

FIGHTING TERRORISM

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, on another matter, the Senate has been discussing the need to respond to terrorist threats within our own borders. To recap, this isn't about people traveling from the United States to the Middle East and returning or people coming from the Middle East to the United States. It is about that, but primarily what we are worried about in Orlando is the radicalization of an American citizen by propaganda, poisonous propaganda being issued by the Islamic State, and that falls in a fertile field with particularly susceptible individuals like the shooter in Orlando.

That is one reason it is so important we complete our work on the Commerce-Justice-Science appropriations bill. It keeps many of our counterterrorism efforts going by funding those who are on the frontlines, such as the FBI and other law enforcement. I hope we can get that legislation completed, too, and in so doing underscore our commitment to those public servants who defend the homeland.

We can't lose sight of the heart of the problem: a lack of any coherent plan to defeat ISIS and a foreign policy missing direction and leadership from the Commander in Chief, the President of the United States.

Over the past few days, it has become even clearer that not even those in the Obama administration are onboard with his short-sighted and reckless policies. First, more than 50 diplomats sent an internal protest memo to harshly criticize the President's Syria policy. You can find that draft version of the memo online. It is four frank pages, decrying Obama's failed wait-and-see-approach to Syria, from some of those who have been most involved with the policy.

The New York Times was forced to admit the number of signatures on it, 51, was "extremely large, if not unprecedented." I wish I had time to read the full memo aloud here, but let me quote from a few paragraphs—actually, from the final paragraph. It says:

The status quo in Syria will continue to present increasingly dire, if not disastrous, humanitarian, diplomatic, and terrorism-related challenges. For five years, the scale of these consequences has overwhelmed our efforts to deal with this conflict; the United States cannot contain the conflict with current policy. . . . [W]e firmly believe it is time the United States, guided by our strategic interests and moral convictions, lead a global effort to put an end to this conflict.

What an indictment of the leadership of the White House by people who are part of the Obama administration. I am grateful that these diplomats opted to stand up and be counted and tell the truth for our own security as well as those in the Middle East who are suffering so much. The administration's policies—really, their inaction—have languished for 5 years with all signs pointing to a much needed course correction. Still, even after the redlines were crossed by Syria's murderous dic-

tator and as the supposed JV team of terrorists are exporting deadly violence into our own country, the White House views its policies in a positive light. It is not just these diplomats working in the State Department of President Obama who are raising red flags.

Recently the CIA Director agreed with them while testifying before the Senate Intelligence Committee. He admitted we are further away from a diplomatic solution in Syria than a year ago, largely because of Russia's involvement in propping up the regime of Bashar al-Assad. He confirmed that ISIS, the Islamic State, is preparing to conduct further attacks, in part by training and encouraging its followers to carry out attacks in their home countries, such as the United States of America.

Contrary to the narrative the White House is selling, Director Brennan called ISIS a "formidable adversary" that is building a global terror network. He stressed that Libya, in particular, is a growing hotbed of Islamic extremism.

Recently I traveled to Tunisia with members of the House Homeland Security Committee, and we met with the Libyan country team—the U.S. Ambassador to Libya and the other members of that country team who had not even been able to go to Libya because it was so dangerous. They were actually working in exile in Tunisia next door.

Director Brennan called the ISIS offshoot in Libya the most developed and most dangerous branch of the terrorist group. How did we get here? President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton failed in their efforts to stabilize the country after toppling Qadhafi. Didn't we learn anything in Iraq? Apparently, the Obama administration did not. They had no plan for what to do once Qadhafi was gone. Evidently, President Obama opted to lead from behind during the military campaign and then not lead at all after Qadhafi fell.

Unfortunately, recent testimony from the President's nominee to head the U.S. forces in Africa, or AFRICOM, suggested the administration hadn't learned any lessons after this disaster. When asked whether there was a strategy in place for dealing with all the threats emanating from Libya, the nominee, the Marine Corps general who was testifying, said he wasn't aware of any strategy, even though he agreed that ISIS has a significant presence in Libya and constitutes an imminent threat to our country here at home.

Just a few days ago, an article in the Washington Post highlighted the difference between what our military leaders believe is necessary to accomplish the mission and what the White House begrudgingly agreed to give them, which is less than what they need. According to the article, U.S. commanders on the ground in Iraq are readying a request to the White House for more troops so we can help the

Iraqi Army secure Fallujah and eventually take back Mosul.

The article also notes that military leaders have been regularly highlighting the need for more troops in the region—and quickly—but are concerned the administration will be reluctant to commit more. That is because the President has instituted an artificial troop cap for Iraq and Syria—it is about the numbers, it is not about the mission—just like he did in Afghanistan, and he doesn't want to add to that no matter what happens.

Apparently, the foolish campaign promises the President made when he was running are more important to him now than actually defeating ISIS abroad. As it stands, his legacy will be leaving Iraq more unstable and more dangerous for U.S. interests than it was when he came into office.

This should be a no-brainer. We don't succeed on the battlefield when we ignore the counsel of the experts, our uniformed military leaders, and we can't succeed on the ground in Iraq when the President will not provide the resources necessary to carry out the operations he has asked them to perform. We don't need a bandaid. We don't need more calls for diplomacy and other hollow talking points in Libya. What we and the world need is American leadership and a commitment from the White House to root out and annihilate ISIS where it lives and breathes.

I doubt the Orlando shooter would have pledged allegiance to the leader of the Islamic State if we had done what our military leadership believes we should have already done, which was to crush ISIS and defeat it. I doubt the Orlando shooter would have pledged allegiance to a leader whose movement had been crushed and destroyed, but he did it because he felt they were winning.

When the watching world sees we lack the will to defeat ISIS, ISIS sympathizers around the world sense weakness, and they are emboldened in their plan to carry out attacks, including on U.S. soil. There is a direct relationship between the battlefield in Iraq and Syria and our neighborhoods and communities here in America. What happens there matters here.

When the request from our military leadership arrives at the President's desk asking for more resources, he should remember Orlando, and he should grant the request. If he refuses or dithers, any resulting failure in Iraq and Syria or further attacks on the homeland will be part of his lasting legacy. From our diplomatic corps to our intelligence community, to the leaders of our military, all have directly or indirectly challenged the President's foreign policy in just the last few days.

If you think about it, it is remarkable. It takes courage and real strength of conviction to buck the leader of your political party or of the administration. I hope the President listens to

them because they are trying to help him make the right decision, and they are the real experts here.

If the President will not act decisively against our adversaries abroad, Congress must do all it can do to guard against the enemy here at home. Passing appropriations bills that provide the resources for Federal, State, and local law enforcement is part of our responsibility. We need to make sure our first responders and law enforcement community have the resources they need, and I hope we get that done soon.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

VIEQUES TRAINING RANGE

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, on Wednesday we are going to be voting on something significant, which has been a source of discussion recently, and I wanted to put a little different perspective on the problems that are in Puerto Rico right now. Puerto Rico has \$90 billion worth of debt right now. They say they can't repay it in full. I think a bunch of guys have done a good job in establishing a solution for that. Puerto Rico is scheduled—and is going to be missing—to have another debt payment, which is going to put that amount over \$90 billion.

This week, the Senate will consider legislation that will impose an oversight board that will set up the bankruptcy court restructuring process. It is important citizens of Puerto Rico and the residents of Vieques realize they still have an opportunity to play a significant role in the nation's defense—a role that could bring an economic investment of hundreds of millions of dollars to Puerto Rico.

In April of 1999, following an accident on the Vieques training range—Vieques is a little island off of Puerto Rico—that resulted in the death of a Navy civilian employee, all training activities on that range were suspended. They had been training on that range for 60 years, and they suspended it. Despite the efforts of Congress and the Department of Defense leadership to include approving additional funding to hold a referendum on Vieques, as well as increased funding per year if Vieques remained open, the Navy was forced to end all training operations in 2003. After 60 years of that arrangement, they had to suspend it. When that happened, we had to close Roosevelt Roads.

I remember when they were considering whether they were going to close Roosevelt Roads, I made the comment that they would be closing it. You guys need to quit rejoicing that you had the

benefit of that because Roosevelt Roads was only there to support the Vieques training range. When the Navy left Vieques and closed Roosevelt Roads, they took with them over 2,500 uniformed military personnel, over 2,000 family members, and impacted more than 2,500 civilian employees. The total economic impact from the Navy was estimated to be over \$300 million a year in 2003 when the Navy ended its operations. I recall when that happened. I was there, and I made the statement that you are going to have financial ruin on the island, and it all started when we were told we were not allowed to continue what we had been doing in Vieques.

Today, as in 1999, our military is facing a readiness crisis and needs ranges like Vieques to train in full-spectrum joint operations.

On September 2, 1999, as chairman of the subcommittee—at that time, I was the chairman of a subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee called the Readiness Subcommittee—I held a hearing on the military requirement for Vieques and the assessment of alternative sites that could replace Vieques. During the hearing, ADM William Fallon, who was the commander of the Navy's Second Fleet at that time, and Gen. Peter Pace, who was the commander of the Marine Corps at that time, testified before the committee I chaired that Vieques was a unique facility. It was the only one located in the Atlantic where realistic combat training could be conducted in a combined and coordinated manner. The only Navy live-fire land, complete with day-and-night capabilities, amphibious landing beach and maneuver areas, and the range had areas of low-traffic airspace and deepwater sea space, with underwater and electronic warfare ranges. That was the only one in the world.

The Navy-Marine Corps study examined 18 alternative sites, evaluating the availability of the air-to-ground live ordnance range, with realistic targets and airspace for high-altitude deliveries, and for a naval surface fire support firing range, which permits the training of ships, forward spotters, and fire coordination teams, the ability for combat arms amphibious training, and nearby naval and air support facilities. We looked everywhere for that. We looked at 18 alternative sites. The study concluded that no single site evaluated was able to accomplish all of the training that was conducted at Vieques. The study also considered apportioning the training to various alternative locations but included the piecemeal approach—and this is using their language now—it “significantly degrades training to support the effective integration and coordination of all combined arms.” We are talking about the Marine Corps and the Navy. The Marine Corps is going in and bombing and the Navy has their planes up there and it is all taking place at one time.

To fully understand the capabilities of Vieques and the potential to conduct

Vieques training at other training sites, I visited Vieques and all 18 alternative sites around the world, as well as additional training sites that were used by the Department of Defense that are actually here in the United States. The sites I visited included Cape Wrath in northern Scotland; Capa Tulado in Sardinia; Mona and Dog Islands in the Caribbean; Kennedy County in Texas; Pinecastle, Avon Park, Pensacola, Eglin, and Tyndall in Florida; Cherry Point and Camp Lejeune in North Carolina; Townsend in Georgia; and San Clemente in California. That is a lot of sites, and I went to all of them. None of the locations had the capability to meet the training requirements of the Navy and Marine Corps and would have placed additional restrictions due to lack of training availability for training days, sea and airspace restrictions, proximity to large populated areas, live-fire restrictions, weather, and an inability to conduct combined operations, such as air, land, and sea operations simultaneously—no place.

I also visited the John F. Kennedy Battle Group and the *Wasp*, and learned that live-fire training is essential for our Nation's ability to safely and effectively conduct combat operations, but by not allowing our forces to train using live ordnance in a realistic combined operation at sea, we are putting our military personnel at risk during actual combat operations.

Numerous DOD officials have testified before our committee and reported that the loss of training at the Vieques range has resulted in the loss of critical combat training essential to the Nation's Navy and Marine forces and would increase the risk to our sailors and marines. In fact, it did. These very brilliant people, the top military officials, talked about how many of our troops and how many of our Americans had to die as a result of the loss of that training area.

RADM Kevin Moran, the Navy commander who oversaw operations throughout the Caribbean, compared combined live training to practice for a football team. He explained that coaches could routinely do basic training for quarterbacks separate from the linemen and separate from the defense. They could train everybody individually, but—this is his quote—“at some point you have to bring them together before the big game. It's [Vieques] the only place we can do that.”

Secretary Richard Danzig, who was then the Secretary of the Navy, said: “Only by providing in preparation can we fairly ask our servicemembers to put their lives at risk.”

Admiral Johnson, then-Chief of Naval Operations, and General Jones, who was the Commandant of the Marine Corps, said that Vieques provides integrated live-fire training “critical to our readiness,” and the failure to provide for adequate live-fire training for our naval forces before deployment will place those forces at an unacceptably high risk during the deployment.