

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, the 116th Congress, so far, has just talked about the humanitarian crisis at the border. Most of our Democratic colleagues have claimed up to this point that there is no crisis or emergency at the border.

We will recall that we started out the year with a government shutdown because of the battle over border security, and our Democratic friends made one thing perfectly clear: They would oppose any effort to fund our security mission at the border. That resulted in the 35-day shutdown.

The Speaker of the House at the time called the situation “a fake crisis at the border,” and the minority leader here in the Senate referred it to as “a crisis that does not exist.” Well, they weren’t the only ones. Throughout the Halls of the Capitol, Democrats in Congress used terms like “phony,” “imaginary,” and “make-believe” to describe the challenges our frontline officers and agents were facing every day.

While our Democratic colleagues have reflexively denied the existence of a crisis at the border, the problems have grown only bigger each day. Of course, it was 2014, I will remind my friends across the aisle, when Barack Obama, then President of the United States, declared a humanitarian and security crisis at the border. So it seemed very odd to me that, in 2019, they decided—when the numbers kept getting bigger and bigger and conditions worse and worse—all of a sudden that the humanitarian and security crisis had gone away.

The fact is, over the last 3 months, the number of illegal crossings across the southwestern border have hit six figures, something we haven’t seen since 2006. We surpassed the number of unaccompanied children apprehended at the height of the 2014 crisis that President Obama was speaking about.

This mass migration has nearly depleted our Federal resources, causing the President to request \$4½ billion for humanitarian assistance and border operations. That request came almost 2 months ago—almost 2 months ago, and Congress has not acted.

Now, it seems, our Democratic colleagues have finally accepted the facts. There is a very real and very urgent humanitarian crisis on our southern border. The bill they passed earlier this week meets the dollar amount requested by the President, but the substance of the bill shows that House Democrats don’t want to send funding where it is actually needed the most.

Unlike the Senate’s bipartisan bill, the original House bill excluded funding for the Department of Defense, immigration judge teams, and underfunded both Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Protection. This morning, they made a last-ditch effort to inject some of their deeply partisan provisions back into our Senate bipartisan bill. While the House Democrats did increase needed

funding in some areas, the newly amended version still includes divisive provisions and reduces funding in areas that the Senate overwhelmingly rejected yesterday.

Here is just one example. Democrats in the House cut the Senate bill’s appropriation of \$21 million for ICE Homeland Security investigations to conduct—get this—human trafficking investigations. So the House wanted to cut \$21 million in the Senate appropriations bill that was dedicated to investigating human trafficking. This is just the latest example of their fundamental lack of interest in sending money where it is needed most—only where it is politically convenient.

It is unfortunately not much of a surprise. Our Democratic friends are trying to keep up with their candidates running for President, whose positions on immigration and border security get more extreme each day. Now, more than one Democrat running for the nomination for President actually supports making entering the country illegally legal—in other words, no orderly immigration system at all—a free-for-all, where it is easier for human traffickers and drug smugglers to come and go as they please. And, of course, there is this: no consideration given for those would-be immigrants who are trying to wait patiently in line and do things exactly the right way and no consideration of the unfairness of those who would jump ahead of the line and enter the country illegally before those who are trying to do it the right way.

The House bill stands in stark contrast to the bipartisan agreement we passed here in the Senate, which funds a range of programs at the Federal departments and agencies working to manage the crisis, and, importantly, it is the only bill in town that has the support of the President. It is, after all, important to get the President’s signature on legislation for it to become law.

The Senate Appropriations Committee overwhelmingly supported this bill, and it passed the committee by a vote of 30 to 1. When the full Senate voted on it yesterday, only eight Members of the Senate voted no.

We have simply waited long enough. We waited too long, in my view, for Democrats to acknowledge this real humanitarian crisis. The House bill is inadequate and mostly a partisan effort.

Our Democratic colleagues have resisted acting for far too long already, making this humanitarian crisis worse. They circulate the very tragic pictures of a father with his young child face down in the waters of the Rio Grande River, and they somehow fail to acknowledge their own complicity in failing to act to provide the sorts of fixes to our asylum laws that would deter, if not prevent, that sort of thing from occurring in the first place. They really do need to look in the mirror.

We need to take action now, and I hope we don’t have to wait any longer

for our colleagues in the House to pass the Senate’s bipartisan bill.

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Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, on another note, I listened with great interest as the ranking member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, the Senator from Rhode Island, spoke about Iran and the challenges we face there. I agree with some and maybe even most of what he had to say.

The American people were appalled when, last week, Iran took down an unmanned American aircraft over international waters. As the Senator said, ordinarily, Iran operates by proxies or by third parties, whether it is the Shia militia in Iraq or Hezbollah or one of their other terrorist proxies like those operating in Yemen, the Houthis. But Iran escalated its attack against the United States by shooting an unmanned drone flying over international waters, so it was quite a shocking move from that standpoint, even from a nation as untethered as Iran.

Iran has been engaged in a 30-year conflict with the United States, one that has resulted in the death of U.S. servicemembers in Iraq and elsewhere—victims of explosively formed penetrators and other training that the IRGC, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, their Quds Force, their Special Operations force—the training they gave to terrorists operating in Iraq to kill Americans.

Then there is the periodic harassment of American and other international vessels operating in the Strait of Hormuz, a narrow strait through which a huge portion of the world’s energy supplies flow. So this is, in some ways, an escalation of what has been a 30-year conflict between Iran and the United States.

Tehran has waged acts of aggression against the United States and our allies. It has exported terrorism around the globe. It is the No. 1 state sponsor of international terrorism, and it has engaged in gross human rights violations against its own people.

As I indicated, Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, or IRGC, is the loyal henchman responsible for leading these acts. It is a branch of Iran’s Armed Forces which tries to squash democracy movements at home and abroad by pushing its extreme ideology beyond Iran’s borders.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps wields vast power and influence and uses its capabilities to encourage turmoil and conflict and violence throughout the Middle East. It funds arms, training, and foot soldiers to the terrorist groups that spread their radical ideology.

While the terrorist activities alone are enough to cause concern, the IRGC is also in control of Iran’s ballistic missile program, which unfortunately has only accelerated under the previous administration’s deeply flawed nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the JCPOA. Once