

NGOs cannot operate today in South Sudan—and we must hold accountable those who have committed crimes against humanity. We have said it over and over, but unless we hold accountable those who have perpetrated these atrocities, we will see it again and again. U.S. leadership is critically important to make sure that we document what has taken place and that we bring to justice those who are responsible for the crimes that have been committed.

There is no question that a solution to the crisis in South Sudan must be political and not military. We understand that. South Sudan again is at a crossroads, and after coming so far, it must choose to renounce violence immediately and pursue a path of peaceful reconciliation.

I am encouraged that President Kiir and former President Machar have sent negotiators to Ethiopia to participate in mediation talks. While these talks are a good first step, in the interim the violence must end, and both sides must be committed to negotiating in good faith. It is my hope these talks can bring about the bright future so many South Sudanese aspire for. The people of South Sudan deserve to understand the true meaning of safety and security, of peace, and prosperity. The United States stands with the people of South Sudan through these difficult times. We must pledge to continue to support those who seek peace, democracy, human rights, and justice for all of the citizens of the world's newest nation.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCAIN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. I ask consent to address the Senate as in morning business.

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

Mr. MCCAIN. My colleague from South Carolina will join me shortly on the floor, but I will make some remarks while I am waiting.

When the Senator from South Carolina joins me, I ask unanimous consent to engage in a colloquy with the Senator from South Carolina.

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

FALLUJAH

Mr. MCCAIN. Some of us were in the Senate 10 years ago in 2004 when U.S. troops led two major offensives against Al Qaeda and other militants in the Iraqi city of Fallujah. Some of us remember how 146 of our brave men and women in uniform lost their lives and more than 1,000 were wounded. Those

fighters were some of the bloodiest and toughest battles since the Vietnam war. Success was costly, but success we had. Ten years later, Al Qaeda fighters have once again raised their black flags over Fallujah, and they are battling to control other parts of Iraq.

This tragic setback is leaving many of our brave Iraq war veterans—and especially those who shed their blood, risked their lives, and lost their friends in fighting against Fallujah—questioning what their sacrifice was worth. Sadly, they find themselves agreeing with Congressman DUNCAN HUNTER, a former marine who fought in Fallujah.

He said:

We did our job. We did what we were asked to do, and we won. Every single man and woman who fought in Iraq, and especially in those cities, feels a kick in the gut for all they did, because this President decided to squander their sacrifice.

Prior to 2011, President Obama frequently referred to a responsible withdrawal from Iraq, which was based on leaving behind a stable and representative government in Baghdad and avoiding a power vacuum that terrorists could exploit.

The President's Deputy National Security Adviser Antony Blinken in 2012—and I am not making this up—stated that “Iraq today is less violent, more democratic, and more prosperous . . . than any other time in history.”

Based on the President's own markers, the administration is falling short of its own goals. The illusion of a stable and representative government has been shattered by increasing sectarian tension, and it is clear terrorists are exploiting the power vacuum left behind.

The Obama administration blames Iraqis for failing to grant the necessary privileges and immunities for a U.S. force presence beyond 2011. This is misleading—in fact, false—because as we saw firsthand, the administration never took the necessary diplomatic effort to reach such an agreement.

The Senator from South Carolina and I traveled to Iraq in May 2011, only several months away from the deadline that our commanders had set for the beginning of the withdrawal. We met with all the leaders of Iraq's main political blocs and we heard a common message during all of these private conversations: Iraqi leaders recognized it was in their country's interest to maintain a limited number of U.S. troops to continue training and assisting Iraqi security forces beyond 2011.

But when we asked Ambassador Jeffrey and the Commander of U.S. Forces in Iraq Lloyd Austin, while in a meeting with Prime Minister Maliki, how many U.S. troops remaining in Iraq would perform and how many the administration sought to maintain, they couldn't tell us or the Iraqis. The White House still had not made a decision.

It went on like this for the next few months. By August 2011, leaders of Iraq's main political blocs joined to-

gether and stated they were prepared to enter negotiations to keep some U.S. troops in Iraq. An entire month passed and still the White House made no decision. All the while, during this internal deliberation, as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff GEN Martin Dempsey later testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee, the size of a potential U.S. force presence kept cascading down from upwards of 16,000 to an eventual low of less than 3,000. By that point, the force would be able to do little other than protect itself, and Prime Minister Maliki and other Iraqi leaders realized the political cost of accepting this proposal was not worth the benefit.

To blame this failure entirely on the Iraqis is convenient, but it misses the real point. The reason to keep around 10,000 to 15,000 U.S. forces in Iraq was not for the sake of Iraq alone. It was first and foremost in our national security interest to continue training and advising Iraqi forces and to maintain greater U.S. influence in Iraq. That core principle should have driven a very different U.S. approach to the SOFA—the status of forces agreement—diplomacy.

The Obama administration should have recognized that after years of brutal conflict, Iraqi leaders still lacked trust in one another, and a strong U.S. role was required to help Iraqis broker their most politically sensitive decisions. For this reason the administration should have determined what tasks and troop numbers were in the national interest to maintain in Iraq and done so with ample time to engage with Iraqis at the highest level of the U.S. Government to shape political conditions in Baghdad to achieve our goal.

We focus on this failure not because U.S. troops would have made a decisive difference in Iraq by engaging in unilateral combat operations against Al Qaeda and other threats to Iraq's stability. By 2011, U.S. forces were no longer in Iraqi cities or engaged in security operations. However, residual U.S. troop presence could have assisted Iraqi forces in their continued fight against Al Qaeda, it could have provided a platform for greater diplomatic engagement and intelligence cooperation with our Iraqi partners, it could have made Iranian leaders think twice about using Iraqi airspace to transit military assistance and weapons and arms and equipment to Assad and his forces in Syria and, most importantly, it could have maintained the significant diplomatic influence the United States at that time possessed in Iraq—influence that had been and still was essential in guaranteeing Iraq's nascent political system, reassuring Iraqi leaders they could resolve their differences peacefully and politically, despite their mistrust of one another, and checking the authoritarian and sectarian tendencies of Prime Minister Maliki and his allies.

The administration's failure in Iraq has been further compounded by its

failure in Syria. In Syria, where President Obama has refused to take any meaningful action, the initially peaceful protests of early 2011 were met by horrific violence by the Assad regime.

This President and this administration have stood back and watched while over 130,000 people have been brutally killed and a fourth of the population displaced. In his promise to avoid military action and reduce the U.S. footprint in the Middle East, we have seen the resurgence of Al Qaeda throughout the region, Hezbollah and Iran emboldened in Syria, Russia reasserting its principal presence for the first time since it was kicked out of Egypt by Egyptian President Sadat in 1973, and the destabilization of the region in ways that will inevitably reverberate here in America.

Again, there are those who may applaud President Obama's decision to disengage, arguing this isn't America's problem to solve. That the United States is fundamentally limited in its ability to influence developments in the Middle East is a consistent theme within the administration. No one denies there are limits to what the United States can do. That is always the case. But as Secretary Hillary Clinton told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee as she was leaving office:

Let me underscore the importance of the United States continuing to lead in the Middle East, North Africa and around the world. When America is absent, especially from unstable environments, there are consequences. Extremism takes root, our interests suffer, and our security at home is threatened.

Nowhere do her words ring more true than in Syria and Iraq today, begging the question that by fleeing Iraq and sidestepping Syria has the administration helped empower terrorist forces in ways that have created long-term threats to U.S. national security? I am afraid it is hard to argue the answer is no.

The administration must recognize its failed policies and change its course. America has lost credibility and influence over the past years, and we simply can't afford to remain disengaged. It is time that America stands and take its rightful role in resolving these conflicts to best serve American interests. It is time we adopt a comprehensive strategy for addressing the growing threats that are now emanating from the region and move forward from a position of strength. A return of Al Qaeda to Anbar Province is a sobering reminder for the administration that the tide of war is not receding.

I see my colleague from South Carolina is here. I am sorry I didn't realize he had come to the floor. I know the Senator from South Carolina and I need to discuss a recent unfortunate development in Afghanistan, but before we do, could I recall for my friend from South Carolina the many visits—and I have lost count, but many visits—we made to Iraq from 2003 really up to 2012, and that one of the most inter-

esting visits we had was when we were in Ramadi and Colonel MacFarland announced to us that the Sunni sheiks had come over—that the major sheik had come over, and he had sent some tanks over—and that was the beginning of what we know as the Anbar awakening—a turning point in the entire conflict. That, coupled with the surge, changed the fortunes of war in Iraq.

By the way, the surge was opposed vehemently by the President of the United States and the former Secretary of State, then Senator Clinton, who stated in a hearing with General Petraeus that she would have to have a “willing suspension of disbelief in order to believe that the surge would succeed.”

But setting that aside, later, when we came back again to Fallujah and Ramadi, the Senator from South Carolina and I walked down the main street of Ramadi—down the main street—with Iraqis everywhere, proving the success of the surge in Anbar Province. Yet now, on the same streets we walked down—the exact same streets—there are now vehicles filled with Al Qaeda, flying the black flag of Al Qaeda.

The bloodiest war of the conflict that was fought during our entire involvement with Iraq was the second battle of Fallujah. There were 95 brave Americans killed and over 600 wounded. What do we tell these young people and their families? What do we tell them? I tell you what we have to tell them. We have to tell them their sacrifice was squandered by an administration that wanted out and didn't want to remain and consolidate the gains that were made through the sacrifice of American blood and treasure.

Mr. GRAHAM. I would be glad to respond to the Senator's comments.

No. 1, I understand the average American thinks of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as having been long and difficult wars costing a lot of money and a lot of American lives. But the point of the war is to make sure that radical Islam is contained and eventually defeated, and that is going to take an effort on our part.

Does it matter that the Al Qaeda flag flies over Fallujah and Ramadi? I think it does. I think when Al Qaeda occupies a city anywhere in the world, it potentially affects every city throughout the world. Imagine the Nazis having come back in Germany and occupying part of Germany. We didn't let that happen. We had a following force in Japan and Germany to make sure the transition from totalitarian and dictatorial states to functioning democracies would occur. We are still in Japan and Germany. We are not taking casualties.

To go into the Mideast and replace dictatorships and think you can do it in a matter of months or even a decade is probably not going to hold water, quite frankly. The good news is we were in a position in Iraq in 2010 where if we had left behind a residual force

not to be in combat but to provide the logistical, air support, training, intelligence capabilities missing in the Iraqi Army, this would have been a very different outcome.

And it does matter to my fellow citizens here in the United States. If Al Qaeda is on the rise anywhere, it does affect us. Remember Afghanistan? Remember when the Russians left and the Taliban took over and they invited Al Qaeda and bin Laden in to be their honored guests? The rest is history. The reason 3,000 Americans died on 9/11 and not 3 million is the terrorists, the radical Islamists, Al Qaeda and their affiliates can't get the weapons to kill 3 million of us. If they could, they would.

So the goal is to create stability and marginalize Al Qaeda throughout the region. Unfortunately, as Senator McCain has predicted for a very long time, the absence of a following force allows security to break down and the vacuum was filled by the emergence of Al Qaeda in Iraq.

I would like to go over some testimony from June of 2010, when General Austin was about to take over from General Odierno the command of our operations in Iraq. General Austin told me during my questioning that we were inside the 10-yard line when it came to being successful in Iraq. In other words, the surge had worked. The surge Senator McCain supported during his Presidential campaign worked.

President Bush made his fair share of mistakes in Iraq, but to his undying credit he adjusted policies. We were all in. He gave General Petraeus all the troops we had to give and he stood behind General Petraeus, and over a 2- or 3-year period there was a phenomenal turnaround in the security situation in Iraq. The surge started in late 2007, early 2008.

Here is what had existed in 2010 in June. Basically, we were inside the 10-yard line, and General Odierno said: I think the next 18 months will determine whether we get to the goal line or give the Iraqis an opportunity to hit the goal line beyond 2011.

So we were in a good spot. The surge had worked, and we needed to close this thing out. I asked this question back in 2010: What would happen if Iraq had become a failed state? Let's say we are inside the 10-yard line but we are not smart enough to get in the end zone. What would happen? Here is what General Odierno said:

... if we had a failed state in Iraq, it would create uncertainty and significant instability probably within the region. Because of the criticality of Iraq, its relationship to Iran, its relationship to the other Arab states in the region, if it became unstable, it could create an environment that could continue to increase the instability.

I don't believe we are close to that. I believe we are very far away from that happening. I think we are definitely on the right path. But those are the kinds of things which would happen if we had a complete breakdown inside Iraq. Here was a quote:

The top U.S. commander in Iraq, Army Gen. Lloyd Austin, has said repeatedly that Iraq is not yet fully capable of defending its own air space or land borders, and that it needs help in other areas such as intelligence and logistics.

Our military commanders were telling us that the surge had worked, but we were not there yet.

Here is what I would like to say to the administration: If you believe Iraq was the wrong war to fight and we shouldn't be there, own your decision. Don't blame the Iraqis.

The truth is the administration, led by President Obama, had absolutely no desire to leave one person behind in Iraq because this was Bush's war and America was tired, and he ran on the idea of ending the war in Iraq. When it came time to make that fateful decision about a small 10,000 or 12,000, whatever the number was, residual force to maintain the gains we fought so hard and to keep Iraq stable, he now wants to tell the world it was the Iraqis. I know differently.

I know, and so does Senator MCCAIN, that this administration made it impossible for the Iraqis to say yes because this administration would never give the Iraqi Government a troop number from the White House as to the size of the force.

I remember General Austin saying publicly we needed 18,000. The bottom line from the Pentagon was somewhere slightly north of 10,000. I remember the discussions in the White House got down to 3,500 and it was cascading down.

I remember General Dempsey answering my question as to how the numbers were reduced: Was it as a result of the Iraqis saying, no, that is too many troops to leave behind in Iraq or were the numbers reduced because the White House did not want to have that many people left behind? He said the cascading down from 18,000 all the way to 3,500 had nothing to do with the Iraqis. It was the uncertainty and unwillingness of the White House to commit to a number.

So what happened? We left the country with 200 U.S. troops advising and assisting, no capability. Everything they talked about happening if we do not get Iraq right and get into the end zone from the 10-yard line in 2010 is happening on steroids. Everything our generals told us about what would await Iraq if we didn't get this right is coming true at an accelerated pace.

So I turn it back over to Senator MCCAIN.

Mr. MCCAIN. Could I ask the Senator again: One, Iraq and Syria now are in danger of becoming a base for Al Qaeda and movement back and forth between that area of Anbar Province, which obviously poses an enormous threat, because we know what the ultimate goal of Al Qaeda is.

Could I also recall for my friend from South Carolina the meeting we had with Maliki—after we had met with Allawi, after we had met with Barzani,

the leader of the Kurds, who all agreed we would get together and endorse a U.S. troop presence to remain in Iraq. This administration refused—even after we came back and begged them to give us a number—refused to give the number, claiming it had to be endorsed by their Parliament, which was absolutely false.

But now we see Iranian aircraft overflying Iraq with weapons and arms for Bashar al-Assad. We see Anbar and that area of Syria and Iraq now becoming possibly a base for Al Qaeda to operate. We see the two major cities in Anbar, Ramadi, and Fallujah—where so much American blood was shed—now with vehicles driving around with the black flag of Al Qaeda on display.

I think it is important we make it clear. The Senator from South Carolina and I are not advocating sending combat troops back to Iraq. That is impossible. It may be an avenue, but it is impossible, and we are not advocating that. We are advocating that we give advice, send equipment, and we give them some capabilities. We help them with intelligence. There are certain places we can help them. But at the same time, now Prime Minister Maliki has to reach out to the Sunnis and get a reconciliation.

From the day U.S. troops left Iraq, Maliki began to persecute the Sunni. He even charged his own Vice President, who was a Sunni, with treason and the Vice President had to leave the country.

So if any of this is going to work, if we have any influence—and have no doubt who has the influence in Iraq today: Iran. But if we have any influence, we have to tell Maliki we want to help and we want to give him the kind of technical assistance he needs. But he has to reach out to the Sunni in the way that took place in the Anbar awakening back in 2008. Because without national reconciliation, all the equipment and all the assistance we can give the Iraqis will not help.

So I do blame Prime Minister Maliki. Responsibility lies with his behavior toward the Sunni, but we were not there to influence him. We were not there. It is not only the kind of assistance we could have provided them that they need, but it also is the influence issue. No expert on Iraq today will tell you we have anything but a minimal influence and Iran has that. If anybody thinks Al Qaeda's control of large portions of Iraq and Syria is not a threat to the United States of America, then they don't understand the nature of Al Qaeda.

Mr. GRAHAM. As to the future of how to move forward, Prime Minister Maliki with all thought did go to Basra and take on the Shia militia.

The political gains we made in Iraq are being lost by lack of security. If we would have had a residual force, the political momentum toward reconciling Iraq would have continued. Without security, people go back to their sectarian corners. I would argue that the Sunnis need to up their game too.

But the immediate problem is how do you repel Al Qaeda from Fallujah and Ramadi? The way it worked before is you had the Sunni awakening, where the Sunni tribal leaders in Anbar had a taste of the Al Qaeda agenda and said: No, thank you. They were literally killing children in front of their parents for smoking. The stories coming out of Anbar Province about the abuse the people of Anbar suffered under Al Qaeda control would break your heart. So the Sunni leaders married with American military personnel to drive the Al Qaeda elements out of Anbar.

We are not there now. So how do you get Al Qaeda dislodged from Anbar Province, Ramadi and Fallujah? You are going to have to get the Sunni tribal leaders to work with the Iraqi Army.

I think now is a good time to send a former military commander of the U.S. forces—someone who is retired if that is what is required—to see if they can bring these parties together to form a military alliance between the Sunni tribal leaders and the Iraqi Army so the weight of the Iraqi Army can be brought into this fight. The distrust is high. But the way Al Qaeda was defeated in the past was the U.S. military working with the Sunni tribal leaders. We are not there.

Mr. MCCAIN. I would argue, I say to the Senator from South Carolina, two names which spring to mind would be General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker, probably the two most respected people in Iraq today. Maybe we are getting into too much detail, but I do agree with him on that.

Mr. GRAHAM. The bottom line is we have to change the momentum. We are not there. But Senator MENENDEZ, to his great credit, is willing to release his hold on the sale of Apache helicopters to allow the Iraqi military an advantage over Al Qaeda. I think Senator MENENDEZ did the right thing.

So supplying arms in a smart way is part of the strategy to move forward. But we have to get the military in Iraq working with the Sunni tribal leaders.

I would ask Senator MCCAIN this question: On the other side of the border in Syria is complete chaos, is hell on Earth. I don't know how we stabilize Iraq long term until we deal with the dismantling of Syria where Al Qaeda occupies the region right across the Iraqi border. How does a breakdown in Syria affect Iraq?

Mr. MCCAIN. I don't think there is any doubt, I would say to my friend from South Carolina, that this has become an almost safe operating area on both sides of the Syria-Iraq border for Al Qaeda.

It is interesting. There has been a little good news in the last day or two; that is, some of the more moderate forces in Syria have struck back at this radical Islamist group because of the incredible cruelty of al-Nusra and ISIS, which is the radical Islamic group both in Iraq and Syria. Interestingly enough, that is being accomplished without any U.S. help. Thank

God for the other countries such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and others which have been of assistance to these people. They have been driving out some of the more extremist element. We are working with the Russians to remove the chemical weapons.

In Syria today, Bashar al-Assad, from helicopters, is dropping these crude cluster bombs which are just shrapnel that kill anybody within lethal range. Since dropping it on populated areas, Bashar al-Assad has slaughtered innocent men, women, and children.

So here we are working with the Russians. Today there was a U.N. resolution from the Security Council condemning Bashar al-Assad's barbaric behavior. Guess who vetoed that. Our friends, the Russians. This is the most Orwellian situation in Iraq anybody has ever seen throughout history. Russians are working with us to remove chemical weapons from Syria and at the same time aircraft from Russia are landing full of weapons to kill Syrian men, women, and children. I am not sure a Syrian mother can differentiate between her child dying from a chemical weapon or dying from one of these cluster bombs that Bashar al-Assad is unloading from his helicopters.

So we have this grandiose idea the Secretary of State and the administration have been pushing for months and months to have a Geneva II. The first Geneva failed. Does anyone on God's green Earth believe that Bashar al-Assad, who is winning, is going to preside over his own transition from power? Of course not.

I will never forget—I am sure the Senator from South Carolina will never forget—the testimony of our now still Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and then-Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta before the Armed Services Committee: Bashar al-Assad inevitably will leave.

The President of the United States: Bashar al-Assad, it is not a matter of when, it is not a matter of whether he will leave but a matter of when.

Meanwhile, the weapons pour in from Iran; Hezbollah, 5,000 of them; 130,000 people slaughtered, and one-quarter of the population being slaughtered, while this administration not only sits by and does nothing but the President of the United States says nothing.

This will go down as one of the most shameful chapters in American history. If the policy of this administration is to only focus on counterterrorism, get out of the Middle East, and remove any involvement of the United States in the Middle East, I can assure my colleagues the Middle East will not allow the United States of America to not be involved.

Mr. GRAHAM. If I may just conclude. I have a quote from Speaker BOEHNER, who said he would support the Obama administration if it decides to leave troops in Iraq beyond 2011.

I remember Senator Obama and Senator Clinton not being particularly

helpful to the mistakes made in Iraq during the Bush administration. In fact, the entire election in 2008 and the primary was about Iraq. I remember the politics of Candidate Barack Obama, who basically used the Iraq war to win the nomination, for lack of a better word. I remember during the campaign he talked about Afghanistan being a good war. We will talk about Afghanistan later. It is not a happy story either, I am afraid.

But the bottom line is that there was bipartisan support for troop presence beyond 2011, a residual force. This administration chose to ignore the advice of the commanders, and they created the situation where the Iraqis could not say yes. Yet they want history to record this being a problem created by the Iraqis for not giving legal immunity to U.S. soldiers. History is going to be written about our times. How this ends, nobody knows. But I know this: It is not fair to say that the reason we have nobody left behind in Iraq is because of the Iraqis. It is fair to say that the administration got the result they wanted, and they should own that—good, bad, or indifferent. Don't create a straw person for the situation that you drove and you created.

As to Syria, please understand that this whole conflict started when people went to the streets peacefully to ask for more political freedom after the uprising in Egypt; that this war in Syria did not start with a Sunni uprising or Al Qaeda invading the country. The conflict in Syria started when the people of Syria, from all walks of life, started demanding more from their government, from this dictatorship, and the response they received from their government was to use lethal force.

It has broken down now to a regional conflict where the Iranians are backing Assad and you have Sunni Arab States backing parts of the opposition and you have Al Qaeda types coming from Iraq and other places filling in the vacuum created by this breakdown in Syria.

At the end of the day, what Senator MCCAIN had been talking about for 3 years is that once you say Assad has to go—no President should say that unless they are willing to make it happen. Assad was on the ropes. With just any effort on our part, a no-fly zone to boots on the ground, any assistance at all in the last couple of years and Assad would be gone, the transition would be well underway. It would have been bloody at first, but we would have behind us now a Syria moving toward stability because the good news is the average Syrian is not a radical Al Qaeda Islamist. Syrians have been living peacefully with each other—Christians, Sunnis, and Alawites—for hundreds of years. Now Syria has become the central battle for every radical Islamist in the region, and it is just sad and sorry to witness.

But what does it mean to us? It means that if this war continues—our

friend the King of Jordan is under siege. The Lebanese Ambassador testified a couple of weeks ago in our committee that the country is saturated. Almost 1 million refugees from Syria have gone to Lebanon. There are over 5 million in Lebanon today. They have added almost 1 million refugees from Syria. They didn't plan to get to 5 million people until 2050. The Kingdom of Jordan—the Jordanians have received over 600,000 refugees, with no end in sight.

Syria is not a civil war. Syria is a regional conflict where you have proxies backing each side in Syria that are taking the entire region into chaos. It is killing Iraq. It is destabilizing Lebanon and Jordan. It has to be addressed in an effective way.

If you want to be President of the United States, certain requirements come with the job: having a vision, making tough calls at the time when it would matter. On President Obama's watch, you had the Arab spring come about and you had a desire by this administration to leave the region at any and all costs. Now you have absolute chaos. The only way we are going to fix this is for America to get reengaged. We do not need boots on the ground, but we need leadership.

It just breaks my heart to see how close we were in 2010. The surge did work in spite of opposition from President Obama as Senator and Secretary Clinton as Senator. In spite of their vehement opposition, the surge did work, and on their watch we are about to lose everything we fought for. Al Qaeda is the biggest beneficiary of our withdrawal from Iraq. Al Qaeda is the biggest beneficiary of our indifference in Syria. Al Qaeda is thriving, and our allies and our friends are in retreat.

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, thank you for your patience.

We yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:35 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. HEITKAMP).

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate be in a period of morning business until 3 p.m. today, and that I be recognized at 3 p.m., with all other provisions of the previous order remaining in effect.

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

I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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