

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). Is there objection?

Mr. PAUL. Madam President, reserving the right to object, as you know, I have been a critic of these treaties for some time. This discussion has gone on for quite a while. I disagree with many of the implications of where these treaties would take us. But I realize there are some beneficial aspects of the treaties.

But because of the critical invasion of privacy that these treaties would allow, I cannot support them. These treaties are an encroachment on our privacy and our constitutional right to privacy. Many of the previous treaties that we have had in the past focused on information specific to tax fraud.

I am not opposed to getting the information of those who have committed fraud or broken the law, but you must have an accusation, you must submit some proof.

We are going to have bulk collection of records without suspicion.

As previously stated in the previous treaties, the information that was exchanged in the past under the current treaties had to show that they were for preventing tax fraud. The new treaty, though, is going to change the standard from looking for tax fraud—which seems to be what everybody is talking about—to saying that we will look for financial information that may be relevant.

What we are doing is taking the standard down to something “may be relevant,” which could be a dragnet for getting everyone’s information. It will be a deterrent to foreign investors both in our country as well as in other countries. I think at the very least every American, whether at home or abroad, deserves the right to the fourth amendment protections guaranteed by the Constitution.

I want the record to be very clear. I certainly do not condone Americans who have not followed the letter of the law, but I can’t support a law that endangers regular foreign investment and punishes every American regardless of whether there is suspicion that they have committed a crime.

While I want the important benefits included in the tax treaties to be ratified, I cannot support a treaty that would pave the way for a law that would permit the IRS to share information of customers at U.S. banks with foreign governments. Imagine, we will be conceivably sharing information about customers here with governments that may well not even be our friends. Also, I cannot support a treaty that may facilitate the bulk collection of private financial data for all U.S. citizens living abroad. For those reasons, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Very briefly, I am disappointed because basically what we are going to do—those of us who are law-abiding and pay our taxes have to

suffer the consequences of those who cheat and go abroad to do so. When they do that, they undermine the ability of this government to have the resources to arm the men and women who serve us abroad, protect them, take care of their health care, and deal with the challenges of educating the next generation of Americans.

Let me just say that this question that the treaty somehow infringes—first of all, if Switzerland is not a friendly country, I don’t know what is. It is not a question of a country that isn’t friendly, so let’s remove that objection.

The treaty supposedly infringes on the fourth amendment rights of U.S. citizens. Look, these bilateral tax treaties only permit the exchange of information that is foreseeably relevant to the collection of taxes.

The proposed treaty also provides protection against fishing expeditions. To exchange information, the requesting country must demonstrate that the individuals targeted have engaged in activities that suggested they are engaging in fraud.

The existing treaty with Switzerland requires the requesting country to establish tax fraud or fraudulent misconduct as a basis for the exchange. That standard has clearly proven to be too narrow for the purposes of prosecuting tax evasion, as demonstrated by the outcome of this Credit Suisse settlement, where the bank still does not have to hand over the names of individuals who use Credit Suisse accounts to hide their income.

Now the wages and U.S. bank account interests of Americans are both reported to the IRS. There is no reason why people with foreign bank accounts should be able to hide their money from the IRS in a way that average, hard-working Americans cannot. It boggles my mind that we are going to treat average, hard-working Americans in a different way than those who have the money to cheat and ultimately avoid their responsibility to our collective society, so we will continue to raise this issue.

I won’t expound upon it any more—I have plenty to say—in deference to the Senator from Arizona, who was gracious enough to yield the floor.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate as in morning business for such time as I may consume.

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

SYRIA

Mr. MCCAIN. The Middle East today is engulfed in an escalating regional conflict. The space for moderate politics in country after country is collapsing, and a process of radicalization is increasingly destabilizing the entire region. At the center of this growing

conflict stands Syria, where for over 3 years now the Syrian people have faced an onslaught of unspeakable violence from President Bashar al-Assad and his forces.

As of today more than 160,000 Syrians have been killed, over half of the population is in urgent need of humanitarian assistance, and 9.3 million people have been driven from their homes in what the United Nations has described “as the greatest humanitarian tragedy of our times.” To give some sense for the scale of the growing refugee crisis, there are now 1 million registered Syrian refugees in Lebanon. That makes up one-fourth of the total population of the country. This does not include the thousands who are living there unofficially and unregistered. This is as if the entire population of Canada were uprooted and became refugees in the United States of America—twice over.

Without understanding the scale, it is hard to comprehend the stress on resources and the escalating tensions that these refugees have caused in neighboring countries. Can you imagine what we would do as Americans if we were dealing with the entire population of Canada living as refugees in our country? Inside Syria, they are confronted with the inhumane cruelty of Mr. Assad and his forces every day.

We have seen evidence of this systematic abuse, torture, starvation, and killing of approximately 100,000 detainees, in what clearly amounts to war crimes and crimes against humanity. The United Nations has detailed the further arrest, detention, torture, and sexual abuse of thousands of children by government forces. Human Rights Watch has documented how Syrian authorities have deliberately used explosives and bulldozers to demolish entire neighborhoods for no military reason whatsoever, just as a form of collective punishment of Syrian civilians.

The United Nations has also documented the toll of the Syrian government’s air strike campaign, and, in particular, the regime’s use of crude cluster munitions that have become known as barrel bombs. Their sole purpose is to maim, kill, and terrorize as many civilians as possible when indiscriminately dropped on schools, bakeries, and mosques.

Worse yet, evidence is piling up that Assad’s forces have been equipping these barrel bombs with chlorine gas. Just last week French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius said that France has evidence of at least 14 chlorine-based chemical attacks carried out by Syrian Government forces since 2013, adding, “The regime is still capable of producing chemical weapons and is determined to use them.”

Around the same time, a senior Israeli defense official stated that “from the day that he signed the deal, Assad has used chemical weapons over thirty times, and in every case citizens were killed.”

The State Department has further verified these reports, stating there

were “indications” of the use of chlorine—though it was quick to point out that this is not one of the chemicals Syria was obliged to surrender.

So it appears that we are faced with a situation in which the Assad regime has agreed to give up certain chemical weapons after using them to murder nearly 1,400 civilians last year, but it is also using other chemicals—less lethal but nonetheless effective—to continue gassing civilians to death, and the world does nothing about it. Why? Because technically this is permitted under the chemical weapons agreement. That is shameful and outrageous.

What is more, months after the deadline for removing all of its chemical weapons stockpiles, the Syrian Government has yet to fulfill its obligations under the treaty and is using its remaining stockpiles to bargain over the terms of the original agreement in the hopes of retaining its storage and production facilities.

As we are once again faced with images of men, women, and children writhing on the ground and gasping for breath, Assad appears to be disregarding some of his chemical weapons commitments and continuing to commit mass atrocities. Again, redlines are tested and crossed, and the United States of America and the world do nothing.

These are just some of the many reasons our Director of National Intelligence referred to the Syria crisis as “an apocalyptic disaster.” But this apocalyptic disaster in Syria is no longer just a humanitarian tragedy for one country; it is a regional conflict and an emerging national security threat to us all. No one should believe that we will be immune to what is happening in Syria. None of us are.

For those of you who look at these far-away events and say what Neville Chamberlain once told himself about a different problem from Hell in an earlier time—that this is “a quarrel in a far away country between people of whom we know nothing”—don’t think that events in Syria won’t have repercussions much closer to home. The terrorist sanctuary that Al Qaeda and its associated forces now enjoy in Syria and Iraq increasingly pose a direct threat to U.S. national security and that of our closest allies and partners. Indeed, the Secretary of Homeland Security, Mr. Jeh Johnson, has said, “Syria is now a matter of homeland security.” The Director of National Intelligence, James Clapper, has also repeatedly warned that Al Qaeda-affiliated terrorists in Syria now aspire to attack the homeland.

If the September 11 attacks should have taught us anything, it is that global terrorists who occupy ungoverned spaces and seek to plot and plan attacks against us can pose a direct threat to our national security. That was Afghanistan on September 10, 2001, and that is what top officials in this administration are now warning us Syria is becoming today.

The latest U.S. intelligence estimates say that more than 100 Americans have traveled to fight in Syria alongside extremists, joining some of the most dangerous terrorist organizations in the world today.

Earlier this month, FBI Director James Comey stated:

All of us with a memory of the ‘80s and ‘90s saw the line drawn from Afghanistan to September 11. We see Syria as that, but an order of magnitude worse in a couple of respects: Far more people are going there, and far easier to travel to and back from.

Already, senior intelligence officials believe that between 6 and 12 Americans who have gone to Syria to fight have now returned to America, possibly with the intention to carry out attacks here. “We know where some are,” stated one senior U.S. intelligence official. Some? But what about the others? Does that reassure you?

The sheer scale of foreign fighters with Western passports traveling to fight in Syria has our senior-most intelligence officers worrying about how easy it would be for these people to slip through the cracks. In March the Director of the National Counterterrorism Center, Matthew Olsen, testified that the NSA simply does not have the ability to track the thousands of jihadists now flocking to Syria. He testified:

This raises our concern that radicalized individuals with extremist contacts and battlefield experience could return to their home countries to commit violence on their own initiative or participate in al Qaeda-directed plots aimed at Western targets outside of Syria.

First indoctrinated, then trained and equipped, the foreign fighters now joining groups such as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, known as ISIS—a group who proved too radical even for Al Qaeda’s senior leadership—presents a challenge that rises above a mere counterterrorism problem. ISIS no longer exists in small, concentrated cells, conducting operations limited in nature and scope. It has become a real nascent state actor, similar in organization and power to the Taliban of the late 1990s and possessing a real army of foreign recruits capable of carrying out attacks across the world. The territory it possesses is no longer a safe haven within a state. It has become a de facto state that serves as a safe haven and an even more vibrant incubator for international terrorism than did pre-9/11 Afghanistan. It is a saddening irony that as our efforts to eradicate the Al Qaeda safe haven in Afghanistan are proving successful, we see an even more dangerous terrorist sanctuary emerging on the border of Europe between Damascus and Baghdad.

My friends, here is the tragic reality of the war in Syria. After more than 3 years of horror, suffering, devastation, and growing threats to international security, the conflict in Syria continues to get worse and worse both for Syria and for the world. But the United States and the international community have no effective policy to help

bring this conflict to a responsible end. The Geneva peace talks have failed entirely, as predicted. Ambassador Brahimi, the U.N. Special Representative, has himself given up on the process and resigned last week. This should surprise no one. The United States and the international community have been reluctant to provide the opposition with much needed material support. Meanwhile, Assad has the active support of Hezbollah, Iran, and Russia and is using nearly every weapon in his arsenal to kill his way to victory, and he is winning. So why would he want to negotiate himself out of power now?

Can we finally stop hiding behind the fantasy of Geneva and admit what has been painfully obvious from the start: that there is no hope for a negotiated solution until the momentum on the battlefield changes against the Assad regime. And that will only happen through greater international intervention of some sort.

After painful and costly experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan, a war-weary American public does not appear eager for an active, internationalist foreign policy, and President Obama has sought to give the American people what they want. While it is understandable and unsurprising that the American public has been reluctant to get more engaged with events in Syria and the wider Middle East, the tide of war does not recede simply because we wish it so.

The outcome of the administration’s disengagement has been a consistent failure to support more responsible forces in Syria when that support would have mattered—the descent of Syria into chaos and growing international instability, the use of Syria as a training ground for Al Qaeda affiliates and other terrorist organizations, the ceding of regional leadership to our international adversaries, and the tolerance of war crimes and crimes against humanity. In short, all of the awful things that critics said would happen if we got more involved in Syria have happened because we have not gotten more involved.

We continue to hear from the administration that there are no good options in Syria—as if there ever were good options in the real world—and that the only alternative to our current disengagement is a full-scale ground invasion and war without end. The President frequently has said as much, recently stating:

It is very difficult to imagine a scenario in which our involvement in Syria would have led to a better outcome, short of us being willing to undertake an effort in size and scope similar to what we did in Iraq.

But this claim has been directly contradicted by other administration officials who recognize that our inaction in Syria is not because we lack options or capability but, rather, the will.

In an April 30 speech at the Holocaust Museum in Washington, our own Ambassador to the United Nations, Samantha Power, said:

To those who would argue that a head of state or government has to choose only between doing nothing and sending in the military—I maintain that is a constructed and false choice, an accompaniment only to disengagement and passivity.

French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius has also highlighted this false choice, recently expressing his regrets that Western nations did not carry out threatened airstrikes against the regime following the August 2013 chemical attack and that more had not been done to stop the abominable behavior of the Assad regime. He stated:

We regret it [not carrying out threatened airstrikes] because we think it would have changed everything.

That is a French Foreign Minister who regrets that we didn't carry out the airstrikes because "we think it would have changed everything." In his comments he made it clear that a limited surgical strike would have made all the difference in Syria and would have stopped the chemical attacks that continue today, saved the lives of thousands of people, and prevented the devastating consequences that have reverberated around the world since that red line was crossed.

It is true our options to help end the conflict in Syria were never good, and they are much worse and fewer now. But as Mr. Fabius pointed out, as bad as our options in Syria may be, we still have options. No one should believe that doing something meaningful to help in Syria requires total war or invasion. Literally no one is calling for that, and it is intellectually dishonest to suggest so. This is not a question of options or costs or capabilities but a question of will.

The continued violence in Syria is expected to kill tens of thousands more and produce millions of refugees by the year's end. This is a humanitarian tragedy, to be sure, but one with immediate strategic consequences. The longer the devastation goes on, the more difficult it will be to put Syria back together again. Failing to do so will leave a dangerous conflagration in the heart of the Middle East—a failed state at war with itself where extremism and instability will fester and terrorists of all brands will find ample space, resources, and recruits to menace the region and eventually attack the United States.

If ever there was a case that should remind us that our interests are indivisible from our values, it is Syria. We cannot afford to go numb to this human tragedy. I have seen my fair share of suffering and death in the world, but the images and stories coming out of Syria haunt me most. In the time I have been speaking, at least two Syrians have been killed, 45 Syrians have become refugees, and 15 Syrian families have been forced from their homes. In another 15 minutes from now, two more will be killed, 45 more will become refugees, and 15 more families will be forced from their homes. Is that acceptable to us?

Neither the United States, Europe, nor the Syrian people can afford the cost of defeatism. The price of abandonment includes not only a failed state in Syria but an entire region teetering on the brink of disaster, and it means emboldening our adversaries and conceding a safe haven and a state to the world's most dangerous terrorist groups. While these are the real, tangible consequences we face, it also means conceding the moral sources of our great power and giving up on every principle our Nation was built on.

All of us, Americans and Europeans, must recognize that our power confers a responsibility on us. If the most powerful nations in the world have the capabilities and the options to help bring to an end one of the most horrific mass atrocities in modern times, what does it say about us that we have not done so? History will render a bitter and scathing judgment on America and the world for our failure in Syria, and I pray we will finally recognize that and take the necessary actions to help the Syrian people write a better end to this sad chapter of world affairs.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD two articles, one entitled "FBI Director: Number of Americans traveling to fight in Syria increasing," and the other entitled "Exclusive: Al Qaeda's American Fighters Are Coming Home—and U.S. Intelligence Can't Find Them."

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, May 2, 2014]

FBI DIRECTOR: NUMBER OF AMERICANS TRAVELING TO FIGHT IN SYRIA INCREASING
(By Sari Horwitz and Adam Goldman)

FBI Director James B. Comey said Friday that the problem of Americans traveling to Syria to fight in the civil war there has worsened in recent months and remains a major concern to U.S. law enforcement and intelligence officials.

In a wide-ranging interview with reporters at FBI headquarters, Comey said the FBI is worried that the Americans who have joined extremist groups allied with al-Qaeda in Syria will return to the United States to carry out terrorist attacks.

"All of us with a memory of the '80s and '90s saw the line drawn from Afghanistan in the '80s and '90s to Sept. 11," Comey said. "We see Syria as that, but an order of magnitude worse in a couple of respects. Far more people going there. Far easier to travel to and back from. So, there's going to be a diaspora out of Syria at some point and we are determined not to let lines be drawn from Syria today to a future 9/11."

Comey declined to give a precise figure for Americans believed to be involved in the Syrian struggle but said the numbers are "getting worse."

"I said dozens last time," said Comey, referring to an interview with reporters four months ago. "It's still dozens, just a couple more dozen."

A senior U.S. counterterrorism official estimated this year that 60 to 70 Americans have traveled to fight in Syria. Comey said that Americans in Syria are actively recruiting other Americans to join the fight.

Comey said the threat associated with foreign fighters in Syria is of concern not only

to the United States but also is "a huge focus" of European intelligence officials.

"It's the first thing we talk about when I go visit a counterpart," said Comey, who has visited 13 FBI legal attache offices abroad since he became director in September.

Comey said thousands of fighters are traveling to Syria from European countries, and they are a focus for the FBI because many of them could easily get into the United States. "They're visa-waiver countries," Comey said. "If someone flows out of Syria, they can flow in here very easily."

Comey said the al-Qaeda affiliate in Yemen remains the greatest threat to the United States. He said the terrorist group is bent on attacking America and that he was very concerned about the group's bombmaking expertise.

[From the Daily Beast, May 20, 2014]

EXCLUSIVE: AL QAEDA'S AMERICAN FIGHTERS ARE COMING HOME—AND U.S. INTELLIGENCE CAN'T FIND THEM

(By Eli Lake)

The number of American extremists who have flocked to Syria is higher than previously understood, American intelligence sources say. And some of the fighters are coming home.

Western intelligence services have been warning that European and American jihadists have been flocking to Syria to fight. But they've been reluctant to say how many Americans have joined the extremist forces there—until now. The latest U.S. intelligence estimates say that more than 100 Americans have joined the jihad in Syria to fight alongside Sunni terrorists there.

Senior American intelligence officials tell The Daily Beast that they believe between six and 12 Americans who have gone to Syria to fight Assad have now returned to America. "We know where some are," one senior U.S. intelligence official told The Daily Beast. "The concern is the scale of the problem we are dealing with."

The scale of that problem by all accounts has gotten worse. Last fall, the official U.S. estimate on Americans specifically who have joined the jihad in Syria was in the low double digits. In January, the New York Times reported that at least 70 Americans have either traveled or attempted to travel to Syria. Earlier this month FBI Director James Comey told reporters that he believed "dozens" of Americans were suspected to be foreign fighters in Syria, but declined to give a more precise number.

In recent months, the U.S. intelligence community has made the tracking of all Westerners going to fight into Syria a top priority. Speaking in March before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Matthew Olsen, the director of the National Counter-Terrorism Center, described in vague terms an effort by the whole government to find Western citizens traveling to Syria and to track their travel.

"In light of the large foreign fighter component in Syria crisis, we are working together to gather every piece of information we can about the identity of these individuals," he said at the time.

More recently, the issue of Western foreign fighters came up in top-level meetings between the Syrian opposition delegation and the Obama administration last week to Washington, D.C.

"We view all foreign fighters as a threat and they are not welcome. There is a convergence of interests between the moderate Syrian opposition and the international community in fighting these foreign fighters and insuring they do not use Syria as a launching pad for external attacks," said Oubai Shabandar, a strategic communications adviser to the Syrian opposition's foreign mission in Washington. "This was a major topic

of conversation this month in meetings with the Syrian opposition delegation and top U.S. officials."

The problem, U.S. counter-terrorism and intelligence officials tell *The Daily Beast*, is that there are just so many jihadists with Western passports traveling to fight in Syria that they worry some of them may slip back into the United States without being detected.

"The NSA does not have the ability to track thousands of bad guys—and on the human intelligence side, this is even more difficult," another senior U.S. intelligence official told *The Daily Beast*. "So we are worried that people are slipping through the cracks."

Olsen in his March testimony said there were thousands of foreign fighters in Syria and that hundreds of those fighters held Western passports.

"This raises our concern that radicalized individuals with extremist contacts and battlefield experience could return to their home countries to commit violence on their own initiative or participate in al Qaeda-directed plots aimed at Western targets outside of Syria," he said. Olsen also said that a group of "al Qaeda veterans" from Afghanistan and Pakistan have gone to Syria, making the prospect of recruiting new members for the organization even more likely.

Aaron Zelin, a senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy who closely tracks the flow of foreign fighters into Syria, said, "In the past when we've seen Americans go abroad to fight in foreign countries and a number of individuals have been trained to go back to attempt attacks on the homeland." The best example he said is Faisal al-Shahzad, the Pakistani American who traveled to Taliban training camps in Pakistan and then attempted to set off a bomb in Times Square in 2010. Al-Shahzad failed to properly detonate his bomb and was reported to the New York police by a Muslim-American street vendor.

"It's not just Americans who are going to Syria, but there are up to 3,000 European citizens from countries that have visa waivers with the United States who have also joined the jihad in Syria," Zelin said. "This is why so many Western counter-terrorism officials are so worried, it's much easier to get into our country with a Western passport."

Those Americans that have gone off to fight in Syria also do not fit the typical terrorist profile. Last May, the *Detroit Free Press* reported that Nicole Lynn Mansfield, a convert to Islam, was killed in fighting in Syria fighting Assad. In April of 2013, a federal court charged Eric Harroun, a former U.S. Army private, with firing a rocket-propelled grenade while fighting alongside al-Nusra, al Qaeda's official affiliate in Syria. If U.S. intelligence estimates are correct, these cases could be unfortunate harbingers of things to come.

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

VETERANS HEALTH CARE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, this weekend Americans will gather to remember all who have fought and perished so that we might live in freedom. Memorial Day is our chance to honor their extraordinary sacrifices.

Of course, Kentucky has long played a proud and vital role in the defense of our Nation. I am honored to represent so many Kentuckians in the Armed Forces, including those stationed at Fort Knox, Fort Campbell, the Blue Grass Army Depot, and members of the Reserves and Kentucky National Guard.

One of the reasons Memorial Day is so important to me is because it allows Americans to reflect and give thanks for all that we have—to recognize that none of it would have been possible without so many Americans we have never met putting everything on the line for us. That is why the men and women who protect us deserve our full support when they are deployed, when they are training, and when they return home. Most Americans certainly agree with that statement.

Yet as we have recently learned, that is not what is happening. So many Americans now turn on the evening news just to be sickened by the steady drip, drip from the Obama administration's growing veterans scandal. The denial of care to our veterans is a national disgrace and the scandal only seems to increase in scope by the day.

We first heard about 1 hospital in Phoenix, then we heard about 10 medical centers across the Nation, now there are at least 2 dozen VA facilities under investigation. It all leads to an obvious question: How widespread is this failure to treat our veterans?

We need answers from the President and his administration. The White House claims the President didn't even know about the latest scandal until hearing about it on the news, even though a top official testified he knew of inappropriate scheduling practices at VA health care clinics as far back as 2010. It sure raises a lot of questions.

It is a curious thing. President Obama, the most powerful man in the free world, always seems to be the last to know about what is going on in his own administration. From the Obama administration's IRS scandal to its ObamaCare Web site fiasco, just about every time, the President claims to be in the dark until the wrongdoing surfaces on its own—usually in the press. The pattern is incredibly worrying.

If it is true he learns so much through the press—if he knows that little about what is going on in his own administration—then I recommend he get reengaged. Right now. Right now. Because American Presidential leadership is needed today. This scandal appears to be a failure of huge magnitude, and the people we represent are demanding he rise to the challenge.

Our veterans are counting on him to work with both parties to get to the truth and to pursue solutions that can make things better—solutions such as the VA reform bill that passed the House yesterday with strong bipartisan support. That legislation, which I have cosponsored and which Senator RUBIO has been the leader on, would make it easier to remove high-level VA employ-

ees for performance failures. It is a smart idea. There is no reason for us not to pass it quickly right here in the Senate. The President should call for its passage right away too. That would be one positive step forward for him—a small one, but a positive one, even though, for some reason, the White House has been ambivalent about the bill.

Look, we all remember how engaged the President was when healthcare.gov flopped. He was very engaged. He didn't just send a staffer out to Phoenix; he didn't just give a secretary a stern talking to; he didn't say he wouldn't stand for it. He pulled out all the stops. He made it his No. 1 priority to get that Web site running, even if that is still not done. What I am saying is the President should put more effort into helping our veterans than his attempt to fix a Web site. Only he can work with us to get to the truth. Our veterans deserve it. They deserve answers. They deserve accountability, and they deserve solutions.

As we look ahead to Memorial Day, I hope the President will work constructively with us to give them just that—to prove how grateful we are to the brave men and women who protect us every single day.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

BARRON NOMINATION

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, I rise today to speak in favor of the confirmation of David Barron to the First Circuit Court of Appeals.

As a Harvard Law professor, he has broad bipartisan support from those who know him best—his colleagues. Larry Tribe and Charles Fried—two professors at Harvard who could not be further apart politically—both agree—and this is the joint quote—"Barron is a brilliant lawyer who will make an excellent judge. What is clear to us is that Barron will decide cases based solely on the relevant sources of legal authority, including binding precedent, and that his political views would in no way distort his legal judgment."

This is the kind of unequivocal support we want for a judicial nominee, and David Barron is just the kind of judge we should confirm.

I stand alongside those of my colleagues who believe transparency is paramount and that we need a public debate on drone policy. Indeed, I support a robust debate on our entire drone policy, not simply the use of a drone to kill an American citizen who was plotting the annihilation of his fellow Americans.

Importantly, the White House just announced that it will release to the general public the key memo Professor Barron wrote, so all Americans will be able to take part in this debate.

But let us be clear: David Barron is not responsible for the administration's delay in releasing the memos he