

Such shifts don't seem intended to dial back the snowballing regional tensions, nor will they prevent the increasing humanitarian suffering. President Biden has sounded increasingly exasperated by developments on all of these fronts, frustrations echoed in comments by his secretary of state, Antony Blinken, during his latest visit to the region.

Rather than slowly amplifying expressions of disquiet, Team Biden should make a course correction—starting with exercising the very real diplomatic and military leverage at its disposal to move Israel in the direction of U.S. interests, rather than vice versa.

The first and most critical shift required is for the administration to embrace the need for a full cease-fire now. That demand cannot be one of rhetoric alone. The administration should condition the transfer of further military supplies on Israel ending the war and stopping the collective punishment of the Palestinian civilian population, and should create oversight mechanisms for the use of American weaponry that is already at Israel's disposal. Ending Israel's Gaza operation is also the surest way to avoid a regional war and the key to concluding negotiations for the release of hostages.

Washington can also leverage the deliberations underway at the International Court of Justice, where South Africa has accused Israel of being in violation of its obligations as a signatory to the 1948 international genocide convention. Israel is demonstrably nervous about the proceedings and understands that an International Court of Justice ruling has heft; indeed, South Africa may have already done more to change the course of events than three months of American hand-wringing. The Biden administration does not need to support the South African claims, but it can and should commit to being guided by any findings of the court.

Finally, the United States should desist from making endless ritual incantations about a future two-state outcome, which are all too easily brushed off by Mr. Netanyahu. It should take at face value his government's categorical rejection of Palestinian statehood and its written coalition guidelines that assert "the Jewish people have an exclusive and inalienable right to all parts of the Land of Israel." Washington should instead challenge Israel to set out a proposal for how all those living under its control will be guaranteed equality, enfranchisement and other civil rights.

Doing so could have the added benefit of challenging Mr. Netanyahu's position. Although he appears to have consolidated his political base for now, his governing majority would be lost with just a handful of defections. Only around 15 percent of Israelis want Mr. Netanyahu to remain in power after this war ends, according to recent polls, and street protests could reignite at any moment.

For a combination of ideological, military and personal political reasons, Mr. Netanyahu probably doesn't want this war to end. And while his political demise is not a panacea for progress—nor can it be an explicit U.S. goal—it is nevertheless a prerequisite for creating the conditions under which Palestinian rights can be advanced. The United States can and should distance itself from the Gaza debacle and the extremism of Israel's leaders.

If Washington does not change its approach, its failures in this war will have consequences, even beyond the immediate crisis in Gaza, the hostilities involving the Houthis in Yemen and the gathering threat of a wider regional conflict.

The world, after all, is watching, and Washington should not underestimate the extent to which the extremely unpopular as-

sault on Gaza is seen globally as not only Israel's war, but America's as well. The U.S. government's transfer of arms to Israel and the political-diplomatic cover it provides, including by deploying or threatening its veto at the United Nations Security Council, makes its ownership of this war highly conspicuous—and damaging.

There are long-term security implications, too. The callous Israeli military campaign and its profound impact on civilians will almost certainly provide recruitment material for armed resistance for years to come. Arab countries will find cooperation and normalizing relations with Israel more burdensome, and Israel's opponents are gaining greater resonance: Hamas displaying resilience, the Houthis an impressive disruptive capacity and Hezbollah disciplined restraint.

With Israel making clear in word and deed its intention to continue down this dangerous path—indifferent to U.S. needs and expectations—shouldn't Mr. Biden be keeping a greater distance?

TRIBUTE TO SOPHIA OHLE

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to Sophia for her hard work as an intern in the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. I recognize her efforts and contributions to my office, as well as to the State of Wyoming.

Sophia is a native of Virginia. She is currently a junior at the Madeira School in McLean, VA. She has demonstrated a strong work ethic, which has made her an invaluable asset to our office. The quality of her work is reflected in her great efforts over the last several months.

I want to thank Sophia for the dedication she has shown while working for me and my staff. It is a pleasure to have her as part of our team. I know she will have continued success with all of her future endeavors. I wish her all my best on her journey.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO MICHELLE ARCHER

• Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Vermont State Police Trooper Michelle Archer for her lifesaving rescue of a young child. Trooper Archer's heroic actions are an extraordinary example of public service.

Trooper Archer joined the Vermont State Police in 2018 and has worked out of both the Williston and Derby barracks, serving the counties of Chittenden, Lamoille, and Orleans.

On December 17, 2023, Trooper Archer was on patrol in Lamoille County. When a 911 call came in from the town of Cambridge reporting that an 8-year-old child had fallen through the ice on a frozen pond into 40-degree water, Trooper Archer was on scene in less than 5 minutes. Without hesitation, she jumped into action. Trooper Archer put her training to use by grabbing a throw rope and floatation device, quickly but calmly entering the freez-

ing water and swimming out to the victim, and bringing the unresponsive young girl to shore. There, Trooper Archer's colleague, Trooper Keith Cote, provided first aid. The child spent time in the hospital, but thankfully, and in no small part due to the troopers' decisive actions, she is fully recovered.

While Trooper Archer's rescue rightfully made headlines, it is just one example of the dedication of Vermont public servants in law enforcement and beyond. Every day, they renew their commitment to protecting and serving Vermonters with fairness and compassion. This often means putting their own lives and safety on the line. They are our neighbors, friends, family members, and fellow Vermonters—committed to the values of integrity, courage, and honor—and to making a difference in the lives of others.

Trooper Archer, along with Trooper Cote, demonstrated exceptional service during this rescue, and for that, they have the sincere appreciation of all Vermonters. I am hopeful that their exceptional display of public service will inspire others to step up and serve their communities. In Vermont, we need more dedicated people to join the ranks of the Vermont State Police and other law enforcement agencies, and to enter other public sector jobs like teaching, healthcare, the fire service, and beyond.●

REMEMBERING DEBORAH WOMBLE JOHNSON

• Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a great North Carolinian, Deborah Womble Johnson.

Born in Nash County, NC, on December 8, 1952, Deborah had a highly successful 37-year career as a healthcare executive, advising some of the top companies in the world, including Abbott Laboratories based in Rocky Mount, NC.

Deborah was a loving wife and mother, a devout Christian, and a pillar in her community. She was an active and lifelong member of the Temperance Hall Methodist Church, founded by Dr. John Mercer, who built her family's historic home. She was an outdoor enthusiast who made countless friends as the president of the Englewood Garden Club, a Nash County certified Master Gardener, and a member of the Wilson County Beekeeper Association.

Deborah is survived by her husband of 28 years, John M. Johnson, Jr.; his son and Deborah's stepson Brian Marshall Johnson of Alexandria, VA; her sister-in-law Laurie Womble and her sons Van and Billy Womble, of Spring Lake, NC; nieces Toni Rouse, Yvonne Harrell, Roberta Weaver, of Pinetops, NC; niece Renee Womble and nephews Dave Womble, Curtis Womble, of Lunenburg, MA; and Bobby Womble of Lexington, NC.

I would like to offer my deepest condolences to Deborah's loving family and the many friends she made throughout her life in North Carolina.