

We must insist that President Obama immediately produce a complete, detailed, and realistic plan to confront, degrade, and defeat the Islamic State. This plan must include realistic, well-substantiated estimates of timeframes, resources required, expected allies, and anticipated obstacles. Also, it must include clear definitions of milestones and metrics of success. Most importantly, the plan must include clear accountability. I have introduced an amendment to the Defense authorization bill that will require just that—a serious, credible, complete strategy for addressing the threat posed by ISIS.

President Obama has shown a tendency to blame others—the Pentagon or allies or Sunnis or the Iraqi Government or Congress—for his own failures of leadership in this effort; therefore, we must demand a coherent, realistic plan so the American people can properly apportion the credit for success or the blame for failure where it belongs.

Let me briefly talk about a couple of other amendments I have introduced, and I am hopeful we can include these two amendments in the managers' package.

Amendment No. 1705 addresses the Department of Defense's present policy of not allowing Active-Duty flag and general officers to visit our friends in Taiwan. Instead, the DOD relies on retired flag and general officers—retired officers to visit Taiwan in what can only be seen as appeasing Communist China.

It is difficult for military officials in both Taiwan and the United States to discuss contingency responses when Active-Duty U.S. generals and flag officers are not able to meet regularly with their Taiwanese counterparts. Without visiting Taiwan, they are not able to familiarize themselves with Taiwan's command centers, terrain, and operational capabilities.

Active-Duty U.S. generals and flag officers have to be able to visit Taiwan and see its military in action in order to gain a better understanding of Taiwan's armed forces and the weapons they require for self-defense.

In the event of an emergency, such as humanitarian assistance or a disaster relief mission, senior officers from Taiwan and the United States will have little, if any, experience working together to save the lives of thousands of Taiwanese citizens and Americans living abroad in Taiwan.

My amendment would simply state that the Department of Defense should undertake a program of senior military officer exchanges with Taiwan. Note that this amendment does not require such exchanges. I do not believe in tying the military's hands in this sort of matter, but I do believe it is important that the Senate go on record as concerned about the current policy of refusing to allow such exchanges. The armed forces of Taiwan are a very valuable partner of the U.S. military. These visits by our generals and admirals will encourage Taiwan to make increased

investments in their national defense, especially in light of the belligerent behavior demonstrated by the Chinese.

I understand that there is bipartisan agreement on this amendment, and I hope and trust that we can include this measure in any upcoming managers' package.

Finally, I have offered amendment No. 1877, which would require the Secretary of the Navy to submit to both the House and Senate Armed Services Committees a report detailing the potential impacts to the industrial base if the July 2017 start date for the refueling and complex overhaul of the USS George Washington is delayed by 6 months, 1 year, or 2 years.

As we learned last year when the administration briefly considered postponing the scheduled overhaul of the USS George Washington, such delays only drive up costs because of the uncertainty they create among the industrial base. I hope to avoid a repeat of that mistake by requiring the Navy to report on the true costs of any delay.

I hope the Senate will agree to this amendment.

Once again, I thank Senator MCCAIN for his leadership on the Defense authorization bill, and I hope the Senate will act to pass this critically important bill without delay. This is one of the most essential bills this Congress takes up each year, and to deter this for any political reason simply is not acceptable when our troops' lives and safety are at risk. They are there to defend us. They need our support, and they need it now.

I yield floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the pending business.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1735) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2016 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

Pending:

McCain amendment No. 1463, in the nature of a substitute.

McCain amendment No. 1456 (to amendment No. 1463), to require additional information supporting long-range plans for construction of naval vessels.

Cornyn amendment No. 1486 (to amendment No. 1463), to require reporting on energy security issues involving Europe and the Russian Federation, and to express the sense of Congress regarding ways the United States could help vulnerable allies and partners with energy security.

Markey amendment No. 1645 (to amendment No. 1463), to express the sense of Con-

gress that exports of crude oil to United States allies and partners should not be determined to be consistent with the national interest if those exports would increase energy prices in the United States for American consumers or businesses or increase the reliance of the United States on imported oil.

Reed (for Blumenthal) modified amendment No. 1564 (to amendment No. 1463), to enhance protections accorded to servicemembers and their spouses.

McCain (for Paul) modified amendment No. 1543 (to amendment No. 1463), to strengthen employee cost savings suggestions programs within the Federal Government.

Reed (for Durbin) modified amendment No. 1559 (to amendment No. 1463), to prohibit the award of Department of Defense contracts to inverted domestic corporations.

Fischer/Booker amendment No. 1825 (to amendment No. 1463), to authorize appropriations for national security aspects of the Merchant Marine for fiscal years 2016 and 2017.

McCain (for Hatch) amendment No. 1911 (to amendment No. 1456), to require a report on the Department of Defense definition of and policy regarding software sustainment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I would like to tell my colleagues that I think we are winding down here. We have several other issues to address, but I think it is very possible that we could see the end here for final passage of the bill. There are still some issues that need to be resolved, but I am grateful for the progress all of my colleagues have made on both sides of the aisle.

I would like to call up and speak briefly on McCain amendment No. 1482. This amendment would prohibit the Secretary of Defense or the Secretary of a military department from funding or conducting medical research or development projects unless the Secretary determines that the research or project is designed to protect, enhance, or restore the health and safety of members of the Armed Forces through phases of deployment, combat, medical recovery, and rehabilitation.

I will not seek a vote on this amendment, but I will say that it is an issue which must be addressed if we are going to spend American tax dollars on defending this Nation, the security, and the men and women who are serving.

What I am going to show my colleagues is what happens with almost any bad deal around here, and that is the incredible increase in congressionally directed spending on medical research which is on the Department of Defense authorization bill—not on the Health and Human Services appropriations but on Defense. When we are cutting defense, when we are experiencing all the bad results of sequestration, we continue to grow to nearly \$1 billion in medical research that has nothing to do with defense.

I am all for medical research. I am all in. The National Institutes of Health is doing great things. I am all for it. But when we take it out of defense spending rather than what it should be taken out of, which is Health