

wounded, thousands and thousands grievously wounded. Our fighting men and women did a yeoman's job. They made us proud. But was that war necessary? In hindsight, it appears to me it wasn't. Not only have we lost thousands of American lives, it has destabilized the whole Middle East and hundreds of thousands—hundreds of thousands—hundreds of thousands—hundreds of thousands of Iraqis have been killed. They are now gone.

But there are some pushing hard in Congress to authorize use of military force right now—right now. Dick Cheney was here yesterday. I guess that is whom they are following. But wouldn't it be a good idea for us to stand back a little bit and see what the President of the United States has to say tonight? He is addressing the Nation. Let's allow him to speak to our country, to our fellow citizens, and lay out his plan.

It is absolutely critical that the American people and Congress hear directly from the President of the United States.

In the Senate we are going to have an all-Senators briefing tomorrow afternoon. The administration will come to one of our classified rooms in the Capitol complex and lay out to us in detail what is going on that is not in the news. So every Member of this body will have a chance to get as much information as possible. The President speaks tonight. Tomorrow afternoon there is a briefing.

It is clear—the President has said so publicly, his administration has said so publicly, and the officials who work directly with the White House—he is doing his utmost. He just returned from Europe and much of the time that was spent there in the NATO conference was about what they are going to do to go after this evil in the Middle East, this ISIS group. He is doing his utmost to build a robust international coalition including the Sunni Arab States.

For this mission to be successful, of course, Sunni Arab countries must play a role and they will do that. That is being worked on as we speak.

It is clear to me that we need to train and equip Syrian rebels and other groups in the Middle East that need some help. It is called title 10 authority. The rebels have tried to get it from us and they should get it. That is our way of building an international coalition. Congress should do that. The Republicans are worried about money. There is money to do that. The chairman of the Armed Services Committee is on the floor and he can certainly vouch for that. It would give authority for the President to help equip these rebels.

Going it alone is not going to work. We must have the support of the international community if we are to rid the world of ISIS. We know France—I at least believe that—has stepped forward, I believe Great Britain has stepped forward, I understand Poland is

part of the coalition that has stepped forward, and there are many other countries the President met with in Europe just a few days ago. We need to build a coalition, and that is what he is doing, rather than declaring war today. Title 10 authority is something we need.

I repeat. Going it alone will not suffice. I also believe that as Commander in Chief the President has the authority he needs now to act against ISIS. I believe the vast majority of the Members of Congress agree with that. Now it is critical we support our Commander in Chief as he takes this decisive action. I am amazed—amazed—that some Members of Congress want to rush to war, because that is what they are talking about is a war. How did that work out for us last time? Not so well. The Bush-Cheney strategy of rushing into conflict didn't work then and it will not work now. Let's be cautious and let's be deliberate.

I repeat. Former Vice President Cheney was here yesterday giving the Republicans a pep talk. He gave them advice on foreign policy. Please—please—taking advice from Dick Cheney on foreign policy, that is a terrifying prospect. We should be learning from our past mistakes, not repeating them.

Air strikes and strategic use of drones and of course covert action are the most effective ways to take out ISIS without committing American troops, placing troops in harm's way. So I support President Obama's decision not to send in ground troops. That is not an option for the American people. I can guarantee everyone that within the sound of my voice.

But now that the Republicans are taking advice from Dick Cheney on foreign policy, I am concerned they once again will rush to commit U.S. troops to a ground war in the Middle East when we could accomplish the mission in a more strategic way.

I say to Democrats and Republicans, let's destroy these despicable terrorists, but let's do it the right way this time. The President knows and the American people know we have to take decisive action. The President knows how to destroy terrorists and their organization. Osama bin Laden is proof of that.

Let's give the President of the United States the time to do this the right way. Troops are out there defending us as we speak. They are not Democrats. They are not Republicans. They are not Independents. They are fighting for us to protect Americans. We need committed, decisive action to stop ISIS.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

#### MIDDLE EAST STRATEGY

Mr. McCONNELL. Last month I got to spend a lot of time with the people

of Kentucky, and since there has been no shortage of issues to keep people up at night over the past few months, I got a lot of straight talk on a lot of topics. I heard a lot about the crisis at the border, about lost health care plans, the chronic shortage of good jobs, stagnant wages, even Ebola, the spread of which is a threat that must be taken seriously.

Yet one issue that kept coming up is America's role in the world and the growing sense that some in Washington are more or less content to let others shape our destiny for us. For many that concern was crystallized when they witnessed the barbaric execution of an American citizen by an ISIL terrorist and the halting reaction to it by a President who has yet to find his footing when it comes to dealing with this group that clearly has the will, the means, and the sanctuary it needs to do more.

Last week the White House announced that the President plans to explain the nature of the threat ISIL poses in a speech to the American people tonight. Well, after spending a month talking with folks in Kentucky, it is pretty clear—to me, at least—that the American people fully appreciate the nature of this threat. After the beheadings of two American citizens, they don't want an explanation of what is happening, they want a plan. They want some Presidential leadership.

I hope the President lays out a credible plan to defeat ISIL. I hope he outlines the steps he intends to take beyond simply the defense of Baghdad, Erbil, Sinjar, and Amerli, and what legal authorities and resources he thinks are required to execute a successful campaign against ISIL. But the fact is the rise of ISIL is not an isolated failure. The spread of ISIL occurred in a particular context, and if we hope to defeat this threat, we need to come to terms with that now.

So before speaking with a little more specificity about ISIL and the ongoing threat of global terrorism, I would like to briefly restate my concerns about the consequences of the President's foreign policy, as I warned a few months ago, because ISIL's military advance across Syria and Iraq carries a much larger lesson—a lesson that should prompt the President to reconsider and revise his overall national security policy and better prepare the country and our military to confront the threats that will survive his time in office.

First, it is important to note a few of the consistent objectives that have always characterized this President's national security policy: drawing down our conventional and nuclear forces, withdrawing from Iraq and Afghanistan, and placing a greater reliance upon international organizations and diplomacy.

As I have noted on other occasions, I have serious differences with the President over this approach. In my view, we have a duty as a superpower without imperialistic aims to help maintain international order and balance of

power, and that international order is maintained by American military might. Indeed, American military might is its backbone. But that is not a view this President seems to share.

The defining bookends to the President's approach were the Executive orders signed his first week in office which included the declaration that Guantanamo would be closed within a year without any plan on what to do with its detainees and the Executive orders that ended the CIA's detention and interrogation programs at the same time. In May of this year the President also announced that all of our combat forces would be withdrawn from Afghanistan by the end of this term whether or not the Taliban is successful in capturing parts of Afghanistan, whether or not Al Qaeda's senior leadership has found a more permissive environment in the tribal areas of Pakistan, and whether or not Al Qaeda has been driven from Afghanistan.

All of this underscores something I have been suggesting for some time—that the President is a rather reluctant Commander in Chief—because between those two bookends much has occurred to undermine our Nation's national security. Yet, tragically, the President has not adapted accordingly.

We have seen the failure to negotiate a status of forces agreement with Iraq that would have allowed for a residual military force and likely prevented the assault by the Islamic State of Syria and the Levant.

We have seen how the President's inability to see Russia and China as the dissatisfied regional powers they are, intent on increasing their spheres of influence, has exposed our own allies to new risk. The failed reset with Russia and the President's commitment to a world without nuclear weapons led him to hastily sign an arms treaty with Russia that did nothing to substantially reduce its nuclear stockpile or its tactical nuclear weapons. And, of course, Russia was undeterred in its assault upon Ukraine.

The President announced a strategic pivot to the Asia-Pacific without any real plan to fund it. This failure to invest in the kinds of naval, air, and Marine Corps forces we will need to maintain our dominance in this region in the years to come could have tragic consequences down the road.

Of course, we have all seen how eager the President was to declare an end to the war on terror, but as the President was focused on unwinding or reversing past policies through Executive order, the threat from Al Qaeda and affiliated groups only metastasized. Uprisings in north Africa and the broader Middle East resulted in additional ungoverned space in Syria, Libya, Egypt, and Yemen. There were prison breaks in Iraq, Pakistan, and Libya, and the release of hundreds of prisoners in Egypt. Terrorists also escaped from prisons in Yemen—a country that is no more ready to detain the terrorists at Guantanamo today than they were back in 2009.

The President's response to all of this has been to draw down our conventional forces and capabilities and to deploy special operations forces in economy-of-force train-and-assist missions across the globe. Speaking at West Point in May, he pointed to a network of partnerships from South Asia to the Sahel to be funded by a \$5 billion counterterrorism partnership fund for which Congress has yet to receive a viable plan. In those cases where indigenous forces prove insufficient and a need for direct action actually arises, the President announced his intent to resort to the use of armed, unmanned aerial vehicles for strikes, as has been done in Yemen and Somalia. By deploying special operations forces, the President hoped to manage the diffuse threat posed by Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, Boko Haram, terrorist networks inside of Libya that now threaten Egypt, the al-Nusra front, the Taliban, ISIL, and other terrorist groups.

But as the nature of terrorist insurgencies has evolved, the President sees no need to reverse the harmful damage of the defense cuts he insisted upon, to rebuild our conventional and nuclear forces or to accept that leaving behind residual forces in Iraq and Afghanistan is an effective means by which to preserve the strategic gains we have made over the years through tremendous sacrifice.

The truth is that the threat of some of these al Qaeda affiliates, associated groups, or independent terrorist organizations has simply outpaced the President's economy-of-force concept. In some cases the host nation's military, which we have trained and equipped, has proven to be inadequate to defeat the insurgency in question, as is the case with AQAP, the Taliban, or ISIL. In some cases the insurgency does not affiliate itself with al Qaeda or builds upon territorial gains before aspiring to attack the U.S. homeland.

The growth, advance, and evolution of ISIL presents a turning point for the President. Will the fall of Anbar Province and the threat posed by ISIL to Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey lead to a reconsideration of his entire national security policy, the kind I have alluded to here and elsewhere, or will the President confine himself within the bookends of shortsighted national security policies that were originally conceived on the campaign trail back in 2008?

If prior events or arguments left the President unpersuaded, the emergence and recent actions of ISIL should convince him that the time has come to revisit his prior assumptions and rethink his approach. ISIL is large and lethal, and its rapid growth has outpaced the capacity of either the Peshmerga, the Iraqi security forces, or the moderate Syrian opposition to contain it. Ominously, ISIL has developed expertise in small-unit infantry tactics, the use of insurgent tactics, and as a terrorist organization. As a re-

sult of oil sales, ransoms, bank robberies, and donations, it is also well funded.

We need a plan, and we need it now. The President has now declared that defeating ISIL is his objective, and that is a very good start. But Americans don't want a lecture, they want a plan—a credible, comprehensive plan to deal with this menace that clearly wants to harm us here at home and is only becoming stronger by the day.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Dempsey has said that defeating ISIL will require military action within Syria, and the President has now declared that defeating ISIL is his objective. Tonight the President needs to set forth the military strategy and the means required to defeat ISIL and to link those actions to any additional authorization and appropriations he would like to see from Congress. If the President develops a regional strategy, builds a combat-effective military coalition, and explains how his strategy will lead to the defeat of ISIL, I believe he will have significant congressional support. This is no small matter. If Congress is asked to support a strategy, it needs to be a strategy that is designed to succeed and not a mere restatement of current policy which we know is insufficient to the task.

The President must seize this opportunity to lead. This is not the time to shirk or put off his solemn responsibilities as Commander in Chief because passing off this threat to his successor would not only be irresponsible, it would increase the threat ISIL poses to Americans by enabling it to secure its gains within Iraq and Syria. In my view, ISIL's campaign across Syria and Iraq presents the President with an opportunity. It is an opportunity to reconsider his failed national security policy.

The President and his advisers may have convinced themselves of their standard straw man argument that anyone who disagrees with this failed approach is bent on serial occupations or bent on invasions, but that is really a false choice, and it is certainly not a plan.

It is time to put the straw man aside and to realize the fight is not with his critics here at home, it is with ISIL. That is why this morning I am calling on the President to present us with a credible plan the American people have been waiting for, explain our military objectives, and rally public support for accomplishing them. That is what the Commander in Chief should be doing at a moment such as this.

If the threat from ISIL demands the commitment of American resources and the risk of American life, the President has a duty to explain that to the Nation and Congress this evening even if it doesn't conform with the tidy vision of world affairs he outlined as a candidate 6 years ago. If his strategy is little more than a restatement of the current policies, if all he plans to do is

manage this threat and pass it off to his successor, well, we need to know that too because Americans are worried and they are anxious. They want and deserve the truth. Most of all, they want a plan, and that is what I am hoping for tonight.

#### HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

LANCE CORPORAL MATTHIAS N. HANSON

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise to mourn the loss of a U.S. marine and a Kentuckian from the hometown of Abraham Lincoln. LCpl Matthias N. Hanson hailed from Lincoln's birthplace of Hodgenville, KY, and was killed on February 21, 2010, of wounds suffered as a result of conducting combat operations in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. He was 20 years old.

For his service in uniform, Lance Corporal Hanson received several awards, medals, and decorations, including the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and the Purple Heart.

"Matt's our hero because of how he lived," says the Reverend Norm Brock, who spoke at Matt's memorial service. "Matt didn't miss life. He lived life."

Service was a proud tradition in Matt's family. His father Lowell R. Hanson, Jr., served in the Army. One of Matt's brothers is currently Active Duty Army, while the other is in the Army Reserve. Matt himself was born in Germany on a military base. As Mary Huff, Matt's mom, puts it: Matt "had to go rogue and join the Marines."

Matt had a strong work ethic in high school says his father Lowell:

He used to get up at 4:00 in the morning to milk cows on a nearby farm, then go to school, then onto football practice, and back to work on the farm. Other people noticed and were impressed by his work ethic, and I was proud of him. He was determined that when he got old enough, he would join the Marines and serve his country.

Growing up, Matt was known for his blue eyes and sneaky smile, and he had a way of talking himself out of anything.

He had an easygoing manner and a lust for life. "He was quiet, a trickster and a charmer," says his mother. But ultimately, he was a country boy who wanted to do right by his country. Matt was a country music fan who particularly liked the song "Way Out Here" by Josh Thompson. He was "funny, energetic, really outgoing," says family friend Emily Johnson. "He could make anyone laugh. He had the brightest blue eyes ever. That's what we'll remember him as."

Matt graduated from LaRue County High School in Hodgenville, where he was a member of the football team and the Student Technology Association. Next to his picture in the school yearbook he put the following quote: "Life moves pretty fast. If you don't look around and pay attention, you could miss it."

Soon after graduation he enlisted in the Marine Corps in the spring of 2008.

"He was very proud of what he had done when he signed up to go to the Marines," remembers LaRue County High School football coach and assistant principal Rodney Armes. "He got his hair cut short and he was a Marine from the day he signed up."

Matt was trained as a rifleman and assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force based in Camp Lejeune, NC. He was deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in January of 2010. Matt played a key role in a crucial multiday battle in Afghanistan just days before his death in mid-February 2010. Matt's platoon came under fire from Taliban forces in the town of Marjah. Matt walked up, under air cover, to the fortified bunker where the enemy fire was coming from and fired a grenade launcher into the bunker with great poise and accuracy, killing the enemy forces. "The battle was over," said Matt's father, thanks to his bravery. "He played a critical role," says Capt. Gordon Emmanuel, Matt's platoon commander. "Anytime he shot he was on impact. Marines were cheering with his shots."

Matt's father was told by Matt's platoon sergeant and by Captain Emmanuel that Camp Hanson, once the biggest U.S. position in Marjah and well known to any Marine who has served in the area, was established at that site in Matt's honor because of his actions.

"The last time I saw [Matt] was on Christmas Eve 2009," said Matt's father. "He hugged me around the neck and said: Daddy, don't worry about me. Everybody dies. Not everybody has Jesus. Not everybody gets to be a Marine."

We are thinking of Matt's family as I recount his life for my Senate colleagues today. They include Matt's mother and stepfather Mary and Larry Huff; his father and stepmother Lowell R. Hanson, Jr., and Cynthia Hanson; his siblings Megan, Samantha, Erika, Lowell, and Brendan; his grandparents; and many other beloved family members and friends.

Matt was buried with full military honors in Hodgenville. The town that is the birthplace of one of America's greatest patriots, Abraham Lincoln, is also a fitting resting place for this brave young man and Marine. The Commonwealth of Kentucky will never forget the life and service of LCpl Matthias N. Hanson or his ultimate sacrifice given freely to his country. It is thanks to men like him that our Nation is free.

I yield the floor.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES RELATING TO CONTRIBUTIONS AND EXPENDITURES INTENDED TO AFFECT ELECTIONS—MOTION TO PROCEED

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S.J. Res. 19, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 471, S.J. Res. 19, a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relating to contributions and expenditures intended to affect elections.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I ask that I be allowed to proceed as in morning business for up to 4 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ISIL

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I believe the President will lay out a strong approach against ISIL tonight. That approach will include going after them wherever they are located, including Syria. The President and Secretary Kerry are making every effort to help lead a broadly based coalition which is so critically important to avoid the consequences of a Western go-it-alone approach which was mistakenly used when we invaded Iraq.

This President, like all Presidents, will welcome bipartisan Congressional support, even though he has the authority in this situation to act without explicit Congressional authority. I hope our friends on the other side of the aisle will lay aside partisan attacks and make a true effort to find a way to take on ISIL in a united manner. A strong bipartisan approach here in the United States will help the President and Secretary Kerry attain the explicit open support of a broad cross section of this world, including Arab and Muslim countries.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about our constitutional amendment. I think we have had a very good debate this week—an overdue debate. I want to thank my colleagues for coming to the floor and for speaking out. But there have also been many misrepresentations by the other side about what our constitutional amendment would do.

Michael Keegan, the President of People for the American Way, wrote a piece in the Huffington Post yesterday. He summed up the debate from the other side of the aisle quite well. He said, "a good rule of thumb in politics is that the scarier someone sounds, the more you should doubt what they're saying."

We heard some scary things in the last couple of days. Lorne Michaels is