

No—they wanted to have private plans negotiate with drug companies—the same approach taken in the MMA. The VA system was not a model for any Medicare prescription drug plans considered on the Senate floor.

Finally, let me address the idea of importing cheap drugs from Canada.

First, nobody has a greater desire than I to make prescription drugs more affordable, particularly for our seniors and the disabled, who depend so heavily upon pharmaceuticals for their quality of life. I co-authored the 1984 bill which, in essence, brought generic drugs to the marketplace to become the force for competition and affordability that they are today.

My colleagues seem to forget that the MMA does include a provision to permit the importation of prescription drugs from Canada once a program is in place that is approved and certified for safety and cost by the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The law also calls for the Secretary to establish a 13-member task force that will study proposals to make re-importation safe and cost effective.

HHS Secretary Tommy Thompson has stated he is hopeful the panel's study will be completed by the end of this year. We shouldn't overlook the fact that the FDA has documented many cases of what appeared to be FDA-approved imported drugs that in fact were contaminated or counterfeit, contained the wrong product or incorrect dose, were accompanied by inadequate directions, or had outlived their expiration date.

These drugs would be at a minimum ineffective, and could actually be harmful or fatal.

The FDA is also concerned with the safety of allowing companies which are not licensed by states to practice pharmacy to sell prescription drugs without any limitation on the amount or frequency of drug imports permitted for individuals.

In addition, reimportation legislation as it is written would allow risky drugs that are currently available in the U.S. only under strict safety controls to be reimported at any amount or frequency to anyone—even those who are at high risk to be seriously injured by the medication.

The FDA underscored these concerns in the Judiciary Committee's hearing on drug importation last July. The agency stressed that opening our tightly regulated, closed system of prescription drug distribution will open the door to counterfeit and otherwise adulterated or misbranded drugs being widely distributed to an unwitting American public.

Mr. William K. Hubbard, the Associate Commissioner for Policy and Planning for the FDA testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee on this important matter. I would like to take this opportunity to read some of his testimony to my colleagues:

FDA remains concerned about the public health implications of unapproved prescrip-

tion drugs from entities seeking to profit by getting around U.S. legal standards for drug safety and effectiveness. Many drugs obtained from foreign sources that either purport to be or appear to be the same as U.S. approved prescription drugs are, in fact, of unknown quality. Consumers are exposed to a number of potential risks when they purchase drugs from foreign sources or from sources that are not operated by pharmacies properly licensed under state pharmacy laws.

Patients also are at greater risk because there is no certainty about what they are getting when they purchase some of these drugs. Although some purchasers of drugs from foreign sources may receive genuine product, others may unknowingly buy counterfeit copies that contain only inert ingredients, legitimate drugs that are outdated and have been diverted to unscrupulous resellers, or dangerous sub-potent or super-potent products that were improperly manufactured. Furthermore, in the case of foreign-based sources, if a consumer has an adverse drug reaction or any other problem, the consumer may have little or no recourse either because the operator of the pharmacy often is not known, or the physical location of the seller is unknown or beyond the consumer's reach. FDA has only limited ability to take action against these foreign operators.

These safety concerns are real, and I strongly believe that if we truly care about seniors and other patients who depend upon prescription drugs, we should not expose them to what currently amounts to pharmaceutical Russian roulette.

Now the FDA is working with some of my colleagues on legislation that would give the FDA greater resources, limit the scope of imports, and provide greater power to the FDA to police imports. In recent public comments, former Commissioner Mark McClellan has said these measures would give the agency the ability to assure the safety of prescription drugs imported by Canada.

In addition to these safety concerns, however, I am also concerned that reimported drugs pose a threat to the innovation Americans—and the rest of the world—have come to expect from our pharmaceutical industry. Canada and other countries with lower drug prices generally import superior American products, but impose price controls to keep costs down.

However, it can cost as much as \$1 billion to produce a new drug, test it, win FDA approval, educate doctors, and make the drug available to patients. No pharmaceutical company could go through this immensely expensive process without a chance to recover some of its costs, which will not be possible if we impose in America—however indirectly—Canadian-style price controls. I do not believe that sacrificing the safety and future supply of our drugs by reimportation is the right answer to the high cost of prescription drugs.

I hope that I have cleared up any misunderstandings that Medicare beneficiaries have about the MMA law. Again, we gain nothing by spreading mistruths about the Medicare bill.

The only thing that results from those types of charges is confusion of

Medicare beneficiaries—the very people who all of us are trying to help. And that is regrettable.

#### ANTISEMITISM

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I speak about antisemitism, an ancient pestilence that has torn at the fabric of society for too long. Specifically, I have become concerned with the dissemination of antisemitic attitudes through political cartoons.

Last month, on the eve of Rosh Hashanah, I stood in this chamber along with a bipartisan group of my colleagues to speak about the cancerous effect that antisemitism continues to have on humanity. As I stated then, it is of the highest priority for our Nation to stand up against this venomous invective and bigotry directed at the Jewish people.

It is an unfortunate reality that some newspapers in the Arab world blatantly promote antisemitism. For my remarks, I had prepared several posters of cartoons that appeared in Arabic-language newspapers to illustrate to my colleagues their insidious nature, but in the end, I found them too unsettling to display.

What I find disconcerting, however, is the fact that this sentiment is creeping into political cartoons both in Europe as well as here in the United States. Newspapers across the country and the world have published cartoons that have gone beyond reasonable differences of opinion and expanded into the realm of antisemitism.

For example, I have seen a cartoon of a man lying on the ground, bleeding and clutching a small Palestinian flag. Impaled in his back is a large American flag with its stars arranged to form the Star of David. This graphic image, insinuating that an Israeli-controlled America has killed the state of Palestine, is appalling.

In Italy, the Newspaper La Stampa ran a cartoon depicting an Israeli tank rumbling toward a baby Jesus, who is crying "Surely they don't want to kill me again?!" This is not a criticism of policy or leadership. This is nothing other than an antisemitic attack thinly veiled as political parody.

In the Greek Newspaper Ethnos, a cartoon appeared showing two Israeli soldiers stabbing captive Arabs. One of the Israeli soldiers is depicted as saying to the other "Don't feel guilty, brother. We were not in Auschwitz and Dachau to suffer but to learn!" How can that be construed as anything other than bigotry? This kind of hatred is simply unacceptable, and I urge my colleagues in the Senate, as well as leaders across the world, to make every effort to end this terrible plague of hatred.

#### RELATIONS WITH KYRGZSTAN

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I make special note of the visit to the United States by the distinguished