

to see the destruction coming from the American and Israeli military, and it would rally the opposition, and the Ayatollahs would collapse and give up, and there would be a regime change and a new era in Iran.

It has gotten worse. They are younger and more radical, and they have more leverage.

Now, I want to be really clear here. The mistake is not ending the war; it was starting it in the first place. Every day this war went on only compounded that catastrophe, and so we ought to be relieved that it may be over and that diplomacy is being given another chance, because it is the only viable path forward.

But none of that obviates the fact that we are suing for peace because it is the least bad option; that a diplomatic solution was within reach all along, before a single bomb was dropped; that after several months of a deadly and costly war, things are worse, not better.

On February 27, the day before the war started, the Strait of Hormuz was open. Oil and other commodities like fertilizers flowed freely to all of the places around the world. Now, under the MOU, the strait is open again but only for 60 days, after which Iran is reserving the right to charge a fee for ships to pass.

Do you understand how unprecedented it is in terms of international law, in terms of international commerce, in terms of the way this planet works with the freedom of navigation, that one belligerent country now gets to charge a fee if you want to move something through international waters?

That is not a “w.” That is not good for this country or regional stability.

Under the original Iran agreement that President Obama signed and Trump later ripped up, Iran promised not to develop a nuclear weapon. It was right there on the first page of the JCPOA. And what it meant was that Iran would not produce the kind of highly enriched uranium that could be used in a nuclear weapon.

They have renewed that commitment in the MOU, except for a much higher price this time.

Under the JCPOA—and I remember. I was on the floor. I was a baby Senator here, and my colleagues on the other side of the aisle said: Oh, my God, you are unfreezing Iranian-sanctioned money, assets to the tune of many billions of dollars.

Can you believe how much money we are giving to Iran in exchange for this pause in the development of their nuclear program? Can you believe that you are giving money to Iran? Look at how belligerent they are in the region.

That was the argument. OK, I thought it was worth it because it was basically buying us 15 years of them not being capable to develop a nuclear weapon.

But under this—and, by the way, not in exchange for a nuclear agreement, in

exchange for reopening the Strait of Hormuz for 60 days.

So I want you to understand, what they are getting is enormous, but it is also not even for a nuclear agreement. It is for an agreement to stop choking the global economy, not only where their assets will be unfrozen, but they will be able to sell their oil freely on the open market for the first time in 30 years.

That is not some \$1.7 billion concession. That is not some \$10 billion concession. That changes generations of bipartisan policy against the Iranian regime.

One of the reasons that they were not even more belligerent, even more powerful was that we were heavily sanctioning their oil. And we are lifting it in exchange for not a nuclear agreement but just for them to take their boot off the necks of the global economy.

And so, I reiterate this point: Keep two thoughts in your head. First of all, the main error was in starting this stupid regime-change war in the first place, and that you don't have to be some member of the Foreign Relations Committee or some fancy foreign policy expert or some professor at some school that studies the Middle East to say: Hey, you know what, these same dudes keep asking for a new regime-change war in the Middle East about every decade. They usually get it, and it always fails. And they did it again, and it failed again.

And that is a different thing from me demanding that they continue this idiocy. I am not demanding that they continue this idiocy. I am glad that they are finally folding.

But make no mistake. They are folding, and they are folding because they played a terrible hand, as terribly as you could possibly play it.

And so, all I am asking—if you are an Iran hawk, if you are a dove, if you are anywhere in between—is let's have a logical foreign policy. Let's understand that Iran is a belligerent country—they are not our allies—and that almost every single time—not every time, but almost every single time—kinetic engagement without any kind of strategy doesn't work. It always backfires.

And, by the way, that is, generally speaking, true. It is, extraordinarily, predictably true in the Middle East.

And I want to make one final point: It is the same people every time. It is the same foreign policy think tanks. It is the same people in the media. It is the same nonprofits. It is the same Members of Congress.

They just look around the planet for a place to remake with force. And there may be a couple of examples in human history where you can remake a place with force, but usually it backfires spectacularly.

And it did here again.

I yield the floor.

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. HICKENLOOPER. 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 Colorado.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. HICKENLOOPER. Mr. President, as a former English major, one of the great tales in Greek mythology was the legend of King Midas.

As the story goes, Midas was granted a wish. He wished that everything he touched would turn to gold.

At first, it seemed like a blessing. Twigs became gold. Stones became gold.

Midas thought he had found true wealth. But he soon realized it wasn't much of a blessing. It was more of a curse.

Midas' food turned to gold. His water turned to gold. And, eventually, even his daughter turned to gold.

The lesson is simple: A man who mistakes gold for greatness will end up with neither.

President Trump never learned that lesson, and he corrupts pretty much whatever he touches.

Take his gold-plated ballroom. The President promised it wouldn't cost taxpayers a nickel, but those promises turned out to be fool's gold.

The cost has skyrocketed and President Trump now wants to spend \$300 million of your taxpayer money to pay for it. He is not building affordable housing in Denver, Durango; he is building a ballroom for himself and his rich friends to enjoy.

President Trump promised to drain the swamp; instead he has turned the Reflecting Pool into an algae-infested bird killer. The administration awarded a no-bid contract for this project to President Trump's neighbor, one of his donors. The renovation was supposed to cost \$1.5 million. It is now estimated at \$16 million, and the job still isn't done.

President Trump isn't working to extend the Affordable Care Act subsidies or reverse the Medicaid cuts that will kick 240,000 Coloradans off of their healthcare. His Reflecting Pool got a makeover while our insurance pool was gutted.

Now President Trump wants to build an enormous arch near Arlington Cemetery. While planning this project, he unilaterally, on his own volition, went to war with Iran, promising immediate victory, total and complete.

What he has delivered is one of the great failures in our Nation's history. He made America less safe and less secure.

He made America's economy weaker, and 14 American servicemembers lost their lives. When asked about the tragic casualties, President Trump said:

[T]here will likely be more before it ends. That's the way it is.

That's the way it is.

Our heroes deserve a Commander in Chief who looks out for them, not a

monument looking down on them. This administration seems to believe the key to making America great again is more bouillon and more branding, like King Midas. They don't seem to understand where true wealth comes from.

America's prosperity isn't measured in monuments; it is defined by dreams, dreams that are only made possible here in this country. Those dreams are what brought me to Colorado as a geologist 20 years ago—or I should take that back—45 years ago, and they are what inspired me to enter public service, so one day my sons and your daughters will inherit a country where everyone has an equal shot at life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

But right now the American dream is slipping out of reach because the deck is stacked against working people. Whether your biggest worry is fuel or fertilizer or gas or groceries, whether you live in a mountain community or an inner city, whether you are surrounded by cows or concrete, this administration's misplaced priorities are making life harder for you. And I don't think it has to be this way.

First, we have got to stop the bleeding from this administration. We have got to end the illegal war, end the disastrous tariffs. We must curb ICE's lawlessness and repair our social safety net, reversing the administration's cuts to healthcare, to SNAP, to student aid. But then we have got to get back to making your life better once again.

We need to lower the cost of living. We need to create more and better jobs and protect our public lands. This work is not going to be easy as we mark America's 250th anniversary—our 250th anniversary. Many are questioning whether we are still capable of meeting the magnitude of this moment, a moment where a technological revolution promises unbelievable innovation at unprecedented speed like a runaway train.

It also leaves us more isolated and struggling to discern fact from fiction. A moment when the consequences of climate change are increasingly impossible to ignore with unprecedented wildfires, drought, destruction; a moment when wealth is flowing to the wealthiest Americans at an unprecedented rate. I am not immune to skepticism, frustration, despair, but a better and a brighter future requires that we work harder and harder and harder. It requires us to giddyap.

Progress is possible because we have seen it, we have done it. This week Congress passed the biggest housing reform bill in decades.

We worked with Senator WARREN to diminish Wall Street from buying single-family homes and to limit their influence in disturbing the housing markets. This matters to every Coloradan because home ownership is one of the single best paths to economic stability and upward mobility.

It is a reminder that our government works best when it works for working

people. When it does, good policy reflects our highest values; and the values that made this country have always been about opportunities for all, not wealth at all costs.

Earlier this morning right as the bill was about to be signed, President Trump decided to hold the legislation hostage. Instead of passing this commonsense bill, he wants to peddle a voter suppression bill that has literally nothing to do with housing.

This is a clear choice before us. Speaker JOHNSON and Senator GRASSLEY and Senator THUNE should sign this housing bill and send it to the White House, or they should not adjourn Congress for the July 4th recess; it is as simple as that.

This saga is exactly why so many Americans have lost so much faith in our President. He has had every opportunity to lower costs, but he chooses not to. The Coloradans I meet on the Front Range or the West Slope aren't looking for more attacks on mail-in voting; they aren't looking for more ballrooms, bombs, and billionaires. They are looking for help, all the while looking out and helping each other.

I see it across Colorado, people showing up for their neighbors, families sharing what they can: Meals, clothing, rides to school. America's wealth has never been found in monuments, reflecting pools, or arches. It is found in our families. It is found in our communities. It is found in you. Our charge has always been to help each other and to keep the American dream alive for the next generation. That is what it has always meant to be a Coloradan. That is what it has meant to be an American. And that is worth more than gold.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

DOBBS V. JACKSON WOMEN'S HEALTH ORGANIZATION

Ms. SLOTKIN. Mr. President, I rise today to address the events that took place exactly 4 years ago today when the Supreme Court ruled on *Dobbs v. Jackson*, overturning *Roe v. Wade*, stripping away reproductive rights for women that we have relied upon for generations.

That decision sent shock waves through the country. Something that many of us, women of my age, relied upon for our entire lives were certainly and suddenly not available to our kids and our grandkids. And as States like Michigan were looking into the reality of a full abortion ban, we had to get to work.

In Michigan, we had a 1931 abortion ban which banned abortions even in the cases of rape and incest. It criminalized nurses and doctors who provided such care, and it was slated to become law again in the wake of the *Dobbs* decision.

In the face of that, Michiganders went to work; that is what we do. We rally together. We got over 700,000 signatures in the better part of 10 weeks.

We organized getting on to our ballot a vote on reproductive freedom including abortion care for our State; and we did this so that women and girls that come after us were in control of their reproductive lives, not politicians and certainly not anyone in this body.

Now, the examples of who this affected are legion, but let me just focus on one woman Sarah from Byron Center, MI. Sarah had already had four miscarriages but was filled with so much hope for her fifth pregnancy. Unfortunately, after 19 weeks she received a devastating call from her doctor that she had a baby dying inside of her. Thankfully, Sarah was able to get the abortion care she needed from her doctor so she wouldn't be exposed to life-threatening bacteria and infections which could have killed her.

Right now in States across the country when other women face this same reality, they are told to wait. They are told to hope they don't get an infection, and they hope they are not left to die.

Even worse, mothers are dying of preventable deaths, leaving their children without a parent, all because of politics and reversing *Roe v. Wade* 4 years ago today. Now just because the story is 4 years old doesn't mean it is over. Women continue to face a two-front war to get access to abortion care, even in a State like Michigan. Access to care and the cost of care is still inhibiting who has access to reproductive care.

More than a dozen States across the country have a total ban on abortion, and the people in this Chamber and around this town continue to chip away at women's access everywhere they turn. Women are struggling to get access to healthcare via telehealth. Families are struggling to access contraception and plan for their futures. Doctors are being criminalized for doing their jobs. Cuts to healthcare, cuts to Planned Parenthood have forced organizations to shut their doors, and politicians who can't outlaw abortion nationwide are trying to outlaw abortion medication, which is how a full half of women get their abortions.

All of this comes with a cost, expensive bills, traveling long distances, and adds risk to people's health. The *Dobbs* decision was a cautionary tale. Even though the Supreme Court allowed abortion over 50 years ago, this body decided not to act. We never legislated a woman's right to choose.

Our grandparents should have taken action on this issue, and we would have reproductive freedom now across the country if we had done so. I think it is an important tale for what this body can and cannot do, what it should and should not do.

It certainly has incredible consequences. So I just wanted to recognize on the 4-year anniversary of the reversal of *Roe v. Wade* where we are and that the fight continues.