

Unfortunately, President Obama's foreign policy failures are not confined to his halfhearted campaign against ISIS. Take the President's nuclear agreement with Iran. This agreement was supposed to protect our Nation and the world from the threat of a nuclear-armed Iran. The actual deal that emerged, however, doesn't even come close to that goal. Even if Iran complies with all aspects of the deal, which doesn't seem likely, it will not stop Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. In fact, the deal will actually make it easier for Iran to acquire advanced nuclear weapons down the road. On top of this, recent reports suggest that the United States and the other signatories to the deal have actually already allowed Iran to evade full compliance with some of the deal's provisions. It is no surprise that even some of the deal's supporters are getting worried.

Iran has been in the news lately for other disturbing reasons as well. In August, news emerged that the Obama administration had delivered a \$400 million cash payment to Iran on the same day four American hostages were freed. Furthermore, the administration had paid the money over the objections of Justice Department officials, who were concerned that the Iranians would regard it as a ransom payment. The administration, of course, strenuously denied that the payment was a ransom, but it is pretty hard to get away from the fact that there had been a de facto exchange of money for prisoners. Two weeks after news of the ransom broke, a State Department spokesman admitted that the administration had held the money until three American hostages had departed the country by plane.

The President's ransom payment to Iran is troubling for more than one reason. First, of course, tying the receipt of a large cash payment to the release of prisoners could easily encourage Iran to expand its hostage-taking. Since the ransom payment in January, Iran has continued to detain individuals on spurious grounds. In late August, the State Department warned U.S. citizens not to travel to Iran because of the danger of being detained by the Iranian Government.

So \$400 million in cash in the hands of the Iranians is a disturbing prospect. Iran is the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism and has a finger in many of the world's worst conflicts, particularly in the Middle East. There is a good chance that at least a chunk of that \$400 million will go to funding Iran's illicit activities, from support for Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad to funds for terrorist organizations like Hezbollah.

On top of all of this, there is the fact that every time Iran gets the better end of a bargain, it feels even more free to act aggressively. Recently, Iranian fast boats have been harassing U.S. Navy ships, and warning shots have been fired. It is not a stretch to think that this aggression and boldness

springs from the administration's position of weakness when it comes to Iran.

Teddy Roosevelt used to say: "Speak softly and carry a big stick." President Obama's foreign policy has reversed that. The President talks a big game, but he has no follow-through. To our adversaries, his statements have become no more than empty threats.

Take Syria. The President drew a redline 4 years ago. If Syrian President Bashar al-Assad used chemical weapons against his own people, the United States would respond. Well, Assad used chemical weapons, and the United States did nothing. It should shock no one that a recent U.N. investigation found that Assad has continued to use chemical weapons against his citizens. After more than 4 years of inaction from our President and 5 years of civil war, Syrian cities lie in ruins, millions are displaced, and tens of thousands—literally, tens of thousands—have been slaughtered. The world's eyes are now on the tenuous ceasefire in hopes that it may lead to peace talks and permit humanitarian aid to reach those most in need. But we must ask how we got here and what lessons can be learned.

The consequence of empty threats is bolder and stronger enemies. When the United States fails to follow through, we send a message that the United States can be ignored at will. We can see the results in chemical attacks on civilians in Syria, in the belligerent acts of the Iranian Navy, in a defiant North Korea testing nuclear bombs, in China boldly asserting territorial claims and building up reefs in disputed waters, and in Russia annexing Crimea and flexing military and political influence in Ukraine.

In 2008, then-candidate Obama spoke of the need for "tough, direct diplomacy, where the President of the United States isn't afraid to let any petty dictator know where America stands and what we stand for." That is a direct quote from the President back when he was running for President. Well, Presidential candidate Obama was right. That is the kind of diplomacy that we need. But, unfortunately, it has never been the kind of diplomacy actually displayed by President Obama.

In that same speech, then-candidate Obama spoke of the need for "the courage and the conviction to lead the free world." Well, that is something that we need even more today, after 8 years of an administration that has frequently lacked the conviction to lead at all.

Senate Republicans will continue to do what we can in Congress to restore America's leadership and to strengthen our country's security. This includes working to advance the essential National Defense Authorization Act and Defense appropriations measures—the latter of which have been blocked repeatedly in this Chamber by Democrats.

I hope my colleagues across the aisle will work with us. Our Nation is al-

ready in a more dangerous position today, thanks to the foreign policy failures of the Obama administration. If we don't start getting our foreign policy right, the consequences could haunt us for generations.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 15 minutes in morning business.

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am here for the 146th time to wake this Chamber up to the consequence of climate change. The leading edge of consequence is already upon us, and it is threatening the people and economies of all 50 States. Because of the dark influence of the fossil fuel industry, we can't have an honest, bipartisan conversation here in the Senate about climate change. So I travel. I have been to 13 States.

Last month, I visited Utah and met with local business, policy, and science leaders to learn more about the effects of climate change in Utah. Coastal Rhode Island and landlocked Utah may seem worlds apart, but we share a common future under climate change, and both Utahns and Rhode Islanders share a deep connection to our home State's natural environment.

Generations of Rhode Islanders have been drawn to Narragansett Bay and our coasts, and it is not just for love and beauty. In 2013, Rhode Island's ocean economy generated \$2.1 billion and supported more than 41,000 Rhode Island jobs. The Presiding Officer from Alaska can appreciate the importance of an ocean's economy.

Narragansett Bay comes alive in the summer's warmth. But it is mostly frozen water that brings people to the mountains of Utah. With what they call the "greatest snow on Earth," winter blesses Utah. During the last ski season, nearly 4½ million skiers and snowboarders visited the State, generating over \$1.3 billion in spending. According to the Utah Office of Tourism and the University of Utah, almost 1 in 10 jobs in Utah is in tourism. Well, whether it is ski boots or boat shoes, there is no question that significant portions of both Utah's and Rhode Island's economies are tangled in the consequences of climate change.

Rhode Island has already seen winter surface temperatures in Narragansett Bay increase by about 4 degrees Fahrenheit since the 1960s, and the sea level at the Newport Naval Station tide gauge is up almost 10 inches since the 1930s. We are seeing more flooding and erosion along our coast, threatening our shoreside businesses and homes. Fish stocks are shifting in search of cooler waters, upsetting the ecological balance of Narragansett Bay and endangering Rhode Island's traditional fisheries.

Out in Utah, there is not much salt-water fishing going on, but they have their own issues. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, average temperatures have already risen two full degrees Fahrenheit there over the past 100 years. During my visit in early August, the National Weather Service reported that for the first time in the 144 years that they had been measuring, Salt Lake City had five nights in a row with low temperatures over 78 degrees and 21 straight days with high temperatures over 95 degrees. Heat waves can have public health consequences, especially for the young and the elderly, but this warming also has serious implications for Utah's famed ski industry.

I visited with Ski Utah and with professional skiers from the group Protect Our Winters, folks who make their living out on the slopes. They spoke about the shortened winter seasons and depleting snowpack. Snowy Thanksgivings have historically kicked off the resorts' winter season, but Utah is seeing more and more weeks of rain. Resorts are forced to make snow, but manmade snow can't match nature's "greatest snow on Earth."

In his book "Secrets of the Greatest Snow on Earth," Dr. Jim Steenburgh of the University of Utah summarizes how Utah meteorologists Leigh Sturges and John Horel foresee snow versus rain at major Utah ski resorts under different climate change scenarios. Steenburgh writes:

For a temperature rise of 1 [degree centigrade] (about 1.8 [degrees Fahrenheit]), about 10 percent of the precipitation that currently falls as snow would instead fall as rain at 7,000 feet (roughly the base elevation of Canyons, Park City, and Deer Valley).

At 9,500 feet (midmountain at Snowbird and Alta and upper mountain at Canyons, Park City, and Deer Valley), however, it's only 3 percent.

The numbers get worse, however, with greater warming. For a 4 [degree centigrade] temperature increase (about 7.2 [degrees Fahrenheit]), about 40 percent of the precipitation that currently falls as snow would instead fall as rain at 7,000 feet. At 9,500 feet, it's about 20 percent.

This troubling future led Ski Utah's 14 resorts to get together and send a letter last year to Utah Governor Gary Herbert, asking the State to take action on climate change by implementing the EPA's Clean Power Plan.

Diminishing snowpack in these mountains is not only troubling for the ski and snowboard industry; it also jeopardizes Utah's water supply. Roughly 70 percent of Salt Lake City's drinking water comes from snowpack melt in the spring and summer. Snowpack is Utah's natural reservoir.

Utah is the second driest State in the union, but it has one of the highest average per capita rates of water usage. And Utah's population is growing as well, expected to double by 2050 to around 6 million souls.

Agriculture is the largest consumer of freshwater in the State. Over 80 per-

cent of Utah water goes to farmers and ranchers. Abbreviated winters mean less snowfall, which means less snowpack, which means less water for Utah's rivers, lakes, and farms in the summer months.

With increasingly hot, dry summers, Utah is primed for drought. According to the U.S. Drought Portal, as of August 30, over half the State was experiencing "abnormally dry" conditions. Around 5 percent of the State was in "moderate drought." As recently as the summer of 2012, Utah had seen upwards of 30 percent of the State in "extreme drought." USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service says Utah's traditional reservoirs were at just 47 percent of capacity in August, down from only 51 percent of capacity at the same time last year.

I saw firsthand the consequences of Utah's water problem during my visit to the Great Salt Lake. I joined the Nature Conservancy at the Great Salt Lake Shorelands Preserve. We walked out on wooden walkways over the marshes, but there was no need. The ground below was bone dry. The preserve is an important stopover for several million migratory shorebirds, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

Now, this is perhaps a small thing, but there is a beautiful bird called Wilson's phalarope that flies a 3,000-mile migration from the Patagonian lowlands in South America. Around a third of the world's population comes to the Great Salt Lake. Its migration of more than 3,000 miles is just one more of God's natural miracles.

Researchers from Utah State University, Salt Lake Community College, and the Utah Divisions of Wildlife Resources and Water Resources found that the lake's volume has fallen by nearly half since the first pioneers reached its shores in 1847. The lake's surface has dropped 11 feet. This has left roughly half of the former lakebed—marked here in white—now dry, and it has driven up the remaining lake area's salinity and its concentration of chemical contaminants. The disappearing lake means less habitat for birds like the Wilson phalarope and for the brine shrimp and the other lake critters that they hunt.

The exposed lake bed contains contaminants of Utah's and this lake's industrial past. The dust containing those contaminants now compromises air quality in Salt Lake City, whipped up from the old lake bed. It also affects the other cities along Utah's Wasatch Front. I met with Utah Moms for Clean Air, who describe the poor air quality in some of the State's largest cities. Given its topography, this region is prone to ground-level ozone in the summer and inversions in the winter. Inversions are layers of air which trap particulate matter in the valley. These contaminants can cause respiratory and cardiovascular problems, particularly in children. Due to that, Salt Lake County gets an F from the American Lung Association for both ozone

and particulates. The State as a whole didn't do much better, averaging an F for ozone and D for particulate matter. World-class athletes can't train in that air and world-beating companies don't want to move employees into that air so Utah takes this seriously, and Utahans are taking action.

Utah gets a lot of sunshine, and Utah is a leader in solar energy. I met with some of Utah's clean energy leaders at the Real Salt Lake Major League Soccer stadium, where one of Utah's largest solar panel arrays provides more than 70 percent of that facility's energy needs. Auric Solar, the Utah company that installed the solar panels, has averaged more than 170 percent annual growth since 2010. sPower, another solar company headquartered in Salt Lake City, told me their various projects are installing in total around 3 megawatts of solar generation every day.

On July 13, Salt Lake City mayor Jackie Biskupski signed a joint resolution with her city council, pledging to transition the city to 100 percent renewable energy sources by 2032 and to reduce carbon emissions 80 percent by 2040. That is in Utah.

I also stopped in Park City, UT. Park City has its own goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 15 percent below 2005 levels by 2020 through a combination of increased access to renewable energy, efficiency incentives for homeowners, and expanded recycling. Park City is often seen as an affluent resort, but one-quarter of its residents live below the poverty line. Outside of Park City, the rest of Summit County is mostly rural. It was the county and city governments that partnered, along with local power providers, to form the Summit Community Power Works, an effort to encourage energy efficiency improvement along all economic levels in the county.

It is working. They have done things such as retrofit the town's affordable housing units with LED lightbulbs, taking impressive steps to increase efficiency and reduce carbon footprints. They don't have the ability locally to change zoning laws or building codes. In Utah that is all controlled by the State. Offering just the economic benefits of efficiency and limited financial incentives, they are already seeing inspiring results.

I left Utah optimistic. State climatologist Dr. Rob Gillies and the other climate scientists I met with from the University of Utah, Utah State University, and Brigham Young University are eager to see their research on climate change reflected in their State's clean energy goals. In all of my meetings and tours, I was struck by the industriousness and self-reliance demonstrated by Utah's climate and clean energy leaders. They are determined to stave off climate change and provide a healthy future for their children and grandchildren.

We in Congress owe it to them and to Americans in every State working to

preserve a healthy climate to be every bit as serious as they are about the science and just as committed as they are to tackling the greatest environmental challenge of our lifetime. It may mean telling the fossil fuel industry to shove off. They have far too much control of this body. I will tell you this. If the Earth's greatest democracy can't handle one greedy special interest, even if it is the world's biggest greedy special interest, then we will deserve and earn our fate.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

FOREIGN POLICY AND THE JUSTICE AGAINST SPONSORS OF TERRORISM ACT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, it is always good to hear our friend and colleague Senator WHITEHOUSE and see his chart. I know he has given that speech or something like it many times, and I am tempted to respond to some of the things he said, but I will not because there is something else I want to talk about.

Yesterday I came to the floor to talk about President Obama's domestic policy legacy, and the No. 1 attribute of that is ObamaCare and how ObamaCare failed to deliver on the promises the President and the people who supported it made in terms of bringing down costs, making care available, not disrupting people with coverage they already had and liked.

The verdict is in on ObamaCare. The costs are up, access to care is down, and I have talked about the huge premium increases my constituents in Texas are going to experience because the masters of the universe who dreamed this up simply did not reflect reality or anticipate unintended consequences of their actions.

Today I would like to talk a little bit about President Obama's foreign policy and national security legacy. After almost 8 years of this administration, the main takeaway is, the world is more dangerous and the world is less stable than it was when President Obama took office 8 years ago. As the Director of National Intelligence, James Clapper, has pointed out, the array of threats confronting us and threatening our national security has never been greater—at least, he said, in his 50 years in the intelligence community.

Last month, I had a chance once again to visit Afghanistan and Iraq. I wanted to go back and get up to speed on exactly what the conditions were, the challenges we were facing there, and meet with our military leaders as well as constituents from Texas. I had a chance to also visit with a number of foreign leaders and of course discuss our ongoing efforts to combat terrorism and help those countries achieve some sort of stability. Obviously, the biggest focus right now is ISIS. The Islamic State is known in

Arabic, I am told, as Daesh, which is more of a pejorative connotation. People resist the Islamic State because they say it is not a state, and indeed what I learned in Mosul and Raqqa, efforts are underway to basically destroy what ISIS now claims is its burgeoning caliphate.

The good news is we have some of the best and brightest patriots in the world working in very difficult places to advance our interests. The bad news is, they are not getting the strategic guidance and leadership we need from the White House. Because of that, success in the region is limited. Because our goals appear to be not actually disrupting and destroying the threat of Islamic radicalism, manifest in the name of ISIS or Al Qaeda, it appears to be more of a containment approach—let's do the best we can to contain it but let the next President and the next Congress worry about it.

We just completed a major offensive against ISIS in Afghanistan, but the Taliban and its ally, the Haqqani Network, are kidnapping Americans and overrunning regional outposts that had been held by the Afghans. One of the biggest problems in Afghanistan, I was reminded once again, is the fact that we have an unreliable partner in Pakistan because what happens is many of the Taliban come from Pakistan, where they have safe haven, and they come over into Afghanistan and attack Afghan security forces and the police and then they go back to this protective hideout in Pakistan.

We know ISIS still holds large swaths of territory in Syria and Iraq. If you look at a map, you actually see a line between Syria and Iraq, but that border has essentially been obliterated. We know ISIS continues to export its terrorist ideology to Europe and the West, where there have been spectacular and deadly attacks either instigated by or inspired by this dangerous ideology.

The strategic and humanitarian crisis in Syria continues unabated, and it is beyond horrible. Now, because of our weakened strategic hand and diminished credibility in the eyes of friend and foe alike, we have apparently been forced to rely on the Russians to negotiate a ceasefire.

Last week, 4 years after President Obama promised that using a chemical weapon would constitute a redline that must not be crossed and that would result in a firmer U.S. response, it was reported that the Syrian Government has once again carried out gas attacks, this time with chlorine. Many were wounded. Two civilians were killed, one including a 13-year-old girl.

Obviously, the threats of redlines that must not be crossed because there were no consequences associated with crossing the redline, obviously Bashar al Assad feels he has impunity to do whatever he wants in order to maintain power because he probably realizes the alternative to doing that is not very good for him.

The line President Obama drew has now been repeatedly crossed by the murderous Assad regime. ISIS is still strong and the war criminal al Assad continues to use those chemical weapons against civilians. We also have seen that when we don't do everything in our power to root out and extinguish a serious jihadist threat abroad—like the one posed by ISIS in Syria and Iraq—that threat can make its way to our shores through ISIS-inspired attacks right here, the most recent one being the Orlando shooter who killed 49 people and wounded many more, who claimed allegiance to the leader of ISIS, al-Baghdadi.

That explains why, according to a recent poll, a majority of voters feel less safe today than they did before 9/11. Unfortunately, on national security issues, President Obama has spent most of his time cutting a deal with the foremost state sponsor of terrorism, Iran, and prioritized our relationship with this enemy over longstanding allies like Israel and Gulf States.

Now, I am afraid, those birds have come home to roost, and we are all paying a terrible price. Unfortunately, the families of the victims of the single biggest terrorist attack on American soil, September 11, 2001, are paying a price too.

We will be hearing more about this, but recently the Senate and the House unanimously passed the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act. This is bipartisan legislation that passed the Senate by unanimous consent and passed with every single Member of the House of Representatives voting for it just last Friday.

To refresh everyone's memory, this bill would provide victims of terrorism an avenue—really access—to justice to seek restitution from those who fund terrorist attacks on American soil.

Some have said this is fighting terrorism by lawsuit. No, it is not. That is not the goal. The goal is simple justice for those injured and the families who lost loved ones as a result of the largest terrorist attack on American soil on 9/11/2001.

President Obama, for some reason, has said he intends to veto the legislation because he thinks it will somehow interfere with his U.S. diplomatic relations with other countries. All this legislation does is amend a law that has been on the books since the late 1970s, the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act. Over time, we have had a number of exceptions carved out to this doctrine of sovereign immunities. All this does is give people an opportunity to make their case in court without being summarily thrown out based on the invocation of this doctrine of sovereign immunities.

It is really inexplicable to me that the President would talk about vetoing this opportunity for the victims of 9/11 and their families to be able to make their case in court, but if he does so, I hope he will do so quickly. We sent the