

remarks throughout the debate on the Affordable Care Act.

For 6 years he has been an outspoken voice for what is right for the American people and what the American people want, which is affordable, quality health care. I appreciate his contribution, not just to the debate today but to the debate we have had in the past and the one we are about to have in the future. He is right that we must come together—Republicans and Democrats alike—and make sure that the broken promises of the Affordable Care Act are fixed; that affordable, accessible, quality health care is available to the American people; that it is deliverable by private industry and by private and competitive free enterprise system; and that government mandates that force prices up and quality down go away. So I thank the Senator for his contribution and all the great work he does.

He is not quite as old as I am, but he might like the movie I like, “Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid.” There is a great line in “Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid” where they are sitting in a cave after having robbed a bank. Butch looks over at Sundance and says: “Boy, I just love it when a plan comes together.”

Well, 6 years later, as we look back on the Affordable Care Act, the plan is unravelling. It is costing the American people more. Health care is less accessible. Deductibles are higher. It is time that we fix it and that we fix it right.

If the King v. Burwell case is decided—as it will be in the next few weeks—we have an obligation to keep the first promise the President did not keep. Do you remember? President Obama said: If you like your insurance, you can keep it? If Burwell loses and if King wins and the Court rules that the subsidies are illegal, approximately 9.5 million Americans who have gotten insurance and have it through subsidies through the Affordable Care Act would be threatened to lose their insurance immediately upon its decision. We can't let that happen. We have to see that we build a bridge from where we are today to a future of better health care, more accessible health care, and more affordable health care.

So we must remember as Republicans, who have so often criticized the President for that remark that if you like your health care you can keep it, to make sure that we don't become an unwitting accomplice in this decision if King wins, by, first and foremost, assuring the 9.5 million who have coverage that we will work to see that you can keep your coverage and that you have a bridge to a better, more competitive, more affordable health care system. It is important for us to remember that.

No. 2, it is important for us to remember that we can't recreate a system that the President created in terms of paying for the health care. Have you ever thought about how the Affordable Care Act is paid for? It is

paid for in the following ways: higher copayments, less benefits, and higher premiums. But even worse, there is a revenue system that actually punishes free enterprise, an 85-percent medical loss-ratio mandate which cut out every private sector insurance salesperson who sold medical plans to the American people, because when you take 85 percent as the maximum loss ratio, then you only have 15 percent for administration. There is nothing left to compensate someone for selling the policy.

No. 3, when we were short \$19 billion, the President decided to create the HIT tax. What is the HIT tax? It is an arbitrary tax against small and medium-sized group medical companies, charging them not only on their premiums, not only on their revenues but on their percentage of market share. Where in the world has the government ever decided to take market share as an indicator of how much you pay? It makes no sense unless you were trying to find dollars to make sense. And the President did it. I can go over litany after litany after litany.

The medical device tax on orthopedists deals with devices in everything that they do. The medical device tax is not a tax on net profit on medical devices. It is a 2.3 percent surcharge on the gross revenues of the device manufacturer.

I tell the story about my visit to South Africa 2 years ago. I got a call from our Governor. He said: You are in Johannesburg, South Africa. Would you go to the chamber of commerce there and visit with a Georgia company from Kennesaw, GA, a small medical device manufacturer that is selling their products. Just tell them thank you for their business.

I said sure. I went by that evening for a reception, found the gentleman from Kennesaw, and said: Thank you so much for doing your business in Georgia.

He said: Oh, I have moved.

I said: Oh, I am sorry. The Governor's office called me.

He said: Well, I just announced that I am moving this week. They don't know it yet.

I said: Where are you moving?

He said: Madrid.

I said: Madrid, Spain?

He said: Yes.

I said: Why?

He said: Because the medical device tax is making it impossible for me to do what I need to do in terms of innovation, in terms of marketing, and in terms of distribution.

So it was an ill-conceived act with the best of intentions but the worst of results. How bad? It is just like what Senator BARRASSO said a minute ago.

In Georgia, one plan is going up 38 percent—one plan. That is the highest we know of—not 4, not 10, not 17 but 38 percent. There are 10,796 Georgians who have that plan who now have the alternative of going to find something else or paying 38 percent more. I don't

know about everybody else, but wages aren't growing by 38 percent, and opportunity is not growing by 38 percent. But the cost of your health care, which you want to have, goes up 38 percent and you have to find a way to pay it. What does that do? It hurts the economy, it hurts family, and it hurts the American people.

So as we look at the results of what is going to happen with King v. Burwell, if King is ruled in favor of and the courts throw out the subsidies on the Affordable Care Act, we need, first of all, to do no harm. We need to make sure that nobody arbitrarily, immediately loses the insurance that they planned on. We need to keep the promise President Obama made and never kept. That is No. 1.

No. 2, we need to get everybody in the same room—Republicans and Democrats alike, providers and beneficiaries alike. Let's build a health care system for the 21st century for America that rewards the best health care system in the world by allowing it to innovate, by encouraging it to compete, and not making arbitrary decisions on cost and taxation that drive people out of the marketplace and out of business.

I am at that age where I care about my health care. I enjoy my health care. I like the policy I have. It costs me a lot more than it did before the Affordable Care Act. Health insurance is important. But there is a limit to what I can absorb. There is a limit to what the American people can absorb, and there is a limit to what government can do to try to fit a square peg in a round hole. I learned in Boy Scouts that doesn't work.

The Affordable Care Act is a square peg that for 6 years we have tried to fit in a round hole, and it doesn't fit. It is time that we rounded that peg, took into consideration the American people, the taxpayers, the patients, and the physicians and did what is right for the American people.

Don't break our promises. Let's keep our promises. Let's allow them to have the choice of insurance policies that, once they buy them, they can keep and a system that doesn't mandate increases but instead encourages competition, quality, and makes sure it is health care the American people want, is accessible, affordable, available, and delivered in a competitive, free enterprise market by the private sector.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I wish to speak about several amendments I have submitted to the Defense authorization bill currently before the Senate.

First, I wish to commend Chairman McCAIN in his first mission as chairman of the Armed Services Committee.

The bill before us bears his imprint and that of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and it addresses the growing challenges facing our military.

This legislation came out of committee in a bipartisan way and came to the floor with the opportunity for every Member of the Senate to offer amendments to this bill. It was an open amendment process, something we have been doing this year that hasn't been done previously under the leadership of the now minority. Unfortunately, that effort was blocked by the minority, and we now are where we are.

I have introduced amendments that will hopefully be carried now in a manager's package with the support of Senator MCCAIN and others here. I just want to describe what those were.

First of all, let me say that despite the efforts of the minority to block our progress on this bill, perhaps one of the most essential things the Senate and the Congress does in any year is to provide for the common defense by passing authorization and appropriations for our military so that they have the policy and the authority and the resources to be able to conduct their efforts, both defending us here at home and dealing with issues overseas.

The bill is a lifesaver and a nation defender, and it is not—to quote the minority leader—"a waste of time." How could anyone come to this floor and simply say that discussing, debating, and passing legislation that protects our country and provides support for our military is a waste of time? It just defies credulity and has us all scratching our heads.

Nevertheless, we proceeded, and we go forward because, thankfully, under the majority leadership of Senator McCONNELL and the leadership of Senator MCCAIN as chairman of the Armed Services Committee, we are moving forward with this bill.

The personnel, platforms, and programs in this bill could very well save the lives of our military personnel deployed on the frontlines of freedom around the globe, and it is necessary that we go forward. That brings me to the rationale behind the first amendment that I have introduced.

Last week, President Obama admitted to the Nation and to the world that he still does not have "a complete strategy" to deal with ISIS. A year ago this month, the terrorist organization Islamic State proclaimed itself as a worldwide caliphate, claiming control of territory in Syria and Iraq. ISIS quickly has become the largest, best organized, best financed, and most ambitious terrorist organization in history—not to mention the most brutal terrorist organization that we have ever seen.

The previous Secretary of Defense and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff described the threat arising from ISIS in apocalyptic terms—as well they should. The unspeakable depravities committed by ISIS are enough to evoke images of death's pale horse.

ISIS has used sophisticated and successful Internet and media outreach tools to attract tens of thousands of radical Islamists to join its fight in Syria, Iraq, and beyond. They have captured and control major population centers in Iraq, including Mosul, Fallujah, and Ramadi. They have secured their bases of operations in Syria and expanded the territory ISIS controls throughout Syria, threatening to dominate any successor state emerging from the Syrian civil war. In the meantime, ISIS has also expanded its influence and secured allegiance from co-operating terrorist organizations in Yemen, Libya, Nigeria, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon.

Yet early last year, the President compared ISIS to a junior varsity. Some junior varsity—it looks more like something that rises to the level of a major, major threat to the nations of the world—not just in the Middle East but to the nations of the world. But why call it a junior varsity?

Then, following the terrorist group's dramatic expansion, later the President acknowledged the threat but admitted that "we don't have a strategy yet" to confront ISIS. Eventually, though, the President did come up with a plan that included two main elements: training moderate volunteers—not American volunteers but Iraqi volunteers—to fight ISIS in Syria and training and equipping the Iraqi Defense Forces to fight ISIS in Iraq.

The first part of this plan has produced no fighters after a year of talk and has just begun to train the first cohort of 400 volunteers, whose training is to be complete in another year or so. Even then, they will be equipped to assume only defensive missions in Syria, according to the Pentagon. That is the U.S. portion. The Iraqi portion deals with training that I will be talking about here in just a moment.

How could this severely limited strategy be even remotely responsive to ISIS, to the means and the threat ISIS poses? How is it that ISIS manages to recruit, transport, train, deploy, and effectively fight tens of thousands of radical men and women, while we are spending 2 years finding and training just 400 in our program in Syria?

In Iraq, 10 years and billions of dollars spent creating defense forces has produced nothing capable of standing up to the ISIS fanatics.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said earlier this month that Iraqi forces "did not have a will to fight" when confronting a vastly inferior—vastly inferior—"Islamic State" force in this particular battle. They just melted away in Mosul and Ramadi, said the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Those who had spent months, if not years, and spent very significant amounts of money on training simply melted away because they did not have the will to fight.

The President's intention to train and equip the Iraqi forces to confront

the Islamic State has failed to produce an effective fighting force that is adequately led and sufficiently equipped. That is the only conclusion we can come to after months and years and extraordinary expenditures of dollars to try to deal with the ISIS threat.

The other major component of the President's strategy is airstrikes. Airpower, when used as part of an integrated grand strategy, can play an essential role. In this case, there is no integrated larger strategy, and therefore airpower is limited in terms of what it can do.

The administration's airstrikes have been much less effective in dealing with the ISIS threat than anticipated. They have not halted ISIS's advances in the region.

In the words of retired Air Force General David Deptula, a key architect of the air campaign in Operation Desert Storm:

Air power has to be applied like a thunderstorm, not a drizzle. In the campaign against the Islamic State, we are averaging 12 strike sorties per day. During Operation Desert Storm in Iraq and Kuwait, the average was 1,241.

Airpower, when properly utilized in concert with troops to support the effort, can bring battlefield success. However, the Obama administration has failed to provide the proper number of well-trained American spotters on the ground in Iraq designating targets. If you do not have forces in position to target the exact target, airpower becomes random and not nearly as effective as it should be. And that has not been authorized by the President as a means of dealing with this issue; therefore, the limits that have been placed on the use of airpower have left us in a situation where it is much less effective than it could be.

It has now been over a year since ISIS was widely acknowledged as a major threat to our national security. When asked just last week what is and is not working in the fight against ISIS, the President stated once again that we still do not have "a complete strategy" to confront ISIS. Instead, he blamed the Pentagon and the Iraqis for not finalizing a plan. Yet the President says we still do not have a complete strategy to address this threat. How is that possible?

As the Wall Street Journal put it in its June 11 editorial, "The fundamental problem with Mr. Obama's strategy is that he is so determined to show that the U.S. isn't returning to war in Iraq that he isn't doing enough to win the war we are fighting."

In the meantime, the White House announced that we would be sending another 450 troops to Iraq to train Sunni tribal fighters. I understand that this really means little more than 50 actual trainers, the rest of this small cohort to provide security for themselves. So we are down to about 50 trainers, and that is the next step in dealing with a threat that far expands the need to do much more.

We must insist that President Obama immediately produce a complete, detailed, and realistic plan to confront, degrade, and defeat the Islamic State. This plan must include realistic, well-substantiated estimates of timeframes, resources required, expected allies, and anticipated obstacles. Also, it must include clear definitions of milestones and metrics of success. Most importantly, the plan must include clear accountability. I have introduced an amendment to the Defense authorization bill that will require just that—a serious, credible, complete strategy for addressing the threat posed by ISIS.

President Obama has shown a tendency to blame others—the Pentagon or allies or Sunnis or the Iraqi Government or Congress—for his own failures of leadership in this effort; therefore, we must demand a coherent, realistic plan so the American people can properly apportion the credit for success or the blame for failure where it belongs.

Let me briefly talk about a couple of other amendments I have introduced, and I am hopeful we can include these two amendments in the managers' package.

Amendment No. 1705 addresses the Department of Defense's present policy of not allowing Active-Duty flag and general officers to visit our friends in Taiwan. Instead, the DOD relies on retired flag and general officers—retired officers to visit Taiwan in what can only be seen as appeasing Communist China.

It is difficult for military officials in both Taiwan and the United States to discuss contingency responses when Active-Duty U.S. generals and flag officers are not able to meet regularly with their Taiwanese counterparts. Without visiting Taiwan, they are not able to familiarize themselves with Taiwan's command centers, terrain, and operational capabilities.

Active-Duty U.S. generals and flag officers have to be able to visit Taiwan and see its military in action in order to gain a better understanding of Taiwan's armed forces and the weapons they require for self-defense.

In the event of an emergency, such as humanitarian assistance or a disaster relief mission, senior officers from Taiwan and the United States will have little, if any, experience working together to save the lives of thousands of Taiwanese citizens and Americans living abroad in Taiwan.

My amendment would simply state that the Department of Defense should undertake a program of senior military officer exchanges with Taiwan. Note that this amendment does not require such exchanges. I do not believe in tying the military's hands in this sort of matter, but I do believe it is important that the Senate go on record as concerned about the current policy of refusing to allow such exchanges. The armed forces of Taiwan are a very valuable partner of the U.S. military. These visits by our generals and admirals will encourage Taiwan to make increased

investments in their national defense, especially in light of the belligerent behavior demonstrated by the Chinese.

I understand that there is bipartisan agreement on this amendment, and I hope and trust that we can include this measure in any upcoming managers' package.

Finally, I have offered amendment No. 1877, which would require the Secretary of the Navy to submit to both the House and Senate Armed Services Committees a report detailing the potential impacts to the industrial base if the July 2017 start date for the refueling and complex overhaul of the USS George Washington is delayed by 6 months, 1 year, or 2 years.

As we learned last year when the administration briefly considered postponing the scheduled overhaul of the USS George Washington, such delays only drive up costs because of the uncertainty they create among the industrial base. I hope to avoid a repeat of that mistake by requiring the Navy to report on the true costs of any delay.

I hope the Senate will agree to this amendment.

Once again, I thank Senator MCCAIN for his leadership on the Defense authorization bill, and I hope the Senate will act to pass this critically important bill without delay. This is one of the most essential bills this Congress takes up each year, and to deter this for any political reason simply is not acceptable when our troops' lives and safety are at risk. They are there to defend us. They need our support, and they need it now.

I yield floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the pending business.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1735) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2016 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

Pending:

McCain amendment No. 1463, in the nature of a substitute.

McCain amendment No. 1456 (to amendment No. 1463), to require additional information supporting long-range plans for construction of naval vessels.

Cornyn amendment No. 1486 (to amendment No. 1463), to require reporting on energy security issues involving Europe and the Russian Federation, and to express the sense of Congress regarding ways the United States could help vulnerable allies and partners with energy security.

Markey amendment No. 1645 (to amendment No. 1463), to express the sense of Con-

gress that exports of crude oil to United States allies and partners should not be determined to be consistent with the national interest if those exports would increase energy prices in the United States for American consumers or businesses or increase the reliance of the United States on imported oil.

Reed (for Blumenthal) modified amendment No. 1564 (to amendment No. 1463), to enhance protections accorded to service-members and their spouses.

McCain (for Paul) modified amendment No. 1543 (to amendment No. 1463), to strengthen employee cost savings suggestions programs within the Federal Government.

Reed (for Durbin) modified amendment No. 1559 (to amendment No. 1463), to prohibit the award of Department of Defense contracts to inverted domestic corporations.

Fischer/Booker amendment No. 1825 (to amendment No. 1463), to authorize appropriations for national security aspects of the Merchant Marine for fiscal years 2016 and 2017.

McCain (for Hatch) amendment No. 1911 (to amendment No. 1456), to require a report on the Department of Defense definition of and policy regarding software sustainment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I would like to tell my colleagues that I think we are winding down here. We have several other issues to address, but I think it is very possible that we could see the end here for final passage of the bill. There are still some issues that need to be resolved, but I am grateful for the progress all of my colleagues have made on both sides of the aisle.

I would like to call up and speak briefly on McCain amendment No. 1482. This amendment would prohibit the Secretary of Defense or the Secretary of a military department from funding or conducting medical research or development projects unless the Secretary determines that the research or project is designed to protect, enhance, or restore the health and safety of members of the Armed Forces through phases of deployment, combat, medical recovery, and rehabilitation.

I will not seek a vote on this amendment, but I will say that it is an issue which must be addressed if we are going to spend American tax dollars on defending this Nation, the security, and the men and women who are serving.

What I am going to show my colleagues is what happens with almost any bad deal around here, and that is the incredible increase in congressionally directed spending on medical research which is on the Department of Defense authorization bill—not on the Health and Human Services appropriations but on Defense. When we are cutting defense, when we are experiencing all the bad results of sequestration, we continue to grow to nearly \$1 billion in medical research that has nothing to do with defense.

I am all for medical research. I am all in. The National Institutes of Health is doing great things. I am all for it. But when we take it out of defense spending rather than what it should be taken out of, which is Health