

powers—concluded an agreement with Iran that, if it is implemented as it was agreed to, promises a peaceful, diplomatic solution. Thanks to the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act, Congress has had ample time to review the agreement.

I have spent hours and hours studying the text of the agreement and scrutinizing our intelligence agencies' classified assessment of their ability to verify Iran's compliance.

As a member of both the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Senate Armed Services Committee, I attended more than a dozen hearings and briefings with administration officials and outside experts—both for and against the agreement. In the end, I have concluded that this agreement effectively blocks Iran's pathways to develop a nuclear weapon for well over a decade.

Right now, what we heard from testimony from both those people who support and oppose the agreement is that Iran can acquire enough fissile nuclear material to make a bomb in less than 3 months. The agreement extends this breakout time to at least 1 year by slashing Iran's stockpile of enriched uranium by 98 percent and banning enrichment above 3.67 percent, which is far below weapons grade, for 15 years.

The agreement also reduces Iran's number of centrifuges by more than two-thirds for a decade, and it maintains inspectors' access to Iran's uranium mines and mills—so the whole life cycle of uranium—for a quarter of a century. These are just some of the many restrictions the agreement imposes on Iran.

In addition, Iran is bound by the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and other agreements to a permanent commitment not to pursue nuclear weapons and, as part of that agreement, to permit access by inspectors to any suspected sites. Of critical importance, the Iran agreement is not based on trust—none of us trust Iran—but it is based on an inspections regime that is more rigorous and more intrusive than any previous negotiated agreement. Nuclear experts are confident that we will be able to detect violations by Iran. Thanks to language in the agreement that allows the United States to respond unilaterally to a violation by reimposing U.S. and U.N. sanctions, Iran knows that it faces crippling consequences if it violates the agreement.

If Congress rejects the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the Iran agreement, all of these advantages go away. The risk of an Iranian nuclear breakout and a regional nuclear arms race will increase dramatically. We will be left with no credible, non-military option for stopping Iran's nuclear program.

Now, I certainly respect the views of my colleagues who oppose this agreement, and I have listened carefully to their arguments. Some of them assert that Iran will find a way to cheat and, therefore, no diplomatic resolution is

possible. However, most opponents are careful to avoid talk of military conflict and argue that we can reject this deal, that we can rally the world to impose harsher sanctions, and that Iran will eventually capitulate.

But sadly, that premise is at odds with the facts as they currently exist. Our negotiating partners in this deal—Britain, France, Russia, China, and the European Union—have concluded that this is a fair agreement. In a briefing for Senators last month, the Ambassadors from these nations told us in no uncertain terms that there will be no going back to the bargaining table if Congress rejects this agreement. If the deal is rejected, the most likely outcome is that the international sanctions regime against Iran would unravel. The United States would be isolated, and we would lose credibility as a reliable negotiating partner. So, yes, we would retain the ability to act unilaterally, but unilateral sanctions have their limits, as we have heard in this body. Our military commanders counsel us that even a robust military option would delay, but it would not prevent, Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon because they already have the nuclear know-how.

This agreement is not about becoming friends with Iran or turning a blind eye to its efforts to destabilize the Middle East. In fact, we must redouble our efforts to help our allies counter Iran's malign influence in the region.

In particular, our commitment to the defense of Israel should remain unshakeable. In addition, we must maintain vigorous sanctions against Iran for its support for terrorism and for its violations of human rights.

Now, while there are risks to whatever course we take with respect to Iran, I believe that the choice is clear. Either we recognize that this agreement is the best available option or we chase some fantasy agreement on our own as international sanctions collapse and Iran's nuclear program continues unchecked and our options for stopping it are narrowed.

I am convinced that the agreement negotiated by the United States and our allies is the least risky approach, and it is the approach that is most likely to succeed. As I said last month in New Hampshire, I intend to vote to support this deal.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. KIRK. Madam President, I ask unanimous that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. KIRK. Madam President, as I rise, many who fear the pending Iran vote feel that it could deliver a mortal blow to the Senate's historic support for the safety of the families of Israel.

Have no fear. No matter what, we will always have a capable majority of Americans who support the free and democratic tolerant society of Israel. No matter what the Iranians do, America's commitment will remain to that shining city on Jerusalem's hills, to a nation that has proved that democracy and tolerance can thrive in a place even as hostile as the Middle East and will remain strong.

I represent many people who have survived the Holocaust. Their spirit is within the State of Illinois. They prevailed over the worst evil that has ever disgraced our time. That spirit unites the free and tolerant people of the United States and Israel that we will prevail no matter what.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:28 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

HIRE MORE HEROES ACT OF 2015— Continued

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, in anticipation of the majority leader and minority leader coming to the floor in a moment, I will begin the debate, a debate on the most consequential vote I will ever take as an elected official. Certainly, in my 41 years of public service, I have never had a decision to make as serious, as complex, and as meaningful as the decision we will make on the Iran nuclear deal negotiated by the administration and the President.

I rise in opposition to that agreement and to explain why I will vote against it, but before I do, I want to compliment three or four members in particular on the Foreign Relations Committee: former Chairman MENENDEZ from New Jersey, Ranking Member CARDIN from Maryland, and Chairman CORKER from Tennessee. Throughout the entire debate on the Iran nuclear deal, they have been forthright in being sure everybody got every question they wanted answered, that every issue was exposed, and that everybody had the time to participate to the fullest degree possible. Great leadership on the part of Senator CORKER, great leadership on the part of Senator CARDIN, and great assistance on the part of Senator MENENDEZ.

In the end, in committee, I voted for the resolution of disapproval to vote against the nuclear arrangement with the Iranians, and I want to talk about why. First of all, the President said a vote against the deal is a vote for war. I argue with that conclusion. In fact, I think a vote against the deal is a vote of strength. A vote for the deal is an

appeasement to the Iranian people, to the Iranian ayatollahs, and to a group of people who have not been trustworthy in negotiations with our country for the past 60 years.

Second, I think it is a vote against strength and for appeasement, when in fact there has never been a time more important to the United States of America to be stronger than today.

Think about this. The bodies of young Syrian children are washing up on the shore of the Mediterranean. The Russians have established a beachhead in the Crimea, the Ukraine, and now in the Arctic. Last week, our President went to Alaska and the Chinese sent five ships off the coast just to wave the Chinese flag in the face of our President.

Our diplomacy around the world is faltering and failing because we are not resolved. We are not as strong as we used to be. Diplomatically we are not respected and militarily we are not feared. It is time we made sure the vote we cast on this Iranian nuclear deal is not a vote that sends another signal of weakness but instead a signal of strength.

Why am I voting against the Iranian nuclear deal? There are five principal reasons. No. 1 is the basis upon which I voted for the New START treaty 5 years ago. When I voted for that treaty, I was on the Foreign Relations Committee as well, and the questions I asked at that time are the same questions I am asking now about what is not a treaty—what I think is a treaty but what the President calls an agreement: No. 1, is it enforceable; No. 2, do we have inspections; No. 3, do we have credibility; No. 4, have I seen all the documents; and, No. 5, is it best for my children and grandchildren and the future of my country?

First, I haven't seen all the documents, and we now find out we will never see all of them because the addendums to the IAEA will not be available to us as Members of the Senate. That is No. 1. No. 2, can we have inspections? Well, yes, you can have inspections, kind of or sort of. Yes, you get 24 hours' notice and then 24 days to approve and then the Iranians have a say over who gets to inspect and we don't have a part. That is not a fair deal.

When I voted for the New START treaty, the principal reason I finally did was this: Russians were allowed in the United States to inspect our nuclear warheads; we were allowed in Russia to inspect theirs. We had absolute credibility in the inspection regime. We knew what we were getting, and it was an enforceable treaty. This is not that. This is one that can be cheated on too easily and far too easily for the American people and the security of my children and grandchildren.

And what about my children and grandchildren—why are they of interest to me in this vote? They are because they are our future. The future of all mankind is the young people

today who will run these countries in the years ahead, unless there is a rogue nation with nuclear weapons that could disrupt the world's balance of power, and that is just what the Iranians are capable of doing. So I want to make sure I don't do anything that would facilitate the Iranian use of nuclear weapons in the future. I don't think this deal protects us from that, and that is why I am going to vote against it.

Lastly, I want to comment about the issue of a cloture vote. I understand there will be a vote to filibuster the final vote on the resolution of disapproval rather than having a resolution of disapproval. I think that is wrong. I think the American people deserve to know where each of us stand, and the people of Georgia deserve to know where JOHNNY ISAKSON stands—what I am going to do and why I am going to do it.

A vote against cloture is to protract having a final vote on the resolution of disapproval and leaves open the whole issue. It is not fair to the American people, it is not right for the American people, and it is avoiding our responsibility. So I will vote for cloture so we can go to a final vote on the resolution of disapproval, and I hope every Member of the Senate will do the same. To do anything less is wrong for America, wrong for our heritage, and wrong for our future.

So I end where I began. I thank Senator CORKER, Senator MENENDEZ, and Senator CARDIN for their forthright leadership. I have studied hard, I have worked hard to try to find the best parts of this deal and the worst parts of this deal. I find it fails in those five tests I have given it and I will vote no. I will vote for the resolution of disapproval and vote against the treaty with Iran on the Iran nuclear deal.

With that said, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Colleagues, before the Senate is a resolution that would disapprove of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action agreed to by the United States, China, France, Germany, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, the European Union, and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

I have long said the Senate should assess this deal by employing a simple standard: Will it further or will it harm the national security interests of the United States and her allies? By that measure, I believe Senators must vote to disapprove of the deal.

I truly wish that wasn't the case, but it is a predictable outcome when one considers the mindset with which the

administration appeared to approach these negotiations. The President's overall foreign policy has long been guided by policies and desires to withdraw forward-deployed conventional military power from operational theaters, to reduce America's commitments and capabilities, and to rely upon international organizations to uphold international order.

That is the type of mindset that guided the administration's negotiators on this deal, and it has resulted in a flawed deal that a majority of Congress and a broad swath of the American people now seem poised to reject—and that is a bipartisan majority.

The American people were led to believe that negotiations with Iran would be about ending its nuclear program, but that is not what the deal before us would do. Instead, the President's deal would bestow international recognition upon Iran's nuclear program by the most powerful nations on Earth. There is no question that Iran's nuclear program is designed to develop a nuclear weapon—no question. This is not about peaceful nuclear energy.

Yet the President's deal would leave Iran as a nuclear threshold state forever on the edge of developing a nuclear weapon. It would allow Iran to maintain thousands of centrifuges—1,044 IR-1 centrifuges in Fordow and 5,060 centrifuges at Natanz—as well as advanced research and development programs.

The President's deal with Iran will also give the regime access to literally billions of dollars. The President himself has acknowledged that at least some of that cash windfall is likely to be used to support terrorism.

It is already clear that Iran is meddling in Bahrain, in Yemen, in Lebanon, and in Afghanistan, and the President's deal will only strengthen terrorist proxies such as Hezbollah, the Houthi insurgents in Yemen, and the Assad regime in Syria.

Iran is working to prop up and protect Assad's regime in Damascus, and it is working with Shia militias in Iraq to expand its influence even further—just as Iran once supplied Iraq's Shia militias with the weapons to maim and kill our soldiers and marines.

Iran has a long history of employing terrorism as a tool for defending the regime—not just against its neighbors, not just against Israel, but also against America.

On September 20, 1984, with support and direction from Iran, the Shia militants of Hezbollah carried out a suicide car bombing against the American embassy in Beirut, 31 years ago. Two dozen people died that day; among them, Chief Warrant Officer Kenneth Welch of the U.S. Army. His son, Brian, has lived with that loss ever since. I want all of our colleagues to know he is sitting with us in this Gallery this afternoon. He is right here with us listening to this debate.

So I ask my colleagues: How could we support a deal that would not only

strengthen terrorist groups like Hezbollah, but also would effectively subsidize the activities of the Revolutionary Guard Corps, a group that has been accused of helping Shiite militias attack and kill Americans in Iraq?

The \$100 billion Iran is expected to reap from this deal is also certain to be invested in Iran's war economy for defense of the regime and will undoubtedly strengthen the hand of the Revolutionary Guards.

The Council on Foreign Relations has referred to the group as the regime's "money machine" because of its varied business interests with Iran. As the Council noted in a 2013 backgrounder, the Guards were estimated to have ties to more than 100 companies controlling about \$12 billion in construction and engineering capital, and one of its fellows, Ray Takeyh, has linked the group to "university laboratories, weapons manufacturers, and companies connected to nuclear technology."

Now, the administration has attempted to make light of the benefits to Iran's economy, military, and terrorist arms from the lifting of sanctions. Secretary Kerry observed that \$100 billion is "nothing"—nothing—"compared to what gets spent" in the region.

"Iran's military budget is \$15 billion," he said, while "the Gulf states' military budget is \$130 billion."

But what is lost on Secretary Kerry is the fact that Iran and its proxies have pursued asymmetric capabilities against the United States, not to mention Israel and our moderate Sunni allies.

Iran has carefully studied the tactics and capabilities brought to bear by our forces in Desert Storm, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and other campaigns. And because it has, the regime has decided to invest in anti-access and area-denial capabilities, cyber warfare capabilities, espionage, and other means to avoid fighting directly against our strengths.

The Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs, in an assessment of the nuclear deal with Iran, expanded on that point. Here is what they had to say:

Iran has acquired and developed various capabilities to execute this asymmetric strategy, including anti access/area denial . . . it possesses the region's largest arsenal of short and medium ballistic missiles, as well as a growing arsenal of cruise missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles, to target military and energy installations throughout the Gulf, including U.S. ships. It also has a sizeable fleet of fast attack craft, submarines and large numbers of torpedoes and naval mines for choking off Hormuz and attacking aforementioned targets. The S-300 air defense systems could stymie U.S. air operations around the Gulf, in addition to complicating any strike on Iran's nuclear facilities.

That is from the Jewish Institute of National Security Affairs.

Now, there is another worrying aspect of the cash windfall from this deal as well. It will also serve to advance

Tehran's efforts to divide the United States from the very allies who helped us bring Iran to the table in the first place. As Iranian trade expands with the other P5+1 countries, they will grow even more reluctant to hold Iran accountable for the inevitable violations of the deal.

We need not have ended up here. We didn't have to be in this place. The President had the opportunity to declare a firm policy to end Iran's nuclear program and to enact additional sanctions while Iran's war economy was ailing. But, no, that is not what he did.

Instead, the administration attempted to rely on the ambiguity of its military policy by claiming at every stage that it sought to keep "all options on the table." But that was never a policy. It was a talking point—a talking point was not going to deter Iran.

As I alluded in a speech delivered at AIPAC a few years ago, the only way the administration is going to be able to persuade Iran to cease its pursuit of a nuclear weapon and to dismantle its enrichment capability is if it was prepared to make the Supreme Leader of Iran believe—believe—that the survival of his regime was actually at stake.

In other words, the only way the Iranian regime could have been expected to negotiate to preserve its own survival—rather than simply delay as a means to pursue nuclear weapons—is if the administration had imposed the strictest sanctions while concurrently enforcing a firm declaratory policy that reflected a commitment to a potential use of force, if that became necessary. But, no. The administration chose to pursue negotiations and sanctions consecutively rather than simultaneously, as it also failed to articulate a clear consequence for the crossing of red lines.

Thus, while the President had an opportunity to exercise political leadership and work with the Congress to craft a stronger policy toward Iran that would have better served our national security, he chose the path of concessions instead. Indeed, the administration allowed for a series of concessions throughout these lengthy negotiations.

Rather than anytime, anywhere inspections, the deal creates a process within which Iran can delay inspections for at least up to 24 days.

Rather than dismantle Iran's enrichment capability, some centrifuges will be put in storage, enrichment will continue, and research and development will go on—all legitimized by the President's deal. Now, at the end of the 10- and 15-year milestones, Iran's breakout time will be reduced to nearly zero.

Concessions were made on the conventional weapons ban and ballistic missile technology embargo too. Despite the fact that the International Atomic Energy Agency reported in 2011 that "Iran has carried out activities relevant to the development of a nu-

clear device," the administration made further concessions regarding the possible military dimensions of Iran's program.

Assessing this deal strategically, it can only be understood as part of a broader strategy to concede a larger sphere of influence to the Iranian regime while weakening our commitment to our moderate Sunni allies and Israel. Now, that is just fitting within the overall administration's view of reducing America's overseas commitments, its reliance upon international organizations, and its seeming determination to withdraw our forward deployed presence. But in terms of our traditional strategy, it makes no sense at all, as Iran's capability and power will be stronger in every single regard.

Writing in the Wall Street Journal in April, two former Secretaries of State noted that Iran's representatives remain committed to a revolutionary, anti-western concept of the international order. They observed that:

Absent any linkage between nuclear and political restraint, America's traditional allies will conclude that the U.S. has traded temporary nuclear cooperation for acquiescence to Iranian hegemony. They will increasingly look to create their own nuclear balances and, if necessary, call in other powers to sustain their integrity.

Does America still hope to arrest the region's trend towards sectarian upheaval, state collapse, and the disequilibrium of power tilting toward Tehran, or do we now accept this as an irremediable aspect of the regional balance?

Regrettably, it appears that the administration has traded the appearance of nuclear cooperation for acquiescence to Iranian hegemony.

The President famously suggested that if countries like Iran were willing to unclench their fist, they would find an extended hand. From that hand the Iranians took concession after concession after concession on enrichment, on centrifuges, on missiles, on the conventional arms embargo, and on sanctions—concessions on every one of those issues.

Under the President's deal with Iran, nearly every aspect of Iran's national power will be strengthened: economic power, diplomatic power, espionage power, conventional warfare power, and the power Iran derives from supporting proxies like Hamas, Hezbollah, the Houthis in Yemen, and the Assad regime.

So when supporters of this flawed deal ask "what is the alternative," there is a simple answer: political leadership. It is the next President and the next Congress that will have to deal with the consequences of this deal; and if we are united in ending Iran's nuclear program, we can make clear to the Iranians that their weapons program is simply unacceptable.

Remember: It was the sanctions enacted by Congress, over the objections of President Obama—many people have forgotten that he didn't want the sanctions they ended up getting—that

caused sufficient concern within the regime to compel the Supreme Leader to allow the negotiations in the first place.

That is why, throughout the previous Congress and the beginning of this Congress, I attempted to pass additional sanctions and made a commitment to a strong declaratory policy against Iran—an idea some of our colleagues may now deem necessary to pursue through legislation given the terms of the nuclear deal with Iran.

But Congress alone cannot provide Presidential leadership. It can provide for the defense capabilities required to contain and combat threats like Iran. It can reassure regional allies, like Israel, that this Executive deal is not a treaty and can be revisited. And when Iran cheats on this deal, we can resolve to use the tools available to us to stop its nuclear weapons program. In short, Congress can lay the groundwork for the next President. But Congress needs real Presidential leadership, too.

Just this morning, we saw reports that Iran's Supreme Leader had ruled out any real rapprochement with the U.S. after this nuclear deal. We saw the Supreme Leader state his desire to see Israel cease to exist in the coming years. Against that backdrop, we now have the President's deal with Iran before us.

Any objective net assessment of this deal must conclude that it will strengthen the Supreme Leader's regime. No question about it. Any objective assessment must also conclude that America and her allies will be made less safe by the President's deal with Iran. Well, certainly that is the conclusion I have reached as well. This is the conclusion many Democrats have reached. This seems to be the conclusion the American people have reached as well.

I wish this was a deal I could support, but it isn't. I urge my colleagues to join me and many others in voting for the resolution of disapproval.

In fact, we know there is a bipartisan majority of the United States Senate in opposition to this deal. We know that already. We know there is a huge majority of Americans who oppose this deal. We know that every single Democrat who has come out for the deal has immediately started making excuses about how we need to get tougher with Iran—every single one of them.

So that is what is before us, and it will be before us until next week.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, first of all, I wish to thank our leader and I wish to thank Senator REID for allowing us to come to this vote without a motion to proceed so we can begin this debate in a sober and responsible manner.

I thank the leader. I know many Members on the other side of the aisle were concerned about maybe nefarious amendments being a part of this debate

on the front end. I thank you for the way you set up this procedure so that we are focused only on the resolution of disapproval. That is something I know the other side had wanted, and I appreciate your setting it up in that manner.

I also thank Senator CARDIN. I thank him for being such a tremendous partner on the committee. I thank him for his diligence in making what I know was a tough decision on the substance. I truly appreciate his ability and the way he worked with us to ensure that we have this debate and this opportunity to vote.

Let me step back and refresh people's memory. I know there has been a lot of discussion, and there are some who purposefully try to confuse what is happening here. But the fact is that the President decided long ago that he was not going to pursue a treaty. He instead was going to pursue what is called a nonbinding political commitment, and he was going to go directly to the U.N. Security Council for approval. As a matter of fact, he has already done that.

In the course of discussions, we realized, just as the leader mentioned, it was actually we who brought Iran to the table. We had four tranches of severe sanctions that, as was mentioned, in most cases were objected to by the administration, but it was those sanctions and then the international community agreeing with those sanctions that brought Iran to the table in the first place. We had discussions. We realized that we understand the President planned to do this with an Executive agreement.

By the way, I think everyone understands that when the President does that, it is only binding on his administration, it is not binding on future administrations, whereas a treaty, which goes through a whole different process, is binding on future Presidents.

Because we had played such a role, we ended up with the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act, and this agreement has now put us in place to debate this issue and to decide as a body whether we want to approve it or disapprove it. I thank Senator CARDIN for his efforts in making that happen.

I thank all the Senators in this body—98 of them; I was missing that day—who voted to put us in this place. As a matter of fact, I think all of us know that if it weren't for that, we would be having no discussion. This would have already been implemented. The President already went to the U.N. Security Council, and it is this pause that has allowed us to weigh in this way on behalf of the American people and to express whether we approve or disapprove of this agreement.

Let me say this: When the President began back in 2012 and he said that he was going to negotiate with the P5+1 on this Iranian nuclear deal to end their nuclear program, I thought, that is outstanding. As a matter of fact, if the President can do that and if he had

done that, I am sure we would have had 100 votes in favor of that. As a matter of fact, in other instances, he mentioned that he wanted to dismantle their nuclear program. Again, as the leader has mentioned, had he achieved that, none of us would be debating this issue. We would be thrilled with that outcome. But it was very evident that was not the course of action which was being pursued when we had the first agreement, the JOPA.

We had another round. We had additional concessions. Finally, we got to the point where we all realized that what was happening—instead of a dismantling or instead of ending Iran's nuclear program, what this agreement does, if we were to approve it, it agrees to the industrialization of their nuclear program. We have a state sponsor of terror, and this agreement is approving the industrialization of their program.

I think everyone knows that one of the great fallacies in this deal is that not only, with our approval, are they industrializing their program, but in 9 months all of the leverage shifts. Their country has a \$409 billion economy. In the next 9 months, this country is going to get about \$100 billion. That has not been disputed. Think about it—25 percent of their economy is going to be given to them in 1 year. Think about an \$18 trillion country such as ours. If we were to get \$4 to \$5 trillion, think what we would be able to do with those resources. Over that 9-month period, regardless of what they do with PMD, regardless of what they do with other issues, the rest of the big economic sanctions are going to be relieved. Their economy is going to be growing. They are going to be cash-rich. They are going to be a much stronger country.

I think it is probably important to talk about whom we are dealing with. I know Senator COTTON has alluded to this before, as have many others, but when we went to Baghdad through the years, most of us sat down with General Odierno. On his coffee table, he would have in front of him all of the devices Iran was using to kill and maim our soldiers. I think you will remember that there was actually a rush at one time to rush out humvees to try to protect our soldiers from having their limbs and body parts dismembered. Once we did that, the Iraqis developed another device. It was made of copper. When it exploded, it would go through any type of metal. It was used to kill Americans. It was used to dismember them. As a matter of fact, when you see people in Tennessee, Wyoming, Kansas, or in other places walking up and down the street with prosthetics, that was Iran. Iran was responsible for the dismembering of so many Americans.

They are the same people, by the way, who are supporting Assad right now. An amazing thing—the IRGC, which is the arm that directly reports to the Supreme Leader, is the shock

force in Syria right now that is keeping Assad afloat.

The ranking member and I recently went to see a display by the Holocaust Museum. A gentleman named Caesar had documented what Assad, with Iran's support, is doing to everyday Syrians in the country. As we sit here, what they are doing is torturing people. As a matter of fact, I wish you could see the pictures. They are actually amputating people's genitals. As we are sitting here in this comfortable setting, Iran is supporting Assad's ability to do that to his own people. We see on the TV screens what is happening. People are flooding out from Syria and flooding out from Iraq to get away from what is happening right now in the Middle East.

We know that Hezbollah—another arm of Iran—through one of its proxies right now, is destabilizing Lebanon.

We know that Hamas is being supplied rockets—sophisticated rockets, I might add—from Iran to shoot into Israel.

We know that in Bahrain, where we have thousands of troops to keep the Strait of Hormuz open, they are supplying terrorist organizations there to disrupt that government and cause harm to the people who are serving us.

So this is whom we are dealing with—the greatest state sponsor of terror that we know. We only named three, by the way. We named Syria, we named Sudan, and we named Iran.

Obviously, when we worked through the first agreements and in the interim agreement where we agreed to enrich, that was quite a shock to most of us. Then they went through the first big round to reach this comprehensive agreement, and that agreement addressed a number of the issues the leader just laid out. But prior to going to Geneva, there were still, in this final round, some issues that needed to be addressed.

I had one of those few calls with Secretary Kerry where I felt as though he was listening. I talked to him at length. I told him: Secretary Kerry, a lot of people are going to have difficulty ever approving a deal that allows Iran to industrialize their program like this.

But how you finish these last pieces is going to say a lot qualitatively about how we really plan to implement this deal. At that time, of course, we still had the issues of previous military dimensions. Some people call it possible military dimensions. But we know they were developing a nuclear weapon. You certainly heard the presentation regarding how we are dealing with Parchin. It is really pretty amazing, after the AP report came out, how this has actually survived late-night comedy. We know that if the IAEA gives a report on Iran's previous military dimensions—I think you know Iran is supposed to be supplying the IAEA information and access to scientists regarding what they were doing. But regardless of what the qual-

ity of this is—if it is a D-minus report or an A-plus report—the fact is that they still get the sanctions relief they are seeking over the next 9 months.

In addition to that, the inspections process—we have all had concerns about the fact that we have to wait 24 days. By the way, there is a lot of misunderstanding about the 24 days. That is after the IAEA raises a concern. That is after Iran responds to that. Some people have written that it could take as many as 40 to 45 days for this to occur. But then there is a 24-day period.

Our leader referred to the IR-1. Iran has done a masterful job because they have gotten the P5+1 to focus on their IR-1 centrifuges. They have 19,000 of them. They are antiques. Truly, they are antiques. What they have going on right now is the development of IR-2s, IR-4s, IR-6s, IR-8s.

I would ask you to go down to the SCIF and let some of our intelligence people tell you the speed—the difference between the IR-8 and IR-1.

Let me say to you without giving any classified information that in a room the size of where I am standing to this back wall and actually much closer this way, in a small room like that, Iran can actually do the equivalent of 720 IR-1s. With a 24-day inspection process, our ability to detect in very small areas of Iran—a very large country—this type of thing is going to be very difficult.

So I talked to Secretary Kerry about those two things, and I am sorry, I feel as if we totally punted on those issues, and then for good measure, as has been mentioned many times, we threw in the lifting of the conventional arms embargo. I mean, where did that come from? What did that have to do with the nuclear power? We threw in the lifting of ballistic testing in 8 years. Again, what was that about? Then, with some really special and peculiar language meant, I think, to confuse, we lifted immediately their ability to test ballistic weapons.

So let me say again that all of this we know is being done with a country that has no practical need for enrichment. They have one nuclear reactor—one. They can buy enriched uranium so much cheaper on the market. They have absolutely no need for 19,000 centrifuges. They have no need for an underground facility to protect from bombing. They have no need for the facility at Arak that produces plutonium.

Many people have said that Iran wants to have the ability to deal with medical isotopes. They want to show to the rest of the Middle East that they are sophisticated. Do you know how many centrifuges they would need to do that? Five hundred.

So what has all this been about? They have put their people through such grief, such economic depravity. They have been isolated from the world. They are a rogue community. And they have done all that to create a

program that has, as we know, only one need, and that is so they can develop a nuclear weapon.

I am very disappointed with where we have come up, and I am disappointed to add this as another problem. We are doing all this without a strategy in the Middle East. I wrote an op-ed in the Washington Post—not that anybody reads them—to talk about my disapproval of this deal. When you think about it, one of the great tragedies—again, we are seeing it play out on television. JOHN MCCAIN has been so good at talking about this issue. But what we are seeing play out right now is no strategy in the Middle East. It is the greatest humanitarian disaster of my lifetime.

So what is going to happen without any strategy to push back against Iran, to push back against what they are doing in Syria, what they have been doing in Lebanon, what they are doing in Yemen, what they are doing in Bahrain, what they are doing certainly against Israel— Hamas—without a strategy, this is going to be the de facto strategy.

I will remind everyone again that in 9 months all the leverage goes away. Right now we have leverage over them. In 9 months, they have all their money and the sanctions have been relieved. Many of you have read statements that have been issued by the Supreme Leader and others that if we try to put sanctions on them for their terrorist activities, violations of human rights or other activities, you know what they are going to say. They are going to say: Hey, I am sorry. You are violating the agreement.

Remember, this President has tried to obligate not just us from putting additional sanctions in place, but he has tried to keep State and local governments from putting sanctions in place. He is actually acting as a buffer against those people who in good conscience would want to push back against the terrible human rights activities that are taking place and the terrorism that is being exported.

Again, this is going to be our strategy. Think about it. In a year, before the next President takes office, let's say we want to put sanctions in place to push back because Iran is supplying additional arms to Assad, as it appears Russia is doing right now, what is Iran going to say? Well, we are just going to begin development of our nuclear program.

What if we say that we know they are in violation of the nuclear program, and therefore we are going to put sanctions in place, what are they going to say? Well, we are just going to resume the nuclear program.

So in 9 months, literally, the leverage shifts from us to them. We are going to be very reticent to challenge them on any violations of this agreement. Candidly, we are going to be reticent to push back against the things they are doing to destabilize the region.

I will close with this. I appreciate the leader setting up this debate. I appreciate Senator REID allowing us to do this. I appreciate that 98 Senators have said: Look, this is probably the biggest foreign policy issue we are going to deal with during our time here in the U.S. Senate. I hope what is going to happen over the course of the next several days is that we will continue to express our approval by some, our disapproval by others—a bipartisan majority—and the reasons as to why some approve this.

At the end of the day what I hope will happen is that—since all 98 Senators in this body said they wanted to debate this and wanted the opportunity to vote up or down on the substance of this deal—we will have enough colleagues in this Chamber who will agree that because it is the biggest foreign policy issue of our day and because 98 Senators stood up and said: No, Mr. President, you cannot implement this deal until we express whether we approve or disapprove this deal, we will have far more than 60 Senators who will agree to allow us to get to a final vote so everybody in this Senate can be accountable.

This is an important issue. I thank my colleagues for the time to be able to discuss it in this way.

With that, I will yield the floor. I thought Senator CARDIN was next, but it looks as if it will be Senator DURBIN.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from Arizona, the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, be recognized and that I be recognized following his remarks.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Will the Senator from Utah, the President pro tempore, advise the Senate if we are operating under a unanimous consent agreement as to time allocations?

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. At this time, the time is equally divided.

Mr. DURBIN. Between which hours?

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The time until 5 p.m. today is equally divided.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, will the President pro tempore be kind enough to tell me how much time has been used by the Republican side since 2:15 p.m.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Approximately 45 minutes.

Mr. DURBIN. I do not object.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I am really glad that the distinguished leader of the Armed Services Committee is going to speak next. The Senator from Arizona probably has more knowledge of the Middle East than almost anybody in this body, but it was my understanding that we were going to rotate back and forth.

We actually have people who have asked to speak. Senator REID had asked to speak, but he decided not to do so. Senator CARDIN was going to speak. We were going to rotate between Republicans and Democrats.

Senators had signed up for time to speak, and that was the procedure we were going to follow. It wasn't going to be just Republicans on the floor and then Democrats, but it appears the majority whip wishes to alter that status.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, we have Senators on the Democratic side prepared to speak when the Republicans are ready to yield.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I say to the Senator from Illinois that I will be more than happy to yield to any speaker on the other side. I was under the impression that we were going to be going back and forth, and I think that would contribute to the debate. If the Senator from Illinois or the Senator from Hawaii or anyone else wishes to speak, I will be glad to yield.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time be equally divided between both sides of the aisle and that following the recognition of a speaker on our side, an opportunity be given to a speaker on the Democratic side and that we alternate back and forth using the time that is allotted for the debate.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object. The Republican side has already used 45 minutes, so I hope the Senator from Texas is saying that between 2:15 p.m. and 5 p.m. the time will be equally divided, and we will rotate from one side to the other.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask consent to amend the request.

Mr. MCCAIN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Texas has the floor.

Mr. CORNYN. I yield the floor.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, am I recognized?

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, again, I say to the Senator from Illinois that the usual way I have seen around here for many years is one side will speak, and then the other side will make their argument. If the Senator from Illinois wants to stack up all of his time on that side so there is no back and forth, I don't think that is the intent of what we are trying to achieve here.

Mr. DURBIN. I say to my friend from Arizona, I have told you, we have Democratic Senators prepared to speak. So when my friends are ready to give up the floor, we will be glad to recognize our Democratic Senators.

Mr. MCCAIN. We have been in since 2:15 p.m.

Mr. DURBIN. We have been waiting patiently.

Mr. MCCAIN. I know their schedules are very crowded, but I would hope

that maybe one of them could wander over and speak. This is a fairly important issue.

Mr. DURBIN. I say to my friend from Arizona, we have a Democratic Senator prepared to speak at this moment.

Is the Senator prepared to yield?

Mr. MCCAIN. Prepared to speak at this moment?

I yield to whichever Senator on the other side wishes to speak.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. SCHATZ. Thank you, Mr. President.

A President of the United States once said of his Nation's enemy that we cannot "wish away the differences between our two societies and our philosophies, but we should always remember that we do have common interests and the foremost among them is to avoid war." In pursuing that cause, he said:

We will be prepared to protect our interests and those of our friends and allies, but we want more than deterrents. We seek genuine cooperation. We seek progress for peace.

It was President Reagan who seized the opportunity during the Cold War and President George H. W. Bush who carried it forward. Together they achieved commitments from the United States and the Soviet Union, enemies through and through, to reduce their stockpiles of nuclear weapons, bringing us ever closer to a world free of the threat of nuclear annihilation. It ingrained in us a tradition of pragmatism—the idea that even with countries we deeply distrust and whose behavior we abhor, we cannot ignore the opportunity to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The Joint Comprehension Plan of Action that the United States negotiated with Iran and the other members of the P5+1 preserves that tradition, to "seek progress for peace."

This deal is not perfect, as the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee so ably explained. We had to make concessions, and that is because it was negotiated between sovereign countries pursuing diplomacy and not unconditional surrender.

I hear complaints about one provision or another, and some of those criticisms are valid, but we don't have the luxury of sending our negotiators back to Vienna. If we do that, things will fall apart. Every ambassador from the P5+1 has made clear that the multilateral sanctions that brought Iran to the table will be upended. We would be isolated diplomatically, Iran's nuclear program would be unconstrained, and Iran would get most of its money too.

Of course, we could levy harsh unilateral sanctions ourselves, and that would be emotionally satisfying to many, but they won't bite. They did not when Iran went from 300 centrifuges to more than 18,000, and they won't now.

The question in this debate is whether to approve the deal or dump it. There is no door No. 3, but we don't

need to feel resigned because, as a deal, it is quite a good one. Experts in the nonproliferation space almost unanimously affirm that it is a strong deal. It blocks each one of Iran's pathways to the bomb and places its nuclear program under strict international supervision. There is no alternative to this agreement, and certainly no military option, that eliminates 98 percent of Iran's fissile material or two-thirds of its operating centrifuges.

Now, I will grant that critics make a few very persuasive arguments that have more to do with how we view Iran than how we view this deal. First they say that it places too much trust in Iran, but the opposite is true. This agreement is not based on trust or shared values, and we have no reason to assume that Iran will comply with its terms in good faith. That is why the agreement adopts a robust inspections and verification regime that will be in place for up to 25 years. We will be monitoring Iran's entire nuclear supply chain—from uranium mining, milling, and enrichment to the manufacturing and replacement of centrifuges—so we will know if Iran is diverting uranium or centrifuges to secret facilities.

If Iran does try to break out to acquire the bomb, all options remain on the table to stop it, including the use of military force. And because the agreement provides us more information about Iran's nuclear program, our military options will be more effective and have the backing of the international community because we will have exhausted diplomacy first.

The other concern, and I think this is a valid one, is that this deal should not be overstated in terms of its impact on our priorities and alliances in the region. It is important on the nuclear issue, but in October we will have many of the same challenges in the Middle East that we have in September. Iran is still the world's leading state sponsor of terror and nothing in this deal will deter us from working to contain Iran's regional aspirations, including its support of Hamas and Hezbollah. But our efforts can now occur with a nuclear-armed Iran off the table.

I wish to personally offer some words to those Americans who love Israel with a personal passion and commitment that I share. Your skepticism is well earned and based in faith and history—based in familial relationships and culture. It is core of who we are.

My colleagues rightly want to know what happens next. What is the United States prepared to do to protect loved ones in a dangerous neighborhood? Whether one supports this deal or not, we can all agree that America's commitment to Israel remains unshakeable, and we will continue, Democrats and Republicans united, to stand with Israel. Even as we work to restrict Iran's nuclear ambitions, we will continue to thwart Hamas and Hezbollah. We are committed to cooperating with Israel on intelligence

and security at the highest levels ever and continuing to ensure that Israel's qualitative military edge is protected. When this debate is over, we must find new ways to enhance our joint efforts to counter threats that endanger Israel every day.

We are debating what may be the most important foreign policy choice of the decade. Our decision will have consequences for the security and the stability of the new Middle East. If Congress chooses to oppose this agreement, we will witness an unraveling of the international sanctions that brought Iran to the negotiating table, with Iran moving ever faster toward the bomb and our country left with few choices besides another war in the Middle East.

We have shown as a country that we have the will to protect ourselves, our allies, and our interests—using military force when truly necessary. We will continue to stand with Israel despite whatever temporary disagreements our governments may have. We do not underestimate or understate the challenges we have and the role of our military in shaping events for the better, but in this instance, with eyes wide open, we ought to pursue peace first.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I wish to thank the majority leader, the Senator from Kentucky, for conducting the debate on this agreement with the seriousness and gravity it deserves. In doing so, he has acted in the best traditions of the Senate, and I thank him for it.

I wish to also thank my colleague, the Senator from Tennessee, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, who I believe just gave a very eloquent presentation of the situation as we are debating today.

Today begins the culmination of a monumental debate that our Nation has conducted for the past 3 months. This debate is not about whether we support diplomatic solutions to international challenges or whether we are willing to negotiate with the Iranian regime or whether we should go to war with Iran. That is not what this debate is about, despite the President's sad, partisan attempts to make it so.

It is always preferable to solve international problems without resorting to military force, but the ultimate test of any diplomacy is not merely whether it avoids the use of force but whether it secures our national security interests. Put simply, I believe the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action fails this test and it fails by the very criteria the administration itself once laid out as a good deal.

Three years ago, President Obama said the goal of negotiations with Iran was to "get Iran to recognize it needs to give up its nuclear program and abide by U.N. resolutions that have

been in place." This is what the President said:

The deal we'll accept is they end their nuclear program. It's very straightforward.

In reality, the deal doesn't require Iran to end its program; it simply suspends it for a period of years. As the President said in April, "Iran is not going to simply dismantle its program because we demand it to do so." Let's contemplate that. "Iran is not going to simply dismantle its program because we demand it to do so."

Unfortunately, the administration's concessions didn't stop there. On November 24, 2013, Secretary Kerry said:

There is no right to enrich. We do not recognize a right to enrich.

However, in the final deal, the administration not only conceded the right to enrich, it also allowed Iran to maintain an industrial-scale enrichment capability that will only grow in size and sophistication.

On the issue of Fordow, the once covert nuclear facility that was built deep into a mountain, President Obama said in December 2013 that Iran had no need—no need—for such a facility if all it sought was peaceful nuclear energy. Yet the final deal allows Iran to maintain nearly 1,000 centrifuges at Fordow and conduct nuclear-related testing there during the entire life of the agreement.

On the issue of Iran's breakout capacity, President Obama said in December of 2013 that in the deal he envisions, the Iranians "as a practical matter, do not have a breakout capacity." Here, too, the administration reversed itself, conceding to a breakout capacity in establishing the arbitrary standard of 1 year.

Similarly, on the so-called possible military dimensions, or PMD, of Iran's past nuclear activities, Secretary Kerry said this April:

They have to do it. It will be done. . . . It will be part of a final agreement. It has to be.

Just 2 months later—2 months later—Secretary Kerry reversed himself, saying:

We're not fixated on Iran specifically accounting for what they did at one point in time or another. We know what they did. We have no doubt. We have absolute knowledge.

My friends, this kind of hubris is astonishing. I know of no intelligence professional who would share that level of certainty. But perhaps Secretary Kerry's reversal is because the final deal does not require Iran to resolve the PMD issue prior to receiving sanctions relief.

Furthermore, the chief of Iran's atomic energy agency has said sanctions relief will proceed regardless of the resolution of the PMD issue. That was the chief of Iran's atomic energy agency.

The mechanism to resolve longstanding international concerns about the possible military dimensions of Iran's nuclear program is contained in a side agreement between Iran and the

IAEA which neither the administration nor the Congress has seen. Get this: There is an agreement on inspection and verification that this Congress, before we vote, will never have seen and the American people will never have seen. How in the world, on the most important aspect of any agreement—verification—the provisions for which are not known to the Members of this body. That alone is a reason to demand—to demand—what are those side agreements? Maybe they are nothing. Maybe they are something we would approve of. We don't even know what in the world they are.

The administration provided a classified briefing on what they know to be in the side agreement, and suffice it to say that I think most of us—even on both sides of the aisle—would agree that briefing is one of the more bizarre and disturbing aspects of this deal. They called it unconventional. That is generous.

What is more, inspections of Iran's facilities will be conducted by the IAEA, the International Atomic Energy Agency. There will be no Americans allowed on the ground, and the details of how these monitoring activities will occur are contained in another side agreement between the IAEA and Iran.

Here is the problem: Verifying that Iran is not cheating on this deal requires a full accounting of the possible military dimensions of Iran's nuclear program. To verify that Iran has ceased its nuclear weapons-related activities necessarily requires that we know the full extent of these past activities—the personnel, facilities, equipment, and materials used and over what time period. We do not have that information.

President Obama has said this deal is based on verification, not trust, but the means of verification are in many cases suspect. This presents a major problem. We will vote in the coming days on the Iran deal, but we cannot even read certain foundational documents pertaining to how that verification will occur, and our own government is not even a party to those agreements. I find that deeply troubling. It may account for, as more Americans know more about it, the overwhelming majority of Americans who do not approve of this deal.

Even more troubling, however, is that the administration also conceded its longstanding and repeated promises that its diplomacy was limited exclusively to the nuclear fight. For nearly a decade, the international arms embargo has significantly hurt Iran's ability to build up and modernize its aging military.

Not long before the deal was announced, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, before our committee—General Dempsey—told the Committee on Armed Services that “under no circumstances should we relieve pressure on Iran relative to ballistic missile capabilities and arms trafficking.” Is

there anything in this agreement that does that? In fact, it is the opposite.

In 5 years, the international arms embargo against Iran will be lifted, freeing up the regime to acquire advanced conventional military means capabilities such as fighter aircraft, air defense systems, and anti-ship missiles. With billions of dollars in sanctions relief, Iran is sure to find plenty of states that are eager to sell those weapons, especially Russia and China.

In 8 years, the agreement would legitimate and accelerate Iran's development of ballistic missiles, including ICBMs, whose only conceivable military purpose would be to deliver nuclear weapons. This concession was made even as the Director of National Intelligence concluded earlier this year that “Iran's ballistic missiles are inherently capable of delivering WMD”—that is weapons of mass destruction—“and Tehran already has the largest inventory of ballistic missiles in the Middle East.”

In this way, the administration's Iran deal not only paves the Islamic Republic's path to a nuclear capability, it also furthers that regime's emergence as a dominant military power in the Middle East. This has direct and dangerous implications for the United States—especially our Armed Forces. After all, the ultimate guarantee that Iran will not get a nuclear weapon is not a 109-page document; it is the capability of the U.S. military to do what is necessary to prevent it if all else fails.

The administration says that the military option will remain on the table if Iran violates the agreement, and that is true. Yet the agreement itself would enable Iran to construct the very kind of advanced military arsenal that could raise the cost of employing our military option should it become necessary. In short, if this agreement fails and U.S. servicemembers are called upon to take military action in Iran, their lives clearly would be at greater risk because of the terms of this deal.

As we debate the technical details of this agreement, this is the bigger picture we must stay focused on: the strategic implications of this agreement on nuclear proliferation, regional security, and the balance of power in an increasingly chaotic Middle East. This has been the focus of our oversight on the Committee on Armed Services, and from this perspective, this bad Iran deal only looks that much worse.

Iran is not just an arms control challenge; it is a geopolitical challenge. For years, many of us have urged the administration to adopt a regional strategy to counter Iran's malign activities in the Middle East. The chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee pointed out what has been done by these IEDs that Qasem Soleimani sent into Iraq to kill and maim our men and women who are serving in the military. Unfortunately, if such a strategy exists, there is no evidence of it. Instead, we have watched with

alarm as Iran's military and intelligence operatives have stepped up their destabilizing activities in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Bahrain, Gaza, and elsewhere.

Iran did all of this under the full pressure of sanctions. Now Iran will receive tens of billions of dollars in sanctions relief. To be sure, a good amount of that money will go to Iran's priorities, but much of it will also surely flow to Iran's Revolutionary Guards Corps and Quds Force—groups that, as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff also mentioned, were responsible for the deaths of several hundred U.S. servicemembers. This will have enormous consequences for stability in the Middle East and for America's credibility.

For decades, Republican and Democratic administrations have sought to contain the malign influence of the Islamic Republic of Iran and prevent it from acquiring nuclear weapons capability. Our allies and partners have entrusted much of their own security to the United States because they believed our commitments were credible. In this way, America's role in the region has been to suppress security competition between states with long histories of mistrust and to prevent that competition from breaking down into conflict.

I fear this agreement will further undermine our ability and willingness to play that vital stabilizing role. Our allies and partners in the Middle East have increasingly come to believe that America is withdrawing from the region and doing so at a time when Iran is aggressively seeking to advance its geopolitical ambitions. Now we have made a deal with Iran that will not only legitimize the Islamic Republic as a threshold nuclear state with an industrial enrichment capability but will also unshackle this regime in its long-held pursuit of conventional military power and may actually consolidate the Islamic Republic's control in Iran for years to come. The dangerous result is that our allies and partners will be increasingly likely to take matters into their own hands—and, indeed, we already see evidence of that.

These fateful decisions may well manifest themselves in a growing regional security competition, new arms races, nuclear proliferation, and possible conflict, all of which would demand more, not less, U.S. leadership and presence in the region.

Ultimately, this is what I find most troubling about the Iran deal. It embodies and will likely exacerbate the collapse of America's global influence that is occurring under this administration and indeed has so often been catalyzed by its policies.

Just consider—just consider, my colleagues, how much more dangerous our world has become. A malign form of Russian influence is expanding in Europe and Eurasia. Vladimir Putin is using 21st century weapons to further his 19th century ambitions of the Russian Empire—most dramatically in

Ukraine where Putin seeks to annex the territory of a sovereign country.

Our President goes to Estonia and days later Russia abducts an Estonian agent on Estonian territory. What message does that send? China's leaders also appear to feel emboldened. Our President visits Asia, and the next week China escalates tensions with a U.S. partner in the South China Sea. Our President visits Alaska and five—for the first time five Chinese warships show up in the Aleutians, violating the 12-mile limit.

Meanwhile, China continues its military modernization while building and militarizing land features in international waters. Again, there is no deterrence. Cyber attacks against our Nation are increasing in regularity and severity. In just the past year, we have been attacked by North Korea, Iran, China, and Russia. The administration does what? Nothing. There is no deterrence, so the attacks continue.

We have watched the hard-won gains of our men and women in uniform melt away in Iraq following the President's decision to withdraw all of our troops in 2011 over the objections of his military leaders and commanders on the ground. Of course, there is the conflict in Syria, which has claimed 220,000 lives and counting, spawned the largest and most threatening terrorist army in the world, involved the repeated use of weapons of mass destruction, destabilized the entire Middle East, and led to the largest refugee crisis in Europe since World War II.

There is no one who was not deeply moved by the picture of the 3-year-old baby on the beach. My friends, that is a direct result of Obama's foreign policy and have no doubt about it. Amidst all of these growing threats, for 4 years now the Budget Control Act and sequestration have cut our military by hundreds of billions of dollars for no strategic rationale whatsoever. Congress has, unfortunately, been complicit in this disaster, but if the President showed as much personal engagement and willingness to compromise with the Republicans as he did with the Iranians, we could repeal the Budget Control Act and sequestration and fund the government tomorrow.

Through it all, my colleagues, what have we heard from our President? We have been told that America's influence is limited, as if that is not always the case. We have been told there are no good options to the challenges we face, as if there ever are in the real world. We have been told we cannot solve every problem in the world, as if that absolves us from ever attempting to solve any problem. We have been told the administration's worst failures are always someone else's fault and that no policy of theirs, after 6 years in power, is ever to blame.

We have been told the only alternative to our current mess of a foreign policy is war and that anyone who disagrees with this President—Republicans and Democrats; they make no

distinction—is a warmonger—is a warmonger. Again and again, where there should be leadership and statesmanship, there is only a parade of truisms and defeatist rhetoric and straw man arguments and partisan attacks.

This has tainted and cheapened our national discourse, as evidenced by the fact that unlike past landmark diplomatic agreements, this one will likely come into force on a party-line minority vote. Let me emphasize that. This Iranian deal will likely be rejected by a bipartisan majority of both Houses of Congress. If there is a precedent in American history for such a thing, I cannot think of it.

Indeed, a recent Pew poll found that only 21 percent of Americans approve of the Iranian deal. This has also diminished our standing in the world. Our words ring hollow. Our reassurances fail to reassure. Our warnings are not heeded. Our redlines are crossed. Our moral influence is being discredited and tarnished. Americans sense this and so do our adversaries. They perceive it as weakness, and it is provocative.

We need leadership, a strategy, and policies to address this crisis in our foreign policy, especially the broader threat posed by Iran. This larger response should include, among other steps, increasing sanctions against Iran for its malign activities in the Middle East and its human rights abuses, new security assistance for our allies and partners in the region, and once and for all eliminating the specter of sequestration.

This Congress should take up this effort with new legislation. I look forward to working on it with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle. That time will come. However, the question now before this body is whether to disapprove of the administration's deal with Iran. I will vote yes. I disapprove of this deal because it would not cut off Iran's path to a nuclear weapon, it would pave a new one. I disapprove of this deal because it would legitimize the Islamic Republic as a threshold nuclear state with an industrial enrichment capability that will grow unfettered after the key terms of the deal end.

I disapprove of this deal because it unshackles Tehran's pursuit of conventional military power. I disapprove of this deal because it rests on the assumption—the hope, really—that in a decade or so we may be dealing with a better Iranian regime. Yet the deal itself will likely strengthen the current Iranian regime. This deal is not in our national security interests. Congress and the American people should reject it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CORTON). The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, as has been said, the time is equally divided. Obviously, Republicans have spent a great deal of time on the floor. The order, just for people on our side who

are coming and going on our side—we know the next speaker is Senator FEINSTEIN, but it was a preagreed order of HATCH, CORNYN, BARRASSO, and GARDNER. It is my understanding that we may only have about 15 to 20 minutes of time left on our side until 5 o'clock. I just say that for the convenience of Members.

Will the Presiding Officer tell us exactly how much time we have on our side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republicans have approximately 10½ minutes remaining.

Mr. CORKER. I say that for the convenience of people on our side who may come and go. That is the order. I know that obviously—how much time does the Democratic side have?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democrats have approximately 1 hour 15 minutes.

Mr. CORKER. So just based on the process put forward by the minority whip—obviously we will have one more speaker over here. I assume you will have Democrats to fill the time on your side until 5. I want to make that known to people. Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise in strong support of the nuclear agreement with Iran. I do so because I believe this diplomatic achievement provides the only option that prevents Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. I would like to take just a moment to say thank you to our negotiating team and commend them on a job that I believe was well done and to thank them for their concerted effort to explain the agreement to the Congress over the past 2 months.

I have been in this body for a long time. There have been many different agreements. I can never remember a time where the Senate has been briefed more assiduously than it has with this agreement. As the Presiding Officer knows, we sat this morning for 2 hours and listened to the top heads of our intelligence agencies discuss with us the particulars of this agreement.

American negotiators have worked with negotiators from the world's major powers—the United Kingdom, France, Germany, China, Russia, and the EU—and reached an agreement that will prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon for at least the next 15 years and I believe longer.

I cannot emphasize this enough: the agreement represents the world coming together to put an end to Iran's nuclear program. By contrast, if the Senate disapproves of this agreement, we are on our own.

As of last night, 42 Senators have announced their support for the agreement. In practical terms, that means the Senate will not disapprove of this agreement. We have conducted a full review and the opponents of this deal have failed, but the opponents are still holding out the false hope that there can be a better deal.

Let me be clear: there is no better deal. No one, no state, no leader has proposed one. The only alternative to the agreement we now have is no agreement at all. Should the Congress reject this accord, the United States, which led this effort, would be deserting our allies and negotiating partners. That is because this is not just an agreement between the United States and Iran. It is an agreement between the world's major powers, the largest most powerful Nations in the world, and Iran. It is one approved by the 15 members of the United Nations Security Council.

Brent Scowcroft, someone I know well, see annually, and the former National Security Advisor to President George H.W. Bush, recently wrote:

There is no credible alternative were Congress to prevent U.S. participation in the nuclear deal. If we walk away, we walk away alone.

I think it may be helpful to remind my colleagues and the American people how we got where we are today. First of all, preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon has been a long-standing and bipartisan national security objective. In 2003, Europe led the first effort to halt Iran's nuclear program. The next decade saw five separate major rounds of failed negotiations and an ever-advancing Iranian nuclear program. Iran went from having a few centrifuges spinning to being a threshold nuclear power.

Following the revelations that Iran was installing centrifuges at Natanz last decade and disclosure in 2012 by our government and allies that Iran was turning a mountain near Qom into a deeply buried centrifuge chamber, Iran has seen sanctions escalate and felt international isolation, but its nuclear enrichment continued and advanced.

The United States, with strong support from this Chamber, led an effort to install devastating multilateral sanctions with the goal of bringing Iran to the negotiating table. Those sanctions were effective because they were supported by the world's powers and importers of Iranian oil. In fact, the United States does not do much business with Iran. We do not import Iranian oil and U.S. banks don't process Iranian financial transactions. Unilateral U.S. sanctions are of little value by themselves, unless we are willing to sanction allies' banks.

Indeed, multiple U.N. resolutions, EU sanctions, and the cooperation of our partners and allies successfully pressured Iran over its nuclear activities. Over time, the international sanctions that we helped build and continually enforced reduced Iranian oil exports from 2.5 million barrels per day to less than 1 million, reduced the number of countries that import Iranian oil from 23 to 6, prohibited Iran from repatriating more than \$100 billion in foreign currency, reduced Iran's GDP by nearly 6 percent in 1 year, caused major inflation, and basically ended

international investment in Iran's economy.

The sanctions worked. Iran elected a reform government with a new President to negotiate an end to the sanctions and revive its economy. And despite its doubts, Iran sent a negotiating team to meet with the governments of the P5+1 nations.

In November 2013 we signed the interim agreement that froze and even reversed Iran's nuclear program. According to the IAEA, and verified by U.S. intelligence, Iran has abided by the interim agreement for more than 1½ years. As we all know, in July 2015 the P5+1 signed the final agreement, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

The agreement is the result of years of careful diplomacy among the world's powers. It was only possible because other nations abided by our sanctions at their own economic sacrifice. They believe that these sanctions worked, have achieved their result, and now should be suspended as Iran dismantles much of its nuclear infrastructure. These countries, which were so critical to our ability to impose sanctions, have told us directly they won't go back to the table to negotiate a new deal.

To my colleagues who plan to vote in opposition to this agreement, I hope they have thought long and hard about what message this would send to the world. The consequences of rejecting this carefully negotiated deal would reach far beyond Iran. It would signal that the United States isn't willing or able to lead the world in confronting global challenges.

Since the agreement was reached, I have spoken with many diplomats and statesmen. They are scratching their heads, wondering why the U.S. Congress is lining up with Iranian hard-liners in opposition to this agreement, instead of siding with the UK, France, Germany, Russia, and China, along with all the other members of the U.N. Security Council.

Last week, Saudi Arabia announced its support for the agreement. Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir, who is known to many in this body, concluded his country's support by saying this agreement "will contribute to security and stability in the region by preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear capability."

During the August recess, a former head of state from one of our closest allies sat with me and said: "You know, we are one of the nations you trust the most. We follow U.S. leadership and have agreed to the Iran deal, and now your Congress wants to back out. Why should we ever follow you again?"

Many diplomats I have spoken with have echoed the former Prime Minister's statement. If Congress rejects the agreement, the world will be unlikely to follow us on other important issues in the future and I believe the Executive foreign policy obligations and responsibilities of a President of

our country are diminished. Our ability to lead against global threats, to be the indispensable nation, I believe, ends.

I understand that many Members of the Senate don't support our President, but by disapproving of this agreement we also undermine the ability of any future President to speak for the United States and carry out his or her constitutional role in conducting foreign policy.

I have been involved in national security issues for many years, and I can't recall a time in recent memory when the world was united to this degree on such a complex issue. Even Russia and China are with us. We shouldn't squander the opportunity.

Many of my colleagues have already described the terms of the agreement and how it constrains and allows for intrusive monitoring of Iran's nuclear program. For me, the arguments of Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz are particularly persuasive. As we all know, he is a distinguished nuclear physicist from MIT, and he played a central role in the negotiations. He is a true expert of unimpeachable integrity, and he knows the nuclear world.

He has said over and over again—and I have heard it personally at least five times—that every pathway to a bomb—plutonium, uranium, and covert—is blocked by this deal. The deal blocks Iran's uranium pathway to a bomb at Natanz and Fordow by reducing Iran's installed centrifuges by two-thirds—from more than 19,000 to 6,000—for at least 10 years. It reduces Iran's stockpile of enriched uranium by more than 97 percent, to no more than 300 kilograms of 3.67 percent enriched uranium for 15 years, not enough nuclear material for a single weapon. It requires intrusive IAEA inspections of Iran's centrifuge production—their careful labeling—and storage facilities for 20 years. And it requires IAEA inspections for 25 years of Iran's entire nuclear supply chain.

The agreement blocks Iran's plutonium pathway to a bomb at Arak by modifying Iran's only heavy water reactor so that it cannot produce weapons-grade plutonium and requires all spent fuel capable of being reprocessed for plutonium to be shipped out of the country.

The agreement blocks Iran's covert plutonium pathway to a bomb nationwide by requiring 24/7 IAEA access to all of Iran's declared nuclear sites for 15 years and by empowering the IAEA to use its most advanced monitoring techniques and equipment to ensure Iran cannot tamper with its devices or evade nuclear monitoring, and it guarantees IAEA access to any suspected—suspected—nuclear site within 24 days, including military facilities, and providing access to all of Iran's nuclear sites under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty permanently.

Most notably, the agreement imposes a perpetual prohibition against Iran ever seeking, developing or acquiring a nuclear weapon.

The terms of this agreement are unparalleled. The IAEA has never had this kind of access in any country. As the vice chairman of the Intelligence Committee, I can say we have looked at this issue very carefully.

As the Presiding Officer knows, as late as this morning, I can say that if Iran doesn't comply with its obligations, we will know about it, and we will be able to snap-back the sanctions that are suspended under this agreement.

The administration has provided Congress with documents detailing the verification measures in this agreement. At an unclassified level, the executive branch has written: "The United States is confident that it will be able to verify that Iran is complying with its commitments under the JCPOA, including its commitment not to pursue a nuclear weapon."

The Senate has also received a classified annex to the assessment from the intelligence community, which I think some of my colleagues have reviewed, and I would hope everyone would. The Senate Intelligence Committee has met with the heads of the U.S. intelligence agencies—as I just said—as recently as this morning to receive testimony and ask questions on our ability to ensure that Iran is complying with the terms of the nuclear agreement. From the reports and those hearings, I am very comfortable saying that the covert path to a bomb is closed, period.

I recognize that this agreement doesn't address other problems the United States and the international community have with Iran. Iran continues to support terrorist groups, prop up Bashar al-Assad, and undermine stability across the Middle East. It is a serial abuser of human rights and is improperly detaining American citizens. These are, of course, reprehensible policies and, of course, we will continue to oppose them. But a nuclear-armed Iran would dramatically compound these problems.

In my view, this agreement presents us with an opportunity to begin a broader discussion with Iran. As Iran, hopefully, will become more integrated into the global community and give up some of its bad ways, we can test whether Iran will move toward rejoining the community of nations. Rejecting this agreement only strengthens the hard-liners who lead the chants of "Death to America."

Eighty-eight percent of Iranians are under the age of 54, and 41 percent are under the age of 25. They defied predictions and elected a moderate replacement to President Ahmadinejad in the hopes that Iran will chart a new course. Clearly, this agreement won't change Iran's behavior overnight, and it would be unrealistic to expect Iran's cooperation on every issue, but it would also be foolish to throw the opportunity away and to give the hard-liners another reason to turn their backs on reform.

More importantly, I am not willing to cede America's global leadership to

reject this nuclear agreement or ignore the possibility of resolving the region's crises in favor of the myth of a better deal. There is no better deal.

For these reasons, I join the large numbers of diplomats, scientists, retired U.S. flag officers, rabbis, arms controls advocates, national security experts, and intelligence professionals in supporting this agreement with Iran.

I urge my colleagues, most sincerely, to oppose the resolution of disapproval and support this historic agreement.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). The majority whip.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I listened carefully to the eloquent remarks of the distinguished Senator from California and all of the countries around the world that embrace this deal, and I didn't hear mentioned once the nation of Israel, our most significant and important ally in the Middle East. And it is because, in fact, they do not approve.

As we have heard from the Prime Minister several months ago, this paves the way to a nuclear weapon. It completely transforms American policy, which had been to deny Iran a nuclear weapon, and it paves the path to a nuclear weapon.

But as I was contemplating this debate, I decided it was important for me to visit with Rick Kupke of Arlington, TX. Rick was one of 53 Americans who were held hostage and held for 14 months in Iran at the time of the Iranian Revolution. In an interview with one of our newspapers in Fort Worth, when asked about this deal with Iran, he said:

This is probably the worst agreement of this kind I've seen in my lifetime.

This is an experienced, seasoned Foreign Service officer. He continued:

I don't know why they think the Iranians are going to abide by any agreement. They never have.

So I approach this agreement between President Obama and the regime in Tehran with a tremendous amount of skepticism.

But this debate shouldn't be a partisan one, and I worry that it is quickly becoming partisan, based on the stated intention of the minority leader, Senator REID, the Senator from Nevada, to actually filibuster and prevent an up-or-down vote on this resolution of disapproval. This is something that apparently is being actively encouraged by the President of the United States. Just a short time after the President himself signed the bill—a bipartisan bill with 98 votes in the Senate, which sets up the procedure by which this resolution will be voted on—the President, the minority leader, and, apparently, many Democrats are tempted to filibuster this most important national security issue that I have confronted and seen since I have been in the Senate—and many would say during their lifetime.

The President has really taken the low road, I am sorry to say. He has

claimed that those chanting "Death to America" in Iran are "making common cause with the Republican caucus." That is the President of the United States. I would like to point out there are several influential leaders of the President's own party who are opposed to this deal and they include some of this Chamber's most expert and respected Members in the field of foreign affairs.

First of all, the ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee, Senator CARDIN, to whom I personally express my admiration and respect for his courage—he pointed out in his remarks, when he announced he would vote for the resolution of disapproval, that the deal "legitimizes Iran's nuclear program." He also said: "Under this agreement, Iran is permitted to be able to enrich to a level that will take them extremely close to breakout, legally."

The junior Senator from Maryland has made clear he shares the concerns many of us have expressed; that this deal leaves far too much of Iran's nuclear infrastructure intact and indeed legitimizes their nuclear program—something our stated national policy just a short time ago was to oppose.

The senior Senator from New York, Mr. SCHUMER—perhaps one of the Members on that side of the aisle whose vote was most anticipated before he announced it—announced he is for the resolution of disapproval. He said: "I believe Iran will not change, and under this agreement it will be able to achieve its dual goals of eliminating sanctions while ultimately retaining its nuclear and non-nuclear power."

Senator SCHUMER makes the point that Iran has gotten everything it wants. It has a pathway to a nuclear weapon, it has retained its nuclear infrastructure, and it has gotten an elimination of sanctions.

The former chairman and ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator MENENDEZ, on August 18 announced his decision to oppose this bad deal. He said the deal "failed to achieve the one thing it set out to achieve—it failed to stop Iran from becoming a nuclear weapons state at a time of its choosing." In fact, he said it "authorizes and supports the very roadmap Iran will need to arrive at its target."

These are not members of the Republican caucus. These are respected members of the Democratic caucus.

There used to be a time—and I hope it returns quickly—where matters of this gravity and seriousness, threats to our national security, were treated with bipartisan cooperation and consensus building, but apparently the President didn't get that memo—encouraging folks on that side of the aisle to prevent even an up-or-down vote on the resolution of disapproval and presumably cutting short the debate and hoping people across America aren't really paying attention to exactly how bad this deal is and how

much it makes the world more dangerous rather than safer.

I hope our colleagues, even if they will vote for this deal or will vote against the resolution of disapproval—I hope they will allow us to have the sort of fulsome debate this serious issue deserves. Then they will be held accountable, as we will, for their vote either for or against the resolution of disapproval.

I note that President Obama seems to want to arrogate to himself not even an authority that the Ayatollah Khamenei appears to have. Ayatollah Khamenei said the Iranian Parliament will vote on this deal, but apparently President Obama doesn't feel the United States Senate should have the same opportunity the Iranian Parliament is going to have—to vote on the merits or lack of merits on this deal.

I hope our colleagues across the aisle will rethink their partisan opposition to actually even having an up-or-down vote on the resolution of disapproval. This could well be, as many have said before me, one of the most consequential foreign policy issues to come before us in a long time, and we ought to treat it with that sort of seriousness.

The American people need to listen—and they are listening—and they will hold all of us accountable for our decisions.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I have been listening to my friend from Texas, and I couldn't agree with him more about the need for us to work in a bipartisan manner to strengthen America's foreign policy.

I believe in the independence of Congress, and I very much support, along with Senator CORKER, the review we are doing. I think this is critically important to the American people. We are having our debate, as we should. I do think, though, that while we are an independent branch, when this debate is over, we have to come together and work in the best interests of America, and I look forward to broad support in Congress to do everything in our power to make sure Iran does not become a nuclear weapons state. I think we can, in a positive way, as we move forward. I mentioned yesterday when I was on the floor about things we can do.

Yes, there is disagreement on whether to vote for or against the resolution of disapproval, but I hope there is no disagreement that we need to work together with a broad consensus of Congress to give this country its strongest possible position moving forward, whether this agreement is approved or not.

With that, Mr. President, I yield to one of the important members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the junior Senator from Delaware, who has spent a lot of time on this issue. He has been a very constructive member of our committee, very instrumental in

the passage of the Iran review act. Senator COONS.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I rise to discuss one of the greatest threats we face today in America, a great threat to our vital ally Israel and to global security—the nuclear weapons ambitions of Iran and the options that remain before us for blocking those ambitions.

On July 14, after years of negotiations between the United States, our international partners, and Iran, the administration reached a comprehensive agreement to freeze and roll back aspects of Iran's nuclear program in exchange for relief from the sanctions that have crippled Iran's economy. Our key partners in imposing and enforcing the sanctions that drove Iran to the negotiating table—the UK, Germany, France, the EU, China, and Russia—also joined in negotiating and ultimately ratifying this deal.

Thanks to bipartisan legislation that passed this Chamber nearly unanimously, Congress is now fulfilling its duty to review this deal under the authority of the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act. As a public servant and Member of this body, I am grateful for the opportunity to join my colleagues to thoughtfully debate this vital and important issue. As a body, we owe that to the American people. As a Senator from Delaware, I owe that to Delawareans—to participate in a vigorous debate on an issue with profound and far-reaching consequences, not just for our Nation but for the whole global community.

In preparation for this vote, I have dedicated myself to studying and understanding the content and consequences of the deal, and I am grateful to the bipartisan leadership of Chairman CORKER and Ranking Member CARDIN in convening more than a dozen hearings of the Foreign Relations Committee, as well as classified briefings; to the dozens of experts who came before us, both against and in favor of the deal, to provide us with analysis and insight; and to the thousands of Delawareans who have reached out to me by phone, by email, by text, and in person to express their strongly held views both against and for this agreement.

As are many of my fellow Delawareans and Americans, I am deeply suspicious of Iran, the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism. I am also deeply suspicious of Iran's intentions for its nuclear program, given its long record of cheating on past deals and of consistently expressing virulently anti-American, anti-Semitic, and anti-Israel views.

Iran is a dangerous regime that is today dangerously close to having enough fissile material to build a nuclear bomb. A nuclear-armed Iran would be a profound threat to our Nation's security and our interests around the world, as well as the security of our vital ally, Israel, and all of our partners in the Middle East.

In response to these undeniable realities, we have successfully built a global coalition over the past decade united in their determination to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. They, too, see clearly the threat of a nuclear-armed Iran. Bipartisan actions by Congress and the administration to enact and enforce sanctions have brought us to this point where our major European allies, as well as Russia and China—countries with which we often disagree—have all signed off on a comprehensive agreement to roll back and restrain Iran's nuclear program. The challenge we are discussing on the floor today is whether to move ahead with our partners in this deal or to turn aside from it and attempt to seek a stronger deal.

From the day it was announced, this agreement has been sharply criticized by many in Congress and by the leaders of our vital ally Israel. After a close reading of this lengthy and complex agreement, I, too, have deep and persistent concerns about this deal.

If Iran simply complies with the plain language of this deal, it will first gain tens of billions of dollars in sanctions relief that it will likely use to strengthen its support for terrorism and its proxies and rogue regimes and that will make it more resilient to future sanctions. Most importantly, the deal leaves in place key nuclear facilities and programs that over 10 to 15 years or more will allow Iran to develop a large-scale uranium enrichment capability that could be used to quickly make material for nuclear weapons if it decides to violate this agreement and the nonproliferation treaty.

To look at those realities and not recognize them as significant challenges or flaws would be to miss the core content of this deal. On the other hand, the agreement achieves several critical goals that could not be easily achieved by any other means, that freeze or roll back Iran's nuclear ambitions. To get any sanctions relief, Iran must give up 97 percent of its existing stockpile of 12 tons of enriched uranium. It must disable two-thirds of their 19,000 centrifuges and permanently restructure its heavy water reactor at Arak so it can no longer produce weapons-grade plutonium.

I have heard no questions or challenges to the technical aspects of these significant accomplishments in the deal.

Most importantly, in my mind, Iran has agreed to thorough, intrusive, around-the-clock inspections of all of its declared and known nuclear sites, its uranium mines, uranium mills, centrifuge production, and uranium enrichment facilities for 15 years and more. Iran pledges under this agreement to abandon all efforts to develop or acquire a nuclear weapon, and the U.N. has ratified a unique arrangement under which the United States alone is able to reimpose U.N. sanctions on Iran for cheating on this deal at any point.

Finally, our own military and intelligence community confirm that the option of military action against Iran remains available at all times and will only be strengthened by the significant additional intelligence we will likely gain through regular inspections of Iran's nuclear infrastructure.

While many Americans, including thousands in my home State, have expressed strong opinions about this agreement, and while I, too, agree with many criticisms of this deal, none of us knows with certainty what will happen if instead Congress rejects this agreement. Will the strength of the U.S. banking system and our unilateral sanctions genuinely be strong enough to force our key allies and Iran back to the negotiating table? Is it possible to negotiate a stronger deal than this or will the nations that have dedicated years, along with us, to these negotiations now abandon sanctions and proceed without us to implement the deal with Iran, simply isolating us rather than Iran?

Meetings and discussions I have held with ambassadors of our key partners, as well as with leaders in financial policy and foreign policy, have ultimately persuaded me we are unlikely to be able to reimpose effective multilateral sanctions and renegotiate our way to a better deal if we reject this one.

Don't just take my word for it. Former Secretary of the Treasury Henry Paulson and former Chairman of the Fed Board Paul Volcker have reached the same conclusion publicly and in a whole series of private conversations have reinforced my conclusion.

Last week I delivered an address at the University of Delaware in my home State to explain in more detail why I have ultimately decided to support this deal. Today I am here to speak to my colleagues in the Senate because I believe strongly this floor must be a place of vigorous, spirited, and honest debate. Though nearly every one of my colleagues—in fact, probably as of today all of my colleagues—have made their arguments, announced their positions and decisions, and discussed their conclusions, as I have in my home State and as many others have with the media, I still believe we cannot ignore this floor as an important place for debate and discussion. I think it is particularly important on an issue that has always in the past garnered such strong and bipartisan support as our Nation's enduring support for Israel.

So let me be clear about my position and where I stand. I will support this agreement and vote against measures to disapprove it in this Congress. I will support this agreement because it puts us on a known path of limiting Iran's nuclear program for 15 years with the full support of the international community. The alternative, I fear, is a scenario of uncertainty and isolation.

Finally, I will support this agreement despite its significant flaws because it is the better strategy for the

United States to lead a coalesced global community in containing the spread of nuclear weapons. I support this deal aware of its flaws, and I am committed to working tirelessly with my colleagues to overcome the limitations of the agreement, to ensure the security of Israel, and to contain and deter Iran's ambitions.

That is why I did not make my final decision to support this deal until I secured, to me, valuable additional commitments from the administration—including a letter from the President offering specific reassurances across seven different areas, including that our allies and other members of the P5+1 will stick by us in strictly enforcing this deal, even as their economic engagements with Iran grow, and that we will continue to aggressively and by all means necessary address Iran's support for terrorism and its proxies, and that our commitment to Israel's security will remain unshakeable.

Moving forward, I hope to work with colleagues to focus on strengthening Israel's conventional military deterrent against Iran, vigorously interdicting and countering Iranian support for terrorism and its proxies, strengthening the nonproliferation treaty, so that in 15 years Iran leaves one cage—the JCPOA—and enters another—the constraints of an appropriately strengthened and bolstered NPT, and developing a clear and thorough plan with our European allies for active enforcement to enact a policy of zero tolerance of Iranian cheating on the agreement.

There are few votes in the Senate that will have as much consequence to the security of our Nation and Israel's as this one. I am voting to support this agreement not because I think it is perfect or because I believe it is a perfect mechanism to end nuclear proliferation. I am voting for it because I believe it is our most credible opportunity in our current situation to lead a global community in containing a profound nuclear threat while preserving America's ability in the future to use economic power and military might to successfully dismantle Iran's nuclear program should diplomacy fail.

My support for this agreement also represents a statement about U.S. leadership of an international system based on institutions that we developed following the Second World War to help bring about a rules-based international system of mutual security.

The United Nations and the IAEA were established following the great conflict of the Second World War to help prevent the spread and threat of nuclear war. We, the United States, helped lead the establishment of these institutions just as we led the international community to reach this deal to limit Iran's nuclear program.

While neither our current international system nor this deal with Iran is perfect, they represent the collective will of our international partners and a vision for America's place in the world

for which I will fight. While we reserve the right to use force, if necessary, to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon, we should uphold the international system that we helped create, and to do so we should support this deal.

The legitimacy of this order is yet another reason we must ensure adequate oversight and verification of this nuclear deal because its failure will be a blow to the international system which gave it birth.

In closing, Scripture offers us many stories, from Genesis to Deuteronomy to Isaiah and the gospels, in which we are encouraged to pursue diplomacy before resorting to conflict. My support of this agreement in no small part is an attempt to heed that advice.

We cannot trust Iran. But this deal, based on distrust, verification, deterrence, and strong multilateral diplomacy, ultimately, I have concluded, offers us our best opportunity to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran.

I support this deal with my eyes wide open, aware of its flaws as well as its potential, and I will remain committed to work with my colleagues to minimize the negative consequences and ensure we reap the maximum benefits of this agreement.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I thank Senator COONS. I know he went through a very deliberative process in reaching his conclusions. I know of his commitment to preventing Iran from having a nuclear weapons capacity, his strong support for regional security in the State of Israel. I know the process he went through because we had many conversations during the August recess. I know his statement is heartfelt, and I know he did what he thought was best. I just want to underscore that and thank him for his counsel and friendship.

I am going to yield to Senator Kaine. Before I do that, I think it is important to point out that we are here today in this review in a very open and transparent way in large measure because of Senator Kaine.

Senator CORKER filed a review statute—I guess it was now several months ago—and through conversations with Senator Kaine he was able to get a framework that ultimately led to the passage of the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act by a 98-to-1 vote on the floor of the U.S. Senate. I was proud to be part of that effort, working with Senator CORKER, but it would not have been possible without Senator Kaine. He was the one who recognized that we needed to find a common path—a non-partisan path—for a transparent review that protected not just the role of the United States Congress, but the executive and legislative branch, and I applaud him for those efforts.

Senator Kaine is a very valuable member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, one of our most

trusted members in so many areas of foreign policy, and I am proud to have him as my friend and colleague.

I yield the floor to Senator Kaine.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. Kaine. Mr. President, I thank my ranking member and friend, the Senator from Maryland, for those kind words.

Mr. President, I rise to discuss the Iran deal currently being debated in the Senate. We have not had a national security issue during my time in the Senate that has received so much attention in committee and on the floor of this body as this, and that is appropriate. The debate has been, and will continue to be, thorough and vigorous. That is appropriate, and I respect the views of my colleagues regardless of how they will vote on this matter.

I wish to spend a few minutes recapping why I support the deal. I did speak on the floor early in August about this. Since that time, a number of leaders have come out in support of the deal: former Senators John Warner, Richard Lugar, Sam Nunn, and Carl Levin; General Brent Scowcroft, General Colin Powell; and today, former head of the IAEA Commission Uzi Eilam. After I briefly talk about my reasons for support, I want to address three final points: one, the Republican argument on the floor today that it is wrong to have a 60-vote threshold for the vote on a resolution of disapproval; two, the arguments that Vice President Cheney made against the deal yesterday; three, finally, the place of vigorous diplomacy as a tool of American strength.

So first, to quickly recap why I support the deal: I support it because it is better than the status quo for 15 to 25 years. I don't compare it with a hypothetical alternative. We can create a hypothetical to justify a position. If we can, let's talk about the status quo.

Before diplomacy started, Iran had rocketed ahead to 19,000 centrifuges and 12,000 kilograms of enriched uranium, a plutonium reprocessing facility under construction, and we had very few inspections. The system was very opaque. That was the status quo.

The best description of the Iranian status quo was the description that Prime Minister Netanyahu made to the U.N. in September of 2012. That was a speech known because he drew a bomb dialogue, and that sort of cartoon was known. But if we go into the guts of his speech, he gave a description of where the Iranian program was, and then he concluded and he said this: I want to thank the international community because the sanctions you have imposed together have hurt the Iranian economy, but "we have to face the truth." The sanctions have not stopped the Iranian nuclear program. In fact, there is a pretty good argument that the sanctions accelerated the program.

So if we go back to the status quo, it is an accelerated program, with 19,000 centrifuges and enough enriched uranium for multiple weapons. What we

get with this deal, for 15 years disabling two-thirds of the centrifuges, for 15 years rolling back enriched uranium to 300 kilograms—not even enough for one weapon—for permanently disabling the plutonium facility, for 25 years enhanced inspections—more than any nation has to comply with—we get in this deal much better than we would have with the status quo that existed before diplomacy, and that is why I support it.

The second point, the argument about the 60-vote threshold. I am surprised to hear arguments on the floor that it is somehow wrong to use a 60-vote threshold on this bill. When I was in my first 2 years in the Senate and in the majority, the 60-vote threshold was used on everything—immigration, minimum wage, turning off the sequester. Sometimes we exceeded the 60-vote threshold. Many times we exceeded 50 votes, but we couldn't get to 60 on minimum wage. We couldn't get to 60 on turning off the threshold, but there was an insistence: We need to get to 60 votes. I can't think of a single issue of importance in my first 2 years in the Senate where the 60-vote threshold wasn't invoked.

As my ranking member, Senator Cardin, mentioned, I was one of the co-authors of the Review Act under which we are now proceeding. The act was clear, and it was understood by all that action in the Senate to pass either a motion of approval or a motion of disapproval, either one, would be by a 60-vote threshold. We talked about this explicitly in committee, we talked about it before the vote on the floor, and we voted in favor of the act by a 98-to-1 margin. I think the current majority party understood that. As was indicated in the letter of 47 to the leadership of Iran, it was stated very plainly we would understand this would be a three-fifths, 60-vote threshold. That is what happens in the Senate, so we shouldn't change the rules now.

The debate has been full, vigorous, and fair. We have spent a lot of time on this and we are going to spend more, and that is appropriate. There is now a complete accountability because all 100 Senators have declared exactly where they are and their position. We should stick with the agreement we made a few months ago, and treat this Resolution of Disapproval under a 60-vote rule.

Point No. 3, the Vice President's arguments yesterday. I respond to them because I think Vice President Cheney basically made two arguments, and they are the two arguments that have been repeated in different ways on the floor. Let me address those two main arguments.

No. 1, we can't trust Iran. I agree. I think everyone on the Democratic side agrees, and there is nothing about this deal that involves trust. That is why we have insisted that Iran subject itself to intrusive inspections by the IAEA for 25 years, and then, following that, to the additional protocol inspec-

tions required of all NPT members. The IAEA inspections—130-plus inspectors in the country—will enable us to catch Iran cheating and give us the intel that will be incredibly helpful if we ever need to take military action against them. It is that inspections intel that caused our two former colleagues, Senators John Warner and Carl Levin—chairs of the Armed Services Committee—to write an article recently, "Why Hawks Should Also Back the Iran Deal." It is because inspections give us intel, which increases the credibility of our military threat.

Now, the Vice President's response to this, interestingly enough, is: Wait. We can't trust IAEA inspections. They are going to do it wrong. They have the wrong protocols, and we can't trust them.

Folks, that argument has been made in this body before by the Vice President and others. Vice President Cheney promoted that we go to war with Iraq, and he repeatedly made the case in 2002 and 2003 that we had to do that to stop Iraq's nuclear weapons program. Two weeks before the war began, in early March, the IAEA issued a report indicating, "we have to date found no evidence or plausible indication of the revival of a nuclear weapons program in Iraq." The Vice President then went to the airwaves with others and led a campaign to trash the credibility of the IAEA, to say that neither the integrity of their inspections nor their accuracy could be trusted. After that, we entered into war against Iraq saying that the IAEA was wrong. And what did we find? What we found was the inspectors and investigators and engineers and scientists of the IAEA were right, and Vice President Cheney and others were wrong. We have been down the path before of trying to trash the IAEA and said they couldn't be trusted, and it was a horrible disservice to America and the world that we didn't give those inspections a chance. We shouldn't go down that path again.

The Vice President made a second argument yesterday—here is a different and better strategy for dealing with Iran—the same strategy that the previous administration followed: Heavy sanctions, threats of military force, but no diplomacy.

But the Cheney doctrine didn't work with Iran. Under that strategy, the Iranian nuclear program rocketed ahead, centrifuges, enriched uranium, growing by the day. The Prime Minister of Israel, Prime Minister Netanyahu, acknowledged this before the U.N. in September of 2012. And when the Vice President was confronted with this by Chris Wallace over the weekend on television, he had no answer for it. He couldn't answer for it because the advance of the Iranian program under the Cheney doctrine cannot be disputed.

I was interested in his speech yesterday when he tried to justify that the strategy had worked when they tried it. Again, he ignored it.

So if we go back to the preferred doctrine of no diplomacy, sanctions, and

military threat, we are likely to get what we just got before, and that is an acceleration of the Iranian nuclear program. We should not go back down that path.

Let me conclude with a story about my favorite President, Harry Truman. Truman was a bold and courageous wartime President. He fought in World War I as a captain. He made tough decisions to use the atomic weapons in Japan. He came back to a war-weary Congress and said: Give military support to Greece against Soviet bloc expansion. He came to a war-weary Congress and said: We have to put troops into North Korea. Nobody would say Harry Truman was a softy. He had military *bona fides*. Truman also was the President who made sure that America was the first nation to recognize the State of Israel, and he always held that as one of his proudest accomplishments. It is one of the reasons that he is my favorite President.

In October 1945, 70 years ago next month, President Truman did something that seems minor but was really important. He called reporters into his office at the White House and said: I have something to show you.

He unveiled that he had redesigned the seal of the Presidency of the United States. The seal is the eagle. The seal has the arrows of war in one claw and the olive branches of diplomacy in the other claw. Truman had redesigned the seal so that the eagle was now turned to face the olive branches of diplomacy before the arrows of war—this wartime President. He explained: Look, I am a wartime President and I will use military force, but American values are such that we should always prefer diplomacy before the military.

We have the strongest military in the world. As a Virginian, I am so proud of it. We use it when needed. I have voted twice in 2½ years in the Senate as a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to use military force. When I cast that vote, it is a very personal one for my State, for me, and my family. These votes are the hardest votes we take. But Truman believed—and I believe—that it is fundamentally a part of our values that we prefer diplomacy first. Before we use military action, we have to be engaged in vigorous diplomacy with allies and adversaries if we can see a path to possibly create a more peaceful world. Other Presidents have reached the same conclusion, not only President Truman—President Kennedy, in negotiating the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty with the Soviet Union; President Nixon, in going to China when China was supporting the North Vietnamese against us; President Reagan, in negotiating against the evil empire, the Soviet Union, over their nuclear program; and now President Obama. Our great Presidents have realized that diplomacy isn't just for friends. Diplomacy is important, even and especially with adversaries if you can see a path—a possibility—to a more peaceful world.

Here is something that is fascinating. Just as a strong military enhances diplomacy, strong diplomacy enhances our military might. That is true in this case. If we do a deal, we get an Iranian pledge that they will never pursue, develop or acquire nuclear weapons, caps on their programs for 15 years, and inspections forever. These tools will increase our intelligence. They will increase our legal justification to take military action if they break the pledge that is in paragraph 1 of the agreement.

It will also increase the likelihood that America will have global support if military action is necessary. But what if we walk away from diplomacy now? We lose the military intelligence that inspections will give us. We give up a clear legal justification for military action if—God forbid—we should need it. We weaken the likelihood that other nations will support military action if it is necessary.

In this case, diplomacy strengthens—not weakens—the American credibility of our military threat. Trying diplomacy here will keep the world's attention on Iranian behavior. Walking away from diplomacy here will put the world's attention on American negotiating tactics and why we decided that we would rather go it alone. I believe the article I branch should send the message that we value diplomacy as a first option, just as President Truman did 70 years ago.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I thank Senator Kaine for his leadership on the review act. I know the statements and his position are heartfelt and ones that he comes to with full passion. I thank the Senator very much for his contribution.

I am now pleased to yield to Senator SANDERS. The two of us came to the Senate together. We served in the House of Representatives. He is one of the most passionate voices in this country. It is an honor to have him here on this issue.

I yield to Senator SANDERS.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. I thank my friend from Maryland.

Mr. President, I rise to speak about the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the agreement that the United States negotiated with China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, and Iran. I support the agreement and will oppose the resolution of disapproval, as I believe this approach is the best way forward if we are to accomplish what all of us want to accomplish; that is, making certain that Iran does not acquire a nuclear weapon, an occurrence which would destabilize the region, lead to a nuclear arms race in the area, and would endanger the existence of Israel.

It is my firm belief that the test of a great nation, with the most powerful

military on Earth, is not how many wars we can engage in but how we can use our strength and our capabilities to resolve international conflicts in a peaceful way. Those who have spoken out against this agreement, including many in this Chamber, and those who have made every effort to thwart the diplomatic process are many of the same people who spoke out forcefully and irresponsibly about the need to go to war with Iraq—one of the worst foreign policy blunders in the modern history of our country. Sadly, people such as former Vice President Dick Cheney and many of the other neocons who pushed us into war in Iraq were not only tragically wrong then; they are wrong now. Unfortunately, these individuals have learned nothing from the results of that disastrous policy and how it destabilized that entire region. I fear that many of my Republican colleagues do not understand that war must be a last resort, not the first resort. It is easy to go to war. It is not so easy to fully comprehend the unintended consequences of that war.

As the former Chairman of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I have talked to veterans from World War II to Iraq, and I have learned a little bit about what the cost of war entails. In Iraq and Afghanistan, we lost over 6,700 brave men and women, and many others have come home without legs, without arms, and without eyesight. Let us not forget that 500,000 veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan came back to their families with post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury—500,000 brave Americans. The suicide rate of young veterans is appallingly high. The divorce rate of those who served is appallingly high, and the impact on their children is appallingly high. God knows how many families have been devastated by these wars.

We should also not forget that many hundreds of thousands of innocent Iraqi men, women, and children who died in that war, and those whose lives who have been completely destabilized, hundreds of thousands of people whose lives have been totally altered, including those who are fleeing that country today with only the clothes on their backs as refugees. The cost of war is real. It is easy to give great speeches about how tough we are, but let us not forget the cost of war on the men and women who serve in our military and people in other countries.

Yes, the military option should always be on the table, but it should be the last option. We have to do everything we can to reach an agreement to ensure that Iran does not get a nuclear weapon without having to go to war. I believe we have an obligation to pursue diplomatic solutions before resorting to military engagement—especially after nearly 14 years of ill-conceived and disastrous military engagements in that region.

The agreement before us calls for cutting off Iran's pathways to the

fissile materials needed for a nuclear weapon by reducing its stockpile of uranium by 98 percent and restricting the level of enrichment of uranium to well below the level needed for weaponized uranium. The agreement requires Iran to decrease the number of installed centrifuges by two-thirds, dismantle the country's heavy water nuclear reactor so that it cannot produce any weapons-grade plutonium, and commit to rigorous monitoring, inspection, and verification by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Only after Iran has demonstrated to the international community its compliance with the tenets of this agreement, the United States and European Union will lift the sanctions that helped bring Iran to the negotiating table in the first place. This agreement also contains a mechanism for the snapback of those sanctions if Iran does not comply with its obligations.

Does this agreement achieve everything I would like? No, it does not. But to my mind, it is far better than the path we were on with Iran developing nuclear weapons capability and the potential for military intervention by the United States and Israel growing greater by the day.

Let us not forget that if Iran does not live up to this agreement, sanctions may be reimposed. If Iran moves toward a nuclear weapon, all available options remain on the table. I think it is incumbent upon us, however, to give the negotiated agreement a chance to succeed. It is for these reasons that I will support the agreement.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, how much time is remaining on the Democratic side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There are 16½ minutes remaining.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I don't know that we have faced a debate of this historic importance for 12 years, because it was about 12 years ago that we voted on the floor of the Senate on whether to invade Iraq. Senators don't forget those debates. What is at stake is war. What is at stake is human lives—not only the enemy but the innocent and those who are friends.

I remember that debate very well. There were 23 of us who voted against the invasion of Iraq—one Republican, Lincoln Chafee, and 22 Democrats. At the time, we were told by Vice President Cheney, Secretary Rumsfeld, and others that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction and we had to stop them for fear that they would use those weapons against our allies and our friends and even against the United States. It turned out that there were no weapons of mass destruction—none. After the invasion, they scoured the country and could find no evidence of those weapons.

The cost of that war is incalculable. The numbers only tell part of the story. There were 4,844 Americans who lost their lives. Tens of thousands have

come home with traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder. The cost to our Treasury is in the trillions. That and the war in Afghanistan—incidentally, the longest war in our history—were efforts in the Middle East to try to bring some order to chaos. Only limited success emerged from those efforts after all of the costs were paid in human life and treasure.

Those who are quick to talk about a military option to deal with the Iranians should be reminded, as the Senator from Vermont just said, of the extraordinary cost of that alternative. I have always felt then and now that diplomacy should be the first effort to try to avoid military action, to try to avoid a war. That is what this is about.

This President, Barack Obama, decided to make the sanctions regime tougher than ever. To do it, he had to engage countries from around the world that depended on Iranian oil and were prepared to stop importing Iranian oil to punish them until they would come to the negotiating table. He gets absolutely no credit for that from the other side of the aisle—none—but he should.

He then took our major leaders and allies in the world and brought together a P5+1 coalition. We met with the Ambassadors from these countries. It was hard, just as an amateur student of history, to sit across the table from the Ambassadors of China, Russia, the United Kingdom, Germany, and France and imagine that coalition coming together for any purpose that would serve the United States in the cause of world peace, but they did. The P5+1 came together and entered into a serious negotiation in an effort to stop the Iranians from developing a nuclear weapon. That was the goal. That was the reason for the sanctions.

There are many aspects of Iranian foreign policy and conduct which are reprehensible to me even to this day that don't reach that level of nuclear weaponry, but we focused on nuclear weaponry because we knew that was critical. If Iran developed a nuclear weapon, it would threaten our greatest friend and ally in the Middle East, Israel, as well as other countries that have worked closely with the United States, and trigger an arms race on the Arabian Peninsula, which would have been devastating. So we set out to stop that from happening.

Something happened during the course of that negotiation which was unprecedented in the history of the United States. On March 9, 2015, 47 Republican Senators sent a signed a letter to the Ayatollah, the Supreme Leader in Iran. I have read the letter over and over again and still cannot believe it. On March 9, 2015, 47 Republican Senators sent an open letter to the leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran which basically said: We know you are in negotiation with the United States over stopping the development of a nuclear weapon, but understand—this letter makes it clear—that this President does not have the last word.

That has never happened before. I have asked those who studied the history of this country if there was ever a time when the United States of America was involved in delicate international negotiations and a group of Senators or Congressmen wrote to the other side—to the Iranians—to tell them to think twice before negotiating with the United States of America. It has never happened. It is unprecedented.

So 47 Republican Senators who did not want to wait until the agreement was reached or written decided in advance to warn the Ayatollah in Iran not to negotiate with the United States or to assume that any agreement would be enforceable with Congress or future Presidents. What a contrast that 47 Republicans would decide in the midst of negotiations to send that letter—what a contrast with the Democratic side of the aisle.

For the last 6 weeks, I have been in touch with my colleagues over here—they are probably tired of hearing from me—talking about this agreement and where they stood. I know, but for a few, what they went through. Many of them were trying to educate themselves on the terms of this agreement because it is complicated. They were talking to experts in the field. One Senator came back and spent 5 hours with the intelligence agencies here in Washington trying to understand the complexities of this agreement and how they worked.

After all of that time, after all of that reflection, and after all of that study, these Senators announced their positions. Forty-two supported the President's position, and four opposed the President's position. Instead of prejudging the agreement or assuming the agreement was bad, they took the time to read it and study it. They took the time to use their responsibilities as Senators to make sure they understood this historic document, and 42 came out in favor of it.

I will tell the Presiding Officer that at this point in history, we have a tough decision to make—whether we as a nation will pursue this agreement in an effort to stop Iran from developing a nuclear weapon or the alternative. I have yet to hear a critic of this agreement honestly present the alternative. The alternative is obvious.

Today Iran owns enough fissile material to make 10 nuclear weapons. The Prime Minister of Israel has warned the world that they are only months away from developing a nuclear weapon in Iran. Yet we hear from the other side of the aisle that we should walk away from any inspections or agreement to stop a nuclear weapon. What is going to happen the next day in Iran if that point of view prevails? What happens if this agreement we have entered into should founder and fail? The door is closed, no inspectors, no negotiations, and Iran is on its own. That is not the recipe for a safer world. That is not the recipe for a safer Israel, as far

as I am concerned, and that is why I support this.

I am happy to be joined in my support with leaders such as GEN Colin Powell, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under a Republican President and former Secretary of State under a Republican President, who has endorsed this agreement. He has told us: Don't trust Iran. Mistrust Iran, if you will, and verify.

We are going to send in scores of inspectors to verify—inspectors who have access to everything in Iran—and if there is a dispute over access, it is one that can be resolved in a matter of days or weeks.

I might add that there are telltale pieces of evidence for the development of nuclear weapons that the Iranians could never destroy in that of period of time. We will know if they have breached this agreement, and in knowing that, we have created the authority within the United Nations for the United States alone to reimpose sanctions based on a breach of this agreement by Iran.

It is an extraordinary agreement. Could it be stronger? Of course. But when we look back throughout history at the skeptics who have attacked Presidents of both political parties who have tried to reach agreements to create a more peaceful world, this is no different. When President Ronald Reagan—literally a deity in the Republican Party—decided to sit down and negotiate with Mikhail Gorbachev over nuclear weapons, the conservative wing of the Republican Party said he was signing a suicide pact, wasting his time, and threatening the United States—Ronald Reagan—in negotiating with Gorbachev. The same held true when Richard Nixon decided to open negotiations with China. The critics on the right were quick to condemn him. Chinese were sponsoring North Vietnamese who were killing American soldiers. There were plenty of reasons not to do it. Richard Nixon did it with bipartisan support, and the world is a better place for the courage he showed.

At this point, as we bring this aspect of the debate to a close—and I see Senator REED is here and will be recognized soon—we listened carefully to those who are critical of this agreement. It turns out that not a single Republican Member of the House or Senate is supporting this agreement—not one. It is hard to think back in diplomatic history when there has been such a partisan division within Congress on an issue of this historic importance and magnitude, but that shouldn't deter us. We need to work with our allies so we can move forward with the inspections and the deadlines to make certain we do everything in our power to bring peace to the Middle East, short of war. Those who want military action should speak up and say so. I don't. I want to see this done through diplomatic means, and I believe this effort is a good-faith effort to achieve that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, the vote the Senate will soon take on a resolution to disapprove the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA, is both momentous and historic. I, along with my colleagues, have carefully and conscientiously reviewed this agreement. We have each applied our independent judgment as to whether or not it achieves the primary objectives the President set out in the negotiations when they began in November 2013—to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon.

Since the conclusion of the negotiations, I have reviewed the text of the agreement, attended and participated in hearings of the Armed Services Committee and Banking Committee with government witnesses and non-government witnesses, received a series of classified briefings, and reached out to Rhode Islanders for their views. These venues—all of them—provided a full range of views and opinions and were critical in my review and decision with respect to the JCPOA.

In my view, evaluating the JCPOA rests on three factors. The first is the sufficiency of the provisions to cut off all Iranian pathways to a nuclear weapon. The second is the ability to conscientiously and continuously monitor and verify adherence to these provisions. Finally, we have to evaluate whether this agreement will leave us in a better position than a rejection of the agreement.

This last point of whether the agreement leaves us in a better position than rejecting it touches on two alternatives suggested by opponents of this agreement. The first suggested alternative is that there is a better agreement awaiting us if we simply reject the JCPOA and impose even more stringent sanctions. The second suggested alternative is that, without the JCPOA and with the possibility that an enhanced sanctions regime cannot be reconstituted, we can exercise a military option which will be more effective and less costly than following through with the JCPOA.

For reasons I will discuss in detail in the course of my remarks today, the JCPOA, in my view, does provide adequate measures to interdict Iranian pathways to a nuclear weapon and an unprecedented monitoring and verification regime moving forward. In addition, our national intelligence means will provide further insights into Iranian activities. In this regard, we will be aided by many international partners whose intelligence activities are acutely focused on Iran.

As such, I believe the JCPOA, if scrupulously implemented, will accomplish our objective of preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon and is a better option than the alternative suggested in lieu of the JCPOA. That is why I intend to support the agreement and will vote against the resolution of disapproval.

To begin this discussion, I think it is important to recognize where we were when President Obama began his efforts to cut off all Iranian pathways to a nuclear weapon. Perhaps the most revealing description comes from Uzi Arad, who in 2009 was the National Security Advisor to newly elected Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Arad described Iran's nuclear capacity in an interview with Ha'aretz, an Israeli newspaper. In his words, "The point of no-return was defined as the point at which Iran has the ability to complete the cycle of nuclear fuel production on its own; the point at which it has all the elements to produce fissionable material without dependency on the outsiders. Iran is now there." That was in 2009.

This was the situation that confronted the President and the world in 2009. To glibly suggest today, as some do, that the international community could negotiate Iran back, after they pass the "point of no return," to a position of "no enrichment" is to ignore the reality of Iranian efforts, particularly from the mid-2000s forward. For example, in 2006 the Iranians possessed fewer than 400 centrifuges in a research facility. By 2009 they had well over 8,000 centrifuges, together with the essential elements of a nuclear program, taking them beyond the "point of no return," as indicated by Uzi Arad.

Former Secretary of State and National Security Advisor to President George Herbert Walker Bush, GEN Colin Powell, recently made this point as well. He said that Iran has "been on a superhighway for the last ten years to create a nuclear weapon or a nuclear weapons program, with no speed limit."

In a similar vein, Amos Yadlin, former head of the Israeli Defense Forces Military Intelligence Directorate and now director of the Institute for National Security Studies, made the point that any analysis or possible options regarding the Iranian nuclear program must begin with the recognition that they have already passed the "point of no return." In his words, "[t]he starting point for comparing the various scenarios is not one in which Iran has zero nuclear capabilities, but one in which Iran has been—however illegitimately—a nuclear threshold state since the beginning of the current decade."

The Iranians advanced their nuclear program as the international community insisted on no enrichment but failed either through sanctions, negotiations, or other actions to significantly interrupt Iranian progress on its nuclear infrastructure or nuclear know-how. Instead, when the negotiations began under President Obama, Iran had already acquired approximately 19,000 centrifuges and other essential components of the nuclear program.

Indeed, the administration's diplomatic effort to build an international

coalition to give effect to the sanctions, which ultimately forced the Iranians to negotiate, was done with the P5+1's recognition that a "no enrichment" approach would not lead to negotiations. This was not a realistic option.

With that prologue, let me now turn to the elements of the agreement that were critical to my judgment. In the area of cutting off pathways to provide nuclear material for nuclear weapons and Iran's enrichment capacity, this agreement accomplishes a key objective. It constrains and, through the interrelated verification measures, eliminates Iran's ability to produce either plutonium or uranium for a nuclear weapon.

On the uranium pathway, the JCPOA requires Iran to cap its stockpile of low enriched uranium, LEU, to 300 kilograms over 15 years. Why is this significant? First, before November 2013 and the initiation of the interim agreement, Iran had more than 12,000 kilograms of LEU. If fully enriched, this is enough to make seven to eight nuclear weapons.

Second, with this cap Iran will not have sufficient LEU in country to enrich and achieve the quantity necessary to produce a single weapon, even with additional enrichment. In other words, it will have to break a term of the agreement—the 300 kilogram cap of LEU—to have enough feedstock to further enrich and to make the quantity needed for even a single weapon.

On the plutonium pathway, Iran has agreed to redesign and rebuild the heavy water research reactor in Arak. The redesigned and rebuilt reactor, the design of which must be approved by the P5+1, may only support non-military nuclear research in radioisotope production. Why is this significant? Arak has been one of the most concerning elements of Iran's suspected nuclear weapons infrastructure, and this fundamental change to the reactor ensures Iran's plutonium pathway for a nuclear weapon is shut off.

In an alternative scenario, if completed, the heavy water reactor at Arak could have been a proliferation risk of unmatched proportion within their program. It could have allowed Iran to take easily acquired natural uranium from the ground and, over a period of time and through a series of reprocessing steps, make weapons-grade plutonium without the need for centrifuges for enrichment. The elimination of this heavy water reactor, as the Iranians previously envisioned it, is enormously significant.

Further, under the agreement, Iran will be forced to use its first generation centrifuge technology, known as IR-1s. This is a significant check on the program because these are Iran's most inefficient centrifuges. While Iran will be able to install more advanced centrifuges in the future, it will be required to abide by the enrichment plan submitted to the IAEA and to be consistent with the limitation inherent in

the Additional Protocol. Also, it is significant that the P5+1 will have 10 years of evaluating, measuring, and assessing Iran's intentions to determine whether its plans and programs are indeed exclusively peaceful, as stated by the preamble to the JCPOA.

More broadly, the agreement's research and development measures provide the international community with insight into Iran's nuclear program. This is a significant opportunity to gauge Iran's intentions and willingness to abide by and comply with its commitments. The JCPOA establishes limitations on advanced centrifuge research, development, testing and deployment in the first 10 years. After that period of time, the international community will continue to have a critical "distrust-and-verify" mechanism built into the program. Iran must abide by its enrichment and research and development plan and submit it to the IAEA. This plan is subject to all of the IAEA's inspection and monitoring tools.

Furthermore, the JCPOA includes a permanent prohibition on Iran conducting research and development activities that could contribute to design and development of a nuclear explosive device. This significant prohibition goes well beyond the limitations of the non-nuclear weapons statement in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Taken together, closing off the pathways to a weapon and the constraints on enrichment and R&D, Iran's breakout time for a single nuclear weapon will remain at least 1 year for each of the first 10 years of this agreement and, critically, Iran's breakout time will remain longer than the two to three months it was in November of 2013.

Before I move on to the next area of discussion, I acknowledge that legitimate concerns have been raised about Iranian activities after the first 10 years of the agreement, sometimes referred to as the "out years." During this time, Iran's breakout time could shrink substantially. However, the initial 10 years of the JCPOA will be critical for the international community to measure and assess Iran's intentions.

A recent analysis of the JCPOA by Robert Einhorn, a noted expert in non-proliferation and a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, is instructive in this area. In his words:

If Iranian leaders . . . believed their national interests were best served by having nuclear weapons, they would run major risks in going forward, with no guarantee of success. Even in the 'out years,' the JCPOA's rigorous monitoring arrangements will remain in force. The world will have gained intimate knowledge of Iran's nuclear program, which would give the United States prompt warning of any Iranian effort to make a dash for the bomb.

In any case, the P5+1 must begin now to communicate its insistence that Iran operate consistent with a peaceful nuclear program after the initial 10-year period. The international commu-

nity must convey in stark terms to the Iranians that a rapid buildup of enrichment capacity after 10 years, beyond what they need for their existing nuclear fuel cycle, will be considered an abandonment of the principles embodied in JCPOA, and that the P5+1 will need to evaluate alternative options.

Now, if my colleagues will allow me to discuss the area of inspection, monitoring, and verification. For me, the agreement must be built on a principle of "distrust and verify." Former Secretary of State Colin Powell put it nicely. He said: "It's don't trust, never trust, and always verify." And the architecture our negotiators designed to verify compliance with this agreement took this approach and set new precedents in key areas: access, modern technological monitoring, and the requirement for affirmative approval for certain actions. Thus, this is a custom-built, rigorously "red teamed" verification regime that is more stringent than any other previously created.

Specifically, the JCPOA does the following: Inspectors from the IAEA will have regular access to all of Iran's nuclear-related facilities. This includes Iran's two primary sites at Natanz and Fordow.

Inspectors will have cradle-to-grave access to Iran's nuclear supply chain, including uranium mines, mills, and centrifuge production and storage facilities that support Iran's nuclear program for at least 10 years and in many cases longer.

The verification regime established by this agreement has the effect of making the entire Iranian nuclear program auditable. This is a powerful tool that will make it possible for IAEA inspectors to know whether Iran is diverting material to a possible covert program.

Iran has agreed to apply provisionally the IAEA's Additional Protocol. This Additional Protocol to the IAEA comprehensive safeguards agreement further augments the agency's ability to investigate suspected clandestine facilities and activities. Of great importance, this is an enduring requirement for Iran beyond the JCPOA's terms.

A dedicated and exclusive procurement channel for Iran's nuclear program will be established to manage all purchases of the nuclear supplier group's "trigger list" and dual-use items. This additional step provides an intrusive authorization and transparency mechanism through which the IAEA can control what is coming into the country and gauge whether the requirement is consistent with the needs of the program and Iran's intentions. Any such procurement outside that channel would be a violation of the JCPOA.

This agreement is often casually compared to the 1994 Agreed Framework with North Korea. Not only are there significant differences between the two, but provisions of the JCPOA were specifically written to provide

more stringent verification based on the lessons from the 1994 agreement. One of the most significant differences was pointed out again by Robert Einhorn. As he indicated, a key weakness of the 1994 Agreed Framework was that “it only provided for IAEA monitoring at the nuclear facility at Yongbyon. It did not provide for monitoring in the rest of the country because that was the only declared site.”

Under the JCPOA, Iran must implement and abide by the Additional Protocol to its Safeguards Agreement under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, an addendum that the IAEA designed to address the ability of a nation to covertly develop a nuclear weapons program, as Iraq did after the first Gulf War. The Additional Protocol applies to all facilities that take part in any element of the nuclear fuel cycle of a state. The JCPOA is significantly more stringent in this regard than the 1994 framework.

More specifically, the Additional Protocol will allow IAEA inspectors access to suspected undeclared nuclear sites anywhere in the country so as to prevent Iran from conducting clandestine nuclear activity. If Iran does not provide access, it is in violation of the agreement and sanctions will be reimposed.

Iran’s compliance with the Additional Protocol in the years after the term of the JCPOA will continue to provide the IAEA with a powerful tool to conduct inspections of Iran’s nuclear infrastructure. Again, the creation of the Additional Protocol was in direct response to previous efforts to circumvent the IAEA’s monitoring efforts in Iraq and North Korea.

An additional element of the monitoring and compliance regime is the independent and unilateral role that the U.S. Intelligence Community and its intelligence liaison services will play in validating Iran’s compliance or noncompliance. While we can never be certain that these intelligence efforts will provide a complete picture of all Iranian nuclear activities, they provide a critical assessment of Iran’s compliance with the agreement, Iran’s perceptions of the cost and benefits of compliance with the agreement, and key insights into the Iranian leadership’s priorities for the program. As a member of both the Armed Services Committee and the Select Committee on Intelligence, these activities and insights will also serve as a critical tool for my colleagues and me to gauge the success or failure of this agreement.

Over the course of the Armed Services Committee hearings, there was detailed questioning on several topics but one in particular: the 24-day period of time that Iran has available to it under the agreement to potentially delay access for IAEA inspectors to a facility suspected of prohibited activity. Secretary Moniz offered a helpful insight into this area. He said:

The 24-day period is itself new in the sense there has never been any time limit in terms

of access to undeclared sites. Again, to repeat, on nuclear materials we have very, very sensitive capabilities and historically those have been proved.

But Secretary Moniz went on to speak candidly as he said:

With regard to nonnuclear materials, it gets more difficult. However, when one has nuclear weapons specialized activity, such as explosively driven neutron initiators, we would not be without tools to detect activities in that kind of a time period. But clearly, as one gets farther and farther away into let’s say, just conventional explosive testing, which is something militaries do normally, then it’s a question of intelligence putting together the context for suspicious activities. But nuclear material, in the end, you need to do nuclear materials to get to the weapon and that’s where we have extraordinary techniques.

Now, critics of the agreement have said that this 24-day period of time is too long and offers Iran too much time to cover up its activities. As Secretary Moniz stated clearly, this is a possibility as it relates to certain non-nuclear activities. However, if Iran introduces fissile materials into these activities, Iran’s ability to cover its tracks in 24 days is extremely unlikely.

I also believe this part of the agreement is an area where Iran’s intentions need to be subjected to constant questioning and evaluation. If Iran is challenging the IAEA inspectors at every turn, it should be interpreted as an indication of its intent with respect to the permanent commitment it made on the third page of the agreement: “Iran reaffirms that under no circumstances will Iran ever seek, develop, or acquire nuclear weapons.”

This is a strong restatement of its basic obligations as a non-nuclear weapons state under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. A pattern of frustrating IAEA inspectors should be seen as a clear warning of possible renegeing on this central commitment.

Let me at this juncture discuss the duration of the agreement. Critics have made a variety of comments in this area of duration. Some argue that Iran can begin enriching beyond the low-enriched limit of 3.67 percent fissile uranium at year 16. That is true, but Iran could do that tomorrow without this agreement. Nevertheless, some argue that this agreement simply suspends Iran’s program in place for a decade. In my view, this is not an accurate characterization as many of the access and verification elements of the agreement go well past 10 years or 15 years. Indeed, some are permanent. Iran’s commitment under the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty and its Additional Protocol remain in place, and their compliance with it will be a key metric for the P5+1. Further, the international community’s ability to impose sanctions always remains available.

Now I want to address the area of possible military dimensions or PMD. Iran has agreed to address all the past and present outstanding PMD issues in a comprehensive and time-limited

manner. This requirement is laid out clearly in paragraph 66 of Annex I of the JCPOA. It is further articulated in more detail in the IAEA’s July 14, 2015, “Road-map for the Clarification of Past & Present Outstanding Issues regarding Iran’s Nuclear Program.”

Resolving the issue of PMD is critical for a number of reasons. It is critical that the IAEA is able to complete its investigation of PMD and issue an independent assessment of any nuclear weapons-related work Iran has conducted in the past. The IAEA made clear in the Director General’s November 2011 report on PMD that unanswered questions remain. The U.N. Security Council has endorsed and reinforced the requirement that Iran address these questions.

Under the agreement, if Iran complies, the IAEA will again gain access to Parchin, and the IAEA will be provided the additional accesses to people, places, and other items it has requested. However, Iran gets nothing in the way of sanctions relief if it does not address these unanswered questions to the satisfaction of the IAEA.

Some critics of the agreement have also suggested that IAEA has outsourced to Iran its inspection of Parchin, the most infamous of Iran’s suspected facilities. I have been briefed extensively on this matter in a classified setting. Those briefings are consistent with the conclusion of IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano. He has stated the agreement with the Iranians is, in his words, “technically sound” and does not—again in his words—“compromise [the IAEA’s] safeguards standards in any way.”

Secretary Moniz has further assured me of this fact. We know the Iranians have repeatedly attempted to eradicate any sign of their activities at the Parchin site. Thus, it is unlikely that any significant PMD-related activities have occurred there in the last 4 years. We do not know what signs of past activities will remain at the site. Importantly, the IAEA will be able to confirm whether there is any ongoing nuclear-related activity at that location.

Critics of the arrangement to inspect Parchin have also suggested that the IAEA has entered into a secret side deal with Iran. In fact, the United States and all the other NPT member countries—Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty countries—have confidential agreements with the IAEA which cannot be shared.

These agreements vary by country, but they are designed to protect the integrity of the IAEA inspection process and the sensitive technical and design information about peaceful national nuclear programs. The IAEA and the Obama administration have taken extraordinary steps to brief Congress on this agreement in a classified setting. These briefings have been informative and helpful to understand more fully what we can expect in the months and years ahead.

Now, I would like to discuss at this point the topic of the arms embargo

and missile sanctions, which is part of this arrangement. Like many of my colleagues, I remain concerned about the elements of this agreement that relate to these issues. The inclusion of these provisions in the JCPOA is directly related to the fact that the United States secured these measures in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1929 to pressure Iran to address the international community's concerns with respect to its nuclear program. Since these sanctions were deemed by the P5+1 to be related to the nuclear program through the U.N. Resolution, they were within the ambit of sanctions relief.

Nevertheless, moving forward, this is an area where the United States needs to leverage the available sanctions and additional tools under other U.N. Security Council resolutions to keep pressure on Iran. For example, other U.N. Security Council resolutions prohibit Iranian transfers of arms to groups such as the Houthis in Yemen, nonstate actors in Lebanon, which includes Hezbollah, the Taliban in Afghanistan, and Shi'a militias in Iraq, as well as North Korea, Libya, and several sub-Saharan states in Africa.

This will mean the Treasury Department, the State Department, and the Intelligence Community must double their efforts to identify prohibited activities and build the international architecture necessary to counter it and deter them.

It also means working with our partners on the Missile Technology Control Regime, or MTCR, to prevent the spread of critical missile technologies, and with our more than 100 partners under the Bush administration's Proliferation Security Initiative, or PSI, to help limit Iranian missile-related imports or exports.

It may also mean what former Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Nick Burns recently suggested to the Senate Armed Services Committee, which is that we will need to, in his words, "reconstitute a coalition of sanctions countries against Iran five years from now on conventional weapons, eight years from now on ballistic missiles." I believe the next 5 years will provide the international community a critical measuring stick for Iranian intentions, and we must be prepared to lead efforts to preclude Iran from obtaining enhanced military technologies.

Now, a bulk of the work that will be done and will be so central to our efforts will be done by the IAEA. The IAEA will be responsible for carrying on the ground the implementation of this agreement on behalf of the P5+1. While critics of the agreement are quick to call into question the technical expertise and skills of the IAEA, it is comprised of individuals with extensive training and experience and a deep commitment to the importance of nonproliferation work.

A recent study by Tom Shea, a noted safeguards expert with experience at

the IAEA and in the laboratory community, concludes:

The IAEA's capabilities have been extended, strengthened and refined over the years in response to real-world proliferation cases in Iraq and North Korea. Its current capacity reflects the international community's decades-long investment in the organization, and the continuing commitment of states around the world to its mission.

I would also note that upwards of 200 IAEA technical experts will be devoted to implementing this agreement. This number far exceeds any number of experts and inspectors devoted to any one country by the IAEA.

Allow me now to focus on the area of sanctions and our ability to reapply them. First, it is critical that we remember Iran will receive no new sanctions relief if it does not complete its nuclear commitments and the IAEA's inspectors verify those steps. Let me be specific here. Prior to granting any further sanctions relief, Iran must, as verified by the IAEA, demonstrate that it has implemented the necessary steps with respect to, No. 1, the Arak heavy water research reactor; No. 2, its overall enrichment capacity; No. 3, its centrifuge research and development; No. 4, the Fordow fuel enrichment plant; No. 5, its uranium stocks and fuel; No. 6, its centrifuge manufacturing; No. 7, completing the modalities and facilities-specific arrangements to allow the IAEA to implement all transparency measures and the Additional Protocol and Modified Code 3.1; No. 8, its centrifuge component manufacturing transparency; and, No. 9, addressing the past and present issues of concern relating to PMD.

This means that Iran must take significant steps to roll back and freeze its nuclear program before it gets anything in the way of sanctions relief. In testimony before the Senate banking committee, Adam Szubin, the acting Under Secretary of Treasury said:

We expect that [process] to take at least six to nine months. Until Iran completes those steps, we are simply extending the limited relief that has been in place the last year and a half under the Joint Plan of Action. There will not be a cent of new sanctions relief.

Moreover, while the President will waive the application of the nuclear-related sanctions under the terms of the JCPOA, the U.S. sanctions, which include the Central Bank and other financial sanctions, will remain available until Congress acts to terminate them. This will allow Congress to monitor an extended period of Iran's compliance before taking any such action. This also gives the President a strong hand because the ability to quickly snap back nuclear-related sanctions means that we can again shut off, to a substantial degree, Iran's access to the international financial system, to international markets, and to international financing that relies on access to the U.S. banking system.

It is important to note that this agreement does not take away the tools available to the President to tar-

get sanctions against Iran's violation of human rights or to damage Iran's ability to finance terrorism. U.S. secondary sanctions remain in place.

As Richard Nephew, a fellow at the Center on Global Energy Policy at Columbia University, recently told the Senate Armed Services Committee, under the agreement:

[The] United States will still be able to pressure banks and companies into not doing business with the IRGC, the Quds Force, Qasem Soleimani, and Iran's military and missile forces. This is both due to direct risk of U.S. secondary sanctions, which remain in place, and an improvement in international banking practices since 9/11.

These secondary sanctions are not insignificant tools, and our use of them in response to human rights violators and terrorism are not a violation of the agreement. As Under Secretary Szubin recently told the Senate banking committee on the matter of terrorism sanctions:

[O]ne of the most powerful [tools] . . . is that when we sanction Iranian terrorist supporters, our designation is amplified internationally. What I mean by that is, when we name a Hezbollah financier, a Hezbollah money launderer, any bank worldwide, not just American banks, any bank worldwide that facilitates transactions for that designated entity faces very severe sanctions from the U.S., sanctions that no bank wants to face.

Under Secretary Szubin has also indicated that the United States will do more in the area of terrorism-related sanctions. Should Iran decide to continue its destabilizing actions in the region, increasing the cost in this area will be critical, so it is important to note the administration's willingness to ramp up pressure in the face of such conduct by the Iranians.

Particular attention has rightly been paid to the amount of sanctions relief Iran will receive and Iran's likely use of that sanctions relief. This is an important issue. While we do not know what Iran will do with it, we do know a couple of things. First, the amount of sanction relief is not \$100 or \$150 billion as some critics of the deal have suggested. According to the Treasury Department, the number is between \$50 and \$60 billion. While this number is significant, it is one-third of what many critics have asserted.

Second, it is likely that Iran will invest a portion of this money into its economy to address the concerns of its people and to begin to recover from the international sanctions regime, but it may also invest in its financing of terrorism across the region. General Dempsey has rightly suggested, "[t]he answer is probably a little bit of both." What we will need to do is monitor closely, particularly via our Intelligence Community, where Iran is making its investments and actively counter those maligned activities.

Now, I believe the JCPOA is the best option available to us right now. Critics recommend rejecting the JCPOA and advocating a regime of new and increasingly crippling sanctions that are

more effective to ensuring Iran does not acquire a nuclear weapon. It is my view that this alternative is not feasible at this time and may, indeed, be counterproductive.

Moreover, the options for enhanced sanctions and even military operations remain available to the United States and our P5+1 partners should Iran at any time fail to comply with the JCPOA. Indeed, noncompliance would be more likely to find an international commitment for aggressive action than a rejection of the JCPOA. Such a rejection could give the Iranians the opening to argue that it can resume all of its existing activities prior to the interim agreement and insist that international sanctions have been nullified by our rejection of the JCPOA.

If the United States were now to say “this deal is not good enough,” it would likely have the immediate effect of alienating us from our partners and, therefore, empowering Iran. Iran would seize this opening to drive a wedge between us and our European allies, as well as Russia and China. Such an action by the United States would play right into the hands of Iran, both in terms of the viability of the multilateral sanctions regime and in terms of the obligations it has already agreed to take under this agreement.

It is difficult to imagine a scenario in which the United States can break, at this juncture, with its most critical economic partners on the Iran nuclear program and then secure more stringent sanctions.

Another complicating factor in this scenario is the outcome for the hardliners in Iran. Undoubtedly, their narrative can gain additional traction in Tehran and they may be able to seize an even greater amount of power and influence. This makes the “more sanctions” approach more concerning because it could produce the unintended consequence of empowering the most strident elements in Iran.

The second most common option discussed by critics of this agreement is the military option. In this regard, it is critical that we understand some points up front. Unless we are prepared to invade and occupy Iran, executing a military option to destroy the nuclear infrastructure will only delay Iran’s nuclear program. It will not bomb away Iran’s knowledge, and it will empower significantly the hardliners in Iran who are committed to developing a nuclear weapon. They will likely disperse and disguise their activities so that military strikes are increasingly ineffective and produce significant collateral damage, which will be exploited by the Iranians for propaganda purposes.

On this issue of delay, General Dempsey provided two important insights. First, in response to a question asking for his military assessment on what is more effective in delaying or stopping the Iranian nuclear program at this time or in the near future, a military strike or this P5+1 agreement, he said:

First . . . I would like to point out that the military options remain. Secondly, I think a negotiated settlement provides a more durable—and reduces near term risk, which buys time to work with regional partners to address the other malign activities.

He also said:

Our government’s policy has been they will not get a nuclear weapon and nothing we’re talking about here today should change that policy.

This agreement does not change that longstanding and clearly articulated U.S. policy.

I also agree with the assessment of former Senators John Warner and Carl Levin—both of whom served terms as the chairman of the Armed Services Committee—that a vote against this deal is a vote to undermine the deterrent value and credibility of our military option.

Closer examination of the military option raises the critical question of our objective if we were to use force—to delay the nuclear program or to overthrow the regime so as to eliminate the nuclear threat? In either case, a daunting scenario emerges. As previously discussed, if our focus is limited only to Iran’s nuclear program, the United States—likely alone or nearly alone—will need to conduct a similar option every few years, as the Iranians will undoubtedly make their nuclear program an operation that is conducted in smaller and more numerous locations in areas that are increasingly difficult to locate and deeper in the ground or masked by civilian activities in populated areas.

If we conduct such targeted strikes, analysts suggest that the Iranians will respond. Such responses could include attacks against U.S. forces in the gulf region and Afghanistan; attacks against Israel by Iran’s most capable proxy, Hezbollah; attacks against our partners in the GCC; attacks against the region’s energy infrastructure; or a combination of all of the above. Along with the significant economic consequences, the loss of personnel and resource drain on our Nation’s military could be severe. Ironically, an additional consequence would be a shift in resources away from the campaign against the Islamic State in the Levant—or ISIL—particularly in Iraq, and our ongoing efforts to consolidate the international community’s gains in Afghanistan.

On the other hand, if our military objective was regime change, I would first remind my colleagues of the Iraq war and all of the implications that exercising that military option had on the region.

In 2012, Michael O’Hanlon of the Brookings Institution wrote:

An occupation of Iran would require up to one million U.S. and other foreign troops over an extended time and, hence, would indeed be implausible. But an invasion, with the single goal of deposing the government, could be considered a possibility under extreme circumstances—if for example there were unmistakable evidence that Iran’s current government was preparing a major at-

tack on Israel, or if it responded to any U.S. “surgical” air campaign with an all-out global terrorist response, using Hezbollah and various elements of its security apparatus.

Although Michael O’Hanlon makes a distinction between an “occupation” and an “invasion,” our experience in both Iraq and Afghanistan should demonstrate that the deployment of ground forces to effect regime change is unlikely to produce a quick exit, so we must be prepared for his “implausible”—an expensive occupation with a million military personnel on the ground.

Thus, as some observers continue to discuss the military option regardless of the scope and intent of it, I would urge them to ensure that their analysis goes beyond the first day, first month, or first 6 months of conflict and rather considers the first year, first 5 years, and first decade of conflict. Our Nation has seen the great cost of war over the past 15 years.

This agreement retains the military options for the Commander in Chief and at the same time establishes an arrangement with the Iranians that allows us to test vigorously and monitor invasively the intentions of the Iranian regime’s nuclear program. This is one major reason at this point that the JCPOA is the most compelling option.

A number of noted national security experts and a number of my colleagues and Americans have discussed the importance of ensuring Iran is not only constrained with respect to its nuclear program but also with respect to its regional hegemonic aspirations and its support directly and indirectly of terrorism. These negotiations did not cover other hostile, objectionable actions by Iran—namely, its support of terrorism, its destabilizing activities across the region, its abuse of its own people, and ongoing detention of American citizens. We cannot condone or ignore these critical issues, and they all must be addressed. But absent implementation of this agreement, the threats posed by Iran would likely be amplified as it returns to deliberate and focused efforts to build a nuclear infrastructure.

The choice before us under the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act is exclusively on the nuclear dimension. But without the JCPOA, I suspect the Iranian nuclear challenge will grow quickly, adding further menace to their regional aspirations and their support of terrorism. Critically, any of these other objectionable Iranian behaviors would be far more dangerous if Iran acquired nuclear weapons.

As I said earlier, I evaluate this agreement with great skepticism. Iran is a major sponsor of terrorism and a leader in other destabilizing activities across the Middle East. As I mentioned previously, though, the negotiations to secure this agreement were not focused on Iran’s support of terrorism. This matter remains outstanding, and charting a pragmatic and implemen-

table strategy to counter it is critical to U.S. national security interests.

More broadly, however, these negotiations are not without precedent. During the Cold War, we negotiated with the Soviets despite their persistent destabilizing activities in many parts of the world. In fact, President Nixon was still in negotiation with the Soviets even while they still supported the North Vietnamese.

Graham Allison, a noted non-proliferation expert at Harvard's Belfer Center, noted in testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee recently that "claims that the U.S. cannot reach advantageous agreements to constrain nuclear arms with states we are seeking to contain, or subvert, or even overthrow . . . are . . . wrong. [The Reagan] administration's core national security strategy for competition with the Soviet Union . . . states that 'U.S. policy towards the Soviet Union will consist of three elements: external resistance to Soviet imperialism; internal pressure on the USSR to weaken the sources of Soviet imperialism;' and 'engaging the Soviet Union in negotiations to attempt to reach agreements which protect and enhance U.S. interests and which are consistent with the principle of strict reciprocity and mutual interest.'"

Even with the JCPOA, I do not suspect that the Iranian support for their proxies will automatically abate under this agreement, and I do not think this agreement is a forcing mechanism for modifying Iranian behavior in the region. I do, however, think this agreement takes the near-term scenario of a nuclear-armed Iran bent on supporting its proxies in the Middle East off the table. And I believe it is for the time being sensible for the United States and our partners to take stock of Iran's willingness to comply with this agreement; monitor its activities closely in the region to see if they increase, decrease, or remain the same; and, in parallel, work with our regional partners to counter Iran's asymmetric threats.

On the matter of our regional partners in the Middle East, I see two critical matters that must be addressed.

First, our partners in Israel rightly see Iran as a significant and ongoing threat to their national security. It is incumbent upon the United States to better understand the concerns of the Israelis with respect to their gaps in addressing the Iranian problem set and to identify areas of cooperation on military and intelligence matters that address these gaps and maintain their qualitative military edge at all times.

Second, it is also critical that our partners and allies know that the United States will not abandon the region in the wake of this agreement. This message is critical for all of our partners to hear and understand.

The May 2015 joint statement following the United States and Gulf Cooperation Council meeting at Camp David provided a roadmap for how the administration intends to proceed. The

joint statement indicates that the United States will be increasing training and exercise engagements with GCC special operation forces elements so as to better enable our partners to confront Iran's asymmetric capabilities, as well as enhancing the ballistic missile defense capabilities of the GCC and improving their interoperability to increase collective defense in order to counter Iran's support of terrorist proxies. These are important and essential efforts that will consume significant time and effort in the Middle East, and it will be critical that we ensure that they are resourced appropriately. The added benefit of these activities is that they will provide the U.S. military with additional access and capabilities in the region to ensure that the military option remains credible to the Iranians and available to the President.

Mr. President, I approached this vote with deep suspicion regarding Iran, and I see the agreement for what it is—a combination of opportunities and risks. I believe these negotiations were necessarily focused on denying Iran a pathway to a nuclear weapon. A nuclear-armed Iran would be a formidable force in the Middle East and, as it has repeatedly demonstrated, not a force for peace and stability. Moreover, a nuclear-armed Iran would likely prompt a nuclear arms race in the region that through accident or design could lead to catastrophe. This agreement provides a framework to close off Iran's pathways to a nuclear weapon.

Rejecting the resolution of disapproval is vitally important, but effective, unrelenting implementation of the JCPOA will be the real test. As such, it is critical that both the President and the Congress exert every effort to ensure that there are unstinting efforts to monitor and sustain the provisions of the agreement. This effort demands constant attention and ample—more than ample funding for the indefinite future.

As Gen. Brent Scowcroft, former National Security Advisor to President George Herbert Walker Bush, recently stated in a Washington Post op-ed supporting the agreement:

Implementation and verification will be the key to success, and Congress has an important role. It should ensure that the [IAEA], other relevant bodies and U.S. intelligence agencies have all the resources necessary to facilitate inspection and monitor compliance.

I believe General Scowcroft is correct. Iranian compliance and the implementation phase of this agreement is critical no matter how you vote on the resolution of disapproval.

It is also important that we ensure that the administration is able to follow through on the commitments they have made to our allies and partners in the Middle East, especially to the State of Israel. Again, General Scowcroft makes an excellent point. The United States must work, in his words, "closely with the GCC and other allies

to moderate Iranian behavior in the region, countering it where necessary." Absent support and resourcing for the implementation phase of this agreement, these efforts may not happen and our efforts to reassure our partners in the region may fail.

Soon, this debate will be over. I believe sustaining the JCPOA will leave us in a strong position to counter potential Iranian proliferation. But regardless of the outcome of this debate, we must not relax our efforts in countering Iranian nuclear aspirations, regional aggression, and the sponsorship of terrorism. I believe the JCPOA will give us valuable tools to monitor and interdict their pathways to a nuclear weapon, but it will require day-to-day surveillance and, where necessary, intervention to increase our chances of success.

In many respects, we are at a moment that recalls the emotional words of Winston Churchill:

Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.

We have concluded an agreement that dramatically constrains Iran's nuclear ambitions. Now the hard work begins each day to ensure that our aspirations become real.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LEE). The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I am honored to follow my friend and colleague from Rhode Island in his very eloquent and powerful remarks, and I wish to add my own on the same topic. The question of whether the Senate should accept the agreement between the P5+1 and Iran to end their illicit and treacherous nuclear program is one of the most difficult and critical matters of national security that I have confronted since my election to the Senate.

I am deeply grateful to many in my State of Connecticut, here in Washington, DC, and around the country who have offered me their insight, interest, and involvement—most especially the people of Connecticut who have given me their thoughts in letters, in emails, phone calls, and in one-on-one conversations across our State in a vast variety of settings, whether at parades or fairs or in one-on-one meetings or meetings in groups. I have made my decision based on conscience and conviction. I will vote to accept the proposed agreement concerning Iran's nuclear program and against the resolution of disapproval before the Senate.

My two paramount goals have been consistently and constantly to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran and to do so by peaceful means. I believe this agreement, using diplomacy, not military force, is the most viable remaining path now available—now available—to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran.

This agreement is not the one I would have negotiated or accepted, but

it is better than no deal. This agreement is an opportunity for us to push back and deter Iran, and it brings on us a special obligation of vigilance and vigorous enforcement. It can be made better. It can be improved and strengthened through unilateral action by the United States and through consultation and collaboration with our allies, not resuming or reopening the negotiations but acting in collaboration with our allies, as well as through actions we can take as a nation alone and working closely with our ally, our friend, our critical partner in the Middle East, the State of Israel.

The administration set forth a case that the current agreement immediately reduces Iran's nuclear program and places it under a series of overlapping safeguards. Together these measures push a threshold nuclear power back from the brink. The agreement imposes an intrusive inspection and surveillance regime relying on international certification and verification by the International Atomic Energy Agency. Future U.S. Presidents have the authority immediately and through Executive order to reimpose our sanctions if Iranian actions are inconsistent with our national security.

Rejecting this agreement is fraught with unacceptable risk. Our formal negotiation partners and allies have signaled clearly they are simply not coming back to the table—a point confirmed in my direct conversations and meetings. There is no better deal available now. The present sanctions will soon become unenforceable, producing an economic windfall for Iran whether or not the United States accepts this agreement. The United States, instead of Iran, would be isolated, and Iran's nuclear program would be unconstrained. Rejection would fracture our unified efforts with our allies and greatly weaken international pressure on Iran and undermine American leadership on this issue and others, especially if economic sanctions are needed in the event of a violation.

This agreement has shortcomings, no doubt, and they are serious. I have listened to my colleagues, including Chairman CORKER, whom I deeply respect, and others here today, enumerate a number of them. Yet I remain convinced the most constructive and clear-eyed role for Congress is to support specific steps to make implementation and enforcement of this agreement stronger and more effective. In fact, in my view, the day after this agreement is approved and accepted is as important as the agreement itself—the day after, the months after, and the years after because that is when this agreement must be enforced vigorously and strenuously and unyieldingly.

I have taken additional time to look beyond this agreement to create a blueprint for diplomatic steps to strengthen it. Specifically, I am working with the ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee,

Senator BEN CARDIN of Maryland, to craft new legislation. Congress must act to encourage and enable diplomacy with Iran, which is not only possible but critically important. Now we must begin the process of addressing those shortfalls and shortcomings, unwanted impacts and consequences revealed during congressional review of the agreement.

No. 1, countering Iranian terror with dollar-for-dollar sanctions. To counter Iran's role as a leading state sponsor of terrorism, Congress must sustain and expand existing sanctions that crack down on terror financing and demand their full enforcement by both the United States and the European Union.

I will continue—indeed, I will increase—pressing Secretary of State John Kerry to take long overdue, aggressive steps to interdict arms to Hezbollah, and I will work to block Hezbollah's financing and logistical support from Iran, applying tools and techniques available through our banking and financial system.

No. 2, empowering our allies to counter Iran and terror proxies. We must renew and reinvigorate our efforts to protect our allies, especially Israel—our major strategic partner in the Middle East—from the threat of Iran and its terror proxies. We need a new framework of defense cooperation that takes into account how this agreement will affect the changing threat from Iran.

Congress must work to expand Israel's qualitative military edge and bolster intelligence cooperation. The Pentagon must establish new joint training exercises that involve strategic air assets and invite Israeli pilots to train flying long-range bombers. Now is the time to aid Israel with extra F-35 Joint Strike Fighter squadrons and the tankers they need to cut off any threat to Israel—well before it reaches their borders. No equipment should be precluded if needed for Israel's self-defense.

As a member of the Senate Committee on Armed Services, I will work to establish such a parallel agreement with Israel to cover threats, both nuclear and conventional, along with an ongoing joint review forum, bringing together the United States, Israel, and NATO members to enhance our deterrent capabilities.

No. 3, preventing a nuclear-armed Iran. The United States must reaffirm unequivocally that Iran will never be allowed to obtain a nuclear weapon and that all available options will be used to stop it from ever accumulating enough highly enriched uranium or weapons-grade plutonium to produce one. Such a policy is consistent with this agreement.

Congress must articulate in statute that that policy is unchallengeable and that Iranian violations both during this agreement and afterward will be met with strong, unquestionable action. It must be clear we will defend our vital interests in the Persian Gulf

region, and those vital interests include preventing a nuclear-armed Iran. It is a fundamental tenet of our foreign policy.

As a member of the agreement, the United States is in a stronger position to deter and remedy violations, whether through economic sanctions or military action as a last resort. If the agreement is rejected and economic sanctions or military actions are ever necessary, we would act alone. That is a simple fact about our rejection. If the agreement is accepted, we act with a coalition of allies and partners with the legitimacy and credibility of diplomacy having run its course and with the intelligence produced by inspections that will help to guide any military action necessary as a last resort. There will be popular support at home, which is absolutely necessary for such action. That support is essential because acting without it will make it difficult, if not impossible, for the President to in effect seek to enforce the very terms of an agreement this Nation has rejected, if that is the result.

Most importantly, this agreement cannot be based on hope or trust. History belies both in our experience with Iran. This deal is not an agreement I have long sought, it is not the agreement I would have preferred, but it makes the threat of a nuclear-armed Iran less imminent. It requires the United States and the international community to sustain their commitment to verify and enforce its provisions over many years, and I am ready to join in the hard work of preventing a nuclear-armed Iran on this difficult diplomatic path.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, I come to the floor to discuss what I believe is probably the most important foreign policy issue I have worked on in my time in the Senate. It is one of great consequence to our Nation and also to our allies.

I don't come to this decision lightly, but there are many reasons I would urge this body to disapprove the agreement that has been entered into between the Obama administration, the Iranian Government, and the P5+1 nations.

First of all, we need to understand the country we are dealing with. Just today the Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said: I am saying to Israel that they won't live to see the end of these 25 years. With Allah's help, there will be no such thing as a Zionist regime in 25 years.

Of course, this is not the first time we have heard this from the Supreme Leader or the leaders of Iran. We are in this position even after having entered this agreement and having had the President go to the U.N. to seek approval of this agreement prior to coming to the Congress. We know that while this agreement was being negotiated, the Iranian Foreign Minister

was smiling for the cameras and negotiating the agreement, while the President of Iran was actually at rallies in Iran where they were shouting “Down with America” and “Death to Israel.”

Iran itself has a history that is important for us to understand. That history is a history of noncompliance. Iran has time and time again failed to comply with U.N. resolutions and failed to meet its obligations. Iran has violated U.N. Security Council resolutions. Iran has violated the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in the past. Iran has consistently been unresponsive to the International Atomic Energy Agency in the past—the IAEA—and Iran has failed to answer questions about its past nuclear weapons activities. If there is no covert, undeclared nuclear facility in Iran today, Olli Heinonen, a former IAEA Deputy Director, has said it would be the first time in 20 years.

So one of the important issues, I believe, for any of us in reviewing this agreement is: What is the inspection regime that would be put in place to assure not only that we are doing a full inspection at the declared facilities of Iran but also the undeclared facilities? The reality is that under this agreement, the process for seeking inspection by the IAEA for undeclared facilities is a process that only a lawyer could love—and I happen to be one—because if we look at the language of the actual agreement, we will see in paragraph 75 that “if the IAEA has concerns regarding undeclared nuclear materials or activities, or activities inconsistent with the JCPOA, at locations that have not been declared under the comprehensive safeguards agreement” the IAEA first has to “provide Iran [with] the basis for such concerns and request clarification.”

So that is the first step. Then, “if Iran’s explanations do not resolve the IAEA’s concerns, the Agency may request access to such locations for the sole reason to verify the absence of undeclared nuclear materials and activities” and the IAEA also has to “provide Iran the reasons for access in writing and will make available all relevant information.”

Then, Iran may come back and “propose to the IAEA alternative means of resolving the IAEA’s concerns that enable the IAEA to verify the absence of undeclared nuclear materials and activities”

So if those alternatives aren’t accepted from Iran, then, “if the two sides are unable to reach satisfactory agreements to verify the absence of” an undeclared nuclear facility, then at that point there is a process that goes into place, and that process—which has been described on this Senate floor—can take up to 24 days.

But we need to understand there is a whole litigation process that occurs even before those days, and this can be a much longer process.

Then, how does this get resolved? This gets resolved essentially by a

committee process. So then we have a committee resolve all of this. That is why I say this is a lawyer’s dream in terms of an inspection regime here.

Then, if we look at paragraph 78 of the agreement, “The members of the Joint Commission, by consensus or by a vote of 5 or more of its 8 members, would advise on the necessary means to resolve the IAEA’s concerns.”

This process, if we add up all the days, is a lengthy process. Again, it certainly is so far away from the anytime, anywhere inspection regime. We have to understand that Iran has a history of using every means possible to delay inspections, especially to areas that are undeclared or they are trying to hide their nuclear facilities. That is why I describe it as an inspection regime that only a lawyer could love because this will allow Iran to litigate access to their undeclared sites, and we already know they have a history of doing that.

One of the issues I have taken a keen interest in since I have been in the Senate is Iran’s missile program. We have heard all along from the administration that they were not going to address Iran’s support of terrorism, that they were going to keep that issue separate—that they were going to keep separate issues of Iran’s support for terrorism around the world—we have heard about that in this debate today—their support for groups like Hezbollah, Hamas, their support for the Houthis in Yemen, their support for the Taliban in Afghanistan, their support for terrorism around the world. Yet at the last minute in this agreement, the administration conceded two incredibly important points: No. 1, allowing Iran to have the resolutions lifted on having arms sales and transactions within 5 years, and then, No. 2, within 8 years, lifting the U.N. resolutions on missiles or ICBMs.

As our own Secretary of Defense has described, the significance of course in ICBMs is the “I,” which means intercontinental, meaning missiles that can hit the United States of America. Yet that was lifted at the last minute, and that was lifted over the objections, over the recommendations of our highest military officer, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Chairman Martin Dempsey.

This has been a focus of mine in the Senate because I have been concerned that we have heard in the Armed Services Committee from many of our top defense and intelligence officials that the preferred method for Iran to deliver a nuclear weapon to the United States of America would be an ICBM and that this certainly represents a threat to America and to our allies.

In fact, I was so concerned about this that last summer I wrote the President of the United States, and 26 Senators joined me in the letter that I wrote to the President. In that letter, I expressed the belief that the Iranian deal should address Iran’s ICBM missile program. The reason I wrote and led this

effort is because we had been hearing for years before the Senate Armed Services Committee from people such as the Director of National Intelligence, James Clapper, who testified before the committee in February of 2014, that “we judge that Iran would choose a ballistic missile as its preferred method of delivering nuclear weapons.”

In 2013, we also heard from Director Clapper that the Iranians are developing two systems that could have intercontinental capability as early as 2015. Here we are in 2015. Some have estimated it may take a few more years. Regardless, according to public testimony from our intelligence community, Iran could have ICBM capability in the next few years, and here we have, in conjunction with this agreement, our blessing because we agreed that the U.N. resolution against their missile program that said, no, Iran, you cannot have ICBM capability, now it is OK. It will be legitimate for them to have ICBM capability.

Why do they need ICBM capability if they don’t have any interest in delivering the most destructive weapons to the world—to countries on the other side of the world, including our own?

So as I said, this issue was against the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff’s advice. When I heard public reports—there were reports bubbling up about the agreement before it was signed that Iran was pressuring, with support from other countries like Russia, to lift the arms embargo, to lift the missile embargo. I was so worried about it that a week before the agreement I asked Chairman Dempsey in the Armed Services Committee, on July 7, about the reports that these resolutions may be lifted on arms and missiles. He told me that under no circumstances should we relieve pressure on Iran relative to ballistic missile capability and arms trafficking. Yet that is exactly what happens in this agreement.

The Chairman came back to our committee after the agreement was signed to testify about the agreement, and I asked him again about including this in the agreement. He told me it was against his military advice to lift the arms resolution and to lift the missile resolution.

So as I look at the grave concerns we should have for our national security, this is one of the top concerns—an insufficient inspection regime legitimizing their ability to have ICBM capability, allowing them in 5 years to legitimately have more arms. We already know they are supplying arms and cash around the world to their terrorist proxies. This agreement of course gives them, within a 9-month period, billions of dollars more cash to support terrorism.

One of the things I have heard on the floor today from my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who are supporting this agreement is that somehow this leaves on the table all of the

tools we need to deal with Iran's support for terrorism—which, of course, destabilizes the region. Except the problem is that nobody has told the Iranians this point because they have a very different viewpoint on this agreement. Iran has taken the position that if any of the sanctions are reimposed, they can walk away from the agreement.

If we look at paragraph 26 of this agreement, I would argue the language in the agreement actually allows them to make that argument, unfortunately.

Tehran has specifically stated that it will treat the imposition of any sanctions that are similar to those that were in place before this deal as a reason to walk away.

So why is this important? It is important because we know they support terrorism around the world. My colleagues have said we have to deal with their support for terrorism, and we still have the tools in our toolbox to issue tough sanctions to deal with their terrorism, even while being part of this agreement. The problem is that the language doesn't necessarily bear that out in the agreement.

In a July 20 letter, Iran told the U.N. Security Council that it would "reconsider its commitments under the JCPOA if the effects of the termination of the Security Council, European Union, or United States nuclear-related sanctions or restrictive measures are impaired by continued application or the imposition of new sanctions with a nature and scope identical or similar to those that were in place prior to the implementation date, irrespective of whether such new sanctions are introduced on nuclear-related or other grounds, unless the issues are remedied within a reasonably short time."

In other words, Iran is taking the viewpoint, under the language of this agreement, that if we reimpose any of the sanctions that are lifted as part of this agreement—which, by the way, these are the toughest sanctions, right? These are the tools in our toolbox—even if they commit acts of terrorism, they can walk away from this agreement.

So let's put this all together. Iran, within 9 months, gets more cash for this agreement. They get to keep their infrastructure for their nuclear program because they get to keep their centrifuges. They are now in a position where people are doing business with them—because we know that many countries around the world want to be able to do business with Iran, so an infusion of cash and relationships there. And then they are continuing to support terrorism. They commit through their proxies a major terrorist event that triggers something that we want to do here—we want to take tough sanctions against them because they have supported a terrorist attack against us or our allies. Yet they are going to take the position that we can't reimpose any of their sanctions

no matter what they do because of the language of the agreement in paragraph 26. They are interpreting it that way.

So if you are Iran, right now, this is a pretty good deal for you. You can get the cash. You can get the legitimization. People are doing business with you again. You can continue to support terrorism, and our hands apparently, in their view, are tied on sanctions.

So when I hear from those supporting the agreement that somehow we still have all the tools in our toolbox to deal with terrorism, it seems to me that if we look at the language of this agreement and how the Iranians are supporting it, we have tied our hands, and we will be in a weaker position to deal with their support for terrorism around the world no matter how egregious their behavior is.

This is a real issue when I think about our national security, when they have the largest state sponsor of terrorism in the world and they will now have legitimate access to developing their ICBM program with the lifting of sanctions in the U.N. and the legitimate purchasing of arms. We know there are countries like Russia that are lining up to sell these arms to them, and then we are going to weaken our ability to impose terrorism-related sanctions in the future.

I heard many of my colleagues talking earlier about the 60-vote threshold in the United States Senate. When we voted on the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act, we voted on it, I believe, 98 to 1. We would think at that point we wouldn't be worried at all about actually getting to the debate on the actual bill. So I hope my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, when they voted for the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act, were serious about having a substantive vote, given that this was a vote of 98 to 1 on this agreement. I believe the American people deserve nothing less than a substantive vote on the merits of this agreement as provided for by the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act.

I know that many of my colleagues are here to speak, but I want to raise one final issue that we have heard about on this floor; that is, actually being able to see the full text of this agreement. We all know that when you have an agreement, especially with a country that has a history of cheating, language matters. We know that because the Iranians are already taking all kinds of different positions on what the language means in this agreement to their benefit. Yet we have not been given access to the two-side agreements between the IAEA and Iran. By the way, that is in direct violation of the express language of the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act, which says Congress should have access to side agreements. But what we do know about these side agreements that has been reported in the press is truly disturbing; that is, as to the side agree-

ments themselves, information has been leaked that indicates Tehran could declare some areas as suspected nuclear sites, including the Parchin military complex, off-limits to inspectors and that Iran could even be permitted to self-inspect there.

Can you imagine allowing a country with a history of cheating the ability to self-inspect or collect their own samples in terms of how inspections would be done? Yet those who are supporting the agreement are saying this is a robust inspection method.

I would ask my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who are supporting this agreement, does it not trouble you that you have not been given access to the language of these side agreements given that what has been leaked about them is that they pertain to the actual inspection process at important sites such as Parchin? I would hope that our constituents would expect us to review every word of the language of something so important to our national security. That, in and of itself, I would say, is a reason to be highly skeptical of this agreement, along with the other issues I have raised.

Finally, we have a long history in this body of debating important international agreements, including agreements that deal with very fundamental issues involving our foreign policy—issues that involve nuclear non-proliferation, issues that involve many sensitive treaty issues. We have a long history of actually debating these in a bipartisan manner and working in a bipartisan manner to approve agreements. Yet on this agreement, we are left in a position where a majority of the Senate on a bipartisan basis has said that we have serious reservations about this agreement and have declared that we are going to vote against this agreement. Yet the administration is continuing to push forward to get this done, to make sure that this agreement is fully implemented without reaching out in a bipartisan fashion to ensure that the strength of the Congress in a bipartisan fashion is behind something so important to our national security.

That should say something about the merits of this agreement. This agreement is deeply flawed. This is an agreement that I believe does not protect our national security. In fact, in the long run it will undermine our security in this country by giving Iran more cash, legitimizing their nuclear weapons program in terms of keeping their infrastructure for that program, legitimizing their ICBM program, and hurting our ability to impose further sanctions if they conduct acts of terrorism, which they certainly have a history of doing through their proxies.

I hope as we continue this debate, we will disapprove this agreement, which I do not believe protects our national security.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I intend to speak at much greater length on this issue perhaps tomorrow. I am pleased to have the opportunity to participate in this colloquy. I will be brief. I know my colleagues are waiting to speak also.

First, I want to commend Senator CORKER, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Together with his work with Senator CARDIN, we have a bipartisan agreement supported by some of the most knowledgeable foreign policy experts on the Democratic side and on the Republican side before us. Had Senator CORKER not been able to make that arrangement, it would have been a done deal before the Congress even saw what was agreed to in this negotiation with Iran.

I think my colleagues here have been amazed at the difference between what we were told the agreement did and didn't do and what we actually learned it does and doesn't do as we pored over it, word by word, annex through annex, looking at every piece of information here that is relevant to our decision. I am thankful for the work of Senator CORKER, who has taken some heat for not doing more. He saved us and saved the American people from not having the ability for us to examine this in detail. That is what this debate here is all about. The American people deserve to know what is in this agreement. The consequences of this for the future of America, for the future of the world are significant and almost mind-boggling. We have to get it right. To get it right, we need to read every word.

Here I am, shortly after the delivery of the 157 pages, together with the annexes, over a weekend poring through each sentence, trying to understand exactly what we have here and what we are dealing with, and I am amazed at what I have come up with. Instead of going through the various items—I will talk about more about this tomorrow, and it has been well presented by my colleague from New Hampshire and others this afternoon, including the majority leader—I would like to discuss something that I don't think has been raised yet. That something is the ambiguity that exists throughout this agreement and particularly in the annexes to the agreement. We know that there are two secret agreements which we don't have access to. How anyone can go forward and support an arrangement when you have side secret agreements and you are not allowed to know what they are—that in and of itself should be reason not to support an agreement. But having said that, let me spend a little bit of time regarding these ambiguities and the vagueness of some of the language here that I think have major implications.

The annex uses familiar forms of mushy language. I am going to quote here: “as determined,” “where appropriate,” “among others,” “as mutually determined,” and “when beneficial.” What are the actual obligations that

we are undertaking if we vote for this agreement that is full of words like that? This is not clear to me, nor would I think it is clear to anyone in the administration.

We questioned the administration on this issue. They have essentially said: Well, this is to be determined at a later date or if this issue comes up, we will try to get some consensus on how to go forward. My own conclusion is that this language is not a mistake. These people who negotiated on our benefit have had a lifetime of negotiating engagement. I assume many of them were attorneys, lawyers that know and understand that a definition of a word or a phrase is everything. You have to understand exactly what it is or you are going to end up with confusion.

These ambiguous obligations, I think, were purposefully designed to placate the Iranians, offering them a vision of a robust military nuclear infrastructure, developed not only with the acquiescence of the West but with our material assistance. Further, if we examine the agreement text—let alone the annex text—this same pattern with misleading ambiguity holds. In many of the detailed commitments that are specified in the agreement and the annexes available to us, these conditional ambiguous terms dominate.

I couldn't help but notice that this wasn't an occasional occurrence. I asked my staff to go through and look at some of these ambiguous definitions and count the number of them. The phrase “as appropriate” or “where appropriate”—“achieving this as appropriate” or “obligated to this as appropriate” or “where appropriate”—was sprinkled throughout the text 34 times. “As mutually determined” or “by consensus to be concluded” occurred 28 times, implying that future agreements or conditional commitments are there as against current commitments. At the same time, the phrase “Iran intends to” occurs more frequently than it should in place of affirmative obligations.

To any lawyer representing a client, whether you are buying a house, leasing a car, leasing an apartment or entering into a business contract, you can go to that lawyer and basically say: Look, I want an out. Or if you are on the other end of the negotiating process, you can say: Put some ambiguous vague language in there—“to be determined,” “as appropriate,” “by consensus”—so that if something goes wrong here, I have an excuse to opt out.

I think that is exactly what Iran was trying to do. If we come up with what we think is a breach of the agreement, it is easy for Iran to say: That needs to be by consensus; and without consensus, we see that as saying such and such, and you see it wrong. If we press the case with Iran, that, of course, gives them the option of withdrawing from the agreement. At an important time, now having over \$100 billion in their hands, now having signed up con-

tracts with many nations around the world—long-term contracts for delivery of oil, minerals or whatever—now having put themselves in a much different position with the sanctions lifted, they may use that exact language as a means of escaping. Or if you turn it on its head and turn it the other way around, Iran says: Well, wait a minute; our intentions are such and such. You didn't understand what we were trying to say to you.

Then how are we going to respond? This puts us in a very tenuous position.

I can recall a number of times when I told my wife: I thought you were going to stop and pick up milk on the way home.

Well, I intended to do that, but I got a phone call.

Wait a minute. I thought you were going to clean the garage on Saturday.

I intended to do that, but Joe called and said: Let's go play golf.

I intended. It was a good intention. That is fine in any kind of a marital relationship or any other kind of relationship. Many of those are just meaningless things. But when you are talking about an agreement that binds the United States on the basis of how its negotiating adversary interprets and uses these words, it can put you in real trouble.

I don't think anybody has talked about that yet. I wanted to bring that up. As I said, I am going to be talking about my position and how I came to the decision not to support this tomorrow. This is a sloppily written agreement that can bind the United States to obligations that we are not even yet aware of and that can give Iran an out if it so chooses. It comes to that point in time when, with a 3-month or so breakout toward having nuclear weapon capability, they simply say: Sanctions are gone, we have our money, we have done the research, even some with assistance of U.S. scientists and the members of the negotiating team, we are in a great position to go forward, and we are just going to do it. We can use this language to opt-out of the agreement. That is just one more reason why each of us should carefully try to understand what is and what isn't in this agreement and weigh this as we try to make a judgment in terms of whether we should go forward or whether we have signed on to a very bad deal here and should vote against it.

With that, I yield to my colleagues who have been patiently waiting to speak.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment and recap the day and some of the issues I heard on the floor. I have been on the floor quite a bit today and heard a lot of the debate. As I processed through some of the debate, I heard—and we will see if some of my colleagues agree with this—a lot of conversation on the details of the agreement in trying to

walk through the actual process. What does the text say? There seem to be two very different opinions about this. I will share what I am hearing.

There are key things that Iran needs to be able to complete a nuclear weapon, and it doesn't seem that this agreement stops them in the process, and it seems that the goal of this agreement was to stop them from acquiring a nuclear weapon.

What does Iran need? Well, they need time. This agreement gives them time. It lays out a schedule, backs up and slows down the process of inspections. It allows them time to be able to finish their research.

It allows them money. That is a key aspect that they need not only for their funding of terrorism but to actually be able to complete the technological research they have to have in those facilities. Billions of dollars are released to Iran almost immediately in this agreement for them to be able to complete their research.

It allows them ballistic missile capability, which is shocking to a lot of people I talked to in my State. They assume this deal actually slows down their ballistic missile research and capability. It actually doesn't. It actually paves the path for them and gives them permission to continue their ballistic missile research.

It allows them to be able to continue toward highly enriched uranium. Again, a lot of people I talked to have been surprised at that because the assumption was, after hearing about it from the President so many times, they shouldn't be allowed to have uranium and shouldn't be allowed to do that. That was the conversation 5 years ago, but now the conversation is, how much uranium can they enrich and what does that look like?

There have been some conversations today by individuals who have said that this will decrease the number of centrifuges they have. That is entirely correct. It does decrease the number of centrifuges, but let me give an illustration. If your company had 20 computers that were built in 1995 and you were told you could replace those 20 computers from 1995 with 3 computers from this year, would you take that deal? I bet you would. That is the deal we are giving to Iran. We are telling them they will have to get rid of two-thirds of their oldest centrifuges—their oldest, originally built—but they can still keep 5,000 of even their oldest centrifuges and they can install 1,000 of their newest technology centrifuges and keep those going. I would certainly think that is a deal they would take—and by the way, they are taking it, and they are asking us to take it as well.

They have time, they have money, they have ballistic missile research, they have highly enriched uranium and the permission to be able to continue their work on their most advanced centrifuges, and they have additional defensive capabilities. They are allowed to continue to stockpile conventional

weapons under this agreement and to even add things such as surface-to-air defense capabilities to be able to defend their military sites.

So you tell me, does Iran have what it needs to be able to complete a nuclear weapon under this deal—time, money, ballistic missiles, ability to be able to complete their research, advanced centrifuges, and defensive weaponry to be able to put around their facilities? Yes.

Here are some of the things which we don't know, which we really can't discuss, and which we would appreciate being able to discuss today—the side deals. We have the documents that have come in. In fact, I have posted them on my Web site, and many others have done the same. We want Americans to be able to read those things because most Americans, when they read them, are stunned with what this agreement says. But what we can't get is the side deal.

Again, I have heard over and over from the President that we are not going to trust Iran, we are going to verify. We don't trust, we are going to verify. Literally, with the side agreements—people keep hearing “What is the side agreement?” Here is what the side agreement is. The main agreement gives broad parameters. For instance, it says we will have inspections. Well, that is great. How are the inspections to be done? Well, that is in the side agreement. So we are agreeing that, yes, there will be inspections. When we asked the question about how the inspections were to be done, we were told that we can't read that document, that it is a separate agreement between the U.N. and Iran. Literally I cannot verify how we are going to verify. I have been told to trust and verify. I can't verify how we are verifying. That seems absurd to me, and it is hard for me to imagine anyone in this body would say: Yes, I would sign off on something I have never read and have never seen. In fact, the people in the administration have said they have never read or seen it. Yet we are being asked to sign off on it and to give our authorization to say: Yes, we will support that. I have a problem with that, and it is one of many reasons why I cannot support this deal.

What I have heard over and over again by individuals who do support this deal today is that this is the deal, it is in front of us, the President has agreed to it, and it will look bad if we don't agree to it. My problem is not looking bad; my problem is a nuclear-armed Iran. That is the problem. At the end of the day, this is not about saving face as America, this is about protecting U.S. interests and U.S. citizens and those of our friends in the gulf. This is not about saving face for the President.

I have heard over and over again: It would be too hard to get the coalition back together to be able to renegotiate this. May I remind everyone that the reason we have this coalition together

is because the crippling sanctions are one thing—you cannot do business with America and with Iran. That is the deal. If we continue the sanctions in place, it is not about getting the band back together, it is about leaving those sanctions in place, and if you want to do business with the United States, you will also have to agree to not do business with Iran. It is not about getting everyone back together. Leave them in place and let's finish renegotiating it.

I have heard over and over again: It is either war or it is this. Quite frankly, I think this deal in its place takes us closer to a conventional war. Why? Because it allows Iran to begin to almost immediately begin stockpiling conventional weapons. Those in the gulf region are so concerned about that that we are promising them they can get more weapons and buy more advanced weapons from us. How does a conventional arms race in the Middle East take us further from war? Under this agreement, it destabilizes.

I have heard over and over again today: What is our message to the world when the rest of the world has signed off on this and yet we say no? Well, here is our message to the world: Iran is screaming “Death to America,” not death to other countries, except for Israel. They are chanting “Death to Israel.” Israel is also standing up and saying: This is a terrible deal for our nation and the stability of the world.

It is not about our message to the world; it is about standing up and being the world's superpower. That is who we are. Let's take responsibility for our position in the world and be able to finish well while we are doing it.

I have also heard multiple times today: Well, let's sign off on this deal and then we will have tougher diplomacy in the future. I have to say that every time I heard that, I smiled and thought, are you kidding me? What do you mean, we will sign off on this deal and then we will do tougher diplomacy in the future? With what leverage? This is our leverage. The sanctions are the leverage. We are not going to get tougher in the future. This is the toughest moment. It gets softer from here.

Iran is still the single largest sponsor of terrorism in the world. They made no change in their actions against Yemen and leading the coup in Yemen. They made no change in their actions propping up Assad in Syria.

We are giving this away if we sign on to this agreement. This deal is built on hope, not on facts and trust, and I know everyone in this body hopes to get a diplomatic solution. We cannot base an agreement with Iran on hope. If we cannot verify it, if we cannot see the documents, if there has been no change in behavior, I think we should assume we still have status quo Iran.

Let's push back. Let's get the better deal. Let's not allow advanced centrifuges to stay in place. Let's not

allow them to continue their ballistic missile testing. These are not hard issues to be able to finish. The deal is half-cooked. Let's get it fully baked, and let's finish a diplomatic solution but not just hope that this works out in the days ahead.

With that, I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I rise tonight to speak about a very troubled time in my life and in this body. I didn't think this moment would arise in my tenure here in the U.S. Senate, but tonight I am very troubled about being a Member of this body.

Just a few short months ago, we told the American people, in our Foreign Relations Committee, that we could work together. We unanimously passed a bill that gave this body, the U.S. Congress, a right that the President and his administration had denied us by not allowing this to be treated as a treaty. Yet we stand here tonight—even though a unanimous bill came out of the committee and 98 Senators voted for us to get a look and a vote on this deal—without the ability to tell the people back home that we will, in fact, have a vote on this deal. I find that terribly troubling. As a matter of fact, I am embarrassed. The people back home deserve better than this body is providing.

There is bipartisan opposition to this deal. There are good Democrats who in their deep conscience are going to oppose the President, and I respect that, but there is not bipartisan support for this deal. There is a huge difference. Only one group in this body is supporting this President's deal with Iran. I am troubled by that.

I applaud Senator CARDIN, the ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee. I applaud Senator CORKER as the chairman of that committee. Under their leadership, we got to this point. Without this deal, without a vote, we wouldn't even be sitting here tonight. We would already be implementing this deal, and we would have told the American people: Yes, we don't have the constitutional balance between the United States and the House of Representatives and the legislative branch that the Constitution calls for. We gave up.

Well, here we are. I would like for every Member of this body who is going to vote for this deal to answer to the people back home: How does this make the world safer for their children and their children's children?

In the Presiding Officer's business career and in my business career, we have seen a lot of deals and we have negotiated a lot of deals. The way I look at deals is to try to evaluate what both sides get in a deal. So let's look at this from that perspective.

First of all, Iran gets a windfall for bad behavior. They have 30 years of noncompliance with NPT requirements, and the first thing we are going to do is give them a windfall—somewhere between \$60 and \$150 billion.

We know by the administration's own admission that we can depend on some of that money—last year \$6 billion went to terrorist support around the Middle East and other parts of the world from Iran. Last year Iran spent \$17 billion supporting their own military. That puts this windfall into perspective. One of the first things Iran did when the administration announced this deal is they sent representatives to Moscow. Does it take much imagination to see that their behavior is not going to change in this deal just because we give them a windfall? As a matter of fact, we are encouraging bad behavior.

Second, I would like to know where our four American hostages are. They get to keep them.

Third, Iran gets to enrich. This is my biggest problem, and I have said it many times. My biggest problem with this deal is that we gave up the ability right off the bat to stop Iran from enriching. To me, that is the fundamental problem in this deal. Breakout without enriching capabilities is 2 to 3 years, not 2 to 3 months like this deal provides. As a matter of fact, the President himself said this deal, after 13 years, allows Iran to have a breakout period that is basically zero. Who are we kidding here? And after 15 years, all bets are off. What we have done is provided a pathway to enriched uranium, and I find that very troubling.

Unlike many other countries that have similar nuclear programs that are peaceful and are not allowed to enrich, we allowed this bad actor to step up and be treated the same as countries such as Germany, Japan, Holland, Brazil, and Argentina. I find that very troubling.

Fourth, they get access to the world's arms market in just 5 short years. Why is that important? It is important because of their support of terrorism, but also, more importantly, it gives them access to a nuclear weapons capability through technology available only through the arms market.

Fifth, after 8 short years, they get access to the intercontinental ballistic missiles technology. Why in the world does a rogue nation like Iran that says they only want a civil nuclear program for power generation—why in the world in the eleventh hour do this administration and our negotiators give up and give them the right to have access, after 8 short years, to ballistic missile technology? They currently have a missile that has a 1,200-mile range. That very easily brings Israel and Eastern Europe into range. If they have access in 8 years to ballistic missile technology, their only intent can be to have a missile that can deliver a missile armed with a nuclear warhead to Washington, DC, and points beyond. I find that very troubling.

Sixth, Iran gets access to technology for centrifuges. This is almost the most unbelievable thing. Not only do they get to keep every centrifuge, they are not destroying every centrifuge; they

don't have to destroy any one. But I agree with what Senator LANKFORD just said, and that is this: They have antiques right now. What we are allowing them to do is to trade up to modern technology, and IR-6 and IR-8 centrifuges. There is only one reason for that. It shortens the time for them to develop enough fissile material to have a nuclear weapon.

Seventh, Iran gets to limit and delay inspectors. This is only important because we allow them to enrich; don't miss that. But what we have done is allow them to dictate the inspection protocol. I have never seen a deal where that was allowed, honest to goodness. This to me is unconscionable. The fact that we have secret deals, yes, this is important, but the fact that we are allowing them—with no U.S. participation, by the way, on the ground in Iran with the IAEA—we are allowing Iran to actually take samples under the protocol of inspection.

The side deals are unconscionable. I would never in business sign a deal where every legal document was not exposed. How in the world—I understand these side agreements are normal operating procedure within the IAEA and their countries that they are inspecting. This is different. This is a public global deal, dealing with a rogue country such as Iran, and we need to see that. I can't imagine how we would approve a deal—anybody would approve a deal and go home and explain to their constituents how this makes sense for the safety of their children and grandchildren when we don't know what is in every legal document.

Now, what did we get? I would argue that basically, from what I hear, the No. 1 goal of this administration is a legacy for this failed President. I am sorry, but that is the only real benefit I can see. We get Iran, the world's largest sponsor of terrorism and proven violator of past nuclear agreements to promise to be a good actor. Really? That is what we get? Yet, the Ayatollah just today—just today—said that Israel will not exist in 25 years. This does not sound to me like a good actor who is going to change their behavior because we have brought them into the community of nations.

Why do we believe the word of a nation that has been a revolutionary pariah since 1979? Have we forgotten that 52 United States American citizens, members of our embassy, for 444 days were held hostage in Tehran just 35 short years ago? This is the same regime, these are the same clerics, the same mentality, that created that situation. We just now have entered into the most devastating foreign policy agreement in my lifetime and maybe in the history of the United States. No deal that I can read in history puts the United States in more jeopardy going forward than this nuclear deal with Iran.

Under this deal, we get an Iran that will continue its bad behavior. I think that is easy to predict. Their sponsorship of terror continues. Their human

rights violations have worsened. Even during the negotiations, they continued to back Assad's murderous regime in Syria, which is the source of one of the most devastating humanitarian crises of the 21st century that is just now coming to light.

The Presiding Officer and I made a trip, along with the leader, just a few months ago. We sat in Jordan and we listened to the plea of those people over there who are receiving refugees. They are telling us how serious this plight is. Now the media has picked up on it, and we see the devastating impact of what is going on in the Middle East. This deal is a manifestation of a much bigger problem.

This President has failed in this foreign policy requirement that the executive branch is given in our Constitution. This is just a manifestation of a bigger failure, but it is devastating to the future security of our kids. Today, Iran has a national holiday called Death to America Day. As a matter of fact, one of the hostages, one of the four hostages just this year, earlier this year, was moved from the second worst prison in Iran to the worst prison in Iran, and guess what day he was moved on? Death to America Day. I find that insulting.

As we just heard, there are three things—I have a little different view of what a country needs to have a nuclear weapon. First of all, I am an engineer, so this will be very pedantic, and I will move very quickly with this. But, quickly, a country needs three things. First of all, they have to have fissile material. We allow this in this deal. There is a pathway for them to get there legally. They don't have to violate this agreement. They will eventually get there in a very short period of time.

The second thing is they have to have a device for a warhead. In five short years they have access to the military arms community where that is totally accessible today.

Third, they have to have a delivery mechanism. In eight short years, as we just said, they will have access to intercontinental ballistic missile technology. Basically, in eight years, if they want to break out, they will have missile technology that can bring a missile warhead right down on our heads here in this chamber.

Without domestic enrichment, Iran's breakout period is really 2 to 3 years, again, not 2 to 3 months. President Obama has claimed that we could not get a deal without giving them the right to enrich. I don't understand that. This brought them to the table in the first place. We gave up on that too early. The President gave us a false choice, and I am insulted by that, and people back home are too. It is either this deal—and everybody agrees this is a bad deal; even the Democrats today are telling us how flawed this deal is. I didn't hear one person today stand up and tell us how great this deal was. Basically, I heard this is the best deal we

can get. Let's give it a try. We can't be any worse off in 10 years. I would argue yes, we can, and yes, we will be worse off in 10 years.

It is absolutely possible to have a better deal. We don't need P5+1 if, in fact, we have the determination to make our own sanctions stick. This \$18 trillion economy is big enough to bring them back to the table and absolutely get the kind of deal that would protect our kids and grandkids.

In previous deals with South Africa and Libya, just as two examples, they gave up their enriching capabilities in order to be accepted into the NPT fraternity of countries that are good actors regarding proliferation of nuclear technology. This deal not only allows Iran to enrich but it gives their illicit nuclear enrichment program the blessing of the international community. The President and the negotiators even threw in technical assistance for Iran's enrichment program. I just don't understand that. As a dumb business guy, I just don't understand how they, in good conscience and without smirking, can stand in front of the American people and say this is a good deal. In fact, I don't hear many people saying that. Even Secretary Kerry basically said this is the best deal we can get, we can't get a better deal, and the only alternative is war. I am insulted by that.

The second thing, they need to design for a warhead. We talked about how getting into the arms community allows them to do that. We don't know whether they have it or not today. Iran would need many things, but one thing they need is access to capital and access to global markets to drive their economy. But let's remember one thing: Why do they need all of this in the first place? Why did this get negotiated? Because they want a nuclear weapon.

The goal in this agreement, according to the administration, was never to allow Iran to become a nuclear weapons State. Yet, we see nothing but pathways that allow them to do that, even legally. I just don't understand how the administration and a few Democrats are standing up today and saying this is a good deal, and we need to vote for it because it won't preclude Iran from ever becoming a nuclear weapons State. It just doesn't do that.

As a matter of fact, in 1994, we signed a similar deal with North Korea. The President at that time, President Clinton, told the American people that if we voted on that deal, that deal would guarantee we would never have a nuclear weapon on the peninsula of Korea. How did that work out for us? I would argue today that we are facing a similar situation that is just as predictable. Looking at the facts, we can see this deal all but guarantees a nuclear Iran. I can't support this in good conscience.

This is one of the worst deals I have seen in my lifetime. I am embarrassed that we sit here in front of the American people and actually have to dis-

cuss this. This is so bad, it is so threatening to our children and our children's children that we have to stand up and we have to fight this all the way through to get a vote on it, first of all, and to defeat this.

I urge my colleagues to join me tonight and this week in opposing this deal.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk for substitute amendment No. 2640.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on Senate amendment No. 2640.

Mitch McConnell, John Cornyn, James Lankford, Kelly Ayotte, John Thune, Cory Gardner, Mike Crapo, Ron Johnson, Joni Ernst, Tom Cotton, James M. Inhofe, Thad Cochran, Bill Cassidy, Pat Roberts, Johnny Isakson, Jerry Moran, John McCain.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. I send a cloture motion to the desk for the underlying resolution, H. J. Res. 61.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on H.J. Res. 61, a joint resolution amending the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt employees with health coverage under TRICARE or the Veterans Administration from being taken into account for purposes of determining the employers to which the employer mandate applies under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Mitch McConnell, John Cornyn, James Lankford, Kelly Ayotte, John Thune, Cory Gardner, Mike Crapo, Ron Johnson, Joni Ernst, Tom Cotton, James M. Inhofe, Thad Cochran, Bill Cassidy, Pat Roberts, Johnny Isakson, Jerry Moran, John McCain.

Mr. MCCONNELL. For the information of all colleagues, this cloture motion would ripen on Friday, but I am optimistic that we will be able to get consent to have the vote tomorrow afternoon.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I appreciate the remarks of the Senator from Georgia, and I certainly associate myself with them.

This debate is vital. Despite President Obama's initial objections to congressional oversight, the American

people deserve a vote in this critical national security matter, which I would note has been negotiated behind closed doors.

The bill that we passed in May accomplished that. Now the Senate Democrats are talking about taking that away by filibustering this debate.

How we went from passing Senator CORKER's bill by a vote of 98 to 1 just a few months ago to a potential filibuster is baffling to the American people. Our constituents want this debate. They have a number of concerns about this deal. We are their voice. We are here to represent them, not to protect the President from a difficult veto.

When these discussions began, President Obama claimed we would be able to diplomatically dismantle Iran's nuclear program. The final agreement suggests this is far from the case. It is apparent that the President and his negotiating partners were willing—eager, even—to give in to every demand made by the world's largest State sponsor of terrorism. The goalposts were moved from dismantling Iran's clandestine nuclear weapons program to blindly hoping we can contain it.

The deal President Obama and Secretary of State Kerry have orchestrated has several key faults. For starters, under the deal, Iran is not required to destroy a single centrifuge, not one. That means well over 1,000 centrifuges will remain in place at Fordow, one of Iran's most infamous nuclear sites. Many will continue to operate. This is no ordinary facility; it is a fortified, underground military bunker built into the side of a mountain. It was constructed in secret, and it has served only one purpose: to covertly produce weapons-grade, highly enriched uranium.

When the talks began, the President was adamant that Fordow must be closed as part of the final agreement. However, over the course of the negotiations, the President caved. The Iranians will be able to maintain the capacity to continue enrichment activities at Fordow.

The President claims that verification will ensure Iran's compliance. Verification appears to be exactly where this deal is lacking any punch. There is nothing in this deal that lets us confidently say we know what is truly going on at any of the nuclear sites in Iran.

There are no anytime, anywhere inspections, including at Fordow. Even worse, international inspectors will not even be the ones handling the inspections at the country's military complex in Parchin. The Iranians themselves will be. How this is acceptable to anyone is astonishing. There is absolutely no reason, given the regime's history, to believe that the Iranian inspectors will be honest about what is going on in Parchin.

A lack of verification is far from the only troubling aspect of this agreement. The Iranian regime believes that the agreement gives them full, permanent relief from sanctions.

Lifting sanctions will provide Iran with approximately \$100 billion in previously frozen assets which the administration has ultimately admitted will go, at least in part, to the Iranian military and its terrorist offshoots. It was hard enough to get the international community to commit to sanctions in the first place. With a reprieve of this nature, we will never be able to reestablish them should Iran not live up to its end of the agreement, which is a strong possibility given the Iranian regime's actions in the past.

Along with sanctions relief, the international arms embargo and ban on ballistic missile research will also be lifted. Within the next 8 years, Iran will have access to modern offensive weapons. This does not bode well for peace in the region. It puts our security and that of our allies at great risk. Remember, we are talking about the world's leading state sponsor of terror.

What we are giving up as a result of this deal, the sanctions relief, the arms embargo, the ongoing enrichment, makes the world a more dangerous place. We have a responsibility to ensure that Iran never achieves its goal of becoming a nuclear power. If Iran goes nuclear, Saudi Arabia and other nations in the region surely will follow. The deal gives us little confidence that we will be successful in this regard.

A nuclear Iran could be devastating for America and our allies. This is about saving our children and grandchildren from the prospects of nuclear war. I cannot confidently say this agreement will accomplish this goal. In fact, I fear it moves us in the wrong direction. For that reason, I oppose the deal and intend to support the resolution of disapproval.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mrs. ERNST. Mr. President, as we come together and debate President Obama's agreement on Iran, I believe it is one of the most consequential national security decisions we may ever face. I have heard my peers talk many times about the things that trouble them, the things they fear, the "things that keep us up at night." I will tell you that this nuclear agreement is one of those things that keeps me up at night, as a mother, as a grandmother, and as a soldier.

Having proudly worn our Nation's uniform for over 20 years and having deployed to the region, I can tell you that protecting and defending this country is something I take very seriously and very personally. I had hoped our President would approach the American people with a deal that reflected the high ground our Nation has stood on against Iran for decades.

Unfortunately, now that I have seen the available details, I believe the President has not negotiated a good deal with Iran. The agreement before us fails to dismantle Iran's nuclear program and does not end Iran's support of terrorism. The President has squandered his opportunity to enhance our

national security and the security of our Israeli and Arab allies by failing to live up to his own goal of ending Iran's capability to build a nuclear weapon.

The administration is asking the American people to accept a deal which will, at best, freeze Iran's nuclear program for 8 years—that is, if the Iranians actually live up to their end of the bargain. One of the major failures in this deal is the lack of anytime, anywhere inspections to ensure that they do. In April, the President's own Secretary of Energy, Dr. Moniz, a nuclear physicist whom the President often refers to as a leading authority on nuclear programs. He said: "We expect to have anywhere, anytime access" when referring to what our country needed to ensure Iran was abiding by a nuclear agreement.

How can we ever be certain of compliance if Iran decides to cheat and we have a weak inspection regime as part of this deal? I would argue that we can't. Another part of this debate that has been very troubling to me is that the President continues to tell the American people there are only two options: his agreement or war. During one of his major speeches on this deal, he actually mentioned the word "war" 50 times in an attempt to hammer this false choice home.

Despite this misinformation campaign designed to pressure the American people into agreeing to a bad deal, our military leaders and distinguished former administration officials clearly denied that our choice is either support the deal or go to war with Iran. In testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff GEN Martin Dempsey disagreed with the President's assessment that the American people face a choice of supporting the agreement or going to war with Iran.

Later that same week, the President's pick to lead the U.S. Navy said war was not the only alternative and that we need to use the full set of capabilities that the joint force and the Navy can deliver to deter that. The military contribution is also just a subset of a whole-of-government approach, along with our allies in the region. It is not just leaders within our military saying this.

Gen. Michael Hayden, former Director of the CIA and NSA, said:

There is no necessity to go to war if we don't sign this agreement. There are actions in between those two extremes.

Dr. Richard Haas, president of the Council on Foreign Relations, said: "I would echo that" during the same hearing. Ambassador Edelman, a former Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and Ambassador to Turkey, said: "I agree with you, I don't think those are the only alternatives." Ambassador Nicholas Burns, a former top U.S. negotiator with Iran on its nuclear programs and former Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, said: "I don't believe that war would be inevitable. . . ."

Rather than misrepresenting the facts and our country's options, I challenge the supporters of the agreement to explain to the American people why they are supporting a flawed and bad deal today, when we should be putting our citizens' interests and their security first. I would also note that this administration was willing to leave the negotiating table without securing an end to Iran's support of terrorism.

Iran is the world's leading sponsor of terror. We are giving them a free pass in this deal to continue those efforts. In addition to the billions of dollars in sanctions relief, which leaves Iran poised to double down on its support of terrorism, the President also agreed to lift the U.N. arms embargo for advanced conventional weapons and ballistic missiles.

As a veteran of Kuwait and Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, I am beside myself, as are many other Americans who served in Iraq, regarding the President's support for sanctions relief for one terrorist in particular: the leader of Iran's elite covert force, the Quds Force, General Qassem Soleimani.

General Soleimani is directly responsible for the deaths of several hundred Americans and the wounding of thousands more during the Iraq war. Throughout the Iraq war, we lost many Americans, killed in action, and many more wounded by Iraq Shia militia who were supported or controlled by General Soleimani. In 2010, Ambassador James Jeffrey, then-U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, said: "Up to a quarter of the American casualties and some of the more horrific incidents in which Americans were kidnapped . . . can be traced without doubt to these Iranian groups."

One of the significant tolls to attack American servicemembers was an improvised explosive device, IED, known as an explosively formed penetrator or EFP. These EFPs were provided by Iran exclusively to groups they controlled in order to kill Americans.

If you ask American servicemembers who served in Iraq during the war, they will tell you these types of IEDs used by Iranian-supported Shia militias were some of the most deadly and devastating types employed by any of the Iraqi insurgency groups, including Al Qaeda in Iraq. While many of my colleagues share the concern regarding General Soleimani and Iran's targeting of Americans during the Iraq war, we seldom hear from Americans who have firsthand experience in fighting these Iranian-supported Iraqi Shia militias.

My staff recently spoke to a currently serving U.S. Army officer, originally from Waterloo, IA, who deployed with the 1st Calvary Division on a 15-month deployment to Iraq during the surge. This Iowan described to us the impact Iran's effort in Iraq had on him and his tank platoon in Baghdad saying:

The threat of EFPs was quite real during our deployment to Iraq. Understanding the

pipeline from Iran into Iraq, the abundance of the munitions and the lethality on US Forces, the sense of peril never left our psyche. While I was never fearful of losing a limb, I knew if I was struck, I would follow certain death, one that I welcomed ten months into a fifteen month deployment.

Removing sanctions on Soleimani is an embarrassment for this administration and in the words of some of our Iraq veterans, "a slap in the face." Then there is Luke, a retired Army servicemember with the storied 101st Airborne Division. While on patrol during the division's second tour to Iraq, Luke lost his leg in combat, after his vehicle was hit with an Iranian-made EFP.

He told us that "we come home blown up and try to put our lives back together only to hear that our country is going to be lifting sanctions that will free up billions for Iran to kill more innocents. We may not be at war with them, but they're at war with us. I'm a wounded veteran and I spend a great deal of time helping other guys like me. I can assure you that this deal directly affects us. It is a slap in the face to all veterans. All those who served. . . ."

We owe it to veterans and our current servicemembers who have sacrificed to stop Iran's support of terror. I urge the President and my colleagues to consider Iran's true intent and not to underestimate Iran's will to enhance its capability to destabilize the Middle East, threaten American security, and the security of our allies in the region and around the globe.

In closing, the decision we make on this agreement will have lasting results for our Nation, the world, and future generations of Americans.

I urge all of my colleagues to reject the President's bad deal and put the security of the American people, our allies, and the global community first.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, we are here today to engage in an honest and open debate about the nuclear agreement that the administration has brokered with Iran.

Let me at this point commend Chairman CORKER for the way he and his committee have handled a very difficult process that has not been coordinated with the administration, where their consideration was for Congress to be cut out. I think Chairman CORKER has done a wonderful job and inserted the Senate of the United States where it should be, as part of this agreement.

I am here to tell you that this deal is not based on absolute value, absolute knowledge of Iran's activities or its intentions—including its nuclear ambitions—but it is naively and dangerously based on faith and hope. Our national security should not be based on faith and hope. Our Nation's security is too precious to be based on faith and hope alone—faith that we will detect any Iranian efforts to cheat and hope that the Iranians will not cheat.

Secretary of State John Kerry told the American people in June that "we know what they did," "we have no doubt," and "we have absolute knowledge of the possible military dimensions of Iran's nuclear program." Let me say that again: "We have absolute knowledge of the possible military dimensions of Iran's nuclear program."

As chairman of the Intelligence Committee, I can tell you we don't have absolute knowledge of anything. Our intelligence is good, but it is not perfect, and it is disingenuous for Secretary Kerry to suggest otherwise.

We must accept the self-evident fact that Iran has a horrific record of complying with nonproliferation commitments. When our best tools are faith and hope, we are putting our own national security, as well as our allies', at risk.

I respectfully ask my colleagues, as you consider your vote on this agreement, to think about the following questions:

Do you know where every potential nuclear facility is located?

Do you know the location or activity of every nuclear-related laboratory, whether it is in a military facility or a university campus?

Do we know whether Iran intends to purchase sensitive nuclear materials from a rogue nation or whether we will detect the sale or the transfer of that nuclear material?

Do we know the intentions of the Supreme Leader or what he and his successor may be thinking in 10 years?

Do we know everything about Iran's past culpability, its future intent or ability to conceal illicit, nuclear activities?

Have we assumed too much about Iran's willingness to abide by the agreement?

Unlike Secretary Kerry, I do not believe that we know everything about Iran's past nuclear efforts. I do not have faith that we know, with any degree of certainty, this regime's intentions, as he suggests.

Our intelligence community does amazing things, and I am continually impressed with the dedication, drive, and the capability of its people. Our intelligence community regularly provides our civilian and military leadership insights and assessments on the toughest national security problems, but they never—they never—claim—and I wouldn't believe them if they did—to have absolute knowledge of any issue. Again, intelligence is imperfect.

Secretary Kerry told the American people and the Members of this body:

No part of this agreement relies on trust. It is all based on thorough and extensive transparency and verification measures.

With all due respect, the Secretary is oversimplifying the very complex and difficult world of treaty compliance and verification. The Secretary should come clean and truthfully state that this agreement does not rely on trust; it relies on hope and faith—faith that we will detect any Iranian efforts to

cheat and hope that Iran will not cheat.

My colleagues should be mindful before casting their votes. Your eyes should be wide open to the uncertainty we as a nation are accepting with this agreement. If the IAEA and our intelligence community are not 100 percent certain and our collective assumptions respect wrong and we get caught unaware or we are surprised, the consequences will be significant. They could be disastrous and we will, without a doubt, regret entering into this agreement.

The agreement the administration has negotiated with Iran is based on faith that we know everything about the nuclear program today and hope that the Iranian regime will abide by the terms of this agreement.

The administration is displaying misguided faith that Iran will not use the billions of dollars soon to be available to continue its efforts to fund terrorist proxies worldwide. I call my colleagues' attention to recent comments by National Security Advisor Susan Rice, who said: "we should expect" that some of the money Iran gets under sanctions relief as a result of the nuclear deal "would go to the Iranian military and could potentially be used for the kinds of bad behavior that we have seen in the region."

Again, this deal ignores the facts and instead hopes that it will work out. Iran is the world's central bank of terrorism, and this additional income is not likely to be solely dedicated to streamlining their postal delivery routes in Iran.

Secretary Kerry testified in July that "they [Iran] are committed to certain things that we interpret as terrorism."

The administration is relying on faith that the IAEA and our intelligence community will be able to detect any trace of nuclear material and any prohibited activity and has hope that the IAEA will continue to have "access" to Iranian nuclear sites—"access" that in some cases is being defined as "the ability to deliver things to Iranians at the gate of a facility, so they can conduct their own surveillance"—anytime, anywhere to deliver the equipment to the Iranians and ask them to do self-inspections inside the gate.

If the IAEA is prevented from gaining the necessary access to declared or suspected facilities in a timely manner, we will be at a significant—significant—disadvantage, and the sanctions pressures we have obtained over years of efforts cannot be remade overnight.

Our reliance on the IAEA is now also tied to two side agreements with Iran that Members of this body have not yet been provided. I will remind my colleagues that when the President signed the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act, the law required him to provide to Congress the agreement and "all related materials and annexes," and that has not happened. Yet the administra-

tion asked that we have faith that these will not have a material effect on the agreement and our ability to ensure Iranian compliance with its terms.

It raises additional questions. Do we have absolute certainty that we know what those agreements include? Do we understand how they may affect Iran's activities, assumptions or willingness to abide by the terms of its agreements with the United States? Do we know without a doubt where every potential nuclear facility is located?

The President argued:

Although it may take 24 days to finally get access to [a] site . . . high school physics will remind us that that [nuclear materials] leaves a trace. And so we'll know that, in fact, there was a violation of the agreement.

I don't have absolute certainty that this is true and question the administration's willingness to give up a requirement for anywhere, anytime access. If Iran isn't hiding anything, why wouldn't they offer that access?

Do we trust Iran's claim that they don't have a covert facility? Do we have faith that they do not? Are we hoping that they do not build one? Do we or can we have absolute certainty on this issue?

A former IAEA deputy director stated in 2013 that "if there is no undeclared [nuclear] installation today . . . it will be the first time in 20 years that Iran doesn't have one."

Ultimately, I believe this deal is built on a foundation that is far more unstable than the administration would have us believe.

While I realize that all the parties involved in this deal have been trying to spin the narrative to their benefit, I cannot believe that a deal as tough as the administration would have us believe would be referred to by the Iranian President as a "legal, political, and technical victory for Iran."

The administration has chosen to trade all of our economic leverage—leverage that was working—for a near-term possible delay in Iran's breakout timeline. No doubt we will still have leverage, but it will be limited, perversely, given the President's statements about opponents of this deal to military action, something we have tried to avoid for many years as it relates to Iran. The administration hopes that it will not have to use military action.

Can you tell me with absolute certainty what the Supreme Leader's intentions are? Can you tell me what he is thinking or what he will be thinking in 10 years when Iran will have rebuilt its struggling economy and will be nearing the end of what limited restraints may remain on its nuclear research and development activities? Did we just enable a regime based on a false choice that we didn't fully understand?

One of the President's chief criticisms, typical of his straw-man approach to debate, has been to suggest that opponents of the deal only want a military action. Oddly enough, it is the

President's own agreement with the Iranians that has stripped us of all leverage except military action if the agreement is not adhered to. The strategic decision to engage Iran in the resulting deal cannot be based on absolute certainty of Iran's nuclear programs or its intentions. The agreement is based on questionable assumptions, allows far too much maneuvering by Iran, and naively trusts the regime that has a history of evasive activities and false declarations to the very body, the IAEA, entrusted with enforcing the agreement.

Do we know without a doubt what is going on in every laboratory in Iran, whether it is on a military facility or a university campus?

I applaud the efforts of our negotiators, our intelligence community, and our diplomats, but I am sorry to say that they were sent on a fool's errand by the President. They were provided a false choice between this agreement and war. The narrative just doesn't add up.

I have spent the better part of 15 years as a member of the House or Senate Intelligence Committee. I understand the nature and the nuance of intelligence work, and I know that there are no absolute certainties in this business.

This deal is based not on an absolute knowledge of Iran's activities and its intentions, as the administration would have us believe, but as you can see, it is naively based on faith and hope.

I, for one, will not vote to enable a regime that supports terrorism, evades international inspections, disregards U.N. Security Council resolutions, and is opposed to the very existence of another nation in the region. The United States has effectively led the international community and enacted sanctions that have restrained the hostile regime, and it now looks as though this administration will undo those years of efforts and enable the same regime by filling its coffers with badly needed resources.

I don't know with absolute certainty where this agreement will lead, but I do understand that there are too many unanswered questions to move forward.

I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing this agreement.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, it has been a long day. We have heard about everything that can be heard from a lot of different people, and I have come to some conclusions that there are some things that are incontrovertible after hearing both sides of the debate all day long. There are six things we should be looking at. I will quickly summarize these. I think it is kind of a good wrapup.

There are six things. First of all, this deal rewards and legitimizes Iran for violating international laws and treaties and United Nations Security Council resolutions. I say it rewards and legitimizes.

The second thing it does is it rewards Iran with \$100 billion dollars. You heard it today. That could be a floating figure. We are not sure just how much it is, but we do know this: what they do with their money is to expand their influence with terrorist organizations.

The third thing is it places the Middle East on the brink of a new arms race. This is something we have heard from others for quite some time, and now we already have some countries coming forward with what their intentions are.

The fourth thing is it fails to dismantle Iran's enrichment infrastructure. That has been stated by a lot of people. No one really is denying that.

And fifth, it places no restrictions on Iran's ballistic missile program. You have to keep in mind we have been talking about bombs all day, but you have to deliver the bombs to make them effective. That is when the missile program comes into play.

And sixth—and I think it is most important—there is, in my opinion, no verification at all.

I would like to summarize all of that real quickly. In speaking about the fact that the agreement rewards and legitimizes Iran's violations, keep in mind they have violated almost every international law or treaty or United Nations Security Council resolution. The Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons, for developing nuclear weapons—they have violated that. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which has to do with the freedom of expression, the freedom of religion, freedom from discrimination, and freedom from torture—they have violated that. The International Convention against the Taking of Hostages—several people have mentioned today—I think the junior Senator from Georgia asked: What about the four hostages who are over there?

I would carry that one step further. One of the hostages is an FBI agent named Robert Levinson. Robert Levinson now holds the record of having been held hostage longer than anyone else in history, and he is still there. He is still there at a time we are in this process.

The U.N. security resolutions on access to nuclear facilities—they have violated that. I think everyone knows that.

Iran has shown from time to time they can't be trusted. The Director General of the IAEA has said Iran has consistently failed to provide information or access needed to allay the IAEA's concerns about the weapons potential.

So that is the first thing. The second thing is rewarding the world's leading sponsor of terrorism. The United States does not normally negotiate with terrorists. This is something I have heard for many, many years, as long as I have been here, until now. Iran remains the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism, as we have heard all day today.

According to the State Department's "2009 Country Reports on Terrorism," they have provided training and weapons to the Taliban fighting our forces in Afghanistan. Iranian IEDs have killed U.S. troops in Iraq. They have paid the Taliban in Afghanistan to kill U.S. troops. Iran supports Hamas in Palestine, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and Assad in Syria.

I had occasion to be in the Persian Gulf on the USS Carl Vinson just a few weeks ago. It was during the negotiations. There I was in the Persian Gulf at the same time an Iranian ship was taking weapons down to Yemen to kill Americans. That was while we were negotiating.

Iran is bankrolling the slaughter of tens of thousands of Syrians and has publicly committed to the annihilation of the State of Israel and has called for "Death to America" while we are in the middle of negotiations.

General Austin, the commander of the U.S. Central Command, made the statement—and I was there when he made this statement—that "Iran represents the most significant threat to the central region . . . Iran continues to pursue policies that threaten U.S. strategic interests and goals throughout the Middle East."

As was stated by my good friend before me, even Susan Rice, who would do almost anything the President asks, has said we can expect some of this money—this \$100 billion dollars or whatever the amount ends up being—is going to be used to fortify their terrorist friends. So we can only conclude the financial windfall estimated to be over \$100 billion will be used to fortify more terrorism.

The third point I think was made today is—and these are the six I think have become incontrovertible—this agreement places the Middle East on the brink of a new arms race.

Dr. Kissinger, who testified before our committee—the Armed Services Committee just the other day—when testifying regarding the ongoing nuclear negotiations with Iran, said, "The impact of this approach will be to move from preventing proliferation to managing it."

We all recall last month, when Prime Minister Netanyahu warned us and said, "The deal that was supposed to end nuclear proliferation will actually trigger nuclear proliferation. It will trigger a nuclear arms race in the Middle East."

Saudi Arabia has been talking recently about possibly being the first to jump in there on this new program, so we can expect that to happen. We know it is going to happen.

The fourth thing is, the agreement fails to dismantle Iran's enrichment infrastructure. I think that has been driven home by many people here. And it permits Iran to retain its enrichment infrastructure, including advanced centrifuges and continued development of its enrichment technology. That is something that is now pretty much agreed to.

Fifth, and next to last, is it places no restrictions on Iran's ballistic missile development. People have not talked much on the floor about this fact. They have talked about the bomb, but there has to be a delivery system before the bomb can be effective.

I can remember in 2007 that our unclassified intelligence report said that by 2015 Iran would have the bomb and a delivery system. Well, here it is 2015, and they weren't that far off. So we know what the capability is out there, what they are planning on doing, and the U.S. intelligence assesses—this is the quote and this is very significant—"that Iran's ballistic missiles are inherently capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction and that Iran's program on space launch vehicles improves Tehran's ability to develop longer range missiles, including an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM)."

What no one has mentioned on this thing is we made an arrangement in the previous administration knowing that Iran was going to have this capability. We have some 30 ground-based interceptors, but they are all on the West Coast, because we thought that was where it was going to have to come from. But guess what. All of a sudden Iran is going to be coming from the other direction. Well, the first thing this President did when he took office was to do away with our commitment.

We had an arrangement with the Czech Republic to have a ground-based interceptor there. I remember so well that one of the best friends we have over there made the statement: Are you sure if we enrage Russia by having this system that you are not going to pull the rug out from under us?

I said: Absolutely.

That was Vaclav Klaus, one of our best friends over there.

I said: Absolutely.

Of course, that is what the President did. Now we have that same problem with the delivery system.

The last thing I think is most important—and I may be the only Member of the Senate who believes this, but I look at this and I go back home. A lot of times you don't find the wisdom here in Washington; you have to go back home. Certainly over this past month, being around my State of Oklahoma, people have asked the question: Well, wait a minute, if they have all this time once accused of something or if the IAEA should say "We believe they are making a bomb in a certain location"—once they do that, if they have the ability under this deal to delay that not just 24 hours, not just 24 days, but they can go on and delay it for two additional periods by applying to the joint commission for 15 days and then the Minister of Foreign Affairs for 15 days—that is 54 days. I suggest we stop and think about that. If we know somebody has something, but they have 54 days to either destroy it or hide it or put it someplace else, they are going to do it.

So my people in Oklahoma say there just isn't any kind of verification. And we all remember what Ronald Reagan said: "Trust, but verify."

These pages are too young to remember what happened with the Soviet Union and all those problems, but clearly that was the major concern at that time. So this is the situation that was pointed out way back during the joint presentation of the House and the Senate by Netanyahu. If he would just change his registration, I would love it if he would run for President of the United States. He is the kind of guy we need. He made the statement at that time that no deal is going to be better than the bad deal that is on the table. I believe that is true.

I had occasion to publish an op-ed last week in the Wall Street Journal urging States to hold fast to their sanctions on Iran. Even if they consider strengthening and expanding those sanctions, here is the thing people don't understand. The reason the President gets by with not calling this a treaty that would have to be confirmed and verified by this body is that it is dealing with the States and not the Federal Government. So my hope is that many other States will be doing what we are doing in the State of Oklahoma and holding on to our sanctions and not releasing any of them. I think that could certainly be, if this thing becomes a reality, one of the few things we can do.

I will end with a quote from then President Bill Clinton in 1994. I remember this because I was there, and I heard him make this statement. After the deal with North Korea, this is what he said:

This is a good deal for the United States. North Korea will freeze and then dismantle its nuclear program. South Korea and our allies will be better protected. The entire world will be safer as we slow the spread of nuclear weapons. The United States and international inspectors will carefully monitor North Korea to make sure it keeps its commitments.

Two decades later, the Defense Intelligence Agency announced that it had "moderate confidence" that North Korea has a nuclear weapon small enough to be placed on a ballistic missile.

So that is what is going on. In today's New York Times—I don't know how anyone can take them seriously when we have the guy who is the real boss over there—the Ayatollah Khamenei, talking about Israel, said: I'm telling you first, you will not be around in 25 years. We will annihilate you in that period of time. Then he talked about the United States. He said: Iranians must not forget the United States is the Great Satan. Ayatollah Khamenei warned, criticizing those calling for better relations, wanting to show this Satan as an angel, but the Iranian nation has pushed this Satan out. We should not allow it to sneak back in through the window.

These are the guys we are negotiating with. With that, I would say this

is not a treaty, it is not a deal, it is surrender.

I yield the floor.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

PLANNED PARENTHOOD

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, last month, before the August recess, the Senate took up legislation introduced by my friend Senator JONI ERNST that would have ended Federal funding for Planned Parenthood, transferring subsidies to other women's community health clinics. Unfortunately, the bill failed on its first vote, but the questions raised by the Planned Parenthood scandal and the challenges it presents to Congress and to the American people have only grown since then.

At issue are undercover videos released over the last few months that provide an unprecedented behind-the-scenes glimpse inside America's leading abortion provider. These undercover videos were captured by a pro-life organization called the Center for Medical Progress. They contain images and conversations unlike anything ever before submitted for public scrutiny. So far, CMP has released 16 hours of footage depicting what appears to be the routine mutilation of American children, born and unborn; the harvesting and sale of those children's body parts for profit; the means by which Planned Parenthood avoids public detection of and perhaps criminal prosecution for their actions; and, finally, in many ways the most terrifying of all, the nonchalant, blood-chilling amusement Planned Parenthood personnel seem to derive from all of the above.

To date, no one has rebutted the evidence contained in these videos. Planned Parenthood's friends and political clients gamely try to change the subject. They take umbrage and they shoot the messenger. They deflect and distract as best they can—the political equivalent of a checkmated lawyer banging his shoe angrily on the table. Even the guilty deserve a defense, after all. But they are guilty. We all know it. You only have to watch the videos for 5 minutes and you know it is true.

The subjects of these videos are sincere and candid—casually sharing the secrets of their grisly business with people they think are their co-conspirators. The evidence points to only one conclusion: Planned Parenthood really does these horrifying things. Planned Parenthood makes money at it and laughs about it over lunch. But aside from the primary evidence, do you know how else we know it is true? Because if it were false, we would know for sure that it was false. The main-

stream media—Big Abortion's loudest shoe banger of them all—would be thundering Planned Parenthood's vindication from every headline, every homepage, every network satellite. If these videos were false—if a pro-life group somehow fabricated this narrative of Planned Parenthood's greed, barbarism, and cruelty—it would be a story.

Who are we kidding? It would be the story, a career-making scoop, with fame, Pulitzer Prizes, lucrative book deals, and speaking tours awaiting the journalist who broke the story. Yet if you open a newspaper, click on the legacy media sites, and turn on the news—nothing. You see nothing. The major networks have gone dark on the videos over the last month, and major newspapers have scrubbed the scandal from their front pages.

Why the silence? Simple. They know it is true too. The media looked for the facts, they found them, and then they turned away. In the case of the Planned Parenthood undercover videos in the court of public opinion, as they taught me in law school: Qui tacit consentire videtur—the media's silence indicates the media's consent.

Everyone who has watched these individual videos knows they have the power to change minds and in only one direction. So the pro-abortion news media is doing everything they can to suppress the videos' exposure.

So tightly have the wagons been circled that the media can't even attack the Center for Medical Progress as much as they would surely like to because doing so would require context. That context would be exceedingly painful here.

Even describing these videos—even mentioning them to a wider audience—can only lead to curious Google searches, then tweets, then Facebook shares, YouTube views, and inevitably to public horror at what people would see and the organization responsible for that horror. This, Planned Parenthood's friends in the media cannot allow, and so they ignore the undercover videos, just like they tried to ignore the harrowing case of Dr. Kermit Gosnell in 2013, the perennial scandal of dangerous clinic conditions and the horror of partial-birth abortion in years past.

Every pro-choice activist, including those with press credentials, knows that the greatest threat to abortion-on-demand is the truth about what it entails. As Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn put it in his Nobel lecture: "[Violence] is necessarily interwoven with falsehood."

The media hides the truth about Planned Parenthood and about Big Abortion—even at the expense of their own credibility, even to the endangerment of vulnerable women and the enrichment of monsters.

Like Tolkien's Gollum, they must protect the "precious." I am not a reporter, nor am I an editor or a producer. I am certainly not a network

news anchor, a job for which I lack the skills, the experience and, alas, the hairline necessary for that position. I am a lawyer by training and now a Senator. Therefore, I cannot make leading newspapers, news sites, and television networks tell this story, but it occurs to me I can try to tell it myself on the Senate floor. More than just tell that story, I can make the case to our colleagues and to our fellow Americans. For the next several weeks, for as long as it takes, I will come to the floor of the Senate—the American people's great deliberative Chamber—and make that case. The public deserves to know the truth about Planned Parenthood, the inhumanity it practices, the laws it may be breaking, and the lies it tells. Taxpayers deserve to know what their money—more than a half billion dollars last year alone—is paying for and how their taxes might be more conscientiously spent.

Americans deserve to know what evil is abroad in their land and what good can be done to overcome it. In the struggle between Planned Parenthood and its victims, President Obama and his party have sided a rich and violent special interest group over the innocent women they exploit, the tiny children they mutilate, and the vulnerable communities they poison.

I harbor no illusions about softening such weaponized extremism with a few floor speeches, nor do I believe that the 45 Senators who voted in August to reaffirm Planned Parenthood's eligibility for hundreds of millions of dollars in Federal funding will change their minds—at least not yet.

The history of our Nation is the story of a good and loving people who stubbornly, if sometimes slowly, overcome narrow, prejudicial legacies. When presented with the truth, Americans have always come to see and defend the innate dignity of our once overlooked brothers and sisters and welcome them out of the shadows and into our hearts and our society.

Indeed, the gradual embrace of our youngest Americans is well underway. In fact, it is gaining momentum all the time. With every Instagrammed ultrasound image, every overjoyed Facebook post, and every advance in embryology and obstetrics, Americans move closer and closer to the truth about the unborn. At the same time, every new undercover video released by the Center for Medical Progress is bringing us all a little closer to the truth about Planned Parenthood.

In coming weeks, I hope these speeches might help my colleagues and anyone who might be listening to come a little closer to the truth about both. As I make the case against using taxpayer funds to facilitate, protect, and promote Planned Parenthood's deceptions and violence, I hope my colleagues on the other side of these questions will join me from time to time. A good debate is always more fruitful than a monologue. But as long as Planned Parenthood's friends remain

mute, I will endeavor to improve upon the silence and, hopefully in time, improve upon our inadequate legal protections for the dignity of human life.

As I said, even the guilty deserve a defense, but so do the innocent. However vulnerable they may be—both children in the womb and mothers in the waiting room—however forsaken, however afraid, the innocent are never defenseless. Their defense is the truth, and I am going to do what I can to tell it.

I thank the Presiding Officer and yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise this evening to discuss the recent nuclear deal with Iran. I join my colleagues in opposition to this deal, and I agree with many of the arguments that have been put forward. Like so many Nebraskans who have contacted me to express their opposition, I have a number of concerns regarding this deal.

One of the difficulties when it comes to explaining opposition to the deal is the sheer volume of the problems with it. There is no simple and succinct way to package all of the deal's weaknesses, which range from highly technical questions about access to suspicious sites to broad overreaching problems.

Overall, I believe that, while the administration claims this deal permanently prohibits Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, the plain language of this agreement simply does not support that claim. I am very worried that inspectors do not have the access they need to verify Iran's compliance. Moreover, there is no effective mechanism for punishing the low-level violations that Iran is sure to attempt. However, even if you put aside the technical questions and assume the agreement will function exactly as it is intended, the fact of the matter is that all meaningful restrictions on Iran's nuclear program expire in 15 years. At that point, Iran's program is legitimized, and it is free to build an industrial-scale enrichment program if it chooses. This means the 1-year breakout time the administration has placed so much emphasis on is only temporary.

In their analysis of the agreement, the nonproliferation experts at the Institute for Science and International Security concluded that after year 15 of the agreement, "Iran could have in place a nuclear infrastructure that could produce significant quantities of weapon-grade uranium rapidly and turn that material into nuclear weapons in a matter of months." Some may contend that even if it is not a permanent prohibition, as the administration claims, it is still better than the status

quo. Even if we are right back where we started in 10 or 15 years, buying time isn't a bad thing, they insist. But, colleagues, we won't be right back where we started. We will be in a far worse position.

Iran's current program was built in violation of its Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty obligations and U.N. Security Council resolutions. The illegality of its program served as the basis for international sanctions, and it relegated Iran to a pariah status in the community of nations. Now, with this deal, Iran's program is legitimized. It is welcomed as a member in good standing with the NPT, and the sanctions regime is repealed, not temporarily waived. Thus, if the United States sought to limit Iran's program after year 15, we would be attempting to rebuild a sanctions regime from scratch and to target a program that, under this agreement, is deemed to be acceptable.

Supporters of this agreement, many of whom argue that the sanctions regime is already on the brink of collapse, need to ask themselves this: How likely is it that sanctions could ever be imposed if Iran rapidly expands its program after year 15 of this agreement? I think the answer is that it would be incredibly unlikely. Is permanently giving up our ability to sanction Iran in exchange for a temporary delay of its nuclear aspirations a fair trade? Of course not. Is buying 10 to 15 years' time worth agreeing to the perpetual instability of an unrestrained nuclear Iran after that point? No.

There are many other reasons to conclude that we will be in a worse position in 15 years despite the administration's claims to the contrary. Not only will Iran's nuclear program be able to proceed without limitations, but it will be far richer with this agreement. There is some debate about how much Iran will receive when the agreement comes into effect. But whether it is \$50 billion or \$100 billion or \$150 billion, there is no disagreement that Iran stands to profit massively from this deal. Moreover, as sanctions are repealed and trade resumes, Iran's economy will grow, bringing further profit to that regime. Although the administration argues that alternative restrictions can be used to hinder Iran's support for terrorist groups, it is difficult to believe that relieving sanctions pressure and infusing Iran with cash will do anything other than improve the positions of Iran's proxies and the terror groups that it funds.

The additional resources will also allow Iran to increase its military capabilities, which will further be enhanced by the negotiators' decision to end the U.N. conventional weapons and ballistic missile technology embargoes on Iran. I find this decision to lift the embargoes—particularly on the transfer of ballistic missile technology to Iran—highly concerning and a compelling example of just how this deal fails to advance our interests.

Rolling back Iran's ballistic missile program has been a key objective of the United States for some time because, as Director of National Intelligence Clapper put it in his statement assessing worldwide threats before the Armed Services Committee this year, "Tehran would choose ballistic missiles as its preferred method of delivering nuclear weapons."

Secretary Carter, in his confirmation hearing, built on this and unequivocally stated that Iran's ballistic missile development was "a threat not only to the United States, but friends and allies in the region."

Last year I joined a number of my colleagues in sending a letter to the President urging him to use the negotiations process to achieve further restrictions on Iran's ballistic missile program. The administration's response to our letter stated that Iran's ballistic missile program "will need to be addressed in the context of a comprehensive solution." This position was repeated by the U.S. negotiators. Under Secretary of State Wendy Sherman also stated on multiple occasions that Iran's ballistic missile program "has to be addressed as part of a comprehensive agreement."

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Dempsey, weighed in at a July 7 hearing before our Senate Armed Services Committee, testifying that "under no circumstances should we relieve pressure on Iran relative to ballistic missile capabilities and arms trafficking." Then, a week later, news reports surfaced that negotiators had agreed to an eleventh hour Iranian demand that the embargoes be lifted.

Indeed, when the deal was announced on July 14, the President revealed that after 5 years, the conventional weapons embargo will be removed, and after 8 years, restrictions related to ballistic missile technology would also expire. I will repeat that point. Instead of exchanging sanctions relief for further limitations on Iran's ballistic missile development, as many of us in this body had urged, U.S. negotiators agreed at the last minute to relax those restrictions. These are the weapons that our intelligence community tells us will be Iran's preferred way to deliver a nuclear weapon, and our most senior military officer testified that we should "under no circumstances" relieve that pressure. When the administration said Iran's ballistic missile programs would have to be addressed, few would have guessed that this is what they meant.

Now, Secretary Kerry has argued this concession won't have an impact because many other tools, such as the Missile Technology Control Regime and the Proliferation Security Initiative, are available to prevent Iran from acquiring ballistic missile technology. But the United Nations restrictions were imposed in order to bolster those measures which were on the books long before the U.N. measures were passed. Removing them will give our counter-

proliferation efforts one less tool to limit Iran's military development and, in particular, its ability to build an ICBM that is capable of hitting the United States.

The administration has also argued that keeping the embargo on conventional weapons in effect for 5 years and 8 years with respect to those ballistic missile restrictions is a victory. After all, they claim, Iran, Russia, and China wanted to have those restrictions removed immediately. Watering down last-minute demands of a minority of negotiators is not a victory for the United States. Any attempt to argue that we were lucky to avoid complete capitulation to the demands of Iran and Russia and China admits a negotiating atmosphere so dysfunctional that no positive agreement could have emerged.

I believe the repeal of the U.N. embargoes will foster Iran's conventional weapons and ballistic missile development. Thus, under this agreement, in 15 years we are likely to see an Iran that has emerged as a threshold nuclear state with an advanced enrichment program, has a more advanced conventional army, and commands a larger, better trained, and better equipped proxy force. It may even have an ICBM with which it can threaten to retaliate against any U.S. attack. All of this will be achieved without violating the agreement that is before us today, which reflects how far short it falls of advancing U.S. interests.

Worst of all, legitimizing Iran's nuclear program diminishes the chance that sanctions could ever be imposed on Iran in the future, and fostering its military development undermines the threat of force should Iran ever attempt to develop a nuclear weapon.

I believe this vote will be one of the most important I will make as a U.S. Senator, and it is worthy of a robust debate. I am disappointed that more of my colleagues—in particular those on the other side of the aisle—have not come to the floor to share their opinion, their position. I find their silence deafening.

As I have looked around this Chamber today, I have been wondering, where are the supporters of this agreement? Why are they not on the floor to defend the substance of this deal? Forget the politics. Forget the false choices, the straw men, and the bluster. We should be here to debate substance.

In conclusion, I cannot support an agreement that attempts to trade inadequate short-term limits for dangerous long-term concessions.

Nebraskans and all Americans and their families are depending on us to ensure that our Nation's security is protected. This deal should not be approved.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

RECOGNIZING LIEUTENANT GENERAL PATRICIA D. HOROHO

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, it is an honor to commend LTG Patricia D. Horoho, the 43rd U.S. Army Surgeon General and Commander, U.S. Army Medical Command, upon her retirement following 32 years of service to our Nation and the U.S. Army. She leaves behind a legacy of transformation that will benefit the health care of our soldiers and their families for years to come.

Lieutenant General Horoho was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army Nurse Corps in 1982 upon her graduation from the University of North Carolina. Over the course of her service, she commanded medical units to include the U.S. Army Medical Command, the Walter Reed Health Care System, the Western Regional Medical Command, and the Madigan Army Medical Center. She also deployed in support of the International Security Assistance Force Joint Command in Afghanistan in 2011.

During her tenure as the 43rd U.S. Army Surgeon General, Lieutenant General Horoho demonstrated her resolve to transform Army Medicine from a health care system to a system of health. Her strong leadership efforts resulted in the Army and the Department of Defense adopting many initiatives to improve the quality of care for military members, families, and retirees—validating the Army Medical Department's professionalism as a High Reliability Organization. She is a national leader and innovator in health care who provided vision and direction that positively transformed Army Medicine.

Lieutenant General Horoho is a true patriot who has dedicated her life to the security, health, and welfare of our Nation. Her loyalty and commitment to the soldiers and their families have never wavered. She is leaving the U.S. Army Medical Department in a high state of readiness, capable of accomplishing its important missions. We thank her for her outstanding service to a grateful nation and wish her well in her future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING JOSEPH M. CASEY

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I wish to congratulate Joseph M. Casey on his