

All these people worked hard. They are all a part of this team, and it certainly goes far beyond just Senator REED and myself.

I yield the floor to Senator REED.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise to join Chairman INHOFE in support of the fiscal year 2020 Defense authorization bill. I thank the chairman for his great bipartisan leadership, thoughtful, sensible, and delivering what I think is an excellent piece of legislation.

It was based on thorough hearings, discussions, and debate on both sides of the aisle, and it came out of the committee with strong bipartisan support. I hope it enjoys that support on final passage.

As the chairman indicated, the bill provides for many different aspects that are necessary to our national defense. It provides a pay raise for the men and women of our Armed Forces who do so much for us. It includes over 30 provisions to address the privatized military housing crisis. It authorizes military construction in almost every State in this country. It provides funding and authorities for our military personnel on the frontlines and for those who are back in the United States building the ships and the tanks and advancing the technologies we need for the future fight.

This bill also contains numerous amendments from many of my colleagues, again, on both sides of the aisle, on other issues of great importance, such as the Intelligence Authorization Act, the authorization of the Maritime Administration, and provisions addressing the fentanyl crisis and the dangers of PFOS-PFAS in our water.

There are numerous provisions here that go beyond the narrow definition of the defense establishment. They are bipartisan, and they are strongly supported by both sides of the aisle.

Again, let me thank Senator INHOFE for his leadership. It made a great difference in terms of his approach to this important legislation.

Finally, I would like to thank the committee staff. Particularly, I would like to thank the majority staff and their staff director, John Bonsell. He did a superb job—they did. “Diligence,” “professionalism,” and “bipartisanship” were the watchwords of their efforts. I thank them for that.

Let me thank my staff. In particular, Jody Bennett, Carolyn Chuhta, Jon Clark, Jonathan Epstein, Jorie Feldman, Creighton Greene, Ozge Guzelsu, Gary Leeling, Kirk McConnell, Maggie McNamara, Bill Monahan, Mike Noblet, John Quirk, Arun Seraphin, Fiona Tomlin, and my staff director, Elizabeth King, who, with John Bonsell, did a superb job.

Let me thank the floor staff who have helped us over the last few days immensely.

I urge all of my colleagues to join the chairman and me in supporting this excellent legislation.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 764

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is on agreeing to amendment No. 764, as modified and amended.

The amendment (No. 764), as modified, as amended, was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title for the third time.

The bill (S. 1790), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading and was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the cloture motion is withdrawn.

The bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

Mr. RISCH. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 86, nays 8, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 188 Leg.]

YEAS—86

Alexander	Fischer	Portman
Baldwin	Gardner	Reed
Barrasso	Graham	Risch
Blackburn	Grassley	Roberts
Blumenthal	Hassan	Romney
Blunt	Hawley	Rosen
Boozman	Heinrich	Rubio
Brown	Hirono	Sasse
Burr	Hoeven	Schatz
Cantwell	Hyde-Smith	Schumer
Capito	Inhofe	Scott (FL)
Cardin	Isakson	Scott (SC)
Carper	Johnson	Shaheen
Casey	Jones	Shelby
Cassidy	Kaine	Sinema
Collins	Kennedy	Smith
Coons	King	Stabenow
Cornyn	Lankford	Sullivan
Cortez Masto	Leahy	Tester
Cotton	Manchin	Thune
Cramer	McConnell	Tillis
Crapo	McSally	Toomey
Cruz	Menendez	Udall
Daines	Moran	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Murkowski	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Whitehouse
Enzi	Murray	Wicker
Ernst	Perdue	Young
Feinstein	Peters	

NAYS—8

Booker	Lee	Paul
Braun	Markey	Wyden
Klobuchar	Merkley	

NOT VOTING—6

Bennet	Harris	Sanders
Gillibrand	Rounds	Warren

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 86, the nays are 8.

The 60-vote threshold having been achieved, the bill, as amended, is passed.

The bill (S. 1790), as amended, was passed.

(The bill, as modified, as amended, will be printed in a future edition of the RECORD.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for 10 minutes each.

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

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

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

The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the escalating tensions between the United States and Iran, my concern about the administration's current approach—a path that I am worried will lead us to war—and my support for the Udall amendment to the NDAA, which will be voted on tomorrow.

I believe that diplomatic efforts, in concert with our international partners, should be pursued immediately to avoid another unnecessary armed conflict in the Middle East.

Let me be clear. Iran is a dangerous and destabilizing force in the region. It supports terrorist proxies and meddles in the internal affairs of other states. Iran continues to pursue ballistic missile capabilities in violation of international norms and abuses the rights of its own people. Unfortunately, the administration's chosen course of action with respect to Iran has isolated the United States from the international community and made it more difficult to collectively address these issues.

The administration's actions and rhetoric related to Iran have created a credibility deficit. This is a fast-changing and dangerous situation, and it is clear that there is not a consensus within the international community with respect to Iran's plans and intentions.

Given these disconnects, it is imperative for the administration to provide Congress with current, unvarnished intelligence so that we may reach substantiated conclusions.

Taking a step back, it is important to recount the actions that have precipitated the current state of affairs. Current tensions are an entirely predictable outcome of the administration's ill-conceived approach to Iran.

Despite then-Candidate Trump's campaign rhetoric, I and others hoped that he would heed the advice of the advisers with respect to the Iran nuclear agreement, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or the JCPOA.

For example, despite personal concerns about the JCPOA before it was signed, former Secretary of Defense Mattis told the Armed Services Committee at his confirmation hearing that "when America gives her word, we have to live up to it and work with our allies."

In October 2017, Secretary Mattis told the Armed Services Committee that he believed it was in our national interest to remain in the JCPOA. General Dunford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, echoed these sentiments at the time and cautioned that, in his words, "the U.S. will incur damage vis-a-vis our allies if we unilaterally withdraw from the JCPOA. Our allies will be less likely to cooperate with us on future military action to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon and less likely to cooperate with us on countering other destabilizing aspects of Iranian behavior that threaten our collective interests."

The administration should have sought to work with the international community to address the challenges posed by Iran by building upon the foundation of the JCPOA rather than squandering that opportunity in favor of "putting Iran on notice" and other inflammatory rhetoric.

Just over a year ago, President Trump made the disastrous decision to unilaterally withdraw the United States from the JCPOA and reimpose nuclear-related sanctions, in violation of previous U.S. commitments under the deal. Since withdrawing from the deal, the Trump administration has taken a series of additional escalatory actions, including the imposition of new sanctions on various aspects of the Iranian economy; cancellation of waivers that previously allowed importation of Iranian oil by China, India, Japan, South Korea, and Turkey; and the designation of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps—often referred to as the IRGC—as a foreign terrorist organization.

The designation of a foreign government entity as a foreign terrorist organization was unprecedented, and it is not clear what purpose it served other than to unnecessarily raise tensions with Iran. As I learned during a recent visit to Iraq and Afghanistan, the IRGC designation has significantly complicated our relationships with foreign partners who described the action as provocative and destabilizing.

While the JCPOA was not a perfect deal, it was a necessary deal. It is important to remember that when the JCPOA was signed, Iran's "breakout" timeline—the amount of time Iran would need to produce enough fissile material for a nuclear weapon—was only 2 to 3 months. Even by the most

conservative estimates, the JCPOA stretched that timeline to more than a year.

By all accounts, the JCPOA has worked as intended. The JCPOA commits Iran to never seeking to develop or acquire a nuclear weapon and effectively cuts off all pathways for Iran to achieve a nuclear weapon until at least 2030. The agreement dramatically reduced Iran's stockpile of enriched uranium and the number of installed centrifuges. It also prevented Iran from producing weapons-grade plutonium and has subjected Iran to the most intrusive monitoring regime in the world to ensure it is living up to its commitments.

The JCPOA was appropriately built upon the concept of "distrust and verify," and I support efforts by our European partners, as well as Russia and China, to preserve the JCPOA despite challenges the Trump administration has put in their way.

According to General Dunford, in the absence of the JCPOA, Iran would likely resume its nuclear weapons program, and, in his words, "a nuclear-armed Iran would likely be more aggressive in its actions and more dangerous in its consequences."

Unfortunately, the administration's withdrawal from the agreement and reimposition of sanctions has left us isolated from our allies and partners while emboldening the hardliners in Iran.

In May of last year, subsequent to the decision to withdraw from the JCPOA, Secretary of State Pompeo articulated a set of 12 "demands" and indicated that "major changes" would need to be made by Iran before sanctions relief would be provided. The administration has sent mixed messages on whether its demands should be viewed as a set of preconditions for discussions on sanctions relief. The demands outlined by Secretary Pompeo are widely viewed as maximalist and leave little room for negotiation, especially given that the administration has already reneged on previous diplomatic commitments related to Iran's nuclear program.

Without greater certainty by the administration on what specific actions would need to be taken by Iran to relieve U.S. economic pressure, I fear that Iran has little incentive to engage in negotiations.

Indeed, the administration has followed that initial set of 12 demands with a succession of orchestrated steps to force Iran into an ever-smaller corner that only serves to increase the odds of miscalculation and reduce diplomatic opportunities. The economic sanctions by the United States have left the Iranian economy reeling, with its gross domestic product shrinking by 5 percent and the inflation rate rising by 50 percent.

As part of this so-called "Maximum Pressure" campaign, the administration has just announced personal sanctions against Supreme Leader Ali

Khamenei and other Iranian leadership. The Iranians have responded by indicating that these sanctions mean "the permanent closure of the doors of diplomacy."

Rather than modifying its behavior, Iran has responded to these demands and subsequent escalatory actions by increasing its malign activities in the region, including in Yemen and Syria, and announcing that it would stop complying with certain aspects of the JCPOA. If Iran follows through on threats to completely withdraw from the JCPOA and resume nuclear weapons development activities, the United States and the international community will be in a much less unified and therefore weaker negotiating position than we had leading up to the JCPOA.

As I assess the current state of affairs, I see four potential outcomes of the current approach being pursued by the administration.

First, Iran could bend to the will of the administration and announce its compliance with the so-called 12 demands laid out by Secretary Pompeo. However, Iran has a long history of struggle against outside forces. A notable example is the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s. Additionally, Iranian capitulation would likely threaten its top priority of regime survival, so clearly this is an unrealistic outcome.

Second, Iran could remain in the JCPOA despite seeing little of the economic benefits promised by the deal and hope that a future U.S. administration would return to the agreement. Iran's recent announcement that it would stop complying with aspects of the JCPOA is a signal that it views the current arrangement as unsustainable and is willing to abandon the JCPOA completely if its economic situation does not improve in the near term.

Third, Iran could agree to return to the negotiating table, seeking a reduction in tensions and easing of sanctions. However, both the administration and Iranian leaders have made clear that they are not interested in such an approach.

In announcing the administration's strategy for Iran last May, Secretary Pompeo stated that President Trump is "ready, willing, and able to negotiate a new deal" but also made clear that "we will not renegotiate the JCPOA itself."

On May 8, Iranian President Rouhani stated:

We are ready to negotiate, within the boundaries of JCPOA. . . . It is not us who left the negotiation table.

These seem to be irreconcilable positions, especially after the latest round of sanctions directed at the Iranian leadership.

Lastly and most significant, I believe, the current approach could result in a military conflict between the United States and Iran. The destruction of an American unmanned drone flying in international airspace by a missile fired from Iran is an example of the potential for widespread conflict. Only at the last minute did President

Trump call off a strike against the Iranian missile sites in retaliation. He concluded correctly that such a strike would be disproportionate. But the incident underscores the precarious position we are in after months of the misguided “maximum pressure” campaign.

Iranian action, either directed by national leadership or mistakenly taken by zealous supporters, could put us on an escalatory ladder of strike and counterstrike that would involve the entire region from Afghanistan to the Levant.

In addition and equally troubling is that an unarticulated goal of this so-called “Maximum Pressure” campaign is to prompt Iran to leave the JCPOA either officially or by gradually increasing its stock of highly enriched uranium or other aspects of its nuclear program. This could give advocates for a military strike on Iran increased leverage. Again, such a strike, even targeted to nuclear facilities, would likely prompt a regional asymmetric response by Iran, with significant military as well as economic consequences.

Like all of my colleagues, I am deeply concerned about Iranian threats to U.S. personnel facilities in the Middle East. U.S. forces have the unquestioned and inherent right to defend themselves, but absent an Iranian directed or sponsored attack or the imminent threat of such an attack on U.S. personnel facilities or key strategic interests, military actions should be pursued only as a last resort and as part of an international coalition, which the administration has so far failed to bring together.

I will be supporting the amendment offered by Senator UDALL because it would make clear that any offensive military action against Iran must be consistent with domestic and international law, including a specific authorization for the use of military force, or an AUMF, provided by Congress.

In this context, the President’s demonstrated willingness not just to bend the facts but to indulge, in certain cases, in fabrications is particularly concerning and unacceptable when it may come to deploying our troops into harm’s way. Congress has the responsibility to demand and, if necessary, challenge the basis for unsupported assertions of Iranian aggression and provocation that could be used to take this country to war.

Echoing one of the themes used in the Bush administration’s justification for the 2003 Iraq war, Secretary of State Pompeo testified to the Senate in April that “there’s no doubt there is a connection between the Islamic Republic of Iran and al Qaeda. Period. Full stop.” And he refused to rule out the use of the 2001 AUMF as a means to conduct military action against Iran.

While Iran is a state sponsor of terror, I am not aware of compelling evidence to suggest Iran or Iranian affiliated groups are an “associated force” of al-Qaida for the purposes of the 2001 AUMF.

In fact, such an arrangement is hard to fathom, given the deep religious and ideological differences between the Shia leadership of Iran and the Sunni leadership of al-Qaida. The administration must come to Congress if it seeks to pursue offensive military action.

Likewise, any consideration of military action against Iran must fully account for the likely cost of such an engagement—in lives, resources, potential negative impact on the global economy, disruption of U.S. bilateral relationships, and other unintended consequences. The administration must provide the American people with a clear-eyed assessment of what those costs may be in advance of any contemplated military engagement.

The Trump administration’s escalatory attacks may soon place Iran in an untenable position. As a result, Iran may seek to change the status quo by initiating a limited military conflict with the United States, thereby requiring the intervention of the international community. If such a scenario comes to pass, our recent efforts to deter Iran through the deployment of additional military capabilities to the region will have failed, and even a limited conflict would be very difficult to manage or to bring to a conclusion.

The President and others in the administration have consistently downplayed the potential costs of conflict with Iran. In fact, just yesterday, the President said that “if something should happen [with Iran], we’re in a very strong position. It wouldn’t last very long.” The President’s assessment is undercut by his own Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats, who told Congress earlier this year:

Iran continues to develop and approve a range of new military capabilities to target U.S. and allied military assets in the region, including armed UAVs, ballistic missiles, advanced naval mines, unmanned explosive boats, submarines and advanced torpedoes, and antiship and land-attack cruise missiles. Iran has the largest ballistic missile force in the Middle East and can strike targets up to 2,000 kilometers from Iran’s borders. Russia’s delivery of the SA-20c SAM system in 2016 has provided Iran with its most advanced long-range air defense system.

In addition to the conventional military capabilities laid out by Director Coats, Iran maintains a network of proxy forces throughout the region, many of whom operate in close proximity to U.S. military personnel in Iraq and Syria. They maintain the capability to conduct lethal action against our forces and facilities without notice.

Recently retired commander of the U.S. Central Command, General Votel, told the Armed Services Committee in February:

The Iranian regime masks its malign activities through proxies and surrogates enabled by the Iran Threat Network in Yemen, Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon. Iran is also attempting to build ground lines of communication through Iraq and Syria into Lebanon to support its proxy Hezbollah. Iran has gained influence with Iraq’s armed forces with the formalization of Popular Mobiliza-

tion Forces, and also exerted influence in Lebanon, Iraq, and Yemen, oftentimes affecting established sovereign governments.

The combination of Iran’s known conventional and asymmetric capabilities should dispel any notion that conflict with Iran would be quick or could be won only through the use of U.S. air power. As former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates reportedly said in a recent speech: “If you think the war in Iraq was hard, an attack on Iran would, in my opinion, be a catastrophe.”

He continued: “[Iranian] capacity to wage a series of terror attacks across the Middle East aimed at us and our friends, and dramatically worsen the situation in Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, and elsewhere is hard to overestimate.”

All of the competent military analysts I have engaged with believe that we cannot conduct an effective land campaign in Iran, and an extended air and sea campaign will undercut the priorities laid out in the national defense strategy, which focuses not on the Middle East but on Russia and China.

Absent the full mobilization of our Armed Forces and those of our allies, ground operations in Iran are simply beyond our capacity. The last ground war involving Iran, the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s, resulted in the death of nearly 1 million troops, the majority of whom were Iranians who died fighting a superior Iraqi military during a brutal and prolonged conflict. There is clearly no widespread U.S. or international support for another such military engagement in the Middle East.

Considering the costs associated with ground operations, a more limited conflict involving a series of tit-for-tat actions is far more likely, with Iran utilizing its asymmetric advantages and proxies in response to U.S. precision and standoff strikes.

It is unlikely that U.S. deterrence could be quickly reestablished under such a scenario, and Iran may use the time to restart and advance its nuclear weapons efforts, thereby increasing its negotiating leverage and also making the situation much more volatile.

War with Iran is not inevitable. To date, the administration has tried to use every instrument of national power to get Iran to change its behavior—except diplomacy and negotiations. The administration’s ill-conceived approach has not worked, and the time has come to try real and sustained diplomacy, rather than relying on coercion.

I urge the President and those in the administration to take this moment of high tension to engage with our allies and partners with the goal of seeking a diplomatic solution to the current situation. In that context and in that spirit, I will support the Udall amendment tomorrow.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, the 116th Congress, so far, has just talked about the humanitarian crisis at the border. Most of our Democratic colleagues have claimed up to this point that there is no crisis or emergency at the border.

We will recall that we started out the year with a government shutdown because of the battle over border security, and our Democratic friends made one thing perfectly clear: They would oppose any effort to fund our security mission at the border. That resulted in the 35-day shutdown.

The Speaker of the House at the time called the situation “a fake crisis at the border,” and the minority leader here in the Senate referred it to as “a crisis that does not exist.” Well, they weren’t the only ones. Throughout the Halls of the Capitol, Democrats in Congress used terms like “phony,” “imaginary,” and “make-believe” to describe the challenges our frontline officers and agents were facing every day.

While our Democratic colleagues have reflexively denied the existence of a crisis at the border, the problems have grown only bigger each day. Of course, it was 2014, I will remind my friends across the aisle, when Barack Obama, then President of the United States, declared a humanitarian and security crisis at the border. So it seemed very odd to me that, in 2019, they decided—when the numbers kept getting bigger and bigger and conditions worse and worse—all of a sudden that the humanitarian and security crisis had gone away.

The fact is, over the last 3 months, the number of illegal crossings across the southwestern border have hit six figures, something we haven’t seen since 2006. We surpassed the number of unaccompanied children apprehended at the height of the 2014 crisis that President Obama was speaking about.

This mass migration has nearly depleted our Federal resources, causing the President to request \$4½ billion for humanitarian assistance and border operations. That request came almost 2 months ago—almost 2 months ago, and Congress has not acted.

Now, it seems, our Democratic colleagues have finally accepted the facts. There is a very real and very urgent humanitarian crisis on our southern border. The bill they passed earlier this week meets the dollar amount requested by the President, but the substance of the bill shows that House Democrats don’t want to send funding where it is actually needed the most.

Unlike the Senate’s bipartisan bill, the original House bill excluded funding for the Department of Defense, immigration judge teams, and underfunded both Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Protection. This morning, they made a last-ditch effort to inject some of their deeply partisan provisions back into our Senate bipartisan bill. While the House Democrats did increase needed

funding in some areas, the newly amended version still includes divisive provisions and reduces funding in areas that the Senate overwhelmingly rejected yesterday.

Here is just one example. Democrats in the House cut the Senate bill’s appropriation of \$21 million for ICE Homeland Security investigations to conduct—get this—human trafficking investigations. So the House wanted to cut \$21 million in the Senate appropriations bill that was dedicated to investigating human trafficking. This is just the latest example of their fundamental lack of interest in sending money where it is needed most—only where it is politically convenient.

It is unfortunately not much of a surprise. Our Democratic friends are trying to keep up with their candidates running for President, whose positions on immigration and border security get more extreme each day. Now, more than one Democrat running for the nomination for President actually supports making entering the country illegally legal—in other words, no orderly immigration system at all—a free-for-all, where it is easier for human traffickers and drug smugglers to come and go as they please. And, of course, there is this: no consideration given for those would-be immigrants who are trying to wait patiently in line and do things exactly the right way and no consideration of the unfairness of those who would jump ahead of the line and enter the country illegally before those who are trying to do it the right way.

The House bill stands in stark contrast to the bipartisan agreement we passed here in the Senate, which funds a range of programs at the Federal departments and agencies working to manage the crisis, and, importantly, it is the only bill in town that has the support of the President. It is, after all, important to get the President’s signature on legislation for it to become law.

The Senate Appropriations Committee overwhelmingly supported this bill, and it passed the committee by a vote of 30 to 1. When the full Senate voted on it yesterday, only eight Members of the Senate voted no.

We have simply waited long enough. We waited too long, in my view, for Democrats to acknowledge this real humanitarian crisis. The House bill is inadequate and mostly a partisan effort.

Our Democratic colleagues have resisted acting for far too long already, making this humanitarian crisis worse. They circulate the very tragic pictures of a father with his young child face down in the waters of the Rio Grande River, and they somehow fail to acknowledge their own complicity in failing to act to provide the sorts of fixes to our asylum laws that would deter, if not prevent, that sort of thing from occurring in the first place. They really do need to look in the mirror.

We need to take action now, and I hope we don’t have to wait any longer

for our colleagues in the House to pass the Senate’s bipartisan bill.

S. 1790

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, on another note, I listened with great interest as the ranking member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, the Senator from Rhode Island, spoke about Iran and the challenges we face there. I agree with some and maybe even most of what he had to say.

The American people were appalled when, last week, Iran took down an unmanned American aircraft over international waters. As the Senator said, ordinarily, Iran operates by proxies or by third parties, whether it is the Shia militia in Iraq or Hezbollah or one of their other terrorist proxies like those operating in Yemen, the Houthis. But Iran escalated its attack against the United States by shooting an unmanned drone flying over international waters, so it was quite a shocking move from that standpoint, even from a nation as untethered as Iran.

Iran has been engaged in a 30-year conflict with the United States, one that has resulted in the death of U.S. servicemembers in Iraq and elsewhere—victims of explosively formed penetrators and other training that the IRGC, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, their Quds Force, their Special Operations force—the training they gave to terrorists operating in Iraq to kill Americans.

Then there is the periodic harassment of American and other international vessels operating in the Strait of Hormuz, a narrow strait through which a huge portion of the world’s energy supplies flow. So this is, in some ways, an escalation of what has been a 30-year conflict between Iran and the United States.

Tehran has waged acts of aggression against the United States and our allies. It has exported terrorism around the globe. It is the No. 1 state sponsor of international terrorism, and it has engaged in gross human rights violations against its own people.

As I indicated, Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, or IRGC, is the loyal henchman responsible for leading these acts. It is a branch of Iran’s Armed Forces which tries to squash democracy movements at home and abroad by pushing its extreme ideology beyond Iran’s borders.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps wields vast power and influence and uses its capabilities to encourage turmoil and conflict and violence throughout the Middle East. It funds arms, training, and foot soldiers to the terrorist groups that spread their radical ideology.

While the terrorist activities alone are enough to cause concern, the IRGC is also in control of Iran’s ballistic missile program, which unfortunately has only accelerated under the previous administration’s deeply flawed nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the JCPOA. Once