOM COTTON of Arkansas, chairman of the Intelligence Committee, introduced a bipartisan bill to impose severe sanctions on the ICC.

The House of Representatives passed the same bill last month. The vote was bipartisan. Passing this bill in the Senate would have sent a very strong message that America stands with Israel, that we wouldn't let our ally stand alone.

Democrats in this body of the U.S. Senate filibustered in spite of the fact that 45 Democrat Senators voted to abandon our closest ally. Two now Democrat Senators voted for this same bill last year when they were Members of the House, yet when the opportunity last week to support Israel in the Senate came, they voted no.

Democrats' filibuster is the reason why the ICC is not facing the crippling sanctions that it deserves. This very topic came up in our discussion with the Prime Minister of Israel.

We did point out the fact that ICC is a kangaroo court, refuses to point out the difference between right and wrong, and the vote of the Democrats to block this bill in the U.S. Senate was an affront to the people of Israel, and the Prime Minister specifically asked the Democrats to get this passed, to support this legislation, which is united support by the Republicans, had bipartisan support in the House, but was held up on this body by a unanimous vote of the Democrats or near unanimous vote of the Democrats to stop this legislation in its tracks and to allow the so-called International Criminal Court to continue with their lack of justice in a court they claim to have, where I see having no jurisdiction.

So where do we go from here in terms of what we have seen today and in our discussion with the Prime Minister? What is the path forward for peace and prosperity in the Middle East? That is what we just spoke about.

First, peace and prosperity in the Middle East begins with American support for Israel. President Trump and Republicans in the Congress stand with Israel and have from the beginning.

Our support is unwavering; it is unbreakable; and it is unequivocal. It is not what we have seen from the other side of the aisle. Additionally, the biggest barrier to peace and prosperity in the Middle East continues to be Iran.

As the largest State sponsor of terror in the world, Iran controls a vast, violent network of proxies. These Iranian terror proxies include Hamas, Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Houthis in Yemen.

Iran funds its terror proxies. Where does the money come from? Well, by selling oil to communist China. Last year the Iranian regime's oil sales to China averaged over 1½ million barrels of oil each and every day.

How did that happen? Well, the Biden administration allowed it. They looked the other way. Tanker loads of oil to China, pay at a discount, tanker loads of cash back to Iran.

To break Iran's choke hold on the Middle East, America must bring back maximum pressure. President Trump is going to do that. He is tough on Iran. During his first administration, he imposed crippling sanctions and enforcement measures that brought Iran to its knees. President Trump is now back into the White House and so is his successful maximum-pressure campaign.

This week, he restored sanctions on Iran. This comes after he relabeled the Houthis as a foreign terrorist organization. It is a strong start, and we can still do more.

In the Senate, stopping Iran terror is a priority for the Republican majority. Now, deterring Iran means restoring peace through strength. Republicans are supporting our military. We are ready to make key investments to make our military more lethal and the most powerful force on earth.

With Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth now in place, we are already seeing morale return and recruiting numbers rise.

We are also working to bring back American energy dominance. Energy is America's most critical national security asset. We, as a nation, are an energy superpower. We have enormous natural resources. We ought to behave that way. And under this administration and this majority, America will unleash American energy.

A stronger America makes our allies stronger and also makes the world safer. Strength deters enemies.

We will work with Israel every step of the way. Together, America and Israel will bring a new era of peace and prosperity to the Middle East.

NOMINATION OF RUSSELL VOUGHT

Mr. President, on a separate matter, Democrats last night filibustered another one of President Trump's well-qualified nominees. I sat in the presiding officer's chair during the wee hours of the night listening to concerns by the Democrats.

The Democrats continue to want to slow things down. Republicans are not going to allow it to happen. We will push through their blockade. We will man the chair, continue with the Senate in session, and tonight we will confirm the 13th member of President Trump's Cabinet.

We are confirming the Cabinet twice as fast as Democrats confirmed Presi-

dent Biden's Cabinet in 2021. This week, we will have confirmed five Cabinet members in just 4 days. Tonight's confirmation is for Russ Vought. He is going to be the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

President Trump deserves to have his nominees in place and do it quickly. Our pace has matched the urgency of the moment. We will push forward and move deliberately to confirm more nominees, that includes Robert Kennedy, Jr., to be the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. It also includes Tulsi Gabbard to be the Director of National Intelligence.

When necessary, we are voting late into the night, early in the morning, on weekends, and that is exactly what Republicans said we would do. We are serious about spending the time and pushing through the work to make sure the President has his Cabinet and his team in place.

We are moving with the speed and commitment that we said because we know the President has a strong and active and bold agenda, and we are part of it, and he needs his team in place in order to accomplish it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire is recognized.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I come to the floor to join a number of my colleagues in expressing my opposition to Russell Vought to head up the Office of Management and Budget.

INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

Mr. President, but I want to start, before I do that, in responding to my colleague from Wyoming. We have worked closely together over the years. We have both been on the Foreign Relations Committee.

To his comments on the ICC, because I was also in the meeting with Prime Minister Netanyahu. I also share concerns about the way the ICC has operated. I think we should be able to come to an agreement, to a compromise, on how this bill gets written. And, in fact, that is what the Prime Minister and his entourage suggested—that this Senate should work together to get this done.

But, unfortunately, what we saw was an unwillingness on the part of my Republican colleagues to come to a compromise, to actually provide the protections that we are hearing from American businesses that they need in order to continue to not be sanctioned for work that they have already done for the ICC; that we are hearing from our colleagues from the European nations who have people working at the ICC that they need so that they are not sanctioned.

And, unfortunately, the Senator from Arkansas, with who we worked to try and get this done, was not willing to look at the compromise. Five words divided us on the ICC. And because he didn't think we were serious, he said “No, I am not going to compromise

with you. I am going to have this my way or the highway."

Well, that is not the way we get things done in the U.S. Senate. That is not the way we should get things done in our government. And I think we are ready to come back to the table at any time, but we need to see a willingness to work together to get this bill done. And I stand ready to do that; I know Leader SCHUMER stands ready to do that; but we need to see our colleagues on the other side of the aisle also stand ready to do that.

So I will yield my time to Senator SCHUMER, and then I will come back to speak on Russell Vought.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I thank my friend from New Hampshire who cares so much about this issue and has done a great job. And I will just be brief on that because I want to talk about Russell Vought.

As is clear, we Democrats—I, certainly—I hate the ICC. I have hated it for 40 years. We have to come to—we have to get something done, but there has got to be a fair compromise. And the compromise has nothing to do with weakening any efforts that the ICC will be punished for what they do to Israel, which I think is anti-Semitic.

But there are other things in that bill that would sanction other people—other countries, other leaders, other businesses, American businesses—that have nothing to do with Israel.

JEANNE SHAHEEN, our Senator from New Hampshire, made a valiant effort to compromise, and we could have had it done, because there was problems with the rest of the bill. It was poorly drafted and went way beyond what it was supposed to do.

We are ready to compromise. We are ready to sit down and get this bill done.

The Israeli Ambassador said, at our meeting, he wanted a bipartisan compromise, and I told him we are ready to sit down and do just that.

NOMINATION OF RUSSELL VOUGHT

Mr. President, now, on Mr. Vought. This morning, it is not business as usual on the Senate floor. Russell Vought is not a business-as-usual nominee. He is one of the most fringe and hard-right individuals the Senate has seen in a very long time.

For the last 20 hours, virtually every single Democrat has come to the floor of the Senate to tell the American people how bad Russell Vought will be for them, to sound the alarm on Russell Vought. We were here yesterday. We were here all last night. We are here today. And we will be here throughout the day to let the American people know exactly what is about to happen if Russell Vought is confirmed.

He is the chief architect of Project 2025. He is going to make Project 2025 the official policy of the Federal Gov-

ernment. And in OMB, he has the power to implement it to hurt every American—whether it is Medicare or Medicaid, Social Security, whether it is owning a home, helping afford a home, whether it is help for schools, for Head Start, for veterans, you name it. If you look at Project 2025, they want to slash so many of those things to bits.

And here you have the wrong man, Russell Vought; in the wrong place, OMB; with the wrong philosophy, Project 2025. It is, unfortunately, three times bad: wrong man, wrong place, wrong philosophy. And deeply, deeply so. Deeply wrong.

His policies will hurt children. His policies will hurt seniors. His policies will hurt veterans.

And I say to our Republican colleagues: You will regret your vote on Vought because he will do such harm to the American people, and you will hear about it day in and day out. But don't say we didn't warn you. Don't say we didn't let you know. We have been on the floor for now close to 24 hours. We will be on the floor close to 30 hours, the maximum we are allowed, to tell America from one end to the other that this man is dangerous, not just abstractly, not just in terms of Democrat-Republican, but in terms of how average people lead their lives and how we can make their lives better.

Just imagine what will happen if Russell Vought and DOGE team up, as they seem to be doing, to eradicate funding they allege is wasteful. Imagine what the awful combination of Vought and DOGE together would make for kids who struggle to get a good meal at school, for veterans who need help with healthcare, for parents who struggle to pay for groceries, for couples looking to buy a home.

Confirming the most radical nominee who has the most extreme agenda to the most important Agency in Washington is a triple-header of disaster—a triple-header of disaster. Again: wrong person, wrong ideas, wrong place to be to put those horrible ideas into effect.

So we are going to keep going and going and going for these 30 hours because we know how bad this nominee is.

DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY

Mr. President, yesterday, in another effort, we wrote a letter with my Democratic colleagues to Secretary Bessent, Treasury Secretary, demanding he meet with us face-to-face about the risky things DOGE is doing at Treasury. I thanked Vice Chair MURRAY, Vice Chair WARNER, Ranking Member WYDEN and WARREN and PETERS for joining me on this important matter.

Bessent has made time in his schedule to talk with Republicans in the House about DOGE. He has a responsibility to meet with Senators from across the aisle, especially because we have such deep concerns about what is happening at Treasury under his watch. His written responses have been wholly inadequate.

He came before the committee before the Treasury payment system was invaded. And he should not be evasive. He should come before us and answer questions.

In this letter, we speak not just for the caucus but for millions of Americans who say this is an urgent matter. Secretary Bessent should meet with us so the American people have confidence that our government will continue to function effectively and that their privacy remains protected.

Again, I thank my colleague from New Hampshire for ceding me a little bit of her time and look forward to her remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

NOMINATION OF RUSSELL VOUGHT

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, now I would like to go back to my concerns about the nomination of Russ Vought to be the head of the Office of Management and Budget because that is an office that determines the services that millions of families and small businesses rely on. And yet he supported unilaterally taking away those services and help for more than 2,600 Federal programs that were ordered to cease activities with less than 24 hours' notice.

And in every State in the country, we heard confusion and panic and chaos. Since then, I have heard from thousands of Granite Staters who are worried about what those cuts mean for them and their families. I have heard from healthcare providers from our community health centers, from our nonprofits, from our police departments, from so many people who provide services to the State of New Hampshire.

And it has now been more than a week, and despite not one but two Federal judges ordering the Trump administration to stop holding up funds, we are still hearing reports of frozen payment systems and missed reimbursements. I know my Republican colleagues are hearing those concerns, too. But despite this outpouring, we are still here today contemplating confirming Russell Vought, the architect of this reckless, unprecedented, and misguided policy.

He was directly involved in drafting the memo that OMB sent out that started all of this last Monday. That memo was so extreme that it provoked concern and outrage from both sides of the aisle about the breadth of payments that were being halted.

Russ Vought then had to walk back parts of the memo that he worked on just the day before. And all of this happened, and he wasn't even a confirmed nominee. I am very worried about what he is going to do if he actually gets confirmed for this job. We know from what we saw that last week was just a short preview of what he plans to do.

The justification that we have heard since that memo is that the memo wasn't meant to cut off funding to all of the programs that saw their funding