

Indonesia got a \$500 million loan from a Chinese state-owned company.

So a bipartisan group of Senators, myself included, said let's figure out a way to reinstate the penalties against ZTE as a part of the annual defense authorization bill, but when it came time to hammer out the differences between the Senate's bill and the House's bill, Republicans watered down the ZTE penalties. Republicans in both Chambers caved to the White House and handed a big gift to China at the expense of American jobs and national security.

In my view, it is inexcusable that the plan put together by Senators on both sides—a plan that would have protected our security and punished a serial violator of U.S. sanctions—was stripped out of this bill. The weaker House proposal that took its place doesn't go nearly far enough to fight the espionage threat that the Trump administration's own counterintelligence nominee testified to.

Bottom line, Trump's ZTE deal is bad for American security and American jobs. The House got it wrong with their weaker legislation. The Senate was under no obligation to accept their watered-down bill. That is why I voted no, and that is why members who voted for this proposal cannot claim innocence when it comes to letting ZTE off the hook for its violations of our sanctions.

NOMINATION OBJECTION

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, today I am placing a hold on the nomination of Justin Muzinich to be Deputy Secretary of the Treasury. I will maintain that hold until the Treasury Department provides the Senate Finance Committee information and documents related to Russia and its financial dealings with President Trump and his associates, as well as outside organizations Russia used to help elect him. I originally asked for these documents on May 10, 2017, and have yet to receive an answer of any kind.

I have stated repeatedly that we must follow the money if we are going to get to the bottom of how Russia has attacked our democracy. That means thoroughly reviewing any information that relates to financial connections between Russia and President Trump and his associates, whether direct or laundered through hidden or illicit transactions.

The Treasury Department for which Mr. Muzinich is nominated to serve as the No. 2 official is responsible for much of this information. The Treasury Department authorities include intelligence and enforcement functions to combat financial crimes and threats, including money laundering.

For these reasons, I will object to any unanimous consent request concerning the nomination of Mr. Muzinich.

REMOVAL OF NOMINATION OBJECTION

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I am lifting my hold on the nomination of Mr. Jason Klittenic to be General Counsel of the Office of Director of National Intelligence. Senator GRASSLEY and I have received a response to our March 6, 2018, letter regarding the Intelligence Community Office of Inspector General, OIG, and the termination of its Executive Director of Intelligence Community Whistleblowing and Source Protection, "Executive Director." In addition, I have been provided access to documents related to the Executive Director's termination. I remain concerned about the circumstances surrounding that termination and look forward to reviewing them further, even as I work with my colleagues to strengthen protection for intelligence community whistleblowers. My hold on the nomination of Mr. Klittenic was based on these concerns and not on the qualifications of the nominee.

AFGHAN RELIGIOUS MINORITIES

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, today I would like to raise concerns about violence perpetrated against religious minorities in Afghanistan, particularly the Sikh and Hindu communities.

One month ago today, on July 1, a suicide bomber attacked a crowd of Afghan Sikhs and Hindus as they gathered to meet with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani on his visit to Jalalabad. At least 19 innocent civilians lost their lives, and 10 more were wounded. The attack also claimed the life of Awtar Singh Khalsa, the only Sikh candidate running in Afghanistan's upcoming Parliamentary elections, and Rawail Singh, a prominent community activist.

Of the 19 killed, 17 belonged to the minority Sikh and Hindu religious groups.

I condemn this cowardly and heinous attack and all those like it in the strongest possible terms. The Islamic State in Afghanistan claimed responsibility for the July 1 attack and multiple attacks on civilian targets since then. It is impossible to overstate the depravity of this group that resorts to killing innocent people when it fails to otherwise advance its cause.

We cannot allow attacks such as this on civilians to pass unremarked, nor can we ignore violence specifically targeted toward Afghanistan's diverse religious minorities. Sikhs and Hindus in Afghanistan have long faced systemic discrimination, economic marginalization, and, as this latest attack only serves to further illustrate, unspeakable violence. Members of Sikh and Hindu communities report facing prejudice, harassment, bullying of children, and attacks from militant groups; disproportionate denial of their rights in Afghan courts; and even interference in their efforts to cremate

the remains of their dead and peacefully adhere to other tenets of their faiths. Only a few places of worship remain available to Sikhs and Hindus in Afghanistan, many of whom face discrimination so severe that they choose to leave the country.

For his part, Mr. Khalsa's candidacy was a testament to the strength and resiliency of Afghan Sikhs who, even in the face of unrelenting hardship, remain dedicated to their country's democratic future. After last month's attack in Jalalabad, that kind of political engagement has been dealt a terrible blow.

The recent and ongoing attacks against Sikhs and Hindus come against a broader backdrop of sustained violence in Afghanistan. According to recent figures from the U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, more Afghan civilians were killed in the first 6 months of 2018—1,692 deaths—than in any other 6-month period over the last 10 years. This figure demonstrates the continuing devastation caused by the past 17 years of war in Afghanistan and the need for the United States and our partners in the international community to redouble efforts toward reaching a negotiated political settlement that can bring this long war to an end. Without peace in Afghanistan, the scourges of terrorist and insurgent violence, illegal narcotics trafficking, corruption, and limited government capacity to deliver justice and other public services will remain, and the Afghan people will continue to suffer.

All Afghans, of all beliefs, stand to benefit from the end of bloodshed. Cowardly attacks against religious minorities such as the one that took place in Jalalabad only serve to damage prospects for a peace that can benefit all.

The Jalalabad attack is also a stark reminder of the sectarian violence facing religious minorities in many parts of South Asia. Across the region, members of minority religious groups are being denied their basic human rights and the ability to live free from discrimination or violence. Attacks like the one in Jalalabad underscore the urgent need for governments in the region to hold perpetrators accountable and to enact laws and policies that foster tolerance, protect minorities' rights, and respect individual freedoms.

America is also home to many Sikh and Hindu communities living in every U.S. State, who, like so many minority groups in our diverse country, have played a positive role in the social, cultural, and economic development of the United States. In my home State of New Jersey, I am reminded every day of how much better off we all are for the contributions of Sikh and Hindu communities to our great State and Nation. This is despite the fact that individuals in the United States of South Asian heritage and representing diverse faiths have faced attacks on account of their identity, including harassment, discrimination in employment and schooling, or even violent