PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 25, 2012

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, I recently voted ''no'' on House Resolution 568. I have made it clear that an Iran armed with nuclear weapons is unacceptable.

My legislation, H.R. 4173, presents a viable approach to achieving a nuclear-arms free Iran by pursuing a diplomatic resolution to the conflict. I am deeply concerned about Iran threatening its neighbors, Israel in particular. I have always strongly supported Israel's security and rights as a nation, and will continue to vote in favor of measures which will enhance the prospects for a peaceful Middle East. This resolution, however, does not advance that goal.

First, the focus on nuclear weapons ''capability'' suggests a lowered red-line threshold, which could make a U.S. strike much more likely. While this term has been used in varying contexts in recent years, it is a vague term that can potentially create openings for those seeking military conflict with Iran.

Further, Clause 2(A) would put Congress on record opposing any diplomatic agreement regarding Iran's nuclear program that allows Iran to enrich any uranium whatsoever, even for peaceful, civilian energy purposes subject to intense international monitoring and safeguards. This provision constitutes a poison pill that would pre-emptively kill any diplomatic solution to the crisis, because there is no feasible agreement that can be achieved with Iran in which it would give up its right under the Non-Proliferation Treaty to enrich uranium for civilian purposes.

Finally, Clause 6 would ''reject any U.S. policy that would rely on efforts to contain a nuclear weapons capable Iran'' and ''oppose any policy that would rely on containment as an option in response to the Iranian nuclear threat.'' This clause is unhelpful and unnecessary as no policymaker is suggesting a containment strategy.

As the sole Member of Congress to vote against the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force, I am wary of legislation that could put our men and women in uniform in harm's way due to a lack of deliberation before entering a war.

This legislation did not reduce the prospects for war with Iran, nor did it advance it's stated purpose of preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. The above mentioned clauses therefore ignore and undermine the prospects for a diplomatic solution. Because of these flawed provisions, I voted against H. Res. 568.