

that discussion right now. All know that the 2001 authorization passed in the days after 9/11 to enable us to go after the attack perpetrators is badly in need of an update after 13 years. Despite its facial language only allowing military action against those complicit in the 9/11 attacks, it has been broadly interpreted to authorize a global war against Al Qaeda or associated forces so long as they pose a threat to the United States or any of its dozens of "coalition partners." That AUMF 13 years later has no geographic limitations. It has no expiration date. Members of the administration have testified in Senate hearings that they expect the war declared in that AUMF may go on for the next 25 or 30 years.

I wasn't here in 2001, but I have no doubt that the Members of Congress who voted for that authorization never would have contemplated war lasting into the 2030s or 2040s, and the American public has never expressed support for such a notion of perpetual war.

But the threat posed to the United States and our allies by nonstate terrorist organizations, whether it is ISIL or Al-Qaeda or Boko Haram or Al Nusra or others, is real and it has grown; and the very nature of the threat is quite different from the old notion of nation state military power that was our standard challenge even through the end of the 20th century.

In a speech in May of 2013 to the National Defense University, President Obama recognized that the administration and Congress have to work together to examine and update the 2001 AUMF in order to narrow its scope, clarify what it allows, and make it suitable for the new challenges that are before us. I have heard many of my colleagues in this body say exactly the same, but there has been no progress on this necessary update. The administration has made no proposal. There is no AUMF revision under active consideration in either House. Strangely, while all acknowledge the authorization needs an update, we drift from crisis to crisis—Syria, Iraq, POW exchanges—without grappling with the underlying document that initiated our entrance into war 13 years ago.

We cannot afford further delays in tackling this important task. So as I conclude, I encourage all of us, Congress and the administration, to embark on the work of updating the 2001 authorization to reflect the current dimensions of our security challenges. The administration should send to Congress a proposal for a revised and narrowed authorization that specifies how the United States should seek to counter threats posed by groups such as ISIL. There will be a role for the military and there will be a role for counterterrorism activities carried out by our intelligence agencies. There will also be a role for development assistance to eliminate the conditions of desperation that so often breed fanaticism. But it is time for those roles to

be clearly described so they can be publicly debated and ultimately adopted by Congress.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

TRINITY SITE RECOGNITION

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Thank you very much, Madam President, and I thank my colleague from the Foreign Relations Committee for a very good speech on a critical issue that our Nation faces right now.

On July 16, 1945, the first atomic bomb was exploded at the Trinity site in New Mexico. For residents of the Tularosa Basin, it marked the beginning of decades of cancer, chronic illness, and suffering that continues to this day.

Next month there will be a candlelight vigil organized by the Tularosa Basin Downwinders Consortium. Folks will once again gather as they have done now for each year for the past 5 years. They will stand shoulder to shoulder, they will light candles, and they will remember. They will remember that an injustice was done and has yet to be righted.

The Trinity explosion paid little attention to surrounding communities. Radioactive debris fell from the sky, killing cattle, poisoning water, poisoning food, the air we breathe. The damage was done and would remain long after the test was finished, for generations. The suffering it caused is very real and so is the sadness, disappointment, and anger. Attention was not paid then, but it must be paid now.

That is why I have introduced legislation in this Congress to amend the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act to recognize the Trinity site, to include the New Mexicans who have suffered for decades, who still wait for justice, who still wait for compensation from the Federal Government for their injuries almost 70 years later—still waiting.

We cannot change the past. We cannot restore the lives of those who have passed away or erase the years of health problems, the years of suffering endured by too many and for too long, but fair compensation will make a difference and provide badly needed help.

The original RECA legislation required years of work on the ground. My father helped lay the groundwork for RECA a quarter of a century ago. Through his work with radiation exposure survivors and their families, compiling stories and records and histories of victims, the Tularosa Basin Downwinders Consortium continues this critical work and I encourage them to keep up the fight.

This is a bipartisan effort and driven by simple fairness for American citizens who should have been helped but were ignored instead. Our bill would expand the downwind exposure area to include seven States from the Trinity and Nevada test sites and would in-

clude Guam from the Pacific side. It would also help post-1971 uranium miners to be eligible for compensation and it would fund a critical public health study of those who live and work in uranium development communities.

I will continue to push for this legislation. It is the right thing to do, and we should get it done.

When folks gather in Tularosa and stand together as candles flicker in the New Mexico sky, we will take a moment and remember those who have been affected by cancer, who have been brought down by radiation-related diseases, and we will remember those who passed away and those who continue to suffer. We offer our prayers and support to those who are still fighting. We stand with you. We know you have suffered. We know justice has not been done, and we will not rest until it is.

I wish to commend the Tularosa Downwinders Consortium, folks such as Tina Cordova and the late Fred Tyler, who will be greatly missed—great advocates, dedicated, committed, and refusing to give up. Thank you for making your voices heard, making your stories known, and for not giving up the fight. Together we will work for fairness until the day comes that we can stand together in Tularosa and light candles of celebration that justice has been done.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, I wish to talk today about a couple of issues. This first issue I will address concerns the first freedom and the First Amendment in this country, a matter which people in other parts of the world are seeing in jeopardy, and that is freedom of religion.

I read an article from the BBC about the current status of Meriam Ibrahim. Just 2 days ago she was acquitted of her death sentence in Sudan, and many people in this building and around the world applauded her release. She was sentenced to death because she would not disavow her Christian faith. In fact, for months she had been held in prison. She gave birth to a child while she was in prison, and she had a young child with her while she was in prison. The birth of the baby, and then the early months of the baby's life, was the determining factor as to when she would be first beaten and then hanged because she would not disavow her faith.

Two days ago, she and her two children were set free. She is the wife of a naturalized U.S. citizen. She had been imprisoned by this government, and unfairly so. Many of my colleagues have been working to secure her release. Last month Senator AYOTTE and I sent a letter to Secretary Kerry urging him to offer and provide political asylum for her immediately. We should not have to provide asylum for her