

our debt course. We should try the one thing we refused to do from the beginning: open hearings, regular order, and a real legislative process and public participation.

I yield the floor.

IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD an editorial from the July 21 edition of the Washington Post. I completely agree with this editorial.

The metric is not how many long overdue individual sanctions are made. We must instead be focused on our goal: preventing the acquisition of a nuclear weapons capability by the Islamic Republic of Iran.

I fear we are spiraling at an accelerating speed to the point when we have but one option left to stop the Islamic Republic of Iran's illegal nuclear weapons ambitions. If that happens, history will judge that we were put into this position by our own failure to avail ourselves of other options while we still had them.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, July 21, 2011]
SANCTIONS AREN'T SLOWING IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRESS

According to a recent story in The Post, the Obama administration is "quietly toasting" the success of international sanctions against Iran. The Islamic republic is having increasing difficulty arranging imports, including food, and the central bank is reportedly short of hard currency. Billions of dollars in foreign investment projects have been canceled, and few banks, insurance companies or shipping firms are willing to do business with Tehran.

There are also signs of political stress. President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is bitterly at odds with conservative clergy and a majority of parliament and appears to have lost the support of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Iran's closest ally, the Syrian regime of Bashar al-Assad, is slowly but steadily losing ground to a popular uprising, raising the prospect that Iran's once-firm foothold in the Arab Middle East will be reduced to an isolated Hezbollah militia in Lebanon.

We don't begrudge the White House a toast or two over these developments; the administration has worked hard and relatively effectively to make the sanctions work. But it's important to note a stubborn reality: There has been no change in Iran's drive for nuclear weapons or in its aggressive efforts to drive the United States out of the Middle East.

If anything, Tehran has recently grown bolder. Last month it announced plans to triple its capacity to produce uranium enriched to the level of 20 percent—a far higher degree of processing than is needed to produce nuclear energy. Western diplomats and experts say that Iran is preparing, and may have already begun, to install a new generation of powerful centrifuges in a plant built into a mountain near the city of Qom. As British Foreign Secretary William Hague wrote in an op-ed published by the Guardian last week, it would take only two to three months to convert uranium enriched at Qom into weapons-grade material. That means that Iran could have a "breakout" capacity allowing it to quickly produce a weapon when it chose to do so.

Mr. Hague told the British Parliament last month that Iran also has been secretly testing medium-range missiles capable of carrying a nuclear warhead. Britain believes there have been three such tests since October. Meanwhile, Iranian-backed militias have launched a new offensive against U.S. forces in Iraq. According to Defense Secretary Leon Panetta and other senior officials, Tehran has supplied sophisticated rockets and roadside bombs for attacks on U.S. troops, 15 of whom were killed during June.

Iran's ability to sustain its nuclear program and its meddling in Iraq reflect the fact that these initiatives are controlled by the Revolutionary Guard, which has not been affected by the political feuding in Tehran and has first claim on the oil revenue that Iran continues to reap. Economic and political hardship also has had no apparent impact on Mr. Khamenei, who has maintained the regime's refusal even to negotiate with the U.N. Security Council, much less obey its resolutions.

The bottom line is that the threat from Iran is not diminishing but growing. Where is the policy to reverse that alarming trend?

DEFENSE CUTS

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a piece from Politico by my colleagues in the House, Chairman FORBES, Chairman TURNER, Congressman BISHOP, and Congressman CONAWAY.

I fundamentally disagree with the President when he said in a recent interview with NPR:

A lot of the spending cuts that we're making should be around areas like defense spending as opposed to food stamps.

I wish the President would listen to the advice of Secretary Gates, who said in his AEI speech this May:

I revisit this history because it leads to an important point for the future: when it comes to our military modernization accounts, the proverbial "low hanging fruit"—those weapons and other programs considered most questionable—have not only been plucked, they have been stomped on and crushed. What remains are much-needed capabilities—relating to air superiority and mobility, long-range strike, nuclear deterrence, maritime access, space and cyber warfare, ground forces, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance—that our nation's civilian and military leadership deem absolutely critical.

My colleagues in the House are absolutely right when they wrote:

The time to draw a line in the sand, and go on the offense to support national security must be now.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From Politico, July 25, 2011]

ON THE OFFENSE OVER DEFENSE CUTS

(By Representatives J. Randy Forbes, Michael Turner, Rob Bishop, and Mike Conaway)

America's all-volunteer military is the most well-trained, well-equipped fighting force the world has ever seen. But the strength of our armed forces should not be taken for granted.

Without sustained investments in our troops and their equipment, the military

power our nation now wields in defense of our security—including our economic security—will slowly be hollowed out. The result is likely to be an America that can go fewer places and do fewer things in defense of its global interests.

While that may sound good to those who remain uncomfortable with America's leadership role in the world, starving the military will not make us any safer, given the global demands on our security interests.

The U.S. military confronts readiness shortfalls and a growing array of risks and security challenges. That is why I am deeply concerned about the avalanche of military spending cuts being discussed—from President Barack Obama's \$400 billion proposal to the Senate's Gang of Six proposal that could cut up to \$886 billion.

The time to draw a line in the sand, and go on the offense to support national security must be now.

Let's be clear: Defense spending is not what put us in this position, and gutting the defense budget to pay the bills is unlikely to get us out of it. As a percentage of our gross domestic product, the defense budget remains just 3.6 percent. This figure is low by all historical standards.

Even if we start slashing major portions of the budget—say \$50 billion each year over the next decade—that figure would still only add up to a fraction of the nation's debt. Yet the additional risk to the nation could be substantial.

Today's military is worn out from a decade of operations that have pushed already aging platforms to the edge. More than half the Navy's deployed aircraft are not fully combat ready, as we recently discovered at a House Armed Services Readiness Subcommittee hearing, and approximately one in five of our Navy ships are deemed unsatisfactory or mission degraded.

With known shortfalls in the Navy maintenance accounts, the Defense Department would be severely challenged to meet the expected service life of its equipment. Even more concerning are the assessments from our Combatant Commanders in the unclassified portion of the Quarterly Readiness Report to Congress. This paints a distressing picture of a military stretched thin by nearly 10 years of war and a sustained lack of resources.

Even as our forces have been aged rapidly by the high tempo of operations in the past decade, the president has cancelled a generation of weapons programs in just the last two years. While much of the nation has smart phones and iPads, the Army is still operating on an Atari-like system.

With readiness shortfalls and pressure to modernize aging platforms, how can we pretend we can defend the country with even more defense cuts? Our national defense planning must be based on an open and objective review of the threats we face and the resources required to meet them. Unfortunately, we now have that process in reverse.

In many ways, it's like a family who is about to purchase a new home. The correct course would be to have an inspector look at the house and tell the family what the problems are and what they will cost to fix. What if, instead, that family told the inspector that they only had \$1,000, and they wanted the inspector to go through and identify only \$1,000 worth of problems to fix?

This is analogous to the way the Defense Department and the Obama administration expect Congress to approach national defense. They dictate how much we will spend on defense without fully and objectively detailing the risks we face, or the choices we must make.

This wouldn't be a sensible course for the new homeowners. So why does it pass as acceptable for managing our national security?