

Mr. GRAHAM. We couldn't have troops on the ground because Iraqis said no. Do we have troops on the ground today, I ask Senator MCCAIN?

Mr. MCCAIN. That is the point. Now we have at least 3,500 troops on the ground in Iraq.

Mr. GRAHAM. Where is the Parliament?

Mr. MCCAIN. We don't have a status of forces agreement. Their Parliament has not endorsed it. Where are our liberal friends on the other side? Aren't they concerned that there isn't a status of forces agreement and we continue to incrementally—a classic example of mission creep—gradually increase our presence more and more.

Actually—and I don't use this line very often but these apologists, particularly in the liberal media, the so-called commentators—they are lying. They are lying when they say that we couldn't keep a sustaining force there. We could, and we could have done it without the approval of their Parliament, including the fact that we have troops in a number of other countries where their Parliaments haven't approved a specific status of forces agreement. So it is really aggravating.

But the reason why they tell this lie is because if it were really a fact that at great sacrifice we had stabilized Iraq and it had a bright future at that time, their calls for a complete withdrawal and the President's announcement that the last combat soldier had left Iraq—remember that? Remember that one of his underlings said: We are leaving behind the most stable, prosperous, democratic Iraq in history. That was the statement. I think it was Blinken or one of those guys. It was great.

We have gotten everybody out of Iraq, just as the President promised when he ran for President of the United States. But leading from behind doesn't work. Just because you leave a conflict, that does not mean the conflict is over.

Again, this morning, they are trying to make that same mistake in Afghanistan, although I pray they have learned that they cannot go to what the President originally announced—that they would go to an embassy specific force of about 1,000. The question is how many and what their missions will be.

So I think it is important to emphasize that this did not have to happen. If we had kept that stabilizing force behind, you would never have had Baghdadi break off from Al Qaeda and move to Syria and seeing the things we are seeing today.

I am afraid my friend from South Carolina is right. In fact, I know he is right. There will be further attacks on the United States of America and Europe because it is inevitable. When Mr. Baghdadi controls a large piece of geography from which he can train, equip, motivate, and send people out to commit acts of terror, that will happen, and the responsibility will lay at the doorstep of Barack Obama and his minions.

Mr. GRAHAM. If I could, just to wrap this up, I wish we were wrong. When the President decided to withdraw all troops from Iraq against sound military advice, we cautioned—literally begged—the President and the Vice President. We went to Baghdad itself to try to help with this problem. I remember saying that I think all hell will break loose because this is so irresponsible. Iraq is in a good spot, but if we leave now, it will all fall apart. I hope I am wrong. Well, we weren't wrong.

When the Syrian people took to the streets to demand more freedom and our response was to ignore their plea, when the people of Iran went to the streets and the Ayatollah shot them down and our President said that he didn't want to discuss negotiations with the regime, when Assad had his back to the wall and President Obama declined to take good advice to arm the Free Syrian Army and the people of Syria to get rid of their dictator, all the things that Senator MCCAIN and I have predicted have come true.

The point of being here today is that the worst is yet to come and, God, I hope I am wrong because this is what I think is going to happen. I think there is going to be an attack on our country that is being planned as I speak, coming from Syria. If we went on the ground in the region—not 100,000 U.S. troops but mostly people from the region with some of us—we could destroy the caliphate and we could disrupt their plans against our homeland, but we are not doing that.

If we don't change our strategy regarding Syria, we are going to lose one of the best allies America has ever had, and that is the Kingdom of Jordan, because it is being overrun by refugees. The whole seam of the Middle East is splitting wide open.

I will say this. Everybody makes mistakes—Bush, LINDSEY GRAHAM, and JOHN MCCAIN. The key is to adjust. The problem I have with this administration is that they seem unable and unwilling to adjust. If they don't change their strategy, we are all going to regret it. As bad as it is today, the worst is yet to come.

Mr. MCCAIN. Could I just add one other point to my friend from South Carolina?

The President is very good at setting up straw men. He says that we only have two choices—to send in a couple of hundred thousand troops or to do nothing. Neither LINDSEY GRAHAM or I or any smart person I know are advocating that.

What we are advocating is about a 10,000 American force providing the capabilities of ISR training, forward air controllers and others, with a large contingent of Arab countries that would then move to Raqqa on the ground with the use of American air power.

Please do not be fooled by this constant barrage of untruths that are being said about those of us that we

want to send in hundreds of thousands. We do not. This has to be an Arab coalition with the United States a small part of it, and, by the way, have them pay for it as well. With the proper American leadership and commitment and credibility, which is totally absent now in the region, that could be done. Otherwise, we will fight them there or we will fight them here.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASIDY). The senior Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed in morning business.

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

PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I had planned to be in the Senate Judiciary Committee today, debating and pushing for passage of the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, or CARA. Unfortunately, the markup was postponed. I wish it had not been. So I hope next week we can make progress on this important bill. We have a need for this legislation, and we also need the money for it. Senator SHAHEEN has an emergency supplemental appropriations bill. These are actually both urgent matters.

States such as mine, Vermont, and our neighboring State of New Hampshire have been deeply affected by this wave of addiction. The media has covered this very personal and ravaging epidemic as never before. We have seen a transformation in how we talk about this issue and the need for solutions. It used to be that if you had a drug problem, they would bring in the police to straighten it out. We have removed the stigma of drug addiction, but we need more than talk. I have visited many of these communities. They are devastated by this epidemic and need resources for prevention and treatment. It is time for Congress to act.

For years I have been convening field hearings and sitting at kitchen tables, listening to Vermonters discuss innovative approaches to confront drug abuse and related crimes. I have also sat at kitchen tables and listened to tragic stories about a member of the family who had been hit with opioid addiction. What I have heard in the meetings I have had with the police, doctors, family members, faith community, and educators is that we cannot arrest or jail our way out of this problem. We have lost the war on drugs—if we were ever winning it—because we relied primarily on unnecessarily harsh sentencing laws.

I spent 8 years in law enforcement, and I know that law enforcement practices will always play an important role. That is why I have worked to secure funding for State-led, anti-heroin task forces. But if we want to find lasting solutions to these problems, we have to identify and support effective

prevention, treatment, and recovery programs. CARA does just that. This legislation would support innovative, evidence-based solutions—best practices that are already showing great progress in States like mine.

We need to do all we can to prevent and treat the abuse of prescription opioids. I have pushed for years to have the FDA promote safer alternatives to powerful prescription pain killers and to remove from the market the older, less safe drugs. The FDA's announcement to expand access to abuse-deterrent formulations of these powerful drugs is a step in the right direction in response to my concerns, but the FDA can and must do more.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the April 28, 2014, Leahy-Blumenthal letter to the FDA Commissioner.

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

U.S. SENATE.

Washington, DC, April 28, 2014.

Hon. MARGARET A. HAMBURG,
Commissioner, Food and Drug Administration,
Silver Spring, MD.

DEAR COMMISSIONER HAMBURG: We are writing to urge the expedited review of New Drug Applications for abuse-deterrent formulations of single-entity hydrocodone products. Zohydro ER was the first pure hydrocodone product to receive FDA market approval. The drug was approved despite lacking any abuse-deterrent properties and over strong objections from the FDA's own independent advisory committee. We share the concerns of the many governors and state attorneys general who believe this powerful drug is all but certain to exacerbate our nation's addiction to opioid analgesics, which results in tens of thousands of overdose deaths each year.

Given their potency and ease of abuse, we have little doubt that pure opioid products may lead more Americans to addiction, some even to heroin. The FDA has already recognized the heightened risks of overdose and death with Zohydro ER, even at recommended doses. Drug developers continue to seek regulatory approval for other easy to abuse opioids, such as Moxduo IR. To the extent that pure opioid products fill a necessary niche in responsible pain management practices, the FDA must now take all available measures to ensure that patients are soon provided safer alternatives. This process begins by prioritizing review of abuse-deterrent formulations. Such formulations are much more difficult to crush or dissolve, two preferred methods of abuse.

As safer, abuse-deterrent opioids are approved, the FDA should act swiftly to remove any older, less safe versions. In the past, it has taken up to three years for the FDA to ban products that lack abuse-deterrent properties when a safer equivalent exists. Americans should not have to wait this long with Zohydro ER.

We also request that the FDA brief our staff on your plans to monitor the use of Zohydro ER, including what metrics will be used to potentially reevaluate its status as an approved drug if widespread problems develop. We also ask that you share your planned efforts to curb prescription drug abuse generally, including the development and approval of effective non-opioid pain-killers that may finally break the cycle of opioid addiction. Each year, the opioid epidemic seeps into more communities and

takes more lives. We are eager to learn how we can assist the FDA to finally get ahead of this scourge.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

RICHARD BLUMENTHAL,
U.S. Senator.
PATRICK J. LEAHY,
U.S. Senator.

Mr. LEAHY. I am also concerned that rural communities are in desperate need of the lifesaving drug naloxone so that opioid overdoses can be stopped. I have heard from law enforcement officers and grateful families what a miracle this drug can be, so we need to make sure we have it supplied where it can literally save lives. I have had police officers tell me that they arrived at a scene with an overdose, and because they had that with them, they saved the life of the person. If they had not had it, the person would have been dead by the time the ambulance arrived.

In Vermont, we have seen a 65 percent increase in the number of Vermonters getting treatment for their addiction over the past 2 years. This is encouraging progress and reflects the fact that our Governor and also State legislators of both parties have stepped up. But we know that there are hundreds more who are on waiting lists, and patients in the very rural corners of my State travel hours just to get their medication. We need to do more about this real threat to our communities.

I am very proud to cosponsor Senator SHAHEEN's emergency supplemental appropriations bill. I want to be able to fund additional public health outreach, treatment, recovery, and law enforcement efforts. We have passed much larger emergency supplemental bills to address swine flu and Ebola. We passed huge supplemental bills on Ebola when we did not have a single case of Ebola originate here in the United States. We were worried about it coming in, but it did not originate here. But here, we have tens of thousands in the Presiding Officer's State, in my State, and in every other State. We have to take the health epidemic already in our communities just as seriously as we did those diseases that did not originate on our shores.

(The remarks of Mr. LEAHY and Mr. FRANKEN pertaining to the introduction of S. 2506 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

WASTEFUL SPENDING

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, this is the first week of February, and a new month brings a new "Waste of the Week" speech from the Senator from Indiana. In preparing for this, we learned another disturbing fact about our economy, and that is that the United States has hit yet another new

mark. Our national debt now exceeds \$19 trillion.

It wasn't that long ago that I was standing on this floor and talking about the fact that we are approaching \$11 trillion of debt, and in just a few years that has accelerated in a most dramatic way. Now it has reached \$19 trillion. Obviously, it is having and it is going to have a significant impact on the future of this country and our economic growth. In fact, the Bureau of Economic Analysis said that our Nation's gross domestic product—the measure of our Nation's economic activity—grew a very anemic 0.7 percent in the last quarter of 2015. We simply cannot sustain our economy and grow and provide economic opportunity for Americans and jobs for Americans at a growth rate of 0.7 percent. In fact, the growth rate on the average is now about 2 percent. We can't even keep our heads above water in terms of providing employment opportunities for people if we don't grow at a much faster pace, particularly following one of deepest and most damaging recessions we have ever had.

Clearly there are issues that need to be addressed, issues that need to be talked about, and actions that need to be taken that put us on a better path to growth. Not having come up with the ability to address our long-term debt in any kind of a macro sense after many opportunities over the years and many efforts—some of them bipartisan and all of them denied by the President of the United States in terms of going forward for "political reasons"—I have shifted my talk to, say, at least let's try to stop spending money that falls in the category of waste, fraud, and abuse.

I have documented over the last year or so well over \$130 billion of documented waste, fraud, and abuse. This isn't just conjuring up some story or picking up stories out of a newspaper; these are documented examples by independent agencies of the Federal Government that examine our spending and come up with ways in which they can point out that the spending is not necessary and that these funds can be used for much better purposes, the best purpose of which would be to not increase our national debt in paying for waste and not demanding ever-more tax increases from our constituents to help pay for waste.

This week I am going to highlight something that wastes taxpayers' money and literally wastes space, warehouse space. The Department of Homeland Security owns or leases a number of warehouses around the country. They need this because they need to have in place the equipment that is necessary to address a disaster. Whether it is a natural or manmade disaster or whether it is a terrorist attack—for whatever reason, they need a number of these warehouses. They either buy or lease these warehouses to store this equipment that is needed for emergency situations.