

has sold to Saudi Arabia in the past, air strikes continue to hit civilian targets. The number of civilian injuries and deaths shows that there is simply not enough progress to reduce civilian casualties.

I could not in good conscience vote to support providing advanced precision munitions—bombs capable of hitting targets guided by laser targeting or GPS—to a campaign conducted by forces unable or unwilling to limit strikes to targets of military necessity.

Civilian casualties are a tragedy, and they threaten to make us less safe by radicalizing populations that otherwise would not be sympathetic to violent extremist groups like al-Qaida. It is critical that the U.S. military is certainly able to hunt down terrorists wherever they operate or wherever they seek haven.

The deployment of remotely piloted aircraft has allowed for persistent intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, which is used to minimize the risk of civilian casualties. When the U.S. military carries out air strikes, we know our men and women in uniform are the best trained in the world and are informed by the best available intelligence.

Precision-guided munitions alone do not avoid preventable tragedies. It takes capable and fully trained personnel. This is what we must expect from our partners for the sake of innocent civilians caught in conflict zones and for our own national security. Failing to do so sets back the potential for a political solution.

We simply should not send precision munitions or any weapons system to any partner with personnel who are not capable or trained to use them. That is why I supported the resolution of disapproval, which specifically objects to the sale of three specific types of precision-guided munitions and related technology. While this measure failed, I will continue to work as a member of the Armed Services Committee to provide oversight and hold the Saudi Government and military accountable.

COUNTERING IRAN'S DESTABILIZING ACTIVITIES
BILL

Mr. President, I was proud to support the Countering Iran's Destabilizing Activities Act. This is important legislation that I was also proud to cosponsor. It will require sanctions on those supporting Iran's ballistic missile program and imposes terrorism-related sanctions on Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps.

For too long, Iran's state sponsorship of terrorism and their repeated ballistic missile tests in defiance of U.N. Security Council resolutions have destabilized the Middle East and threatened Israel, our strongest ally in the region. Their destabilizing actions are fueling the ongoing violence causing widespread humanitarian suffering in Yemen. Iran provides weapons and troops that fuel conflicts, and Iran's military consistently behaves in an unprofessional manner, putting American troops at risk.

I believe most Iranian citizens want to play a productive role in the world. It is their government that is the problem. I believe that pressure provided by additional sanctions for destabilizing activity can improve the behavior of the Iranian regime, and we must send a clear signal to this regime that their actions are simply unacceptable.

This legislation also provided a vehicle to address another nation's leadership whose actions have warranted international condemnation—Russia. This bill includes an amendment that I supported to enhance sanctions on Russia.

This amendment ensures that sanctions imposed by President Obama are codified in law and cannot be removed without congressional review. It also imposes new sanctions on Russians who facilitate human rights violations, supply weapons to the Syrian Government, conduct cyber attacks on behalf of the Russian Government, and do business in the Russian intelligence and defense sectors.

Let me be clear: Russia is not our friend. The Russian Government has conducted an information warfare campaign against our own country and sought to undermine our democratic process.

This is not a one-time incident. Russia continues to attempt to disrupt democratic institutions and interfere with our allies.

Congress has supported imposing tough sanctions on Russia, and it is important that Congress has an opportunity to review any attempt to remove them. I am glad this amendment was adopted on a broadly bipartisan basis.

Finally, I am a cosponsor of an amendment offered by Senator GRAHAM that reaffirms the importance of NATO, particularly article 5, the collective defense provision, which states that an attack on one is an attack on all. Article 5 has been invoked only once, in response to the September 11 attacks on the United States. With the inclusion of this amendment, the Senate sends a strong, clear signal that the United States stands by our commitment to security and stability throughout the world, and we always will.

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

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

BUILDING AND SUSTAINING A LARGER NAVY

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I rise to continue my discussion about the case for a bigger Navy, a bigger fleet, and to endorse the requirement of the experts in the Department of Defense that we move to a 355-ship Navy.

When a crisis strikes around the world, the President asks his national

security team: Where are the carriers? Where are the aircraft carriers?

Each of our carriers is a 100,000-ton giant, accompanied by an entire carrier group that consists of mighty warships and aircraft. The carrier, itself, represents 4.5 acres of sovereign U.S. territory.

In early January of this year—and Senators do not know this—a strange and profoundly disturbing thing happened. The answer to the Commander in Chief's question, had it been asked at that point—where are the carriers?—would have been that none of them had been deployed—not a single one. For the first time since World War II, the United States had no carriers deployed anywhere—not in the Persian Gulf, not in the Mediterranean, not in the Western Pacific.

There is a gap in our global carrier presence, and there is a gap in our fleet. This comes from years of complacency. Also, it comes from a different set of facts that we are faced with and a different set of challenges that we are faced with in our quest to make our presence known and to protect our national security interests on the open seas. We have ignored the great naval competition that is taking place elsewhere—the fact that it is accelerating. We have taken our Navy and our sailors and marines for granted.

Simply put, the Navy we have today is too small. We cannot accomplish the critical missions that we have by preserving the status quo. Right now, we have 277 ships, and we need to get to 355 ships. That was reiterated today by the Chief of Naval Operations and the Secretary of the Navy in a hearing before the full Armed Services Committee.

I will reiterate to my colleagues and to the American people what the Navy does for America and why the current fleet is too small to meet current and emerging challenges.

First, the global presence of the Navy ship matters to American prosperity—to the quality of life of Americans. Ninety percent of global trade is sea-borne. Maritime traffic has increased by 400 percent over the past quarter century. In addition to commerce, nearly all intercontinental telecommunications transit via a web of undersea cables. Undersea cables are responsible for nearly all of our intercontinental telecommunications.

Second, a strong Navy deters aggressive behavior and reassures our allies as the Nation's first-on-the-scene force. A strong Navy can help keep bad situations from spiraling out of control and getting worse. For example, the President recently dispatched multiple carrier strike groups to the Sea of Japan following North Korea's missile tests. The President asked where the carriers were, and he dispatched them to a place of crisis. A mix of ships gives our Commander in Chief a range of military options, and their deployments to areas of instability can send a message of resolve to our friends and foes alike.

Third, if deterrence fails, our naval forces can provide a decisive response to aggression. Surface ships, submarines, and the aircraft on the carriers can launch missile strikes, control air and sea traffic, and intercept missile threats. The recent U.S. action in Syria is a good example, as the Presiding Officer knows. In using destroyers in the Mediterranean, the Commander in Chief delivered precision strikes against Syrian airfields. He enforced the redline against outlawed chemical weapons, and President Assad has not crossed that redline again.

Accomplishing these missions as the Nation's sentinel and first responder requires a big Navy. Admiral John Richardson, the Chief of Naval Operations, put it best in "The Future Navy" white paper that was released last month. He said:

Numbers matter. The number of ships in the Navy's fleet determines where we can be, and being there is a key to naval power.

Again, the current fleet of about 277 ships is way too small. It is important to remember that not all ships are deployed or deployable. In fact, only about 100 ships out of the 277 are currently deployed. The other two-thirds are undergoing heavy maintenance, routine sustainment, or are training to deploy. The Navy recently validated its requirement for 355 ships—a 47-ship increase over the previous requirement.

The lack of ships has created coverage gaps all over the world. I will give two examples.

First, the commander of Pacific Command, ADM Harry Harris, recently told Congress he has only half the submarines he needs. Admiral Harris is responsible for deterring China and North Korea, but he is missing half of the submarines he needs. Closer to home, the commander of Southern Command, ADM Kurt Tidd, has zero Navy ships permanently assigned to his area of operations. These are just two of the many alarming instances where the lack of ships is having major consequences.

While we watch our edge erode, America's real and potential adversaries are building the size and capability of their fleets. They are on the field competing while, in America, many of our players are still in the locker room.

China is building a modern navy capable of projecting global power. China is modernizing every type of ship and submarine in its fleet. China commissioned 18 ships last year. In April, China launched its first domestically built carrier and plans to build at least six more carriers. By 2030, China will have more than twice as many attack submarines and four times as many small surface ships as the United States. Beijing is developing its first overseas naval base in the Horn of Africa. China's naval buildup may attempt to push the United States first out of the Western Pacific, away from critical trade chokepoints and our allies in South Korea and Japan.

I would call the attention of Members to the poster that I have, and I hope it is printed large enough for my colleagues to see. In terms of five types of ships, it compares where we were in 2000, where we are today, and where we are projected to be if current trends continue.

For example, on the farthest column shown on the chart, in attack submarines—and the black portion of each circle represents China's capability, and the blue represents our capability in the United States of America. In 2000, it was 64 to 55 in favor of the Chinese. In 2016, as we can see, 56 to 57. But under current projections, by the year 2030, when it comes to attack submarines, the Chinese will have 87 and the United States will have only 42—a disturbing trend which the Navy would like to reverse if we have the ability and the wisdom to give them the requirement they have said they need.

With regard to ballistic missile submarines, in 2000, quite a mismatch—only 1 for China as compared to 18 for the United States; then, only last year, 4 for China and 14 for the U.S. Navy; and then projected for 2030—and really that is in only 13 short years, which is hard to believe—there will be more Chinese ballistic missile submarines than American ballistic missile submarines unless we take the Navy's requirement to heart and take action beginning this year to rectify that situation.

With regard to small surface ships, as we can see, there was a 79-to-62 advantage in sheer numbers in 2000 and a 103-to-23 advantage of the Chinese in 2016. In 2030, there will still be a mismatch, in terms of numbers, of 123 small surface ships compared to only 40 for the United States of America.

With large surface ships, it was 20 to 79, then 19 to 84, and by the year 2030, as we can see, the Chinese are projected to have 34 large surface ships.

With regard to aircraft carriers, as I pointed out, they were not in that game at all in 2000. They delivered their first last year, and they are projected to go to four by the year 2013.

It all adds up to 260—a 260-ship fleet for China and only 199 for the United States unless we act, and act responsibly, in response to what the Navy and the Marine Corps and the best military minds in the Pentagon are telling us, and I hope we will do that.

An increasingly aggressive Russia is also modernizing. The Kremlin is pouring money into new attack and nuclear ballistic missile submarines. Russian submarine patrols have doubled, and those patrols are stretching closer to the U.S. homeland. The Russian Navy's operating areas have expanded to include regular operations in the Baltic, Black, Mediterranean, and Caspian Seas. Russia is also exploiting new opportunities in the Arctic by building naval bases in the High North.

So both China and Russia are investing heavily in their fleets and in new ballistic and cruise missiles that can target U.S. naval forces.

And, of course, we need to turn to the subject matter of North Korea. Kim Jong Un will stop at nothing to develop a nuclear weapon that can strike our allies and that can strike deployed U.S. forces and eventually our homeland. A nuclear ballistic submarine would essentially make North Korea impervious to threats of preemption. North Korea is building fortified submarine bunkers and began testing submarine-launched ballistic missiles within the last year.

Iran is another rogue state developing a massive fleet of fast attack boats and mini-submarines to deny the free passage of ships through the vital Strait of Hormuz.

Naval competition is a fact. China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran have clearly been building up the size and the sophistication of their fleets. The Chief of Naval Operations has a word to describe the pace of competition, and that word is "exponential." The CNO puts it this way:

Time is an unforgiving characteristic of the maritime [environment]. Things are moving faster, including our competitors.

So let's start competing again. Building a larger fleet is a national project. It will require sustained commitment by the President, the Congress, and the Department of Defense. As chairman of the Seapower Subcommittee, I intend to begin laying a firm foundation this year for a significant buildup in the future, and I hope my colleagues will join me.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS FOR THE VICTIMS OF THE CONGRESSIONAL BASEBALL PRACTICE SHOOTING

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I wish to start this afternoon with a reflection on what happened yesterday. We are thinking today of the individuals who were hurt in the attack during the baseball practice in Virginia, and, of course, we are praying for those who were injured. I will list them. Many of the names we already know, but it is important to list them.

Of course, Representative STEVE SCALISE from the State of Louisiana—we are thinking of his family and praying for them, and we hope for his speedy recovery. Matt Mika, who works for Tyson Foods, was also a shooting victim like Representative SCALISE. Zack Barth, who works for Congressman ROGER WILLIAMS, was a shooting victim, and Special Agent Crystal Griner, of course, of the Capitol Police, who exhibited such courage in the line of duty. We are thinking of Crystal at this time as well.

We know there were individuals injured at the scene, including Special Agent David Bailey of the Capitol Police, who was not shot, apparently, but suffered an injury and was released from the hospital. We are happy to hear he has been released. Representative ROGER WILLIAMS, who was hurt at the scene as well—not a shooting victim but hurt—and, of course, two of

our colleagues were there at the time, Senator RAND PAUL and Senator JEFF FLAKE. We are thankful they were not injured in any way.

On these days, we come together as a family to remember those who have been the victims, and we are thinking of them and their families and praying for them.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. President, I rise today to talk about the healthcare debate and in particular not just the issue of healthcare but the effort underway by Senate Republicans in their attempts to repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

I have grave concerns about the substance of the legislation—what we know about it. It has been kind of a secret process. We don't know a lot, but we have some general sense of where they are headed. I also have grave concern about the lack of transparency employed by the Republican majority around the development of this healthcare plan.

Like millions of Americans, I oppose this secretive process—and I have to say it is a partisan process as well—that could result in major legislation that would harm children who will lose their healthcare, especially by way of the cuts to Medicaid. It could harm individuals with disabilities—and by one recent estimate in Pennsylvania, that means over 720,000 Pennsylvanians with a disability who rely upon Medicaid; and, of course, seniors—a lot of seniors across the country cannot get into a nursing home absent the full support of the Medicaid Program, and we are concerned about them as well; and finally, middle-class families who may not be able to afford healthcare if the House bill were to become law or a substantially similar bill passed by the Senate.

In 2009, the legislation passed the Senate after a yearlong, open process that included a total of 44 bipartisan hearings, roundtables, and summits. That was in the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, of which I was a member at the time and remember well those hours and hours and days and days of hearings. The Committee on Finance at that time also had many hearings over many months. This whole process by two committees led to the consideration of some 435 amendments offered by both parties, majority and minority, and a full debate on the Senate floor that lasted over 25 consecutive days. In fact, a number of Republican Senators were able to offer and get a vote on their amendments, some of which passed and became part of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Yet, in the last 5 months, there have been no Senate hearings on this proposed legislation, no hearings on the House proposal, and certainly no hearings on what is being developed here in the Senate. If that is the case—if that remains the case over the next couple of days and weeks—then I believe we

should institute a very basic rule: If you have no hearings, you have no vote. In other words, you can't have a vote on the Senate floor on a bill that will affect so many tens of millions of Americans and will change dramatically and, I would argue, adversely, to the detriment of a lot of people, our healthcare system. I hope the majority will agree with that—that if you don't have a hearing, you shouldn't have a vote on the Senate floor.

There have been no relevant bills considered in executive session by any of the committees of jurisdiction. Every indication is that the Republican majority will jam this legislation through with minimal opportunity for debate. This is unacceptable to me, but I also believe it is unacceptable to people across the country in both parties.

We know, for example, the reason—or one of the many reasons—folks would want a hearing before a vote, and that is because we are getting a sense of what the substance is. Just to give one example, I won't enter this whole report into the RECORD, but I am holding a full copy of the Congressional Budget Office cost estimate. This estimate is dated, May 24, 2017, analyzing H.R. 1628, the American Health Care Act of 2017. This is the bill which passed the House. Page 17 of the CBO report says:

Medicaid enrollment would be lower throughout the coming decade, culminating in 14 million fewer Medicaid enrollees by 2026, a reduction of about 17 percent relative to the number under current law.

That is quoted directly from page 17 of the CBO report, that over the decade, 14 million people will lose their Medicaid coverage.

I know some here and across the city who were commenting on this legislation—either members of the administration, Members of Congress, or otherwise—are refuting this, but I think when you have a Congressional Budget Office report which is an independent entity that both parties have relied upon—and it is not only the CBO. This is a report authored by not just the Congressional Budget Office but also the Joint Committee on Taxation.

So 14 million fewer people on Medicaid—why is that relevant to the Senate debate if the CBO report was analyzing the House bill? Here is what one think tank, which has analyzed healthcare policy for years, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities—they put forth a report this Monday, June 12. In that report of just a couple of pages, they had a chart—I am holding it. I do not expect people to see it, but here is what it says. It has four columns. The first column has the major provisions of the House bill; and then what are likely, based upon reporting and information we can ascertain so far, major provisions of the House bill; and then major provisions of the Senate bill.

There is a section entitled “Medicaid Expansion.” When the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities analyzed and

compared the House bill to what we know so far about the Senate bill being proposed or at least the development of it, basically the Center on Budget says there is no long-term impact on any reported changes from one bill to the other. The Medicaid per capita cap—another very disturbing development that is being considered—when they compare the Senate bill to the House bill, they say no major changes.

So we are very concerned about what happens to Medicaid. I am very concerned because of the 1.1 million children in Pennsylvania, the disability number I mentioned before of over 722,000 people with disabilities who get Medicaid, and of course the seniors who depend upon Medicaid. So we are concerned about the elimination, even over time, of the Medicaid expansion. We are also concerned about the Medicaid Program itself.

In addition to those numbers, I want to highlight a few individual stories of people to get a sense of what is at stake when it comes to this bill and when it comes to Medicaid.

This past Friday, I met with German Parodi from Philadelphia. Here is his story:

In 2001, he was a victim of a carjacking and was shot in the neck, leaving him paralyzed and unable to use his legs and having limited use of his arms. He was nursed back to health by his grandmother and has worked for the past 16 years to be a full citizen, going to school, working, owning his home, now caring for his grandmother who once cared for him. German, who now uses a wheelchair to get around, has worked to achieve what every American wants—to be a successful student, to own a home, and to care for his family. He can do this because of his knowledge, skills, and perseverance, and he has been able to achieve these goals because he gets direct care services paid for by Medicaid. His direct care professional helps him get out of bed in the morning, get showered, dressed, breakfast, and get to work. Medicaid and the services it provides makes it possible for him to use his skills to be successful.

German told me that without Medicaid, “I would end up having to live in an institution. This would dramatically affect my life and my grandmother's life.”

While talking with me, he said: “Please do everything in your power to protect my life and the lives of millions like me.”

I am short on time but here is another example. Latoya Maddox, whom I met at the same meeting, is from the Germantown section of Philadelphia. She was born with arthrogryposis multiplex congenital, a disability that limits the use of her limbs. Latoya also uses a wheelchair to get around, including getting to school and getting to work. She is smart, energetic, and the mother of a soon-to-be 6-year-old. She is now a junior at West Chester University working on her bachelor's