

hateful ideology and controlling communities in Syria and Iraq. We know that ISIS has sacked banks and still profits from the illicit sale of oil, antiquities, and other items through the black market while extorting the civilians under their control. ISIS uses this funding to conduct terror attacks and control territory in both Syria and Iraq. They use it to buy more weapons, ammunition, and components for improvised explosive devices known as IEDs. They use it to pay salaries for fighters and develop propaganda materials to spread their hateful ideology.

In August of 2014, I joined with Senator RUBIO, urging the administration to prioritize stopping ISIS's financial support. Soon after, the President announced his comprehensive strategy to degrade and defeat ISIS.

Already, we have seen that the United States and coalition efforts, including airstrikes on oil trucks and cash storage sites, have had a meaningful impact on ISIS's finances. For example, in recent months, ISIS has had to reduce the salaries they pay their fighters. Our airstrikes have also taken key ISIS leaders, including their finance minister, off the battlefield.

Just yesterday, Deputy Secretary of State Tony Blinken reported significant progress on rolling back ISIS's control of territory. In April, Maj. Gen. Peter Gersten, Deputy Commander of the Combined Joint Task Force, Operation Inherent Resolve, said: "ISIS's ability to finance their war through oil refineries has been destroyed." That is what it says right here. Their "ability to finance their war through oil refineries has been destroyed." This is a very significant step, since ISIS was heavily reliant on this source of income.

The President also recently signed into law my bill, the Protect and Preserve International Cultural Property Act, which helped ensure that the United States is not a market for antiquities looted from Syria. This is important because a report by the CultureUnderThreat Task Force stated that ISIS may try to increase—its antiquities trafficking activity as other revenue streams, such as oil sales, are cut off.

ISIS is rewriting the rule book on how terrorist groups work. Despite the loss of territory in both Syria and Iraq, it continues to cultivate its affiliates in northern and western Africa, Central Asia, and other parts of the Middle East. It continues to sow the seeds of terror in neighboring countries such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia, further afield in Europe, Africa, and, of course, here in the United States. ISIS has figured out how to operate outside of the international financial system, lessening the impact of our banking sanctions that we have relied upon before. We may be able to defeat ISIS, but the problem of terrorist financing will stay with us.

I took a trip in February to Israel, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey,

which confirmed this assessment. That is why I believe we need a more robust, permanent, international architecture for countering terrorist financial networks.

In June, I introduced the Stop Terrorist Operational Resources and Money Act—the so-called STORM Act—with Senator JOHNNY ISAKSON, and this is but a first step. This bill provides a strong set of tools to compel greater cooperation from partner nations.

The STORM Act authorizes a new designation by the President called "Jurisdiction of Terrorism Financing Concern," which can be triggered either by a lack of political will by a country or a lack of capacity to take on this problem. Some countries have the capacity to make meaningful progress but lack the political will to do so. I believe we should levy tough penalties that make countries reconsider their willful ignorance or tacit acceptance of terrorist financiers carrying their country's passports or operating in their territory. The penalties under the STORM Act include suspension of security or development assistance, blocking of arms sales, and blocking loans from the IMF or the World Bank.

With some countries the challenge is a basic lack of capacity. The United States is well equipped to provide technical assistance and capacity building. We have done this before on the issue of nuclear nonproliferation. The STORM Act authorizes the administration to do the same with countering terrorism financing.

Lastly, the STORM Act authorizes sanctions against financial institutions that do business with ISIS. This sends a signal that banks need to be vigilant in ensuring that they do not facilitate ISIS's financial operations.

In the years since 9/11, terrorist groups have become ever more sophisticated in the way they finance their operations. We have to respond in kind, and it is right to expect all our partners to do the same.

The bipartisan STORM Act sends a very clear message. If you fail to pull your weight when it comes to terrorism financing and cutting it off, there will be consequences. If you want to improve your record, the United States is here to help you.

I urge my colleagues to support the STORM Act as an element of our fight against ISIS and a step toward building a more robust, international architecture to stop terrorism financing in the long run.

I yield the floor.

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

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

ISIS

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, you oftentimes draw the short straw and have to preside while I am speaking, and you can probably give some of these talks as well as I can, but I am going to go back and talk about something I have discussed every couple of weeks—not so much during our 7-week recess but certainly before and subsequent to that as well. What I have been doing is providing an update for our colleagues on what is going on in a part of the world we have a lot of interest in, including Iraq, here; Kurdistan, here, which is part of Iraq; Turkey in the north; Syria, which is right here to the west of Iraq; and Iran is over here. We have the Mediterranean Sea right here.

I just want to hearken back to 2 years ago when the folks from ISIS were rolling through this part of the world hellbent on getting to Baghdad. Baghdad is right here, right down here, not too far from Iran. They had made extraordinary progress, killing a lot of people along the way, taking a lot of prisoners, a lot of them women as sex prisoners, and slaughtering a lot of people, with mass graves and a large amount of carnage. They were able to scare off the Iraqi Army. In many cases, the Iraqis turned tail and ran. Their leadership ran too. In fact, their leadership may have actually run before the rank-and-file troops, heading this way, back toward Baghdad. Finally, when the folks of ISIS were sort of knocking on the door just west of Baghdad, they were slowed and stopped.

What has happened in the last several months? There has been a big change in the momentum of the battle. Now it is not just Iraq on its own in this fight; Iraq is joined by a coalition of roughly 60 nations, of which the United States is the leader. Our job is not to provide boots on the ground in Iraq or in Syria; for the most part, our job is to provide intelligence support. Our job is to provide air support—fixed-wing, rotary-wing, unpiloted aircraft, drones—and our job is to provide training, support, and advice to the folks who are doing the fighting.

This is a province just west of Baghdad called Anbar Province. We have all heard of it. This area right here—west of this whole area is considered the Sunni Triangle because the lion's share of the folks who live in this part of Iraq are Sunni. There are particular cities they live in. One is called Fallujah. A member of my staff was wounded and almost killed in Fallujah a few years ago. There is Ramadi and a place called Tikrit. Tikrit, right up here, is where Saddam Hussein was from. All these areas were taken over by ISIS a couple of years ago. They have been driven out of those cities and out of this part of Iraq.

The folks who have been doing most of the fighting on the ground—their abbreviation is CTS, which, as I recall, stands for Counter Terrorism Service.

We are providing support for them, but they are actually the boots on the ground.

The next province here in this country is to the northeast. It is on the border here with Kurdistan, and it is a town called Mosul. It is not a town, it is a city, and there are about 2 million people living there. That is the second largest city, right behind Baghdad, that is still in the hands of ISIS.

Sometime later this year or early next year, we expect to see a full-scale movement by the coalition—led again by the Iraqi forces themselves—to move on Mosul. There is a town here—there is actually a base here about 50 miles southwest of Mosul called Qayyarah, and it is a big Air Force base, and that was taken maybe a month or so ago by the Iraqi forces with our support. There is not only a base there, there is a town that goes with it called Qayyarah, and that town is now in the hands of the Iraqis, and the folks from ISIS have been driven out of Qayyarah. It was really the last major city or town between Baghdad and Mosul that was in the hands of ISIS.

Now we come across the northern part of Iraq over into Syria again to a place called Manbij. This is a pretty good size city. It is very close to the Turkish border. There is another town here on the Turkish border with Syria called Jarabulus. These two places were in the hands of ISIS until very recently. They served almost as a gateway, almost a free flow of ISIS troops, soldiers, or reinforcements coming across the border with Turkey and through Jarabulus and down by Manbij. Both those cities are now in the hands of forces that are in alliance with our coalition.

There is a place here—not as big as Mosul—called Raqqa that is still in the hands of ISIS. They think of it as the spiritual center of their caliphate. My guess is that sometime next year, after Mosul has been taken, full attention will turn to Raqqa. There will be coalition forces coming in from the southwest and folks who we are fighting with in the northeast, and that will be the next big battle.

In the meantime, since the last time I spoke on the Senate floor, a lot of land that ISIS had taken has been retaken. It was less than 50 percent, and now 50 percent or more of the land that ISIS previously held has been retaken.

Again, this is not just the United States. We are playing a constructive role, but the coalition and the Iraqis themselves—some who ran from ISIS—don't run anymore. We were very much encouraged by the courage they have shown.

Among the other things that ISIS took, aside from land, was oil—oil reserves—and they turned that into money. They captured banks. They went right into the treasuries of the banks and safes and vaults and stole a lot of money—hundreds of millions of dollars. A fair amount of that money

has actually been destroyed by airstrikes—literally, cash on fire. I don't know if it is half, but it is a lot of the money, and ISIS's ability to realize more revenues by virtue of oil and by selling oil on the black market has been significantly reduced. The idea there is to starve them and reduce the ability for reinforcements to come in from the north and at the same time to take away their ability to make money and use that money to pay their troops and buy things that they and their forces need to wage a successful war.

So that is a little bit about what is going on in that part of the world. I will mention a couple of other pieces. I don't think we have Libya on this map. Libya is over here, a little to the west and to the south. Imagine it is somewhere over here—probably over here, but we get the drift.

When ISIS is being driven out of this part of the world—out of Iraq and Syria—where do they go? About 50,000 have been killed, over 100 to 200 of their top leaders, including the No. 2 guy who was killed I think last week. Frankly, some are packing up and going home. They see the writing on the wall.

Others are going to different countries. Libya is one of the places ISIS has headed. They settled into a place called Sirte, a big seaport town. We have had a heavy focus working with the Libyan forces to take back Sirte, and a week or two ago the last portion of Sirte was recaptured. I think that is another positive development.

We have terrorist groups in the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf. And through the air and with aircraft assigned to the carriers, we have been providing that support. The Turks have been good about giving us access to one or more of their bases, so we have the ability to fly aircraft out of there and provide air support for the coalition forces that we have.

One of the other ways that ISIS has been very effective in waging this war, aside from the actual fighting on the battlefield, is fighting that does not occur on a battlefield and is not the kind of battle that you win with guns and bullets and rockets and missiles, but it is the kind of fight that goes on through the Internet and through social media. These guys are pretty good at that. They are not 12 feet tall on the battlefield, as it turns out. We are capable of degrading and destroying them, as the President likes to say. But the ability to actually take them down on the Internet through social media has been more challenging.

Before I get into that, though, I think the last time I spoke here, I mentioned that 2 years ago some 2,000 foreign fighters per month were coming in to this part of the world to be part of the ISIS team—2,000 a month. The last time I reported, I said that number was down to 200 a month. Today, we know that number is down to 50 a month. Part of it is because Jarabulus and Manbij and other towns have pretty

much cut off access to the Turkish border. That is an encouragement. I think I mentioned the last time I was on the floor that 2 years ago maybe 10 Americans a month were coming to this part of the world to join ISIS and to fight. Today, that number is probably down to one per month, one every 2 months. We are encouraged by that.

In cyberspace, I understand there are over 360,000 pro-ISIS twitter accounts that have been taken offline this year. Let me say that again. In cyberspace, over 360,000 ISIS twitter accounts have been taken offline over the past 12 months. For every pro-ISIS twitter account, there are now six anti-ISIS accounts criticizing and challenging ISIS's twisted theology. For a while, the ISIS fighters continued to take their hits on the battlefield and had a good spanking applied to them, but they were still doing well on social media. Not so much anymore. As it turns out, as they move over to places like Libya and try to set up a minicaliphate, we have shown that isn't going to work either.

So on balance, this is going in the right direction. It is not time to spike the football. It is a pretty good coalition working together, and we are starting to hit on all eight cylinders.

I would just say to our troops and to those who are part of the coalition, as we say in the Navy when people do a good job, "Bravo Zulu." We are not going to spike the football yet, but things are very much encouraging. We are grateful for everybody who has helped to make that possible.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

BLACKFEET WATER RIGHTS SETTLEMENT ACT

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, today is a good day for Montana and the Blackfeet people.

With the passage of the Water Resources Development Act, the Blackfeet Water Rights Settlement Act is one step closer to the President's desk. Today's action marks the first time the compact has passed the Senate after being introduced four times since 2010.

Today, for the first time, this important legislation came to the Senate for a vote and it passed. I, along with my colleague Senator JON TESTER, worked hard to make sure it made it through this time. The settlement is long overdue and will not only establish the tribe's water rights but will also facilitate real, tangible benefits for the Blackfeet and surrounding communities.

The bill will improve several Federal water structures that are some of the oldest and most in need of repair in the country and will help irrigate some of the most productive farmland in our State. The Blackfeet Water Rights Settlement Act also balances the need of the State and the local community.