

Uighurs at Guantanamo, the detainees, one after another, testified that they were trained by none other than Abdul Haq who "was the one responsible for the camp." So just as these detainees testified that Haq ran the camp and led their training, they, time and again, admitted to training on what they referred to as "the AK-47" or "the Kalashnikov."

It is unbelievable to me that we are talking about releasing these dangerous detainees into American communities, despite the fact that they received military-style training on AK-47s in a camp run by a known terrorist and terrorist organization, both of which are designated as such by the United States and the United Nations. And the administration is doing so just one week after it denounced the man who trained the Uighur detainees in the following clear words. This is what the Treasury Department said:

Abdul Haq commands a terror group that sought to sow violence and fracture international unity at the 2008 Olympic Games in China. Today, we stand together with the world in condemning this brutal terrorist and isolating him from the international financial system.

So within a week of our Government seeking to condemn and isolate "this brutal terrorist," the administration is planning to turn loose his pupils into the United States.

There was a time not long ago when no Senator would need to come to the floor to explain that it is dangerous and unlawful to release extremist militants trained by terrorists into the United States.

Why would we release them here? We captured them on the battlefield. We took them to Guantanamo. Now we are going to release them. China would like to have them back. They are rightly concerned about the people who attempted to bomb the Olympic games. We don't have to release them here. We don't have to release them.

Well, according to the press reports I have cited, the administration is planning to release the Uighur detainees to gain favor and "generate good will" with foreign governments. Now we understand, according to the Associated Press, Mr. Holder is in Europe where he is "to reassure skeptical Europeans without generating too much opposition back home."

That is an uneasy statement for me. That sounds a little duplicitous to me, for an Attorney General to be in Europe where he is "to reassure skeptical Europeans without generating too much opposition back home." I suggest he needs to be focused on security in the United States. I think we need to consider why it is we feel that a nation we have favorable trade relations with, China, which successfully conducted Olympic games, isn't able to detain people who are committed to a group that was designed to attack those games.

If another country captured terrorists who were attacking the United

States—and we would like to have them and hold them in custody—let me ask, what would we think if they released them into their communities and gave them subsistence and payments from the government? Wouldn't we think that government was aiding terrorism?

How did we get into this position? I do not think the administration has thought this through. There is no question China has certain well-known problems with human rights, and I have been one of their critics. But are those problems any worse than the problems in Yemen, Algeria, Libya, Sudan, and Saudi Arabia—all countries to which the United States has returned Guantanamo detainees? What message is our government sending here, and what will be the repercussions? Have any of these questions been seriously considered?

I call on Attorney General Holder to answer my letter of April 2 well before he plans to release any of these militants onto the streets of America. If he is able to travel halfway around the world "to reassure skeptical Europeans," perhaps he can answer a simple, direct, two-page letter from this skeptical Senator.

We know as many as 60 former Guantanamo Bay detainees who were released overseas have returned to the battlefield, including some in senior roles with al-Qaida. That stark reality is why the Senate voted 94 to 3 to support Senator MCCONNELL's resolution that concluded with these words:

It is the sense of the Senate that detainees housed at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, including senior members of al Qaeda, should not be released into American society, nor should they be transferred stateside into facilities in American communities and neighborhoods.

I note that now-Vice President BIDEN and now-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton—Members of the Senate then—voted for the resolution. Then-Senator Obama did not. He was not voting. But he has made statements that indicate he understands the dangerousness of these individuals. I suggest that he give more thought to those words he has previously issued and that he follow the law, the plain law as I see it, and not release any of them into the United States.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, it is my intent to take a very few minutes. We are speaking in morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Thank you, Mr. President.

CATASTROPHE INSURANCE

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, what do Florida, Louisiana, Texas, and California all have in common? Aside from all being Sunbelt

States, each of these States is subject to a natural catastrophe event. We have certainly seen that in the case of hurricanes in Florida and Louisiana and Texas, and we know of it with the Northridge earthquake in the case of California.

Each of these States approaches their homeowners insurance in a different way. But, increasingly, States are moving to a position whereby a quasi-government reinsurance company is set up—in the case of Florida, it is the Florida Hurricane Catastrophe Fund—that, in effect, reinsures private insurance companies in order to induce them to continue to sell insurance in the marketplace.

So the insurance companies, instead of going out onto the world markets to get reinsurance—that is, insurance against catastrophe—instead, or in addition to, go to a creature, in Florida's case called the Florida Hurricane Catastrophe Fund.

The problem is that each of our States—Florida and Texas and California and Louisiana—that are each facing this potential megacatastrophe event—hurricane or earthquake—find it increasingly difficult to buy reinsurance at an affordable rate. Indeed, some of the reinsurance cannot be provided for, even if you go out and try to prearrange a bond issue, given the fact of these markets that are very uncertain now about being able to obtain a bond issue, and that uncertainty is causing a great deal of turmoil for a State to know that it can cover the losses if a major catastrophe hits.

What I am introducing today—and I will be joined by Senators from Texas, California, and Louisiana, and will ultimately invite all of the Senators from the States on the Atlantic seaboard and the gulf coast, as well as other earthquake-prone areas, such as Memphis, TN, which has one of the major fault lines in the country running through it and would be a potential major catastrophe because of all the gas lines that run from the Texas and Oklahoma well fields all the way to New York and to New England—it would be a major catastrophe if an earthquake hits; and that is one of the fault lines—so what this legislation will do is provide a backup for the State catastrophe funds by allowing them to have the assurance that when they go into the private marketplace—to float bonds, to pay off claims after the disaster has hit—that they will be able, even in these uncertain times of the economic markets, to sell those bond issues because they will have a U.S. Government guarantee.

You might say: Well, why would we want the Federal Government to guarantee those? Well, clearly it is in the interests of the Federal Government because these are only going to be guaranteeing public organizations that are an arm of the Government and that are run by members of a board that indeed are public officials, and it will actually end up saving Federal tax dollars.

You might say: Why in the world? If the Federal Government is going to guarantee a bond issue, that has a certain cost to it. It does. But this is how it saves the Federal Government money: Because at the end of the day, when the natural disaster strikes, guess who is going to pay for it. It is going to be the Federal Government. So if a large part of those payments has already been provided by private insurance, because we have enabled that through this catastrophe reinsurance fund, then that means that is an additional cost the Federal Government will not have to bear.

I remind the Senate that after Katrina struck New Orleans, that total tab is somewhere in the neighborhood of \$200 billion, and the Federal Government's share of that is well north of \$100 billion, or over half of the total cost. When the category 4 or 5 hurricane hits an urbanized part of the coast—be it in any one of our States—it is clearly going to be a major economic loss, of which the Federal Government is going to come in. If a lot of those damages have already been paid by private insurance, enabled by these reinsurance funds set up by the State governments—enabled because they have a Federal guarantee on the loans—then it ends up being a win-win situation.

Because my colleague from Tennessee is in the Chamber, I hasten to add that, of course, catastrophes are not just hurricanes, but some of the worse catastrophes that could happen are, in fact, earthquakes. An 8-point plus on the Richter scale earthquake, centered on a major metropolitan area, such as San Francisco or Memphis, TN, would be a cost well in excess of insurance losses, well in excess of between \$50 and \$100 billion.

This is a rational way through the private sector marketplace to approach that problem, and I commend to the Senate this bill that I introduce today, the Catastrophe Obligation Guarantee Act. I ask the Senate to favorably consider it.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have a Catastrophe Obligation Guarantee Act fact sheet printed in the RECORD.

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

COGA FACT SHEET: THE CATASTROPHE
OBLIGATION GUARANTEE ACT
WHY IT IS NEEDED

Many states have catastrophic natural disaster risk so large that the private markets simply can't insure it.

Residential property insurance is vital to post-disaster recovery, because it protects people's most valuable asset—their homes. But in the private insurance market, catastrophe coverage is often very expensive or simply unavailable—this can rob community recovery of much-needed resources.

To bridge this affordability/availability gap, California, Florida, Louisiana, and Texas have created public insurance or reinsurance programs.

These programs need substantial post-catastrophe capital to pay their claims, but for

public entities, the only available form of external capital is debt capital.

Sadly, in severely disrupted credit markets such as those that prevail today, even credit-worthy public entities can't raise enough debt capital to fully meet program needs.

The new COGA approach—Established programs in California, Florida, Louisiana, and Texas have a continuing common need for reliable, adequate private financing. They have come together to advance an innovative approach: Federal guarantees of the State programs' post-event debt. COGA will provide these State programs, and any other qualifying State program, with dramatically enhanced debt-market access, across all market conditions, at much lower borrowing costs.

WHAT IT DOES

COGA would authorize (at pre-set levels) Federal guarantees of State-program debt incurred to pay insured losses from major natural catastrophes.

COGA does not furnish Federal funds to State programs and does not make the Federal government a reinsurer of catastrophe risk.

Upon application by a qualifying State program, the Treasury provides a 3-year COGA guarantee commitment—this gives the State program vital certainty in planning its claim-paying capacity. States reconfirm their qualifications each year.

The guarantee is not actually issued until after an event (when a State program would go into the debt markets), and then solely to obtain funds to pay and adjust losses it cannot otherwise cover with existing resources.

To be eligible, State catastrophe programs must meet stringent criteria, including:

Public purpose and organization, including tax-exempt status, and a board composed of or appointed by public officials.

Proven ability to repay, and an actuarially sound rate structure.

States must have robust building codes and recognize loss-mitigation measures.

WHAT IT WILL COST AND WHAT IT WILL SAVE

Guarantees are only for public organizations with proven ability to repay their obligations.

Under COGA, the Federal government would make payments only in rare circumstances—it is a debt guarantee, not a direct loan. Guarantee fees cover COGA's administrative costs.

States without effective programs will want to form them—COGA-supported post-event funding will provide broad, sensible incentives to qualified State programs.

The COGA guarantees will save Federal dollars: When more people are covered by State catastrophe insurance, the Federal Government's post-event burden is greatly reduced.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I congratulate the Senator from Florida on his comments. He is exactly right, there is a major fault along the Mississippi River near Memphis, TN. There was a massive earthquake in the early 1800s that created Reelfoot Lake. The earthquake was so profound that the Mississippi River actually ran upstream in order to do that. One eyewitness to that was Davy Crockett, who was on a bear hunt that winter up in northwest Tennessee. He wrote about it in his autobiography which was intended to be his Presidential campaign autobiography. It never quite worked out. But we take it very seriously.

The University of Memphis has a center dealing with earthquakes. We will

be very interested in his proposal. I was glad to have a chance to hear about it.

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, do you remember a few years ago when our Congress got mad at France and banned French fries in the House of Representatives cafeteria? We Americans have always had a love-hate relationship with the French, which is why it was so galling last month when the Democratic Congress passed a budget with such big deficits that it makes the United States literally ineligible to join France in the European Union.

Of course, we do not want to be in the European Union. We are the United States of America. But French deficits are lower than ours, and their President has been running around sounding like a Republican, lecturing our President about spending too much.

Now the debate in Congress is shifting to the size of your electric and gasoline bills and to climate change. So guess who has one of the lowest electric rates in Western Europe and the second lowest carbon emissions in the entire European Union. It is France again.

What is more, they are doing it with a technology we invented and have been reluctant to use: nuclear power.

Thirty years ago, the contrary French became reliant on nuclear power when others would not. Today, nuclear plants provide 80 percent of their electricity. They even sell electricity to Germany, whose politicians built windmills and solar panels and promised not to build nuclear plants, which was exactly the attitude in the United States between 1979 and 2008, when not one new nuclear plant was built. Still, nuclear, which provides only 20 percent of all U.S. electricity, provides 70 percent of our pollution-free electricity. So you would think that if Democrats want to talk about energy and climate change and clean air, they would put American-made nuclear power front and center. Instead, their answer is billions in subsidies for renewable energy from the Sun, the wind, and the Earth.

Well, we Republicans like renewable energy too. We proposed a new Manhattan Project, for example, like the one in World War II, to find ways to make solar power cost competitive and to improve advanced biofuels from crops that we do not eat. But today, renewable electricity from the Sun, the wind, and the Earth provides only about 1.5 percent of America's electricity. Double it and triple it, and we still do not have very much. So there is potentially a dangerous energy gap between the renewable energy we want and the reliable energy we need.

To close that gap, Republicans say start with conservation and efficiency. We have so much electricity at night, for example, we could electrify half our cars and trucks by plugging them in