

actual public works projects or whether infrastructure was only ever intended as a wrapping paper for unrelated gifts to the far left.

Remember what happened when Republicans went to President Biden, offering a bipartisan compromise path on COVID relief. They were informed the Democrats were not interested in working together. So our country needs the administration to find a smarter approach.

FOREIGN POLICY

Madam President, now, on one final matter, the last few months have given the world a glimpse at what is driving the foreign policy decisions under the Biden administration. First came a rush to rejoin a climate agreement that does not effectively hold our competitors to their own commitments.

Then, just weeks ago, there was the announcement of a total abandonment of Afghanistan that will squander our leverage to promote a diplomatic end to the civil war, put innocent Afghans at risk, roll out a red carpet for the Taliban, and embolden the terrorists.

Even this administration's own intelligence chiefs and our military commanders are concerned about how we will stay a step ahead of terrorists in the region without access provided by our U.S. footprint.

Late last week, we got a further peek at the incredible wishful thinking behind this policy. As reported in the New York Times, some Biden officials suggest the Taliban "might govern less harshly . . . in order to win recognition and financial support."

The Secretary of State—America's top diplomat—seems to think it is that simple. He expressed hope that "civilian and economic assistance" could "advance a just and durable peace . . . and a brighter future for the Afghan people."

The Deputy National Security Advisor was more dismissive of the Afghan people's plight, morally equating our Afghan partners and the Taliban as just "two Afghan parties" in a conflict.

I do not believe Afghan women and girls are jumping for joy at the prospect of a Taliban takeover. In fact, as one of the New York Times headlines put it, "Afghan Women Fear the Worst"—"Afghan Women Fear the Worst."

I certainly do not believe the Taliban will abandon their brutal fundamentalist ways just to secure recognition from the Western powers that they despise.

Speaking of women's rights, over the weekend, the United Nations chose to further degrade its legitimacy by inviting Iran, of all countries, to join its Commission on the Status of Women. The U.N. chose to further degrade its legitimacy by inviting Iran to join its Commission on the Status of Women.

Yes, you heard that right. The panel claiming principal international authority over the empowerment of women will now include a nation whose police are empowered to beat and as-

sault women for improper veiling—a nation that turns a blind eye to pervasive domestic violence, forced marriage, and rape.

And it is not just the U.N. that seems to be going soft on Tehran. The Biden administration seems willing—if not desperate—to provide sanctions relief up front, squandering leverage, just to reenter President Obama's flawed nuclear deal.

This sanctions relief would benefit a regime that is being run by the extremist Islamic Revolutionary Guards. That is what Iran's own Foreign Minister admitted in leaked documents. That is who is running the show—the same terrorists who were used by Soleimani to spread violence across the region, before the prior administration removed him permanently.

Republicans are not opposed to nuclear diplomacy, but we know that preemptive concessions will not secure a better deal or make America or our allies more secure.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. DUCKWORTH). Without objection, it is so ordered.

WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY DAY

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, as we finally, finally begin to turn the corner on the coronavirus pandemic, we have the hard work of rebuilding our economy.

One of the core engines of the American economy is intellectual property. From the smallest startup to the largest multinational company, intellectual property is central to creating jobs, boosting economic output, and protecting consumers. So it is appropriate that, today, we celebrate World Intellectual Property Day, which recognizes the important role that intellectual property plays in promoting innovation, creativity, and economic growth.

This year's World IP Day theme celebrates the contributions of small- and medium-sized businesses to the global marketplace. Why? Well, these small enterprises make up 90 percent of the world's businesses. Whether through protecting their brands with trademarks or their inventions with patents, intellectual property allows these small companies to grow and succeed; yet, here at home, far too many Americans with an entrepreneurial spirit find key elements of the intellectual property system out of their reach.

Last week, the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Intellectual Property—and I am privileged to chair that—held an important hearing to find ways to boost access in the patent system. We know that women and people of color are chronically underrepresented in the patent system, which results in a serious loss to our economy.

I am particularly proud that this hearing featured testimony from Georgia Grace Edwards, a Middlebury College graduate and entrepreneur, who realized that, after spending a summer in Alaska and 8 to 12 hours at a time on ice, she was at a serious disadvantage when it came to answering nature's call during her treks. Like so many innovators before her, Georgia Grace got to work in designing a new zipper—in sense, it was such a great thing—that could be incorporated into a variety of women's pants.

Now, while she was ultimately able to successfully navigate the patent system and secure protection for her idea, here is the problem. She faced a number of barriers along the way: the high cost of obtaining a patent, particularly from legal fees; a lack of knowledge about how the patent system works; and the lack of representation of women throughout the system.

Ten years ago, Congress enacted the Leahy-Smith America Invents Act, which put structures in place to help access the patent system and bring up a far more diverse set of inventors into the innovation economy, and at our hearing, we heard specific ideas for building on the success of the Leahy-Smith America Invents Act.

As the President awaits nominating the next Director of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, I want him to choose a nominee who shares a commitment to increasing access. It is not just the huge companies that need it; it is the small inventors.

It is important that the next Director of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office respect the law, including the statutory bounds set by Congress. You know, the last administration took steps to undermine the Leahy-Smith Act. They acted outside those statutory bounds.

I have always sought to curb the potential for poor-quality patents to be abused. That drove much of the work we did 10 years ago. So I look forward to supporting a nominee for PTO Director who shares my view that it is important to weed out poor-quality patents, avoid the potential for abuse, but at the same time reinforce the protection provided to high-quality patents.

We must also work to ensure that hard-working small business owners and creators who rely on copyright protections to make a living are able to protect their works online.

While I appreciate the steps that some online platforms are taking to address the persistent problem of online infringement, much like the issue of diversity in the patent system, more work needs to be done.

Last month, I joined with Senator TILLIS and other members of the IP Subcommittee, and we sent a letter to major online platforms outlining specific voluntary measures they could adapt to crack down on online infringement. I hope that on World IP Day, the leaders of these online platforms will take a moment to consider the plight