

different ways: our justice system, our foreign policy system, and our ability to respond to the havoc that is taking place in the Middle East right now. Let's put an end to all of this obstruction. Let's move forward with votes on these qualified consensus nominees as we have done historically. It wasn't until this Republican crowd arrived in the Senate that they started doing it. We have never had this before. We may have held somebody up for a while, but they basically put a stamp of disapproval on anything that President Obama wants to do.

We are not going to stand by silently and allow these nominations to linger in the Senate. We are going to continue to demand that they schedule votes on these qualified, dedicated public servants so they can work on behalf of our great country.

Mr. President, would the Chair announce the business of the day.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 11 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Democratic whip is recognized.

#### TERRORIST ATTACKS AGAINST FRANCE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, earlier in this session we observed a moment of silence to exhibit our solidarity with the people of France. I add my voice to others here today in sharing my deepest condolences and solidarity with the people of that great nation. As a result of barbaric violence that occurred over the weekend, we are finding this solidarity coming together from across the world, standing behind the people of France in their hour of need.

These events that occurred in Paris were heartbreaking and infuriating. America knows well from the tragic events of September 11 that this kind of savagery is a challenge to the civilized world, one which we must collectively stand and defeat.

As French President Hollande said to a joint session of the French Parliament, when France is attacked in such a manner, the whole world is attacked. I agree.

The people of Russia are also victims of such violence in the recent downing of their airplane departing Egypt, another tragedy for which ISIS has claimed credit. The people of Lebanon and Turkey have suffered horrific bombings in their capitals in the last few weeks from these same terrorist groups, and the brave reformers in Tunisia—one of the few countries to emerge from the Arab spring with an inclusive and inspiring democracy—have faced similar violence against innocent people at their museums and tourist destinations.

The perpetrator of all of these monstrous attacks is ISIS, which has filled

the void created by the wars in Iraq, Syria, and the broader political chaos of the Arab spring. These murderous henchmen have conducted the most heinous of acts: beheadings, mass rape, torture, and the murder of innocents in a sick attempt to intimidate the civilized world and to feed their own warped ideology.

I have supported President Obama's leadership in organizing a global coalition to defeat ISIS and will continue to do so. I applaud Secretary Kerry for his efforts to negotiate an end to the Syrian civil war, but we must do more.

When France is attacked and President Hollande reaches out to his allies, he is reaching out to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO, of which the United States is a member. He should reach out as well—and we all should reach out—to Russia which, as I mentioned earlier, has been victimized by this terrorist group in the downing of that aircraft. Then reach out to the Saudis and Muslim leaders around the world. Join us in a coalition to destroy ISIS, first in their occupied territory in Syria and in Iraq, and then in their murderous web of recruitment and hate around the world.

Several people in the United States have reacted to the tragedy in France by calling for us to suspend refugees coming to this country. Many of these people have not reflected on the refugee situation in our country. Each year, the United States of America accepts about 70,000 refugees from around the world. These refugees are each carefully investigated, reviewed and vetted. That process takes anywhere from 18 to 24 months before a refugee from any part of the world is allowed to enter the United States. We do everything humanly possible and take extraordinary efforts to make certain dangerous people do not arrive on our shores. That vetting process must continue and when it comes to suspicious circumstances, must be doubled in its intensity to make certain our Nation is safe, but for those who are focusing on that as the answer to what happened in Paris, they are very shortsighted.

One out of four of the refugees coming to the United States in the last fiscal year came not from the Middle East but from Burma. In addition to that, we find many refugees coming to the United States from Iraq. It turns out that over 3,000 refugees came from Iran. In each and every instance, we should apply the standard of strict vetting and the highest standards of investigation. I certainly stand by that, but those who say we should turn away refugees coming to the United States have forgotten the lesson of history. It was May of 1939, a ship docked in Florida. The ship was named the *SS St. Louis*. On that ship were almost 1,000 Jews from Europe who were trying to escape persecution. Sadly, the United States turned them away and they had to return to Europe. They were afraid for their lives. The Nazis had engaged in Kristallnacht and violence against

Jewish people, and these refugees were coming to our shores seeking refugee status. In May of 1939 we turned them away. They returned to Europe and over 200 of them died in the Holocaust.

Since that time the United States has taken a different approach to refugees. We have been a country sensitive to the reality that in many parts of the world people are living in fear of death every day and can only find safety on our shores. Over the years we have accepted 750,000 refugees from Vietnam; we have accepted over 500,000 Cuban refugees, including the fathers of two U.S. Senators, one who is running for President; we accepted over 200,000 Soviet Jews who were escaping persecution in the former Soviet Union; we have accepted refugees from around the world—from Somalia, from Bosnia. The list is long. That is an indication of who we are and our values.

Now, we need to be careful when any refugee comes to the United States. We should give them a thorough investigation, but for us to step back and say we are going to stop being a refuge for refugees from around the world is a retreat from America's values. Let us make sure the process for refugees, immigrants, and visitors is the very best. Let us carefully follow through on each one of them, but let us not turn our backs on many around the world who fear for their lives and are looking for the safety of the United States. That has been part of our heritage for over 60 years and it should continue.

What can we do? We know we have an obligation to keep America safe, and we know ISIS and terrorists like them are trying to find ways into the United States. First, we must acknowledge the obvious. For more than 14 years, with the exception of the Boston Marathon, involving lone-wolf terrorists, we have kept America safe. It has been through the good work of our men and women in the intelligence community, the military, the FBI, and in so many different aspects of our government.

So what can we do in the Senate to make sure they are able to do their job effectively? Why don't we do our job in the Senate. Why don't we pass the appropriations bills for these agencies. Imagine, here we are, over a month into this fiscal year, and the Senate has not passed the appropriations for the FBI, the appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security. What are we waiting for? Instead, we have vote after revote after revote over old issues that have been resolved on the floor of the Senate months ago. This week, if we want to fight terrorism and protect the United States, let us pass the appropriations bills for all of the agencies of our government. It is time to do it and to do it now.

Secondly, we need to make sure our country has the tools to fight terrorism, the kind of terrorism we have seen in Paris, France. We know we need to change the approach when it comes to the encryption of data and communications so that we have access