

We have also seen a steady flow of Russian weapons and other support to the blood-thirsty butcher of Syria, Bashar al Assad, who, as I mentioned earlier, has slaughtered more than 200,000 of his own country men and women.

The President's paralysis by analysis has also infected his incoherent approach in dealing with the terrorist army of ISIL, the so-called Islamic State. In 2011, after he pulled negotiations with the Iraqis on a status-of-forces agreement, the Obama administration proceeded with a misguided plan to pull the plug on the American presence in that country, thus squandering the blood and treasure that Americans invested in trying to liberate the Iraqis and provide them with a better future.

While it is true the Iraqis had not agreed to the U.S. conditions to an enduring American presence, including legal immunity for our troops, the administration simply gave up and failed to expend the political capital necessary to secure a status-of-forces agreement and to preserve the security gains in Iraq that, as I have said, had been paid for by American blood and treasure.

The resulting security vacuum, coupled with an incompetent and corrupt Prime Minister, set the conditions for ISIL to make alarming gains in territory and power in Iraq last year.

As chaos took hold in Syria, ISIL and other terrorist groups were flourishing. We know that in 2012 many of the President's most senior National Security Advisers—including then-CIA Director David Petraeus, then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Martin Dempsey, and then-Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta—all of them recommended at that time that the President initiate a program to arm vetted moderate Syrian rebels.

President Obama refused, publicly remarking just 1 year ago that ISIL, the Islamic State in the Levant, was the JV team of terrorist groups. Today, of course, the irony is the President has now sent us an authorization for the use of military force to fight this JV team, as he called it 1 year ago.

Then last summer, when the challenge had grown many times more complex and more difficult, the President dusted off the idea and moved ahead with it.

This is not exactly a picture of decisive leadership, nor is it designed to instill respect—indeed, fear—in our enemies nor confidence in our allies.

Today, with ISIL growing in strength in our region, our Commander in Chief cannot even bring himself to call the evil they represent by their rightful name. He refuses to acknowledge ISIL is a radical Islamist group, even after these jihadists have beheaded numerous American citizens, other Western captives, and burned alive a pilot from one of our closest allies, Jordan.

And then, of course, there is the most recent tragic news about Kayla

Mueller, the young humanitarian aid worker who tragically lost her life in the hands of ISIL terrorists, after being held captive in Syria since 2013. Kayla, from Phoenix, AZ, had been assisting the group Doctors Without Borders.

In 2011, in a video she posted on YouTube, remarking about the slaughter by Bashar al Assad of his own citizens in Syria, and the rampage of ISIL, she said that “silence is participation in this crime.”

Well, the President chose to use his recent speech at the National Prayer Breakfast that I attended, along with my wife and friends from Dallas, to paint a picture of moral equivalence between the barbaric entity known as ISIL and Christian crusaders from centuries ago. I have to say I am not the only one, apparently, who was confused by this equivalency or this comparison the President used during his remarks that morning.

This week, as Congress has now received the President's draft authorization for use of military force against ISIL, most of us still lack a clear understanding of the strategy the President seeks to employ in order to degrade and destroy this threat.

Even though the military campaign began last August, I know the Presiding Officer has served with distinction in the U.S. Marine Corps—and one of the things I hope the President will answer is how he hopes to defeat ISIL with just airstrikes. Indeed, as I understand from the military experts, you can't hope to win a conflict like this by blowing up things with airstrikes. You actually have to hold the territory so the enemy doesn't reoccupy it once you have moved on somewhere else.

The strategy we have heard so much about clearing, holding, and building, which seems to be an essential strategy when it comes to winning a conflict such as this, is nowhere to be seen in the President's strategy to have airstrike after airstrike after airstrike.

So I hope the President will enlighten us on what strategy he seeks to employ in order to degrade and destroy ISIL. If not, I trust that Members of the Senate on both sides of the aisle will offer their ideas about the kind of strategy that could have a reasonable chance of success.

I personally am reserving judgment on this authorization for use of military force until I learn more about the President's strategy and hear more about what sort of consensus we can have in the Senate about a strategy that has a reasonable chance of success.

I take very seriously—as I know every single Member of this Senate does—the granting of authority to use military force, putting our men and women in uniform in harm's way to protect not only us but our national security interests around the world. So this is one of the most serious and most important sorts of debates we can have as Members of the Senate. But I

worry about the flawed policies I have identified and that these are really just the tip of the iceberg.

In future remarks, I wish to come back and address a national security threat that I think is perhaps the most urgent, and that is of Iran's relentless quest for nuclear weapons, as well as the impact on our closest ally in the Middle East, the State of Israel.

Recently one of America's finest generals and former Commander of the United States Central Command, Gen. James Mattis, testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee that the United States needs “to come out now from its reactive crouch and to take a firm strategic stance in defense of our values.”

I couldn't agree more. The world is safer and more stable when America leads, leads from the front, not from the rear, and when we say what we mean and we mean what we say, and we back it up with action.

If the President can't do that, then over the last 2 years of his administration it will be incumbent upon Republicans and Democrats in Congress to lead the way in the absence of Presidential leadership and to do what we can do within our authority to prevent further erosion of American credibility on the world stage.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, last Tuesday President Obama met with 10 people at the White House. These are people who had written him letters about the health care law. The White House said it designed this little publicity stunt to remind people to sign up for insurance on healthcare.gov by the deadline date of Sunday, February 15.

At his meeting the other day the President said that the people there were “a pretty good representative sample of people whose lives have been impacted,” as he said, “in powerful ways.”

I will tell you, if President Obama really wanted a representative sample, he would have included some of the people his law has affected in alarming and expensive ways. What does the President have to say to those people? Why didn't he invite any of them to the White House for his photo-op?

Here is what the New York Times wrote on Sunday, February 8. This is the Sunday Review, New York Times. The headline is “Insured, but Not Covered: New policies have many Americans scrambling.” Why isn't the President willing to talk to those people

who are scrambling all across the country who may have insurance but are not covered?

The story starts off by telling the story of one woman in New York City. Her name is Karen Pineman. She lost her existing health insurance policy because it didn't meet all the mandates President Obama said a health insurance policy had to include. It might have worked very well for her, but it didn't work well enough for President Obama, so she lost her coverage.

The article says that "she gamely set about shopping for a new policy through the public marketplace." After all, she had supported President Obama and she had supported the health care law, as they say, as a matter of principle.

The article goes on:

Ms. Pineman, who is self-employed, accepted that she'd have to pay higher premiums for a plan with a narrower provider network and no out-of-network coverage.

So here she is—supported the law but then lost her insurance and had to buy other insurance with a narrower provider network and higher premiums. She accepted that she would have to pay out of pocket to see her primary care physician because her primary care physician didn't participate and wasn't part of that narrow network. She even accepted, the New York Times reports, having copays of nearly \$1,800 to have a cast put on her ankle in an emergency room after she broke her ankle playing tennis.

The article goes on:

But her frustration bubbled over when she tried to arrange a follow-up visit with an [orthopedic surgeon] in her network.

She had to buy the insurance under President Obama's law because she lost her own insurance even though the President had promised her "if you like your insurance, you can keep it."

The article goes on:

The nearest doctor available who treated ankle problems was in Stamford, Conn.

She is in New York City. She lives in New York. The closest doctor who was in her network was in Connecticut. She has had it. She said:

It was ridiculous—didn't they notice it was in another state?

What does President Obama have to say to this woman in New York? I see she wasn't included in the photo-op they had at the White House with the 10 people who wrote letters to the President. What does he think about the powerful negative ways his health care law is affecting her life? After all, the New York Times thought it was enough that they would devote the front page of the Sunday Review section this past week to "Insured, but Not Covered: New policies have many Americans scrambling."

The article sums it up this way:

The Affordable Care Act has ushered in an era of complex new health insurance products featuring legions of out-of-pocket coinsurance fees, high deductibles and narrow provider networks.

All of ObamaCare's mandates force insurance companies to use things like

these deductibles and narrow networks to keep premiums from going up even faster. Remember, the President said premiums would go down by \$2,500 per family. They have actually gone up, not down, and they have done all these things so they wouldn't go up even faster.

The New York Times article says that under ObamaCare these insurance plans come with "constant changes in policy guidelines, annual shifts in what's covered and what's not, monthly shifts in which doctors are in and out of network," and surprise bills for services people thought would be covered. Is the President proud of that? He stood up and said the Democrats should forcefully defend and be proud of the law. I don't see one Democrat on this floor of the Senate who is standing here to forcefully defend and be proud of this law.

The article goes on to say that for many people it is all so confusing and so expensive "that they just avoid seeing doctors." What does President Obama have to say to people who are so confused by their insurance now that the easiest path is to just not go for health care?

According to a recent poll, 46 percent of Americans said that paying for basic medical care is a hardship for their family. Forty-six percent say it is a hardship for their family. Where was it a year ago? Well, it is actually up by 10 percent.

The President said that things would get better, that people would like the health care law, and that Democrats should forcefully defend and be proud of it, but 10 percent more people this year than last year say that it is harder to pay for basic medical care, that it is a hardship for their family. What does he say to these people? What does the President of the United States say to these people who said his Affordable Care Act is making their life more of a hardship?

This is an extensive article, "Insured, but Not Covered," in the Sunday issue of this week's New York Times.

There is another example from this article—Alexis Gersten, who lives in a town called East Quogue. She bought ObamaCare health insurance coverage for her family. Then she found out that they did have insurance, but they weren't covered. When her son needed an ear, nose, and throat doctor, the nearest one in her network was in Albany, NY, which is 5 hours away from where she lives. Even though her own cardiologist was on the network list, he said he didn't take her plan. She ended up driving an hour to see a new cardiologist. Finally, there was a dispute over deductibles that left her with a pediatrician's bill for \$457.

Five hours to take her son to a specialist? Is that what the President means when he says the Democrats should forcefully defend and be proud of this law they voted for? Almost \$500 out of pocket to see a pediatrician? Is that the kind of powerful effect Presi-

dent Obama wanted his health care law to have on families? That is what he said last week, "a powerful effect on their lives." What does the President have to say to this woman, to Alexis?

The only reason health care costs are not even higher for a lot of people is because the Obama administration decided to give subsidies to some people to help hide the true costs. Over the next few months, the Supreme Court is going to decide if President Obama is breaking his own law by giving out some of those subsidies.

Millions of people in 37 States may suddenly find that they have to bear the expenses of ObamaCare entirely on their own, buying insurance that many of them don't want, don't need, and can't afford, covering lots of things they would never buy insurance for if given the personal choice, but the President says they must because he seems to know more about what they need for their families than they do.

Last December several of us asked the administration to start warning people, people who buy insurance through the healthcare.gov Web site—the disastrous Web site—to inform those people that they may lose their subsidies come this summer when the Supreme Court makes its ruling.

We asked the administration—the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Treasury—to let us know how the administration plans to protect people who might get caught in the mess that President Obama and his administration and all the people who voted for it created. All we have heard in response is that the administration has no plans—no plans—to warn anyone or to do anything to help Americans harmed by the President's health care law. This has the potential to be yet another ObamaCare train wreck.

Another study came out last month that looked at the change in health insurance coverage for the first 9 months of 2014. It found that there was a total change of about 8 million more people who actually have coverage. The problem is that most of those people were just added to Medicaid. Medicaid is a program that is already broken and doesn't work well. As a doctor who has taken care of patients in Wyoming for almost a quarter of a century, I can tell you that Medicaid across the country is a broken system. Yet the people who have gotten health insurance—not care; the President is quick to use the word "covered," but he doesn't use the word "care" because there is a huge difference. I can tell you that as a doctor. There were about 6 million people enrolled in the individual market, mostly through the exchanges, except 5 million people lost their insurance that they had gotten before through work.

So when you take a look at the net effect on coverage, 89 percent of those newly covered got it through Medicaid. That works out to a net gain of a little under 1 million people who actually got private insurance, in spite of the exchanges and in spite of the subsidies.

Seven and a half million got it through Medicaid. All of that expense and all of the hardship President Obama caused on American families—families who have suffered as a result of the President's health care law—and most of the net gain in coverage is people who went onto Medicaid?

The American people didn't ask for this. If President Obama actually talked with a real representative sample of Americans, he would know that. But he doesn't. He only hears what he wants to hear. He disregards the rest. He didn't do that last week. He still refuses to listen to people who have been hurt by his law.

It is time for the President to be honest with the American people about the ways his law has harmed them. This is it—New York Times, Sunday, February 8, “Insured, but Not Covered: New policies have many Americans scrambling.”

It is time for the President to start working with Republicans to give people the kind of health care reform they wanted all along—access to the care they need from a doctor they choose at a lower cost. That is what the American people are demanding, and that is what they deserve, and that is what Republicans are going to give them when we get the opportunity to do so. It is time for President Obama to join us.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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

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

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, we are running out of time until the Department of Homeland Security shuts down, and the majority doesn't seem to have any real plan to avoid it.

There are 17 days left—with a week of recess in between—until tens of thousands of DHS workers are furloughed, fire grants to local fire departments are no longer sent out, and training local first responders in handling terrorist attacks stops dead in its tracks. Yet each day comes with a new round of finger-pointing from Republicans eager to pass the buck to the other Chamber.

The distinguished majority leader, my friend, Senator MCCONNELL, and my friend from Tennessee, Senator ALEXANDER, and many other Republicans in this body have said it is time for the House majority to come up with a new plan. The House of course says it is the Senate majority that needs to act again. This morning Speaker BOEHNER, astoundingly, said the House

would not pass another DHS bill. He is tied in such a knot he can't move, even though he knows his failure to move risks a government shutdown.

The House of course says it is the Senate majority that needs to act again, and yesterday the majority leader said the onus was now on the House to fund DHS. This morning the majority leader said the onus is now on the Senate. We have all kinds of Abbott and Costello behavior going on. The funny thing is the finger-pointing is not at the Democrats. They are pointing at each other as to who is to blame.

The American people are getting whiplash from listening to the Republican leadership on this issue. The Republicans need to sort out the divisions within their own caucus before they deflect any blame on Democrats, because while Democrats remain united in both Houses in support of a clean bill, the Republican majority is busy playing a game of hot potato with national security funding.

The disunity and delay has led a few Republicans to start talking about a continuing resolution that would guarantee another cliff and more brinkmanship and underfund DHS in the meantime. Delaying this same standoff by a few weeks or months isn't a very good plan B. It is hardly a plan at all.

Secretary Jeh Johnson described the CR for DHS this way: “It's like going on a 300-mile trip with a five-gallon tank of gas.”

Let me give a few examples of why a Republican continuing resolution is a very poor plan B.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, will my friend from New York yield for a question?

Mr. SCHUMER. I will yield for a question when I finish my remarks, just as he was nice enough to yield to me a few days ago.

First, without a bipartisan full-year bill, the Secret Service cannot move forward with the critical reforms recommended by an independent panel of experts made after the White House fence-jumping incident.

Second, we can't upgrade the biometric identification system that prevents terrorists from coming into the country. Republicans and Democrats negotiated an additional \$25 million for DHS to upgrade the system that allows them to stop terrorists from coming through an airport or on a cargo ship and into the United States. A CR does not provide that funding.

Third, Secretary Johnson has said the Department will be constrained by a CR from improving security along our southwest border and maintaining the resources we added to deal with last summer's border crisis. Some say, Why does a CR constrain all of this? Because it is just ratifying last year's funding, and when new situations have emerged—new terrorist threats, new trouble on the border—we can't change the budget. It makes no sense. No company would simply pass last year's budget when they are experiencing new

challenges; neither should our government.

In short, a CR just doesn't work. It is not how we should be funding the Department of Homeland Security.

So we implore our Republican colleagues: Don't shut down the Department of Homeland Security, don't set up another shutdown, and don't underfund the men and women who work 24/7 to keep us safe. Pass a clean appropriations bill and give the people on the frontlines of defending this country the tools they need to get the job done.

I will be happy to yield for a question to my good friend, the Senator from Texas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask my friend from New York—I don't hear any Republicans talking about a shutdown and I don't hear any Republicans talking about a continuing resolution. I just hear Republicans talking about taking up the bill the House has passed, which is a \$40 billion appropriations bill and having a vote on it. But isn't it true that Democrats are united in blocking our ability to even consider that \$40 billion appropriations bill?

Mr. SCHUMER. I thank my friend for the question. It is nice to see him standing on the Democratic side. I hope he tries it again. If he likes it, he might do it more often.

I would say this: We all know what Speaker BOEHNER did. The hard right in the House said we want to force the President to undo his Executive order. They know if they put it on the floor alone, the President might veto it, so they attached it to Homeland Security and they basically say to the President, the only way we will fund the Department of Homeland Security is if we include these unpalatable riders, which the President has said he would veto.

So there is a simple solution.

That would force a shutdown. What the House did is say if we don't do it our way, we are shutting down the government. That didn't work 2 years ago—and that effort was led by the junior Senator from Texas, not my friend, the senior Senator from Texas—and it is not going to work today. Everyone knows what our colleagues in the House did. They are playing hostage. They are holding a gun to the head of America and saying unless we do it their way, they are going to shut down the government. That is why they attached it.

Let me repeat to my dear friend from Texas: No one objects to debating what the President did on Executive orders. We welcome that debate. It is the act of tying it to funding the government—the same thing they did with ObamaCare a few years ago—that says we are going to shut down the government unless we get our way.

So the logical solution—and I will yield in a moment—is very simple: Pass the Department of Homeland Security bill. If they don't want to shut