

this country to evolve and to grow into a more perfect Union.

And here we are, on the eve of Juneteenth, and we see not a stride forward but a stride back, but a step back, but our democracy being knocked down again by people who do not believe in the ideals of a democracy, of fair voting, fair maps, fair representation.

But I am here to tell you right now that progress is not always linear, that we are not in a nation that always, always marches forward. We have seen setbacks before. We have seen challenges, pains, and sorrows. What I am here to tell you is that this most recent dark chapter that is ongoing right now will come to an end. I am here to tell you that weeping may endure through the night, but joy cometh in the morning. I am here to tell you that we may have a setback and we may have a falling down, but this is not a failure. This is not final. We will fight.

I am not talking about a physical contest. I am talking about what makes democracies thrive, which is when we stand up and organize, we stand up and mobilize, we stand up and make sure that our voices are heard.

On this Juneteenth, we need to recommit ourselves, like our ancestors did, to the highest ideals of our democracy, which are freedom and liberty. And how are these rights secured upon our Nation? It is by people in this country standing up and securing those rights through action.

We are not a nation whose story is powerful people preying upon the powerless. We are a nation that has shown that the people hold the power and that the power of the people is greater than the people in power.

Six people in black robes, they were wrong in *Plessy v. Ferguson*; they were wrong in *Korematsu*. We overcame them then, and we can overcome them now.

The people united for the cause of freedom is the great story of America, and it is time that our generation—benefiting from the fruits of liberty, from the toiling hands of those in the past—it is time for our generation to earn the right of democracy by sweating for it and struggling for it now.

This Juneteenth, let us cry “freedom” again but not with our mouths. Let’s do it with our sleeves rolled up and ready to organize and mobilize in the days to come—because this next election is not right or left; it is right or wrong—so that we can elect people to this body and the other that will restore voting rights, that will restore voting freedom, that will restore the ideals of fairness. That is the end, that is the aim, and that is how we overcome again. That is how we, as a people, secure liberty and justice for all.

TRIBUTE TO SARAH ROJAS

Mr. President, I stand here with joy and sadness. I stand here with humble gratitude that I cannot express.

Today, I want to recognize one of the more extraordinary people I have worked with in my life and one of the

more extraordinary members of my staff, whose today is her last day. That person is my dear, dear friend Sarah Rojas.

It is very difficult to put into words the role that Sarah has played in my life and on my team. For 13 years—for my entire time as a U.S. Senator—she has done almost every job in a Senate office.

She is our utility player. She has been a special assistant to the director of special projects, acting communications director twice, to legislative director, to deputy chief of staff, to one of my most trusted counsels. She has played every position imaginable.

To her colleagues on my staff, she is that leader everyone looks up to and someone that everyone genuinely considers, like I do, that she is a friend, someone you can lean on.

To the people of the great State of New Jersey, gosh, I wish you all knew how incredible of a public servant she is and has been to New Jersey’s interests. She is one of those people who, for millions of people in my State—her labor, her work, her counsel have made things better for New Jersey.

To me, I don’t call her Sarah; I call her, usually, Rojas.

I am in public. I am in the light. I get jeers and applause. I get recognition and calls to do better. But I stand strong through it all because of the people around me, the people who encourage me, who keep my feet on the ground, the people who don’t let my positive press get to my head or my negative press get to my heart. Sarah has been one of those great ballasts in my life—keeping me balanced, keeping me grounded, keeping me inspired and encouraged.

She has superpowers, to be honest with you. One of them is her empathy. One of them is her capacity to care. One of them is her ability to make everybody around her feel her love.

I am devastated, actually, really sad that Sarah is leaving DC, although a consolation I get is that she is going to be in Jersey. I love the fact that she is going home.

Watching Sarah for 13 years of her life—I have seen her get better every day. Sarah has grown as a person, and she has grown as a leader. Thirteen years being witness to her blossoming is a privilege.

I want to thank not just her today on the floor, but I want to thank her incredible family. I want to thank her husband Nick—not just for rescuing her from those days when she was a single woman; I want to thank her husband Nick for being the rock in her life that has made her stronger for us all.

I want to celebrate her parents Joy—such an appropriate name—and Chris, whom I want to wish a very happy Father’s Day to.

Chris and Joy, thank you for raising such an extraordinary child.

I love what James Baldwin said. He said that children are never good at listening to their elders, but they never

fail to imitate them. Sarah is who she is because of her parents.

Her sister Emily, I am grateful for as well. I have a sibling—two siblings, actually, and they are also part of that circle of support. I want to thank her for that.

I thank them all, all of her family, for support, for encouragement, for the latitude when she has had to work late hours, for showing up when I have had to take her away from perhaps the center of her life, which is Sadie.

Sadie, I hope one day years from now, somebody will show you this video. I don’t know if you will understand it in the present moment, but I hope you are going to look back and hear what I say to you, Sadie.

Sadie, you should be proud of your mom. You should be in awe of her. Sadie, your mother is one of the more phenomenal people I know, and that makes me confident you are going to be phenomenal, too, Sadie. You have a rock star mom—maybe not known by millions, but to all who know her, she is a star that illuminates not just your life but all of our lives.

Four years ago, Sarah lost a very important person in her life, and I want to honor them as well: her grandmother Gloria Rojas. Again, these names like “Joy” and “Gloria” say so much about the people.

Gloria was this extraordinary trailblazer. It is another reason why I know how she got to be so great—how Sarah did. Gloria was the first Latina broadcast journalist in New York. She was a big deal. But she once said that the big news stories are not always the most satisfying; it is the little stories where you can really make a difference.

It is this idea that is such a human thing. It is this idea in life that is just so true, that the smallest things we do often matter the most. Every interaction, every conversation, every person you encounter, making them feel seen, making them feel valued, making them feel worthy, that is the legacy we can leave.

Indeed, to Gloria, her granddaughter Sarah, that is the legacy she is carrying forward, this understanding that in most days of our lives, the biggest thing we can do will most often be a small act of kindness, decency, and love. If you live every day of your life with that kindness, with that decency, with that love, you will make a change in this world that you cannot even fully appreciate or understand.

That is the last 13 years of Sarah Rojas—showing up every day, showing up fully herself, with unapologetic empathy, with courageous compassion, with remarkable consistency. Every day that I have known Sarah Rojas, as we tried our best to serve the State of New Jersey, every day, she illuminated our lives.

So I am excited, Sarah—I am excited, Rojas—to know that you will continue to serve, continue to make change, and continue to make a difference. But on this day, your last day serving in the

U.S. Senate, I want you to know that you are loved; I want you to know that your grandmother in Heaven, that your daughter as she grows, that your parents and all of us who love you, we recognize you, we celebrate you, and we thank you for showing a level of patriotism that is the core of what we have talked about for years—that patriotism is love of country and you cannot love your country unless you love—truly love—all your country men and women.

Thank you, Sarah, for 13 years of service. Thank you for loving and living so large. Thank you for making an indelible difference in your service to the U.S. Senate.

SENATE PAGES

Mr. President, I want to note something to you, sir. The pages that are serving right now—they seem great. They have been here for, what, 10 days, sir? I don't know if you recognize the fact, though, that as admirably and deserving, as kind and generous as they are, they are kind of half-pages because they are not taking class. They are classless pages. I would like the RECORD of the Senate to remark that they have no class. I mean that in a literal sense. I mean, they are very polite people. But I just wanted to add that into the RECORD, today, sir.

Do you agree, Mr. President? Without objection, I would like to make that known.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. I think it is well known that they are here without class.

Mr. BOOKER. Yes.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

IRAN

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President and to all here, I rise today to speak about the breaking news that the President has entered into a memorandum of understanding with Iran to end the war he started on February 28.

The news has included a release from the White House of a memorandum of understanding with Iran about the end to the war. We in the Senate have not been briefed on this. We have received news accounts from journalists that have the terms of the memorandum. But the White House has confirmed that those terms are accurately reported.

So I want to rise today and take some time to analyze the memorandum, what we know about it but also what we don't know about it since there are some agreements that are still needing to be forthcoming in the next 60 days.

First, I want to tell everyone how we got here. The United States and Iran have been engaged in a back-and-forth sort of war attrition against each other since about the 1950s. The sad reality is we were friends; we were allies in World War II. The Iranian people loved the United States because the United States helped guarantee their independent sovereignty and borders at a

conference in Tehran that took place in the middle of World War II.

But for some reason that is just so tragic to contemplate, the United States decided to topple the democratic elected Government of Iran in 1953 and install a dictatorship over the Iranian people. That then led to intense resentment of the United States.

When the Iranian people overthrew the dictatorship in 1979, those who took control of Iran were hardliners. They hated the United States because of this 26-year dictatorship that they suffered under. And since that moment in 1979, it has been back and forth between our two nations.

Iran invaded our Embassy, violating international law, and held dozens of Americans hostage for 400-plus days. The United States funded Iraq to wage a war against Iran in which hundreds of thousands of Iranians were killed.

Iran funded proxy terror groups that bombed the U.S. Marine barracks and Embassy in Beirut, killing hundreds of Americans. The United States shot down an Iranian commercial aircraft in 1989, killing nearly 300 Iranian civilians.

The United States invaded both of Iran's next door neighbors to topple their governments. Iran then funded proxy groups to attack U.S. soldiers in their region.

We have been back and forth, the United States and Iran, sadly—beginning as friends—since the 1953 decision of the United States to topple the Iranian Government. If more war with Iran were the answer, we would have found it a long time ago.

So I took to the floor of the Senate immediately after the President started this war to say the war was illegal because he had not consulted with Congress before waging it, the war was foolish because 25 years of war in the Middle East should have taught us something, and the war was likely to lead to very, very significant negative consequences for the United States. That has, in fact, happened. Fourteen U.S. troops have lost their lives. We have spent probably already in excess of \$50 billion in taxpayer money to prosecute this war, and we have a huge bill still to pay, both to reconstitute infrastructure that Iran has attacked in the region and replenish munition stocks that have been depleted. Thousands of civilians in Iran, including schoolchildren, have been killed during this campaign.

I am very thankful that we found an off-ramp to this war. Even though the war was illegal and stupid and foolish and destructive, finding an off-ramp is a good thing. So I am happy that the administration has negotiated an end to the war, and I pray that the negotiation and the end to the war will hold.

But I want to remind everybody who is paying attention to this that there was a different path, and it was a path of diplomacy.

President Obama, in his first term—but it really began more in his second

term—determined that 50 years of hostilities between the United States and Iran was just too much and we needed to find a path forward in the relationship.

We don't have a magic wand to wave to make the Iranian Government a good government, a nondictatorial government, we can't affect completely how Iran treats its people, but we can start to find some path to start building some kind of a relationship after war being a constant essentially since 1953.

And so President Obama and his team, especially Secretary of State John Kerry and Secretary of Energy Ernie Moniz, worked over the course of many years to find an Iranian nuclear deal to control Iran's nuclear ambitions.

That deal, the runup to the deal was announced in late 2013, and between 2013 and 2015, when the deal was finalized, the administration briefed us repeatedly—I am on the Foreign Relations Committee, I am on the Armed Services Committee—from the very announcement that “we are going to try to find a deal” to the deal being finalized 2 years later, dozens of dozens of briefings with administration officials, visits to the region to talk to nations in the region, allied nations, European nations about the deal and, finally, the deal was done.

And that deal controlled Iran's nuclear ambitions peacefully, without a single bomb being dropped, without a single school being destroyed, without a single schoolchild being killed—the United States in our best tradition. In our best tradition, we are a diplomatic nation.

Teddy Roosevelt won the Nobel Prize for helping broker the end of the Russo-Japanese war, and since then many Nobel Prizes have gone to Americans, American leaders, not just Presidents but diplomats like Ralph Bunche and others for putting the United States forward as a diplomatic nation, and that nuclear deal with Iran, though not perfect—few deals are perfect—and though not covering all aspects of Iranian bad behavior, finally, got the United States and Iran in the same room where they could communicate and hopefully find a path to get out of a state of back-and-forth war that essentially had been constant since 1953.

When Donald Trump became President in 2017, he said he wanted to destroy the Obama nuclear deal. I am convinced the President didn't understand the deal. I am convinced he wanted to destroy the deal for one reason, President Barack Obama, who is opening his Presidential library in Chicago today.

Donald Trump wanted to destroy it because President Barack Obama had done it. That was the only thing he understood about the deal, and that was all he needed to know about the deal.

And so he set out to do what no American President had ever done. The United States has never backed out of