

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

legislation over to him on Monday, and I hope he does whatever he is going to do. I would love to have him sign the legislation into law, but if he decides to veto it, I hope he does it quickly so we can just as quickly vote to override that veto. There is no reason why we need to make these families wait any longer.

It is worth noting that the Middle East isn't the only region of the country that is more unstable since President Obama took office. Just over the weekend, it was reported that North Korea completed yet another nuclear test—its fifth. According to reports, the warhead that was detonated was about twice as large as what they tested in the beginning of the year in January.

President Obama called the test a threat and that is about all, giving lip-service to two of our strongest allies, Japan and South Korea, but with no visible or tangible commitment to do anything about it. He said our commitment to them was unshakeable, and so it is, but you couldn't tell that by the reaction to this fifth nuclear test by North Korea. But just like our partners in the Middle East, not to mention Europe, these two East Asian allies don't have reason to put much faith in the Obama doctrine, whatever it is, because unfortunately our timidity in supporting our friends and allies emboldens our adversaries, while causing our friends and allies to wonder whether we will keep our commitments to them.

North Korea has accelerated its missile testing. It has already conducted close to two dozen tests this year. Eventually, of course, the concern is that they will be able to mount nuclear warheads onto missiles that could not only hit our allies in the region but also the mainland United States at some point.

Even as enemies of America attempt to grow their arsenal of weapons of mass destruction, this administration is reportedly considering handing a gift to North Korea and other rogue regimes by adopting a no first use policy on nuclear weapons. Why in the world would you tell your adversaries beforehand what your intentions would be? This weakens, of course, the effectiveness of our own nuclear deterrent in furtherance of a fantasy goal of a world without nuclear weapons. I wish that it could be true, but it is a fantasy. The loss of deterrence caused by an announcement like that indeed creates an even more frightening and dangerous world.

Throughout his time in the White House, President Obama has done next to nothing to counter the threat posed by North Korea, and that is dangerous.

President Obama has just a few more months left in the Oval Office. At this point, it would be unrealistic to hope he uses the time to promote a solid foreign policy and national security agenda that reflects the best interest of the American people. Instead, we can only

hope he does no further harm to our national security interests.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). The Senator from Iowa.

Mrs. ERNST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business for up to 10 minutes.

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

FOREIGN POLICY

Mrs. ERNST. Mr. President, this past weekend we bowed our heads in remembrance of the nearly 3,000 lives we lost on September 11, 2001. The largest attack on U.S. soil since Pearl Harbor changed our lives drastically, but it did not impact America as our enemy had hoped. We did not falter. We bonded together. We fought back. From places such as Sub-Saharan Africa, Afghanistan, and the Philippines, U.S. troops operating under Operation Enduring Freedom showed those responsible for 9/11 the true power of the United States of America. The plan to fight against Al Qaeda and its hosts was as clear as its name: "Global War on Terrorism."

Through strong American leadership, support from our allies, and working alongside local forces, the United States embedded itself in places where extremism had spread to deny terrorism a safe haven. From combat operations in Afghanistan to advising missions in the Caribbean, there has long been a global and comprehensive plan for our response to 9/11. Since then, the global fight on terrorism has continued to become narrower under our current administration, despite the continued threat of Al Qaeda and the clear expansion of ISIS. Without clear leadership, we are failing to stop the spread of terrorism.

Ignoring over a decade of lessons forged on the battlefield, this administration has not only failed to put together a comprehensive plan to fight Islamic extremism in the Middle East, but they have also dismantled the global effort and allowed groups to come back stronger in other regions of the world. This is especially true in Southeast Asia, a nearly forgotten safe haven for terrorists determined to cause harm. Southeast Asia was used for the initial planning of the horrific attack carried out by Al Qaeda that we all bowed heads for in remembrance this past weekend.

In 1994, Khalid Shaikh Mohammed used the Philippines as a safe haven to target the United States. Today, ISIS appears to be doing the very same thing. The warning signs in Southeast Asia are all too familiar to the ones we witnessed over a decade ago with Al Qaeda in that region. They used its Southeast Asia cells to organize and finance its global network. This included planning and financing for 9/11 and the safe harbor of Al Qaeda operative Ramzi Yousef, who was convicted for organizing the 1993 World Trade Center bombing.

Because of this, following the September 11 attacks, U.S. Special Forces were deployed to the southern Philippines in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. With an annual cost of less than one new F-35, the Joint Special Operations Task Force in the Philippines partnered with local forces and trained, advised, and assisted our allies in the fight against Al Qaeda-linked groups.

Up until the mission was officially ended under this administration, operations and efforts to assist Philippine forces in dismantling terror networks were hailed as a success. The threat of terrorism from extremist groups in the Philippines, such as Abu Sayyaf, were largely reduced. But the success from U.S. support in the region has been short-lived. Just as we have been witnessing throughout the globe, previously weak or splintered terrorist networks in Southeast Asia are banding together beneath the flag of ISIS. Yet the administration's plans to defeat ISIS have not changed and a comprehensive global strategy still fails to be defined.

We can not allow Southeast Asia to once again become a safe haven to target America. While it is easy to dismiss the terrorist groups in the region as mere criminal gangs and disorganized rebels, the Philippines lost 44 of its special police in a single battle against groups now linked to ISIS in Southeast Asia last year. In April, 18 Philippine soldiers were killed in a fight quickly claimed by ISIS. Then, in June, ISIS released a call for other fighters to join them after beheading a Canadian hostage. The video proudly displaying the black flag of ISIS states: "If you can't get to Syria, join the mujahideen in the Philippines." It is truly alarming.

Our efforts to counter ISIS in Asia can assist our broader goals of countering a rising China and dealing with an unstable North Korea.

Just before President Obama traveled on his final trip to Asia this month, I sent a letter urging him to discuss efforts for a new U.S. counterterrorism strategy in the region. Specifically, I asked President Obama to consider leveraging the five new bases recently announced for U.S. personnel in the Philippines to counter the rise of ISIS and to utilize our freedom of navigation patrols in the South China Sea to provide support capabilities. Like many of our efforts under Operation Enduring Freedom, this should be a fight with the support of our allies.

The use of U.S. Special Forces helping train the Filipino forces has a successful track record in the region, but it needs to be real support and real training—a commitment with American leadership—or else it will never have the full support of our allies in Southeast Asia. They have witnessed our failure to appropriately support allies in the Middle East, like the Kurdish Peshmerga. We must correct this building perception of poor American leadership and weak support on the