

between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first half.

The Senator from Iowa.

FIGHT AGAINST ISIS

Mrs. ERNST. Mr. President, as we continue to fight against ISIS and those radicalized by them, I rise today to urge my colleagues to join efforts to provide direct assistance to a critical partner in that fight—the Kurdistan Regional Government.

Yesterday, I joined Senator BARBARA BOXER of California to do just that. We introduced bipartisan legislation to provide temporary authority for the President to provide weapons directly to Iraqi Kurdish Peshmerga forces in the fight against ISIS. This legislation builds upon a similar bipartisan House effort led by House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman ED ROYCE and Ranking Member ELIOT ENGEL. The bill's 3-year authorization seeks to reduce delays in arming Peshmerga forces to fight ISIS, while still maintaining consultation with the Iraqi Government.

Beginning in the first gulf war, the Iraqi Kurds and their Peshmerga forces have played a vital role in supporting U.S. interests and a free Iraq, despite limited means of doing so.

Since August 2014, the Kurds have provided sanctuary to nearly 2 million ethnic and religious minorities in Iraqi Kurdistan, and they have been the only force to hold its ground against ISIS in northern Iraq.

Currently, by law, the United States must provide support to the Iraqi Kurds through the Iraqi central government in Baghdad, which has often not been timely or adequate in the past. This has had a negative impact on the Kurds' ability to defend Iraqi territory and provide security for those Iraqis and Syrians who have sought refuge in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Last November, Secretary of State John Kerry said that if Chairman ROYCE wanted to change current law—to "fix it"—that he invited him to do so. Well, that is exactly what this legislation does.

It makes it the policy of the United States to provide direct assistance to the Kurdistan Regional Government to combat ISIS. We do that because we believe that defeating ISIS is critical to maintaining an inclusive and unified Iraq and that the Iraqi Kurds are key in that goal, as well as to help to end the humanitarian crisis in Iraq through their support of over 1.6 million displaced persons from Iraq and Syria.

The legislation preserves the President's ability to notify the Iraqi Government before weapons, equipment, defense services or related training is provided to Iraqi Kurdish forces.

It ensures this emergency authorization does not construct a precedent of providing direct support to organizations other than a country or an inter-

national organization. Finally, it works toward accountability by requiring a report to Congress on U.S. weapons provided to the Iraqi Government which have ended up in the hands of Iranian controlled and supported Shia militias or foreign terrorist groups.

ISIS is deadly and determined, and Iraqi Kurdish Peshmerga forces—our critical partner in the fight against ISIS—need U.S. weapons as quickly as possible.

This 3-year authorization would bolster efforts against ISIS, which are critical to maintaining a unified and stable Iraq and imperative to our national security interests. We simply cannot afford to have future delays at this critical moment in the battle.

I urge my colleagues to join us in supporting this much-needed legislation to arm the Iraqi Kurds in the fight against ISIS.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

AFRICAN GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY ACT

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, Thursday a week ago I had the privilege, as a member of the Finance Committee, to serve on the markup of the African Growth and Opportunity Act, trade promotion authority, and trade adjustment and assistance.

This past Saturday, I was given the opportunity to give the Republican response on the radio, and I talked about trade promotion authority. I have been privileged to be ranking member and chairman at one time of the African Affairs Subcommittee. I have traveled back and forth to the continent of Africa, seen the opportunities for trade, business, and exchange with the African people.

I came to the Congress in 1999. In that year, I voted for trade promotion authority for President Bill Clinton, a Democrat. Later, I voted for trade promotion authority for President Bush, a Republican. And I proudly will vote for trade promotion authority for President Obama, a Democrat, because trade is not a partisan issue. It should not be nor should it ever be a partisan issue. It should be an issue of the American people's employment opportunities and jobs in the future. Trade is the cement that holds together the diplomacy and the agreements between countries to work together, play together, and not fight together and not have armed conflict. Trade is important to the security of the United States of America and, in fact, the rest of the world.

But I don't want to talk about trade promotion authority today. I want to talk about the African Growth and Opportunity Act.

Africa is the continent of the 21st century for the United States of America, with 1.5 billion mouths to feed, a number of votes at the United Nations, in terms of the African countries, but most importantly, it has the rarest

earth minerals and the natural resources so important to us and the rest of the world. Africa is a gold mine waiting to be mined. But it is not one that we abuse, like the Chinese are abusing it. It is one where we share in prosperity.

When China goes into Africa, they bring their own workers, pay their own workers with Chinese currency, extract the rarest minerals—oil and petroleum and natural resources—and then leave.

When America goes, we invest in the human capital with PEPFAR to reduce the rate of AIDS, and we invest in the Millennium Challenge Corporation to bring jobs, opportunities, and a lack of corruption to the African people.

The African Growth and Opportunity Act is a godsend for the continent of Africa, but it is a godsend to the country of the United States of America. In the future, Africa will become our greatest trading partner if we handle it right.

The African Growth and Opportunity Act that will be before us, along with TPA, is a 10-year extension of our goal. That is important, because it gives predictability to the African countries and the United States. But, more importantly, it gives us the opportunity to file cases with the Trade Representative against those countries that are not playing by the rules.

South Africa is a perfect example. They have blocked access to their market to poultry from the United States of America, with arbitrary and capricious blockades to keep our poultry from going in.

Senator COONS from Delaware and I from Georgia, two big poultry States, have confronted the South Africans. We know that under the new AGOA, when it is passed and ratified by this Congress and by the African countries as well, it will give us the opportunity to file a petition to ask the Trade Representative to file a case to open up the South African practices. And if they are found to be not right—or wrong or corrupt—then we can block South Africa's participation in parts of the AGOA or all of the AGOA. In other words, the AGOA is going to have consequences, much as the Millennium Challenge account does.

Today, when America makes an investment in a foreign country in Africa for the Millennium Challenge Corporation, there are consequences if they don't end corruption, if they don't have private sector participation, if they don't have the rule of law governing their project. We pull the Millennium Challenge Corporation out, and they don't get another grant.

Look at the nation of Ghana, which is now working on its third grant, or the nation of Benin, which is working on its second. Both are improving their infrastructure and their ability to trade and produce with America because of a joint venture between our country and those countries.

I urge all my colleagues in the House and the Senate to adopt the African

Growth and Opportunity Act for three reasons.

No. 1, it is a 10-year predictable extension of a relationship we need to grow and prosper.

No. 2, it gives us the tools not to be abused, and it makes sure that if one of the African countries is abusing American access to their market, we can stop it and file a case with the Trade Representative.

But No. 3, it offers hope and prosperity for America in the 21st century—with 1.5 billion mouths to feed, rare earth minerals, natural resources, the power of the people and the power of the purse of the people. Africa is the continent of the 21st century for our country. Having a trade agreement with Africa is essential to seeing to it that we have a prosperous and free future.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). Without objection, it is so ordered.

REBUILDING OUR COMMUNITIES

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, yesterday, along with Senator MIKULSKI and Congressmen CUMMINGS and RUPPERSBERGER and SARBAKES, I was in Baltimore with Attorney General Lynch meeting with our faith-based leaders. Attorney General Lynch also met with the mayor of Baltimore as well as the family of Freddie Gray. She also met with our Baltimore City Police Department. I wish to thank the Attorney General for her personal presence in Baltimore.

For those of us who live in Baltimore, the events over these last couple of weeks have been heartbreak. The city we love has gone through a very difficult time. I wish to thank my colleagues who have contacted Senator MIKULSKI and me for offering their help, for offering their understanding, and for their willingness to work together so we can deal with the issues that have been raised in Baltimore—and other cities, quite frankly—in other places around the country. It is our responsibility to move forward, and the people of Baltimore understand that. We understand the national spotlight will be leaving and we are going to need to deal with the issues that are left behind.

To me, there are two pillars for the rebuilding of Baltimore and restoring confidence; one deals with public safety and justice and the other deals with rebuilding as a result of the damages that were caused and dealing with the core problems that led up to the violence in Baltimore. I believe that we in Baltimore can serve as a model for the

country as to how we can make our community and our Nation stronger.

On the public safety and justice pillar, let me make some suggestions to my colleagues. I have spoken to several of my colleagues about areas where I hope we can work together in order to restore public safety and justice in our community. One of those issues is a bill I filed that would end racial profiling in America. We should have passed this bill a long time ago.

Racial profiling—profiling because of the race of a community or the ethnic background or a religion—is just wrong. It is against the values we believe in in this country. It turns communities against law enforcement. We saw that in Baltimore and we have seen it in other communities around the country where the local community just does not have confidence that the police department is working on their behalf. We heard examples of that yesterday in the roundtable discussion we had with the faith-based leaders. We have to restore that confidence. One way to do it is to make it clear that our national policy is against profiling by police.

Now, let me make it clear that if a person has some specific information about a particular crime and identifies who is responsible, that is not profiling. That is not what we are talking about. We are talking about communities in Baltimore and around the country where a person is African American and they have a much better chance of being stopped by police just because of the color of their skin. That is wrong, and it has to end in America. We need to take action in this body, the U.S. Senate, to make it clear that we will not permit racial profiling. It is not only wrong and counterproductive to neighborhoods working with police; it is costly. We have limited resources to spend in law enforcement. It is not productive in keeping communities safe, and as we have seen around the country, it can be deadly. We need to do more in this area.

I have spoken to some of my colleagues about some of the sentencing guidelines we have in this country. They are certainly discriminatory against certain communities in America. We need to take a look at our criminal justice system and at the sentencing guidelines to recognize that if a person is of a certain race or a certain religion or ethnic background, that person is much more likely to end up in prison today, even though the incidents of the violations of the law are no different in their community than in other communities in this country. We have to deal with it. This country has to deal with that.

Lastly, I have introduced legislation that would restore voting privileges for those who have completed their prison sentences, and we need to pass it. I know I have support on both sides of the aisle. We had a vote on that not too long ago, where we had almost a majority willing to move forward. I hope we

can come to an agreement. I remember the opposition said it is the wrong bill. Well, let's get a bill that is the right bill to restore voting privileges to those who complete their sentences.

They can then again become a part of the community. They know we believe they have a future. They should be able to serve on our juries. There is not a person who is serving in the U.S. Senate who didn't have a second chance sometime in their life. All of us need a second chance. We can't give up on people. I think the experiences we have seen in Baltimore and around the rest of the country indicate that we all have a stake in rebuilding and giving opportunities to every person in our community.

I talked about rebuilding and dealing with the core issues that led up to the violence in Baltimore. There was a letter written to the Baltimore Sun this week that said we need a Marshall Plan for America's cities. That sort of struck me because I thought back to World War II, when Europe was burning and the United States came to the rescue of Europe and put out the fire. But we didn't stop there. We then planted the seeds for the rebuilding of Europe. We were not alone. Other countries helped us, the private community helped us, businesses helped us, and Europe was rebuilt.

So it is not enough just to restore public order on the streets of Baltimore. We have to rebuild in a way that we give opportunities for jobs for all the people in the community. We talked about what is going to happen this summer. Will there be summer jobs for our young people? Will we have permanent jobs for them? We have to work on that.

We have to work on rebuilding. We can do this. We have come together in the past. We are the strongest country in the world. The United States has been there to help people around the world. We said we would pursue efforts about ending HIV/AIDS under President Reagan, and the PEPFAR Program has changed the dynamics around the world on the spread of HIV/AIDS. It is time we used that energy here in America to help the people of this country.

So I hope we will all come together and look at the core problems and help rebuild America. It is appropriate that we talk about it the day after we passed our budget. I hope, as we get to the individual appropriations bills, that we understand the Federal Government, in partnership with the private sector, in partnership with State and local governments, can do a better job.

Today, Secretary Perez, the Secretary of Labor, is going to be in Baltimore meeting with local officials to figure out how the Federal Government can partner with us to provide resources to energize the private sector, to energize the rebirth of Baltimore. I heard a request from groups I met with about the new markets tax credit. We