

determination they need from the people in the Senate and the House, from people in the Defense Department and the administration, from people in the White House, from the Office of the President himself on down who are going to be making decisions that will put others in harm's way as we try to prevent greater numbers of Americans, frankly, from being in harm's way.

I clearly count myself among those who believe this is a real danger to us—the location of this ISIS threat, the understanding from the Secretary of Defense that somewhere between 1 and 200 Americans are there fighting alongside this genocidal group, and many times that from Europe fighting alongside this group—people with passports that allow them to come to the United States, to not worry about coming over the border and just worrying about buying a plane ticket and coming in that way.

Of course there are those who say—and I agree: If we know who they are, we should take their passports away. That is easy if you know who they are to invalidate the passport. It is pretty hard if you do not know who they are to invalidate that passport. In fact, it just cannot be done. There are not only Americans coming back, but others from visa waiver countries who just simply have a passport from their country and they buy a plane ticket. Suddenly those who have become steeped in this wrong-headed view of the world—who have become conditioned to the idea that a life, if it does not agree with you, does not matter—they would be able to come into this country and into European countries in ways that we have not seen before and still have access—as terrorist groups have had before to many other countries—to poison the minds of people who are looking for an answer. I can assure you that this is not the right answer.

So I wish my colleagues well as we make these important decisions. We are going to be looking at whatever we decide to do in the next couple of days and over the next 75 days or so. We will have a chance to revisit that decision as we look at how force is being applied and how our hopes are being met. We will see if what the President thinks will happen as a response to what we are doing here is actually what appears to be happening later this year.

#### HEALTH CARE

Mr. BLUNT. I have come to the floor almost every week. I think I have come to the floor every week it was possible to be on the Senate floor over the course of the last year to discuss the changes we have seen in health care. We are now approaching the 1-year anniversary of the—everybody would agree—disastrous launch of ObamaCare. Most Americans now agree, not only was the launch disastrous, but actually the changes in our health care system have not been what they would have hoped for.

The administration has delayed the 2015 open season, to sign up for health care, until the middle of November now. Interestingly, the middle of November is right after the election. I assume that is not a coincidence that the administration does not want voters to be reminded, between now and election day, of what the problems are in just trying to sign up and what the new costs and new deductibles may be.

But for whatever reason, of the many delays and the many determinations by the administration over and over again, no matter what the law said, the administration decided: Well, we can actually change that. There is no justification for November 15 except the first Tuesday in November. I think we all know that. No matter how many things we delayed, though, the health care plan continues to get less and less popular. Every month, as I look at those numbers, fewer Americans have confidence in the direction we are headed in health care than we did before.

Earlier this week, CMS began sending notices to consumers enrolled in the exchanges that have income-related discrepancies that do not match the Federal data. Apparently, about 363,000 individuals are receiving those letters. If they do not respond by September 30, the subsidy they thought they were having for their policy will not be there. In August CMS began to reach out to people who required proof of citizenship. Apparently, it is too much trouble to have proof of citizenship to take to the polls with you but not too much trouble to have citizenship proof if you are going to participate in this program that taxpayers pay for and that voters, ultimately, by who they send here and who they send to the White House, are responsible for.

On Monday, it was announced that around 115,000 individuals—1,700 of them were Missourians—were notified that their coverage would end by September 30 unless they could provide that verification of citizenship. That is not a very good notice to get with 2 weeks and a couple of days of notification: By the way, you are about to lose your health care coverage unless you can provide documents and provide them right now.

USA Today reported that healthcare.gov still remains so “glitchy,” according to them, “remains so glitchy,” that some people are being forced to send their information multiple times. Many cannot access their accounts, and then now there is the well-understood concern that the information may not be nearly as secure as we would want it to be.

Serco, a company that was hired to provide services for processing paper applications—we found out just a few days ago, after months of waiting, that the Federal Government finally responded to a St. Louis television station—KMOV's freedom of information request which they submitted in March. It takes a long time to get one

simple question answered. The question was: How many paper applications are actually being processed at this processing center in Wentzville, MO? How many applications were processed between October of last year and March of this year?

The number was not so big that it should have been that hard to count. It was less than 5 percent of the anticipated number that the workforce was put in place for and the company was paid to process—about 271,000 people over that several months' period of time.

The director of the project testified in September that the company, he said, was “prepared to manage an estimated 6.2 million paper applications” between that period of time, and instead they managed 271,000. When you have a workforce in place to do 6.2 million applications and they do about one-quarter of a million, no wonder people from that workplace were coming forward. Numerous whistleblowers, according to KMOV, were saying: We are playing board games. We have library books stacked up on the tables. We are told, every once in a while, to push the button that refreshes our computers so that it at least appears that the computer has not just gone away in one of many miscalculations in how this was going to work.

A GAO report released on Tuesday confirmed that people who had had concerns about this bill because it would use Federal funding for the first time to lead to taxpayer-funded abortions—and many of my colleagues in the House voted for this and voted for it only because President Obama repeatedly promised that the health care law would not lead to American tax dollars being used for this purpose. It is a longstanding policy. It is a policy that Americans have strongly supported for a long time. Unfortunately, this new report by the government itself indicates that was one more government promise not kept.

We are on the verge of entering the second year of healthcare.gov. We are on the verge of entering the second year of this new Federal involvement in people's health care decisions. I think there is a reason that every week, every month, when Missourians are asked by the Kaiser Foundation and others about this, this is less popular than it was the month before.

Hopefully, when we come back next year, we will look for ways to make health care work better. Then we will begin to see people have more confidence if we would do that effectively month after month, instead of less confidence month after month.

I yield back and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. MANCHIN. I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 15 minutes or until my remarks are complete.

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

#### THE MIDDLE EAST AND ISIS

Mr. MANCHIN. Madam President, I rise today to discuss the gravest and most important issue we can debate in Congress. I am here to talk about America's involvement in the Middle East and President Obama's plan to defeat ISIS. Make no mistake, we must defeat and destroy ISIS. But how we destroy them is what we must get right.

I applaud the President for presenting a plan to the American people. I support airstrikes against ISIS. I support providing humanitarian aid. I support cutting off terrorist funding sources. Doing these things has already helped to prevent genocide and has already begun to roll back ISIS's gains in Iraq.

I also support in engaging the world community, but most importantly Turkey and the Arab League nations. Unfortunately, I have not seen signs from the region that tell me we have their full support. This should be an Arab ground war and a U.S. air war, but I cannot and will not support arming or training the Syrian opposition forces. I did not come to this decision easily.

I spoke with military and foreign policy experts. I attended classified briefings and asked questions of this administration—but, most importantly, I studied our history.

We have been at war in that part of the world for the past 13 years. If money and military might could have made a difference, it would have by now.

In Iraq alone, we spent the better part of 8 years training the Iraqi police and military force of a 280,000-person army at the cost of \$20 billion to the American people—\$20 billion. The first time they had to step up and defend their country, their people, and their way of life, what did they do? They folded in the face of ISIS, abandoning their equipment and facilities to the enemy.

I ask my colleagues and the President, why do we think that training the rebels would turn out any differently?

In West Virginia, we understand the definition of insanity. We get it.

The first principle of war is to know your enemy. And we certainly know our enemy.

ISIS is a barbaric terrorist with no respect for humanity, and they deserve to die. I have seen the videos and, like every American, I was disgusted and outraged.

But as it is most important to know your enemy, it is equally important to know your allies—and I am not confident we know who our allies are.

To illustrate that point, I refer my colleagues to press reports that moderate Syrian opposition forces sold American journalist Steven Sotloff to ISIS, who beheaded him and put the video on the Internet. Are those people our allies?

Who are our other allies in this fight? As of today, we have only hints of military support from Arab countries that themselves face a greater threat from ISIS than any one of us.

Syria's neighbors have the technical ability and the financial resources to support and train the Syrian opposition forces. If that is the correct course of action we should take, they have the wherewithal to do it.

In the 1991 Iraq war, we had commitments from our allies around the world, but most importantly from the Arab community. We had a total buy-in. I know Secretary of State Kerry has been working tirelessly to build a similar coalition and to recruit support from Iraq's neighbors, because it is their neighborhood and theirs to defend. I hope it is successful because, as our intelligence community has said repeatedly, ISIS could soon become a direct threat to the United States of America. But I strongly believe that if our military arms and trains Syrian rebels, we will be involving ourselves in a ground conflict that we cannot resolve where potentially everyone involved is our enemy.

To my mind, the reasons not to arm Syrian rebels today are very clear. No. 1, first, the weapons we give to moderate opposition may not remain in their hands. If my colleagues have seen the videos of ISIS shipping U.S. Army humvees and MRAPs out of Iraq that we gave to the Iraqi Army, they will understand what I mean.

No. 2, I have seen no evidence that the Syrian rebels we plan to train and arm will remain committed to American goals or our interests. The vast majority of national level Syrian rebel groups are Islamist, none of whom are interested in allying with the United States. This is not to their best interests—and not in their interest—and none of whom we should be associating with.

Further, the opposition fighters we will train care more about overthrowing Assad's regime than they do about defeating ISIS. Assad is evil, make no mistake about it, but he is not a threat to America. If the moderate opposition has to choose between defeating Assad and defeating ISIS, why do we believe—think about this—they will choose our priority over their own? Why would we even think that? How do we know they won't join forces with ISIS if it helps them overthrow Assad, their main objective?

No. 3, authorizing military support for Syrian rebels will inextricably draw us into a civil war we have no way to end—and we have seen this picture unfold before. Our fight is against ISIS and the Islamist terrorist groups that threaten the United States. A limit of

that fight should be doing what we need to do to protect Americans and to prevent genocide. Every further step we take from that basic principle of protecting Americans and preventing genocide takes us back down the road of Middle Eastern nation-building. That means we should support others with counterterrorism forces, intelligence gathering, air power, and diplomatic efforts—and it means stopping the flow of illicit oil, money, and fighters across Syria's borders. We do not need to arm and train Syrian rebels to protect Americans.

I would ask my colleagues to consider America's history of intervention in the Middle East. It has not been a successful one. Interventions have failed in Lebanon, Somalia, Libya, Iraq, and Afghanistan is on the brink of failure.

What did we learn from our actions? Certainly not that going into Muslim countries to restore order or restore democracy is a winning strategy for us.

I have been very clear: We have every right to and we must—we must—defend ourselves and protect American citizens and interests against terrorists anywhere in the world. I again voice my strong support for the counterterrorism efforts already ongoing to protect Americans, but we have proven by blood and treasure already spent that we have not made a difference with American boots on the ground in this part of the world.

Some have used the examples of our garrisons in Germany, Japan, Korea, and the Balkans as examples of where the United States successfully established the rule of law with residual military forces, but such comparisons have little basis in history. Once our mission was achieved and occupation began, our troops did not face the threat of violence from the same people we had just defended and liberated.

Others have said if we had kept a residual force in Iraq that ISIS would never have taken hold, and I respectfully disagree. How can I fault a President for pulling troops out after 8 years, billions spent, and thousands of lives lost, with no end in sight? Again we trained in Iraq a military of 280,000 persons at a cost of \$20 billion, and when they faced their first test, they folded. That was a fraction of the total cost of our wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

I wish to give a rundown of where we stand today. In Iraq, conservatively, we have spent \$818 billion. In Afghanistan, we have spent \$747 billion, and that is continuing to grow. The total cost of our recent wars: \$1.6 trillion, and that is growing. That doesn't include the cost of long-term care of wounded veterans, over 50,000.

But the cost in money is nothing compared to the cost of lives. In Iraq, 4,400 dead, 36,000 wounded. In Afghanistan and still counting, 2,200 dead and 21,000 wounded.

I know my vote comes with a price. I know that. It is my understanding that