



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 118th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 169

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2023

No. 196

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable PETER WELCH, a Senator from the State of Vermont.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal, unchanging God, You are our rock, our fortress, and our stronghold. Empower our lawmakers to change in ways that will render them more faithful to You and more responsive to Your call. May they develop such moral and ethical fitness that they will clearly comprehend Your desires and be eager to do Your will. As they grow in grace and in the knowledge of You, deliver them from the bondage of fear as You turn their spirits toward the light of Your presence. May Your prevailing providence in our Nation and world make them more deeply committed to You.

We pray in Your majestic Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mrs. MURRAY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, November 29, 2023.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable PETER WELCH, a Senator from the State of Vermont, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATTY MURRAY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. WELCH thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Micah W.J. Smith, of Hawaii, to be United States District Judge for the District of Hawaii.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

ANTI-SEMITISM

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, today, I come to the floor to speak on a subject of great importance—the rise of anti-Semitism in America.

I feel compelled to speak because I am the highest ranking Jewish elected official in America—in fact, the highest ranking Jewish elected official ever in American history—and I have noticed a significant disparity between how Jewish people regard the rise of

anti-Semitism and how many of my non-Jewish friends regard it. To us, the Jewish people, the rise of anti-Semitism is a crisis—a five-alarm fire that must be extinguished. For so many other people of good will, it is merely a problem, a matter of concern. So, today, I want to use my platform to explain why so many Jewish people see this problem as a crisis.

Before I get into that, I want to offer two important caveats about what this speech is not.

This speech is not an attempt to label most criticism of Israel and the Israeli Government, generally, as anti-Semitic. I don't believe that criticism is. And this speech is also not an attempt to pit hate toward one group against that of another. I believe that bigotry against one group of Americans is bigotry against all, and that is why I have championed legislation, like the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act, which targets violence against Asian Americans, and the Nonprofit Security Grant Program, which provides funding to help all houses of worship—churches, mosques, synagogues, gurdwaras—and to protect them from extremists.

When President Trump called for a Muslim ban during the first weeks of his Presidency, I held an emergency press conference to protest the ban alongside a Muslim mom and four of her daughters—all dressed in chadors—who said they feared they might never see their father again. It was a deeply distressing moment, and I am an emotional sort. I began to cry. President Trump saw me crying on TV and gave me a nickname—“Cryin’ CHUCK SCHUMER.” I was and am proud of that moniker.

The growing and vibrant Arab-American community is a vital part of our Nation and of my city, and I condemn unequivocally any vitriol and hatred against them. We tragically saw where such hatred can lead sometimes—in Vermont this week—and that is unacceptable.

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

S5643

But, today, I want to focus my remarks on anti-Semitism because it hits so close to home for me and because I believe this moment demands it.

I have just said what this speech is not. So what is this speech about?

I want to describe the fears and anxieties of many Jewish Americans right now, particularly after October 7, who feel there are aspects of the debate around Israel and Gaza that are crossing over into anti-Semitism—rank anti-Semitism, with Jewish people simply being targeted for being Jewish—having nothing to do with Israel. I want to explain through the lens of history why this is so dangerous. The normalization and exacerbation of this rise in hate is the danger many Jewish people fear most. And, finally, I want to suggest how and why I hope that all Americans of good will can come together and do a better job of condemning such views and such behavior. But, first, let us establish the facts.

There is no question that anti-Semitism is a serious problem in America. In general, Jewish Americans represent 2 percent of the U.S. population. Yet we are the targets of 55 percent of all religion-based hate crimes reported by the FBI. This problem has been steadily worsening in recent years, but after Hamas attacked Israel on October 7, hate crimes against Jewish Americans have skyrocketed. The Anti-Defamation League estimates that anti-Semitic incidents have increased nearly 300 percent since October 7. The NYPD has recorded a 214-percent increase in New York City.

After October 7, Jewish Americans are feeling singled out, targeted, and isolated. In many ways, we feel alone. The solidarity that Jewish Americans initially received from many of our fellow citizens was quickly drowned out by other voices.

While the dead bodies of Jewish Israelis were still warm, while hundreds of Jewish Israelis were being carried as hostages back to Hamas tunnels under Gaza, Jewish Americans were alarmed to see some of our fellow citizens characterize a brutal terrorist attack as justified because of the actions of the Israeli Government. A vicious, blood-curdling, premeditated massacre of innocent women, men, children, the elderly—justified. Even worse, in some cases, people even celebrated what happened, describing it as the deserved fate of colonizers and calling for glory to the martyrs who carried out these heinous attacks. That happened here in America.

Many of the people who express these sentiments in America aren't neo-Nazis or card-carrying Klan members or Islamist extremists. They are, in many cases, people who most liberal Jewish Americans felt previously were their ideological fellow travelers. Not long ago, many of us marched together for Black and Brown lives; we stood against anti-Asian hatred; we protested bigotry against the LGBTQ community; we fought for reproductive jus-

tice—out of the recognition that injustice against one oppressed group is injustice against all.

But, apparently, in the eyes of some, this principle does not extend to the Jewish people: the largely Ashkenazi survivors of decades of pogroms in Imperial Russia and, in the Holocaust under Nazi Germany, their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren; the Mizrahi, who were forcibly evicted from Arab countries, and their descendants; the many Sephardim, who were scattered across the Mediterranean after they were expelled from Spain and Portugal in the late 1400s.

Do they not deserve the solidarity of those who advocate for the rights and dignity of the oppressed, given the long history and persecution of the Jewish people throughout the world?

Many of those protesting Israeli policy note that at least 700,000 Palestinians were displaced or forced from their homes in 1948, but they never mention the 600,000 Mizrahi Jews across the Arab world who were also displaced, whose property was confiscated, whose lives were threatened, who were expelled from their communities.

The hope, at the time, was that there would be two states—a Jewish state and a Palestinian state—living side by side. The plan was for the State of Israel to absorb the Jewish people from Arab lands and the new Palestinian State to absorb the Palestinians who now lived in Israel. In fact, Israel did absorb the displaced Jewish people of Arab lands, but the Arab nations, instead, sanctioned the United Nations to set up refugee camps for the Palestinians, refusing to accept the possibility that any of them would ever be relocated.

Several times throughout history, Israeli Prime Ministers called for a return to close to the pre-1967 borders established by the United Nations plan. Those calls were rejected by Yasser Arafat, the PLO, and the wider Arab community. Many, if not most, Jewish Americans, including myself, supported a two-state solution. We disagreed with Prime Minister Netanyahu and his administration's encouragement of militant settlers in the West Bank, which has become a considerable obstacle to a two-state solution.

But the reason why I invoke history about the founding of the Israeli State is because forgetting or even deliberately ignoring this vital context is dangerous. Some of the most extreme rhetoric against Israel has emboldened anti-Semites who are attacking Jewish people simply because they are Jewish—independent of anything having to do with Israel.

Those who are inclined to examine the world through the lens of oppressors versus the oppressed should take note that the many thousands of years of Jewish history are defined by oppression. From October 7, 2023, in southern Israel; to 2018 at the Tree of

Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh; to 1999 at the Los Angeles JCC; to 1986 at the Neve Shalom Synagogue in Istanbul; to 1974 at the Netiv Meir Elementary School in Ma'alot; to Yom Kippur, 1973, in the Golan Heights; to 1972 at the Munich Olympics and Lod Airport; to 1967 at the Straits of Tiran; to the 1940s and 1930s in Germany and Central Europe; to the 1800s in the Pale of Settlement; to 1679 in Yemen; to 1492 in Spain, 1394 in France, 1290 in England; to the Crusades of the Middle Ages; to 629 in Galilee; to the year 73 in Jerusalem; to 586 B.C. in Judea; to 722 B.C.E. in Samaria; to the 13th century B.C.E. in Egypt, the Jewish people have been humiliated, ostracized, expelled, enslaved, and massacred for millennia.

To paraphrase lines recited every year, century after century, at Passover Seder: This is the bread of affliction that our forefathers ate in the land of Egypt. . . . In every generation, they rise up to destroy us.

For Jewish people all across the world, the history of our trauma, going back many generations, is central to any discussion about our future. Too many Americans, especially in our younger generation, don't have a full understanding of this history. Because some Jewish people have done well in America, because Israel has increased its power and territory, there are people who feel that Jewish Americans are not vulnerable; that we have the strength and security to overcome prejudice and bigotry; that we have, to quote the language of some, become the "oppressors." In fact, anti-Semitic conspiracy theories throughout the generations often theorize, often weaponize this very dynamic by pitting what successes the Jewish people have achieved against them and against their fellow countrymen. That has been throughout history. It is happening now.

But for many Jewish Americans, any strength and security that we enjoy always feels tenuous. No matter how well we are doing, it can all be taken away in an instant. That is just how it is. We only have to look back a century, a few generations, to see how this can happen.

Growing up, I remember my grandfather telling me that he rooted for Germany over Russia in World War I because Germans treated the Jewish people so much better than Russia did.

In the early 1900s, German Jews were one of the most secure and prosperous ethnic communities in Europe, but in the span of a decade, all of that changed.

When the Nazis first marched in the streets and held rallies decrying the so-called international financiers, war profiteers, and communists, many Germans of good will either stayed silent or marched alongside of them, not necessarily realizing what they were aiding and abetting. But when Adolf Hitler took the podium just a few years later at the Reichstag, it was clear by

then that the terms “international financiers,” “war profiteers,” and “communists” represented the Jewish people, whom Hitler called “parasites” feeding on the body and productive work of other nations.

By bits and pieces, the Nazis softened the ground rhetorically for what Hitler eventually stated was his true goal: “the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe.” So many of those Germans of good will who marched in the early years of Hitler’s ascension stayed on the sidelines after his horrifying intent was made clear. The end result, as we all know, was the most targeted and systematic genocide in all of human history. Six million Jewish people were exterminated in a few years while so many others turned a blind eye.

History shows that anti-Semitism is deeply embedded in Europe. I have always said it is the poison of European societies—anti-Semitism is the poison of European societies, just as racism against Black Americans is the poison of our society.

While we are thankfully a far ways away from Nazi Germany today, this is why many people worry about the marches today, especially in Europe. What may begin as legitimate criticism of Israeli policy or even a valid debate over other religious, economic, and political issues can sometimes cross into something darker: attacking Jewish people for simply being Jewish.

Obviously, many of those marching here in the United States do not have any evil intent, but when Jewish people hear chants like “from the river to the sea”—a founding slogan of Hamas, a terrorist group that is not shy about their goal to eradicate the Jewish people in Israel and around the globe—we are alarmed.

When we see signs in the crowd that read “by any means necessary” after the most violent attack ever against Israeli civilians, we are appalled at the casual invocation of such savagery.

When we see protesters at Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade compare the genocide of the Holocaust equivalently to the Israeli army’s actions to defeat Hamas in self-defense of their people, we are shocked.

When we see many people and news organizations remain neutral about the basic absurdity of these claims and actions, we are deeply disappointed.

More than anything, we are worried, quite naturally, given the twists and turns of history, about where these actions and sentiments could eventually lead. Now, this is no intellectual exercise for us. For many Jewish people, it is like a matter of survival, informed once again by history—in this case, very personal history to me.

Take the story of my own family. My grandfather came to Ellis Island at a very young age from Eastern Europe without an education, without a penny to his name. He was a street urchin, stealing apples from the pushcarts just to survive, but he dreamt of a brighter future for himself and his family.

My grandfather ended up with the paper workers in Utica, NY, and he helped form the union there. But he lost his job in the lead-up to World War II, so he came back to New York City and bought a little exterminating business.

His son—my father—followed in his footsteps and eventually took over that exterminating business. My father struggled in that job, barely making ends meet, but together with my mother, he provided a stable and loving home in Brooklyn for my siblings and me, where we were able to flourish.

Because of the tolerance and the openness and the opportunity that courses through all of American life, I now stand before you as the majority leader of the United States Senate—the highest elected office a Jewish person has ever attained in the history of this country. Only in America—only in America—could an exterminator’s son grow up to be the first Jewish party leader in the Senate.

But it must be said also that this is not the norm in the grand and long scheme of Jewish history. While my grandfather came to America and encountered opportunity, many of his siblings, cousins, aunts and uncles, and other family members remained behind in Eastern Europe.

When I was still a young boy, I was told why many branches of our family tree stopped growing forever.

In 1941, when the Nazis invaded Ukraine, then part of Galicia, they asked my great-grandmother—the matriarch of the family, the wife of a locally revered rabbi—to gather her children, her grandchildren, and her great-grandchildren on the porch of her home, which was located in the town square. As more than 30 people gathered on the porch, aged 85 to 3 months, the Nazis forced the remaining Jewish citizens of the town to gather in the town square and watch.

When the Nazis told my great-grandmother “You are coming with us,” she refused, and they machine-gunned down every last one of them—the babies, the elderly, everybody in between.

This story resonated deeply in my heart when I first started learning the details of the October 7 massacre in Israel. I was in China with a bipartisan delegation of my fellow Senators trying to get President Xi Jinping to open up Chinese markets to American companies and stop the flow of fentanyl across our borders.

As the horrors of October 7 started coming into focus, the Israeli Ambassador to China shared with me the story of what she heard had just happened in one of the kibbutzim called Be’eri. Hamas terrorists entered the kibbutz on October 7 and killed more than 120 Jewish residents, from the elderly to babies.

Sadly, it was not the first time I heard of such evil being committed against the Jewish people. Most, if not all, Jewish Americans know stories similar to that of my family. Most, if

not all, of us learned this story at a young age. It will be imprinted on our hearts for as long as we live.

All Jewish Americans carry in them the scar tissue of this generational trauma, and that directly informs how we are experiencing and processing the rhetoric of today. We see and hear things differently from others because we are deeply sensitive to the depravation and horrors that can follow the targeting of Jewish people if it is not repudiated, which brings me back to today.

While many protesters no doubt view their actions as a compassionate expression of solidarity with the Palestinian people, for many Jewish Americans, we feel in too many instances, some of the most extreme rhetoric gives license to darker ideas that have always lurked below the surface of every question involving the Jewish people. Anti-Semites have always trafficked in coded language and action to define Jewish people as unworthy of the rights and privileges afforded to other groups.

I believe there are plenty of people who chant “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free” not because they hate Jewish people but because they support a better future for Palestinians. But there is no question that Hamas and other terrorist organizations have used this slogan to represent their intention to eliminate Jewish people not only from Israel but from every corner of the Earth.

Given the history of oppression, expulsion, and state violence that is practically embedded in Jewish DNA, can you blame the Jewish people for hearing a violently anti-Semitic message loud and clear anytime we hear that chant?

We shouldn’t accept this sort of language from anybody any more than we accept other racist dog whistles, like invoking “welfare queens” to criticize safety net programs or calling COVID-19 the “Chinese virus.” And that goes for extreme rightwing Jewish settlers who also use deplorable language and who don’t believe there should be any Palestinians between the river and the sea.

Anti-Semites are taking advantage of the pro-Palestinian movement to espouse hatred and bigotry toward Jewish people. But rather than call out this dangerous behavior for what it is, we see so many of our friends and fellow citizens, particularly young people who yearn for justice, unknowingly aiding and abetting their cause.

Worse, many of our friends and allies whose support we need now more than ever during this moment of intense Jewish pain have brushed aside these concerns. Suddenly, they don’t want to hear about anti-Semitism or the ultimate goal of Hamas. When I have asked some of the marchers what they would do about Hamas, they don’t have an answer. Many don’t seem to care. So Jewish Americans are left alone—at least in our eyes—to ponder what this all means and where it could lead.

Can you understand why the Jewish people feel isolated when we hear some praise Hamas and chant its vicious slogan? Can you blame us for feeling vulnerable only 80 years after Hitler wiped out half the Jewish population across the world while so many countries turned their back? Can you appreciate the deep fear we have about what Hamas might do if left to their own devices? Because the long arc of Jewish history teaches us a lesson that is hard to forget: Ultimately, we are alone.

As a teenager growing up halfway across the world from Israel in Brooklyn during the 1950s and 1960s, I remember this feeling of aloneness myself. When many of the world's airlines boycotted Israel so that they could maintain business with the Arab world, I admired Air France, as a little boy, because only they would fly to Israel. I preferred to drink Coca-Cola to Pepsi because Coca-Cola did business in Israel and refused to participate in a biased boycott. Later, I remember—in June of 1967—walking in solitary silence to class at Madison High School with a transistor radio held to my ear, listening to the news reports about the Six-Day War and praying to God that Israel would survive.

On top of feeling alone, the second dominant feeling that Jewish people have endured throughout history has been the sting of the double standard, which is the way the world has practiced anti-Semitism over and over again.

To the Jewish people, the double standard has been ever present and is at the root of anti-Semitism. The double standard is very simple: What is good for everybody is never good for the Jew. And when it comes time to assign blame for some problem, the Jew is always the first target. And in recent decades, this double standard has manifested itself in the way much of the world treats Israel differently than anybody else.

The double standard was made clear to me when I was in college. I remember the day when the great and articulate Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations, Abba Eban, was invited to come lecture on campus while the Students for a Democratic Society and the Progressive Labor Party were waging a campaign against Israel's right to exist.

Two thousand people gathered in the large auditorium to see Ambassador Eban, and the members of the SDS and PLP sat in the gallery and hung a banner saying "Fight the Zionist Imperialists."

When the members of the SDS and PLP tried to shout him down, Eban pointed his finger to the protesters in the gallery, and with his Etonian inflection, he calmly but strongly delivered a statement I will never forget and that I will paraphrase now.

He said: I am talking to you, up there in the gallery. Every time a people gets their statehood, you applaud them. The Nigerians, the Pakistanis, the

Zambians—you applaud their getting statehood. There is only one people, when they gain statehood, you don't applaud—you condemn it—and that is the Jewish people.

We Jews are used to that, he said. We have lived with a double standard throughout the centuries. There were always things the Jews couldn't do. Everyone could be a farmer but not the Jew. Everyone could be a carpenter but not the Jew, he said. Everyone could move to Moscow but not the Jew. And everyone can have their own state but not the Jew.

There is a word for it, he said to them. That is anti-Semitism, and I accuse you in the gallery of it.

And the protesters slinked off.

This double standard persists in America today, and it is once again leaving Jewish people to feel isolated and alone.

In the immediate aftermath of October 7, an attack on defenseless civilians—the elderly, women, babies—a good number of people skipped over expressing sympathy for its victims in their haste to blame the attack on the past actions of the Israeli Government.

Can anyone imagine a horrific terrorist attack in another country receiving such a reception?

And when Hamas terrorists actively hide behind innocent Palestinians, knowing that many of those civilians will die in the Israeli response, why does the criticism for any civilian death seem to fall exclusively on Israel and not at all on Hamas?

My heart breaks for the thousands of Palestinian civilians who have been killed or are suffering in this conflict—so many children. And I have urged the Israeli Government to minimize civilian casualties on many occasions. But by committing such heinous atrocities on October 7 before sneaking back into their tunnels underneath hospitals and refugee camps in Gaza, Hamas has knowingly invited an immense civilian toll during the war, exploiting the double standard that so much of the world applies to Israel.

Of course—let me repeat—that does not relieve Israel of the responsibility to protect innocent Palestinian lives, and I have been among the first to tell Israeli leaders they must act according to international law. I am also fighting for critical humanitarian aid for Palestinians that this Senate, under my leadership, is working to deliver.

So I rise in this Chamber today. I am speaking up to issue a warning, informed by lessons of history too often forgotten. No matter what our beliefs, no matter where we stand on the war in Gaza, all of us must condemn anti-Semitism with full-throated clarity wherever we see it before it metastasizes into something even worse because, right now, that is what Jewish Americans fear most.

The spike in anti-Semitism we are experiencing right now in America began after the worst instance of violence committed against Jewish people

since the Holocaust. The vitriol against Israel in the wake of October 7 is all too often crossing the line into brazen and widespread anti-Semitism, the likes of which we haven't seen for generations in this country, if ever, which is why we need to name it clearly anytime we see it.

After October 7, when boycotts were organized against Jewish businesses in Philadelphia that have nothing to do with Israel, that is anti-Semitism.

After October 7, when swastikas appeared on Jewish delis on the Upper East Side, that is anti-Semitism.

After October 7, when protesters in California shouted at Jewish Americans, "Hitler should have smashed you," that is anti-Semitism.

After October 7, when a Jewish U.S. Senator was violently threatened for her views on Israel, that is anti-Semitism.

After October 7, when students on college campuses across the country who wear a yarmulke or display a Jewish star are harassed, verbally vilified, pushed, even spat upon and punched, that is anti-Semitism.

After October 7, when an author in a prominent leftwing magazine labeled the pro-Israeli rally in Washington a "hate rally," that is anti-Semitism. I attended that rally—like tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of others—because I believe there should be a place of refuge for the Jewish people, not because I wish violence on Palestinians or any other people.

And, Mr. President, after October 7, when students at Hillcrest High School in Queens ran rampant in the hallways and demanded the firing of a teacher—these are high school students demanding the firing of a teacher—just because that teacher attended a rally supporting Israel and forced her to hide in a locked office for hours while staff struggled to regain control, that is anti-Semitism.

Walking out of the school to march in support of Palestinians is completely legitimate, but forcing a Jewish teacher to remain—as she described—locked in an office because she attended a rally in support for Israel is anti-Semitism, pure and simple.

In fact, Mr. President, the teacher whom I am speaking about is sitting in the Gallery today, right now. I invited her to come and listen, and I am truly honored that she accepted my invitation. That is true courage. I believe it shows just how strongly so many Jewish Americans feel about the issue.

She has requested anonymity, which I ask everybody present and everyone in the media to please respect, but I say to her from the bottom of my heart: Thank you for being here. Thank you for caring.

I have just listed a few of the so many examples—there are so many more—of how the pure, unadulterated anti-Semitism has dramatically increased since October 7, but the roots of pluralistic, multiethnic democracy are deep in America. This is a place

where Jewish people have been able to flourish alongside so many other immigrant groups. We must never lose sight of just how special that is, nor must we ever stop fighting for it.

All Americans share a responsibility and an obligation to fight back whenever we see the rise of prejudice of any type in our midst, to preserve this Nation as a promised land of refuge, as a land that honors the dignity of every individual, as a land of opportunity for all.

So my plea—my plea, my fervent plea—to the American people of all creeds and backgrounds is this: First, learn the history of the Jewish people who have been abandoned repeatedly by their fellow countrymen. I say this particularly to younger people who didn't live with any of this history. Learn the history of the Jewish people who have been left isolated and alone to combat anti-Semitism through the centuries.

Second, reject the illogical and anti-Semitic double standard that is once again being applied to the plight of Jewish victims and hostages, to some of the actions of the Israeli Government, and even to the very existence of a Jewish state. That is a double standard. There is no ducking from it.

Third, understand why Jewish people defend Israel—not because we wish harm on Palestinians but because we fear a world where Israel is forced to tolerate the existence of groups like Hamas that want to wipe out all Jewish people from the planet.

Some of us watched this film, which the public can't see, which showed the brutality and viciousness that every Israeli citizen and every Jew feels.

We fear a world where Israel, a place of refuge for Jewish people, will no longer exist. If there is no Israel, there will be no place—no place—for Jewish people to go when they are persecuted in other countries.

As an adult, I remember watching my grandfather, one of the few in his family to survive the Holocaust, being overwhelmed by emotion and breaking down in tears when he saw Israel for the first time. This had nothing to do with politics or with money or with racism or oppression. It was deeply human—the emotional catharsis of a man whose family was uprooted and exterminated finally stepping foot in the place of refuge for his people, the place that the Jewish people have yearned for not just for decades, for centuries, but for millennia.

So many of my aunts and uncles and cousins and nieces and nephews would be alive today had Israel existed before World War II, as I said before.

Many Jewish Americans fear what the future may bring based on the repeated lessons of history. Many Jewish Americans see clear anti-Semitism in the double standard that is being wielded by too many opponents of Israel, and we see it in attacks on Jewish people for simply being Jewish, apart from having anything to do with

Israel. And maybe worst of all, many Jewish Americans feel alone to face all of this, abandoned by too many of our friends and allies in our greatest time of need, as anti-Semitic hate crimes skyrocket across the country.

I implore every person, every community, every institution to stand with Jewish Americans—not to ignore it, not to shrug your shoulders—to denounce anti-Semitism in all its forms, especially the double standard that has been wielded against the Jewish people for generations to isolate us.

The time for solidarity must be now. Nothing less than the future of the American experiment hangs in the balance. Building a more perfect Union, one that fulfills our founding ideals, is our longest and most solemn struggle as a country. And as Americans, we are called on to do all we can to achieve that higher standard.

We are stewards of the flames of liberty, tolerance, and equality that warm our American melting pot and make it possible for Jewish Americans to prosper alongside Palestinian Americans and every other immigrant group from all over the world.

Are we a nation that can defy the regular course of human history where the Jewish people have been ostracized, expelled, and massacred over and over again? I believe—truly believe in my heart—that the answer can and must be a resounding yes, and I will do everything in my power as Senate majority leader, as a Jewish American, as a citizen of a free society, as a human being, to make it happen.

Ken y'hi ratzon. May it be God's will. I yield the floor.

Mr. SCHATZ. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Republican leader is recognized.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I had an opportunity to watch the majority leader's speech this morning. It was extraordinary. I want to compliment him for providing a history lesson for Americans about the history of the Jewish people and putting it in context with the conflict that is underway.

So I want to thank him and associate myself with his remarks. I share his disgust at the alarming rise of anti-Semitism in America—and around the world—in the wake of the October 7 attacks.

So, again, I stand with him in condemning this hatred. And I stand with our ally, Israel, as it defends, literally, its right to exist.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. President, on another subject, Border security is actually national se-

curity. This is not just a statement of legislative priorities or partisan politics; it is a fact of human history.

The Senate has little more than 2 weeks to deliver supplemental legislation on the four urgent national security priorities. And each one of them deals directly with the questions of border and sovereignty.

For over a decade, Putin has been trying to redraw the borders of Europe. He has invaded and occupied Georgia and Ukraine. He has attempted assassinations and influenced operations on foreign soil. And he has exploited humanitarian crises to weaponize migrant flows to Europe, including, most recently, at the border of Finland.

Meanwhile, the Hamas terrorists who rule Gaza violated sovereign borders on their way to slaughtering 1,200 Israelis and taking hundreds more hostage. These savages' stated objective is to erase the borders of the state of Israel "from the river to the sea."

China, for its part, is also keenly focused on challenging borders. The PRC has used force in an attempt to gain the upper hand along its border with India. It has expanded its military footprint in the South China Sea and threatened to resolve longstanding territorial disputes with multiple neighbors by force. And China's historic investments in military modernization are aimed at threatening Taiwan's sovereignty and bringing the island to heel.

Borders matter. Sovereignty matters. The United States is a global superpower with global interests. And we have an interest in preventing autocrats and terrorists from trampling the borders of Europe, the Middle East, and the Indo-Pacific. Because if we leave them unchecked, these aggressors will keep challenging borders and keep starting wars.

Borders are intrinsically and universally about a nation's security. Controlling and defending them is the essential predicate of sovereignty. So it is not by accident that, in addressing urgent national security priorities, Senate Republicans are working so hard on policy changes to restore security to Americans on borders.

Trying to clean up the Biden administration's border crisis isn't some arbitrary interest; that is, unless you ask the Democratic leader. According to the senior Senator from New York, the national security crisis his party has abetted at the southern border is "extraneous" to the national security supplemental before the Senate. The way our colleague sees it, securing our own borders as we help our allies and partners defend their sovereignty would be dangerous.

Dangerous? Here in the real world, what is dangerous is denying the humanitarian and national security crisis festering at America's southern border on President Biden's watch. What is dangerous is accepting the record numbers of illegal aliens surging across our borders as the new normal. What is