

Let me repeat that. We are not here to undercut these programs; we are here to preserve them. We are here to make the necessary structural, long-term incremental changes so those benefits will be there for people when they retire.

As Winston Churchill once said:

One ought never to turn one's back on a threatened danger and try to run away from it. If you do that, you will double the danger. But if you meet it promptly and without flinching, you will reduce the danger [at least] by half.

We have not met this promptly. But I believe it is not too late to begin the process of making commonsense adjustments to the current systems. Modest incremental changes now will help us avoid much more drastic and painful changes later.

In 1983, Congress was faced with a serious Social Security crisis. We were months away from having checks not sent out. Together, President Reagan, Tip O'Neill, majority and minority members of the Senate and the House, and the political leaders of the respective parties gathered together and decided to put this issue and the solution to this issue above politics, and they did so. It was a difficult debate and discussion, but we made the changes that were implemented on an incremental basis.

Social Security bought 30 years of solvency on the basis of that decision. The sky did not fall. The economy did not collapse. And the people, when they learned why we were doing what we were doing—to preserve the program, not leave it in a dire situation where benefits would have to be cut or reduced dramatically—they backed what we did and supported it.

I believe we are in that position now with our entitlements. So if we can propose sensible, modest changes that will save these programs, I think the public will gladly support them.

Over the last decade, we have watched the storm clouds gather, and we have watched as those fiscal clouds have drawn ever closer and become ever darker. They are now bearing down upon us, and alarms are sounding louder than ever. As I have said, it is incumbent upon each of us in this Congress to acknowledge that the storm is here and to do all we can to mitigate the damage.

But given the current division of authority in our Congress and executive branch, it is incumbent upon the two Chambers and the two parties to set aside the politics of 2012 for the sake of the future of our Nation. I believe the voters will respond favorably to that decision.

However, no matter what we do as elected representatives, we cannot ultimately succeed without the engagement and the support and the leadership of the President of the United States. We know the President understands the gravity of the fiscal crisis. As a former Senator, as a Presidential candidate, and now as Commander in

Chief, he has clearly articulated his understanding of the issue.

In 2006, then-Senator Obama said:

Increasing America's debt weakens us domestically and internationally. Leadership means that the "buck stops here." Instead, Washington is shifting the burden of bad choices today onto the backs of our children and grandchildren. America has a debt problem and a failure of leadership.

Those are the words of former Senator Barack Obama, now President of the United States.

As a candidate for President, in 2008, Presidential candidate Barack Obama said:

We're going to have to take on entitlements and I think we've got to do it quickly.

And in 2009, President Obama said:

What we have done is kicked this can down the road. We are now at the end of the road and are not in a position to kick it any further.

He also promised his administration would "work with Congress to execute serious entitlement reform."

President Obama, as both Republicans and more and more Democratic Members of Congress are committing to go forward—and as Republican and Democratic Governors of States in fiscal peril are responding—our Nation, Mr. President needs you now to assume the primary leadership role in helping us avert these financial problems and potential financial meltdown.

The 2012 election must be subordinate to the urgency and the challenge before us. We cannot afford to wait until 2013 to begin the necessary work to prevent a fiscal disaster. We need Presidential leadership now. Our country's future is at stake.

Given the immensity of our fiscal challenges we face today, some would say it is too late to remedy the problem. I do not hold that view. And I do not hold that view primarily because of our Nation's history in rising to the challenge that faces us. From the Founding Fathers to George Washington, from Abraham Lincoln to Roosevelt and Reagan, times of trial and crisis have always produced moments of great leadership and the response of the American people to support that leadership.

That is what Americans are yearning for today: leadership—leadership to guide us out of this dangerous financial hole that threatens our Nation's security and future.

So I ask our President—as other Presidents throughout our history have done in times of major threats—Mr. President, grant us your leadership. Grant us the leadership needed to restore the strength and prosperity that has been the American story and has allowed our Nation to be the defenders and protectors of democracy and freedom.

Thirty years ago, Ronald Reagan delivered his first inaugural address, and expressed the urgent need to rein in spending and curb the size and growth of the Federal Government. He said doing so will require "our best effort,

and our willingness to believe in ourselves and to believe in our capacity to perform great deeds; to believe that together, with God's help, we can and will resolve the problems which now confront us."

For each of us serving here today, I believe it is our duty to rise to the immediate challenge and "resolve the problems which now confront us." It will take all of us uniting behind a common purpose—that above all else, we must first restore and strengthen our fiscal security. We must articulate a clear vision, set specific goals, and make the tough decisions needed to bring our Nation out of debt and preserve prosperity and opportunity for future generations.

I am here today to commit to Hoosiers, to my colleagues, to my children and grandchildren, to all our Nation's children and grandchildren, that I will not turn my back on our economic dangers or seek the false safety of political denial.

I am standing here today to find solutions, to make the hard decisions, and to leave behind a country that is stronger and more fiscally secure for future generations.

This crisis is not insurmountable. We can overcome it by doing what great generations before us have done: mustering our will to do what is right. If we do, I know that America's greatest days are not behind us but still lie ahead.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

CONGRATULATING SENATOR COATS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, not often in life does someone get a second opportunity to make a good first impression. The Senator from Indiana has had a chance to make two maiden speeches in the Senate. I confess I was not there for the first one, but I am pleased to have been here for the second, and I want to commend him for his extraordinary speech, particularly his emphasis on the importance of the President of the United States leading on the issue of entitlement reform.

We all know that under the Constitution only the President's signature can make a law. I think what the Senator from Indiana has pointed out, and many others have pointed out, is that on the issue of entitlement reform—the over \$50 trillion of unfunded liabilities we have lying out there ahead of us; promises we have made we cannot keep—this cannot be done without Presidential leadership and a Presidential signature. I thank the Senator from Indiana for reminding us all of that. We all still hope the President will step up and help us meet this enormous challenge. I commend the Senator from Indiana for a wonderful first impression.

SBIR/STTR REAUTHORIZATION ACT
OF 2011—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I understand Senator VITTER will seek recognition to offer some amendments. I ask unanimous consent that after Senator VITTER has offered his amendments, I be recognized for up to 10 minutes as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, reserving the right to object—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. If the Senator amends his request that at the conclusion of his remarks we return to amendment No. 183.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator so amend his request?

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I think the Senator was distracted over there. If the Senator would amend his unanimous consent request so that we would return to amendment No. 183 at the conclusion of his remarks.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, 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. INHOFE. 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. INHOFE. Mr. President, I yield the floor to the Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be able to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise today to share my thoughts on the hearings held last week in the House of Representatives called “The Extent of Radicalization in the American Muslim Community and that Community’s Response.” Congressional hearings are supposed to serve as an important role of oversight, investigation, or education, among other purposes. However, this particular hearing—billed as the first of a series—served only to fan flames of fear and division.

My first concern is the title of the hearing—targeting one community. That is wrong. Each of us has a responsibility to speak out when communities are unfairly targeted.

In 1975, the United States joined all the countries of Europe and established the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, now known as the OSCE. The Congress created the U.S. Helsinki Commission to monitor U.S. participation and compliance with these commitments. The OSCE con-

tains commitments in three areas or baskets: security, economics, and human rights. Best known for its human rights advancements, the OSCE has been aggressive in advancing these commitments in each of the OSCE states. The OSCE stands for religious freedom and protection of minority rights.

I am the Senate chair of the U.S. Helsinki Commission. In that capacity, I have raised human rights issues in other countries, such as in France when, in the name of national security, the Parliament banned burqas and wearing of all religious articles or when the Swiss restricted the building of mosques or minarets.

These policies were restrictive not only to the religious practice of Muslims but also Christians, Jews, and others who would seek to wear religious symbols and practice their religion as they saw fit.

I have also raised human rights issues in the United States when we were out of compliance with our Helsinki commitments. In that spirit, I find it necessary to speak out against the congressional hearing chaired by Congressman PETER KING.

Rather than constructively using the power of Congress to explore how we as a nation can use all of the tools at our disposal to prevent future terrorist attacks and defeat those individuals and groups who want to do us harm, this spectacle crossed the line and chipped away at the religious freedoms and civil liberties we hold so dearly.

Radicalization may be the appropriate subject of a congressional hearing but not when it is limited to one religion. When that is done, it sends the wrong message to the public and casts a religion with unfounded suspicions.

Congressman KING’s hearing is part of a disturbing trend to demonize Muslims taking place in our country and abroad. Instead, we need to engage the Muslim community in the United States.

A cookie-cutter approach to profile what a terrorist looks like will not work. As FBI Director Mueller recently testified to the Senate:

... during the past year, the threat from radicalization has evolved. A number of disruptions occurred involving extremists from a diverse set of backgrounds, geographic locations, life experiences, and motivating factors that propelled them along their separate radicalization pathways.

Let us remember that a number of terrorist attacks have been prevented or disrupted due to informants from the Muslim community who contacted law enforcement officials.

I commend Attorney General Holder and FBI Director Mueller for increasing their outreach to the Arab-American community. As Attorney General Holder said:

Let us not forget it was a Muslim-American who first alerted the New York police to a smoking car in Times Square. And his vigilance likely helped to save lives. He did his part to avert tragedy, just as millions of

other Arab-Americans are doing their parts and proudly fulfilling the responsibility of citizenship.

We need to encourage this type of cooperation between our government and law enforcement agencies in the Muslim community.

As the threat from al-Qaida changes and evolves over time, the piece of the puzzle is even more important to get right. FBI Director Mueller testified before the House recently that:

At every opportunity I have, I reaffirm the fact that 99.9 percent of Muslim-Americans, Sikh-Americans, and Arab-Americans are every bit as patriotic as anyone else in this room, and that many of the anti-terrorism cases are a result of the cooperation from the Muslim community and the United States.

As leaders in Congress, we must live up to our Nation’s highest ideals and protect civil liberties, even in wartime when they are most challenged. The 9/11 Commission summed up this well when they wrote:

The terrorists have used our open society against us. In wartime, government calls for greater powers, and then the need for those powers recedes after the war ends. This struggle will go on. Therefore, while protecting our homeland, Americans must be mindful of threats to vital personal and civil liberties. This balancing is no easy task, but we must constantly strive to keep it right.

I agree with Attorney General Holder’s recent speech to the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee, where he stated:

In this Nation, our many faiths, origins, and appearances must bind us together, not break us apart. In this Nation, the document that sets forth the supreme law of the land—the Constitution—is meant to empower, not exclude. And in this Nation, security and liberty are—at their best—partners, not enemies, in ensuring safety and opportunity for all.

Actions, such as the hearing held last week, that pit us against one another based on our religious beliefs, weaken our country and its freedoms and ultimately do nothing to make our country any safer. Hearings such as the one held last week only serve as a distraction from our real goals and provide fuel for those who are looking for excuses to find fault or blame in our way of life.

Let’s not go the way of other countries but instead hold dear the protections in our Constitution that safeguard the individual’s right to freely practice their religion and forbid a religious test to hold public office in the United States. Our country’s strength lies in its diversity and our ability to have strongly held beliefs and differences of opinion, while being able to speak freely and not fear the government will imprison us for criticizing the government or holding a religious belief that is not shared by the majority of Americans.

On September 11, 2001, our country was attacked by terrorists in a way we thought impossible. Thousands of innocent men, women, and children of all races, religions, and backgrounds were murdered. As the 10-year anniversary