

at not just the roots of the problem but what is the comprehensive strategy to address that problem.

We can't develop a successful strategy to defeat ISIS unless we understand its true nature. The President's insistence on downplaying the extremist threat and viewing each act in isolation is a fundamental flaw in his national security policy, in my belief. Referring to ISIS as the "JV team," as it seized nearly one-third of Iraq, publicly stating that ISIS has been "contained" just hours before the attack in Paris, and then referring to those attacks as a mere "setback" are all symptomatic of this failed policy, in my view.

I think this is a time for moral and strategic clarity. I think of Roosevelt and Churchill in World War II. I think of Kennedy and Reagan in the Cold War. Times of crisis require seeing threats as they are and not as we might wish them to be. Nothing would make me happier than if the President of the United States would provide this clarity.

We now know that the Paris attacks were planned in Syria, organized in Belgium, and carried out in France. This revelation is yet another confirmation of a key fact many of us have been saying for years: ISIS is a global threat with global reach and ambitions. It is motivated by a radical Islamist ideology that while rejected by the majority of Muslims, nevertheless holds great appeal to too many Muslims around the world. This ideology rejects any form of government that is not based on a radical interpretation of Sunni Islamism and holds that it is the duty of all Muslims to wage jihad against those who do not share their views—including of course the United States, including of course Israel, including of course the apostate regimes, as they call them, like America's Arab allies all through the Middle East.

The President continues to insist that the limited scale and scope of the administration's strategy to counter ISIS is working, but ISIS is not just a nuisance to be managed. It is a global threat to be defeated. Rather than containing ISIS to a geographic region, the conflict in Syria and Iraq has served as an incubator for terrorism. The territory ISIS holds provides a safe haven for these terrorists to train, organize, gather resources, and project power. Tens of thousands of foreign fighters from Europe, the United States, and around the world have flocked to the frontlines of the global jihad, and many return home with the training and resources necessary to carry out monstrous attacks. Meanwhile, a flood of refugees fleeing atrocities and persecution in Syria have provided ISIS operatives a community in which they can easily hide. Indeed, it appears at least one of the Paris attackers was someone who disguised himself as a refugee to get into Europe.

This enemy is cunning and knows it cannot defeat us on a conventional

fight on the battlefield, so it is employing asymmetric warfare to attack our values and degrade the collective security of our nations. They know they have access into every home and are using modern media technologies to exploit a disenfranchised minority. Their audience spans the globe. Think about this: If they only reach 0.0001 percent of the global population, then they have an army of over half a million potential terrorist recruits.

More intelligence cooperation between the United States and our allies is absolutely necessary to track suspected ISIS terrorists and prevent them from hiding their presence and launching attacks. The United States should also increase the scale and intensity of military operations against ISIS targets. If we can give the French the intelligence to be able to attack key ISIS targets in Syria, then why haven't we used that intelligence ourselves to degrade the enemy? We must intensify the use of our military. We must intensify U.S. Special Operations forces and local allies. We must defeat ISIS forces on the ground and retake territory.

As I have argued for a couple of years now, we cannot ignore the broader conflict in Syria and must lead our allies in pursuing a comprehensive strategy to not just defeat ISIS but to also achieve a negotiated resolution of the Syrian conflict.

Over 4 million people have fled Syria. The Government of Syria has murdered over 200,000 of its own citizens. I saw an interview today where someone was asking one of the refugees from Syria what their preference was—to go to Europe or to go to the United States. The refugees said what most refugees said: I want to go home, but I need a safe haven there.

We should have a no-fly zone in Syria and provide for people the ability to stay in their own country. Military force alone will not solve this problem. Obviously, we need to do more and engage the Muslim world in this effort, but it can shape the parameters of an acceptable solution.

These measures are all important, but they all stem from the recognition of something far more fundamental. In the absence of U.S. leadership, chaos and instability ensues. It takes active American leadership to reassure our allies, to deter our enemies, and to uphold the international order upon which global stability and prosperity depend. We should not be the world's policemen; I agree with that. It is more like being the world's sheriff, where you bring together a posse of like-minded nations. Whether it is the NATO countries with regard to Ukraine or whether it is our Sunni allies with regard to what is happening in the Middle East, we must be the sheriff who pulls the posse together. In the absence of that, in the absence of that leadership, we will not meet this challenge.

In the Middle East, the chaos we see is not just contained in Syria, and it is

not just confined to ISIS. As the United States prepares to provide billions in sanctions relief agreed to in the Iran nuclear deal, Iran has been very busy. Iran has sent ground troops into Syria as part of a new joint offensive with Assad, Russia, and the terrorist group Hezbollah. Iran has tested a ballistic missile, they have arrested several American citizens living in Iran, and they have threatened to wipe Israel off the map of the Middle East. Ayatollah Khamenei has now banned any further negotiations with the United States of America.

Meanwhile, Russian forces are conducting combat operations in the Middle East for the first time since 1941. Russia has launched a sustained air campaign—not really against ISIS, as Putin claims, but almost entirely against U.S.-backed rebel groups and other moderate groups opposed to both ISIS and Assad. There is discussion of them targeting ISIS more. I hope that is true. In Europe, Russian forces continue to occupy portions of eastern Ukraine and continue to occupy Crimea. After a brief lull, violence is once again rising, as Russian efforts to undermine the democratic pro-Western government of Ukraine persist. Russia also continues to wage an unprecedented information war that leverages all elements of national power to confuse, demoralize, and mislead.

In the meantime, hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing conflict in the Middle East stream into Europe, threatening to overwhelm Europe's ability to vet and process them and create opportunities for terrorists to evade detection and conduct attacks like those we saw in Paris.

In the Pacific, China is building artificial islands in international waters to reinforce its claims in the South China Sea.

This is the world that unenforced redlines and leading from behind have created. It is a world where the very structure of international order is under siege and where the direction of our collective future is brought into question. Of course, this trend is not irreversible, but the United States must first step out of the shadows.

Ronald Reagan spoke memorably about peace through strength. We must be unambiguous in our support of our allies, and we must be clear-eyed and resolute in standing up to our foes. This is the path to peace and security for us and for the world.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

PRESIDENT'S REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PLAN

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I appreciate very much the remarks of Senator PORTMAN. I think he is touching on some critically important issues that all of us need to fully understand. As always, his insights are valuable and worthy of serious consideration by all.

I would also briefly note that I do believe—and I spoke about this several weeks ago—there is a need for this country, as Senator CASEY noted, to develop a bipartisan strategy, particularly with regard to how we deal with the rising spasm of extremism in the Middle East. It is a fact. It is happening. We as a country have to be able to work together in a bipartisan way to decide what action we may choose to use—whether it is military force, whether it is technological advancement, whether it is working with allies—to do whatever we can to increase more stability, more peace and tranquility, and less terrorism and violence. It is a big matter, and I am not at all confident that we have a strategy. In fact, we don't have a strategy that anyone can recognize as effective in this region, as a number of witnesses before the Armed Services Committee have testified, including former Secretary of Defense Bob Gates, who served under both President Bush and President Obama.

This President seems to have his own plan. He refuses to listen. As he traveled around the world recently talking about the attacks in Paris, I think it stunned our allies. This is not a healthy situation. There are millions of refugees. Good leadership, responsible leadership, should have anticipated this danger, and when it developed, have a sound strategy that deals with it in a humane way. It cannot be the strategy of the United States and Europe that when instability occurs anywhere in the world, when instability occurs in Syria or other places in the Middle East, the solution is for everybody to come to Europe or the United States. This is not healthy for those countries, it is not part of the historical tradition, and for reasons I am going to touch on, it is very bad policy.

I think Senator PORTMAN is correct that we are not where we need to be militarily, strategically, and in other ways, to help bring about a situation in which people can return to their homes and be with their families and not have to be running all over the world, marching through Europe, not knowing where they are going to go, in countries that will not and cannot support them. It is not sound policy.

I want to address the economic and security threats imposed by the President's refugee resettlement plan and talk about it in some detail and explain why the more effective and compassionate solution is to resettle the region's refugees in safe zones in the region rather than flying them into the United States or Europe or other places around the globe.

Each and every year, the United States issues green cards to roughly 1 million immigrants. We admit approximately 500,000 foreign students. We distribute work visas to approximately 700,000 foreign workers and grant approximately 25,000 requests for asylum. Asylum is when a person arrives in our

country and says: I can't go home because I will be in danger. A refugee is when somebody is in a foreign country—not their own country—and comes to our Embassy or to the UN and says: I am threatened here. I am not safe. I want to be a refugee and go elsewhere. If they are accepted, they are a refugee. If the others are accepted after they come to our country—perhaps illegally—they are asylees. We have brought in another 70,000 refugees on top of that each year in recent years.

The fact is, refugees are among the most costly immigration programs for several reasons. Refugees are instantly eligible for all Federal welfare and entitlement programs. Most are low-skilled and frequently lack any formal education and many—most don't speak English.

There is great cost involved in this. One estimate from an expert is that for every 10,000 refugees admitted, there will be a lifetime cost to the U.S. Treasury of \$6.5 billion. This year, we are now going to accept 85,000. The President says he will accept 100,000 next year and maybe more. Now, 100,000 is 10 times \$6.5 billion added to the debt of the country, because no extra money is being appropriated for Medicaid and for food stamps. The money is going to be added to the debt. It is not healthy. It is very expensive.

There are enormous security concerns as well. We have seen a number of refugees implicated in terrorist activity inside the United States. We wish it weren't so, but it is a fact. Yet, in this environment of increasing Federal debt, wage stagnation driven by excess labor supply, and ISIS terrorists trying to infiltrate as refugees, President Obama has announced a unilateral expansion of the refugee program to begin admitting many more Syrian refugees. This is at a time when 83 percent of the voters say projected growth in immigration should be curbed, according to Pew polling.

The President persists in his plan even though his own officials, testifying before the Subcommittee on Immigration and the National Interest, conceded there is no database in Syria with which to vet refugees.

The administration briefed us last night, and they publicly stated: We are going to use biometric techniques. In the United States, what does that mean? It means they take your fingerprint and run it against the NCIC—National Crime Information Center—and see if you have warrants for your arrest or if you have been convicted of anything. You can't do that in Syria. You can take their fingerprints, but there is no database to run it against. So that is just puffing. That is spin. You can't run fingerprints in Syria, because there is no database to run them against. As his officials further concluded, there is no way to prevent refugees from radicalizing after their entrance into the United States, as has happened, unfortunately, with Somali refugees.

It is an unpleasant but unavoidable fact that bringing in large

unassimilated flows of migrants from the Muslim world creates the conditions possible for radicalization and extremism to take hold. This is what they are seeing in Europe.

The FBI Director tells us there are now active ISIS investigations in all 50 States. They have a terrorist investigation involving ISIS in every State in the Union today. I think there are 900 open cases.

Our subcommittee has identified dozens of examples of foreign-born immigrants committing and attempting to commit acts of terror on U.S. soil. It is happening every day. Preventing and responding to these acts is an effort encompassing thousands of Federal agents, attorneys, and prosecutors and billions of dollars in costs. They are directing their efforts away from bank fraud and Medicare fraud and toward watching terrorists. Their ability has been limited by restrictions on their ability to conduct surveillance. In effect, we are voluntarily admitting individuals at risk for terrorism and then on the back end trying to stop them from carrying out bad, violent designs.

The former head of the Citizenship and Immigration Services union, which represents immigration workers who handle the casework on these evaluations for admission, issued this warning more than a year ago. This is important. This is the man who represents the individuals who do the work every day, and he got frustrated and he told the truth. This is what he said:

It is also essential to warn the public about the threat that ISIS will exploit our loose and lax visa policies to gain entry to the United States.

Indeed, as we know from the first World Trade Center bombing in 1993, from the 9/11 terrorist attacks, from the Boston Bombing, from the recent plot to bomb a school and courthouse in Connecticut, and many other lesser-known terror incidents, we are letting terrorists into the United States right through our front door. . . . Applications for entry are rubber-stamped, the result of grading agents by speed rather than discretion. We've become the visa clearinghouse for the world.

We can't properly vet the people coming now. Yet we are still talking about adding more and more people to it.

Senator CRUZ and I sent the administration a list of 72 individuals charged with or convicted of terrorism-related offenses in just the last year. We wanted to know something. We asked for the immigration histories of each one of these individuals. Isn't that a good thing to know? We are policymakers. We are supposed to decide how to conduct immigration issues. As we evaluate how to improve our immigration situation, shouldn't we know how these terrorists—who have been arrested, charged, or convicted—got into the country?

Well, stunningly, the administration has just refused to respond. They didn't

respond because they don't want the public to know. They think if they can ignore these requests, then people will not know and will not begin to question how things are being conducted. Congress should not acquiesce to the President's refugee funding request when he refuses to even publicly disclose the immigration history of these 72 terrorists, many of whom are involved with and directly connected with Al Qaeda and ISIS.

An outright majority of the public opposes resettling Syrian refugees in the United States. In fact, voters across all parties wish to see a reduction of Middle Eastern refugee settlements. It is in the data. That is what people think. They are worried about this issue. Why shouldn't they be? We have had our own problems. We have had 9/11, we have had the Boston bombers, and many other instances, such as Chattanooga, and look at what is happening in Europe. I don't think the American people are mean or unkind. They are just rightly concerned. They want to protect their families, their Nation, and their interests, and I think we should consider their concerns.

The safe and proper course is to focus on regional resettlement. One report says that for the price of placing one refugee in the United States, 12 can be helped in their homeland. Our goal must be to help refugees find safety and help them return to their homes, not for us to depopulate the region.

How serious is this? Only this strategy will protect the security of the United States and the West, protect the finances of our country from further debt, and protect the long-term stability and safety of the Middle East itself. That is what our goal should be, and our President is not focused on this issue. It has been raised in committee after committee and nothing has been accomplished. He just sticks with the plan he has.

What then is Congress to do to stop the President from carrying out a plan the voters oppose and Congress has not approved? The answer lies in the power of the purse. Each and every year the President submits a request to Congress to fund his Refugee Admissions Program. Only with these funds can the President carry out his plans. Congress, which has been run over time and again by this President, must not write the blank check the President is asking for. He can also bring in more refugees than he has currently indicated. Secretary Kerry has told the Judiciary Committees of the House and Senate they just may well bring in more than this.

My colleague Senator SHELBY and I outlined in a joint statement that the answer is for Congress to include in the year-end funding bill a clear requirement that the President must submit his annual refugee plan to Congress for approval. Senator SHELBY is on that Appropriations Committee. Under this plan, Congress must approve how many refugees are brought in and from where.

Mr. President, is it time to wrap up?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I thank the Chair and ask for 1 additional minute to wrap up.

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

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, we are facing a humanitarian crisis of monumental proportions. In large part, it is because the President has mismanaged the situation in Syria. He is the Chief Executive, he is the Commander in Chief, the military does what he says, and this has not been good. It just has not been good. It has caused danger, it has caused innocent people to be killed, it has caused people to have to flee, and it has also allowed the surge of ISIS and Al Qaeda-type terrorist organizations in Syria to be able to create an entire state of their own and to export their terrorism.

We have to create safe zones in Syria and other places in the region where people can stay in their homes, and we need to work to end this fighting as soon as possible so people can go back home permanently. It cannot be the position of this country that we just bring in millions of people because of the dangers abroad. It just does not make common sense.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, as my colleague from Alabama prepares to leave, I want to wish him and his family a happy Thanksgiving holiday and I look forward to seeing him in 10 days.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, Senator CARPER is one of our most delightful colleagues. He is always gentlemanly and calls us to consider and think on the higher things. I thank my friend from Delaware for that and his service.

ISIS

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, it has been quite a week. I think we have all learned a bit about Syrian refugees, the challenges they face, and the potential challenges they create for us in this country. One of the things we have learned is that it is not easy to come here as a refugee to this country. In fact, it is pretty difficult. It is not something one can do easily. If you want to come over thinking that you might wait a couple of weeks or a couple of months—you might wait a couple of years. You have to go through a vetting process with the United Nations. You go through a vetting process overseas with the U.S. folks. You have to have your information go through any number of databanks to determine whether you are a person of special interest and could potentially be a problem. It is a long process.

I will be honest. If I were a bad guy over there, one of these ISIS folks trying to get into the United States and create mayhem, there is no way I

would want to wait 2 years, go through a refugee program, and probably get bounced out somewhere along the line through all these background checks and access to intelligence databanks and personal interviews. I think I would find another way to get here, and there are other ways to get here. We have been talking about that more recently today and yesterday.

One of the potential ways to get here is through what is called the Visa Waiver Program. It is an agreement we have with 38 different nations. The Visa Waiver Program started a number of years ago, and it has now grown to include 38 countries. It started off as a travel facilitation program, kind of like the TSA precheck or the global entries we have at the airports here in the United States. It started off as a travel facilitation program, and over time it has turned into an information sharing partnership with 38 different foreign countries. The idea is to make it a little easier for folks who we believe are trusted travelers to get into this country from several dozen nations. One of the things we don't focus on very much in this program is we believe it is to our economic advantage to facilitate travel and tourism for those visiting our country. That is hard to argue with. It also facilitates tourism and traveling to the other 38 countries.

We didn't just enter willy-nilly into this agreement with these other 38 other countries. There are certain requirements we have in terms of access about the people who would like to come to this country under the Visa Waiver Program. We have any number of different kinds of access to intelligence data files and databases, and we insist on that before we allow these countries to participate. If they don't want to do that, they are not part of the Visa Waiver Program.

If they change their mind during the course of our relationship with them as part of the Visa Waiver Program and become not very good partners in this, we bounce them out, they are no longer part of the Visa Waiver Program, and then those people have to go through the regular visa process.

Anyway, that would provide another option. It is probably a more favored option for somebody who is anxious to get over here from Syria or for anybody who wants to do mayhem. That might be an option if they live in one of those 38 countries. People can go to U.S. consulates all the time in other countries. They ask to come here. Sometimes they ask to come here on a visa. It could be a tourism visa. A lot of people want to come to the United States as a tourist. It could be that they want to come here to study. Those may be perfectly legitimate, but in some cases they may not be. Folks come here in many other ways.

We had an interesting hearing today in the Senate's Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. We had two witnesses from the Federal