

through thin. The Kurds have been instrumental at every phase of U.S. engagement in Iraq and Syria, every phase.

Going back to the 2003 invasion, Kurdish fighters have been crucial boots on the ground in the fight against Islamic tyranny, and that is just a fact. The parts of Iraq retaken and controlled by the Kurds were strongholds for Western values like democracy and capitalism and multiculturalism. In fact, when allied forces withdrew in 2011, not a single U.S. soldier had lost his or her life in Kurdish territory.

The Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, better known as the SDF, have been another set of boots on the ground in the fight against ISIS. With the help of coalition supplies, weapons, and airstrikes, the SDF recaptured large parts of Northern and Eastern Syria from ISIS's iron grip.

Four years ago, the Presiding Officer will recall, there were 100,000 ISIS soldiers. Thanks in large part to our Kurdish allies, those numbers today are 5,000. Today, ISIS has surrendered 99 percent of its territory, including its capital in Raqqa. The so-called caliphate fighters are now being held to a small sliver of territory on the eastern border with Iraq near the Euphrates River. Our Kurdish allies deserve much of the credit for these successes.

It is plain to see that the Syrian Kurds have been invaluable in America's fight against jihadists and tyrants in the Middle East. The SDF, Syrian Kurds, controls nearly one-quarter of Syria right now. That is land that doesn't belong to ISIS; that is land that doesn't belong to Assad, a butcher; that is land that doesn't belong to Russia; and that is land that doesn't belong to Iran. More importantly, it is land where the Syrian Kurds know they will be free from persecution and from slaughter.

For a while now, I have been asking my colleagues in the Senate to support my amendment to S. 1. My amendment would promote stability and security for our close friends in the Middle East because it is the right thing to do. It is the moral thing to do, and America's foreign policy has always had a moral component.

My amendment will allow the United States to defend the Kurds in Syria by giving the President—not requiring the President to do anything. It would give the President the authority to use our military as he deems fit to keep our promise and to protect our allies—and all of our allies. After all, the Kurds have contributed to the fight against ISIS, and we owe them some peace of mind as we draw down our presence in the region. As we draw down our presence in the region, it is time to stand up and stand by our friends to make sure the fight stays won.

The threat of U.S. military force has been a major deterrent for the reemergence of jihadists like ISIS and al-Qaida. As the Presiding Officer knows

well, weakness invites in wolves. Our presence has held back Assad, it has held back Turkey, it has held back Russia, and it has held back Iran from gaining stronger footholds in the area. Without assurances of our support, as we wind down our effort in Syria, the Kurds will be left behind to fend for themselves. Without the Kurds, we cannot be certain who will step in to fill the power vacuum in the areas of Syria they currently control. We can only guess, and the answers to those guesses don't look good.

If the Kurds are vulnerable to attack from Turkey or Syrian rebels, they might have to turn to their enemies for protection out of fear. Even if they don't, they can't fight off the Turkish military if the Turkish military decides to attack and pursue the remnants of ISIS at the same time.

To abandon the Kurds now would be unconscionable. To abandon the Kurds now would compromise the security of our allies, Israel and Jordan, and it would risk exposing the region to more turmoil.

I urge my colleagues in the Senate to think about the Kurds as they consider how best we can strengthen America's interests and security in the Middle East. It is time we make sure America keeps the promises we made to all of our allies—not just some of our allies, all of our allies—in the Middle East.

Mr. KENNEDY. Toward that end, I hereby offer a second amendment that I am sending to the desk. This second-degree amendment will amend amendment No. 65 proposed by Senator McCONNELL. I ask that the amendment be read.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is the Senator offering the amendment?

Mr. KENNEDY. I am.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That requires unanimous consent because the Senate is in a period of debate only.

Mr. KENNEDY. I hear no objection. May I ask that my amendment be read?

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. KENNEDY. Afterward, I would ask that my amendment be read.

Now I would again ask for a quorum call.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I would like to temporarily withdraw my unanimous consent on my amendment, although I reserve the right to return.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Consent is withdrawn.

The majority leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OFFICE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, this year marks the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Legislative Drafting Service, which we now know as the Office of the Legislative Counsel. In recognition of the anniversary, I would like to make a few comments about the history of the office.

During the first 130 years of Congress, 1789–1918, legislation for Congress was drafted by Members of Congress, congressional staff, Executive agencies, and outside individuals and groups which sometimes led to legislation that was not always clear, consistent, organized, and well written.

In 1911, Columbia University established a Legislative Drafting Research Fund to conduct research and work toward the better drafting of statutes and sent Professor Middleton Beaman and Thomas Parkinson to Congress to demonstrate the feasibility and value of the use by Congress of a full-time staff of professional legislative drafters.

The positive experiences of committees, Members, and staff of Congress, including the Ways and Means Committee of the House of Representatives, in working with professional legislative drafters led to the introduction and consideration of legislation to establish a Legislative Drafting Bureau, including S. 1240, 63rd Congress, which was reported to the Senate on June 17, 1913.

During the debate on the establishment of a Legislative Drafting Bureau, Senator Elihu Root of New York argued in favor of establishment citing the use of counsel by the British House of Commons and stating that “[t]he fundamental idea . . . to give the benefit of a trained, experienced student in the preparation of bills. . . . We need trained and intelligent assistance in the drafting of laws.”

On February 24, 1919, Congress enacted section 1303 of the Revenue Act