

weapon. Those inspectors were eliminated by President Trump in his first term.

The second explanation of why we are at war in Iran was their development of ballistic missiles. Yet we know that this is reminiscent of the excuse given for the invasion of Iraq years ago. Remember the allegation that there were weapons of mass destruction which could harm our allies, even the United States? Ballistic missiles in Iran are not capable of reaching the United States. Using that as an excuse as a "clear and present danger" is hard to rationalize.

The third explanation of the five we have had so far from the White House is regime change. Regime change. Well, certainly, the Iranian people deserve a regime change, but are we willing to back them up? If they go in the streets and are being massacred and slaughtered like the previous administration in Iran was responsible for, what will we do? Send troops to the streets of Tehran? That has never been explained by this administration.

The fourth explanation for our invasion of Iran given by the White House in this early stage is that the Israelis were going to do it anyway and we probably would be dragged into the conflict. Really? So Israel is dictating America's foreign policy?

The fifth explanation that I heard on the radio this morning from the President last night: A nuclear war was about to be launched by Iran. Really? With what missiles? What capacity? What weapons? This is a theory that is not backed up by any type of fact.

Here is the reality. Five days into this war, we have had five different explanations of why we are in this war.

Let me tell you my experience, having been here on the vote to go to war in Iraq. It is far easier to get into a war than it is to get out of a war. I remember that vote, and I remember that night here, standing in the well of this body, when I was 1 of 23 Senators—1 Republican and 22 Democrats—who voted against the invasion of Iraq. We knew at the time that there was a possibility that a larger war would emerge rather than just a simple invasion, and it did. For 9 years, we fought on, American soldiers valiantly doing their duty and many of them losing their lives in the process. It is far easier to get into a war than it is to get out of one.

This scattershot explanation of why we are going into Iran does not give me confidence that this administration has a clear strategy, but it does confirm my fear that we have an impulsive Commander in Chief—impulsive. Remember when he said he needed to have Greenland as part of the United States and he was willing to defy not only Denmark, a traditional ally of our country, but also the NATO alliance to do it? Our Commander in Chief in Greenland? Even worse, declaring that the nation of Canada should somehow become the 51st State of the United States. For goodness' sake, for decades,

Presidents of both parties have been able to count on the friendship, support, and alliance of Canada. Now, they are in a position where they question whether the United States can be trusted to deal with. That has been achieved by this impulsive Commander in Chief.

And, of course, NATO. For 75 years, the strongest alliance on Earth, maybe in history, has kept us out of a third world war. What does this President, this impulsive Commander in Chief, do? He threatens the very basis of NATO and whether the United States has a future in it. I can't believe he did this. There are so many countries depending on the NATO alliance, and this impulsive President went to challenge them head-on and really destroyed the confidence which we have had with so many of these allies for so many years.

That is the reality of the Commander in Chief as we launched this war in Iran, and I worry about it—five different explanations in 5 days as to why we are there.

Before we ask the men and women of America, the families of America, to put their sons and daughters at risk in a war, shouldn't we have a fulsome debate here on the floor of the Senate? That is what the Republicans fear: a real debate on why this war is being launched. And that is why we have to remind them to pick up their copy of the Constitution and look at article I, section 8. It is only three words, but it is pretty clear—the powers of Congress: "To declare War." "To declare War."

Many of my Republican colleagues would like to ignore that phrase and say it means nothing. They are prepared to say that we will not have a debate when it comes to this invasion of Iran. That is a mistake. It is a serious mistake. We learned that in Iraq. And credit President Bush at the time for at least allowing us to engage in that debate before there was an active invasion. This President has not. He launched a war, and now, he is saying to Congress: Step out of the way. You have no role in this.

Ultimately, the Constitution says the American people have a role through their elected representatives in the Senate and in the House.

I urge my colleagues to support TIM KAINE's effort today to establish again what this Constitution clearly says: The power to declare war is ours. If we give it up, then we are turning our back on the Constitution and our responsibility to the American people.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question occurs on the motion to proceed.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN).

The result was announced—yeas 90, nays 8, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 45 Leg.]

YEAS—90

|                 |              |            |
|-----------------|--------------|------------|
| Alsobrooks      | Graham       | Murkowski  |
| Baldwin         | Grassley     | Murray     |
| Banks           | Hagerty      | Ossoff     |
| Barrasso        | Hassan       | Padilla    |
| Bennet          | Hawley       | Peters     |
| Blackburn       | Heinrich     | Reed       |
| Blumenthal      | Hickenlooper | Ricketts   |
| Blunt Rochester | Hirono       | Risch      |
| Boozman         | Hoeben       | Rosen      |
| Britt           | Husted       | Rounds     |
| Budd            | Hyde-Smith   | Sanders    |
| Cantwell        | Justice      | Schatz     |
| Capito          | Kaine        | Schiff     |
| Cassidy         | Kelly        | Schmitt    |
| Collins         | Kennedy      | Schumer    |
| Coons           | Kim          | Scott (SC) |
| Cortez Masto    | King         | Shaheen    |
| Cotton          | Klobuchar    | Sheehy     |
| Cramer          | Lankford     | Sitkin     |
| Crapo           | Lujan        | Smith      |
| Cruz            | Lummis       | Sullivan   |
| Curtis          | Markey       | Thune      |
| Daines          | Marshall     | Warner     |
| Duckworth       | McConnell    | Warnock    |
| Durbin          | McCormick    | Warren     |
| Ernst           | Merkley      | Welch      |
| Fetterman       | Moody        | Whitehouse |
| Fischer         | Moran        | Wicker     |
| Gallego         | Moreno       | Wyden      |
| Gillibrand      | Mullin       | Young      |

NAYS—8

|         |            |            |
|---------|------------|------------|
| Johnson | Paul       | Tuberville |
| Lee     | Scott (FL) | Van Hollen |
| Murphy  | Tillis     |            |

ANSWERED "PRESENT" —1

Booker

NOT VOTING—1

Cornyn

The motion was agreed to.

HOUSING FOR THE 21ST CENTURY ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant executive clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 6644) to increase the supply of housing in America, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 4308

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. I call up substitute amendment No. 4308.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant executive clerk read as follows:

The Senator from South Carolina [Mr. SCOTT] proposes an amendment numbered 4308 to H.R. 6644.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask that the reading be dispensed with.

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

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

AMENDMENT NO. 4307

Mr. THUNE. I call up amendment No. 4307 from Senator SCOTT.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant executive clerk read as follows:

The Senator from South Dakota [Mr. THUNE], for Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, proposes an amendment numbered 4307 to amendment No. 4308.

Mr. THUNE. I ask that the reading be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To require the Comptroller General of the United States to submit to Congress studies on workforce housing, housing for persons who are elderly or disabled, proximity of housing to Superfund sites, and residential heirs property)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

**SEC. \_\_\_\_ . GAO STUDIES.**

(a) **WORKFORCE HOUSING STUDY.—**

(1) **MIDDLE-INCOME HOUSEHOLD DEFINED.**—In this subsection, the term “middle income household” means a household with an income above 80-percent but that does not exceed 120-percent of the median family income of the area, as determined by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development with adjustments for smaller and larger families.

(2) **STUDY.**—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study and submit to Congress a report that—

(A) identifies obstacles middle-income households face when looking to secure affordable housing;

(B) identifies geographic areas where housing is the most unaffordable and unavailable for middle-income households;

(C) includes a list of Federal housing programs, including Federal tax credits, grants, and loan programs, that are not available to middle-income households due to their income status, including Federal housing programs designed to promote affordability;

(D) recommends income and other parameters to establish a clear and consistent Federal definition for the term “workforce housing” for use when describing the segment of housing that could be made available to those middle-income households in Federal housing programs if funding commensurate with the additional eligibility were to be made available; and

(E) analyzes how to modify or newly develop new Federal housing programs and incentives to include “workforce housing” if funding commensurate with the additional eligibility were to be made available.

(b) **HOUSING FOR ELDERLY OR DISABLED.**—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall carry out a study and submit to Congress a report that identifies options to remove barriers and improve housing for persons who are elderly or disabled, including any potential impacts of providing capital advances for—

(1) the program for supportive housing for the elderly under section 202 of the Housing Act of 1959 (12 U.S.C. 1701q); and

(2) the program for supportive housing for persons with disabilities under section 811 of the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 8013).

(c) **PROXIMITY OF HOUSING TO SUPERFUND SITES.**—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall carry out a study and submit to Congress a report that identifies how many residential dwelling units, and how many dwelling units that are a part of public housing (as defined in section 3(b) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437a(b))), are located less than 1 mile from a site that is included on

the National Priorities List established pursuant to section 105 of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (42 U.S.C. 9605).

(d) **RESIDENTIAL HEIRS PROPERTY.**—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall carry out a study and submit to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives a report that—

(1) establishes a comprehensive definition of residential heirs property, or family land inherited without a will or legal documentation of ownership;

(2) examines the occurrence of and consequences to owners of residential heirs property, and provides an estimate regarding the number of current residential heirs properties;

(3) describes the objectives and requirements of the Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act as approved by the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws in 2010;

(4) details the various resources that may be available to the owners of residential heirs properties, including housing counseling, legal services, and financial assistance to resolve residential heirs property title issues from the Federal Government, nonprofit organizations, and institutions of higher education; and

(5) makes recommendations with respect to how to reduce the number of residential heirs properties, including—

(A) by incentivizing States and other jurisdictions which enact or adopt the Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act or similar such reforms;

(B) by awarding grants to States and other jurisdictions to assist residents of those States and jurisdictions to establish and document property ownership rights or settle a decedent's estate;

(C) by awarding grants to entities that—  
(i) provide housing counseling, legal assistance, and financial assistance to homeowners and their heirs relating to title clearing and home retention efforts of heirs' property; and

(ii) target services to low- and moderate-income persons or provide services in neighborhoods that have a high concentration of low- and moderate-income persons; and

(D) by conducting other activities that assist individuals to clear title with respect to heirs' property and with general estate planning.

Mr. THUNE. I ask for the yeas and nays on the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 4310 TO AMENDMENT NO. 4307

Mr. THUNE. I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant executive clerk read as follows:

The Senator from South Dakota [Mr. THUNE] proposes an amendment numbered 4310 to amendment No. 4307.

Mr. THUNE. I ask that the reading be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To improve the bill)

At the end add the following:

“This Act shall take effect 1 day after the date of enactment.”

AMENDMENT NO. 4311

Mr. THUNE. I have an amendment to the text of the underlying bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant executive clerk read as follows:

The Senator from South Dakota [Mr. THUNE] proposes an amendment numbered 4311 to the text proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 4308.

Mr. THUNE. I ask that the reading be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To improve the bill)

At the end add the following:

“This Act shall take effect 2 days after the date of enactment.”

Mr. THUNE. I ask for the yeas and nays on my amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 4312 TO AMENDMENT NO. 4311

Mr. THUNE. I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant executive clerk read as follows:

The Senator from South Dakota [Mr. THUNE] proposes an amendment numbered 4312 to amendment No. 4311.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To improve the bill)

Strike “2 days” and insert “3 days”

MOTION TO COMMIT WITH AMENDMENT NO. 4313

Mr. THUNE. I move to commit the bill to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs with instructions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant executive clerk read as follows:

The Senator from South Dakota [Mr. THUNE] moves to commit the bill to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs with instructions to report back forthwith with an amendment numbered 4313.

Mr. THUNE. I ask that the reading be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To improve the bill)

At the end add the following:

“This Act shall take effect 4 days after the date of enactment.”

Mr. THUNE. I ask for the yeas and nays on the motion to commit with instructions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 4314

Mr. THUNE. I have an amendment to the instructions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant executive clerk read as follows:

The Senator from South Dakota [Mr. THUNE] proposes an amendment numbered 4314 to the instructions of the motion to commit.

Mr. THUNE. I ask unanimous consent that reading be waived.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To improve the bill)

Strike "4 days" and insert "5 days"

Mr. THUNE. I ask for the yeas and nays on my amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 4315 TO AMENDMENT NO. 4314

Mr. THUNE. I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant executive clerk read as follows:

The Senator from South Dakota [Mr. THUNE] proposes an amendment numbered 4315 to amendment No. 4314.

Mr. THUNE. I ask unanimous consent that the reading be waived.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To improve the bill)

Strike "5 days" and insert "6 days"

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

HONORING SERGEANT FIRST CLASS NOAH TIETJENS

Mr. RICKETTS. Mr. President, I rise today to honor and remember a great Nebraskan. Noah Tietjens was killed by the Islamic Republic of Iran in Operation Epic Fury.

As a young man, he joined the military to protect and serve our Nation, and he gave his last full measure of devotion after serving nearly two decades in protecting our country.

I mourn for him with my fellow Nebraskans, and I ask my fellow Nebraskans and all here to pray for Shelly, his wife; Dylan, his son; and for the five other Americans who were killed in Operation Epic Fury. They are truly great Americans who are protecting our Nation.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Mr. President, I ask for a moment of silence to remember them.

(Moment of silence.)

IRAN

Mr. President, the Islamic Republic of Iran is a terrorist nation. Nearly 50 years ago, they started this reign of terror by storming our Embassy and kidnapping our diplomats, and they have been chanting "Death to America" ever since. They have been responsible, as the leading sponsor of state terrorism, for terrorist attacks all around the world. It has led to the

deaths of hundreds, if not thousands, of Americans.

When we had American troops deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan, 2,000 were killed by IEDs, and we know that Iran funded these weapons.

We know that they have had plots to assassinate our President and other officials in our own country—on American soil. We know that they have funded the Houthis, Hamas, and Hezbollah; that they have bombed our friends and killed civilians. And when their own people protest their terrible policies, they kill the protesters—their own people—by the thousands.

We cannot let a nation that embraces terror in the way Iran does have a nuclear weapon. This has, again, been the policy of Presidents, as the administrations have changed—that Iran cannot be allowed to have a nuclear weapon.

Thus, we come to the reason for Operation Epic Fury.

Iran had been in negotiations with numerous administrations and had always refused to give up their nuclear ambitions. This administration has decided that enough is enough. The goal is to make sure Iran cannot threaten us or their neighbors.

So we are targeting the things that they could use to do that—their missiles, their missile launchers, their missile stockpiles, their ability to manufacture those missiles that they are using right now to attack their neighbors. We are attacking their navy so their navy cannot threaten the shipping that goes through the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz and to make sure they cannot mine it to shut this down. Ultimately, we will continue to go after their nuclear facilities that they stubbornly refuse to give up. We will go after them.

We have learned the lessons from North Korea that, once a nation has nuclear weapons and a missile system, they are not going back. Iran can already reach allies of ours right now with their ballistic missiles. We know they want to continue to develop those to reach Europe and then, ultimately, the United States.

A country that chants "Death to America" and has a nuclear weapon and a missile that can reach us is a danger to our people. This can never be allowed to happen. That is why we have to destroy their ability to threaten us and their neighbors, right now, before it gets out of control. If we wait too long, we may not be able to stop it.

Thank you to our brave women and men in uniform who are carrying out this operation, who are risking themselves to keep our country safe.

I ask for the prayers of the Nation for all of our members of the military and to remember their families, who serve alongside them, and to continue to mourn our dead who have died defending our Nation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RICKETTS). The Senator from Kentucky.

WAR POWERS RESOLUTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, later today, the Senate will consider a resolution from my good friend and colleague Senator KAINE of Virginia. The purpose, as our colleague puts it, is to prevent the Nation from sending our young people to die in war without legitimate justification.

I do not doubt the sincerity of our colleague's intentions. Like Kentucky, Virginia is a State with a large military footprint, and the magnitude of the risks undertaken by the brave people we represent is simply inescapable. But I would submit to each of our colleagues a few reminders as the debate unfolds.

First, this weekend's events are not the beginning of a war but an attempt to end one that has spanned nearly half a century. The Islamic Republic of Iran was, quite literally, founded on the premise of existential war against America and against Israel. Over and over again, it has escalated this war, exported more terror, spilled more blood, and destabilized an entire region. So, make no mistake about it, this war belongs to the mullahs in Tehran.

As I have explained so many times, over the years, the powers of the President for the use of military force—with or without prior congressional approval—are, actually, well established.

Every single President during my time in the Senate has invoked these inherent authorities. From President Reagan's strikes on Libya to President Biden's strikes on the Houthis, to President Trump's use of force to end Iran's war of terror, it is squarely within his inherent authorities as Commander in Chief. Therefore, I will oppose the Kaine resolution and would recommend our colleagues do the same.

Now, with that said, a President's clear authority to use military force does not absolutely absolve him from a responsibility to place his national security decisions on the broadest possible political foundation. In fact, precisely because Presidents hold such expansive constitutional authority, it is incumbent on them to ensure such use is judicious, rooted in core national interests, and broadly supported by the American people.

Literally, for decades following World War II, Presidents of both parties tended to take this responsibility quite seriously. They understood that wild swings in foreign policy between administrations could confuse our allies and embolden our adversaries. So, throughout the Cold War, they spent considerable time and political capital explaining to the American people the stakes, objectives, and strategies they intended to pursue in service of our national security.

When it came to Iran policy, President Obama did not take this responsibility to heart, and it is little surprise that his unilateral deal did not survive for long after his Presidency. Likewise,

despite my urging, President Biden failed to speak clearly to the American people about our national interest in helping Ukraine resist aggression.

President Trump has made a bold and tough decision—one that could transform the region for the better, literally, for generations to come. But there are risks involved, and I hope his administration will work to explain the connection between the Commander in Chief's worthy objectives and the military and diplomatic means to achieve them. Connecting ends and means is the essence of strategy, and it is important for the administration to explain to the American people how they intend to do so.

In turn, our colleagues in the minority have a responsibility to actually listen and to not reflexively oppose foreign policy decisions of Presidents they don't like. After all, we don't have to look far into the past to find Senate Democrats voicing support for keeping the military option on the table in America's dealings with Iran or supporting President Biden's unilateral military force against Iran's proxies in the absence of explicit congressional authorization. More immediately, I hope our colleagues will consider the consequences of terminating ongoing operations before they have even succeeded.

What would the Chinese or the Russians conclude if America abruptly lost its stomach for decisive action?

What cold comfort would our allies take from an increasing erratic and partisan application of U.S. foreign policy commitments?

The consequences of successfully ending Iran's decades-long war against us and our allies and partners could reach far beyond the Middle East. This is evident in the way Russian and Chinese officials quickly—very quickly—condemned U.S. and Israeli operations and in their unwillingness or inability to come to Tehran's aid in a meaningful way.

Two observations at this point:

First, one of the reasons U.S. operations have enjoyed such freedom of maneuver in the Western Hemisphere and the Middle East is that Russia is bogged down in its war in Ukraine—a war whose battlefield innovations are already shaping operations over in the Gulf. If Russia were more unencumbered, it could have provided more materiel assistance to its partners in Venezuela and Iran.

The price of peace in Ukraine matters, and we should be careful not to compel an outcome that allows Russia to reassert itself in regions of critical importance to the United States. At the same time, there is tremendous value globally to destroying Iran's ability to produce the drones that rain down death in Europe and the Middle East alike. There is likewise value in disrupting its illicit oil trade with the PRC.

And, finally, a word about munitions and military readiness and the defense

industrial capacity. Regardless of disagreements on the pending question, every one of us should want the United States to have the best possible military. Every one of us should want our Armed Forces to be prepared for even more challenging threats.

Today, the U.S. military is not prepared to confront aligned adversaries and deter or defeat aggression simultaneously on multiple fronts. The reasons are numerous, and there is plenty of blame to go around.

Administrations have failed to submit budget requests that meet the basic requirements of the military. Congress has failed to pass timely, full-year appropriations. Industry has failed to anticipate inevitable demand. And, now, America faces Russia's war against Ukraine and China's determined military modernization with shallower magazines of critical munitions.

But there is good news. With more funding, there is spare production capacity to be tapped for this year, fiscal year 2026. We can build more munitions, produce more spare parts for airplanes, repair ships, invest in dilapidated military infrastructure, and deepen our cooperation and coproduction with our allies.

We shouldn't wait another year to seize these opportunities. The way to realize the well-resourced military our Nation requires for future conflicts is to build it today, right now.

My colleagues have heard me invoke the wartime words of the late ADM Harold Stark, but his warning bears repeating:

Dollars cannot buy yesterday.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

UNITED STATES AND CANADIAN HOCKEY

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I want to say a brief word about two subjects today:

First, hockey, a wonderful sport. It requires endurance, stamina, hand-eye coordination, balance. I have never played hockey. My son did in high school, and he was good. He was very good. Because he was interested in hockey, I learned a lot about it. I went to his games, his practices. I really learned to admire the sport and the talented people who play hockey. As an aside, I will tell you one lesson I learned about hockey through my son: You can't wash hockey gear. And as you probably know, Mr. President, you carry the hockey gear around—hockey players do—in these big duffel bags, huge, which, of course, they zip up, and my son did that.

When he would come in from practice or a game—and I would help him with his bag full of gear that you can't wash. Be very, very careful when you unzip that bag because the smell will knock you cold.

Why do I mention hockey? Well, we just had a great hockey game. United States v. Canada. The United States

won—men's hockey. The United States won, and I am very, very proud of our boys. It was a close, close game, 2 to 1 in overtime. And, of course, we celebrated that victory and congratulated our U.S. team at the State of the Union Address.

But I want to mention Canada. I think it is important to know that Canada has got a great team too. That was just a really good game, and it could have gone either way. And I so admire the people of Canada. Things get rocky a little bit between us—between America and Canada—but deep down Americans love the people of Canada. They are smart and they are hard-working and they are industrious and they are our neighbors and, you know, we just appreciate them so much. And I just wanted to say to the members of the Canadian hockey team: Well played. Well, well played.

I am proud of America and our boys for winning, but I am proud of the young men who played for Canada as well, and I wanted to say that.

NETFLIX

The second thing I want to talk about, briefly, is Netflix—Netflix and lawfare. Permit me to explain.

I love Netflix. I don't get to watch a lot of television, but sometimes when I come in, in the evening and I want to relax, I will watch one of the shows on Netflix.

And, you know, they have shows like—I wrote a few down—"Godless," "Adolescence," "Ripley," "The Queen's Gambit"—just wonderful, wonderful acting. I really admire Netflix. It is a great American company. The ingenuity, the creativity that its founders had to have to come up with this concept—you know, video demand through streaming.

Netflix is so successful today. They have 325 million subscribers. Their movies go out and their limited series go out all across the world; 56 languages, I think. Netflix has 16,000 employees. They generate about \$45 billion a year in cashflow. It is just a great American company, and I am proud of them.

That is why I was so surprised to hear recently some of the things said by one of the Netflix board of directors. I don't know how many directors Netflix has. I think it is anywhere from 10, 11, 12, 13—really bright people. You go through and read their resumes, you can't help but be impressed. They are well compensated. Now, just to be a board member, they pay you \$300,000 a year.

But I was shocked to hear what one of their board members said. And I don't know if this board member was speaking for Netflix because she is so prominent. She is well-known, and it is well-known that she is on the board of Netflix. I think she was on the board of Netflix and then went into government.

I am talking, of course, about Ms. Susan Rice, who worked for President Obama and President Biden; a Stanford

graduate; a Rhodes Scholar; has a DPhil from Oxford. Ms. Rice—I guess I should say Dr. Rice—is absolutely brilliant.

But anyway, one of her paying gigs right now—I suspect she will go back into government. One of her paying gigs right now is she is a very prominent independent director for Netflix. And it is very hard to—I mean, when she is so prominent, and you have this extraordinary American company, it is—they are kind of joined at the hip. That is why I was so surprised. I want to read you what Ms. Rice said. I am going to quote. These are her words, not mine. This is what Ms. Rice said:

When it comes to the elites, you know, the corporate interests, the law firms, the universities, the media . . . it is not going to end well for them. For those that decided that . . . [they] would act in their perceived very narrow self-interest, which I would underscore is very short-term self-interest, and . . . take a knee to Trump—

Not President Trump, not Mr. Trump—

take a knee to Trump—

As an aside, that surprised me because when I talk about President Obama or President Biden or President Trump, I am always very careful to call them President. Democrat or Republican, it is a matter of respect. But she said—I am going to repeat this sentence:

For those that decided . . . [they] would act in their perceived very narrow self-interest—

Ms. Rice said—

which I would underscore is very short-term self-interest, and . . . take a knee to Trump . . . they are going to be caught with more than their pants down, they're going to be held accountable by those who come in opposition to Trump and win at the ballot box.

[I]f these corporations—

I don't know if she is talking about Netflix or not. I know she is on the board of Netflix.

[I]f these corporations think that the Democrats—

Ms. Rice, as you probably know, is a prominent Democrat.

[I]f these corporations think that the Democrats, when they come back in power, are going to play by the old rules and say, "Oh, never mind, we'll forgive you for all the people you fired, all the policies and principles you've violated, all . . . the laws you've skirted," I think they've got another thing coming."

Because just like when Trump fought—

Once again, "Trump," not President Trump—

Because just like when Trump thought, "Ok, I will redistrict, and the Democrats won't have the guts to play hardball, they are going to be surprised."

Democrats have had a bellyful, and we are not going to play by the old set of rules when these guys are playing by a different set of rules.

Ms. Rice talked about being surprised. I am surprised. I am shocked. What came to mind, initially, when I read these words, is: You can only be young once, but you can always be im-

mature. You can only be young once, but you can always be immature.

What Ms. Rice is talking about is payback. What Ms. Rice seems to be saying is two wrongs don't make it right, but they do make it even. What Ms. Rice seems to be saying—and I don't know whether she is speaking on behalf of Netflix or not—but what Ms. Rice seems to be saying is that it is OK in America today to use the law to prosecute and harass your political enemies. I find that astounding coming from a person of her stature.

That is the sort of thing that doesn't happen in America. That is the sort of thing that is only supposed to happen in countries whose Powerball jackpot is 287 chickens and a goat, not America. We believe in the rule of law. We believe in equal protection. We believe nobody is above the law but nobody is beneath it. I can't think of a more irresponsible statement for somebody to make.

I remember when former President Biden started this lawfare business. Former President Biden, directly or indirectly, instructed Judge Merrick Garland, who was then-Attorney General, to prosecute a former President of the United States—a former President of the United States who had run against President Biden, Attorney General Garland's boss, and a former President of the United States who, at the time he was prosecuted by the Justice Department, was a current opponent against President Biden. And I remember thinking at the time: They have unleashed spirits they cannot control. That is not what America is all about.

And I know some are going to say: Well, President Trump is doing the same thing. If that is true, I don't like that either. In fact, when many of President Trump's nominees for the Justice Department came and appeared before us for confirmation in Judiciary, on which I sit, I talked to them about this. I said "Two wrongs don't make a right, but they do make it even" is wrong. It was wrong then, when President Biden did it, it is wrong now if people are doing it, and it is going to be wrong if Ms. Rice gets back into government. And it is wrong for her to advocate this, especially if she is doing it on behalf of Netflix, a great American company. Gosh. You can only be young once, but—man, oh, man—you can always be immature.

I suggest the absence of a quorum unless the Parliamentarian wants me to yield to somebody. She is pointing to Senator MCCORMICK, so I am going to yield to my good friend, the distinguished, handsome Senator from Pennsylvania.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

H.R. 6644

Mr. MCCORMICK. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. President, I rise today in support of the ROAD to Housing Act. I grew up in northeast Pennsylvania, in a town

called Bloomsburg, believing in a simple deal: You work hard, you play by the rules, and you can build a life in your own home. But that promise—the American dream—has become increasingly out of reach to families across our great Commonwealth. There are too few homes to buy and too many aging homes that families can't afford to maintain.

The numbers tell a clear and disturbing story. Pennsylvania is short about 100,000 homes today. That is the same number of seats as we see here in Penn State's Beaver Stadium. Median home prices have hit an alltime high of \$325,000, rent has surged, and more than half our housing stock in Pennsylvania is over 50 years old, which means greater repair costs for homeowners already struggling with tight, tight budgets.

The absence of good, new, affordable housing has locked out young families. When I was a teenager, the median age of a first-time homeowner was 29—29 years old. Today, it is 40—40 years old. That is an entire decade of home ownership and wealth building that has been lost by a generation.

Now, American families didn't create this problem; Washington did. Major Federal housing programs had been funded for decades without serious reform. Some hadn't been updated since the 1960s. The Biden administration had 4 years to address this crisis, and instead, we got more bureaucracies, more mandates, and reckless spending that drove this problem off the cliff.

From the row houses of Philadelphia to the small towns of the Monongahela Valley, home prices across Pennsylvania have risen more than 75 percent—75 percent—since 2020. Nationally, the average monthly mortgage payment is over \$1,000 higher than when President Biden took office.

Just last year, I visited Bedford Dwellings in Pittsburgh's historic Hill District with HUD Secretary Turner, and we spoke with great Pennsylvanians who feel that the American dream is increasingly out of reach. I hear this feedback everywhere I travel across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This is a big problem, it is an unacceptable problem, and it is time for a new direction.

President Trump's leadership is lowering housing costs for American families. He cut redtape in permitting and construction, and he directed key Agencies to keep Wall Street out of the starter home market. And he delivered the most significant Federal investment in affordable housing in decades via the Working Families Tax Cut Act. But today—today—the Senate has an opportunity to build on this progress, with serious bipartisan support, by passing the ROAD to Housing Act.

This important bill advances three goals: First, build more. The act cuts the redtape, lowers costs, and speeds up zoning and permitting. Second, fix what we have. Grants and forgivable loans are provided to low-income homeowners for repairs, for helping to

preserve home values, and to help stabilize neighborhoods. Third, empower communities, not the bureaucrats. Local leaders are empowered to make decisions that fit their towns. The Federal Government should be a partner, not a gatekeeper.

Guided by these three principles, the ROAD to Housing Act represents the most consequential Federal action on housing in a generation. Let me repeat that: the most consequential Federal action on housing in a generation. Passing through the Banking Committee with a unanimous 24-to-0 vote—Republicans and Democrats alike—is also proof that the Senate can address important issues in a bipartisan way.

I am particularly proud of the amendments my friend and colleague Senator FETTERMAN and I champion together. They protect Pennsylvania workers, Pennsylvania veterans, and Pennsylvania homeowners. For example, I was the lead or colead on six provisions that will help ensure Pennsylvanians, including our 800,000 veterans, can afford good homes without the risk of falling through the cracks.

The bill in my provisions also empower Pennsylvania's community lenders. There is a scene in the iconic movie "It's a Wonderful Life" where George Bailey, played by Jimmy Stewart—Jimmy Stewart, by the way, was a native of my dad's hometown Indiana, PA. In that movie, he fights to save the Bailey Building & Loan. This was a community lender in the fictional town of Bedford Falls that knew every borrower by name and made the mortgages that helped ordinary people own homes. That model once helped build a wonderful life for generations of Americans, but we have regulated so heavily that community lenders who want to serve their neighbors can't make the math work.

My friends, home ownership for most young families should not exist only in the movies. It should exist in Bloomsburg and Bedford and Braddock and in every Pennsylvania community where a local lender knows the borrower and wants to say yes. This bill—this bill—makes important steps in that direction.

And one more thing: The ROAD to Housing Act builds on President Trump's efforts and takes on Wall Street landlords competing directly with first-time home buyers for single-family homes. The housing market should work for Main Street, not for Wall Street.

So for all of these reasons, I am proud to stand in support of the ROAD to Housing Act. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote yes. Vote yes and make the American dream of home ownership possible again for the next generation of Pennsylvanians.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

IRAN

Mr. HICKENLOOPER. Mr. President, "We now have a government that can-

not manage even a simple crisis at home while, at the same time, stumbling into continuing catalogue of catastrophic events abroad." That is a direct quote from President Trump a year ago, spoken about the Biden administration, which President Trump spoke in his inaugural address just over a year ago.

Fast-forward 1 year, and now, it is this administration dragging the United States into an illegal war with Iran, one that has already taken American lives and spread chaos and destruction to an entire region. Iran's authoritarian regime is brutal, corrupt, oppressive, but the President's approach leaves us facing profound, unanswered questions about new dangers that may be unleashed.

I don't think there can be a clearer question raised about this administration than the President's own words said a year ago. We have a government that can't manage a simple crisis at home, and at the same time, we have one that is actively seeking catastrophic conflicts abroad. Every strike, every military escalation, every headline is a distraction. It pulls our attention overseas from the urgent economic struggles that Americans face at home. It distracts from the hard, less glamorous work it takes to make life more affordable for the American people. Iran is only the latest in a long line of distractions.

Right now, the United States and Israel are hitting targets all across Iran. The Trump administration entered this war with no plan of what comes next. And, now, the killing of Iran's Supreme Leader has left that country facing a dangerous, uncertain future.

The conflict is spreading. Iran is retaliating by launching missiles at U.S. bases and partner countries across the Middle East. The entire region has now been dragged into this war, and six American soldiers are already dead. As we speak, more troops—our courageous men and women—are being deployed into this volatile region, all to fight a war of choice that is illegal. It is a war that the American people don't want.

The administration can't agree on a joint goal, a strategy, or even an endgame. They don't seem to have one. They didn't anticipate how to evacuate hundreds of thousands of Americans living in or visiting in the Middle East who are now being told to flee a war zone but can't because the airspace is closed.

The United Kingdom has been evacuating its citizens throughout the region, but our government, which has been planning this attack for months, doesn't seem to have plans for Americans.

These are worse than mistakes; they are failures that are already costing American lives and throwing the region into chaos. All the chaos serves a purpose and distracts from the President's failures at home; the rising prices, the violence of ICE against

American citizens, and the unreleased Epstein files.

While this House—this White House—wages war abroad, working Americans are barely treading water at home. Over the last year, the President's disastrous illegal tariffs have crushed small businesses in Colorado and across the country. They have raised costs for all Americans. Tariffs clearly are a tax on Americans.

Just this week, gas prices reached an 8-month high in the response to the war in Iran. Americans are already paying for this war at the gas pump. Rent and home prices continue to rise, pushing the average American's first home purchase to age 40—an alltime record.

Tens of millions of Americans are paying double for their healthcare because the President and MAGA Republicans passed legislation that will lead 15 million people to lose their coverage altogether.

In 85 of the country's largest metro areas, childcare for two kids costs more than rent. On top of all that, U.S. job growth is at its weakest since COVID, and wages aren't keeping up with inflation.

According to Moody's, the top 10 percent of U.S. households now account for nearly half of all spending. That means, on paper, the economy may look relatively good but only for half of Americans—half of Americans at the top.

While working families struggle to get by, the President has given an extra boost to the powerful and well-connected. The Trump family themselves have made \$4 billion off the Presidency, and his administration helped pass \$4 trillion in tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans and for the largest corporations. They forced taxpayers to give up healthcare in order to pay for this tax cut.

Meanwhile, our communities feel out of control. We have witnessed ICE arrest children, separate families, kill Americans, all with zero accountability. We have seen the President and his Department of Justice delay and deny the release of the Epstein files—the full Epstein files. And the selective files we do have, the name "Trump" shows up more than 85,000 times.

Americans want safety. They want justice. They want to be able to pay their bills. Instead, what they are getting are coverups, corruption, and chaos. Here is the thing: Americans know that something is wrong. Every paycheck feels a little small. Every trip to the grocery store and the doctor, every bill for rent, energy, or childcare is never quite enough.

It is a terrible feeling. Americans work hard every day and still feel like they are getting nowhere. The last thing that they need—the last thing that we need—is another war.

Americans know how this story ends because we have been here before. We remember Iraq. The more the President fuels this war machine, the more

American families are getting closer to running on empty. It is time to cut short this illegal war and demand that the administration deliver for Americans and focus on our homes, for every family, for every soldier, for every paycheck, for every taxpayer dollar.

A year ago, the President warned about a government “stumbling into a continuing catalog of catastrophic events abroad,” but that is what we have done. We don’t need this war. We need to focus on doing better at home. I yield the floor.

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

WORKING FAMILIES TAX CUT ACT

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, one of the things I noticed about today is that it is March 4. That means it was exactly 8 months ago that President Trump signed into law the Working Families Tax Cut Act.

Now, we knew that this was a massive win for the American people, and what we are seeing now is that is beginning to play out. The American people are realizing what a big win passing this Working Families Tax Cut Act—the Big Beautiful Bill—was.

One of the things that have come up recently is the \$150 billion investment it made in our Nation’s defense, and certainly we are seeing that in action. It has been vital as our men and women of the military are working day and night to defend our Nation from these attacks from the largest state sponsor of terrorism on the face of the Earth, and that is Iran.

It also provided \$170 billion for border security, including funding to complete building the wall on our southern border, building new detention facilities for those that have illegally entered the country and are awaiting deportation, and, to make all of this happen, of course, hiring and training more agents.

I think it is important to note that since this bill was signed into law, not a single illegal alien has been admitted into our country. Think about that. For years, millions—millions—of people were coming into the country, and Heaven knows how many known and unknown “got-aways” were getting into this country. But now, not one. And this has been especially crucial to maintain our border enforcement as our colleagues across the aisle, the Democrats, continue their push for a partial shutdown of the Department of Homeland Security.

When I talk with Tennesseans, the part of the law that they are most excited about is tax cuts, leaving more money in their pockets and sending less money to the Federal Government.

Now, true to its name, the Working Families Tax Cut Act delivered the largest tax relief for Americans in history, and it prevented a \$4 trillion tax hike. Of course, that would have been the largest tax hike ever.

So while these provisions went into effect last year, most people are just now beginning to see how this is going

to affect them because we are at the point where everybody is trying to get their information together and fill out their IRS filing for the year.

In this law, I was so pleased that my legislation to remove income tax from Social Security for our Nation’s seniors was included. Every senior that is 65 years of age and older—every single one—gets a \$6,000 bonus deduction. If it is a couple, married filing jointly, their bonus deduction is \$12,000. What we know is that this eliminates the income tax for 88 percent of our Social Security recipients.

I think this is a matter of fairness. American workers spend a lifetime paying into Social Security. The Federal Government has that first bite at your paycheck. They take that money out. So why should seniors have to pay tax on that Social Security? It makes absolutely no sense to be taxing taxes. And that is what this provision has done for years. So by being able to remove this, we know that most seniors are going to see an extra refund of somewhere between \$670 and \$1,300. So for Americans on fixed incomes, these savings are going to help to pay for medicine, food, gas, groceries, and other expenses they may have.

For millions of workers, we have also lowered the taxes on tips and overtime. Americans who go the extra mile deserve to benefit from their hard work, and this provision of no tax on tips or overtime ensures that is going to happen. With the new tips deduction, single filers will see an average savings of \$1,370, and some are going to see savings of as much as \$5,500. With the new overtime deduction, the average is estimated at \$1,440.

So this is delivering historic tax relief and benefits for families.

Earlier this year, I had the honor of joining President Trump and Treasury Secretary Bessent for the official summit for the Trump accounts. These are new tax-advantaged accounts that were established in our legislation, and they are going to jump-start the American dream for millions of children across this country.

With the accounts, Americans that are born between 2025 and 2028 are going to be eligible for a \$1,000 contribution into their account from the Treasury Department.

Parents and grandparents and uncles and aunts who are always struggling with what to get for birthday, Christmas, or special events can contribute up to \$5,000 a year into this account until that child turns 18.

We know these accounts are going to grow to tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of dollars by the time that child grows to be an adult. So I think it is so important for those of us that have grandchildren, for those of us that have children—think about what this could mean for those children and grandchildren to be able to have a debt-free college education or maybe a downpayment on a home or, for a child that is truly an entrepreneur, the ability to start a business.

We have been so excited about these, and the American people are excited about them too. Already 2 million families have applied for these accounts. To any of the Tennessee families who are hearing these remarks, I would encourage them to sign up for this. It is IRS form 4547.

Be sure you sign your child up for one of these accounts.

Now, it is impossible to list all the savings that are in the Working Families Tax Cut Act, and there are a few more that are so specific for families. The enhanced child tax credit was made permanent. That is going to benefit 40 million families that are now getting ready to file their Federal income tax.

We also have a new deduction for interest paid on made-in-America new vehicles. You will be able to deduct the interest on that car payment. That is going to yield thousands in potential savings for new car owners.

It permanently extends the estate and lifetime gift tax exemption. This is vitally important for people that own family farms, that have generational small businesses. What we have done for these family farms and small businesses is move that estate or death tax exemption up to \$15 million per individual.

So for a couple that owns a family farm and they want to pass that on, that would be up to a \$30 million exemption.

It also provides a significant increase to the basic standard deduction and permanently extends the first Trump administration tax cuts for businesses, bonus depreciation, interest expensing, and research and development. These are so important because your mom-and-pop shops that are on Main Street, your small business factories that are in every town across this country—certainly, we have many of them in Tennessee.

Families want to consider these businesses, but so often they have had to sell the business or sell the farm to pay taxes. So often, they end up losing money because interest expensing or bonus depreciation was not permanent or was not there at all.

We are looking, this year, at families seeing an average of \$2,600 as a savings on their taxes, and, after they reset their deductions, seeing a take-home pay increase of about \$10,000 for the year.

Our working families tax cuts are strengthening the buying power of our families. It is strengthening the growth opportunities for our businesses and our communities in Tennessee and across the country.

And I think it is important to note that I have laid out all of these things that the American people benefit from. But I would remind the Chamber: Not one single Democrat voted for any of this—not one.

So I think that is what our colleagues across the aisle will see. As our senior citizens realize they have got a

\$6,000 bonus deduction, they are going to ask them: Why did you vote against this?

They are going to ask them: Why did you vote against no tax on tips? Why have you voted for higher taxes? Why did you want a \$4 trillion tax hike?

Those are the questions that the citizens are beginning to ask, and I know that, as they learn more about what was included in the working families tax cuts—the Big Beautiful Bill—they are going to have more questions for our colleagues who were against leaving more money in the pocket of our citizens.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

#### IRAN

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, as a combat veteran who deployed to the Middle East, I serve to protect America, not just then but always. And I stand strongly with our Commander in Chief as he acts on behalf of the safety and security of Americans.

The Iranian regime has been threatening, targeting, and taking the lives of our citizens for 47 years. Yet President Obama gave the regime billions to enrich uranium and obtain weapons used against our own servicemembers. And President Biden's appeasement strategy continued to fuel and fund Iran's proxy terrorism.

Enough is enough.

This weekend, President Trump took decisive action so neither Iran nor its proxies can ever take another one of our citizen's lives. And the objective is clear: Ensure no American has to live under the threat of Iran-backed terror again.

Like every American, I have no desire to see a long, drawn-out war, but this mission is worthy of being completed.

God bless our servicemembers around the world who are bravely and selflessly carrying out this noble endeavor.

When I served in Iraq and Kuwait in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, each day I put on my boots, I donned my Kevlar, and I stood shoulder to shoulder with my fellow Iowa National Guardsmen, unsure of what the day ahead would bring. But I knew it was my responsibility, as a company commander, to help my men and women stay focused when we were surrounded by chaos. And that remains my prayer for every single one of our men and women in uniform who are working to end Iran-backed terror.

Our Nation is still grappling with the news that six courageous heroes, including those from Des Moines' 103rd Sustainment Command and young Iowan SGT Declan J. Coady of West Des Moines, were killed in action.

These young men and women gave their lives in support of a noble mission: protecting their fellow Americans and keeping our homeland secure. Our Nation owes them an incredible debt of gratitude. It is one that can never be repaid.

But as their fellow brothers and sisters in uniform carry out the mission to ensure we never lose another American to Iran-backed terror, their sacrifice to protect our Nation is not and will not ever be in vain.

Every American life is precious, and in Iran's decades-long pursuit of creating chaos around the globe, too many of our servicemembers have been killed.

In 1979, militants backed by Iran's regime seized 66 Americans from the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and held them hostage for 444 days. Eight U.S. servicemembers were killed attempting to rescue them.

In 1983, Iran-backed Hezbollah terrorists drove a truck bomb into a Marine barracks in Beirut, killing 220 marines, 18 Navy sailors, and 3 Army soldiers.

In January 2024, a drone launched by Iran-backed Hezbollah killed three U.S. soldiers at Tower 22 in Jordan. Those soldiers were engineers from the 718th Engineer Company out of Georgia. It is one of my former companies.

And no one can forget October 7, 2023, when Iran-backed Hamas terrorists massacred more than 1,200 men, women, and children—including nearly 50 Americans—and they took 12 of our U.S. citizens hostage.

I was in the region that night and immediately went to Israel, where I witnessed the effects of Iran's brutality up close.

Make no mistake, folks, when Iran's leaders chant "Death to America," they mean it.

Our adversaries must understand that a single American loss is one too many and that they will pay dearly for spilling the blood of those who wear the uniform.

Already, President Trump's "peace through strength" efforts are working. Iran's Supreme Leader and over 40 senior Iranian regime leaders have been wiped out. Their weapons systems, their navy, and their nuclear ambitions are being demolished. And our President, Donald J. Trump, is bringing the region together, united against their common enemy, Iran.

Since October 7, I have traveled to the Middle East more than 10 times in pursuit of peace, and I have heard firsthand from leaders across the Middle East for years about their fears of Iran and its proxies.

While a more peaceful world was always the goal, as long as the Iranian regime and its proxies existed, it seemed far from reality.

This week, Iran launched sustained attacks at our partners, thinking they would fracture our relationships in that region. They thought wrong. Instead, our partners have been brought together. They know who the real

enemy is, and they have told me they stand with the United States and they support our actions. These are our Arab friends in the region. For too long, they have also lived under the threat of the Iranian regime and are ready for a region where peace and prosperity can finally take hold.

And we know a safer Middle East means a safer world.

Iowans are no strangers to the consequences of the chaos in the Middle East, which is why I want to bring an end to it.

In December, two Iowa National Guardsman—Staff Sergeants Nate Howard and Edgar Brian Torres-Tovar—were killed by terrorists in Syria. Shortly after, in January, I visited the Iowa troops that were stationed in the region, including the unit that our staff sergeants came from, and I had one simple but very important message for them: Their noble mission matters.

The work our men and women are doing overseas is helping keep the American homeland safe, but now is our opportunity to bring an end to the decades of chaos—the sooner the better. While the power to declare war exclusively rests with Congress, the responsibility to defend our Nation and our homeland is in the hands of our Commander in Chief.

And don't forget, Congress holds the power of the purse. Yet, at this very moment, the Department of Homeland Security is shut down by Senate Democrats who are blocking its funding. This is a dangerous time for a political stunt. We don't know if there are terrorist sleeper cells waiting to avenge the death of the Ayatollah, or even lone radicals. Consider, a gunman who killed two in Austin, TX, on Sunday was wearing a T-shirt featuring an Iranian flag, and a Virginia mosque less than an hour's drive away from this very Capitol honored the "martyrdom" of the Ayatollah this week.

While I appreciate the gentleman from Virginia's interest in exercising Congress' war powers, I would urge all of my Democrat colleagues to get behind those who are at this moment defending our Nation.

We have already lost too many lives at the hands of Iran, but as long as the Iranian regime chants "Death to America," the lives of our citizens will continue to be threatened.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, the military strikes on Iran by the United States and Israel are a reckless escalation of an illegal war. Americans do not want another endless war in pursuit of regime change. Americans want to fix the affordability crisis here at home. Americans want to fund healthcare, not endless warfare. Americans want to reclaim the tax breaks for billionaires and millionaires to spend it on healthcare and education and environmental protections in our country. This war is not helping America; it

is hurting America. This war is built on lies about nuclear threats, and those lies are now costing American servicemembers' lives.

Senators got a classified briefing from the administration yesterday, and it confirmed what we already knew: This is an unnecessary and illegal war—of choice—by Donald Trump. Iran posed no immediate threat, and there is no plan to end this catastrophe.

President Trump said yesterday that he started this war because “he had a feeling”—Donald Trump “had a feeling,” he said, that Iran was going to attack. There is no evidence—zero—to back this up. He has presented no evidence to back up his feeling, and that is outrageous. We should never even start a war based on a feeling but only on facts. Donald Trump is risking the world on his whims and on his feelings.

There was a time for diplomacy and for Trump to seek congressional approval. Instead, this war will be a wrecking ball through the Middle East and must be stopped.

Any war should have the support of Congress and the American people. Trump's war has neither. This attack has not been approved by Congress and holds dangers for all Americans.

If Trump does not stop this war now, Congress must. I look forward to voting later today to support the bipartisan War Powers Resolution to stop this illegal war.

Let me be clear: This is a crisis of Trump's own creation. Iran's nuclear program was under control, thanks to the 2015 nuclear deal which severely limited Iran's enrichment program and was working to prevent Iran from producing a nuclear bomb. But Trump tore up that deal in 2018 and then bombed Iran last June. Trump claimed then that the attack obliterated Iran's nuclear program. If it did, why is he attacking now? Was he lying then or is he lying now? He was lying at some point in this process. Either it was obliterated or it wasn't.

A diplomatic solution remains the best way to permanently and verifiably prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. The more Trump bombs Iran, the further we get away from diplomatic deals. We are going backwards.

Now, with the death of the Ayatollah—a terrible, repressive leader who no one will miss—there is a power vacuum in the country and more chaos. There is no guarantee that there will be a change of regime at all or that whoever replaces the Ayatollah will be any better. In fact, the replacement could be much worse than the Ayatollah.

Trump clearly sought regime change in Iran, but it is unlikely we will see it without sending ground troops, which we should not do. History teaches us that air wars alone do not force regime change. In Venezuela, we removed the leader but did not change the regime.

The future of Iran should belong to the Iranian people. I stand with them. Before the attacks, they showed ex-

traordinary courage by peacefully taking to the streets to demand change.

As much as we all want to help and support the Iranian people, this is not a moment to impose solutions or shape outcomes from the outside, but that is what Trump is trying to do.

I left yesterday's classified briefing understanding that Trump had absolutely no plan for this war or its endgame. It is not clear at all as to whether or not their goal is to engage in regime change or not. It is not clear at all when they plan to end this war and what their goals are that will end the war. And it is very clear that they have no idea what the successor government will look like in Iran.

They are making this up as they go along in Trump's Oval Office. I know that because they clearly had no evacuation plan for the scared Americans who are now struggling to leave the region, many without answers still as to how they get out of the region. My office is doing everything we can to help Massachusetts residents who are abroad in the Middle East trying to get home. We are hearing that the State Department has no plan to help them. This is a dangerous and reckless approach to war, and these families do not deserve to be in the crosshairs.

I am pressuring the State Department to act quickly and decisively to help bring these families home safely. It is day 5, and it is unacceptable that they still do not have a clear plan in the Trump administration as to how to evacuate all of these Americans who are caught in this Middle Eastern conflict. There was no plan.

The best way to protect people in the region is to end this war and end it right now. President Trump is completely out of control, and Americans have already lost their lives because of it. We need to end this illegal and unnecessary war now, and I will do everything in my power to make that happen.

No war with Iran.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

ISLAM

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, I have come to the floor several times over the past few months to sound the alarm about the serious threats that radical Islam poses to the United States of America. You know, unfortunately, we are seeing that play out in real time now with what is happening over in Iran.

You know, as I have discussed many times, radical Islam is not a religion. It is a death cult, and it is a political ideology that encourages Muslims to kill all infidels. In simple terms, that means Americans and Christians. So it shouldn't be a surprise that Iran launched a 47-year war against the United States almost immediately after being taken over by radical Islam in February of 1979.

Just 9 months after the Iranian Revolution, which put the radical Islamists

in charge, a group of Iranians stormed the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and took 66 American hostages. Sometimes, we forget.

A few years later, in 1983, Iran helped orchestrate the deadly Beirut bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks, which killed 241 American servicemembers—241. How soon we forget.

In October 2000, Iran's proxies bombed the USS *Cole* off the coast of Yemen.

In 2012, Iran conducted a series of cyber attacks on critical American infrastructure, seeking to take us down digitally.

In 2016, they seized two American ships and held 10 U.S. Navy sailors hostage for 16 hours.

Since 2023, Iran and its proxies have attacked—have attacked—U.S. forces 180 times across the world, not to mention they have done all of this while chanting “Death to America.” How nice.

Clearly, these radical Islamic terrorists have one goal in mind: to wipe out the United States America, to wipe us off the face of the Earth. To accomplish this goal, they have been working feverishly to develop a nuclear weapon to gain more strength and more power.

Thanks to Barack Obama entering the Iran nuclear deal in 2015, sending them pallets of cash, they were almost successful. This so-called deal basically allowed Iran to build a nuclear stockpile, to which the United States for years turned a blind eye.

The deal remained in place until 2018, when President Trump withdrew and imposed maximum-pressure sanctions on Iran. You know, the pressure worked, as Iran's economy was plunged into a deep recession during President Trump's 4 years in office. But luckily for them, Joe Biden got into the White House in 2021, and what did he do? He immediately reentered Obama's broken nuclear deal with Iran, empowering Iran to once again build a nuclear arsenal.

They were well on their way to achieving that goal of nuclear power, but Iran's luck ran out when President Trump got back into office last year. He pulled the United States out of that nuclear deal, and a few months later, President Trump gave an order for Operation Midnight Hammer, which was one of the most impressive missions in U.S. military history. This flawlessly executed operation destroyed the nuclear capabilities Iran had been building under Joe Biden.

Unfortunately, Iran's nuclear ambitions didn't end there. Iran's former leader, the deranged Ayatollah, was doing everything he could to get their nuclear program back together.

These terrorists cannot be trusted. They want to see every single freedom-loving American dead—pretty plain and simple—and they would like the use of a nuclear weapon to do that. That is the reason they were working for that.

So, as Secretary of War Pete Hegseth said, we didn't start this war, but we

are damn sure going to finish it. And thank goodness somebody has stepped up to the plate.

Thanks to President Trump and Secretary Hegseth, on Saturday morning, U.S. military forces began Operation Epic Fury, a targeted mission to wipe out Iranian leadership and obliterate the country's offensive ballistic missile and nuclear weapons capabilities.

Unlike the forever wars in the past 50 years, Operation Epic Fury's goals, by President of the United States Donald Trump, are clearly laid out: Destroy the Iranian regime's missiles and their launchers, annihilate their navy, prevent their terrorist proxies from destabilizing the world, and ensure Iran can never—never—obtain a nuclear weapon.

You know, we tried diplomacy, but as the old saying goes, you can't negotiate with terrorists. They wanted nothing to do with it, but President Trump and his group tried. That is what these people are—terrorists—motivated by their radical Islamic beliefs.

If you don't believe me, let's look directly into the Quran. In 2:98 of the Quran, it says: Allah is the enemy of all non-Muslims.

Pretty simple.

In 8:12 of the Quran, it says: Allah will instill fear in the heart of those who disbelieve, therefore strike them upon the necks.

If you wondered where radical Muslims got the idea of beheading people, which we saw many times over the years, now you know.

Or take Quran 8:39, which says: Fight non-Muslims until the faith of Allah is fully established.

Those are not my words. This is all clearly written in the book of Quran.

Now do you see why I say that radical Islam is not a religion but is a death cult? They have a plan.

There has been a lot of talk over the past few days about what "America First" means, and that is OK. In this country, you have the right to debate and even to disagree with your government. That is what this country is all about. But despite the fact that President Trump has been the leader of the free world for the majority of the last decade, the mainstream media and leftists still don't seem to understand it.

So let's spell it out for you: MAGA isn't about isolationism. It is the big stick that punishes the people who chant "Death to America."

"America First" is about having a military so strong and so effective that your enemies go into hiding.

In case you haven't noticed, you haven't heard a peep out of Russia or China since President Trump took out the Iranian terrorists this past Saturday. In fact, China's oil imports have been crippled since President Trump took out the Venezuelan dictator and now the radical Islamic Iranian regime. President Trump now has put our enemies on notice. Mess around and find out.

To the left screaming "endless wars," no, it isn't. We have been fighting this

war since 1979. Now, it is time to end it. Americans have been regularly killed by these radical terrorists since 1979. This operation isn't about nation-building. It is about protecting U.S. citizens by making sure these terrorists don't get their hands on a nuclear weapon.

I am proud of our military, which has valiantly executed the mission so far. This has been the most lethal and successful air campaign in history. This is a highly complex mission. President Trump says he expects to potentially go a few more weeks, hopefully minimizing any more American casualties along the way.

I join every American in mourning the losses of the six American service-members who have been killed so far. These men and women are patriots who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country and for our safety. We join their families and friends in mourning their losses, and we pray for the safe return of all of our brave warriors overseas.

But for those of us who are in the homeland, we must stay vigilant because the truth is that the threat of radical Islam isn't confined to the Middle East any longer. Under Joe Biden, thousands of radical Islamic terrorists illegally entered our country. We have no idea how many terrorists are here. We have no idea where they are at. It is scary, but it is true.

Just this past weekend, a 53-year-old naturalized American citizen—born in Africa—entered a bar in Austin, TX, and senselessly murdered 3—3—innocent Americans and injured 14 others. To no one's surprise, the terrorist was wearing a sweatshirt that read "Property of Allah," along with a T-shirt underneath with an Iranian flag printed on it. Law enforcement also found a Quran in the terrorist's vehicle.

If we don't do something about the terrorists who are here, this may just be the first in a string of attacks carried out by Muslim terrorist cells in the next few months.

You don't have to look far to see the rising influence that Islam is having in the United States. More than 5 million Muslims live here today, and they are influencing our culture and even our laws. We are blessed that the freedom of worship is a constitutionally guaranteed right in this country, and it should be. If you want to come here legally, peacefully practice your religion, and blend into our society by adopting the treasured American values of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, you are welcome to do so. That is what this country is all about. But if you believe that Sharia law supersedes American law, our Constitution, and that it is righteous to kill Americans, you should be deported—pronto.

Sharia law is anti-American and has no place in a free society. Yet, we are seeing U.S. towns and cities starting to enforce elements of Sharia law itself. Towns in Minnesota, Michigan, and

New Jersey now allow daily Islamic calls to prayer to be blasted on speakers in public places. Now, that is not even allowed in Muslim countries—they can't do that—but we allow that to happen in our country.

The iconic Times Square in New York has been taken over daily by Islamic calls to prayer—and don't even get me started on this Islamic mayor in New York City. He took his oath of office with one hand on—what?—the Quran. I wonder if he agrees with the Quran statements I listed earlier. I wonder if he believes that. He was recently seen praying with Muslim police officers, which is fine. Before we realize it, Mamdani will be enacting Sharia law in America's premier city and not the U.S. Constitution. It is coming. Additionally, Mamdani recently visited a New York City mosque which has ties to the Iranian regime. To make matters worse, the mayor's friend, who runs a mosque, openly prays for the killing of infidels. And who is that? That is you.

But it isn't just New York. A city in Michigan recently legalized the barbaric live slaughter of animals for Muslim holidays. This is not a Third World country, folks. We do not sacrifice animals in the streets of the United States of America, but I guess our Western values go out the window when it comes to appeasing the Islamic death cult.

Over the weekend, not far from our Nation's Capital, a mosque held a memorial service for the late Ayatollah, who was taken out just the past week by President Trump. They had a memorial service for him. The mosque's social media post described the Iranian dictator as a martyr and "our leader." These are people right down the street. Yes, this is the very same terrorist who was responsible for murdering tens of thousands of his own people just last month. He was working every single day to form a worldwide caliphate where Sharia law would be the constitution and global terrorism—or jihad—would be its foreign policy, and you have to have Islamists on American soil calling him a hero. It is absolutely sickening.

For some reason, our colleagues the Democrats in this body are siding with these people. I don't understand that. I mean, they have nothing to do with America. We even have some elected officials in this body who worship Sharia law, and they need to be stopped. If these people love these Third World countries they are from so much, especially those people in the House, please feel free to move.

A mosque in Dearborn, MI, also held a vigil for the evil Iranian dictator, calling him the "great leader of our time." But they didn't stop there. These idiots also claimed that America was built by devil worshippers, referred to the Statue of Liberty as "Lucifer", and said they want their children to grow up in a culture of jihad—killing all Christian Americans.

These people seem to be completely ignorant about the Founders of our country. So here is a little about the history of America: We weren't built by devil worshipers. In fact, America was founded by Christians who believed in one true God. That is why our motto is "In God We Trust." It is on our currency. Our God is full of forgiveness and mercy. Jesus, his son, taught us to turn the other cheek and love our neighbor as ourselves.

Allah, on the other hand, shows no mercy. In fact, he encourages murder, violence, and the torturing of women. This is why I say that radical Islam is fundamentally incompatible with American Christian values. In America, women are allowed to dress, go to school, work, and marry whomever they like. Iran used to be like this, too, before they were taken over by radical Islamists in 1979.

This is them post-1979.

Sadly, under the sick leadership of these terrorists, women are treated like dogs. Did you hear that? Women are treated like dogs. They are forced to cover every part of their bodies—of their skin—except for their eyes. They aren't allowed to leave home unless they are with a male escort. They aren't allowed to get an education or work a job, and they are forced sometimes to marry as young as 6 years old. Pedophilia and inbreeding are rampant, and women are lucky if they are allowed to drive.

Hell, we have a U.S. Congresswoman from one of these Third World Muslim countries who is married to her brother.

Where are all my Democrat colleagues who claim to be feminists? They should be outraged by Islam's treatment of women.

We cannot allow this sort of poisonous ideology to fester. Under Joe Biden, 10 to 20 million people came here illegally. Many of these people came from radical Islamic countries and brought their sick ideology with them.

If you live in the United States and practice Sharia law, you should be deported immediately. We have no choice, folks, if we want to keep this country. Don't let the door hit you on the ass on the way out, is what I say. If you chant "Death to America," we do not want you here.

We are stupid if we just sit on our hands while terrorist cells work to pull off their next attack and say that this is a one-time deal. It is not.

Thanks to our Democrat colleagues who just like the way this country is going and love power, the Department of Homeland Security now is shut down. That is really smart. This is not the time to be playing politics. This is an urgent national security crisis. Every single one of my Senate colleagues put their hand on the Bible in this room and swore an oath when they joined this body. We swore to defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic.

Well, I have news for you. The enemies are inside the gates. They are here. It is past time that we reopened the Department of Homeland Security and deported every single terrorist who is living in this country—and there are thousands.

If we don't take a stand now, our way of life, our Christian values, our freedoms, and our national identity are gone. It is going to be over. There is only room for one law in this country, and that is the Constitution of the United States of America. For too long, people have tiptoed around this issue—afraid to hurt someone's feelings or to make people uncomfortable. But the time for being politically correct is over.

So the question is: Will we continue to turn a blind eye to the radical Islamic cult, or will we stand up before more Americans are killed?

Now is the time to act. If we don't, we will lose our country as we all know it. We are already starting to see it happen. This isn't a Republican or a Democrat issue. This is an American issue. I wish more of my Republican and Democrat colleagues would join me in denouncing radical Islam before it is too late, but it seems like we are living in an age in which people are too scared to stand up for what is right. Weak leaders have allowed the Islamic cult to destroy Europe.

Folks, we are going to be next.

Thank God for President Trump, who actually has the courage to take out these radical terrorists. Let's get in, complete the mission, and get out. God bless our President, God bless our troops, and God bless the United States of America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

#### WAR POWERS RESOLUTION

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, on Saturday morning, the United States military started conducting airstrikes on Iran, dragging America into yet another war in the Middle East. Since President Trump's reckless decision to escalate this conflict, at least six Americans have been killed in service to their country, and many more have been injured. And President Trump himself has said:

There will likely be more before it ends.

And then he also said:

Well, that's the way it is.

Well, my heart goes out to their families and loved ones, and I will be forever grateful for their service and for their sacrifice.

It has been days since this attack, but President Trump has yet—has yet—to make it clear to Congress—and, more importantly, to the American people—what exactly our objectives are. What does victory look like? What he does say seems to change daily, if not more frequently.

The American people have a right to know the facts and a right to know the truth.

And our Constitution leaves no room for doubt that Congress—not the President—has the sole power to declare war. And that check is in place for a very important reason: Our Founders did not want to place the immense power over whether or not to go to war in the hands of just one individual.

They argued, if the President alone could make such a decision unilaterally, it would be the equivalent of granting the President the power granted to a King. We all know our history. The United States had just defeated a King in the Revolutionary War, and our Founders were in the process of creating a constitutional Republic, not a monarchy.

Talking to my constituents in Michigan, and certainly as evidenced by numerous polls that have come out recently, President Trump has decided to start a war that Americans clearly do not want. The American people instead want us focused on issues that will improve their lives here at home.

When I hear from Michiganders, they tell me they want lower prices; they want safer streets; they want more attention to their challenges here at home. But if Americans are going to send their sons and daughters into harm's way across the world, they certainly deserve to know what the President's end goal is and what is the exit strategy.

Now, make no mistake, Iran is a brutal authoritarian regime, and I have long said that we must ensure that Iran never ever produces a nuclear weapon, but unless we face an imminent threat, the President cannot—he cannot—unilaterally drag us into war.

Our country knows too well that war in the Middle East comes at a very high cost to our servicemembers and to their families, and it is also an incredibly expensive endeavor for our taxpayers.

In September 2021—20 years after the United States invaded Afghanistan—Brown University released a comprehensive report that outlined the staggering cost of the War on Terror. It found that those military engagements added approximately \$8 trillion to our national debt. We are still grappling with the cost of all of those wars, and now the President is starting a new one, all without properly consulting the American people.

But let me be clear: This is not about partisan politics. This is not about that at all. It is about fundamental constitutional obligations. In fact, in 2013, Democrats made the Obama administration come to Congress with a plan for its involvement in Syria. It was Senate Democrats who forced a vote to authorize the use of military force by a Democratic President. They did it because it was required by the Constitution. It was not a party issue. But, unfortunately, my Republican colleagues seem to be content to simply act as a rubberstamp for President Trump and not require a vote as required in the U.S. Constitution.

During my time as a lieutenant commander in the U.S. Navy Reserve, I served in Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, places where, right now, our servicemembers are at a heightened risk because of this operation—and my thoughts and prayers are with these brave servicemembers and the nearly 40,000 U.S. troops serving within range of Iranian missiles—and a situation on the ground that is changing rapidly.

What comes next is critical for U.S. servicemembers, the American people, and the entire world. That is why, today, the Senate will vote on a resolution that would assert Congress' power over the President to declare a war, as outlined in the Constitution, and put forward by our Founders.

It would not prevent us in any way from defending ourselves against an attack, but it would ensure that President Trump cannot escalate this war with Iran without congressional approval—and, more importantly, the approval of the American people.

The American people deserve answers and our servicemembers deserve real leadership and that is why I will be voting yes on the resolution before us here today. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting it because it is past time for this administration to show the American people a real plan. It is past time for Congress to start acting like a coequal branch of government.

We need to exercise the checks and balances that our Constitution expects from us. And that means every Member of this Chamber right here, right now, needs to go on the record to say whether they want to be passive, ignore their obligation to the Constitution, and allow the President to continue this war without a clean, clear plan for the American people or—or—do they want to require the President to be fully transparent and accountable to the American people and, importantly, preserve the integrity of our beloved constitutional Republic?

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HAGERTY). The Senator from Nebraska is recognized.

HONORING SERGEANT FIRST CLASS NOAH  
TIETJENS

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I want to begin with a moment of solemn gratitude. Yesterday, we received devastating news. U.S. Army SFC Noah Tietjens of Bellevue, NE, was killed in Kuwait during an unmanned aircraft system attack while supporting Operation Epic Furry.

He was assigned to the 103rd Sustainment Command out of Des Moines, IA. Sergeant Tietjens enlisted in the Army Reserve in 2006 as a wheeled vehicle mechanic. He gave two decades of his life to this country, deploying to Kuwait in 2009 and again in 2019—always answering the call, always showing up.

His record of service speaks for itself. Sergeant Tietjens earned the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Com-

mandation Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary and Service Medals, the Iraq Campaign Medal with Campaign Star, the Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, and the Armed Forces Reserve Medal with "M" Device.

Each ribbon and each medal marks a chapter of life poured out in service to something larger than himself. We honor Sergeant Tietjens today, and we hold his family, his unit, and all who loved him in our hearts.

In addition to Sergeant Tietjens, five other American heroes did not come home. All six of these servicemembers gave their last full measure of devotion in service to this country, and we will never forget them. To their families—their mothers, their fathers, their spouses, their children—a grateful nation stands with you and prays for you. May they rest in eternal peace.

IRAN

Mr. President, last week, President Trump made a decisive call to strike at the world's leading State sponsor of terrorism. The Iranian regime is responsible for the death of hundreds of Americans and continued to pose unacceptable threats to this country—to the United States.

Our brave men and women in uniform carried out Operation Epic Furry with courage, precision, and unwavering commitment to protecting this Nation and to protecting the world from one of its greatest threats. Because of their valor, Iran's ability to project force and project terror throughout the region has been significantly degraded, and their nuclear ambitions have been devastated.

But the threat does not end with the strikes this weekend. Iran's terrorist proxy networks are already embedded in our hemisphere, in part because of years of open border policies that left this country dangerously exposed.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Mr. President, the risk of a terror attack on American soil has gone up, and our Department of Homeland Security, it is shut down—not understaffed, not underfunded—it is shut down, for 19 days and counting.

This Agency was created on September 11, 2001, for one purpose: to make sure that we never again suffer a catastrophic attack on our homeland. DHS, they guard our airports; it responds when hurricanes and wildfires devastate our communities; it defends our power grids, our water systems, and our financial networks from foreign adversaries who seek to bring us to our knees. And right now, well, this critical Agency is crippled.

Sixty-one thousand TSA employees are working without pay, including 42,000 screeners who are standing at security checkpoints in airports around this country at this very moment. They are screening your bags; they are checking your boarding passes; they are doing their jobs with profes-

sionalism—all while not knowing how they are going to pay their rent, how they are going to feed their children, or how they are going to keep their lights on.

This is not just unfair; this is a disgrace. Two-thirds of CISA, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, has been furloughed. The people whose sole job is to protect our power grids, to protect our hospitals, our financial networks from Chinese and Iranians and Russian cyber attacks, they have been sent home.

FEMA's emergency response capacity is totally disrupted.

The Coast Guard, the Coast Guard is unfunded.

The Secret Service is strained.

And every single day that this drags on, the window for a catastrophic attack on this country—on American soil—it opens up a little wider. It is these organizations that are bearing the brunt of this government shutdown.

So I would ask my Democratic colleagues—I will ask them directly—why? Republicans have put forward a counterproposal. The ball—well, it is in Senator SCHUMER's court; and so far, do you know what? We all know what. He has chosen politics. He has chosen politics over protecting American people.

Well, let me be clear about where Republicans stand. We will not accept any agreement that ties the hands of Federal law enforcement. We will not accept provisions designed to obstruct immigration enforcement. We have been ready to fully fund the Department of Homeland Security and get every one of those 61,000 workers back to doing the jobs that keep this country safe.

Mr. President, let me close with this: Six Americans just gave their lives to make this world safer. The very least we can do is ensure that the Agencies defending our homeland here at home have the funding, the personnel, and the operational capacity to do their job.

To my colleagues across the aisle: End this shutdown, fund our Department of Homeland Security, and stop holding our national security hostage.

To the American people: Know that there are those of us who will not stop fighting until every Agency charged with protecting this homeland is fully funded, fully staffed, and fully focused on our safety because that above all else is our most basic responsibility.

God bless our fallen heroes. God bless every servicemember still in harm's way. God bless the United States of America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

IRAN

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I want to associate myself with the remarks of my colleague from Nebraska Senator FISCHER, and I thank the Presiding Officer for all the leadership you have provided in this crucial time.

What I would like to do to start with is read a letter that was sent by Admiral Cooper to all of those participating in Epic Fury. As a commander, he wanted to let everybody know, in these operations, sort of what is at stake. If I can, I will read it:

To America's extraordinary sons and daughters deployed around the Middle East,

By order of the President of the United States, we are embarking on a mission of profound consequence. The time for preparation is over. The time for action has arrived.

As we move from deterrence into active combat, I write to tell you how honored I am to serve with you—the most exceptional Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen, Guardians and Coast Guardsmen on this earth.

Some of you are stationed in the Middle East. Many of you have deployed overseas on short notice. Others have been extended on deployment for this [crucial] mission. You represent the strongest, most lethal warfighting force the world has ever known. You all selflessly serve our . . . country and make us . . . very PROUD.

Since 1979, the Iranian Regime has killed and wounded thousands of Americans . . . and continue to threaten Americans and our friends. Today, by your courage and grit, you will change the course of . . . history.

My guidance for you is simple:

Be Relentlessly Lethal. In the heat of conflict, remember who you are. Let your conduct be as professional as your aim is precise.

Take Care of Your Teammates. The men and women on your flanks, in front of you and those at your [side] are your Guardian Angels. Be [there].

Steady Your Resolve. Combat is inherently chaotic. The hours, days and perhaps weeks ahead will challenge you. There will be noise and confusion. Fall back on your training. It is the best in the world.

You are the shield of the free world, and today, you are its sharpest sword.

As the eyes of the world fix upon [you], stay safe, and GODSPEED.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that this letter be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

COMMANDER, UNITED STATES  
CENTRAL COMMAND,  
February 28, 2026.

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Steady Your Resolve. Combat is inherently chaotic. The hours, days and perhaps weeks ahead will challenge you. There will be noise and confusion. Fall back on your training. It is the best in the world.

You are the shield of the free world, and today, you are its sharpest sword.

As the eyes of the world fix upon us, stay safe, and GODSPEED.

C.B. COOPER II.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, that letter was sent to everybody involved in Epic Fury. Six people received this letter that have been killed in action.

This letter is a statement by the commander that what you are doing is righteous, what you are doing is long overdue, what you are doing will make your country safer, and the eyes of the world are upon you.

I would like to say this: I have never been more proud of our men and women in the military than I am now. That is true every day but particularly now. They have been tested by the sting of battle. Six have fallen, and God bless them.

The best thing you can do for a military unit when they suffer losses is to make sure the struggle continues and the sacrifice is not in vain. That is what they want. They accept the risk of injury and death; they cannot accept and should not have to accept anything less than victory.

So a couple of days into this conflict—3 or 4—we have lost six, and more may follow.

To the families of the fallen: Your loved ones died nobly in the service of their country.

The enemy that we are facing, Iran, is the largest state sponsor of terrorism on the planet. They have been killing Americans by the thousands since 1979.

In 1983, 220 marines, I think 18 sailors, and 3 members of the Army were killed in Lebanon by Hezbollah, a proxy of the Iranian regime, in a bombing against the Marine barracks. We withdrew. We never held those responsible accountable. I love Ronald Reagan. He was a great President. But that was his biggest mistake.

So we are here to settle the account with the Iranian regime, after months of trying to negotiate an outcome to avoid conflict that would prevent Iran from ever having a nuclear weapon, would lessen their ability to produce missiles that could hit our homeland and terrorize the region, and to stop their funding of terrorist organizations like Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Houthis. It was clear during those negotiations that Iran is wedded to its agenda.

The Ayatollah is a religious Nazi. He is no more likely to give up his agenda than Hitler was. What does he want? Listen to what he says, not what I am saying. He says "Death to America," and he means it. Well, he can't say it anymore because he is dead, but there are others in Iran who keep saying it.

He wants to purify Islam—the regime does. They are radical religious fanatics that believe there is only one way to worship God, and that is through the Shia way. The Sunnis in Saudi Arabia are the worst offenders in their eyes.

So they have a goal to purify the faith of Islam, to create an international caliphate built around an extreme ideology. That extreme ideology will allow a 16-year-old girl to be taken off a bus and beaten to death because she didn't wear her headscarf right. That happened. There are cameras all over Iran—particularly Tehran—making sure that as a car goes by, the woman is covered.

These people are fanatics. They throw gay people off buildings. They will not tolerate any other form of religion. They killed 32,000 people in the last couple of months who have had it with the Ayatollah.

People are tired of living the way they have to live. They are tired of having daughters killed for just not wearing their headscarf right. They are tired of an economy that is broken and a regime that just wants to destroy the region and is built around a cult of death.

People ask me what happens next. There is zero chance that the Ayatollah and his henchmen would ever be our friends. There is zero chance they would give up their religious fanatical ways. We tried for months, to no avail.

Those that follow, I think, will be better for us. Why do I say that? If you look at the protesters and consider them no different than the Ayatollah, then that is an affront to them. They are out in the streets risking their lives not to have more oppression but to have less. Do you really think these people who have taken to the streets want to continue this regime as we know it? Isn't that an offense to them?

But when the regime falls—and it is not if; it is when—the people of Iran will have a new chance, I hope, to start anew. I don't know what will happen, but I know it will be their decision. It is not our decision.

America is not going to go in and run Iran; we are going to try to take down a terrorist regime that is bent on our destruction. They have been building missiles—100 a month. The goal is to hit us. They have been supporting Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis since 1979 to kill Americans. The IEDs used in Iraq and Afghanistan, coming out of Iran, maimed and killed thousands of American servicemen, and they were made by the Iranians—the Iranian Revolutionary Guard and Quds Force. This regime is a cult of death.

October 7 was designed to stop Israel and Saudi Arabia making peace—the biggest change in 1,000 years. I worked with President Biden and his team to build on the Abraham Accords, to have Saudi Arabia recognize Israel, which would end the Arab-Israeli conflict. We were close, but the October 7 attack that killed 1,200 innocent Israelis, slaughtered people, raped women, and

cut children's heads off in front of parents was designed to stop that process.

Since October 7, Israel has been a state of constant war and conflict. Hamas is just about done, and President Trump, after trying through diplomacy, made a decision to call the question on Iran. I talk to him a lot.

Midnight Hammer was a very successful military operation to degrade and obliterate the nuclear ambitions of the Iranian regime, and it worked. But it wasn't very long after that they were right back at trying to restart it.

I think President Trump came to conclude that there is nothing he can do; there is no deal to be had with the religious Nazis. And thank God he concluded that. Can you imagine, a year from now, if we had left this regime intact—100 missiles a month, more capability?

The money from the JCPOA agreement with Obama and Biden was used to fuel their war machine, not roads, bridges, and hospitals. The regime couldn't care less about the people. They have a religious agenda to dominate the world.

Hitler wanted a master race, believing the Aryan race was superior to everybody else, and he literally wrote a book about killing all of the Jews. Nobody believed him. They should have.

This regime, since 1979, has openly embraced a cult of death, and they have acted on that cult of death.

President Trump, after a sincere effort to bring this conflict to a peaceful conclusion, concluded that to continue to allow this regime to move forward would put America at unacceptable risk, and he was right.

So here is where we find ourselves. Operation Epic Fury is off to a great start. The Ayatollah and his inner circle are dead. They are dead because they chose not to negotiate. There was no deal to be had with Hitler in World War II, and there is no deal to be had with the religious Nazis.

Everybody in Iran is not a religious Nazi—quite the opposite. Most people in Iran are dying for a better life, and some have literally died to have a better life.

So this operation is ahead of schedule. Its goal is to make sure this regime now and in the future cannot produce missiles to hit America, continue to hold the region hostage, that this regime will no longer be the largest state sponsor of terrorism, being able to keep Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis up and running.

So that is the goal, is to take their capability off the table, and the ultimate capability they want is a nuclear weapon. My goal is to have people in charge of Iran who don't want a nuclear weapon to blow the world up, who don't want a bunch of missiles to terrorize America, who want to live in peace.

When this regime collapses, the Prime Minister of Israel said, a gateway to peace will be open. I talked with him this morning.

So the big payoff for taking this regime down now before they get more lethal and about imminent threats—do you really want an imminent threat before we act? If somebody is threatening your family—to kill your family, to burn your house down—do you want to wait until they get to the gas station or the gun store?

Since 1979, they have told us who they are and what they believe. It is now time to deal with who they are, what they believe, and what they have done.

So this operation will continue. Every day, Iran grows weaker, and we grow stronger. The ability to generate missile attacks is going down, not up. There will be pain before this is over. The likelihood of more casualties is real. But the reason our men and women are over there is to protect us over here.

When you take the eye off the ball in the Mideast, they will come here—9/11. You had 19 people trained in Saudi Arabia, of all places, that were able to generate 9/11.

When you ignored what happened in Afghanistan, you did so at your peril. The Taliban gave al-Qaida a safe haven in Afghanistan, and from there, they trained, and they attacked us on 9/11. I made a promise to myself that I will do everything I can to never let that happen again.

So if you want to stop radical Islam from blowing you up over here, you need to fight them over there, and you need to have partners if you can. There is no better partner on the planet than Israel. They hit above their weight, they do everything we ask them and then some, and they ask very little in return.

I do believe the Arab nations in the region that have been viciously attacked by the Ayatollah's regime—that they are soon going to get in the fight—at least I hope they will. You will have a coalition of regional countries, the United States—some support from Europe—sinking the ship, the largest state sponsor of terrorism. The mother ship of terrorism is Iran. That ship is sinking, and the captain is dead.

It is just a matter of time. Israel is committed. President Trump is committed. This is a righteous cause that makes us safer here at home. And the big benefit from bringing this regime down, ending this reign of terror, is that we can get back to the peace table, that we can renew our effort to try to bring peace to the region in a historic fashion.

If the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia under Crown Prince MBS would go back to the table to try to find a peace deal with Israel, it would be the biggest change in a thousand years. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the keeper of the two holy mosques, Mecca and Medina—the most holy of the holies in Islam. For that country to move forward consistent with conservative Islamic principles but embracing the world and recognizing the Jewish State

as a legitimate member of the region would be breathtaking. I think it will happen the day this regime in Iran falls, that there can never be another October 7 undercutting peace.

So to my Democratic colleagues: This operation is working, is ahead of schedule, and you should all pray that it is successful.

President Trump for months tried to negotiate, with no results—not for lack of effort. I have known this for a long time. The Ayatollah is not a man you can deal with. The Ayatollah is a man you need to make sure can't kill you and your family. He is Hitler on the religious side. What he wants for the world is a master religion. Well, his dreams are going to be denied, and the Iranian people are going to have a chance to start over. If they want to start over being a friend to America, we will be their friend. If they want to continue to threaten us, we will continue to push back.

So why am I here on the floor. There is an effort by my good friend from Virginia Senator Kaine to terminate the operation.

The War Powers Act was passed years ago by the Congress saying that after 60 days, any military operation not approved by the Congress must come to an end. That is just blatantly unconstitutional. That creates 535 Commanders in Chief.

The Constitution designates the President as the Commander in Chief not for 60 days but for however long it takes to be Commander in Chief.

The Congress can stop military action by cutting off funding. If you don't like the war in Iran, say: We will not pay for it. We have the constitutional power of the purse. We can't become the Commander in Chief after 60 days. You will ruin the country. Can you imagine Congress being the Commander in Chief? Can you imagine the debate we would have about what ships to send and what troops to send? It would be a nightmare. The Founding Fathers understood that. They designated a single entity in the Constitution—the President—as the Commander in Chief. They gave power to Congress to declare war.

Does it mean that you can't have military conflict unless Congress declares war? No. We have declared war five times in the history of the country: World War II, World War I, the Spanish-American War, the Mexican-American War, and the War of 1812—five conflicts where Congress said: We are in a state of war. We have had over 130 conflicts since the War Powers Act where Congress never authorized anything.

The norm in this country is not to declare war by Congress. But for the military to be used by the Commander in Chief, sometimes authorization from Congress is requested, sometimes it is not. More than not, it is not requested.

The President, as Commander in Chief, has the ability to use our Armed Forces to protect our Nation, and Congress, if we disagree with that choice,

has the ability to terminate the action by taking the money away. That is the check and balance that was created a long time ago. The Founding Fathers never envisioned that after passage of 60 days, the President would be replaced by 535 people.

So the War Powers Act, back during the Vietnam era, was an unconstitutional, in my view, infringement on article II power. I said that for Obama. I said that for Biden.

When President Biden thought about going into Syria after the chemical weapons attack, I, along with Senator McCain, said: Do it. You don't need congressional authorization. You have all the power you need.

Clinton went into Haiti. I mean, there are just a lot of examples of Democrats and Republicans using military force. President Bush 41 went into Panama to take down a drug kingpin.

The norm is not declaration of war; the norm is for the President, the Commander in Chief, to use military force as they believe appropriate. The role of the Congress is to check and balance that decision by cutting off funding if you choose to.

We are going to have a vote at 4 o'clock. The reason I want my colleagues to reject the War Powers Act is that you will set in motion a system where 535 people, after 60 days, become the Commander in Chief, grinding this Nation's ability to defend itself to a halt.

If you want to stop this war, say: We will not pay for it.

I will not agree with you, but at least it would be constitutional.

So I will end where I began. The letter written by Admiral Cooper to those serving in harm's way reminded them of the history the Iranian regime has toward us, the American people, our men and women in uniform.

Since 1979, they have been killing Americans. They have been killing their own people. They have been slaughtering people in the name of religion. It is time for that to end. It is time for this regime to fall. It is time to open the gateway to peace.

To my Democratic colleagues: What you are proposing would create chaos for every Commander in Chief that follows. You had a chance to deal with Iran. You gave them money. You were fooled by who these people are.

President Obama gave them billions of dollars, believing that they were normal people.

To my Democratic colleagues: The Ayatollah was never a normal person. Those who are around him are not normal. These people are nuts. These people are religious fanatics. If you don't get that, you are going to continue the cult of death.

To those in World War II who thought Hitler was normal: Boy, were you wrong. How many chances did you have to stop Hitler, and you just blew it because you thought he really didn't mean to kill all the Jews, that he could be reasoned with. About 100 million

people later, you got it wrong. We are not going to do that again.

To my Democratic colleagues: You have misjudged Iran from day one, and in your world, you give them money, hoping they will do better. In my world, we are going to bring them down. We are going to destroy this regime to protect America, to free the Iranian people, and to open the gateway to peace.

To those who argue that we shouldn't do this: What solutions have you offered? What have you done to bring down this regime, to stop it? You have done nothing but fuel it, give it money, thinking they would use it wisely. Boy, were you wrong, were you foolish to give this group a bunch of money, thinking they wouldn't use it to build a war machine.

This foolish behavior is over. We now have a President—Donald J. Trump—who understands that the people we are dealing with in Iran—the regime—are a bunch of religious fanatics; they are religious Nazis. We are about bringing them down with our Arab partners.

The Arabs in the region have been terrorized by the Iranian regime, and they are going to join the fight, I hope, soon.

The biggest thing going for us are the Iranian people. We finally have boots on the ground—they.

Three things have happened, and I will conclude. The Iranian economy is in shambles because of the sanctions and because President Trump put a tariff on anybody buying Iranian oil, and their money is drying up.

Midnight Hammer—us, Israel—in the past has depleted and degraded the Iranian military to the weakest they have been.

Finally, the people have risen up, and you turned your back on them. You talk about Gaza. You talk about what has happened to the Palestinians. I understand. Innocent Palestinians being killed—I know it is hard to watch. I think Israel had to do what they had to do.

Not one word. Have any of you said anything about the protestors? Have any of you come out and said: I hope you win. I hope you are successful.

If I were you, I would keep doing—what would you do in Iran? Would you be out there with them? I hope I would. I don't know if I would be that brave.

What they are doing today is what we did a long time ago. We rose up and said: Enough of tyrants.

These people, the protestors, are the best among us all. What have you done to have their back? What have you done to encourage them? Nothing. All you want to do is talk about what we can't do. You want to make sure the oppressor stays in power. If we have to depend on you to fight evil, it never will be fought.

So the differences between us and our Democratic colleagues could not be starker. They want to stop this. I want the regime to collapse. I want to get behind Admiral Cooper and give him

and his people what they need to take this regime down, working with our allies in Israel, because if we don't do it now, we will regret it.

When it comes to the Ayatollah, you pay now or you pay later. He is gone, but the regime has not yet collapsed—but it will.

This is the biggest decision I think we can make as a country—to finally take on this evil in Iran.

Like World War II, you ignored evil to your own peril. You thought Hitler was normal. He wasn't.

This guy and those around him—the Ayatollah and the cult of death—they are not normal. They will only be stopped when better people are risking everything to stop them. That is how it always works. Bad people are taken down because good people finally have had enough.

So let it be said when they write the history of these times that I am with the protestors.

You are righteous in your demands. America is here to help you. Help is not on the way anymore. It has arrived.

Vote no to this War Powers Resolution. It is an affront to our constitutional democracy.

And to my Democratic friends, you should be ashamed of yourself, not embracing the righteous nature of the Iranian people's demands.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, the difference between Democrats and Republicans is that Republicans have learned nothing from decades of American hubris in the Middle East, believing that U.S. troops, U.S. planes, U.S. guns, and U.S. bombs could fundamentally change realities in a far-off land.

Democrats have learned our lesson. We watched as thousands of American soldiers died in Iraq and in Afghanistan.

We listened to Donald Rumsfeld say that the Iraq war would be over in 5 days, 5 weeks, maybe 5 months. It created an insurgency inside the Middle East that we are still dealing with today—20 years in Afghanistan, a mismanaged war from the start. The Taliban is back in charge.

We ran planes over Libya to release the people from captivity imposed upon them by Qadhafi, only to unleash a new civil war that killed thousands upon thousands.

It is amazing to me that my Republican colleagues refuse to learn lessons. It is amazing to me that my Republican colleagues refuse to listen to the American people, who do not want American soldiers and American lives and their taxpayer dollars wasted on endeavors in the Middle East that are going to make things worse, not better.

I heard my friend Senator GRAHAM in his analysis of the Ayatollah. I agree with him. But not everything is World War II. Not every effort at regime change works. In fact, regrettably,

World War II and our operations against Hitler are the exception, not the norm. Whether it be in Vietnam or Iraq or Afghanistan or Syria or Libya, over and over again, trillions of dollars in American taxpayer money has been spent to try to create regime change, and we have been frustrated and denied in those efforts, and we have lost lives in that process.

When are we going to learn?

And that is the message that we are sending the Iranian people. I was in the briefing with my Republican colleagues. I don't think any of us left that briefing believing that the American military was going to ride to the rescue of the Iranian people when they arrive in the streets to protest for freedom.

You can't support a people's revolution from the air. Only ground forces could support and protect the Iranian people when they show up in the squares of that nation, protesting for democracy.

But I am telling you that it looks like the plan is to leave the Iranian people hanging out to dry, because if all we are doing is dropping bombs on targeted sites inside Iran, if we are not actually involved in a regime change—and, by the way, we have been told, over and over again, by this administration that we are not going to quibble over who runs Iran next, even if it ends up being a hard-line government. Then we are goading the Iranian people out onto the streets, with the implicit promise that we will be there with them but the decision made behind closed doors that we will not.

Six Americans have already died for an illegal war that no one in this country wants. And 900 to 1,000 people in the region have died. U.S. Embassies all over the region are under attack. Thousands of Shia Muslims in Pakistan right now are protesting—a Shia insurgency targeting the United States in the works. Iranian missile and drone attacks have hit targets as far away as Cyprus.

Oil prices are up by 9 percent. Gasoline prices had their largest 1-day increase in 20 years. Natural gas prices are up 45 percent. The region is in chaos.

American consumers are paying the price, and for what? We still don't even know the reason for this war. Half the administration is out there saying: Well, Israel pulled us in.

I hear my friend Senator GRAHAM saying that this was a war of choice, but half the administration is saying it wasn't, saying that Iran was going to attack and the only reason that we got involved was because Israel was going to attack, and the only reason we got involved was because we feared the blowback from Iran. We were dragged into the war by Bibi Netanyahu.

Others, like Senator GRAHAM and sometimes President Trump, say: No, America decided on our own to enter this war.

But then for what? Are we engaged in regime change or not? If you aren't en-

gaged in regime change, why did you take out the Ayatollah and all of those who were surrounding him? That clearly is a signal that you want regime change.

Are we going after their nuclear program or not? We all know that airpower alone cannot eliminate their nuclear capacity.

And if the goal is not regime change and we accept that new hard-line leadership is going to take over in Iran, then that is a recipe for perpetual war, because the only way that you will be able to destroy their capacity to make missiles and drones is to be permanently running jets overhead and constantly bombing the new sites that the hard-line regime sets up.

That is endless war. That is trillions of dollars. And for what? If, at the end of this engagement, there is harder line leadership in charge of Iran than at the beginning, then why do we do it? If at the end of this process, because we won't go in with ground forces, the nuclear program still exists, why did we do it? If we are going to hang the Iranian people out to dry and we aren't going to get their back when they stand up against the regime, why did we do it?

The first several days of this conflict have been criminally incompetent, shifting rationales for the war; no plan to get American assets protected, to get Americans out of the region; shifting explanations for what the purpose of the war is and very mixed messages to the Iranian people.

History tells us that an air campaign alone will never be successful in toppling a despotic regime. In fact, without—let me caveat that: without the serious threat of a ground invasion. History, in fact, tells us that what is most likely to happen is that it hardens the resolve of the existing regime; that it ends up in even worse, more provocative, more dangerous leadership taking hold.

President Trump seemed to think out loud in comments he made yesterday. He was asked what the worst case scenario was, and, as if it had just occurred to him for the first time, he said: Yes, I think the worst case scenario would be that we do all this bombing, we spend a trillion dollars, a whole bunch of lives get lost, and it ends up with the Iranians choosing even harder line leadership that are more provocative and dangerous and deadly in the region.

That is not the worst case scenario. That is the most likely scenario. And the idea that it is just occurring to him that this thing may go off the rails, as almost every other engagement in the region has over the last several decades, should be stunning to all of you.

The alternative then is a ground invasion, which no one in this country wants. No one in this country wants that. That would kill tens of thousands of Americans. Yes, it might end up with you being able to prop up a democratic regime. You might actually be

able to get the nuclear program with a ground invasion, but that is tens of thousands of Americans dead in the process.

Air campaign: proven to be ineffective to carry out the goals that are being articulated by the administration. Ground invasion: deadly, impossible to rally the American people around. This is a no-win strategy. It is a no-win strategy, and the cost to the American people is substantial: higher prices, Americans dead, and, frankly, just a President distracted—a President who seems to care more about running Venezuela and dropping bombs on Iran than he does care about the American people.

So I know many of my Republican colleagues, including the last speaker, have been, historically, incredibly optimistic about the difference the American military can make in the Middle East, with zero evidence of that to be the case.

President Trump was elected, in part, because he promised he wasn't going to get the United States involved in another Middle Eastern war. People took him seriously, and now he has gotten us involved in the most significant new conflict in the region in decades.

Let me say one final thing. I am supportive of Senator KANE's resolution, but it is not an authorization of military force. Our most sacred obligation as a Congress is to authorize war, and a President is prohibited by the Constitution and by the statutes of the United States from entering into war without that authorization.

I am glad we are having this debate, but it is not a substitute for an authorization of military force. Even if it fails, that does not give the President legal permission to carry out this endeavor.

Senator GRAHAM held up a poster in which he showed that there were 130 different occasions in which various Presidents of the United States have engaged in military actions overseas without the consent of Congress. That is true. But that doesn't mean that it is legal or constitutional.

If your neighbor breaks into your house 130 times in a row, that doesn't mean that it is suddenly permissible by law.

In fact, the outrage gets more acute and more serious as the brazen lawlessness and unconstitutional actions of an administration get more regular.

We need to authorize this war. I, frankly, believe that we shouldn't proceed with other business until we get a commitment to have a debate on an authorization of military force. I don't think it would pass. I think it is easier for some of our colleagues to come up with some procedural justification to vote against the War Powers Resolution than it is to put their name on a proactive declaration of war.

So I want that debate. I think the Senate has to demand that debate. I think our legacy will be soured as a body if we let this, the most significant

military action in the Middle East since the Iraq war, persist without using whatever leverage we have to have a debate on this war.

It is really hard—I will wrap up. I know I have colleagues on the floor who want to speak.

It is really hard to encapsulate in one speech how dangerous, how inane, how illegal, how ill-planned this war with Iran is, especially just after the first few days. We are likely going to end up with a worse Iranian regime at the end. We are telling the Iranian people to rise up on the streets, but we have no plan to support them if they do.

We cannot, with an air campaign alone, take out their nuclear program if it is buried underground. We cannot, with an air campaign, take out their missile and drone program, unless we are basically ready to bomb Iran permanently. That is a trillion-dollar war that lasts years.

We aren't prepared to do the thing that would end the regime and take out the nuclear program—a ground invasion—because, of course, the cost of that would be thousands of American lives.

So worse people take over in the end than the Ayatollah. We don't end their nuclear program. We don't end their weapons program. We leave the Iranian people out to dry.

And at what cost? Oil and gas prices are spiking. Grocery and household items won't be far behind. A half dozen families are about to bury their dead children. The military tells us there is going to be a lot more casualties to come. This war is going to cost trillions of dollars. That means no money to lower your healthcare premiums, no money to fix your kids' schools, because all the money is going to go to billion-dollar defense companies that profit off of endless war.

This is a disaster, and it is made more of a disaster because we are not going to actually debate an authorization of military force. This is not a substitute for that debate, and I think all of my Democratic colleagues agree.

We should not sugarcoat this. This is already a disaster of epic proportions, and I am just going to tell you it is likely to get worse.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. WARNOCK. Mr. President, I have listened very carefully to the President of the United States, to the Secretary of State, to the Secretary of Defense—or War, as he likes to call it. I have listened to other members of the administration, over the last several days, both in their public statements and in our private briefing.

And what is clear to me is that they don't seem to know why they have dragged the United States into war.

Furthermore, they have no plan how to get out—no clear rationale, no clear objectives, no plan for the day after decapitating the brutal leadership of an awful regime.

Make no mistake, we have the most powerful military force on the planet and in human history. There is no question that we could go all around the globe and take out leaders we don't like.

The day after, that is the hard part. That is what we are facing right now. We have no idea who will step into this power vacuum created over the last few days, no plan for getting Americans who are in the region to safety right now. They are being told in so many ways: You are on your own.

No clear vision of what victory actually looks like, no exit plan.

We pray for the families of the six brave Americans who have already paid the ultimate sacrifice, our servicemembers who are indeed the best among us, who go no matter who the President is. They follow orders, they are the embodiment of courage and patriotism, and that is why they deserve better than this. And so do the American people.

After nearly 25 years of misadventures, Americans have grown weary of endless wars in the Middle East. And we know from recent history—not ancient history—that it is easy to get in, not so easy to get out.

“Mission accomplished.” Remember that? And yet, years after that declaration, American soldiers were sent on deployment after deployment after deployment, carrying in their bodies the visible and invisible wounds of war; moreover, the body bags kept coming home.

I promised the people of Georgia that I would walk with them even as I work for them. I have stood at Dover Air Force Base to receive the bodies of Georgia servicemembers. I have looked into the grief-stricken eyes of their family members as they gazed at a flag-draped coffin, dealing with unbearable grief.

There is no worse pain, and there is no more solemn duty for a Commander in Chief than to send our servicemembers into battle.

Yet I sat and I watched and I listened to the President the other day, and I was struck by the cavalier way in which he said: People die. That happens in war. No sense that he feels deep in his soul the awesome responsibility that he carries. He has entered into this adventure without much thought about the human cost or the security of the United States or the stability of the region.

The declaration of war is not a power that the President of the United States has. The Constitution makes it clear the declaration of war is the authority and the responsibility of Congress. Presidents of both parties, yes, they have engaged in military operations, but the declaration of war belongs to this body.

Well, to me, this looks like a war; it feels like a war. Those six families are dealing with the consequences of war, and Donald Trump has said there will be more. Moreover, Donald Trump has

said this is war. Well, I take him at his word. He has called it a war, and yet he refuses to come before the Congress as the Constitution demands and make his case for war.

And after yesterday's briefing, I think I know why. Aside from his own ego and hubris, his authoritarian tendencies, Donald Trump has refused to come before the Congress and make his case because he has none. It is exceedingly difficult to explain your rationale when it is not clear in your own head, when it changes every day.

Is it regime change? Well, they have no idea who will follow. And as my colleague from Connecticut laid out, history suggests that we may well end up with somebody worse. We have seen the perils of regime change.

And then we heard another explanation. Is it to disarm Iran of its nuclear capabilities? I thought the President said he had obliterated that a few months ago. Now, he says the regime was an imminent nuclear threat.

Which is it? The American people deserve to know, and the families of those six servicemembers who have already died deserve to know.

Is it to destroy their ballistic missile capabilities? Well, what changed in their capabilities that demanded this action right now as we are 4 days into this conflict and already this war is spreading?

The American people deserve better than this: No rationale, no explanation, no strategy, no exit plan.

We must stop this madness because the American people have made it clear that they want us focused on the healthcare, their everyday costs, their children, their families. Are they concerned about their safety? Yes. But while Khamenei was clearly a brutal dictator—and there are many of them around the world—whether we are actually safer today than we were last week, given the increased instability that we are witnessing in the region in real time, is an open question.

And still getting this body to have a real debate on something so grave, so deeply consequential, is almost impossible, but we must demand that it happen.

Donald Trump has attacked seven countries in the first year of his Presidency, more than any President in the modern era. He is out of control. We must put guardrails on this President. Otherwise, who can and who will?

My colleagues, our servicemembers are living up to their oath. Let's live up to ours. Let's put guardrails on this President, stop this madness, and get focused on the American people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington State.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, President Trump promised to deliver Americans lower prices and no new wars. When it comes to broken promises, it does not get more blatant than that.

First, prices are soaring. Republicans let healthcare premiums double. They

slashed Medicaid and food stamps. And Republicans allowed Trump to hit families with the largest tax increase in American history, his tariffs that are squeezing family budgets and shutting down businesses.

But not content to only break his promise of lower prices, President Trump is also breaking his promise of no new wars. Trump is charging ahead with new conflicts without approval from Congress, without any long-term strategy, and without any concern about who will be paying for the consequences of his actions in Venezuela and now in Iran.

Trump, who is a billionaire, knows he is not going to pay for the war. He knows his family is not going to be on the front lines. Instead, everyday Americans are going to pay the cost of Trump's war with the higher prices and worse inflation, fueled by oil prices that are already rising. American families are going to pay for Trump's war in lost opportunities, as billions upon billions of dollars that could have gone to building affordable housing or making childcare accessible or lowering your healthcare premiums are now squandered on more missiles, set to be launched by a trigger-happy billionaire with no concept of the repercussions.

I mean, seriously, this President is ordering our kids to be shipped off into war from his beach club in Florida. That is obscene.

And tragically, American families are already paying the cost of Trump's war, as the lives of our brave American servicemembers, our sons and daughters, are lost. My heart goes out to the families who have already lost a loved one in Trump's war. And my thoughts are with the rest of our servicemembers on the front lines and their family members back home, all of whom are watching the news and anxiously waiting to hear what happens next.

You deserve a clear strategy from any President before he puts you in harm's way, not a President who shrugs his shoulders about how long this will go, not a President who doesn't know and doesn't care if he will put American boots on the ground, and not a Congress led by Republicans that refuse to do their job and hold the President accountable to the people before our citizens are put in danger.

You know how I can tell President Trump has no strategy? Well, I have been listening to him because I have been scouring every statement from this administration in public remarks, in private briefings for any inkling of a cohesive strategy, a real plan, even a spark of critical thinking about what happens next.

No one here mourns the Supreme Leader, but no one in this administration has a clear answer about what happens next.

I strongly support the millions of Iranians who have been protesting and speaking out for freedom and democracy, but you don't bring democracy to the Middle East with bombs. Haven't we learned that by now?

There is no guarantee that what comes next means a safer world for all of us or a democracy for the Iranian people.

War should always be a last resort. But, of course, the same people who came up with a name like Operation Epic Fury can't seem to think of a plan more nuanced than blow things up, pat themselves on the back, regardless of the fallout.

Maybe that is why Trump refused to make an address to the American people, laying out his rationale before this strike. Maybe that is why he refused to ask Congress to back his plan before he sent missiles flying—because he didn't have a plan.

That honestly becomes more clear every time a member of this administration opens their mouth. After all, Trump and his officials are contradicting themselves, one moment to the next—sometimes in the same breath. But the truth is obvious. Trump cannot pretend to have a strategy for this war when he can't even say why he started it.

First, he says: We destroyed Iran's nuclear capability. Then he says: Just kidding, we have to bomb again.

One minute the administration claims Iran planned an imminent attack on Americans. Then they admit that was not true.

Trump cannot pretend to have a strategy for this war when he can't even decide on whether this is about regime change or not. His Secretary of Defense said in the same breath:

This is not a regime-change war . . . but the regime did change.

His Secretary of State says the administration wasn't targeting Iran's Supreme Leader. But then Trump says:

I got him before he got me.

And President Trump has also urged the Iranian people to rise up on the one hand but suggested he is ready to negotiate with the government on the other.

And Trump cannot pretend to have a strategy when he doesn't even care about the timeline. In one sentence he said the conflict is "projected 4 to 5 weeks," but we have the "capability to go far longer than that. . . . We'll do whatever."

Excuse me? "We'll do whatever?" That is not a plan. "We'll do whatever" is simply not good enough when American lives are at stake. And then in a post yesterday, Trump said "wars can be fought forever." The American people do not want forever wars, not again.

And if you really want to understand just how callous and unserious the President is about the war he is starting; if you really want to understand just how little he has thought about the American servicemembers, Embassy personnel, and everyday Americans he is putting in harm's way, Trump ended his train of thought the other day by saying:

I don't get bored. There's nothing boring about this.

Before he actually got bored of talking about the war, he started and moved right on to a topic he really does care about, his precious White House ballroom. You want to know where Trump's priorities lie? He has clearly put more thought and care and planning into this new White House ballroom than he has with the war with Iran. He will talk about it any chance he gets.

He has a timeline for the ballroom. He has a budget for that ballroom. He has an actual long-term vision for the ballroom but not for the war he started from Palm Beach, FL, not for a war with American lives on the line.

And that is because the problem is worse than Trump lacking any strategy for his war with Iran. President Trump also lacks any sort of concern for the weight of his decisions or any sort of appreciation of the sacrifice he is singlehandedly forcing on our military families.

Again, that is clear from his own words. What did he say to the tragedy that American servicemembers were killed by Iran's response? Trump said:

There will likely be more. . . . That's the way it is.

That is the way it is?

Or asked about boots on the ground, about putting our sons and daughters in the line of fire, he shrugs it off and says:

I don't have the yips with respect to boots on the ground.

That might be the most dismissive statement I have ever heard by a President making that about our servicemembers. It is reckless, it is insulting, and it is up to us here in Congress to say enough.

But we need Republicans to join us. War is not some game. Our troops are not toy soldiers. Civilian casualties are not nothing. In Iran, hundreds have died, including more than 100 schoolgirls, children. They are blameless. Hospitals have been bombed. Shopping malls and homes have been hit.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff told the President this war could lead to significant American casualties. Already as we know, six American servicemembers have died. I don't care if the media grades Trump on a curve. It is not acceptable for a President to shrug his shoulders at this kind of death and destruction and then provide no real reason for launching a brutal war of choice. What a disgrace to the office. What a disgrace to the role of Commander in Chief. The American people deserve so much better.

If Trump will not rule out boots on the ground, then this Congress needs to. We have a constitutional responsibility when it comes to war, and I will never let us forget that.

As I said in 2002 before voting against the Iraq war due to similar concerns, I understand the consequences of war. I don't shrink from them. My father was among the first to land in Okinawa as a GI. He was a Purple Heart recipient. Growing up, we always knew our country may need to project force to defend

our freedoms. And I know we have a high obligation to the men and women of our Armed Forces who undertake the hard work of securing our freedom.

In college, I volunteered during the Vietnam war at the Seattle Veterans Hospital. Most of the patients were young men my age at the time who had returned from Vietnam traumatized. I carry that experience with me every day. It weighs heavily on my mind whenever we are faced with questions of war and peace.

Putting our men and women in uniform in harm's way, that is an absolute last resort. We owe it to them to do our due diligence first. We must have good reasons based on solid intelligence. We must have clear goals and a plan to achieve them. We must have a serious plan that puts them in no more danger than necessary, for no longer than necessary.

We should not gamble American lives on incomplete plans, unclear objectives, and completely uncertain futures. That was on my mind when I voted against the Iraq war in 2002, and it is my North Star today as well.

But there is a big difference between what is happening right now and what happened back in 2002 before the Iraq war because you see, back in 2002, the administration came to Congress to make its case for war. The President went to the American people to make that case. And the Secretary of State spoke to the U.N. I did not agree with this case. I voted against the war. But Congress—we—all of us—had briefings. We had public hearings, and we had serious conversations with the President and his leaders.

Back in 2002, Congress debated; we deliberated; we voted. And this is critical. We did it before the Bush administration charged into what was, predictably, a painful war with no end in sight.

But Trump doesn't want any of that. He doesn't want to make his case to America or our allies or Congress. He doesn't think he has to. Trump wants to bomb what he wants, he wants to kill whom he wants to, and start whatever war he wants—consequences be damned.

We saw it in Iran. We saw it in Venezuela. This is not a pattern that we can ignore. The Founders—Founders of this country—put Congress in charge of declaring war for a reason. This cannot be left to one man, certainly not a trigger-happy billionaire who is out of touch with reality. We—all of us—have to reassert our power as a coequal branch of government, and we have to do what is best for our country and for our servicemembers.

America does not want any more wars. It does not want more Americans killed because of a reckless President that a Republican Congress refused to check. We know what America wants. All of us do know that. They want us to keep the promises that Trump broke—lower prices, no new wars.

I will be voting against this war. I urge all of my colleagues to join me.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, this weekend, our Commander in Chief made the most difficult decision a President can make. He ordered young American servicemembers into action. My friends on the other side of the aisle are challenging the President's choice, and they are entitled to do so.

I do find myself amazed, from time to time, with their rhetoric on the floor this morning and this afternoon. To hear them, apparently, President Trump should have announced to the world that he was going to bomb the headquarters of the Ayatollah and destroy the leadership of Iran who has attacked the United States and killed Americans for over four decades.

Apparently, if this war lasts as long as 5 weeks, we should agree that we are going to fold our tents and come home and leave the job undone. Apparently, the fact that the ruthless drug lord dictator of Venezuela, President Maduro, is out of office is a bad thing. I disagree with that, and I wonder how that rhetoric is going to last through the decades. We will see.

I will vote no on the pending resolution. President Trump decided to attack Iran. That decision was profound, deliberate, and correct. The President understands the weight of war. He was clear-eyed about the risks, and he was honest with the American people. From very early on Saturday morning he said, "We pray for every servicemember as they selflessly risk their lives to ensure that Americans and our children will never be threatened by a nuclear-armed Iran."

Indeed, we must be mindful of the brave men and women deployed in this operation. And certainly, we grieve for the six American service men and women who died in the fighting. I also grieve for the thousands of Americans that have died over the last 47 years at the hands of the brutal Islamist ninth century regime in Iran. I grieve for those. We care for the civilians caught in harm's way. And yes, we are doing our best to get them out. War is hell, which is why we prioritize deterrence and engage only when absolutely necessary. But when we enter into combat, we must do so deliberately as this administration has done.

My colleagues ask why are we doing this? The President has given at least four goals explicitly. We are doing this to destroy Iran's missile capabilities and their ability to produce missiles. That is a good thing. We are doing this to annihilate the Iranian Navy; to ensure the regime can no longer arm, direct, and fund the terrorist activities that have gone on for over four decades; and to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon. That is why we are doing it. And that is why I will vote against this resolution.

The facts on the ground reflect a limited set of goals. We have taken out their air defenses and missiles systems ahead of schedule. That is a good thing.

Last week, Iran had 11 ships in the Gulf of Oman. Today, they have none. That is a good thing. We can expect to see airstrikes continue until our military objectives are achieved, a task that will take weeks, not days. But we ought to stay there long enough to get it done.

I think the President's decision was correct. For decades, the Iranian regime has killed thousands of Americans and thousands of citizens of our friends and allies and supported those who do. Too many American servicemembers have lost brothers in arms to Iranian violence. Too many parents have lost sons and daughters to Iranian aggression.

For decades, Iran has been the world's leading sponsor of terrorism—the Houthis, Hamas, other armed groups. The regime armed, funded, and trained terrorist groups across the region. These proxies have attacked and killed thousands of our people—thousands of our friends.

Iran is a murderous partner of the overall "axis of aggressors," which include China, Russia, and North Korea. They are all pals. They are all allies.

The Ayatollah was a friend of the tyrants who lead those nations. He stood with Xi Jinping. He stood with the war criminal Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong Un. Like them, the Supreme Leader violently suppressed his people.

The regime was hell-bent on acquiring the world's worst weapons. If successful, they could have struck our friends, our bases, and, in time, our homeland, Washington, DC, America.

President Trump, on the other hand, said from day one that he would keep Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, and that is a major part of what this is about. He knew the Ayatollah had to be stopped, and he came to the correct conclusion that now was the time to do it. Already, Israel had devastated Iran's proxies. Last summer, President Trump rained down fire on Iran's nuclear facilities, and, in the past few months, untold numbers of Iranians have stood up to the regime. The citizens of Iran have stood up to this murderous regime in a massive show of opposition to the Ayatollah.

Last Saturday morning, Iran had never been weaker. The time had come for the United States and for our ally Israel to strike. President Trump, the Commander in Chief, made that most difficult of decisions, and I think it will stand the test of time.

This does not have to be a forever war. It is not an aimless exercise in the Middle East. This is a measured campaign to eliminate the Ayatollah's threat. It might take time to finish, and we are certainly not going to put a time limit on it. But that does not make it endless. It is, instead, a weighty, deliberate, and correct decision made to protect the United States of America, and I shall vote no on the resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JUSTICE). The Senator from California.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. President, we are at war once again. George W. Bush had his Iraq war, and Donald Trump now has his Iran war.

Make no mistake, with the massive deployment of American military forces, with the massive amounts of ordnance that are being used, with the tragic loss of six lives—six service-members of the United States—we are at war.

We are at war, having had no national debate of whether we should enter into war. We are at war, having had no authorization by Congress—a power explicitly given by our Founders to the Congress to declare war. The Founders understood that the executive branch, acting alone, would grow too fond of war. We are seeing that fear materialize before our eyes with a President who now has used military force repeatedly against different countries with different rationales.

Why should we care whether there is a vote in Congress on war? Why should we care whether there is a debate in the country over war?

We should care because, if we vest the sole power to make war in the President of the United States—the sole decision to bring a country into war with the President of the United States—there is no check on the use of that authority; there is no check on the abuse of that authority; there is no meaningful way to constrain a President from getting involved in adventurism around the world that causes our country an enormous price to pay in lives lost, in treasure lost.

Now, you might say: Well, what about these other uses of military force by others in the past? Well, of course, with the Iraq war, there was a vote on authorization. With the Afghanistan war, there was a vote on authorization. But what about these other uses? Doesn't a President have a right to use force to defend the country from imminent attack?

The answer is yes. If there is an imminent threat of attack, the President has the authority. But if it goes beyond anything imminent, he must come to Congress for an authorization.

So what was the imminent threat here? Well, the short answer is, there was none. But the administration has given several shifting rationales—several incompatible arguments—of why they believe there was an imminent threat.

Let's look at Secretary Rubio, last week, who said that the Iranians were headed in the pathway to, one day, being able to develop weapons that could reach the continental United States.

Well, a threat to reach the United States, one day in the future, is the very antithesis of "imminent."

Donald Trump said, on Monday, that the regime had missiles capable of hitting Europe and our bases, both local and overseas, and would soon have had missiles capable of reaching our beautiful America.

By "soon," the best estimates are that it would take years. That is certainly not imminent.

Secretary Rubio, on Monday, had this to say:

There absolutely was an imminent threat . . . We knew that there was going to be an Israeli action.

He said:

We knew that that would precipitate an attack against American forces, and we knew that if we didn't preemptively go after them before they launched those attacks, we would suffer higher casualties . . . We knew that if Iran was attacked, even by someone else, they would immediately come after us and we were not going to sit there and absorb a blow before we responded.

So, on Monday, Rubio says, because Israel was going to attack, we had to preemptively attack.

But on Tuesday, the President contradicted his own Secretary of State and said: "We were having negotiations with these lunatics"—meaning the Iranians. "It was my opinion that they"—meaning Iran—"were going to attack first. They were going to attack if we didn't do it. . . . If anything"—the President said—"I might have forced Israel's hand, but Israel was ready."

So the President says, no, the imminence didn't come from Israel, and that he may have, in fact, forced Israel's hand.

On Tuesday, Hegseth took sides with the President and not Marco Rubio, saying that Trump's explanation was "100 percent correct."

OK, so the imminent threat didn't come from anything that Israel was planning to do. It didn't come from missiles that could hit the United States that were years away.

What was the other imminent rationale that the administration used?

Well, on February 21, Steven Witkoff said that Iran is "probably a week away from having industrial-grade bomb making material."

Of course, that contradicts what the President said last June, with the first Iran war, in which he said and reiterated, just this past Saturday, that "we obliterated the regime's nuclear program."

Well, either we obliterated it or we didn't; and if we obliterated it, it is obviously not an imminent threat.

On Monday, Secretary Hegseth told reporters at the Pentagon that the Islamic Republic was building sophisticated missiles and other conventional weapons to shield its plans for a nuclear bomb.

Iran had a conventional gun to our head as they tried to lie their way to a nuclear bomb.

Again, there was no evidence that Iran was on the cusp of a missile that could hit the United States, no evidence that Iran was building the mechanism of a bomb, and no evidence of imminence.

What about regime change? Is that somehow a rationale for war at all, let alone war without an authorization by the American people and Congress?

Donald Trump, in 2016, had this to say about regime change. He said:

We must abandon the failed policy of nation-building and regime change.

Earlier in 2025, Donald Trump said:

Regime change takes chaos and, ideally, we don't want to see so much chaos.

But, on Saturday, Donald Trump said:

When we are finished, take over your government.

He said this to the Iranian people.

It will be yours to take. . . . Take back your country.

On Monday, Secretary Rubio said:

We would love to see this regime be replaced.

On Tuesday, Donald Trump said "someone from within" the Iranian regime might be the best choice to take over.

But regime change is not an argument that we face as an imminent threat.

Finally, the last rationale of the administration's was on Saturday, when the President posted on Truth Social that "Iran tried to interfere in [the] 2020, 2024 elections to stop Trump, and now faces renewed war with [the] United States."

On Sunday, he cited Iran's effort to assassinate him as a key factor in ordering the operation that killed Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. "I got him before he got me," Trump told ABC News. "I got him first."

So this was, I guess, the final rationale. He is the one to get the Iranians before they got him.

So here we are with this shifting series of incoherent rationales—none of them amounting to imminence, none of them posing a direct and imminent threat to the United States. Now we are at war again, where we have tragically lost the lives of American servicemembers, where we are sinking billions and billions of dollars again into a foreign war without a time constraint, without a plan. This comes at great cost to the American people, most particularly to our military families.

But we are about to get a request for a supplemental appropriation, probably in the tens of billions of dollars, to backfill all the munitions we are using today. That is tens of billions of dollars that will not go into your healthcare. That is tens of billions of dollars that will not go to reducing the cost of your housing or your groceries. That is tens of billions of dollars that will not go into investing in America. That is tens of billions of dollars that we are literally blowing up over Iran when we face no imminent threat.

Folks, we have already, essentially, walked away from our most important power, and that is the congressional power of the purse. The President rescinds funds, and he impounds funds, and we put up no murmur of protest. We have walked away from that most important power in the Constitution that the Founders gave us.

The other most important power they gave us is the power to declare war. There is no argument that this is anything less than war. This resolution is about stopping that war, but it is also about reasserting Congress' vital role as a check on the Executive and on the abuse of the authority to bring a nation to war.

This is about whether the American people, through their elected representatives, will have a say when their sons and daughters are put in harm's way, when the resources of this country are diverted away from their communities and toward the building of bombs and weapons and engagement in another potentially endless foreign war.

I thank Senator KAINE for this resolution, and I am proud to work with him on this. I urge all of my colleagues to support it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, I rise today to oppose the resolution that my Democrat friends brought here to the floor.

It is very short—only a few pages long—but the operative part of it is only 18 words. It is on page 3.

It says:

Congress hereby directs the President to remove the United States Armed Forces from hostilities within or against Iran.

Real simple—they are telling the President he must stop and remove our troops from the conflict that we are currently involved in.

It is important to remember what we are doing here and what the Democrats are trying to do here. I am going to talk in two different parts. One is of the War Powers Act and the Constitution. We have all sat through hundreds of hours of argument on this. So I am not going to spend a lot of time on it. The third part is how we got here, where we are, and where we are going, which is a little more interesting, I think.

In any event, as far as the War Powers Act, it was enacted in 1973 by Congress. It was designed to try to cut into the constitutional powers of the President under article II of the Constitution. Every single President—every one of them since then, Democrat and Republican—has refused to accept this as constitutional, the War Powers Act. They have always said that it infringes on the President's article II constitutional authorities to defend the American people and to complete the oath they have taken to defend the country.

So 45 of the last 47 Presidents, which is all we have had, have ordered kinetic acts—just like President Trump has done—without going to Congress. This isn't new. This has happened in 45 of the last 47 Presidencies. Article II of the Constitution clearly gives the President not only the right but, indeed, the duty, as does his oath, to protect the United States.

Having said all of this, the claim is that what the President did is illegal.

Well, if that is what they really believe over here, then what are we doing here? All we are doing is yakking here. What they should do is go across the street to the Court and file suit, if it is illegal, to stop it. They sue him three times every day before breakfast. What difference does one more lawsuit make? That is what they should do. That is the remedy if they think it is illegal.

Now, more interesting are the three parts of this: How did we get here? Where are we in this moment? Where do we go from here?

Forty-seven years ago, this started. What you had was the Iranians take over our Embassy in Iran. They illegally held and kidnapped and restrained our diplomats there—a number of them—for 444 days. At that point in time, 47 years ago, there were two sides. On one side was us, the United States and Israel. On the other side was Iran and all the other actors in the region, the Arab countries that surrounded them. That was the difference from where things were then as to where they are today.

What has happened over the last 47 years is the Arab countries have gotten tired of this. They are sick and tired of this.

So where are we today? We are at the point today where you have only one bad apple left in the region, and that is Iran—and, of course, their proxies, the three agents—Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Houthis, all of whom are actually just part of Iran.

When Iran is defeated—and they will be here—the three agents are gone too. Hezbollah has been badly decimated already. The other two—Hamas has been almost decimated completely, and the Houthis are still around. But all three of those are going to be gone when, indeed, Iran is defeated, which it will be here before very long.

So over these 47 years, what Iran has done—while the Arab counties have moved away, while they have moved to wanting peace and security in the region—they have continued to murder thousands of Americans. They have killed thousands of Americans.

I grabbed the list and was going to bring it out here. It would take me about half an hour to read all of the sins that the Iranians have committed over these 47 years.

So we are left in a very, very different place today. The Arab countries want nothing to do with this, and we are going to deal with a different Middle East than what we have.

Today, I am more optimistic than I have ever been about the Middle East. I really believe that when we end this and the Iranian regime is brought down, we are going to have a Middle East that is going to be very peaceful, and it is going to be a different Middle East as we go forward.

The people will look back at this and say: When did that happen?

I think the turning point was the Abraham Accords, but in addition to

that, it has happened in other respects also.

You say: Well, what evidence do you have of that?

You know, during the Hamas war between Israel and Hamas, the Iranians decided one day to launch 300 missiles against Israel, and they did that. None of those landed. None of those did any damage because of the overhead defense they have, but also, you had Israeli pilots, U.S. pilots, British pilots, and French pilots flying to protect Israel and take out these missiles.

That is not the big news. On that same night, the big news is that two Arab countries were also flying. Jordan and the Saudis were flying to protect Israel from the onslaught of missiles from Iran. That is clear evidence that the Middle East has changed. It is a different place today, and it is continuing to be a better place.

Since this most recent war broke out, the Arab countries have decided to side with us and side against Iran. They are all by themselves.

Iran is decimated. That is where we are at this moment. Their navy is at the bottom of the sea. Their air force is nonexistent. Yesterday, a Yak-130 took off in Iran. It lasted just moments in the air before it was taken out by one of our F-35s. They are done. They are through. Their missiles and their drone stockpiles are dwindling and dwindling badly. The strikes are becoming less and less that they are able to put out there. This is going to end, and it is going to end rapidly. This is not a forever war—indeed, not even close to it. This is going to end very quickly.

The Commander in Chief ordered this attack because of the increase in the manufacturing of long- and medium-range missiles and after trying to restart the nuclear program that was decimated in the 12-day war. All this time, they had us sitting at the table, dragging out and yakking away at negotiations that were going absolutely nowhere. For that reason, he did what he did, and that is, ordered our brave young men and women to do what they are doing today.

The message to the regime I would have today for them is, no one is coming to help. I said that before in the 12-year war; I was right. Today, the same is true. China is not coming. Russia is not coming. North Korea is not coming. Cuba is not coming. Venezuela is not coming.

They are not coming to help you, Iran. No one is coming.

But there is one entity left that is trying to help you, Iran regime, only one on this planet, and that is my friends over here. They have brought this—and you heard the language I said. They are trying to use the process of the U.S. Senate to stop our Commander in Chief from doing what he has set out to do.

No other entity on the planet is attempting to help you, Iran. Nobody. Nobody except one, and that one is right here. But we are going to end

that now. It ends now. It ends here in a few moments when we have this vote.

To our brave men and women, I say: You are fighting to accomplish the task and the objectives that the President, our Commander in Chief, has given you. We are proud of you. We are about to help you.

Know this: We have your back. We are about to defeat here on this floor the last entity that is trying to stop you from doing the job that the President of the United States has given you. Bless you for what you are doing.

Bless the United States of America.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, once war begins and American soldiers are under fire, a rational discussion of the pros and cons of war becomes nearly impossible. That is exactly why our Founders wrote a Constitution that demands a debate before the initiation of war.

But there was no debate in Congress, let alone a vote. Americans awoke to discover their country once again embroiled in a war in the Middle East. Americans were not asked if they would bear the burdens of war. Instead, the American people were told, through a Presidential 8-minute video posted around 2:30 in the morning, that the country was once again at war.

And, because there was no national discussion about going to war, we do not know whether ground troops will be used, we have no idea how long the war will last, we have no idea who will lead Iran after the death of the Supreme Leader, and we have no idea how many casualties the American people are supposed to tolerate. We cannot know the answer to these questions because no one bothered to make the case that war with Iran was worth the sacrifice.

The Senate only now debates whether hostilities should end after they have already begun. Before I discuss the merits of this war, I want to say that my prayers and those of my family are with the troops in the region and in combat and anyone who may be called to do so. I do not take lightly that combat has begun, that many have been severely injured, and that lives have been lost.

It is because of those realities of war that the Constitution grants the power to declare war to the U.S. Congress—not one individual sitting in the Oval Office. Giving Congress the power to declare war was meant to prevent the ability of one person to commit the Nation to war. When the Nation goes to war, it should be a collective decision, where a clear rationale for war is articulated. But more importantly, a debate and a vote in Congress provides the Nation with the only opportunity to discuss whether a country is aware of and accepts the inevitable sacrifices of war, especially the loss of life.

The people have been robbed of a public debate. Let me inform the public, that evasion is intentional.

The congressional leadership—reassigned to their own irrelevance—will gladly hand the President the power to

initiate war in exchange for plausible deniability. The congressional leadership wants to make the case to the voters that they are not to be held accountable at the ballot box because they simply played no role in the decision to go to war. That is not statesmanship. That is shameful.

This country is now at war, which already cost the lives of six American servicemembers and many more are severely wounded. Those soldiers and their families deserved a public debate and a vote in Congress before the initiation of hostilities.

But had Congress debated war with Iran, we would have been wise to recall the words of John Quincy Adams who, as Secretary of State, advocated a foreign policy of restraint. "Wherever the standard of freedom and independence has been or shall be unfurled," argued Adams, "there will [America's] heart, her benedictions, and her prayers be. But she goes not abroad in search of monsters to destroy."

There is wisdom in Adams's words, but his was not an original argument. It was George Washington himself who warned in his farewell address to stay out of the world's endless conflicts.

Congress has tragically forgotten this advice. The history of the 21st century has been one of endless wars in which America perpetually searches for the next monster to destroy. From Afghanistan to Iraq to Libya to Syria to Venezuela, the advocates for war tell us that a country is a threat and that toppling a foreign government is a noble quest to protect security at home while spreading freedom globally.

While they have recycled their arguments, when they bother to make them, the results are always instability, chaos, suffering, and resentment.

The Iraq war was launched under similar false pretenses, and the consequences of that fateful decision still reverberate throughout the Middle East to this day. The overthrow of Iraq's secular government and the collapse of its civil society spurred some of the worst sectarian violence in modern history and directly led to the rise of ISIS.

Over a decade since the U.S. military intervention that toppled Muammar Qadhafi, and a year after the fall of Assad, these divided, unstable countries struggle to escape the cycle of violence and chaos. And although Nicolas Maduro may have been removed from power by American military forces, the socialist and oppressive Chavista regime has not been removed from the Venezuelan government. And, most tragically, after two decades of war, the Taliban flag flies over Kabul. America's adventures have not produced the promised utopias, or even Jeffersonian democracies.

History is replete with examples of wars that quickly escalate beyond their initiator's intent. While some may think that we maintain escalation dominance, the spiral of violence can rapidly get out of control.

America is at war. But Americans don't want this war. They didn't vote for it. In fact, they voted for just the opposite. Beyond the documents and words of our Founders, that is why their intentions to only grant the power to Congress is so important today. If the President came to Congress to ask for authorization for war, the people's representatives can do what they were elected to do and represent them. Debate provides information and answers we do not now have.

The constitutional separation of war powers is not just some notion that belongs in our history books. It is a vital part of a democratic republic. This Congress should be ashamed of how it has allowed this unilateral march to war. No others in our history have been this cavalier with our military men and women and tax dollars as they are at this moment.

I urge my colleagues to join in opposing both this war and the unilateral actions that were taken without congressional authorization as the Constitution commands.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

IRAN

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I rise today, I believe, as the penultimate speaker before we have a vote on the War Powers Resolution, a bipartisan resolution I filed with Senators PAUL, SCHIFF, and SCHUMER.

I rise today in support of our troops, who don't deserve to be sent into war unless this Congress votes that there should be such a war.

I pray for the families who are learning that their loved ones will not come home. I pray for the families whose children or spouses are deployed overseas, unable to sleep with worry about them.

Mr. President, I have paid attention over the course of the last 13 months as this President has again and again and again used our troops to carry out military action without coming to Congress. I have paid attention to the reasons that my colleagues are giving who want to give the President an E-ZPass around the Constitution.

When we had a vote last summer about the attack on Iran at the end of the Israeli 12-day war, by the time the vote had been called up, that bombing mission was in the rearview mirror, and so my colleague from Idaho said: There are no hostilities. The hostilities are over, so you should vote against the resolution on that ground.

When we called up an effort to constrain the President from illegally striking boats in international waters, the legal rationale asserted by my colleagues and the White House to vote down a War Powers Resolution and end-run the Constitution was: These are pinprick strikes that don't rise to the level of war. Only if it is war must the White House come to Congress.

When I brought forward a resolution a month or so ago to say no war in Venezuela without a vote of Congress,

again my colleague from Idaho said: This isn't war. It is over. It was one and done. There are no troops left in Venezuela.

There has been one reason after the next to give the President an E-ZPass lane around the Constitution.

Well, today, we are dealing with something different. You can't stand up and say this is a pinprick that doesn't lead to the level that would be characterized as war. You can't stand up and say this is one and done and no troops are engaged in hostilities against Iran.

Members of the Senate, this is war. The President of the United States has called it a war against Iran. The head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Caine, has called it a war against Iran. Secretary Rubio, our Secretary of State, has called it a war against Iran.

All of the excuses that you have advanced to give the President an E-ZPass around the Constitution and suggest he needn't come to Congress all evaporate because this is a war. It is a war.

Many of my colleagues know that during the classified briefing yesterday—I can't reveal information given to me, but I can say what I said. I challenged the body, including the administration witnesses: Your escalating pattern of military action without seeking approval convinces me that you believe you never need to come to Congress to wage war against anyone anywhere.

I hoped that someone might refute my point and tell me I am wrong and they would come to Congress, but no one did.

So here we are in a war that has cost American lives, that is leading to chaos throughout the region, that threatens to grow bigger and bigger and bigger. And I am asking the Senate to do what the Framers of the Constitution said we should do—debate and vote about matters of war.

What are the arguments now that the other side has made to suggest we should vote down this resolution?

First, they say that Iran are bad actors. On that, we would agree. If you put in a resolution "Iran has carried out a lot of bad actions," you would get a 100-to-zip vote in this body on that resolution. But being a bad actor is not an E-ZPass around the Constitution. It does not allow us to take our sons and daughters into war and risk their lives without a debate and vote. That is not a sufficient rationale.

The other rationale—and you just heard my colleague make it—was that the effort to bring a War Powers Resolution, a bipartisan resolution, before this body is somehow partisan; it is this side trying to come to the aid of the regime.

There is nothing partisan about the Constitution. There is nothing partisan about caring for our kids and wanting to have a debate before they get sent into harm's way to risk their lives.

This is not a partisan issue on our side. We are basically asking a ques-

tion of the entire Senate—indeed, of the entire Nation: Have we learned nothing from 25 years of war in the Middle East?

Mr. President, 14,000 American troops and contractors were killed in Iran and Afghanistan. More than 65,000 American troops and contractors were injured in these wars. These nearly 80,000 people were from every walk of life, every State and territory, every race, every age, every rank, every religion, every gender. They only have two things in common: A, they had a patriotic desire to serve their country, and B, their futures were dramatically affected—in some instances, eliminated—because of 25 years of war in the Middle East.

Someone suggested yesterday that this resolution was our effort to gum up the work of the—what is the work of the Senate? What is the work of the Senate if it is not to discuss the circumstances under which we should send our kids into war?

In addition to the lives lost of American troops and contractors and those injured, hundreds of thousands of innocent civilian deaths in Iraq and Afghanistan, more than \$8 trillion was spent that could have been spent on American healthcare, on American housing, on American education—spent on the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and what did we get for it? What did we get for it? If people think 25 years of war in the Middle East was a good thing or produced something, I hope they would come to the floor and tell us what we gained from it.

This effort to force a vote is not about partisanship; it is about the Constitution. But even more importantly, it is about the lives of our troops and the question of what, in fact, we got from 25 years of war in the Middle East and whether we should continue that "forever war." The President tweeted out the phrase "forever war" today when he talked about the munitions that we have.

We don't need illegal wars. We don't need forever wars. We don't need more wars in the Middle East.

Let me say this and conclude and yield to our Democratic leader. I have said this to my colleagues before. I came to this body in 2013 with the experience of being a Governor and watched my Virginians repeatedly deployed, time after time after time—Active Duty, Guard, Reserve, DOD civilians, Virginia National Guard—into the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. And I went to the deployments, and I went to the homecomings, and I went to the wakes, and I went to the funerals, and I signed the condolence letters that all Governors sign when they get the bad news that one of their own has lost their lives in war.

And when I came to this body in 2013, I said that I would do anything I could in my power to stop any President—Democrat or Republican—from waging war without coming to Congress and that I would especially do anything I

could to stop an unwise, unnecessary war that puts our troops' lives at risk for no legitimate reason. Colleagues who have been with me since 2013 know that I have upheld that standard against Presidents of both parties. When President Obama wanted to use military action in Syria to punish the Syrian regime for using chemical weapons against its own citizens, even though I was his friend, I stood up and said: You cannot do that without a vote of Congress.

Presidents can defend against incoming attack, protect against Houthis firing at our ships in the Red Sea. Presidents can act when there is a pre-existing congressional authorization to go after terrorists who Congress voted the President should be able to act against. But in this instance, there is no congressional authorization on the books that would authorize this military action. And as my colleagues have amply demonstrated, the administration and their shifting set of rationales, and even in a classified setting, could produce no evidence—none—that the United States was under an imminent threat of attack from Iran.

It is easy to try to dismiss this by saying: Oh, it is about partisanship. And those who would say that say it so they don't have to grapple, I believe, with their own sense of unease about what we are starting on right now.

Perhaps this war will be over in a few weeks or a few months. We pray that it will be, but that is what we thought about the war in Iraq when we claimed that the mission was accomplished, when we claimed that we were met as liberators. And yet, years and years and years later, troops from all of our States were still coming home deeply wounded and affected, both physically and in their mental health, from those wars, from seeing what happened to them and their friends. Some never came home.

If there is one thing we do that we have to get right, it is this. It is this. We can't afford to hide under a desk and let any President—Democrat or Republican—send our best and brightest, our own kids, into war to risk their lives unless we have debated it, we have determined it is in the national interest, we have voted and thereby put our signature and our thumbprint on the notion that it is worth sending our best and brightest to risk their lives.

I urge my colleagues: As this is escalating from pinprick strikes and one-off operations now into full war, even called war by the President and his chief advisers, let's stand up and do what the Constitution requires us to do.

I urge a "yes" vote on my resolution. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHMITT). The minority leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first, let me thank my friend from Virginia for his stellar leadership on this issue, not just this year but through the last

decade. He is an inspiration, I think, to all of us. I also want to thank Senators SCHIFF and PAUL for joining me and Senator KAINÉ in this important resolution.

Now, Mr. President, today, Senators face a choice: Stand with the American people, who are tired of war in the Middle East, or side with Donald Trump, who bumbled America into another war most Americans fiercely oppose.

Voting on matters of war is one of the most solemn votes a Senator can take. This is about whether or not Senators are ready to send your sons and your daughters into harm's way. If there was ever a moment for Senate Republicans to take a stand, it is now.

The last thing the American people want or need is another war in the Middle East. But if you listened to Secretary Pete Hegseth's press conference this morning, one thing is crystal clear: America is at war, with no plan, no strategy.

In his own words, Hegseth said, "We are just getting started." Hegseth said, "We are accelerating, not decelerating." And in the wake of six brave Americans who died in uniform, Trump simply says, "There will likely be more. That is the way it is."

This, my colleagues, is madness. Americans spent the last two decades fighting and dying in the Middle East. Parents watched their kids shipped off to foreign lands—so many lives lost—so many billions wasted—so much suffering and anguish that scarred an entire generation.

Why is Donald Trump hell-bent on making history repeat itself? Why is he plunging America headfirst into a war that Americans do not want and which he cannot even explain?

Enough is enough. The American people deserve a say, and that is what our resolution is about. We must act to stop Trump's belligerence.

The American people will be watching how Senators vote. History will judge this Chamber for how we act.

To my colleagues, all of my colleagues: It is time to make a stand. We must stop another war in the Middle East. Support our resolution.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

**DIRECTING THE REMOVAL OF UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES FROM HOSTILITIES WITHIN OR AGAINST THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN THAT HAVE NOT BEEN AUTHORIZED BY CONGRESS—Motion to Discharge**

Mr. KAINÉ. Mr. President, pursuant to section 601(b) of the International Security Assistance and Arms Export Control Act, I move to discharge the Committee on Foreign Relations from further consideration of S.J. Res. 104, to direct the removal of United States Armed Forces from hostilities within or against the Islamic Republic of Iran that have not been authorized by Congress.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

Motion to discharge from the Committee on Foreign Relations, S.J. Res. 104, a joint resolution to direct the removal of United States Armed Forces from hostilities within or against the Islamic Republic of Iran that have not been authorized by Congress.

**VOTE ON MOTION TO DISCHARGE**

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to discharge S.J. Res. 104.

The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINÉ. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, how am I recorded?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. In the affirmative.

Mrs. MURRAY. In the affirmative. Thank you.

The clerk continued with the call of the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 47, nays 53, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 46 Leg.]

**YEAS—47**

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

**NAYS—53**

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

The motion was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MORENO). The majority whip.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**EXECUTIVE CALENDAR**

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to con-

sider the following nominations en bloc: Calendar No. 657 through Calendar No. 660, Calendar No. 661 with the exception of Col. Thomas M. Siverts, Calendar No. 662, and Calendar No. 663, and all nominations on the Secretary's desk with the exception of PN681 Dustin B. Elliott, PN681 Vincent J. Noble, and PN835 Thomas P. MacNeil; that the nominations be confirmed en bloc; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to any of the nominations; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; and that the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

The nominations considered and confirmed en bloc are as follows:

The following named officers for appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

*To be lieutenant general*

Maj. Gen. Steven M. Marks

**IN THE AIR FORCE**

The following named officers for appointment in the United States Air Force to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

*To be lieutenant general*

Maj. Gen. Jefferson J. O'Donnell

**IN THE MARINE CORPS**

The following named officers for appointment in the United States Marine Corps to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

*To be lieutenant general*

Lt. Gen. Andrew M. Niebel

**IN THE AIR FORCE**

The following named officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203:

*To be major general*

Brig. Gen. Michelle L. Wagner

**IN THE MARINE CORPS**

The following named officers for appointment in the United States Marine Corps to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

*To be brigadier general*

Col. Seth E. Anderson  
Col. Robert B. Finneran  
Col. Edmund B. Hipp  
Col. Andre M. Ingram  
Col. Lance J. Langfeldt  
Col. Reginald J. McClam  
Col. Daniel J. Skuce  
Col. Joshua M. Smith

**IN THE AIR FORCE**

The following named officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203:

*To be major general*

Brig. Gen. Erica R. Austin

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 9435:

*To be brigadier general*

Col. James M. Valpiani