

Instead of making the case directly to the American people, the Koch brothers funnel unseemly amounts of money into elections, trying to elect representatives who will do their bidding. Again in the paper today, they have all these phony organizations they fund. It is just a way to hide the agenda of the Koch brothers. They don't want their name to appear. They want to do everything they can to mislead the American people.

The influence of unlimited spending on a political system is not right. It allows individuals to dictate their will on the American electoral process, and in this instance in secret. This unlimited campaign spending disenfranchises Americans who don't have the resources to go tit-for-tat with two of the richest men in the world.

When the minority leader was a freshman Senator, he also took exception to the limitless spending of special interests. He said:

If the American public thinks that special interests are having undue influence on the process, then get rid of the PACs. I will be more than happy to eliminate PACs altogether.

But I guess times have changed. Now the Republican leader rails against campaign finance reform when in the past he was in favor. There should be no surprise that he attended the Kochs' planning session this past weekend. Evidently Senator MCCONNELL no longer believes that special interests have an undue influence on our government.

But he wasn't the only member to attend the Koch extravaganza. The junior Senator from Florida found the time to fly across the country and kiss the ring of the Republican Party's billionaire benefactors and, among other things, told them how outrageous it is that people are talking about the climate changing, that the Earth is warming. I am sure the junior Senator got a lot of applause there, even though we were not able to hear the applause because it is all very secret.

What else should we expect? The decisions by the Supreme Court have left the American people with the status quo in which one side's billionaires are pitted against the other side's billionaires—except one side doesn't have any billionaires.

We must undo the damage done by the Supreme Court's recent campaign finance decisions, and we need to do it now. That is why I support the constitutional amendment sponsored by Senators TOM UDALL of New Mexico and MICHAEL BENNET of Colorado. This constitutional amendment grants Congress the authority to regulate and eliminate the raising and spending of money for Federal elections. Senators UDALL and BENNET's amendment will rein in the massive spending of super PACs which have grown so much since the Citizens United decision in January of 2010. This constitutional amendment also provides States with the authority to institute campaign spending limits at the State level.

Simply put, a constitutional amendment is what this Nation needs to bring sanity back to political campaigns and to restore Americans' confidence in their elected leaders.

Let's put an end to the cult of darkness which is corrupting our elections. It is time we revive our constituents' faith in the electoral system and let them know their voices are being heard.

Mr. DURBIN. Will the majority leader yield to a question through the Chair?

Mr. REID. Be happy to.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask the majority leader through the Chair, yesterday afternoon the subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary on the Constitution held a hearing and a vote on Senate Joint Resolution 19, which the majority leader has referenced, offered by Senator UDALL of New Mexico and Senator BENNET of Colorado.

The resolution would basically restore us to the moment in time before the Citizens United decision and before the McCutcheon Supreme Court decision which would allow the Federal Government and the States to regulate campaign spending. It is content neutral in terms of the efforts to be made by the government but reestablishes new standards in terms of contributions in spending across America.

I ask the Senate majority leader, who has followed this closely, as he has followed the amount of money being spent on elections in this country, what he can foresee as the ultimate result if we fail to undo the Citizens United decision?

Mr. REID. We are already seeing it, I am sad to say. In one State the Koch brothers have spent almost \$20 million against one Senator, and they say that is just the beginning.

America should not be for sale. I agree with the Republican leader when he said there should be limits put on this. I agreed, as I read the quote from his earlier remarks, it is not right.

Now we have two of the richest men in the world trying to buy America, and they are not only trying to buy Senate seats and House seats, there are votes on secretaries of state around the country, State legislatures. They have far more money than virtually every government and they want to have their view of government be the law: Privatize Social Security, do away with the Internal Revenue Service, and on and on with their money-buying program to convince the American people that the Koch brothers are right.

Mr. President, I would also say this through the Chair to my friend. They not only have all these entities I have talked to you about, they give money to the Chamber of Commerce. I am sure they were their largest contributor. Why? Because the Chamber of Commerce runs ads against us.

I appreciate the question and I would like to go on a little longer but the Republican leader is here.

I will close, but I deeply appreciate my friend who has been such an advo-

cate on the Judiciary Committee and I hope very soon that the full committee reports on that resolution so we can move it on the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

ENERGY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, last night the Senate Democratic leadership pulled the Energy and Water bill from consideration for one reason: to protect the administration's new job-killing coal regulations. So once again Senate Democrats are preventing my commonsense procoal measure from moving forward. They have done the bidding of the administration instead of listening to constituents back home. Kentucky families, especially our coal families, continue to struggle under the Obama economy.

The Senate Democratic leadership's latest action is yet another example of the lengths they are willing to go to defend the Obama administration's regulatory agenda—an agenda Washington Democrats seem willing to protect at all costs, even when supposedly pro-energy Senate Democrats try to make us think otherwise.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. President, historians will note that President Obama's national security policy has been noteworthy for its adherence to consistent objectives: drawing down our conventional and nuclear forces, withdrawing from Iraq and Afghanistan, surrendering the tools necessary to fight the war on terror, and placing substantial trust in international organizations and diplomacy. In short, he has displayed an inflexible commitment to policy positions that would completely erode America's standing in the world, and he has refused to change course even as circumstances have changed.

I, like many in the Senate, profoundly disagree with his view of America's role in the world. I disagree because I believe his attitude has left America weaker and will leave substantial problems to his successor.

I believe that we, as a superpower without imperialistic aims, have a duty to help maintain an international order and a balance of power, not out of altruism but out of national interest. And I believe that international order is best maintained through American military might. In fact, I believe that American military might forms its very backbone.

But President Obama has always been a reluctant Commander in Chief. It seems he has always seen things quite differently. That was clear from his first actions in office, and his more

recent actions set the other bookend to his Presidency—withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Consider that in his very first week in office, he signed an Executive order that sought to end CIA's interrogation and detention programs and to close Guantanamo within a year. The problem was that he didn't have a credible plan for what to do with the detainees afterward. He still doesn't.

That was one of the first things he did in office, and it parallels disconcertingly with one of the most recent things he has done in office: announcing the withdrawal of all of our combat forces from Afghanistan by the end of his term. I say that because once again he announced step A without thinking through the consequences of step B. He seems determined to pull out completely whether or not the Taliban is in a position to reestablish itself, whether or not Al Qaeda's leadership finds a more permissive environment in the tribal areas of Pakistan, and whether or not Al Qaeda has been driven from Afghanistan completely—one of our primary aims in this conflict from the beginning.

The two examples I mentioned serve as bookends to his Presidency, but between these two bookends much has been done that undermines our national security—for instance, the President's inability to see Russia and China for what they are: dissatisfied regional powers intent on increasing their respective spheres of influence.

The failed reset with Russia and the President's commitment to a world without nuclear weapons led him to hastily sign an arms treaty that did nothing to substantially reduce Russia's nuclear stockpile. What do we have to show for the reset? Moscow was undeterred in its assault on Ukraine, as everyone can plainly see, and Russia has repeatedly found ways to undermine our national objectives.

Then there is the President's strategic pivot to the Asia-Pacific—a plan he announced without any real plan to fund it, rendering the strategy largely hollow. We see examples of that almost daily, with China undeterred in its efforts to intimidate smaller nations over territorial disputes. Let's be clear. We cannot pivot forces to Asia that are still needed in places such as the Mediterranean and Persian Gulf, nor can we constrain China's ambitions without investing or developing the forces needed to do so. I fear that the failure to make the kinds of naval, air, and Marine Corps investments that are necessary could have tragic consequences down the road.

Of course, we have all seen how eager the President is to declare an end to the war on terrorism. The threat from Al Qaeda and other affiliated groups has now metastasized. The turmoil unleashed by uprisings in north Africa and the broader Middle East has resulted in additional ungoverned space in Syria, Libya, Egypt, and Yemen. We have seen prison breaks in Iraq, Paki-

stan, Libya, and the release of hundreds of prisoners in Egypt. Terrorists have also escaped from prisons in Yemen, a country that is no more ready to detain the terrorists at Guantanamo now than they were in 2009. And the flow of foreign fighters into Syria—which has fueled the growth of ISIL—suggests that the civil war there will last for the foreseeable future.

The dogged adherence to withdrawing our conventional strength and sticking to campaign promises has created a more dangerous world, not a stable one—as just one example, the President's failure to negotiate a status of forces agreement with Iraq. An agreement such as that would have allowed for the kind of residual military force that could have prevented the assault by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. Now we see the consequences unfolding before our eyes, and it is incredibly worrying. President Obama's withdrawal-at-all-costs policy regarding Iraq has proved deeply harmful to U.S. interests, and it ignores the sacrifices made by our servicemembers—those who sacrificed life and limb fighting to keep America safe.

Several weeks ago the President spoke at West Point, and in that speech he vaguely described a new counterterrorism strategy and pledged to engage “partners to fight terrorists alongside us.” He made clear that he hopes to use special operations forces in an economy of force, and he hopes to deploy, train, and assist missions across the globe—all as he withdraws our conventional forces and as our conventional warfighting ability atrophies.

As I said, he will leave his successor with a great many challenges.

So this morning my Republican colleagues and I will explain how, by inflexibly clinging to campaign promises made in 2008, the President has weakened the national security posture of the United States and why we believe he is likely to leave the next President with daunting security problems to solve.

Mr. President, I see the Senator from Arizona and others are here.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half of the time.

The Senator from Arizona.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Republicans be allowed an additional 15 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCAIN. I thank the Presiding Officer.

FOREIGN POLICY

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, today we see reports that now ISIS has taken over the major oil refinery in Baiji, Iraq. Names that we used to hear quite often, such as, Tal Afar, Mosul, Fallujah, Ramadi—all of these areas are now under the black flag of Al Qaeda and ISIS, which is an even worse organization than Al Qaeda, if that can be believed.

We now see the forces of ISIS marching on Baghdad itself, which I don't believe they can take. But the second largest city in Iraq—Mosul—is now under the black flag, and quantities of military capability and equipment have clearly fallen into the hands of what has now become the richest, largest base for terrorism in history. This has all come about in the last couple of weeks.

What has the United States of America done? Today we see on the front page of the Washington Post: “U.S. Sees Risk in Iraqi Airstrikes.” The President of the United States goes for fundraising and golfing and now is fiddling while Iraq burns. We need to act, but we also need to understand why we are where we are today.

The Senator from South Carolina and I visited Iraq on many occasions—more than I can count. We know for a fact that if we would have left a residual force behind, this situation would not be where it is today.

The fact is that the President of the United States, if he wanted to leave a residual force, never made that clear to the American people. In fact, on October 22, 2012, the President said: “What I would not have had done was left 10,000 troops in Iraq that would tie us down.” In 2011 he celebrated the departure—as he described it—of the last combat soldier from Iraq.

The fact is that because of our fecklessness and the fact that we did not leave that residual force behind, we are paying the price, and the people of Iraq are paying a heavier price.

What do we need to do? First of all, we have to understand there are no good options remaining. This is a culmination of failure after failure of this administration. But for us to do nothing now will ensure this base for terrorism. We have tracked over 100 who have already come back to the United States of America. There are hundreds who are leaving—not only the battlefield in Syria and Iraq—and they will pose a direct threat to the security of the United States.

I say to the critics who say “Do nothing and let them fight it out,” you cannot confine this conflict to Iraq and