

agreement, it is certain that the countries that helped us reach this point will walk away, too, starting with Russia and China.

Without this perfect alignment of interests for punishing sanctions, they will fall apart, and we will lose this moment.

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Now, despite the huffing and puffing, military action is not viable. Talk to your constituents about what their appetite is for another military engagement in the Middle East, particularly, with the horrific costs and consequences that would follow.

Military action would only strengthen the most reactionary evil forces in Iran to unleash the next escalation of global terror, which is frightening to comprehend. An attack will strengthen Iran's resolve to secure their own nuclear weapons, just as North Korea has done. And you cannot bomb away the knowledge that Iran has on nuclear technology.

Ten, fifteen years is a lifetime in international affairs. Who could have imagined what has taken place in the last 15 years of our history? The world was a much different place in the year 2000.

We ought to work to keep this coalition in support of the agreement alive and well and work to implement it and to enforce it, because we can snap back these sanctions if Iran crosses the line. The evidence is that the American public, and especially the majority of Jewish Americans, want to give diplomacy a chance.

Congress should allow it. Reject the alternative for people who have no alternative. Recognize this as a major achievement, and work together to make diplomacy work. Let's seize this once-in-a-generation opportunity.

EGYPT AND THE PERSECUTION OF COPTIC CHRISTIANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, there is a cultural and religious cleansing sweeping across the Middle East. ISIS has made it clear that there is no compromise on religion. It is intolerant of any religious belief different than its own. If a person is not a Muslim, they are forced to pay a tax, convert, or be executed. In the face of this ugly terrorist group that preaches hate, Christians are persecuted.

But ISIS is just one example of groups that are intolerant of Christians. Egypt is a hotbed of persecution of Coptic Christians.

Some people thought after the fall of Mubarak, things would get better, but that hasn't been true for Coptic Christians.

A schoolteacher told a Coptic teenager to hide his cross that was on his necklace. He wouldn't do so, so the teacher encouraged the class to punish

the boy to protect the name of Allah. His classmates beat him to death. He died because he was a Christian.

A mere rumor that a Muslim girl was dating a Christian boy led to church burnings and a curfew for Christians.

Since 2011, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom has deemed Egypt a "country of particular concern."

In 2013, the Muslim Brotherhood blamed Coptic Christians for the downfall of President Morsi, even though it was the majority of the Egyptians that were tired of Morsi's oppressive rule. So Muslim mobs battered their way into an Orthodox church south of Cairo, tore down the cross, and torched the building. After they looted the church, they set the church on fire with Molotov cocktails and gasoline. When they left, they spray-painted a nearby wall with the words, "Egypt is Islamic."

In all, over 40 Christian churches were destroyed or damaged in Egypt.

Like the Nazi marking of Jewish homes, black Xs are painted on Christian stores so attackers know which shops to target. Dozens of houses, shops, hotels, and vehicles belonging to Christians have been burned and looted.

The military said it would help rebuild churches that were destroyed, but the law requires non-Muslim places of worship to receive Presidential approval before rebuilding a church; and of course, Presidential approval is very difficult to obtain. So this is the government's way of stopping construction of Christian churches across Egypt. The government is still not protecting Coptic Orthodox Christians and their churches.

Coptic Christians are often treated as second-class citizens by the government. Bishop Boulous was charged with blasphemy, or "defaming Islam," in 2009 because he wanted to change his religion on his national identity card from Muslim to Christian.

You see, Mr. Speaker, in Egypt you have to put your religious affiliation on your identification card.

After receiving multiple threats, his wife and his children were forced to flee the country. The prosecutors have ignored court deadlines for his trial, and he remains in prison today.

President el-Sisi has staked his legacy on the fight against terrorism, ISIS, and the Muslim Brotherhood. Ensuring human rights for Christians must be given the same priority.

Four years after the so-called Arab Spring, attacks against Christians have not stopped. In February, 21 Egyptian Coptic Christians were beheaded by ISIS. The brutal mass murder was filmed in a 5-minute, highly produced video and disseminated by ISIS' propaganda arm. When their relatives got permission from the President of Egypt to build a church in the memory of the martyrs, they were attacked by rock-throwing radical mobs.

Coptic Christians just want to be left alone and worship and exercise their

religion. They want to be able to gather on Sunday without fearing the church they are in will be bombed or burned. They want to live in peace without having to hide from radical, intolerant mobs ready to attack them.

These are not unreasonable requests. They are basic freedoms. Our ally, Egypt, must do a better job of protecting all religious groups.

Religious freedom is a human right. We guarantee in our First Amendment, and, Mr. Speaker, it is the first right of the five rights mentioned in the First Amendment. That placement is not accidental.

The right to practice one's religion is a basic human right. Egypt should protect all religious groups, including Coptic Christians, from religious cleansing.

And that is just the way it is.

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Massachusetts (Ms. CLARK) for 5 minutes.

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I would like to share the story of a determined woman who took a traumatic personal experience from her past and is using it to help people.

Erin Merryn is a survivor of childhood sexual assault that began when she was just 7 years old. In her book, Erin shares: "The only message I got as a child came from my abusers, and that was to stay silent or else. I went to bed night after night crying and keeping my secrets locked away in my childhood diary."

Tragically, Erin's is not an uncommon story. Childhood sexual assault is a silent epidemic that exists in every one of our communities, and I am asking us to come together to do something about it. I am asking, as a mom of three boys first and as a lawmaker second, because every 6 minutes a child is sexually assaulted in the United States. One in four girls, and one in twenty boys are sexually assaulted before they turn age 18, and yet only a tenth of children who are sexually abused will tell someone.

Survivors of child sexual assault carry the corrosive burden of this heinous act with them the rest of their lives. Survivors often experience guilt, isolation, problems with self-esteem, and building relationships.

Erin shared her story to educate and protect thousands, if not millions, of children. And today, thanks to her work, policies that require schools to provide age-appropriate sexual abuse prevention education for teachers and students are called Erin's Law.

As Members of Congress, as parents, as neighbors, we owe it to our kids to follow Erin's example and be their strongest advocates. Children, teachers, and parents are on the front line of this problem, but they often don't have the tools necessary to identify it or get kids the help they need.