

This is the latest in what has become a disturbing pattern of Republican hatred and intolerance toward Muslims. Remember, Syria is mostly Muslim, but there are Jews, there are Christians—lots of them. During the course of the current Presidential cycle, we have heard from the leading lights of the Republican Party the following: that we are at war with Islam, that we should be shutting down Muslim houses of worship in America, close the mosques, that we should ban Muslims from government service. We have two of my friends who serve in the House of Representatives who are Muslim. They are proud. That religion has made them better people.

Now they are even suggesting that we should reject refugees fleeing persecution on the grounds that they are Muslim. That is not America. That is hate emanating from some Republicans. That anti-Muslim venom from Republicans is a propaganda bonanza for ISIS. Christian groups have responded to those Republican attacks. We have heard what the Pope said: to kill in the name of religion is blasphemous.

World Relief, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service are all dismayed at the anti-refugee fervor pushed forward by Republicans and are urging supporters to contact elected officials on behalf of these victims of the Syrian conflict.

We must pause and think about what they have been through—poison gas, cluster bombs. Let's think about who these refugees are. They are not our enemies. They are expelled from their homeland by the same evil rulers we are fighting. All they want is to find safety, to restart their lives. These people have been persecuted—that is an understatement—by President Assad and ISIS. The Syrian regime, I repeat, has barrel-bombed their own citizens, has unleashed chemical weapons against their own citizens, rapes, justifying the rapes of these hundreds and hundreds of women in the name of their religion—murdering women and children. Those refugees hate Assad. They hate ISIS. That is why they are trying to get out of that horrible situation they find themselves.

The Department of Homeland Security has verified that not one of 1,800 refugees already admitted in the United States has a single confirmed tie to terrorism—not one. To deny our moral obligation to these struggling people would be to abandon the principles of this great country. That is how France feels about it also. On the heels of last week's appalling attacks, the President of France is refusing to neglect France's duty to humanity. Here is what this good man said yesterday:

30,000 refugees will be welcomed over the next two years. Our country has the duty to respect this commitment.

After what they have been through, this is what the President of France

said: Accepting Syrian refugees is the moral thing to do and it is sound policy. Former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice agrees that the United States must open its arms to those fleeing persecution. Here is what she said:

What the United States has done is to be open to people who are fleeing tyranny, who are fleeing danger, but we have done it in a very careful way.

Secretary Madeleine Albright authored an op-ed this week for Time magazine. Now, remember, she herself was a refugee. That is how she came to this country during World War II. She said Americans must respond with compassion if we are going to defeat ISIS. We can do all we want with refugees. This is no way to win the war, attacking the refugees. Here is what she said, Madeleine Albright:

Our enemies have a plan. They want to divide the world between Muslims and non-Muslims, and between the defenders and attackers of Islam. By making Syrian refugees the enemy, we are playing into their hands. Instead, we need to clarify that the real choice is between those who think it is okay to murder innocent people and those who think it is wrong. By showing that we value every human life, we can make clear to the world where we stand.

What Secretary Albright said and what Secretary Rice said is absolutely right. We process Syrian refugees in a very careful way. It has worked. We are not the nations of Europe. Has anyone stopped for a minute and thought that we have an ocean between us and them, an ocean, the Atlantic Ocean.

The U.S. refugee screening takes place well before any individual comes to our borders. To enter the U.S. refugee program as an applicant, the U.N. Refugee Agency must first select and refer all potential refugees to our program. We accept refugees solely on a referral basis from the United Nation's agency. We do not go out and solicit any of these people. After being referred, all refugees, including those from Syria, are subjected to extremely rigorous screening and security checks. This is not some easy procedure where refugees fly right through the application process and are sent here in a matter of days. No. It takes an average of 18 to 24 months for a refugee to make it through the process to come to the United States.

Remember, the vast majority of these people are checked and rechecked, taking 24 months; they are women and children and old men. I repeat. It takes 18 to 24 months for a refugee to make it through the process of coming to the United States. That is why only 1,800 refugees have been admitted since the start of the conflict out of the millions who are fleeing Syria. Our government accepts only the most vulnerable of the Syrians, survivors of violence and torture, those with severe medical conditions, women and children, but security precautions are not taking a backseat in the process. These Syrian refugees are real people. Images of their plight should be so

visually apparent in our minds. Think of that little boy whom we saw and everyone saw around the world, a picture of this little dead boy washed up on a beach, a drowned Syrian boy whose body was washed up on this Turkish beach, pictures on the front page of newspapers, all the TV programs for several days.

At that time, Democrats and Republicans together responded with calls for compassion and action. I urge Republicans to remember that little boy. We must help where we can. That is who we are. We are America. We come to the defense of the defenseless. We come to the aid of those in need. Right now we are needed. We are a nation—a nation of freedom. We should not forsake our duty and obligation to these struggling people.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 11 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Texas.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that after I promulgate two unanimous consent requests, the remaining time between now and 11 a.m. be equally divided between myself and the assistant Democratic leader.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Texas.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— S. 247

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 247 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; I further ask that the bill be read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The assistant Democratic leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on behalf of the Democratic ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Senator PAT LEAHY, and myself, I do object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Texas.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—
S. 2302

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 2302 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; I further ask that the bill be read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, moments ago I asked this body to take up and pass two commonsense pieces of legislation in response to the terrorist attack in Paris. The first, the Expatriate Terrorist Act, is legislation I introduced over a year ago—attempted to pass over a year ago—and that the Democratic Party blocked. That legislation provides that any American citizen who goes and joins ISIS, who takes up arms against America and attempts to wage jihad, by doing so, forfeits his or her U.S. citizenship. Existing Federal law provides for grounds of revocation of citizenship, and this piece of legislation would add joining terrorist groups such as ISIS to those grounds.

Unfortunately, the Democratic Party has just objected to passing that commonsense legislation. As a consequence, and because of that objection, it means that Americans—and the estimates are it could be up to or over 100 Americans—who have gone and joined ISIS right now are waging jihad against America. As a consequence of that objection, it means those ISIS terrorists can come back to America using a U.S. passport and wage jihad against this country—attempt to murder innocent men and women in this country using a U.S. passport. That is, I believe, a profound mistake.

The second piece of legislation I just asked this body to pass and the Democrats just objected to is legislation that would stop President Obama and Hillary Clinton's plan to bring in tens of thousands of Syrian Muslim refugees to the United States in light of the declaration of war from ISIS, in light of the horrific terrorist attack and in light of the admissions from the Director of the FBI, Director Comey—who I might note President Obama appointed—who said the administration cannot vet these refugees to determine whether or not they are ISIS terrorists. Indeed, he said since they do not have the data on which of the Syrian refugees are involved with ISIS terrorism, they can query the database, but with no information in the database, he said they can query over and over again

until the cows come home, but they do not have the information.

Unfortunately, the Democratic Party, the Democratic Senators in this body have chosen to stand with President Obama and his absurd political correctness, his unwillingness even to utter the words "radical Islamic terrorism." The President refuses to say the words "radical Islamic terrorism." Hillary Clinton refuses to say the words "radical Islamic terrorism." Not only do they refuse to say the words, but they are supporting a policy of bringing tens of thousands of Syrian Muslim refugees into this country knowing full well we cannot vet them to determine who is coming here to wage jihad. That is a profound threat to this country, and I hope we will stand as one. This ought to be an area of bipartisan agreement.

I would note that the legislation I introduced includes an exception for persecuted minorities facing genocide—Christians, Yazidis, small minorities facing genocide. In response to my acknowledging genocide as a different circumstance, President Obama, 2 days ago in Turkey, attacked me directly. He said it was un-American to want to protect this country from terrorists and to want to help persecuted Christians. Then yesterday, President Obama attacked me again from Manila, saying it was offensive that I, and so many millions of other Americans, want to keep our children safe.

Mr. President, it is neither un-American nor offensive to believe in the rule of law, to believe in standing up to radical Islamic terrorism. And it is an astonishing statement that so many Democratic Senators choose to stand with a President who will not confront radical Islamic terrorism.

Indeed, just this week Secretary Kerry rationalized the terrorist attack on Charlie Hebdo saying it was understandable why they attacked Charlie Hebdo. We should not be acting as apologists for radical Islamic terrorists. The very first obligation of the Commander in Chief is to keep this Nation safe. And I will say that any official responsible for bringing people in when they do not know if they are radical Islamic terrorists will bear responsibility for the consequences of their actions.

ISIS has been plain. They intend to murder as many Americans as possible and they intend to carry out terror attacks here, such as that which happened in Paris. This commonsense legislation would have helped protect this Nation, but I am sorry to say the Democratic Party is objecting to it.

I believe we should put America first, protecting America first. Unfortunately, my friends on the other side of the aisle are blocking that effort.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I understand there is a limited amount of time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 7½ minutes remaining on the Democratic side.

Mr. LEAHY. I thank the distinguished Chair.

Mr. President, I am worried in this country that we hear rhetoric that is dangerous, and it is time to stop. It shames the very nature of what America is. These are ideas that are wrong, and I would say they are deeply anti-American.

My grandparents—my Italian grandparents, my Irish great-great-grandparents—heard some of this rhetoric when some in this country said they shouldn't come here: Don't allow these Papists into the United States; don't allow these Irish, who are opposed to the rule of Great Britain on their island, and they actually stood up and fought against Great Britain.

The words back then, like some of the words today, come from a place of fear and hatred. I do not want to stand by quietly and see the victims of terrorism and torture be demonized just so people will have talking points for the local evening news. We are better than this.

The bill my colleague, the junior Senator the from Texas, introduced an hour ago would prevent refugee protection for virtually all nationals of Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Syria, and Yemen, regardless of how much they have suffered at the hands of terrorists and despots. Women fleeing gang rapes and children fleeing horrors we cannot even imagine would be closed off.

A few weeks ago the world came together, stunned and heartbroken over the image of a 3-year-old Syrian child's lifeless body washed up on a Turkish beach. His tragic death focused our attention on the desperate plight of so many Syrians who have fled the horror of ISIS and Bashar al-Assad.

We called it the humanitarian issue of the day. We called forth images of our Statue of Liberty and our proud history as a land of refuge for those fleeing persecution. I heard so many on this floor as well as from commentators in the news. Those who call now for us to slam our doors on even properly vetted Syrian and other refugees should remember that the people we will shut out are those very children who touched our hearts just weeks ago.

Of course, we are horrified by what happened in Beirut and Paris, and we need an effective, thoughtful strategy for countering ISIS and other terrorist organizations. That is what we should be debating. What we have done so far is not working, and we should be talking about how more countries should be involved in this fight. ISIS is our enemy; the people fleeing ISIS are not.

In fact, we have had discussions about other things that could be done. Somebody who is on a terrorist watch list but who is in this country legally can go to a gun show and buy all the automatic weapons they want, and they break no law. They can buy all the ammunition they want, and they