

I have consistently called for—and President Obama had promised—a comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy designed to meet a set of clearly defined goals for the Afghanistan-Pakistan region. The Obama administration has rightly characterized the problem as involving both of these two countries. But right now, we have a plan only for one country.

I am not suggesting it is General McChrystal's job to set that wider. As directed by the President and by our NATO allies whom he represents as commander of ISAF, the general has laid out a good strategy for success in Afghanistan and that strategy includes a request for more boots on the ground. I understand there is a lot of hand-wringing in Washington right now over Afghanistan. We saw the same reaction over sending more troops into Iraq 2 years ago. The political courage shown by the White House and Congress back then proved to be successful. Today, we must marshal the same courage and give General McChrystal what he needs to get the job done.

Amid the reports of wavering and hand-wringing, an important question comes into mind: What has changed? During the campaign and after his inauguration, the President spoke repeatedly about the importance of winning the war in Afghanistan.

For example, on March 27, 2009, when he rolled out his comprehensive new strategy for Pakistan and Afghanistan, the President declared that:

To succeed, we and our friends and allies must reverse the Taliban's games and promote a more capable and accountable Afghan government. Our troops have fought bravely against a ruthless enemy. Our civilians have made great sacrifices. Our allies have borne a heavy burden. Afghans have suffered and sacrificed for their future. But for six years, Afghanistan has been denied the resources that it demands because of the war in Iraq. Now, we must make a commitment that can accomplish our goals.

I was heartened by these words. I agreed with the President on the need for a fully resourced counterinsurgency campaign and a solid commitment to ensure the security of the Afghan people and our own vital interests. I applauded his recognition of winning this war when he told our veterans, the VFW, this past August:

Those who attacked America on 9/11 are plotting to do so again. If left unchecked, the Taliban insurgency will be an even larger safe haven from which al-Qaida would plot to kill more Americans. So this is not only a war worth fighting; this is fundamental to the defense of our people.

But our troops in the field have now been waiting over 6 months for the President to follow through on his promises. As General McChrystal's recently leaked assessment points out, time is of the essence, and we cannot afford more stalling by the administration on this vital national security issue.

The general said the next 9 to 12 months are critical and that is why we need a decision now. I call on the Presi-

dent to heed his own words from this past weekend. Let's ignore the politics of the moment and finish the job in Afghanistan.

I recognize we have not yet seen any official numbers associated with General McChrystal's troop request, but I am very encouraged by the general's emphasis on putting more of an Afghan face on operations. I believe our ultimate success depends on our ability to hand responsibility for security over to Afghans.

I was also gratified to see the report's strong emphasis on the importance of "smart power" to achieving success. While the assessment does not actually use the term, the concept is woven into the core of the report. General McChrystal and others have been clear that traditional kinetic military efforts alone will not achieve the success we need. Success will be attainable only if we maximize the ability of nonmilitary agencies of the United States Government to work through Afghan institutions to achieve stability, reconstruction, and the rule of law.

As I have said repeatedly on the floor, the efforts by the National Guard, led by my own Missouri National Guard, to bring agricultural experts, including full-time farmers who also serve as trained military soldiers, who have gone into Nangarhar Province and in 1 year transformed the agriculture of Afghanistan so they could make a greater profit from raising legitimate crops and taking Afghanistan and Nangarhar Province from the No. 2 poppy-producing province in the nation down to almost zero poppy production. Six more National Guards from different States are there now. More are coming. Two weeks ago, I challenged all of the Nation's National Guard and their commanders at their meeting in Nashville to commit to send a National Guard unit from every State to an appropriate province where they can help, and they can make a difference. That is part of smart power. They need to bring the economic resources and the structures and the information and experience we have, protected by soldiers and airmen of the National Guard who can defend themselves and those they are protecting. That is smart power.

In the McChrystal report, the Afghan Defense Minister rejected the popular myth that Afghanistan is a graveyard of empires and we are destined to fail there. I couldn't agree more. As General McChrystal affirmed in his report: "While the situation is serious, success is still achievable." The Obama administration and Congress must each do its own part to give our troops the resources and time they need to make that success a reality.

Let's not snatch a defeat from the jaws of victory in Afghanistan just because a few pundits are pedaling political pessimism in Washington. All the experts, including General McChrystal, agree we need a properly resourced

counterinsurgency strategy, and we need it now. It is time to listen to our commanders on the ground, not the ever-changing political winds whispering defeat in Washington.

Madam President, I thank the Chair, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. VOINOVICH. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 10 minutes.

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

#### EASTERN EUROPE

Mr. VOINOVICH. Madam President, I rise to discuss America's relationship with our Eastern European friends as well as the challenges America faces in our relationship with Russia.

Over the last decade in the Senate, I have been a champion of NATO and worked diligently to increase membership in the alliance. I have also been active in improving our image in Eastern Europe through the expansion of the Visa Waiver Program at the request of our friends and allies in Eastern Europe. My passion for foreign relations stems in large part as a supporter of Ohio's diverse ethnic communities. As mayor of Cleveland and Governor of Ohio, I gained a keen understanding of Europe from my close work with constituents who had ties to countries that were once subject to life behind the Iron Curtain. This goes back to my first paper in undergraduate school and how the United States sold out Yugoslavia at Teheran and Yalta.

We did see the Berlin Wall fall and the Iron Curtain torn thanks in part to the efforts of Pope John Paul II, President Reagan, and President George H.W. Bush. But even with the end of the Cold War, I was deeply concerned that darker forces in Russia could once again reemerge as a threat to democracy, human rights, and religious freedom not just for the Russian people but for the newly freed "captive nations" of Eastern Europe.

I understood getting those nations into NATO could make the alliance more vibrant and healthy and give them safe harbor from the possible threat of Russian expansionism. One of my proudest moments in the Senate was being present at Prague in March of 2002 in the room when Lord Robertson announced that seven countries—Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia—were invited to join NATO.

When I was Governor of Ohio and chairman of the National Governors Association, I led an effort in 1998 to

secure passage of an all-50-State resolution in support of NATO expansion for the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland. These new members have brought great vigor to the NATO Alliance and are now some of our strongest allies working alongside our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan—especially Afghanistan.

As such, I was astounded last week to see the Obama administration appear to turn its back on some of our staunchest NATO allies. Last week's missile defense announcement was made with little advance notice or consultation and disregarded the great political capital expended by the leaders of Poland and the Czech Republic. This decision leaves the impression that the United States is dealing unilaterally with Russia without regard to our NATO allies. Regardless of the merits of the decision itself—and I had a chance to talk to Secretary Gates about it, and it makes sense that this was a good decision—the manner in which it was revealed to Warsaw and Prague was a major public relations and public diplomacy blunder.

The Polish people are up in arms about the decision—and not so much with the decision, but the way it was handled and the disregard for handling it in a proper fashion. The fact also that the decision was announced on September 17, 2009, the 70th anniversary of the Soviet invasion of Poland, makes it even worse. The way this decision was communicated shabbily to Poland and the Czech Republic should also send a shiver down the spines of our brothers and sisters in Eastern Europe and their Baltic neighbors, who are concerned with Russia's aggressive efforts to reassert its influence in what was once the Soviet Union.

In an opinion piece in last Friday's edition of the Washington Post, David J. Kramer, of the German Marshall Fund, notes that:

Whatever the official explanation now for not moving forward, many—including the Kremlin—will read this shift as an effort to placate Moscow. Announcing the decision ahead of [President] Obama's meeting with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev this week in Pittsburgh reinforces such thinking.

I had the opportunity this past July to travel to the Baltic States with my friends Senators Durbin, Cardin, and Wicker as part of the U.S. delegation to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, to the parliamentary assembly that was held in Vilnius, Lithuania. As part of that trip, I also visited Riga, Latvia—a stop that marked the highest ranking official visit of the United States in Latvia in over 3 years. In all of our bilateral meetings with Presidents, Prime Ministers, and Foreign Ministers from former Soviet countries or countries the Soviet Union exercised influence over, we were told it was comforting for them to know their membership in NATO serves as a hedge against a potential expansionist Russia.

We should be worried about the uncertainty surrounding a Russia that is

reverting back to a KGB-ruled country seeking to weaponize its oil and natural gas resources as a means to expand its influence on Europe and the West.

I think one of the concerns we all ought to have is that many members of the European Union, instead of coming together and negotiating with Russia over the issue of natural gas, are cutting their own deals. I think we should be very concerned that in the long run many of those countries are not going to be able to make good decisions because of the influence Russia will have over their natural gas resources.

Russia has the world's largest reserves of natural gas and has the eighth-largest oil reserves. Moscow turned off the tap to Ukraine this past winter. They could do it again. We should also be concerned about Moscow using its control of oil and natural gas to pit members of NATO against each other.

There is much talk about resetting the U.S. bilateral relationship with Russia. Moscow seeks to regain its global stature and be respected as a peer in the international community. There is nothing inherently wrong with this.

I believe there are key areas where the United States and Russia share common cause and concern: Russia is a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council and will be essential to effective multilateral pressure on Iran to give up its nuclear program; Russia continues to have leverage on the North Korean regime and has stated that a nuclear-free Korean peninsula is in the interest of both our countries; we are partners on the International Space Station—in fact, we are going to rely on them to send our NASA people to the space station; and, until the Georgia situation flared in August of last year, our government and U.S. industry were working hard on a nuclear cooperation agreement with Russia, very much like the one we entered into with India.

With the world economy as it is today, the worst thing we could do is break off communication and revert back to our Cold War positions. This week's G-20 conference in Pittsburgh is an opportunity to further engage Russia and determine where we have a symbiotic relationship and what we can accomplish together for the good of the international community. Nevertheless, such a reset should not come at the expense of our Eastern European friends.

Time will tell whether last week's decision will have any influence on Russian cooperation on the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty—START—or our efforts to prevent a nuclear-armed Iranian regime.

In the meantime, we have our work cut out as we seek to rebuild confidence and trust with our friends in Eastern Europe. After last week's events, I suspect that their confidence in the reliability of the United States as a partner and ally has been shaken.

I yield the floor and note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. BURRIS. Madam President, I would like to speak in morning business.

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

#### RYAN WHITE HIV/AIDS TREATMENT MODERNIZATION ACT

Mr. BURRIS. Madam President, in my home State of Illinois, there are roughly 44,000 people living with HIV or AIDS.

Every day, these Americans face deadly illnesses that require delicate—and often expensive—treatment.

Thankfully, they don't have to fight this fight alone.

Across America, about 500,000 HIV patients who don't have adequate income or insurance are currently able to receive assistance under the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Treatment Modernization Act.

This program supports a wide range of medical and support services that benefit HIV and AIDS patients.

Illinois alone receives \$75 million in Federal funds that serve more than 10,000 people.

These programs make a real difference, not just in my home State, but in every State in the Union.

They are critically important not only for the people who receive treatment, but for public health in general.

That is why we cannot let the Ryan White Act expire on September 30.

If we do not take action right now to reauthorize this program, the treatments will stop.

If we do not stand up for those who need our help, half a million Americans will suddenly find themselves out in the cold.

We cannot let that happen. We must act now keep this safety net in place.

That's why I support a 3-year extension of the Ryan White Treatment Modernization Act.

But we shouldn't stop there.

As we reauthorize this legislation, it is a great opportunity to make a few small changes to make it more effective.

We should update the Ryan White Act, to make HIV/AIDS information more accurate.

We need to maintain transitional grant areas, so that essential services can be better matched with existing needs.

We should make sure medical transportation and dietary treatments are covered for all patients.

And we should use common sense to ensure that rebates and grants are