

nominations have succeeded during election years. Without exaggeration, Senate Republicans have made up a distinction without a relevant constitutional difference." Even school children know that Presidents are elected to 4-year terms and they have to carry out their constitutional duties each and every year right up until noon of January 20 of their last year. It is no different for Senators. We can't just sit this year out because an election will be held in November. As Professor Siegel concludes, Senate Republicans "are harming the court without a justification that passes the laugh test."

Today, as we remember the victims, their families, and the entire Oklahoma City community, let's also remember the good the Senate has done when we have put aside destructive partisanship and come together to act for the good of the country. This body has done that time and again, under both Democratic and Republican leadership, as it has carried out its constitutional duty to consider nominees to the Supreme Court. I hope the Senate will carry out that duty for a public servant named Merrick Garland who has served this country so well.

INVESTING IN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, on April 12, 2016, the Appropriations Subcommittee on State and Foreign Operations held a hearing on violent extremism and the role of U.S. foreign assistance. We heard testimony from four distinguished witnesses, including my good friend and partner in humanitarian work, Bono, the lead singer of U2 and cofounder of ONE. As I said at the hearing, there are millions of people who may never know Bono by name or have the privilege of listening to his music, but their lives are better because of the profound impact his advocacy has had on the world's efforts to combat poverty.

At the hearing, Bono testified about what he called the three extremes: extreme ideology, extreme poverty, and extreme climate. His testimony was powerful. It complemented the opinion piece he wrote that was published in the New York Times on the morning of the hearing in which he highlighted the importance of investing in international development in a way that empowers local populations, including refugees and other displaced persons.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a copy of Bono's article entitled "Time to Think Bigger About the Refugee Crisis."

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the New York Times, April 12, 2016]

BONO: TIME TO THINK BIGGER ABOUT THE REFUGEE CRISIS

(By Bono)

I've recently returned from the Middle East and East Africa, where I visited a num-

ber of refugee camps—car parks of humanity. I went as an activist and as a European. Because Europeans have come to realize—quite painfully in the past year or two—that the mass exodus from collapsed countries like Syria is not just a Middle Eastern or African problem, it's a European problem. It's an American one, too. It affects us all.

My countryman Peter Sutherland, a senior United Nations official for international migration, has made clear that we're living through the worst crisis of forced displacement since World War II. In 2010, some 10,000 people worldwide fled their homes every day, on average. Which sounds like a lot—until you consider that four years later, that number had quadrupled. And when people are driven out of their homes by violence, poverty and instability, they take themselves and their despair elsewhere. And "elsewhere" can be anywhere.

But with their despair some of them also have hope. It seems insane or naïve to speak of hope in this context, and I may be both of these things. But in most of the places where refugees live, hope has not left the building: hope to go home someday, hope to find work and a better life. I left Kenya, Jordan and Turkey feeling a little hopeful myself. For as hard as it is to truly imagine what life as a refugee is like, we have a chance to re-imagine that reality—and reinvent our relationship with the people and countries consumed now by conflict, or hosting those who have fled it.

That needs to start, as it has for me, by parting with a couple of wrong ideas about the refugee crisis. One is that the Syrian refugees are concentrated in camps. They aren't. These arid encampments are so huge that it's hard to fathom that only a small percentage of those refugees actually live in one; in many places, a majority live in the communities of their host countries. In Jordan and Lebanon, for example, most refugees are in urban centers rather than in camps. This is a problem that knows no perimeter.

Another fallacy is that the crisis is temporary. I guess it depends on your definition of "temporary," but I didn't meet many refugees, some of whom have been displaced for decades, who felt that they were just passing through. Some families have spent two generations—and some young people their entire lives—as refugees. They have been exiled by their home countries only to face a second exile in the countries that have accepted their presence but not their right to move or to work. You hear the term "permanent temporary solution" thrown around by officials, but not with the irony you'd think it deserves.

Those understandings should shape our response. The United States and other developed nations have a chance to act smarter, think bigger and move faster in addressing this crisis and preventing the next one. Having talked with refugees, and having talked to countless officials and representatives of civil society along the way, I see three areas where the world should act.

First, the refugees, and the countries where they're living, need more humanitarian support. You see this most vividly in a place like the Dadaab complex in Kenya, near the border of Somalia, a place patched together (or not) with sticks and plastic sheets. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is doing noble and exceedingly hard work. But it can't do everything it needs to do when it is chronically underfunded by the very governments that expect it to handle this global problem.

Second, we can help host countries see refugees not just as a burden, but as a benefit. The international community could be doing much more, through development assistance and trade deals, to encourage businesses and

states hosting refugees to see the upside of people's hands being occupied and not idle (the World Bank and the Scriptures agree on this) The refugees want to work. They were shopkeepers, teachers and musicians at home, and want to be these things again, or maybe become new things—if they can get education, training and access to the labor market.

In other words, they need development. Development that invests in them and empowers them—that treats them not as passive recipients but as leaders and partners. The world tends to give humanitarian efforts and development efforts their own separate bureaucracies and unlisted phone numbers, as if they're wholly separate concerns. But to be effective they need to be better coordinated; we have to link the two and fund them both. Refugees living in camps need food and shelter right away, but they also need the long-term benefits of education, training, jobs and financial security.

Third, the world needs to shore up the development assistance it gives to those countries that have not collapsed but are racked by conflict, corruption and weak governance. These countries may yet spiral into anarchy. Lately some Western governments have been cutting overseas aid to spend money instead on asylum-seekers within their borders. But it is less expensive to invest in stability than to confront instability. Transparency, respect for rule of law, and a free and independent media are also crucial to the survival of countries on the periphery of chaos. Because chaos, as we know all too well, is contagious.

What we don't want and can't afford is to have important countries in the Sahel, the band of countries just south of the Sahara, going the same way as Syria. If Nigeria, a country many times larger than Syria, were to fracture as a result of groups like Boko Haram, we are going to wish we had been thinking bigger before the storm.

Actually, some people are thinking bigger. I keep hearing calls from a real gathering of forces—Africans and Europeans, army generals and World Bank and International Monetary Fund officials—to emulate that most genius of American ideas, the Marshall Plan. That plan delivered trade and development in service of security—in places where institutions were broken and hope had been lost. Well, hope is not lost in the Middle East and North Africa, not yet, not even where it's held together by string. But hope is getting impatient. We should be, too.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I see my distinguished colleague on the floor.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

MILITARY READINESS

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I have the honor to represent the tip of America's spear—Fort Bragg, NC. Fort Bragg is the largest military installation in the United States, and it is the home to the most decorated combat forces of the military, the All-American Division, the 82nd Airborne.

The 82nd is a subordinate command of the XVIII Airborne Corps, America's Global Response Force. Whenever a threat occurs, units of the XVIII Airborne can be wheels up and on top of any target in the world in just 48 hours.

In the 15 months that I have had the privilege to represent North Carolina

in the Senate, I have made the readiness of the XVIII Airborne one of my top priorities. In fact, you would think it would be everybody's top priority, but I have watched budget cutters in the Air Force slowly chip away at the ability of the commanders at Fort Bragg to adequately train their paratroopers at Pope Army Airfield.

This year, the Air Force began dismantling the one Air Force tactical unit at Pope—the 440th Airlift Wing—capable of providing daily and ad hoc support for Fort Bragg soldiers. I said at the time that the removal of the 440th created unreasonable risks to the readiness of critical airborne units. They must be prepared to respond to a range of contingencies in very short timeframes. I have pointed out repeatedly that the deactivation of the 440th comes at a time when the Nation is facing growing uncertainty and increasing threats abroad that could require a military response, and it is a response that only forces at Fort Bragg can fulfill.

Over the last 7 years, the 440th has provided the Army with unparalleled support, tailored training opportunities without the tyranny of distance that comes through logistical, bureaucratic, and operational delays by having aircraft stationed somewhere other than Pope Army Airfield.

The Air Force leadership stated that after any deactivation of the 440th, out-of-State aircraft would support all airlift requirements for Fort Bragg units at Pope. The Air Force asked me to suspend disbelief. They told me to accept that it is more cost-effective for units to fly from Little Rock, AK, or McChord Air Force Base in Washington State and support Fort Bragg in North Carolina rather than having planes stationed at Fort Bragg.

I did my best to ensure that the Air Force understood the Army's requirements, and I promised them that if they removed the 440th, I would be monitoring their progress and their ability to satisfy the Army's requirements for as long as I am in the Senate.

The first warning signs that the Air Force was in trouble came in December at the annual Operation Toy Drop. Operation Toy Drop is the world's largest combined airborne operation at Fort Bragg. The drop is actually a daytime, nontactical, airborne operation supervised by foreign military jumpmasters. They view it as a rare treat to participate so that they can get jump wings from a foreign country.

This year's operation was purposefully designed by the Air Force to prove to Congress—to prove to me—that they could support the training mission at Fort Bragg. To prove the point, the Air Force Reserve went so far as to reduce the 440th's role in the operation. However, when the Air Force planes could not get to Pope because of weather, mechanical, or other delays, the 440th had to step in and make up the deficit, as they have done so many times before.

This is the real world in action. Bad weather and mechanical problems happen. The Air Force knows this exercise happens every year. They know it is highly visible. They knew they were under a microscope. Still they couldn't meet the requirement. In fact, during Operation Toy Drop, the 440th provided for about 40 percent of the chutes and 43 percent of the lift for the entire operation.

Fort Bragg leadership has been clear to the Air Force in terms of their combat requirements, their training requirements at Fort Bragg. They have told the Air Force that they have to drop 10,000 paratroopers a month. Eight thousand drops a month is considered the bare minimum for the XVIII Airborne Corps. Sadly, the Air Force is not meeting those requirements. Only 6,100 paratroopers exited from Air Force planes in March. That is 1,300 fewer paratroopers dropped than in February, which is 77 percent of the 8,000 sustainable threshold and 61 percent of the Army's overall requirement. Where I went to high school, 61 percent was a D-minus, bordering on an F. They are failing.

The Air Force has missed the Army's minimum jump requirements every month this year. These numbers are illuminating and concerning because in the Southeast, this is the best flying weather. January, February, and March have the best flying weather in the Southeast. What is going to happen when the Southeast thunderstorms and tornado season kicks in? If the Air Force can't meet Fort Bragg's need when the skies are clear, how is it going to do when the storm clouds gather?

I hope the Air Force knows I have their back as a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee. But in this case, this is about fulfilling the Army's requirement. This is about me having the Army's back. This is about making sure the men and women who will be asked at a moment's notice to assemble on the Green Ramp at the Pope Army Airfield and go wherever they must go to defend freedom and save lives are at their highest state of readiness. But the performance to this point suggests that the Air Force is failing its customer service to the Army. No business in America would be able to dictate to the customer how and when they are going to get their product, but that is exactly what is happening with the Air Force's relationship with the Army—and they are failing.

I will ask Senator MCCAIN to inquire as to whether the Air Force expects to meet the needs of the Global Response Force. They haven't in this first quarter, and this is the first quarter that they were trying to transition to a Pope Army Airfield without the 440th. If they can't answer the question, then it is time for us to consider other options.

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

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

ENERGY AND WATER APPROPRIATIONS BILL

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, when Republicans took the majority in the Senate last January, we were determined to get the Senate working again.

By 2014, the Democratic-controlled Senate had largely ground to a halt. Serious legislation had been replaced by political messaging, and the Democratic leadership refused to allow votes on amendments. In short, despite Democratic control of the Senate, Democrats and Republicans alike were shut out of the legislative process. Republicans were determined to change that.

Since we took control of the Senate in 2015, we have focused on taking up substantial legislation that addresses the challenges facing the country. We have made sure individual appropriations bills get written in committees with input from Senators of both parties, and we have opened the Senate floor to debate and amendment.

Why is that important? Because an open legislative process in the Senate means all Americans get represented. When legislation is written in the open using the committee process and Senators have a chance to highlight their constituents' concerns, the final bill is a lot more likely to reflect the American people's priorities.

One of our most basic responsibilities as Members of Congress is to pass appropriations bills. Appropriations bills give Senators and Congressmen a chance to take a look at where taxpayer dollars are being spent and how we can spend this money more efficiently and effectively. Unfortunately, too often Congress ends up skipping the appropriations process and rolling a number of the appropriations bills into one giant spending bill. That means we lose the opportunity to closely examine our spending priorities and make sure we are spending money wisely.

Since we took control of the Senate, Republicans have been determined to make sure Congress takes the appropriations process seriously. We have made sure individual appropriations bills are developed in committee, where Senators of both parties have the opportunity to help develop the bill and make sure their constituents' concerns are heard.

This week Congress is taking up the Energy and Water appropriations bill. This legislation funds a number of priorities: rural water projects, critical infrastructure projects, nuclear deterrence efforts, energy research, flood control, and environmental cleanup, to name a few. I am particularly pleased