

possible to support the Nigerian government to return these young women to their homes and hold the perpetrators to justice." But we need actions to back up those words, and I would like to suggest three actions we should take to help marshal a global response to this heinous crime.

First, the United States should seek a resolution from the U.N. Security Council condemning this attack and calling for member countries to extend all appropriate assistance to Nigeria and neighboring countries to help locate the victims of Boko Haram's abductions and bring them home.

Second, we should move as quickly as we can to provide intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets to contribute to the search for the missing girls. The countries of the region have limited resources, and American support with aerial and satellite surveillance, similar to what we have provided to the hunt for Joseph Kony and his so-called Lord's Resistance Army in Central Africa, could make a significant difference in their ability to liberate Boko Haram's hostages.

Finally, we should work to strengthen the capabilities of local authorities in Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, and other countries in the region to counter Boko Haram, protect children, particularly girls, in their education systems, and combat human trafficking.

I led a delegation last month to Mexico focused on fighting human trafficking, and one of the lessons I took away from that was the critical importance of training local law enforcement, prosecutors, and judges to recognize trafficking when they see it. A sharp-eyed police officer in one of these countries can make all the difference in finding these girls.

Make no mistake. How we respond to the abduction of the schoolgirls of Nigeria will send a message about our Nation's commitment to human rights and the fight against modern-day slavery.

Human trafficking is a stain on the conscience of the world. It is one of the reasons I became involved in this issue, having been a prosecutor and seeing the devastation that prostitution and trafficking and sex trafficking wreaks on these girls.

In the United States we have our own problems; 83 percent of our victims in the United States are from the United States. We have had several prosecutions in my own State. We have had prosecutions in North Dakota. It is one of the reasons I introduced a bill with Senator CORNYN. We have multiple authors who go after this crime to look at a smarter way to handle these cases, which is modeled after the safe harbor law, which Minnesota uses, as well as 12 other States.

The idea is to treat these girls as victims. Their average age is 13 years old—not old enough to drive, not old enough to go to their high school prom. It takes that concept, puts it into a comprehensive sex-trafficking strat-

egy, and goes after this in our own country.

It is now the world's third largest criminal enterprise—human trafficking—right behind drugs and guns. So do not think this is just something that people are talking about. It is not. It is happening right now.

Nicholas Kristof and his wife Sheryl WuDunn wrote a book called "Half the Sky," named for the Chinese proverb "women hold up half the sky." It is about human trafficking. It uses examples from all over the world. In it they argue that "it is not hyperbole to say that millions of women and girls are actually enslaved today." They estimate that 2 million disappear each year. In fact, this book was written long before this happened in Nigeria, and one of the examples they use is a girl being abducted in Nigeria. One of the examples they use is girls being abducted in Moldova, one of the poorest countries in that region. Senator MCCAIN just went to Moldova and came back. When he was there he asked: Where are all the young girls and women? The officials there told him: Many of them have been trafficked to other countries—trafficked to Russia.

This is happening right now, and these girls in Nigeria need our help. The girls abducted and apparently sold into forced marriages in Nigeria are as young as 15 years old. They are being forced to endure what no one, let alone a young girl, should ever have to experience.

Simply put, this is a barbaric practice that must be extinguished from the world. In the book Kristof and his wife wrote they liken the imperative of abolishing human trafficking today to what the British bravely did in the early 1800s when Britain abolished slavery.

They note that what mattered most in turning the tide against slavery was the British public. It was not the abolitionists' passion and moral conviction, as important as that was, but instead what turned the tide was what they called the "meticulously amassed evidence of barbarity"—the human beings packed into the hold of slave ships, the stink, the diseases, the corpses, the bloody manacles.

We cannot close our eyes to the clear "evidence of barbarity" unfolding before us in Nigeria. This is one of those times when our action or inaction will be felt not just by those schoolgirls being held captive and their families waiting in agony, but by victims and perpetrators of trafficking around the world. Now is the time to act.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order the Senate will be in

a period of morning business until 5:30 p.m. with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HIRONO). The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I be given enough time to complete my speech.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection.

FREE SPEECH

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, it is no secret that our Nation faces a number of critical problems. We have a national debt that currently stands at \$17.4 trillion. We are in the midst of an entitlement crisis that threatens to balloon our debt and swallow funding for the rest of our government. We have a still-struggling economy, which was once again confirmed last week with the announcement of lackluster growth numbers. These are just some of the problems we are facing. There are numerous others.

With all the challenges in front of us, you would think the Senate majority and the President of the United States would be focused on solving at least one or two of these problems. Sadly, that is not the case. In this heightened partisan climate, my friends in the majority are far more often than not focused on two things: shoring up their political base and marginalizing their political critics. In other words, it is all politics all the time.

It is pretty easy to find examples of the Democrats' efforts to solidify their progressive base. Indeed, we have seen it in just the last few weeks. Why else do you think we have had show votes on bills such as the so-called Paycheck Fairness Act and minimum wage, especially since we already have laws that say women should be paid fairly? Why else did we have to endure the all-night speech fest on climate change a few weeks back? None of these efforts were rooted in any kind of policy justification. They certainly weren't aimed at benefiting our economy or creating jobs. If anything, they would do exactly the opposite. In fact, the CBO confirmed that the Democrats' latest gambit here on the floor—the minimum wage—would actually cost our economy somewhere upward of at least half a million jobs.

All of these endeavors were aimed at driving turnout for the Democratic base in November, but that is just half of the Democrats' equation. The other half is silencing their critics. Indeed, over the past few years we have seen a

pattern coming from the other side—both in the Senate and in the White House—of using whatever tools are available to intimidate critics and marginalize opposition.

It started, of course, with the IRS targeting scandal. I know a little bit about it, being the ranking member on the Senate Finance Committee. The IRS has admitted that in the runup to the 2010 and 2012 elections it was improperly targeting conservative groups applying for tax-exempt status by harassment and intimidation. Now, for obvious reasons, President Obama has tried to sweep this scandal under the rug, but the record is pretty clear on the matter. The IRS singled out conservative groups—groups that were critical of the President and his policies—for extra scrutiny. These conservative groups were subjected to delays in their applications. Some still haven't gotten their approval after years of trying. In several cases they were asked a number of intrusive and harassing questions about their activities and goals. There is no getting around this; that is exactly what happened. This turn of events has left a black cloud over the IRS as an agency and seriously damaged the public's trust in government.

Let's be clear. The IRS did not engage in these activities in a vacuum. On the contrary, they were cheered on by some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who, rather than simply dealing with criticism they didn't agree with, urged the IRS to apply more scrutiny to these conservative organizations.

Unfortunately, after the political targeting scandal, the IRS wasn't finished. The pattern continued. Late last year the agency unveiled a regulatory proposal designed to limit the "political activities" of 501(c)(4) organizations. If finalized, these regulations would effectively silence grassroots organizations across the country. They would no longer be able to engage in activities as innocuous as voter registration drives or candidate forums without those activities being labeled "political."

The purpose of these regulations is very clear. The administration does not want grassroots organizations educating the public on the issues of the day. They certainly don't want them informing people about candidates' positions on matters of public policy. This regulation is designed specifically to put a stop to all of that.

It is no surprise that this proposal has been condemned by groups across the political spectrum. Indeed, any objective observer would call this what it is: an affront to free speech and fair debate.

But, as I said, there is a pattern here. It is an ongoing effort on the other side to undermine free speech and impose limits on Americans' participation in the political process, and it has not stopped with the IRS regulations. Just last week it was announced that the

Senate majority plans to hold a vote on a constitutional amendment that would limit the scope of the first amendment and allow Congress to impose limits on political speech—just last week. It is difficult to imagine that we have come to that, but here we are.

Political speech is critical to our democracy. Indeed, this principle is at the very foundation of our Republic. It is one the Supreme Court has upheld time and time again, including very recently. Yet, when confronted with speech they don't like, my friends on the other side of the aisle are willing to use every tool at their disposal to even change the text of the Constitution itself in order to silence it.

In a marketplace of ideas like the one the Founders intended, disagreeable speech can easily be met with additional speech, and in the end the truth will almost certainly prevail. But, alas, my friends don't appear to be interested in the truth or a marketplace of ideas. They only want one store that will only sell ideas with which they happen to agree. It is truly mind-boggling, but that is where we are.

This isn't the end of the pattern. In fact, the pattern of hostility toward free speech and the effort to intimidate and silence critics continues virtually every day here on the Senate floor. Almost every day Democratic Senators, including members of the Senate Democratic leadership, come to the floor to call out American citizens by name and demonize them for having the audacity to participate in the political process. They use the Senate's time and resources to single out individuals whose only crime is that they happen to have different views on public policy. I suppose their other crime is that they are successful, which is more often than not enough to draw the ire of my friends on the other side. When you couple success in the economy with criticism of Democrats and their policies, it is apparently too much for my colleagues to bear. Day after day Democratic leaders come to the floor to call out these Americans by name in order to attack them. They spread falsehoods about these Americans and their intentions, and they malign the entire conservative movement and Republican Party as guilty by association.

Even if this type of demagoguery weren't unbecoming of the Senate—which it is—these attacks would be shameful in their own right. After all, how are these unjustified attacks on American citizens going to help our struggling economy? How are these attacks going to create jobs for the middle class?

And, how are these attacks on American citizens going to rein in our already out-of-control national debt? They are not, and they are not intended to.

As I said, these days Democrats have two missions: No. 1, to solidify their

base and, No. 2, marginalize their opposition, and when they come to the floor every day to make bogeymen out of individual Americans, they are doing both. They are not, as they claim to be, trying to take money out of the political equation. If they were, they would be just as concerned with those on their side who spend millions bankrolling liberal causes and Democratic candidates. I am talking, of course, about the labor unions, trial lawyers, and billionaire environmentalists who have pledged to spend hundreds of millions of dollars in this campaign cycle alone. Instead, they are trying to scare up votes.

Apparently they believe if they can make scapegoats out of those who choose to participate in the political process, they can cover up the fact their policies have failed to get our economy moving and that they don't have any real answers to the real problems plaguing our country. Perhaps more importantly, they think if they can attack certain individuals for their political activities, others will be afraid to get similarly involved. Once again, this is a pattern of hostility against both free speech and against any Americans who speak out against the policies of the Democrats. Quite frankly, it is simply shameful that it has gone this far.

We need to have a different conversation. We need to talk about ideas and proposals that will actually help the American people. I hope in the coming months my friends on the other side of the aisle will be willing to have this conversation rather than simply relying on underhanded tactics that, in the view of many, demean our government and the Senate in particular. That is the type of debate the American people want to see, and I think they are smart enough to see through anything the other side wants to offer in its place.

I have never seen it this bad in the Senate. I have never seen this body so ineffectual in my 38 years in the Senate. I have never seen such politics played in this awful manner. I have never seen people's free speech rights being criticized and demeaned as is going on right now. That is not to say we have not had some faults on our side too, but I do have to say what is going on here is unbelievable.

Since they broke the rules to change the rules, the Senate has not functioned as a great legislative body at all. It won't be functioning until we get those rules back. I believe when some of our colleagues on the other side, many of whom have never been in the minority, finally get in the minority—and I believe that is going to happen sooner rather than later—they are going to realize these rights are very important. They are going to realize we should be doing more in the Senate than trying to protect our side from any possible repercussions that could occur, which seems to be the major aim of our colleagues—or at least the leadership—on the other side at this time.

This is a great body. We have great people whom I deeply admire on both sides of the floor. There were Senators, who are now gone, on the other side of the floor whom I deeply admired. Never have we had, as far as I can remember in my 38 years, this type of stultification of free and fair and open debates. It is a disgrace. I think they know it is a disgrace, but they don't care; they are more interested in power than they are in doing what is right.

The way they have singled out various conservative individuals by name on the floor is deeply troubling to anybody who is fair. The fact is the Democrats have never liked money. They try to blame Wall Street for everything, but Wall Street is run primarily by Democrats. We do have an occasional Republican up there, but an awful lot of them are Democrats who are giving big dollars to the Democratic side. They have a right to do it if they want to without being demeaned on the Senate floor. I hope we will have not only free and open debate, but that we will have better and more honest debate in the future.

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

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

DEFENSE ACQUISITION REFORM

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, as consideration of the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2015 proceeds in earnest, and with the recent release and annual assessments of the Department of Defense major procurement programs by the Government Accountability Office and the Pentagon's Director of Operational Testing and Evaluation, we are, once again, reminded of the DOD's chronic inability to rein in costs associated with its largest and most expensive weapon and information technology systems.

This is, of course, a problem the DOD—the Department of Defense—has struggled with for years. During every one of these years, I brought this problem to the attention of the American people, both in the Senate Armed Services Committee and here on the floor of the Senate.

So I need not go over again the frustrating litany of costly procurement failures at the Department of Defense. At this point we are all aware of the future combat system, the Army's "transformational" vehicle and communications modernization program, in which the military and the U.S. Army wasted almost \$20 billion developing 18 vehicles and drones, only one of which actually went into production. In other words, they blew \$19 billion. As had been done on other pro-

grams, on the Future Combat Systems, the Army held a "paper competition" to select contractors far in advance of fielding any actual prototypes. But it awarded control to two separate companies and let them, not the government, hold their own internal competitions to determine who would test and build the vehicles and systems—encumbering the program with a dizzying array of conflicts of interest and preferred-supplier preferences that chipped away at the program from the inside out.

As for the Air Force, its Expeditionary Combat Support System—the ECSS program—wasted over 1 billion taxpayer dollars attempting to procure and integrate a "commercial off-the-shelf" logistics IT system. That effort resulted in no usable capability for the Air Force, and taxpayers were forced to pay an additional \$8 million in severance costs to the company that failed in its mission. The Marine Corps, in turn, spent 15 years and \$3 billion on its Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle before canceling the program in 2012—another \$3 billion down the drain.

While there are so many other failures, we shouldn't forget the VH-71 program—the presidential helicopter program—with which the Navy attempted to procure a new presidential helicopter. Before that program's cancellation in 2009, taxpayers were forced to pay \$3.2 billion and got exactly zero helicopters.

Our "joint service" programs have also faced profound difficulties. Even though the Department of Defense has not completed development testing on the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, that program is already well into production, exposing it to the risk of costly retrofits late in production.

While today the Joint Strike Fighter Program is on a more stable path to succeed, during a recent Airland Subcommittee hearing on tactical aircraft programs, I asked the head of the program, Lt. Gen. Chris Bogdan, what lessons the DOD learned from that program's costly failures. By the way, it is the most expensive weapons system ever—a \$1 trillion weapons system. He identified three lessons: the danger of overly optimistic initial cost estimates, the importance of reliable technological risk estimates, and the complexity and costs of building next-generation planes while still testing them.

That is, of course, a post mortem that we are all very familiar with, including on some of the failed acquisition programs to which I just alluded. For that reason, Congress enacted the Weapon Systems Acquisition Reform Act of 2009. That law instituted reforms to make sure that new major weapons procurement programs start off right, with accurate initial cost estimates, reliable technological risk assessments, and only reasonable "concurrency," and stable operational requirements.

While the Government Accountability Office found this law had a "sig-

nificant influence" on requirements, cost, schedule, testing, and reliability for the acquisition of new major weapons systems, there is still much to do, especially on the so-called "legacy" systems already well into the development pipeline. According to the Government Accountability Office, the cost of the Pentagon's major weapons systems—that is 80 systems in total—have swollen to nearly one-half trillion dollars over their initial price tags and have average schedule delays of more than 2 years.

I will repeat that for the benefit of the Pentagon, my colleagues here in the Senate, and the American people. The Government Accountability Office says the cost of the Pentagon's major weapons systems, of which there are 80 in total, have swollen to nearly one-half trillion dollars—that is T, trillion dollars—over their initial price tags—their initial cost estimates—and have average schedule delays of more than 2 years. That is not acceptable. That is not acceptable to the American people, it should not be acceptable to Members of Congress, and it sure as heck shouldn't be acceptable to the people who are responsible for these cost overruns. That is the Pentagon and that is these manufacturers.

Against this backdrop, I will briefly discuss two critical aspects of how the Department of Defense procures major systems—real competition and accountability. In my view, it is no coincidence that the period of remarkably poor performance among our largest weapons procurement programs has coincided with a dramatic contraction in the industrial base, due, in large part, to consolidation among the Nation's top-tier contractors. For this reason the Department of Defense must structure into its strategies to acquire major systems true competition—not like fake competition—as we saw in the Future Combat System or as proponents for an alternate engine for the Joint Strike Fighter once advocated. According to the Government Accountability Office, in fiscal year 2013, only 57 percent—I repeat, 57 percent—of the \$300 billion the Department of Defense obligated for contracts and orders was actually competed. In other words, only in a little over half of the \$300 billion—roughly \$150 billion—in contracts and orders was there actually any competition. Unacceptable. Competition should be driven through the subsystems level, and it should be reflected in approaches that foster innovation and small business participation throughout a system's entire lifecycle.

Especially within the Navy's "shipbuilding and conversion" account and the Air Force's "missile procurement" account, costs associated with the Ohio-class replacement submarine and the Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicle—that is our space effort—those programs respectively, will severely presurize other procurement priorities within these same aspects of Pentagon spending.