

he filed cloture on the debate. By rejecting our offer, the Republican leader has made the cloture vote the decisive and definitive vote on this issue. That is why I once again will put forward my consent to skip cloture and all procedural votes and move to a vote on final passage.

Every Senator in this body should understand that if they are forced to vote on cloture, it is because Senator MCCONNELL, not Democrats, wanted them to. The idea that Democrats are somehow trying to stop debate or keeping us from a final vote is foolish. It is simply untrue.

Let's be clear. Let's be clear who is moving to end debate. It is the Republican leader who is moving to end debate, not me, not us. It is the Republican leader who filed a procedural motion last night and today.

What Democrats are offering is an opportunity to continue debate and move straight to a vote on final passage. This is exactly what we have done on many policy issues in the past because of Republican demands. In fact, since 2007 the Senate has regularly held votes on passage at a 60-vote threshold on policy and national security issues—for example, on national security issues such as Iraq policy resolutions; the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, or FISA; United States-India nuclear cooperation; foreign aid prohibition for Pakistan, Egypt, Libya; FISA reauthorization; terrorism risk insurance, or TRIA. These are just a few of the many votes we have taken at the 60-vote threshold demanded by our Republican friends.

Actions speak louder than words. Democrats acted to get this bill to the floor and debate it. Democrats are ready to vote on final passage. But if we are forced to vote on cloture, all Senators should understand that the cloture vote would then become the defining vote that determines whether the resolution of disapproval moves forward to the President's desk. A vote against cloture is a vote for the Iran agreement, plain and simple.

Mr. President, may I have the consent agreement restated? I think I understand it, but basically we would have a cloture vote and move immediately to a vote? No, just a cloture vote. I am sorry.

The question before the body—and they are waiting for me to respond—is, we would have a cloture vote on this matter because the leader has objected to my consent request, and we would have it at 3:45 p.m. today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is the Chair's understanding.

Is there objection?

Mr. REID. Please wait. Staff is conferring here.

No objection.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

NUCLEAR AGREEMENT WITH IRAN

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, just a few short months ago, Senators of both parties came together to pass a bipartisan bill based on an important principle: that the American people through the Congress they elect deserve a say on one of the most important issues of our time. We rallied around that principle, voting 98 to 1 to ensure the American people would have a real say on any deal with Iran. What a tragedy it would be, then, if at the very last moment some of those same Senators decided to filibuster to prevent the American people from having a real say on this incredibly important issue.

I know some of our colleagues are currently under immense pressure to shut down the voice of the people. But I would ask colleagues to reflect on the gravely serious nature of the issue before us. I would ask colleagues to consider the expectations they set with their constituents when they voted for the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act. I would ask colleagues to consider something else as well. This is a deal that will far outlast one administration. The President may have the luxury of vacating office in a few months, but many of our responsibilities extend beyond that time. The American people will remember. They will remember where we stand today. Let's stand on their side.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

HIRE MORE HEROES ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.J. Res. 61, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 61) 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.

Pending:

McConnell amendment No. 2640, of a perfecting nature.

McConnell amendment No. 2641 (to amendment No. 2640), to change the enactment date.

McConnell amendment No. 2642 (to amendment No. 2641), of a perfecting nature.

McConnell amendment No. 2643 (to the language proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 2640), to change the enactment date.

McConnell amendment No. 2644 (to amendment No. 2643), of a perfecting nature.

McConnell motion to commit the joint resolution to the Committee on Foreign Relations, with instructions, McConnell amendment No. 2645, to change the enactment date.

McConnell amendment No. 2646 (to the instructions) amendment No. 2645), of a perfecting nature.

McConnell amendment No. 2647 (to amendment No. 2646), of a perfecting nature.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 3:45 p.m. will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 5 minutes.

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

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I understand we are moving back to the incredibly important debate on Iran. I will come back and address that a little bit later.

REMEMBERING ALISON PARKER AND ADAM WARD AND PAYING TRIBUTE TO VICKI GARDNER

Mr. President, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today to pay tribute to the victims of another horrific act of gun violence.

On August 26, a gunman opened fire during a live television interview at Smith Mountain Lake in Virginia. By now, I think everyone in this Chamber and all across the country saw that event on live television. The gunfire killed WDBJ News 7 reporter Alison Parker, News 7 photographer Adam Ward, and the shooting severely wounded Vicki Gardner, a local chamber of commerce official who was being interviewed. I know my colleague Senator Kaine has already spoken on this, but I speak for everyone in the Commonwealth when I say our hearts go out to the Parker family and the Ward family. We are all pleased to hear that Vicki Gardner was released from the hospital on Monday, and she is on the road to recovery.

So Smith Mountain Lake in Virginia is now added to the all-too-familiar, heartbreaking litany—Charleston, Aurora, Sandy Hook, Tucson, and Virginia Tech. It became clear in the days following the 26th that Alison Parker and Adam Ward represented the best of their community. The outpouring of love and support for them and their families was remarkable. I had a number of conversations with Alison's father Andy, whom I knew from local government, and I will be meeting with him later today. Vicki Gardner, who was released from the hospital, will soon, hopefully, be getting back to her job at the chamber of commerce.

We feel—particularly those of us in Virginia—as if we knew Alison, Adam, and Vicki because the crime committed against them was so horrible and the details were reported so widely.

How many more parents must lose their children to gun violence? How many more anxious families must maintain a lonely vigil at the hospital before all of us here in Congress move on commonsense gun legislation?

More than 30,000 people are killed by firearms in this country every year. The last time Congress meaningfully engaged in a debate about gun reform was more than 2 years ago, after Sandy Hook. Even after the horrific loss of 20 children and 6 adults in Newtown at Sandy Hook, the Senate was still unable to pass responsible, commonsense

reforms, such as closing the gun show loophole. Since Sandy Hook, there have been at least 136 school shootings in America. That is an average of one every week.

Probably like most of us, there are a lot of meetings we take in the Senate that kind of blur before our eyes. I will never forget the meeting with the Newtown families after that tragedy. I would have thought and would have expected with their grief that these families would have come in and asked for a whole array of legislative solutions, but they didn't. The families I met with came in and simply had one very reasonable, commonsense request of Congress: universal background checks to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and those with serious mental illness. Let me acknowledge that won't prevent every shooting. It is not a magical fix for violent, disturbed people who are determined to do harm, but it is a start at tackling the epidemic of gun violence.

I am a supporter of the Second Amendment—for many years I had an "A" rating from the NRA—but I believe background checks do not infringe on the Second Amendment. As a matter of fact, gun owners understand this. In fact, a greater proportion of gun owners support requiring background checks for all gun sales than do non-gun owners. In a recent survey, 85 percent of gun owners and 83 percent of non-gun owners—so gun owners more than non-gun owners—supported requiring background checks for all gun sales.

Reasonable people can disagree about what additional steps might need to be taken, but the facts are not up for debate. Background checks do work, and they keep guns out of the hands of those who shouldn't have them.

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the Brady law has blocked almost 2.4 million gun purchases since its enactment in 1994. Almost 200,000 purchases were blocked in the most recent year in which we have records. But, as we know, background checks aren't performed on every purchase. In fact, a significant number of transfers are done with no check whatsoever to determine whether a prospective buyer can legally possess a gun.

There is no reason why we shouldn't have a comprehensive background check system on all firearms sales. The Senate came close to making progress on this in the weeks following Sandy Hook. I want to particularly cite two colleagues, Senator MANCHIN and Senator TOOMEY, who both have strong records of support for the Second Amendment, who introduced and fought for bipartisan legislation that would have expanded background checks for many private gun sales, while still allowing families to appropriately transfer firearms within their family. However, this responsible and commonsense proposal fell short.

The cycle of tragedy followed by outrage followed by inaction has become

all too familiar. These tragic events are not isolated in any one part of the country—Charleston, Aurora, Tucson, Roanoke. Each of them breaks our hearts. We should not and cannot simply acknowledge and accept them as the status quo. We must not be content, and we must recognize that Congress, those of us in this body, have an ability to act. Thoughts and prayers for victims are not enough; we need to take responsible action. We can debate and should debate how far reform measures should go, but at the very least, we should look at a way to renew a push for more meaningful background checks. We must do more to make sure criminals and those who are dangerously mentally ill cannot purchase guns. We must work together to make sure local and State governments have the resources and place an appropriate priority on inputting the correct data into the national background check system.

As recently as the end of June, Senators TOOMEY and MANCHIN indicated they were considering ways to renew their efforts at meaningful background checks. I want to state clearly today that they will have my full support in this effort. I call on my colleagues to work with us to get legislation expanding meaningful background checks to the floor of the Senate before the end of this year. I can think of no better way to honor the lives of Alison Parker and Adam Ward and the thousands of other American families touched by gun violence.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROUNDS). The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I intend to support the resolution of disapproval of the comprehensive plan of action negotiated by the Obama administration with the Islamic Republic of Iran. The agreement falls woefully short of the international goal to improve global security by stopping Iran's nuclear weapons ambitions.

The American people and Congress were promised an inspections regime providing anywhere, anytime access to facilities where tests were conducted. Instead, Iran can delay access to facilities for up to 24 days. This is inconsistent with the Obama administration's claims that no part of this agreement is based on trusting Iran at its word. A credible agreement would include stronger verification measures to ensure that the Iranians play by the rules, particularly given that government's well-documented efforts to conceal its nuclear activities and ambitions.

We are also concerned about the consequence of lifting the economic sanctions that forced Iran to the negotiating table. This agreement is an issue of long-term significance. Our country and our allies will be forced to deal with the repercussions of a strengthened Iran for the foreseeable future. This agreement is a bad deal for us and our allies, and I will not support it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I have been a Member of this body for nearly four decades. During that time, I have had the honor of participating in numerous debates that shaped the course of our future, but I can think of none more important than the one in which we are now engaged.

The Iranian regime is one of our most dangerous foes. It has declared the United States to be the "Great Satan." It has repeatedly claimed its intent to "wipe Israel off the map." It has perpetrated violence against American servicemen and civilians alike. It has sown conflict across the most volatile region of the world. And it has repressed its people by some of the most ghastly methods imaginable.

Indeed, we should remember throughout this debate that our quarrel is not with the Iranian people. The Iranian people are our friends. We should remember throughout our plight and their desire for a cooperative relationship with the United States and the rest of the world. Instead, it is the dictatorial and fanatical regime that seeks to build and even use nuclear weapons, to destabilize the entire region, and to kill Americans and Israelis. Given the threat posed by this rogue regime, preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability is absolutely critical. It is a goal shared across party lines as well as among many of our friends and allies abroad.

All of us here prefer to prevent Iran from acquiring this capability by diplomatic means if possible rather than by armed conflict. In light of this shared desire to resolve the Iranian threat without a war, I examined the Obama administration's proposed agreement hopeful, if skeptical, that I could support the agreement. Nevertheless, the duty incumbent upon us as Senators is not to accept or reject this deal based upon knee-jerk reactions or blind partisan loyalty but rather to determine our stances based on thorough examination and reasoned judgment.

Regrettably, after much study, I have concluded that this is a catastrophically bad deal that I must strongly oppose.

Now, at the outset, I should note that the media is reporting that President Obama has gathered the votes to support his Iran deal. In reality, he has done no such thing. Were this a treaty, it would fall well short of the two-thirds requirement. It won't—and it can't—even muster a majority in either the House or Senate. There is nothing bipartisan about support for this deal. Only the opposition is bipartisan, and only the opposition is a majority. The deal lacks the most important kind of support—that of the American people. A strong majority of Americans oppose this deal, and they are right to do so.

Far from blocking the Iranian regime's path to nuclear weapons capability, this agreement actually secures

what Mark Dubowitz, the executive director of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, calls a “patient pathway” to nuclear weapons capability.

Consider the timeline. From day one, the Iranian regime will be allowed to enrich uranium using thousands of centrifuges and to conduct nuclear research and development. After 8 years, the regime will be allowed to begin building hundreds of new advanced centrifuges annually and will be allowed to expand its ballistic missile program.

After 15 years, it will be permitted to use advanced centrifuges to enrich uranium on an industrial scale, to stockpile significant quantities of enriched uranium, and to build heavy water reactors, according to the State Department’s own fact sheet. After only 10 years, Iran’s breakout time to rush for a nuclear weapon drops “almost down to zero,” as President Obama himself admitted.

In the words of former Deputy National Security Advisor Juan Zarate, this deal “stalls, [then] enables, and then validates an Iranian nuclear program.” All that the Iranian regime has to do is abide by the terms of the agreement to achieve threshold nuclear status—with an expanded infrastructure for the production of nuclear materials and a visible means of delivering a nuclear weapon to targets as far away as the United States.

Moreover, the deal’s means of verifying the Iranian regime’s compliance with these temporary limits on its nuclear programs are, frankly, pathetic. Our only peaceful means of recourse under the deal, the so-called snapback mechanism, involves an incredibly cumbersome process.

It allows the Iranian regime to delay international inspections for up to 24 days without recourse, a critical gap that experts such as former International Atomic Energy Agency Deputy Director General for Safeguards Olli Heinonen and former National Nuclear Security Administration Deputy Administrator for Defense William Tobey assert could allow Iran to hide evidence of illicit nuclear activities.

Other parties’ intransigence could also drag out the snapback mechanism more than 2 months before reimposing U.N. sanctions, approximately the same length of time as Iran’s current breakout timetable, according to President Obama.

Furthermore, the deal only makes the snapback mechanism available for instances of “significant nonperformance,” leaving no mechanism to respond to the kind of incremental cheating that has characterized the Iranian nuclear program thus far.

Perhaps most troubling, it remains unclear whether weapons inspectors will even have access to all Iranian nuclear facilities in the first place. Senior officials of the Iranian regime have repeatedly claimed that the deal does not allow access to military sites. The agreement’s language appears to have been left deliberately vague on this

point, hardly an encouraging development.

Moreover, press accounts of an IAEA side deal with Iran indicate that the international watchdog has already agreed to rely on the Iranian regime to conduct its own inspections at the Parchin weapons testing site, providing the IAEA with only photographs, videos, and environmental samples. Former IAEA Deputy Director General Heinonen may have put it best when he observed:

If the reporting is accurate, these procedures appear to be departing significantly from well-established and proven safeguards practices. At a broader level, if verification standards have been diluted for Parchin or elsewhere and limits imposed, the ramifications are significant as it will affect the IAEA’s ability to draw definitive conclusions with the requisite level of assurances and without undue hampering of the verification process.

Regarding these troubling reports, I have a number of outstanding questions and concerns that have only been amplified by the Obama administration’s steadfast refusal to share the text of the agreement with Congress. This intransigence amounts to an evasion of the spirit and possibly the text of the bipartisan Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act, a development that rightfully sows doubt and concern about what else the Obama administration might be hiding.

In light of these incredible concessions to the Iranian regime, I am also deeply troubled by the great benefit the Iranian regime stands to enjoy from this deal. To use the succinct words of one scholar, “President Obama is agreeing to dismantle the sanctions regime permanently. In return, Tehran is agreeing to slow the development of its nuclear program temporarily.”

The current sanctions regime has imposed heavy costs on the Iranian economy. Oil exports have dropped by 60 percent. The inflation rate has risen to 40 percent. And foreign companies, deterred by harsh penalties, have avoided investing in Iran, thereby isolating Iran from the global economy. Along with the threat of military action, these sanctions played a critical role in bringing the Iranian regime to the negotiating table, and we should thus be very careful before sacrificing this leverage.

In exchange for these minimal, temporary concessions, the Iranian regime stands to reap enormous rewards in sanctions relief. According to figures cited by President Obama, the Iranian regime will regain control of more than \$150 billion currently frozen in the world’s financial institutions. Sanctions relief will also allow an influx of international businesses into Iran, bringing about greater revenue for the regime.

Where should we expect this money to be spent? Will it go to the long-suffering Iranian people who are the victims of this regime, a people who have long contributed to the advancement of civilization and the good of mankind, a

people whose true spirit has been continually repressed for almost 40 years, a people who have paid a high price because of the radical fundamentalism of their leaders, and a people who look to us for strength in the defense of our ideals, not capitulation to this heinous regime?

Unfortunately, we cannot expect such an outcome. If history is any guide, we should expect the Iranian regime to use sanctions relief to pursue its dangerous aims, including: to support its terrorist proxies that represent a dire threat to the stability of the whole region, such as Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Houthis in Yemen, and the murderous Assad regime in Syria; to encourage the “swarming of [foreign] businesses to Iran,” which the Iranian foreign minister believes will make it “impossible to reconstruct” broad international sanctions; to take advantage of the lifting of the U.N. arms embargo after 5 years to purchase sophisticated weapons systems such as the Russian S-300 air defense system, which would make American or Israeli military action against the Iranian nuclear program even more difficult than it already would be; and to shore up the political and financial standing of the most radical elements of the Iranian regime, reducing the likelihood of internal reform and a more constructive Iranian foreign policy.

If the Iranian regime suddenly becomes flush with cash, what incentive will it have to change priorities 15 years from now?

Doesn’t this deal reward what the Obama administration called “bad behavior” in one of the most astonishing understatements that I have ever heard?

And in the words of one expert, “when in the course of human history did getting \$100 billion [or \$150 billion] at the stroke of a pen ever convince anyone that they have been wrong all along?”

For a deal built on the unfounded hope that the Iranian regime would change its ways, I see very little reason to expect success. And for an agreement that would supposedly reinforce the position of the Iranian moderates and bring relief to the Iranian people, I see only the prospect of strengthening the hand of the hard-liners and of sanctions relief diverted for more violent misadventures, rather than for the benefit of the Iranian people.

Reflecting on this spectacularly bad deal, I can only conclude that Obama administration officials proved to be weak negotiators because of an absolute desperation for a deal—almost any deal. These massive concessions to the Iranian regime for so little in return were produced by this administration’s knee-jerk aversion to the prospect of using military force, a preoccupation demonstrated by the constant rhetoric that we hear from the White House that the only alternative to this deal is war.

That claim is patently false. We can and should go back to the negotiating table. While reassembling the sanctions coalition that this agreement throws away will not be easy and may not even be fully possible, a nation as strong as ours still has plenty of tools at our disposal. Our unparalleled economic and military might give us significant leverage to get a better deal, and we should not be misled by overly simplistic rhetoric to conclude otherwise.

War is never a happy matter to contemplate, especially from a position of responsibility such as in the Senate. In this body, we are saddled all too often with the sorts of decisions in which real people's lives hang in the balance: those of our friends and neighbors; our fellow countrymen; our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines; and even those in faraway distant places who look to America as a guardian of freedom and peace, what Abraham Lincoln called the last, best hope of Earth.

None of us relish the prospect of war, especially in an age in which our weapons have a power almost too terrible to contemplate. In particular, neither I nor any of my colleagues seek a war with Iran; as I stated before, the Iranian people are not our enemies. They are our friends. No people have paid a higher price for the regime's record of terrorism, mass murder, corruption, and duplicity than the Iranians. The prospect of inflicting collateral damage on our long-suffering friends further counsels against any course of action that leads to war.

It is not a cavalier attitude about war that leads me to oppose this deal; it is my unwavering judgment that this deal makes war much more likely that leads me to oppose it.

Let there be no doubt. A deal that paves rather than precludes Iran's path to a nuclear weapons capability makes war more likely. A deal that makes the Iranian regime more confident of its ability to protect its nuclear program from international pressure and military action makes war more likely. A deal that funnels tens of billions of dollars to terrorists bent on destabilizing the Middle East makes war more likely. A deal that provokes a nuclear arms race in the most volatile region on the globe makes war more likely. A deal that surrounds Israel not only with a nuclear Iran but also eventually with numerous other regimes with nuclear weapons capability and a genocidal attitude toward the Jewish State makes war more likely. And a deal that puts the Iranian regime and its terrorist allies one turn of a screwdriver away from a nuclear weapon and a means of delivering it anywhere across the world makes war more likely.

War may come, but it is not inevitable. As Members of "the world's greatest deliberative body," it is our duty to discern the wisest course of action that preserves the security of the United States and our allies—that reduces the risk of war but does not let

the strong desire for peace we all share cloud our judgment about how we best preserve that peace.

In this solemn debate, it is my hope that the voice of reason will have the power to change minds and overcome the pressures of our politics that have the power to lead us astray. I am encouraged in my hope by the fact that almost every Member to come out in support of this deal has noted its significant flaws. The opposition to it has been unambiguous, strong, and bipartisan, and it constitutes a strong majority in both the House of Representatives and the Senate. I want to pay tribute to four of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who have bucked significant political pressure to vote their consciences against this bad deal.

We still have a chance to change course. All that is required is the bravery and good judgment to lead our Nation and the world to an agreement that can actually preserve the long-term peace. I urge all of my colleagues to join me in opposing this disastrous deal and in supporting a better way forward.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, first, I thank our honored President pro tempore for his outstanding comments.

But while my distinguished friend from Illinois is on the floor, I thought I would walk through a unanimous consent request, if that is OK. I think it has been cleared with him.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time be further divided as follows: from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. would be Republican time, from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. would be Democratic time, from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. would be Republican time, from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. would be Democratic time, from 2 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. would be Republican time, from 2:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. would be Democratic time, from 3 p.m. to 3:45 p.m. it be equally divided between the leaders or their designees, and that Senator MENENDEZ be given 15 minutes of the Republican time and 15 minutes of the Democrat time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. DURBIN. If I might ask the Senator from Tennessee to clarify, would the last part of his request relate to the period between 3 p.m. and 3:45 p.m.?

Mr. CORKER. Yes, that is correct.

Mr. DURBIN. I have no objection.

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

Mr. CORKER. Thank you.

Mr. President, so our side knows what will occur between now and the end of our time, the next 15 minutes will be for Senator GRAHAM, then 10 minutes to Senator BARRASSO, and then 10 minutes to Senator FLAKE.

With that, I yield the floor to one of the best national security voices in the United States of America, Senator GRAHAM of South Carolina.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I just want to make sure people understand what we are trying to do here this morning. Our Democratic colleagues are filibustering an attempt to have a debate and an up-or-down vote on the most consequential foreign policy decision in modern history. That is what you are doing.

Senator CORKER, in good faith, got us here in a bipartisan manner. And Senator REID has come out of nowhere to change what was the common understanding of how we would proceed—get 60 votes, a simple majority, and let the President act as he wishes.

But, no, we couldn't do that. They are more worried about protecting Barack Obama from having to veto this than they are about having a debate on the floor of the Senate.

Now, let me tell you a little about who you are dealing with here, folks. If I hear one more comment from my Democratic friends about how much they love Israel—with friends like this, you don't need an enemy. This is who you are dealing with. This was yesterday:

Iran's supreme leader predicted Wednesday that Israel would not exist in 25 years, and ruled out any new negotiations with the "Satan," the United States, beyond the recently completed nuclear accord.

In remarks published Wednesday on his personal website—

At least the Ayatollah has gotten into modern times—

and in posts on Twitter, the supreme leader—

Do you know why they call him the Supreme Leader? Because he is—

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, responded to what he said were claims that Israel would be safe for that period. . . .

Where did those claims come from? It came from this administration, my colleagues on the other side. You are telling the world that this is the best deal for Israel. Guess what. Nobody in Israel who is in the current government agrees with you. It is just not Bibi. Everybody who is in the current coalition government understands this is not a good deal for Israel.

Why don't you listen to them? You want it to be a good deal for Israel. Well, it is not, and your wanting it doesn't change it.

So let's finish what he said.

[The Ayatollah] responded to what he said were claims that Israel would be safe for that period under the nuclear agreement reached in July.

"After nuclear negotiations, the Zionist regime said that they will not be worried about Iran in the next 25 years."

I repeat.

"After nuclear negotiations, the Zionist regime said that they will not be worried about Iran in the next 25 years."

Israel didn't say that. People over here said that.

The Ayatollah wrote:

"I am telling you, first, you will not be around in 25 years' time, and God willing, there will be no Zionist regime in 25 years. Second, during this period, the spirit of

fighting, heroism and jihad will keep you worried every moment.”

Clearly, somebody who is on the course of change, somebody we should give \$100 billion to, create a pathway to a nuclear bomb in 15 years and let him buy more weapons in 5 years and build an intercontinental ballistic missile in 8 years—clearly, this is the man who has changed course and you have empowered him.

At least—at least—Chamberlain can say Hitler lied. At least Chamberlain can say: I negotiated with the Fuhrer. He told me to my face: If you give me this, I am done.

Well, we all know Chamberlain was a chump, and Hitler actually meant what he said when he wrote a book.

The question is, Does this man mean what he says when he tweets yesterday that the ink is not dry on the deal?

The one thing you can say about the old Ayatollah—who is crazy, who is a religious Nazi—is that at least he is honest. He doesn't want you to be confused as you vote as to what he wants to do to your friend Israel. See, he doesn't want you to misstate what this deal means to him. You obviously are writing him off. You obviously believe he doesn't mean it.

I guess he has a polling problem in Iran. He has to get his numbers up. He needs to say these things—because he doesn't mean it. But he has to keep his people happy because they like hearing this stuff. All I can tell you is his people tried to rise up against him in 2009, and our President sat on the sidelines and didn't do a damn thing. The biggest moment for change in Iran came in 2009, when young people and women took to the streets demanding a fair election that was stolen from them by the Ayatollah, and his response was to beat them, shoot them, put them in jail and torture them. This is the guy you are going to give \$100 billion to, a clear pathway to a bomb. He doesn't even have to cheat to get there and buy more weapons to attack us.

At least Chamberlain lied. This man is telling you what he is going to do as of yesterday, and between these times that negotiations have started until now, has he shown us a little leg about what will change? During the negotiations he has toppled four Arab capitals. During the negotiations he has supported the Houthis in Yemen, who destroyed a pro-American government, and we have lost eyes and ears on Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula—a Sunni extremist group that attacked Paris and will attack us.

During the negotiations they have done anything but be moderate. I cannot believe that you don't believe him. I cannot believe you made the biggest miscalculation in modern history by empowering a religious fanatic with the ability to attack our Nation, destroy our friends in Israel, and keep the Mideast on fire for 15 years. What are you all thinking over there?

All I can say is that on the last 9/11, 3,000 of us died because they couldn't

get weapons to kill 3 million of us. If you let this deal go forward, before too long the most radical regime on the planet will have the most lethal weapons available to mankind. They will share that technology with terrorists and they will come here. Why do they need an ICBM, folks? What are they going to do with it? They are not going to send people to space. What are you thinking? What are you all thinking over there? You are taking the most radical regime on the planet, a theocracy—this is not a democracy. The moderates were shot down in the streets. They were begging: Are you with us or are you with him, President Obama?

President Obama is absolutely the poorest champion of freedom and the weakest opponent of evil in history. Evil is flourishing on his watch. President Obama said you would have to be crazy not to support this deal. Let's walk through whether we should follow his advice about radical Islam.

This is the President who was told to leave troops in Iraq to make sure our gains would be maintained, and he pulled everybody out because he wanted to get to zero. He turned down every commander's advice to get to zero because he made a campaign promise. This is the President who was told by his entire national security team 3 years ago to establish a no-fly zone and help the Free Syrian Army because Assad was on the ropes, at a time when it would have mattered, when there was a Free Syrian Army to help and Assad was about to fall. Obama said: No thanks. This is the President who drew a redline against Assad, after he backed off, and said: If you use chemical weapons and you cross that redline, there will be a price.

Here are the facts. Assad is going to be in power and Obama is going to be gone. The last man standing is going to be Assad. So all I can tell you is this is the man who said: Don't worry about ISIL. They are the JV team. I killed bin Laden; Al Qaeda is decimated.

At what point in time do you realize President Obama has no idea what he is talking about? At what point in time is it obvious to anybody in the world who is paying attention that when it comes to radical Islam he has no clue?

So this is the guy we are going to send in to negotiate with a radical ayatollah—a guy who, in the eyes of the world, is a complete weak defender of freedom and a very poor adversary of evil. If that is not enough, the Iranians are rubbing this in John Kerry and Barack Obama's face by tweeting this out hours before you vote on this deal.

Just to remind you that no matter what you say on this floor about Israel, nothing has changed in his mind about Israel. When you claim Israel is safe, he is telling you: No, they are not. But you are not listening because you don't think he really means it. Well, I can tell you right now, you better be right. How about this idea. When it comes to the Ayatollah, assume the worst, not the best.

To our friends in Russia, John Kerry said one of the big benefits of this deal is that we will bring Russia in and Iran will be a better partner in the Mideast, and we will have a major breakthrough where Iran begins to help us with problems like Syria. Well, here is Russia's response, before you vote. They are sending Russian troops—maybe fighter planes—into Syria to prop up Assad before you vote. They are taking everything John Kerry said about what would happen if you do this deal and rubbing it in his face.

Tell me how you fix Syria with Assad in power? What the Russians are doing is ensuring he will stay in power longer, and the longer he stays in power, the more refugees the world will have to deal with and the more Hell on Earth will occur in Syria.

The Syrian people want two things; they want to destroy ISIL and they want Assad gone because he has destroyed their families. So Secretary Kerry, how well is this working, with this new engagement of Iran and Russia. Things are really changing. Look at the tweet yesterday. What are you going to tell the American people this means? Interpret the Ayatollah for me. This is just all talk? He has to say these things? He doesn't get elected. He doesn't have to worry about the next election. He says these things because he believes them. He is a religious fanatic, compelled by his version of Islam to destroy everything in his religion that he doesn't agree with—to destroy the one and only Jewish State and attack democracies such as ours, and you are giving him more to do that with. This is, over time, a death sentence for Israel, if it is not changed.

If I had \$100 billion to negotiate with, for God's sake, could I get four people out of jail? I could get people out of jail here with \$100 billion. Who is negotiating with Iran? This idea we are going to separate all of their bad behavior from their nuclear program was the biggest miscalculation in modern foreign policy history.

To suggest we don't need to look at Iran as a whole unit; that we are going to ignore the fact that they have four hostages, U.S. personnel held in sham trials, a Washington Post reporter; that they are the largest State sponsor of terrorism; that they destabilize the region; that they have driven our friends out of Yemen; that they are supporting Hezbollah, a mortal enemy of Israel; and that they have taken over the Lebanese Government—we are not going to worry about all that? What do you think they are going to do with the \$100 billion? Do you really think they are going to build roads and bridges?

The best indication of the next 15 years is the last 35. When you separated their nuclear ambitions from their destructive behavior, giving them access to more weapons and \$100 billion, you made a huge mistake because you are damning the Mideast to holy hell for the next 15 years, and you are

giving the largest state sponsor of terrorism more money and more weapons to attack us—and you couldn't get four people out of jail.

The only reason they are not dancing in Iran is the Ayatollah just doesn't believe in dancing. I have friends over there whom I respect and admire. I have no idea what you are thinking. I have no idea why you believe the Ayatollah doesn't mean what he says, given the way he has behaved. If they would shoot their own children down in the streets to keep power, what do you think they will do to ours? And the only reason 3,000 people died on 9/11 is because they couldn't get the weapons to kill 3 million of us, and they are on course to do it now.

I have never been more disappointed in the body than I am today, a body known to be the most deliberative body in democracy in the history of the world. Yet you will not let us have a vote. You will not let us have a debate.

Please stop saying this deal makes Israel safer. That is cruel. Your response to this deal is to give them more weapons because you know they are not safer. I find it a bit odd that in response to this deal we are selling the Arabs every kind of weapon known to man and we are promising Israel every kind of weapon we have. If you truly thought this was such a good deal, why do you have to arm everybody who is in the crosshairs of the Ayatollah?

When they write the history of these times, they are going to look back and say that President Obama was a weak opponent of evil and a poor champion of freedom. They are going to look and say that the United States Senate refused to debate the most consequential foreign policy agreement in modern times, and the people in Israel are going to wonder where did America go.

Has it ever crossed your mind that everybody in Israel who is in power, who is running the government today, objects to this agreement?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. GRAHAM. Senator CORKER, thank you for trying to have the debate we need. To my Democratic friends: You own this. You own every "i" and every "t" and every bullet, and you own everything that is to follow and it is going to be holy hell.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I am so proud of my colleague from South Carolina for the remarkable speech he just gave to this Senate about his concerns about this President's deal with Iran—the President's nuclear deal with Iran. That is what the Senate is debating right now—a deal President Obama negotiated with Iran and whether that deal should stand or fall.

This agreement could affect American foreign policy in the Middle East and beyond for this generation as well as the next. It will affect America's relationship with our allies as well as with our enemies. Other countries are

wondering whether America will accept a flawed agreement that gives Iran almost everything it has asked for or will we, as the United States of America, stand strong against outlaw nations with nuclear ambitions and dreams.

As Senators prepare to vote on this legislation we should ask: Does this agreement do enough to stop Iran's nuclear weapons program? Does this agreement do enough to protect the security of the American people and our friends around the world? I believe the answer is no. It would be irresponsible to support such a weak, such a naive, and such a dangerous deal.

The original goal of ending Iran's nuclear weapons program was a good one, and I wish the President had actually stuck with that goal. I wish the President had done a better job of negotiating with the Iranians. He did not. During the negotiations this administration was far too willing to make concessions, concessions that put our own national security at risk.

We were in a very strong position during these negotiations from the start, and the Obama administration squandered the advantage. The President badly wanted to strike a deal with Iran, and that is the problem because President Obama has shown once again that if you want a deal badly enough, you will end up with a bad deal. The President fell in love with this deal, even though it is deeply flawed. And deeply flawed is a description our Democratic colleagues continue to make about this deal. The President cannot see the flaws that our colleagues on the Senate floor can see because I believe the President is blinded by deal euphoria. He is in love with the deal.

The agreement President Obama has negotiated will legitimize Iran's nuclear program. It will accept Iran as a nuclear threshold state. To me, this is inexcusable. It is not the deal the President should have signed. It is not the deal the President could have signed. It is not the deal President Obama promised he would sign.

President Obama once said that Iran didn't need advanced centrifuges in order to have a limited, peaceful nuclear program, but under this agreement his administration did negotiate that Iran will not eliminate a single centrifuge. It will continue to research more advanced centrifuges, and it can even start building them.

So how did it happen? How did this happen? On the day the agreement was announced, the President of Iran bragged—bragged—about how he had gotten the Obama administration to surrender on this point. "To surrender," that is the language I am hearing around the State of Wyoming and certainly the language we are hearing from Iran: The President surrendered.

At the beginning, the President said Iran would only need 100 centrifuges. Then the number went to 1,000, then

4,000, then eventually allowed more than 6,000. When it mattered most, the Obama administration wanted a deal so badly that it was willing to concede on point after point after point. This proves if you want a deal bad enough, you will get a bad deal—and that is what we have here today.

The same thing happened with ballistic missiles. GEN Martin Dempsey, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the United States military, told the Senate Armed Services Committee, "Under no circumstances should we relieve pressure on Iran relative to ballistic missile capabilities and arms trafficking." Under no circumstances.

Defense Secretary Ash Carter also testified at the same hearing. Now, this hearing, of course, was only 6 days before the final deal was announced by the President. Secretary of Defense said, "We want them to continue to be isolated as a military and limited in terms of the kinds of equipment and materials they are able to get." That was 6 days before the final deal was announced.

So what happened? What did the President of the United States surrender on? With this agreement, Iran will have access to ballistic missile technology in as little as 8 years, even though the Secretary of Defense said no; even though the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said, "Under no circumstances." That is when Russia and other countries are going to be able to start selling this deadly technology to Iran—and I believe that Iran will use it.

Now, this was a last-minute demand that Iran made, and it should have been easy for President Obama to reject it, but he did not. He surrendered. The President was so desperate to get a deal that he gave in once again. It is always the same story with the Obama administration: If you want a deal bad enough, you are going to get a bad deal—and they have. When the Obama administration is negotiating with countries that need a deal much more than we do, the President of the United States surrenders.

This administration has no red lines when it comes to negotiating. They will give away anything to get a deal. There have been too many concessions for anyone to be comfortable with this agreement. There are too many red flags. President Obama cannot see the defects that are obvious in this plan. He refuses to see what is so clear to the American people.

After this agreement, Iran will be a nuclear threshold state, and a military and an industrial power. It will have the money to support terrorists around the world—more money than it has had in the past. It will have the freedom to pursue its nuclear ambitions.

Even some Democrats who have said they support this deal are doing so with great reservations. They say they know it is not a good deal, but they say: It is the only option we have. Well,

that is not a good enough reason for me to accept all of the risks and all of the concessions that the Obama administration allowed in this agreement.

The President says: The choice is the Iran nuclear deal or war. He has said it time and time again. It is fear mongering. It is not true. There is an alternative. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said so.

General Dempsey was asked about that at a hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee. In answer to the question: Is it this or war, the general said, "I can tell you that we have a range of options, and I always present them"—present them to the President. "We have a range of options." It is not just a choice between this deal or war. It is a choice between accepting a bad deal or rejecting it. If the only choice is to take this deal or leave it, then we must leave it.

The Obama administration doesn't want us to have a vote here in the Senate. The Obama administration knows it signed a bad deal, and it wants the whole thing to disappear from the front pages before it causes them any more embarrassment.

So instead of having a full and honest debate on the floor of the Senate, the President and the Senate Democrat leader are trying to hide behind a filibuster. That is not how the Senate should handle this important resolution to disapprove the Iran deal. Every Member of the Senate should be willing to cast a vote up or down on this Iran deal. We should stand up, we should represent the people of our State and this Nation, and we should cast our votes.

The Obama administration has made its arguments, and it has failed to make its case. The President has not shown that America will be better off with this deal, and I believe we would be better off without it.

We have heard the administration's excuses. We have heard all of the ways the final deal fell short of their promises. America can't afford to let Iran have the nuclear program that this agreement will allow it to obtain. We should vote to disapprove the Iran deal. The President should drop his veto threat. The President should send his people back to the negotiating table because this deal poses too great a threat to America's national security for us to do anything else.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, as we continue the debate on one of the most important foreign policy matters this body has addressed in some time, I would be remiss if I didn't mention how honored I am to be a part of it.

It is not unusual for the Congress to engage in debate over matters like spending bills, bills to authorize various Federal agencies, executive branch and judicial nominations, or other business that we routinely attend to around here. But it is only on

occasion that this body gets to have the opportunity to weigh in on some of the more pressing foreign policy matters. When it does, the legislation it considers often has lasting consequences for the United States and for the rest of the world.

Take, for example, the Taiwan Relations Act. Passed by both chambers in 1979 in response to the normalization of relations between the United States and China, this piece of legislation remains the cornerstone of the U.S.-Taiwan relationship to this day.

Likewise, this body has considered a number of arms limitation treaties over the decades between the United States and Russia. The Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, or START, was approved by this body in 1992 by a vote of 93 to 6. START II was approved in 1996 by a vote of 87 to 4. Most recently, the New START treaty with Russia was approved in 2010 by a vote of 71 to 26.

These bills address subject matter that was highly controversial. I am sure there was a fair amount of disagreement between Democrats and Republicans, and between the Congress and the White House. But in instances likely too numerous to count, Senate deliberation ended with a bipartisan vote that set the U.S. foreign policy into place for years, even decades, and signaled that America was speaking to the rest of the world with one voice.

I deeply regret the JCPOA will not build on this history. Unfortunately, the administration elected to negotiate this deal as an executive agreement rather than a treaty. That was the administration's call. It does mean, however, that the administration did not need to negotiate the JCPOA, mindful that it would need the support of 67 Senators. It also means the Senate does not have the opportunity to offer so-called RUDs—reservations, understandings, and declarations—that can accompany treaties and clarify its interpretation of the agreement.

To be sure, there are several troubling aspects of this agreement that could have been improved if the Senate had the opportunity to consider the JCPOA as a treaty. For example, the text of the agreement clearly states that any reimposition of the sanctions specified in Annex II would be viewed by Iran as a violation of the agreement and would likely prompt Iran to cease abiding by its obligations under the agreement. The sanctions in Annex II include all the influential sanctions, such as those on Iran's Central Bank. These have had a profound effect on Iran's economy.

In hearings and briefings by the administration, I have asked whether the United States could reimpose these powerful sanctions at some point later down the line for other, nonnuclear-related behavior by the Iranian government to penalize Iran for regional activities or for committing acts of terrorism. This regime, as we know, has made achieving regional hegemony its calling card since its inception in 1979.

Now, this administration has assured me that these sanctions would be available in the future, but, unfortunately, that simply does not square with the text of the agreement.

The question of reimposition of sanctions raises a further question of how this agreement might bind the hands of future Congresses and future administrations. As I previously mentioned, though the JCPOA has already been adopted by the United Nations, it will never be the supreme law of the land in the United States because it is not a treaty. A treaty that has been agreed to by at least 67 Senators gives the treaty the critical imprimatur that insulates it from political winds for the lifespan of the treaty. The JCPOA will benefit from no such imprimatur.

What if, for example, a future Congress or President wishes to reimpose sanctions against Iran or take some other action that might legitimately cause Iran to accuse us of violating the JCPOA? A future Congress or President could be put in the position of either having to preserve an agreement that neither had a hand in negotiating nor taking action that would result in Iran walking away from its nuclear obligations. It would be beneficial for U.S. foreign policy to steer clear of those lose-lose propositions.

The current administration has already expressed reluctance to push back against Iran's interpretation of the agreement even before it has been implemented. I have serious concerns that if there is reluctance to push back on Iran now, there will be even more reluctance to push back on Iran's regional behavior once the deal is in place. This gives Iran more leverage than it currently has moving forward, and that could have disastrous consequences on the Middle East. These are issues that could have been addressed in a positive manner by the Senate if the agreement had been submitted as a treaty.

Now, when this agreement was announced, I said I would take every opportunity to learn more about it, so I attended every hearing held by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I commend Chairman CORKER and Ranking Member CARDIN for holding these hearings and going about this in such a deliberative and serious manner. I attended every classified congressional briefing and several other briefings, and had discussions with numerous experts and administration officials.

After these discussions, these hearings, these briefings, I believe it is a much closer call on this agreement than most want to admit. There are positive aspects on the nuclear side. Unfortunately, I think this deal suffers from significant shortcomings.

Hoping that Iran's nuclear ambitions might change after a 15-year sabbatical might be a bet worth making. Believing that Iran's regional behavior will change tomorrow while giving up tools to deter or modify such behavior is not a bet worth taking.

It is for these reasons that I reluctantly oppose the JCPOA.

I do hope that we can make up for this unfortunately partisan vote by working together, and with the President, to pass a regional security framework agreement that will not only reassure Israel and our allies in the region, but solidify this agreement throughout the duration of the JCPOA.

The United States is strongest when we speak with one voice on foreign policy matters.

BORDER JOBS FOR VETERANS ACT

Mr. President, yesterday, we were able to pass on a bipartisan basis—in fact, unanimously—a bipartisan bill to help put veterans back to work as Customs and Border Protection officers at understaffed U.S. ports of entry.

Earlier this week, Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson confirmed that the agency has not yet filled 1,200 of the 2,000 new CBP officer positions created by Congress in 2014 to improve security and reduce trade-stifling commercial traffic in ports. Secretary Johnson has attributed these shortfalls to delays associated with applicant background investigations. So we were able to pass legislation to force the Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security to work together with this legislation. Now they will do so, and hopefully it will improve the condition of trade and the backlogs we have on the border.

I applaud my colleagues for making this happen—cosponsors JOHN MCCAIN, CHUCK SCHUMER, RICHARD BURR, TAMMY BALDWIN, RICHARD BLUMENTHAL, DIANNE FEINSTEIN, and others. Thank you for passing this legislation. It will improve the situation on the Arizona-Mexico border.

I yield the floor.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I know the time has ended. I know that Senator DAINES wants to speak very briefly. Senator DURBIN is allowing that as long as we give back some time at a later moment. If we might have 3 minutes.

Mr. DAINES. I wish to thank the Senator. I appreciate that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. CAPITO). The Senator from Montana.

Mr. DAINES. Madam President, if Iran's ultimate goal is to obtain a nuclear weapon, the deal reached by the Obama administration sets Iran on course to do so. From the time this deal is agreed to, Iran has 10 years to fill their coffers with tens of billions of dollars from newly unsanctioned oil sales and pursue the research and development of nuclear capabilities. As the world's leader of state-sponsored terrorism, it will only be a matter of time before Iran achieves its ultimate goal, and that is obtaining a nuclear weapon. These are bipartisan concerns.

This deal will not prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, and the American people deserve a better deal. This deal is stacked against transparency and accountability. It provides up to a 24-day delay before Iran is

forced to comply with inspections of nuclear sites on their military bases. This is a long way from "anywhere, anytime" the American people were promised. Can you imagine if the EPA or the FDA came knocking on a Montana farmer or business owner's door, and they said: Well, you can't come and inspect right now, but come back in 24 days. That is what we have set up right now with the Iranian Government through this deal.

Through this deal, the American people are being asked to enter into a binding trust agreement with the world's leading state sponsor of terror. In fact, just yesterday I looked at my Twitter feed, and the Supreme Leader of Iran—he is called the Supreme Leader for a reason—Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said: "I say that you [Israelis] will not see the coming 25 years and, God willing, there will not be something named the Zionist regime in [the] next 25 years." And then he went on to reiterate in calling America the Great Satan. This is whom the United States is making this bad nuclear deal with. It is not a mistake to push for tougher sanctions.

The American people deserve a better option. Two nights ago, I had a tele-townhall meeting, calling into 100,000 Montana households. Overwhelmingly, by 3 to 1, Montanans opposed this deal.

As we close, let me say this: As I step back and look at the numbers today, if we look at the Senate, it looks as if about 69 Senators are opposed to this deal. There are 42 supporting it. Those 58 who oppose it are bipartisan. The House numbers are similar in ratios.

The point is this: There is bipartisan opposition to this deal, both Democrats and Republicans joining together. The only support is partisan. It is a mistake to not push for a better deal that can be supported by more than one segment of one political party.

I yield back my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, so that those who are following this debate understand where we are, this morning the Democratic leader, Senator HARRY REID of Nevada, for the second time offered to the Republican side the following: that we will bring this critically important, historic measure before the U.S. Senate for an up-or-down vote—a clean up-or-down vote—at a margin of 60 votes.

Sixty votes is the margin that is used for every major and, I might add, controversial measure before the Senate. So what we are asking is not out of line. In fact, the Republican side had supported the notion of a 60-vote margin until they didn't have 60 votes. Now they are calling for some other approach.

So here is what we face. This afternoon at about 3:45 p.m., we will have a rollcall vote. It will be on the procedural question of whether we end debate on one aspect of this issue. It is known as a cloture vote. We will see

how it turns out. But we have made a good-faith offer twice to the Republicans to finish this important debate and to bring this to a 60-vote close.

Every single Member of the Senate on both sides of the aisle has announced publicly in advance where they stand on the issue. No one is trying to avoid this tough vote, and it is a challenging vote. Everyone has faced it squarely and honestly, and that is where we should go. Senator MCCONNELL, on the Republican side, objected to this. We will face a procedural vote at 3:45 p.m.

What is troubling is that we are in disarray now in the Congress. This statute that brings us to the floor of the U.S. Senate, the resolution of disapproval on the Iran agreement, passed the Senate with a vote of 98 to 1—a strong bipartisan agreement that this is how we would approach it. This is what Senator MCCONNELL is working off of, the basic statute that brings us together. But look what is happening across the Rotunda. Yesterday the House of Representatives disassembled. When they were supposed to move forward procedurally to the same vote we are facing, they fell apart. There was a Republican caucus, and it was in disarray. Now they are proposing not the underlying statute which we are considering but three brandnew, different approaches to this. This is no way to run a Congress. It is no way to address a serious foreign policy issue, one of the more serious issues of our time.

My colleagues are here to speak. I am going to yield the floor to them. I have spoken from time to time, but I will say this: Understand what we are trying to achieve here. We are not putting a seal of approval on Iran and their conduct and their activity. That will never happen. Instead, what we are saying is we have one goal in mind, shared by many nations around the world: to stop Iran from developing a nuclear weapon. That is the goal. I believe this agreement comes as close to achieving that as we can hope for at this moment.

I wish it were stronger and better, but in the course of negotiation, we don't always get everything we want. But think of what happened here. We met in Switzerland at the table with five other nations—China, Russia, the United Kingdom, Germany, and France. The European Union, I might add, joined the United States in this effort to negotiate this agreement and walked away. All nations involved in the negotiations said this is a good agreement and should move forward. In addition to that, we have had support from the Security Council of the United Nations. Over 100 countries have endorsed this.

Yet it has been categorically rejected by the Republicans in both the House and the Senate. The first evidence of their rejection was March 9 of this year while the negotiations were underway. Forty-seven Republican Senators sent a letter to the Supreme Leader in Iran,

the Ayatollah, saying to him basically: Don't waste your time negotiating with the United States of America. That has never happened in the history of the United States—never. I asked the historians to check it. Never have we had Members of Congress sending a letter in the midst of negotiations telling the other side: Don't pay attention to our President; don't pay any attention to our Nation. It never happened before. So 47 of them made it clear even before the agreement was reached that they were rejecting it. That doesn't show good faith. That doesn't show an effort to try to be objective and honest about this.

Here we stand today with the first procedural vote this afternoon. There are two things we want to achieve with this vote and with this agreement: No. 1, stop Iran from developing a nuclear weapon. We do that by shutting down their production facilities, by closing down their centrifuges, and by sending in scores of international inspectors, who will be roaming through Iran during the entire pendency of this agreement, looking for violations that could trigger the sanctions being returned. No. 2, our goal is to bring peace and stability as best we can when it comes to the nuclear issue in the Middle East, particularly in support of our friend and ally, the nation of Israel. I think the President's good-faith effort here reaches that goal.

I support this, and I will be voting on the procedural side this afternoon to support the President's Iran agreement.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, my dear friend and colleague and I disagree, but I very much respect the way he has conducted himself throughout this entire debate.

Every several years or so, a legislator is called upon to cast a momentous vote in which the stakes are high, and both sides of the issue feel very strongly about their views. Such is the case with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran. It demands reasoned and serious debate.

Over the years, I have learned that the best way to treat big decisions is to study the issue carefully, hear the full explanation of those for and against, and then, without regard to pressure, politics, or party, make a decision based on the merits. That is what I did with the Iran deal. I carefully studied the JCPOA, read and reread the agreement and its annexes, questioned dozens of proponents and opponents, and sought answers to questions that went beyond the text of the agreement. After deep study and considerable soul-searching, I announced that I would oppose the agreement and vote yes on the motion of disapproval.

While we have come to different conclusions, I want to give tremendous credit to President Obama for his work on this issue. The President, Secretary

Kerry, and their team spent painstaking months and years pushing Iran to come to an agreement and, years before, assembling the international sanctions regime that brought Iran to the table in the first place. It was the President's farsightedness that led our Nation to accelerate development of the Massive Ordnance Penetrator, the MOP, the best military deterrent and antidote to a nuclear Iran. Regardless of how one feels about the agreement, all fairminded Americans should acknowledge the President's strong achievements in combating and containing Iran.

I also have a great deal of respect for the careful thought and deliberation my colleagues went through before making their final decisions. While I came to a different conclusion than many in my own caucus, I recognize for them that this is a vote of conscience, just as it is for me.

I wish to recount my reasoning here on the floor before a vote is taken. I examined this deal in three parts: nuclear restrictions on Iran in the first 10 years, nuclear restrictions on Iran after 10 years, and nonnuclear components and consequences of a deal. In each case, I didn't ask what is the ideal agreement. We are not in that world. I asked, are we better off with the agreement that we have before us or without it?

In the first 10 years of the deal, there are serious weaknesses in the agreement. First, inspections are not "anywhere, anytime." The potential delay of as many as 24 days before we can inspect undeclared, suspicious sites is troubling. It is true that declared sites will be monitored. That is one of the positives of this deal. But if Iran is going to cheat, it will not be at a declared site with the eyes of the world watching, it will be at a nondesignated site. If Iran is trying to cheat, it will certainly delay the inspection process as long as possible.

Even more troubling is the fact that the United States cannot demand inspections unilaterally. We require a majority of the eight-member joint commission. Assuming that China, Russia, and Iran will not cooperate, inspections would require the votes of all three European members of the P5+1 as well as the EU representative. It is a reasonable fear that once the Europeans become entangled in lucrative economic relations with Iran, they may not want to rock the boat by voting to allow inspections.

Additionally, the snapback provisions in the agreement seem cumbersome and difficult to use. While the United States could unilaterally cause snapback of all sanctions, there will be instances where it is more appropriate to snap back some but not all of the sanctions. A partial snapback of multilateral sanctions could be difficult to obtain because the United States would require the cooperation of other nations.

If the U.S. insists on snapback of all provisions, which it can do unilaterally,

the Europeans, Russians or Chinese might feel it is too severe a punishment and might not comply.

Those who argue for the agreement say it is better to have an imperfect deal than nothing. When you consider only this portion of the deal, it is indeed better to have inspections and sanctions snapback than nothing, but even for this part of the agreement, the weaknesses with both of those processes make this argument less compelling.

Second, we must evaluate how this deal would restrict Iran's nuclear development after 10 years. In my view, if Iran's true intent is to get a nuclear weapon, under this agreement it simply must exercise patience. After 10 years, it can be very close to achieving that goal. Iran would be stronger financially, better able to advance a robust nuclear program. Unlike its current unsanctioned pursuit of a nuclear weapon, Iran's nuclear program would be codified in an agreement signed by the United States and other nations.

Finally, we must consider the non-nuclear elements of the agreement. This aspect of the deal gives me the most pause. For years Iran has used military force and terrorism to expand its influence in the Middle East by actively supporting military or terrorist actions in Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, Iraq, and Gaza.

Under this agreement, Iran would receive at least \$50 billion in the future and would undoubtedly use some of that money to create even more trouble in the Middle East and perhaps beyond. The hardliners could use these funds to pursue an ICBM as soon as sanctions are lifted and then augment their ICBM capabilities in 8 years after the ban on importing ballistic weaponry is lifted. Restrictions should have been put in place limiting how Iran could use its new resources.

Using the proponents' overall standard, not whether the agreement is ideal or whether it is better to have it or not have it, it seems to me, when it comes to the nuclear aspects of the agreement, within 10 years we might be slightly better off with it. However, when it comes to nuclear aspects after 10 years and nonnuclear aspects, we would be better off without it.

Ultimately, in my view, whether one opposes or supports the resolution of disapproval depends on how one thinks Iran will behave under this agreement—whether contact with the West and a decrease in economic and political isolation will soften Iran's hardline positions or whether the current autocratic regime views this deal as a way to get relief from onerous sanctions while still retaining their designs on nuclear arms and regional hegemony.

No one has a crystal ball. No one can tell with certainty which way Iran will go. It is true, Iran has a large number of people who want their government to decrease its isolation from the world and focus on economic advancement at

home, but this desire has been evident for 35 years. Yet Iranian leaders have held a tight and undiminished grip on Iran with little threat.

Who is to say that this same dictatorship will not prevail for another 10, 20 or 30 years? To me, the very real risk that Iran will not moderate and will instead use the agreement to pursue its nefarious goals is too great; therefore, I will vote to disapprove the agreement, not because I believe war is a viable or desirable option, nor to challenge the path of diplomacy, it is because it is far too likely that Iran will not change, and under this agreement it will be able to achieve its dual goals of eliminating sanctions while ultimately retaining nuclear and non-nuclear power. It is better to keep U.S. sanctions in place, strengthen them, enforce the secondary sanctions on other nations, and pursue the hard, trident path of diplomacy once more, difficult as it may be.

For all of these reasons, I believe the vote to disapprove is the right one.

I yield the floor.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I yield 20 minutes to the Senator from Delaware.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Madam President, I thank the Democratic whip for yielding time to me and for his extraordinary leadership on this issue and tell him how proud I am of him and my other colleagues, no matter where we come down on this issue.

I have a little bit of a different approach to the serious matter that is before us. During the first week or two of the August recess, I did something that I suspect none of my colleagues did; I actually read the Iran deal and a lot of the materials that relate to the agreement. After putting it down, my mind wandered back to another time and place where there was an intense effort to end years of hostility and mistrust in the Middle East.

As Governor of Delaware and chairman of the National Governors Association, I led a trade delegation in 1999 of business leaders, government officials, and citizens mostly from Delaware, many of them Jewish, and we went to Israel in the summer of 1999. We went looking to strengthen economic and cultural relations between Delaware and Israel.

Briefed by U.S. Department of State officials before departing on our mission, I also went looking for an opportunity to encourage Israeli and Palestinian leaders to seize the day and change the leadership in Israel in order to try and negotiate the two-state solution that always seemed just out of reach.

Those opportunities came sooner than I ever expected. Shortly after we landed there, we were whisked off in Israel to a sprawling outdoor Fourth of July celebration that was hosted by the U.S. Ambassador to Israel. Among the guests there that day were former

General Ehud Barak, who was about to become Prime Minister of the country, and Bibi Netanyahu, the man he defeated. The other guests included the widow and daughter of the late Yitzhak Rabin, Labor Party leader Shimon Peres, former Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, General Ariel Sharon, and a remarkable assemblage of who's who in Israel.

I spoke briefly that day with Ehud Barak and at length with him several days in his office after he had officially assumed his new duties as Prime Minister. The second conversation focused on the negotiations which lay ahead with Yasser Arafat, shepherded by the Clinton administration, to try to reach a land-for-peace deal once and for all with the Palestinians.

Ironically, a few days later, our delegation was invited to Ramallah to join Arafat and members of his leadership team for an extended lunch. Over that meal, I sat with Arafat and I shared with him the new Prime Minister's earnest desire to complete the work begun by former Prime Minister Rabin before his assassination. I urged Arafat to set aside generations of conflict and distrust in an effort to find common ground with the Israelis that would ultimately provide greater security for Israel and better relations with its neighbors in return for Palestinian statehood. The conversation seemed to go well. A few days later back in the States, I shared as much with the Clinton administration.

The negotiations that ensued over the course of the next year ultimately presented Arafat with the best land-for-peace proposal the Palestinians would ever receive. In the end, they turned it down. Dennis Ross, who played a key role in the negotiations for the administration, would later tell me that "Arafat simply could not take yes for an answer."

Sixteen years have passed since then. Another transformative opportunity has presented itself, and this time to America and to our five negotiating partners—the British, the French, the Germans, the Russians, and the Chinese as well as the people of Iran. We have a chance to ensure that the Iranian hopes of developing a nuclear weapon are put on the shelf for years—maybe forever.

The Iranians have a chance to bring to an end the crippling economic sanctions that the coalition we lead has imposed on Iran for years, and the Iranians have another opportunity; that is, to shed their status as a pariah among the nations of this world and assume a position worthy of their history and their culture.

Over the past 2 years, I have had countless meetings with people from Delaware and beyond our borders who fall on both sides of this issue. Some are vehemently opposed to any deal with Iran and others believe we absolutely must have a deal in order to avoid a war.

I came to support this agreement only after considering all of these

points of view, reviewing the text of the deal again and again, hundreds of additional pages of supporting documents, and taking in dozens of briefings from experts on Iran and nuclear proliferation.

Two years of negotiations have produced an agreement that Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and most of our Republican colleagues denounced almost as soon as the ink was dry on it and well before they ever read it. They said America should reject the deal and negotiate a better one. Well, to that I think you say: Good luck.

Last month, along with a number of my colleagues, I met here in Washington with ambassadors and representatives of the five nations that were our negotiating partners. To a person they argued—persuasively I thought—that this is a deal we should not reject. In effect, they urged us to learn from Arafat's mistake and this time take yes for an answer.

They are not the only ones who believe we should support this deal. There are dozens of former Israeli national security and military officials, including retired Israeli Navy Admiral Ami Ayalon. He is pictured here. He was effectively the CNO of the Israeli Navy—the person in charge of the Navy in the last decade. I am an old Navy guy. I am a retired Navy captain. I spent 23 years in the Navy. I was interested in what he had to say when he came to my State.

Here is what he said, among other things: "The Iran deal is the best possible alternative from Israel's point of view given the other available alternatives."

Now, look, he is one significant Israeli leader who believes this is the right thing for Israel. As it turns out, there are dozens, and actually scores, of former Israeli military leaders and intelligence leaders who agree with him—not all but a lot, and we should listen to their voices. I have certainly listened to him.

To those who think there are dangerous people in Iran who want this deal so they can exploit it, I remind them that the Revolutionary Guard is vehemently opposed to this deal. A lot of people I have talked to in Delaware in recent weeks think that, well, the Revolutionary Guard, the bad guys and hardliners in Iran, if you will, are for it. As it turns out, they are not for it. It is quite the opposite.

Here is a photograph of Major General Mohammad Ali Jafari, commander of Iran's Revolutionary Guard. He said: "We'll never accept it." That is not exactly a voice of endorsement for this agreement. I think this is all the more reason we should vigorously enforce this agreement through the intrusive inspections regime it mandates for the International Atomic Energy Agency to make for years to come, in order to ensure that the Iranians comply with every element required of them by this deal.

This deal blocks four pathways to a bomb. I will mention what they are:

first of all, the uranium facility in Natanz, blocked; the uranium facility at Fordow, blocked; weapons-grade plutonium, blocked; covert attempts to make a bomb, blocked; intrusive and uncomfortable inspections; sanctions relief only after Iran meets its obligations. If they cheat, the harsh economic sanctions snap back. Who can snap them back like that? We can, the United States, and any of our negotiating partners as well. We don't need their concurrence. We can do it alone.

Iran currently has 10,000 kilograms of enriched uranium and nearly 20,000 centrifuges, that puts them 2 or 3 months away with a nuclear bomb. Without a deal, it stays that way. With a deal, however, that enriched uranium stockpile must shrink to 300 kilograms and Iran must cut their number of centrifuges by two-thirds. And the ones they end up with are not the advanced centrifuges, they are actually the most elementary centrifuges. That change blocks their pathway to a bomb, keeping them at least 1 year away for the next 15 years or maybe longer.

Our negotiating partners also made the following critical points repeatedly. If at the end of the day the agreement is implemented and the Iranians violate its provisions later on, we will know it. We will know it by virtue of our own intelligence, the intelligence of our partner nations, and the intelligence of the Israelis as well. If it becomes apparent that the Iranians have cheated, any of the six of our nations can mandate the reimposition of an international economic sanctions regime against Iran, the same crippling sanctions that brought them to the table 2 years ago and to this hard-fought agreement today.

Madam President, 35 years ago, the United States imposed sanctions against Iran that were largely unilateral. It was just us. Then we began ratcheting it up over time.

Unilateral sanctions by the United States were clearly a nuisance to Iran, but they did not bring Iran to the table. Only sustained, multilateral sanctions, joined in by our five negotiating partners and others around the world, succeeded in bringing Iran to the table in a mood to talk. In fact, under the agreement that has been negotiated, if necessary, they could be set up by the United States in their entirety at our request—our request—if we are convinced the Iranians are cheating. This agreement guarantees that if they are ever needed again, any of the six of us could pull the trigger and reimpose them. Conversely, if the United States rejects this agreement, we not only lose the ability to know that the Iranians are pursuing the development of a nuclear weapons capability, we will also lose the support of the rest of the world in reimposing sanctions in the event that a future government in Iran elects to pursue a nuclear weapons program. I don't know about my colleagues, but that makes no sense to me—no sense. It also makes no sense to our negotiating partners.

Almost every American who was alive on 9/11, which we will commemorate tomorrow, remembers the horrifying images of that tragedy. To make matters worse, we had to endure the spectacle throughout the day and night of tens of thousands of Arabs across the world taking to the streets to celebrate the death of thousands of Americans. Lost among those images, however, was a remarkably different gathering that took place in another nation. It took place in, of all places, Tehran, the capital of Iran. There that night, thousands of Iranians came together in a candlelight vigil in solidarity with the United States. Most Americans have no idea that ever happened. I have never forgotten it.

A half-dozen years later in New York City, I would meet an Iranian leader named Javad Zarif, living there with his family. He was the Iranian ambassador to the U.N. We didn't have relations with them and we still don't. But the Iranians have for some time had an ambassador there to the U.N. and he lives in New York City.

Zarif was educated, it turns out, at San Francisco State University and the University of Denver. I remember thinking when I met him that he spoke flawless English—better than I—and he knew more about Americans than most Americans. I think his kids were educated here as well.

Impressed, later on, after I came back to Washington, DC, I spoke to him and I said: Why don't you come to Washington and meet some of our colleagues to give them a chance to get to know you and to have a dialogue.

He said: The George W. Bush administration won't let me come. They won't let me leave New York City.

So I said: Well, that is easy to fix, and I met with the Bush administration. Well, it wasn't easy to fix, and they wouldn't relax their travel ban.

So I later would ask Zarif in a conversation we had—this is when Ahmadinejad was the President of Iran, saying the holocaust was a figment of the imagination and the leaders of Israel should be blown off the face of the Earth. I said to Zarif: How do you get along with your President Ahmadinejad, and his response was: Not good.

He said: Ahmadinejad doesn't trust me. I am not going to be here much longer.

And he was right. The next time I reached out to him, he was gone. He was gone, seemingly without a trace. I found out years later he had been recalled to Iran and had returned to private life writing, lecturing, and largely staying out of sight.

As Ahmadinejad's second and final term began to wind down, a campaign to determine who would replace him ensued. A reformer named Rohani put his hat in the ring. Most people had never heard of him, at least not here. And most people in Iran said he would never have a chance to even get elected or run. Well, he got to run, and not

only did he get to run, he won more votes than the other five candidates combined. In the end, he did serve.

Later on, the question was what kind of cabinet would he put together to surround himself as the leader of Iran. And what he did—we were watching to see who would be minister of this or that over there. So when Rohani submitted the names of the Iranian parliament, his submission for Foreign Minister was my friend, Zarif. You could have knocked me over with a feather. I never saw it coming, never imagined it would come. The man who had gone on to lead the Iranians in negotiations with our five negotiating partners over the past 2 years is a man I have known for a half a dozen years or more.

Our negotiating team has been led superbly by Secretary of State John Kerry. By his side, however, for much of the past year has been a less well-known Cabinet Secretary, our Energy Secretary Ernie Moniz, who would end up playing a key role among all of the members of a very talented and dedicated team.

Dr. Moniz has never sought elected office. I first met him almost a decade ago at MIT where he was a leader and a professor in physics. He was regarded as one of the world's experts on all things nuclear. He testified one day at a field hearing I held at MIT focusing on spent fuel rods from nuclear plants. Later, I came back and people said: What is he like? And I said: This guy Moniz is a genius. And by God he is.

It turns out he is not just a genius; he leads a bunch of these national labs where people who are just as smart as he is know all kinds of information, including all things nuclear—more so than any other country in the world. As it turns out, they were harnessed to help us in this negotiation—the national labs—led by Ernie Moniz.

As it turned out, ironically, among the graduate students at MIT during Dr. Moniz's distinguished career, there was a young Iranian named Akbar Salehi. Later Salehi would return to his country and, as fate would have it, ultimately become Dr. Moniz's Iranian counterpart in the negotiations with the U.S.-led team. As it turns out, Salehi's thesis adviser at MIT was one of Ernie Moniz's closest friends at MIT, and thus was created maybe not a bond, but a connection, and a shared trust that went back to both Ernie Moniz, a former professor at MIT, and a former graduate student, Salehi at MIT.

It didn't take long for Secretary Moniz to make a profound impression during the negotiations. Shortly after he joined the team earlier this year, he gave the Iranians what several members of the U.S. team would later describe to me as a tutorial in all things nuclear, making it clear that the Iranians had "more than met their match." Adding Ernie Moniz to our team was I think a stroke of genius, not only bringing him here, but the national labs as well. In the countless

meetings he has participated in with House and Senate Members, he has bolstered the credibility, probably as much as anybody, of the agreement—and the confidence of many in it—in ways that almost no other American could do.

Much has been made of whether we can trust the Iranians to do what they have committed to do. John Kerry, Ernie Moniz, and the other members of our team have made clear that the agreement they and our five partners from the other nations have hammered out with Iran is not based on trust. Let me say that again: It is not based on trust. It is based, as we have already heard on this floor, on mistrust. We realize that some future Iranian regime may well ponder whether to violate the agreement and launch another pilot program to develop another nonpeaceful nuclear capability. If they actually attempt to do that, the key questions are these: Will we know it? Are the consequences for Iran severe enough to deter them from going forward with it? I am convinced the answer to both those questions is yes.

Today, Iran has much more than the hardline Revolutionary Guard whose influence has begun to wane. Iran today is a nation of 78 million people. Their average age is 25. Most of them were not alive in 1979 during the Iranian revolution. They don't remember the brutal Shah we propped up for years and allowed to come to our country when his regime fell. This new generation of Iranians is ready to take yes for an answer. I think we should too. This is a good deal for America and our allies, and that certainly includes Israel, one of our closest allies. I think it beats the likely alternative that there could well be war with Iran, hands down.

I will close with this brief conversation. About a year and a half ago I was up in New York in a house that Senator DURBIN had actually visited with me, as well as a couple of others where Zarif used to live. We had the opportunity to talk about the upcoming negotiations. I said: Zarif, you and Iran have a choice. You can have a strong, vibrant economy for your country again, or you can have a nuclear weapons program. You cannot have both. And we are not going to accept a nuclear weapons program.

We have the ability to know if they cheat. If they cheat, we have the ability to put right back in place these same crippling economic sanctions. If that doesn't do the job, we have other alternatives at our disposal. Nothing is off the table.

Sometimes around here we talk about voting our fears or voting our hopes. I am prepared to vote my hopes, for our Nation and the Iranians as well. Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I wish to thank my colleague, the Senator from Delaware. That was a very

thoughtful presentation. The Senator from Delaware has a personal interest in and has made a personal commitment to this issue. I thank him for his insight.

I now yield 10 minutes to the Senator from Michigan.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Madam President, earlier this week I announced that I will reluctantly support the Comprehensive Joint Plan of Action and oppose the resolution of disapproval, despite some very serious reservations.

I did not reach this position easily or quickly. Although there are many positive aspects to this deal, this agreement also has flaws that I believe need to be addressed in the months and years ahead.

The congressional review period has served a very useful purpose. My colleagues on both sides of the aisle have raised very important points about this deal as we were briefed by experts and administration negotiators. I commend Senators CARDIN and CORKER for their bipartisan efforts to establish this review and for affirming Congress's role in shaping our Nation's foreign policy.

After this debate is over, it is my hope that moving forward the Senate will forge bipartisan consensus and act with unity of purpose. We must work together and take action against Iran if they fail to live up to their obligations under this agreement, and we must work on legislation and multinational and lateral efforts to combat Iran's sponsorship of terrorist activities, arms smuggling, and hegemonic ambitions.

We need to look no further than the humanitarian crisis emanating from Syria to see the havoc and chaos that Iran and its proxies are wreaking on an already troubled region.

We need to provide robust oversight and work together to stem the proliferation of nuclear material, especially from nascent nuclear states and from Iran in particular. Nearly 20 countries produce safe nuclear power without domestic enrichment. America's longstanding policy is that the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty does not provide the right to enrich uranium.

While in the short term this agreement helps reduce Iran's capacity to enrich and eliminates the vast majority of their Iranian stockpile, I am concerned that in the long term other nations will view this agreement as a precedent that will lead to increased proliferation of nuclear enrichment and the potential for other nations to emerge as threshold nuclear states.

Just a few years ago, the United States signed and ratified a 123 Agreement with the United Arab Emirates that would help them build nuclear power capabilities while explicitly preventing them from enriching uranium on their soil.

The United States must take a leadership role in setting a threshold of acceptable levels of enrichment of ura-

nium for the safe production of nuclear energy. As more nations look to meet growing energy needs while minimizing carbon output, a comprehensive policy to ensure only safe levels of uranium enrichment with strong international safeguards is critical to global security.

No nation faces a more severe threat than Iran's nuclear ambitions than the State of Israel. For decades, the Iranian regime has made it their mandate to eliminate the Jewish State. We must be united in ensuring that this never happens. We must always be ready to act to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon and smuggling arms to its proxies in the region.

As the Middle East falls deeper into chaos, our alliance with Israel, a nation that shares so many of our values, has never been more important. America must reaffirm our longstanding commitment to Israel's security by renewing our memorandum of understanding, providing Israel with defense capabilities in order to cement its qualitative military edge in the region, and bolstering Israel's ability to initiate deterrence against Iran.

The JCPOA is not the end of our multilateral efforts against Iran and its illicit behavior. America must work with our allies to initiate multilateral sanctions against Iran for its terrorist activities, especially its funding of Hezbollah and Hamas.

We also need to set clear understandings of how Iran will be sanctioned for minor violations of this agreement that will not initiate the snapback of full sanctions. We must continue working in a coordinated fashion to ensure unity in purpose against Iran's nuclear ambitions, terrorist activities, and efforts to destabilize the region. We must also continue pressing for the release of all U.S. hostages currently imprisoned in Iran, including Amir Hekmati. Congress must address these issues.

In 2009 Congress debated whether to pursue sanctions or diplomacy with Iran first, with military force always being the last resort but a necessary final deterrent. I was proud to cosponsor the effort to pass sanctions in 2009 and help pass additional sanctions in the years since. As a new Member of the Senate, I joined a group of bipartisan Senators ready to pass additional sanctions against Iran as they continued to drag out negotiations. Iran needed to know that the patience of the United States was not limitless.

The JCPOA is a product of complex negotiations and painstaking compromises. But let's be clear. Either rejecting or accepting this deal comes with a set of distinct risks. However, those who oppose this deal have been accused of supporting war over diplomacy, and those who support this deal have been likewise portrayed as supporting containment and capitulation. Foreign policy is rarely so simple, and it is certainly not so simple in this case.

As leaders of this great Nation, we owe it to our citizens and the men and women in uniform to never let ourselves become so fractured by partisan politics on issues of such importance to national security. I look forward to working with Senators on both sides of the aisle to protect the interests of our allies and the safety and security of this great Nation and to ensure that the United States of America remains both united in our goals and indivisible in our purpose.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. I yield 10 minutes to the Senator from Maine.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Mr. KING. Madam President, I want to talk about this arrangement and agreement with Iran and cover several points and what I think are important realities that have not been emphasized in this debate, but first I would like to address the issue of the 60-vote margin.

First, I think it should be on the record that the minority leader offered to the majority leader a unanimous consent agreement that there would be no filibuster on the motion to proceed and there would be a 60-vote threshold required for final passage of the bill. As I understand it, that offer was rejected. That means the only alternative is to go the technical rule of the filibuster in order to require a 60-vote margin.

It is absolutely clear from the legislative record of the Corker-Cardin bill that everyone involved in that discussion, including the Senator from Tennessee, understood that a 60-vote margin would be required in the passage of this legislation. There is no question about it. There are quotes in the RECORD. Everyone understood that from the beginning of the consideration of the Corker-Cardin bill.

Finally, every major issue that has come before this bill since I have been here has required 60 votes, whether it was immigration or background checks or extension of unemployment benefits or the minimum wage. All of those have required a 60-vote threshold. That has been the standard in this body. We could debate whether that should or should not be the standard, but it is, it has been, and this is not a time to decide we are going to arbitrarily abandon that.

I must say I am sort of amazed to hear people discussing this as if this is some kind of new imposition of a rule, and it reminds me of "Casablanca": I am shocked—shocked—to understand that there might be a 60-vote requirement on this piece of legislation.

That has been the standard for this body certainly for as long as I have been here and for some time longer. As I say, we can discuss whether that should be the standard, but that is what it is, and no one should be surprised that is the way we are proceeding here today.

OK. Let's talk about the agreement—five quick realities.

No. 1, Iran is a nuclear threshold state today. There is a lot of argument. I sat through the long debate yesterday afternoon about what happens in 2030, what happens in 15 years, and would Iran be somehow a legitimized nuclear threshold state. They are a nuclear threshold state today. The risk to the world is imminent. It is not in 15 years; it is today. That is why this agreement is so important—because basically it freezes and rolls back Iran's nuclear capabilities for at least the next 15 years and probably longer.

The No. 2 reality: Iran is a rogue nation. It foments terrorism around the world. It is a state sponsor of terrorism. Everyone knows that. Under this agreement, as has been pointed out, because of the nature of the negotiations, which were "roll back your nuclear program in exchange for relief from the sanctions," they will indeed receive relief from the sanctions, and that will give them additional funds for their economy and possibly for their nefarious purposes. But I would submit that the only thing worse than a rogue Iran is a rogue Iran armed with nuclear weapons. That is the essence of this deal. It prevents their opportunity to gain nuclear weapons, to create sufficient fissile material. It rolls back what they already have.

I should point out that they became a nuclear threshold state during the imposition of various sanctions regimes. So it is clear that sanctions in and of themselves are never going to prevent their achievement of becoming a nuclear weapons state.

No. 3, this is a multilateral agreement. All the discussion around here acts as if it is the United States and Iran, Obama and the Ayatollah. It indeed involves the world's major powers. It involves Great Britain, France, Germany, China, Russia, and other countries that have helped to enforce those sanctions and make them effective. If we walk away from this deal, we are doing so alone.

We had an extraordinary meeting before the recess with Ambassadors from the P5+1 countries. They made it clear that they had accepted this agreement and that if we rejected it, their willingness to go back to the table, reimpose the sanctions, reinforce the sanctions—I believe one of the Ambassadors used the term "far-fetched"—it is not going to happen.

The sanctions are going to erode starting now, no matter what we do in this Congress. I can't figure out any way that a weaker sanctions regime—which is inevitable because other countries involved in the sanctions have already started to make moves toward doing business with Iran—I don't see how a weaker sanctions regime is ever going to bring Iran back to the table to get a better deal.

Reality No. 4: This agreement is flawed. It is not the agreement I would prefer. There are elements that I think

could be improved. I wish the 15 years was 20 or 30 years. I wish the 24 days was 12 days or 8 days or 1 day. But this is the agreement that is before us. And the analysis could not be strictly of the agreement itself and within its four corners, but compared to what? That is really the basic question here—not whether this a good deal or a bad deal. The question is, How does this deal, no matter what its flaws, compare with the alternatives that are out there? In all of the drama and all of the argument and all of the speeches and rallies that we have heard, no one has yet come up with a credible alternative. I have not yet heard a credible alternative. The only thing I hear is this: We will reimpose sanctions and bring them back to the table and get a better deal. It is going to be very hard to reimpose those sanctions without the support of our international partners. If we enter into the deal and Iran cheats, then we can bring the international partners back with us, but to do so—to try to think that we could do so now is just unrealistic. I wish there were a better alternative. I also wish I could play tight end for the New England Patriots, but it is not going to happen. It is simply not realistic. There is no credible alternative.

Finally, we have to talk about what happens after the deal. Congress has a responsibility. The administration has a responsibility. We cannot trust Iran. Everyone knows that. No one argues that.

There has been a lot of discussion about the IAEA. I serve on the Intelligence Committee. We had a briefing just yesterday morning with the heads of our intelligence agencies. It is not just the IAEA that is going to be watching this agreement, it is the world's intelligence community, and we have significant capability to know if they are cheating over and above and in addition to anything the IAEA brings to the table. This is not trust; this is verification based upon the IAEA's worldwide experience but also based upon the considerable intelligence assets of the United States and other countries that are supporting us in this effort.

Finally, there are risks. I understand that. There are risks on both sides. There are severe risks. This is not an easy call. It is one of the hardest decisions I have ever had to make. But if you analyze the alternatives and weigh the risks, I believe the risks of not going forward with this agreement are significantly greater than the risks of giving diplomacy a chance going forward with this agreement, which can be verified. If there is cheating, it can be caught, No. 1, and punished, No. 2, and if the agreement doesn't work, we have the same options we have today.

This is a difficult decision. It is one that has weighed on this body and on this country. But I think this is a tremendous opportunity for us to avoid a nuclear-armed Iran and secure at least that part of a peaceful Middle East and more secure world.

Thank you, Madam President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, let me thank my colleague from Maine for his thoughtful presentation.

I would like to ask how much time remains.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Seven minutes.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I am going to yield to the Senator from Ohio. I hope 7 minutes is adequate. If it is not, I would ask unanimous consent to extend that and offer time to the other side or whatever is necessary.

I yield to the Senator from Ohio.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. I thank you, Madam President, and I thank the assistant Democratic leader.

Madam President, I rise in support of the international agreement designed to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. No one in this body trusts Iran. No one in this body disputes that Iran is the leading state sponsor of terrorism, that it denies Israel's right to exist, and that it destabilizes the Middle East and violates the human rights of its people. That is why we need to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran, which would pose an exponentially greater danger to the security of the United States, to our long-time important ally Israel, and to the entire world. This is the only viable option.

As Senator KING said, no one has answered the question of what happens if we reject this agreement. Well, of the hundreds of calls I have made and the dozens of briefings and discussions I have had with people on both sides of the agreement—from Israeli officials, to American security people, to activists, engaged citizens on both sides of this—nobody has answered the question: What do we do if this agreement is killed in the Congress? What would follow? What is the alternative?

I am incredibly proud of the diligent work my Democratic colleagues have done over the last 6 weeks in researching, examining, and questioning this deal. There was no knee-jerk reaction on our side where people all went the same way almost immediately when the agreement came out. People on the Democratic side of the aisle listened to experts, and they listened to stakeholders. We came to thoughtful, informed decisions.

I made my decision after serious study of the agreement's contents, after listening to Ohioans on all sides of this, after consulting with nuclear experts, such as the Energy Secretary and Nobel Prize-winning physicist Secretary Moniz. I attended hours of briefings from the President, from the Energy Secretary, from Treasury Secretary Lew, from Secretary of State Kerry, and other administration officials. I consulted U.S. intelligence officials, outside arms control experts, and

met for over an hour with Israel's Ambassador to the United States. I met with all five of the Ambassadors from the P5+1 countries; those who have been long-time allies of ours from France, England, and Germany; those from China, and from Russia, who are allies on this issue, if not a number of others. All—every one of them individually, collectively, warned that the United States—it would be the United States which would be isolated internationally if Congress rejects this agreement.

Many of my colleagues talk about Iran's sponsorship of terrorism, its human rights abuses, and its pursuit of ballistic missiles. These are legitimate concerns, but they are not the focus of this agreement. Of course we would love to solve those issues. Sanctions on those issues will remain in place, but that was not the focus of this nuclear agreement.

Let's be clear. When I hear opponents say that Iran 10, 15 years from now would be a threshold nuclear state—maybe they will, maybe they will not. That is certainly debatable. It is not debatable that Iran is a nuclear threshold state right now. They are 2 to 3 months away from being able to produce enough fissile material for a bomb. That is a fact. They are 2 to 3 months away from being able to produce enough fissile material for a nuclear weapon.

The agreement provides for comprehensive restrictions today—beginning when Congress allows this agreement to move forward, to block Iran's pathway to a bomb. They include reducing Iran's installed centrifuges by two-thirds for at least 10 years, cutting its stockpile of enriched uranium by 98 percent for 15 years, reconfiguring its plutonium reactor to render it inoperable and deny Iran a source of weapons-grade plutonium.

To verify Iran's compliance, the deal requires 24/7 access to all declared nuclear sites. The United Nations inspectors will say that of the 120 country inspections they have done, this is the most comprehensive and the most intrusive. The deal provides time-certain access to all suspicious sites in Iran. It provides for a permanent prohibition on Iran acquiring or developing a nuclear weapon. It provides a permanent ban on nuclear weapons research and a permanent inspection regime for their nuclear program.

If Iran violates the deal, the agreement gives the United States extraordinary power to snap back both U.S. and international sanctions without fear of veto by other nations. The President made clear that if 10 or 15 or 20 years from now Iran tries to build a bomb, this agreement ensures the United States will have better tools to target it. Americans fundamentally don't want another war in the Middle East. Americans strongly prefer a diplomatic solution, which this agreement is all about, that ensures that Iran cannot obtain a nuclear weapon.

At the beginning of my remarks, I spoke about the serious way, with

great gravitas, that Democratic after Democratic Senator—the serious way we pursued coming to a decision on this. Let me contrast for a moment on this, one of the most significant national security issues Congress will face in a generation. I have been in the House and Senate for 20 years now. This will be one of the two most important decisions I have made on foreign policy. The first was my vote against the war in Iraq. It was clearly the right vote, even though at the time there was public support for it.

We know that the information we were presented was not exactly right in the end, even though there was huge support in Congress and a lot of public support for going into war with Iraq. I thought about that a lot. I made a decision that I thought the Iraq war would be disastrous for our country. That decision clearly was right. It was not so partisan back then, although we had a President that certainly pushed us and a Vice President, especially, that pushed us into that war.

But this agreement should not be subject to the kind of reflexive partisan attacks we have seen in recent months. Just a few months ago, 47 of my Republican colleagues signed a letter signaling their opposition to the emerging deal—not just that, they signed a letter to the Ayatollah—to the leader of the enemy, Iran—suggesting that the deal was not quite on the up-and-up because of the President of the United States. They signed a letter that was teaching the Ayatollah, if you will, some American civic lessons. Imagine, if Democrats in the Senate in the early 1980s had written a letter to President Gorbachev saying: Don't negotiate with Ronald Reagan. Imagine if we had done that.

I ask unanimous consent for an additional 2 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BROWN. Imagine if that had happened. So we start off with 47 Republicans writing to the Ayatollah, saying, fundamentally: Don't negotiate with President Obama. We have seen now not a single one of my colleagues is in support of this agreement, even though Secretary Powell supports it, even though former Senator Lugar, who was as respected as anybody in this country as a former Republican Senator, supports it. It is not just disappointing that not a single one of my Republican colleagues supports this, but the first day the agreement came out, I heard talk radio saying: Read the agreement. Read the bill. The first day this agreement came out, 19 Republicans—on that first day—came out in opposition to this agreement. There is no way they could have read it. I know how complicated this agreement is. I have read it. I assume that every one of my Democratic colleagues, in an arduous, focused, difficult, persistent way, studied this issue. Then I see what happened on the other side of the aisle

when it was—as Timothy Crouse said the press does in the “Boys on the Bus”—“if one of them flies off the telephone wire, they all fly off the telephone wire.”

That is what happened. I was just so disappointed. Senator CORKER is here, one of the people who did not sign that letter and one of the people who thought about this issue. But what I saw in the contrast of the way we looked at this, it was pretty disturbing.

I will conclude. My time is running out. This agreement will matter for our country. It is clearly in our national interests. I think there has been no good answer offered on what happens if we walk away. That is why I ask my colleagues to vote no on the next vote coming in front of us.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. Madam President, I want to thank the Senator for his comments. Just so we know how we are organized on this side for the next hour—and I think we are about evened up on the time, maybe 3 minutes more needs to come our way but roughly even. For the next 30 minutes, we have Senator COATS, one of our outstanding foreign policy, national security Senators, who served as an ambassador; 15 minutes for Senator GRASSLEY; and 15 minutes for Senator ROBERTS.

I thank you so much for being here and your incredibly responsible way of facing this issue.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. COATS. Madam President, I thank my colleague Senator CORKER for his diligent efforts, as it consumed literally hundreds, if not thousands, of hours as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in helping guide us through this very important, very difficult process.

I was on this floor earlier saying this is an issue that rises above partisan politics. This is something that each of us as a Senator has to weigh carefully. I don't know how many hours and how much time I have spent reading through, parsing through, trying to analyze and understand this agreement, its side annexes and everything connected with it. I would like to now say to my colleagues, perhaps with an appeal that they at least, at the very least, set aside: The deal is done. You lost. Therefore, we are not even going to allow a vote on this matter.

This is one of the most historic, consequential measures that anyone in this Chamber will ever be confronted with. I know for me it is one of the most historic because of the consequences that may occur if we don't get this right. It is important that we debate this, have ample time to go through every bit of this, and have each Member weigh carefully what we hear from each other and what we come to understand on the basis of our own personal examination. I hope that

will be the case. To deny us the opportunity to even let our yes be yes or our no be no before the public I think would be a tragic mistake.

I would like to go back a little bit and talk about my history with all of this. When I returned from my ambassadorship to Germany and actually had to deal with this as one of many different issues—because even back then there was great concern among both the United States and the German Government over Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons capability. I engaged in a number of discussions and diplomatic efforts there in working with our allied country Germany on this issue. But when I did come back, I suppose partly because of my engagement there, I was asked by the Bipartisan Policy Center that had just been formed to chair a task force on this very issue, the Iranian pursuit of nuclear weapons.

We obviously wanted this to be bipartisan, so I recruited my fellow Senate colleague Chuck Robb, then a retired Senator from Virginia. Together we co-chaired that effort. Later we were joined by retired 4-star General and Deputy Supreme Allied Commander of Europe Chuck Wall. We put together a who's who of experts on the Middle East and experts on nuclear capabilities. We had renowned experts from across the spectrum come and present to us.

All of that resulted in three major reports titled: “Meeting the Challenge, U.S. Policy Towards Iranian Nuclear Development”; the second one, “Meeting the Challenge, Time is Running Out”; the third, “Meeting the Challenge When Time Runs Out.”

There is a treasure trove of information here about how Iran has violated U.N. treaty resolutions, violated the nonproliferation treaty agreement. We have talked about the consequences of all of this and made recommendations to the administration, whatever administration that would be. As it turns out, these recommendations went both to a Republican administration under President George W. Bush and to the Obama administration under our current President.

Clearly, we have outlined—and in the interest of time I will not be able to go back through all of this. But let me just state a couple of the conclusions here relative to all of this. Absent necessary leverage, we believe it unlikely that Supreme Leader Khamenei will reciprocate President Obama's conciliatory gestures in a meaningful way.

First of all, we endorsed diplomacy to its ultimate, but we recognized that diplomacy has its limits. You can sit at a table and not come to agreement for decades. We had been trying diplomatic efforts with Iran and they were not succeeding. So then we talked about the necessity of having sanctions, ever-ratcheting, tightening sanctions, to bring Iran to the table. Included in that was the threat of the use of force if all else failed.

None on that committee were warmongers. We wanted to do everything

possible to prevent conflict in this in solving this problem. So we laid out a long framework. Perhaps if this continues into next week, I will be able to go through some of this framework, but the key on this is stated here somewhere. The key to this was that you had to have a combination of tough diplomacy, which we had years of, and we were going to continue that, backed up by ever-ratcheting sanctions, to show Iran that there was a price to pay for not coming to agreement, and then backed up ultimately by the threat of force if we could not secure an agreement, which would reach the goal.

The goal was to prevent Iran from having nuclear weapon capability, knowing the destabilization that would take place in the Middle East, the historic impact this would have, and consequences this would have if we allowed that to happen.

Let me move on to what I believe are major problems with this deal. We know Iran's misbehavior, its violation of six U.N. treaties that it agreed to, its violation of the nonproliferation treaty, its support for terrorism. It is a bad actor, perhaps the world's worst bad actor, engaging in weaponization that killed American troops. We are dealing with a rogue nation here.

I don't know how my colleagues react to this, but when they cut a deal with the United States, they are cheering on the streets of Tehran. And the Supreme Leader came out yesterday and basically said: Well, don't worry, Israel won't be around in the next 25 years. They will be wiped off the map. We have already said “Death to Israel” and also “Death to the Great Satan, the United States.” This is the party that we just negotiated an agreement with.

Now, if we had negotiated an agreement that achieved our goals, I would say good for us. Finally, the sanctions worked. We came up with a good agreement. But I have read through this document and parsed over every word, tried to find every meaning. I serve on the Senate Intelligence Committee, and earlier I served on the Armed Services Committee. I have had more than a decade of experience in this.

I spent almost the entire weekend carefully reading this, hoping that we had achieved, if not all, at least some of the most important goals we had.

But to my dismay, we ended up not achieving any of those goals. The goal was to prevent Iran from having nuclear weapons capability that could break out and totally destabilize the Middle East. What we have come up with is an agreement that puts them on a path to do exactly that, justified now by this agreement, justified by the Security Council at the U.N.

I said there were two major things that needed to be talked about before we talk about some of the specifics: First is the false claim that we must choose between accepting this failed agreement or war, and the second is

that the agreement prevents Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability.

This is the sales pitch from the White House. This is the sales pitch that is being made to the American people, and neither of these is true.

It has to be a desperate administration that has chosen to force this agreement on us by arguing that it is a choice between this deal and war. I am disgusted by the administration's sales strategy for this agreement and those who are led down the path of belief that the only option here is war, and therefore, no matter what we gave away, this deal is better than the alternative.

This false choice is among the most infamous, cynical, and blatantly false manipulations the Obama administration has used to distort this important debate, and they ought to be ashamed of themselves for using this tactic.

In fact, the false argument masks a far more valid argument that this deal makes future war far more likely, not less. By abandoning the tool of economic sanctions, in giving away a strong, principled negotiating position, the administration's desperate tactic is reducing our options when Iran does go nuclear, as we have put them on the path to do.

President Obama and Secretary Kerry have repeatedly said over the past year: No deal is better than a bad deal. They never argued that any deal is better than no deal, yet that is what they ended up conceding.

We had the strength of the six most powerful countries in the world—the United States, Great Britain, France, Germany, China, and Russia—sitting at one side of the negotiating table. On the other side of the negotiating table was Iran, crippled by sanctions and oil falling into the range of \$40 a barrel, costing more to extract and sell than they could get back. They were desperate to achieve some kind of relief from these sanctions.

We had the negotiating leverage. We gave away that leverage in these negotiations, desperate to conclude any deal whatsoever so that we could avoid making some difficult decisions down the line in terms of what we had said we must do.

Four Presidents—including this President, two Democrats, two Republicans—said it is unacceptable for Iran to achieve nuclear capability. We gave that away just to get them at the table. Just to get them at the table, we took off the use of any force, any leverage or additional sanctions or continuing sanctions in order to get to the table—not negotiating to get what we needed, but just to get to the table.

The administration has accepted, in my opinion, a deeply flawed deal and then set it in motion with a U.N. Security Council resolution on the next day, well before Congress could even respond to it.

Thank goodness Senator CORKER and Senator CARDIN were able to convince

their colleagues on a 98-to-1 vote to give Congress the right to have a say in this issue. Had that not happened, the President, by not declaring this a treaty, by declaring this simply an executive agreement, the President would have locked this thing in even before we had a chance to read it, before the American people even had a chance to know what it was except for what the President told them it was or the Secretary of State told them that it was.

So we are having this debate thanks to these two men, these two leaders—one a Republican and one a Democrat—who had the courage to stand up to this President and say: No, the American people deserve to have a say.

And, boy, what a say it is. I don't know about others. My mail is running 10 to 1 against this. Maybe I am talking to the wrong people, I don't know, but the more they learn about this agreement, the more they say: Are you crazy? We gave up that? For what? What did we get back?

I want to go over some of that, trying to move through this because I know time is of the essence here, but this idea that war is the only alternative—and then the sales pitch that I have heard so many of my colleagues and others who support the deal say: You know, I am for this because this prevents Iran from having a nuclear bomb. It is just the opposite. It gives Iran the pathway to have a nuclear bomb. This has a sunset clause in it, and it releases all the sanctions. It has a sunset clause that says after 15 years they can do whatever they want to do. We cannot reimpose sanctions. What kind of a deal is that? But the false narrative that this will not allow that—the agreement, even the annexes say we have to help Iran achieve nuclear research, nuclear research that can help them move toward this.

I looked at the annex and said: Surely, I am reading this wrong. We are committed to help them? And if other nations, say Israel, want to take action against this because they think they are going to be extinguished from the face of the Earth—as the Iranians have told them that is going to happen—if they want to take action, we actually are required to convince the Israelis not to do that. We side with the Iranians.

I mean, you can't write this script. This is beyond comprehension. So those two false narratives alone ought to be reason to say: Wait a minute. Let's not go forward with this deal. Surely we can find a way to negotiate a better deal for us.

Our Bipartisan Policy Center committee—I want to read from this because we looked into this very question, and this was the conclusion: Even if Iran were to honor all of its obligations and fully comply with all the restrictions in the agreement—JCPOA—the deal would not prevent a nuclear Iran indefinitely. Starting in year 13, Iran will be able to break out, produce enough fissile material for a nuclear

weapon in about 10 weeks, down from 1 year. In year 16 Iran would obtain nuclear weapons capabilities in a breakout time of less than 3 weeks.

That was the conclusion—not of Republicans—that was the conclusion of a bipartisan group of experts, chaired by a Republican and a Democratic former Senator at the time.

And what we have said actually has come true. The sunset clause should, by itself, be enough to persuade, hopefully, a majority of us to reject this deal. This doesn't make sense.

If President Bush in 2001 had presented to the American people this same deal with Iran and secured the votes to pass this deal, today Iran would be having breakout—unrestricted breakout, assisted by the agreement. And we are going to call that a diplomatic victory?

Fifteen years is going to go by very fast. They are going to have breakout capability much earlier than that and could easily—if you read the agreement—easily declare that we have breached the agreement, they are pulling back, and therefore they are going forward. And they will have well over \$100 billion to achieve that effort. They will have sanctions relief—total sanctions relief. They will be able to export all of the oil that they want, and Iran wins.

There are some particular problems with this, and they have been listed by people on the right, Charles Krauthammer, and on the left or at least in the middle, David Brooks. The New York Times is not exactly a Republican rag, and David Brooks is not necessarily far rightwing. They are basically saying: Every single major goal that we had going into this agreement has been given away in a desperate attempt to achieve any agreement so that we don't have to deal with this. What we have to deal with can be pushed down the road.

So on that basis I went through the agreement and looked at some of these areas. I would like to identify for the record those that we had the leverage to achieve—a goal, a stated goal by the administration and by others negotiating to achieve—and we caved on every one of them.

First, verification inspections. Most people understand that anytime, anywhere means anytime, anywhere. Actually, now it means—well, a minimum of 24 days if Iran agrees with us initially that we should go through this convoluted process where Iran helps make the decisions. It is like giving Tom Brady and the Patriots the right to determine whether or not the footballs were deflated. I am from Indiana, it is the Colts, and they whipped us in the Super Bowl. I am probably biased in that statement.

On the other hand, just to simplify it for people, if you have an adversary that you don't trust and you want to have an ability to find out if whether or not what they do and say is true, you don't say: Go ahead, check it yourself, then tell me what you think, and

we will take that for an answer. So, talk about caving anytime, anywhere on inspections.

The administration also argued this principle of short notice. Secretary Kerry, when asked this at one of our meetings here, basically said: No, we never pursued such a goal; and, indeed, we never heard of it.

I, along with every one of us here was relieved when the administration announced—I don't know if it was Secretary Kerry or one of his team supporters—announced inspections anytime, anywhere, and everybody said: Oh, OK, at least we have that.

Now we learn no American can be part of the inspection team. Now we learn that a U.N. independent agency will do inspections, and now we have learned that military and former weapon manufacturing and research facilities are off limits, and we are not even allowed to inspect them.

So anywhere, anytime has become a farce. How can you possibly—that in and of itself would be reason not to vote for this agreement. How go do you go home and say to people: Anytime, anywhere is a scrubbed version of 24 hours a day at a minimum as long as Iran agrees.

It doesn't take somebody with a Ph.D. or a law degree—or even a Senator or a Congressman who has delved into these issues—for people to say, are you nuts? Who would sign a deal like that?

Uranium enrichment—we caved there. Then talk about one of the key weaknesses is the agreement that the centrifuges are to be disconnected and only stored feet from their original position. They can be reintroduced into the enrichment system when the earlier expiration dates of the deal occur, whenever the Iranians choose to move quickly toward nuclear capability.

This involves some highly technical stuff, but the bottom line is almost all aspects of these enrichment details in dispute are in dispute by experts who understand the technical application of all of this, and they are not persuaded by the misleading leadership coming out of the administration—once again another cave.

Fordow. What is Fordow? Fordow is a facility at which some nuclear technology pursuit was being undertaken, and we wanted to be able to shut that down.

But the Iranians said: No, no, I don't think so.

So we said: OK, let's cave on that; let's move onto something else.

The same applied to military dimensions and undisclosed military facilities. So Secretary Kerry is faced again with Iranian intransigence and explained his new position now. He no longer was fixated on the past: That was something that we talked about months ago. I am not fixated on that anymore. So scratch that one off. Don't worry. Keep Fordow. Keep Fordow open, no problem. What is next?

Sanctions relief. This agreement does not generally relieve sanctions pressure as originally intended. Rather it abandons the sanctions regime entirely all at once. Indeed, the multilateral sanctions are now already gone. European nations and others are flocking into Tehran to sign long-term agreements that will never be subject to sanctions if they are snapped back. We lost again. So the re-imposition of sanctions, if we find out something is wrong here, is a farce. It is not implementable.

I talked about snap-back here, so I am going to move forward from that. This is one I mentioned before, but I still can't comprehend it.

The deal obligates the P5+1—that is the six of us, the six nations that were negotiating—to actually help Iran build up its nuclear infrastructure during the 15 years before they achieve a 3-week breakout. So we are actually helping them construct their nuclear infrastructure, which then can easily be converted to breaking out for a nuclear weapon. And in return for altering their timetable for nuclear industrial development, the Iranians secured not just international acceptance of that activity but actual assistance in pursuing it.

That is incredible. We are actually helping Iran get to the bomb? As we hear from some of our colleagues and others who support this agreement, they say: I am voting for this because this prevents Iran from getting the bomb. Read the agreement. It is not easy to read. It is not fun to read. But it is alarming to read.

I was in the Senate during the 1990s and the negotiations with North Korea, and actually, Wendy Sherman, the principal negotiator along with Senator Kerry of this agreement, was the principal negotiator in the North Korea agreement. I remember being told on this floor through the President of the United States, then President Clinton and his Secretary of State and others: Don't worry; we have total verification procedures in place. If they cheat on us, we are going to know it. And when we know it, we are going to stop it. Well, here it is 2015, and North Korea has somewhere between 20 and 40 nuclear weapons sitting on top of ballistic missiles, and we didn't know it.

That made me a skeptic going into this thing because it is like *deja vu* here. We are being told the same thing: Don't worry; we will know if they cheat. We will be able to do something to stop them.

This is the assurance that this is a good deal. So that is a hard sale for me. It is a no sale for me. I didn't end up voting for that because I had some real suspicions about whether that would take place. But that actually ought to be a lesson for all of us here—that something that is promised by the President of the United States and his Secretary of State and his negotiating team won't necessarily come true and be the case. So the promises that have

been made about what this agreement is and what it isn't and what we will be able to do I measure by what didn't work out really well in North Korea, and yet the same negotiator that negotiated that helped negotiate on this.

I don't know if my colleague from Tennessee is standing because I am running long on this, but I have a lot more I would like to say. I am going to try to move to a couple of last things here.

Some prominent people have been noted here as favoring the deal. Well, I think Henry Kissinger is someone who probably has some experience, at the age of 90-some years and a lifetime in diplomacy. I don't have to give his credentials. And George Shultz also has some credibility on this. So if you want to listen to one side on this, you ought to listen to the other. These individuals have said:

Previous thinking on nuclear strategy assumed the existence of stable state actors. . . . How will these doctrines translate into a region where sponsorship of nonstate proxies is common, the state structure is under assault, and death on behalf of jihad is a kind of fulfillment?

Sadly, their views have been largely ignored and not mentioned by anybody else. So if they are going to mention their guys, we are going to mention our guys.

Look, the last thing I want to say here before I conclude is there hasn't been much discussion about the consequences for Israel, our democratic ally in the region, which I think should be a core issue. Prime Minister Netanyahu was here and spoke to a joint assembly of Congress. He received standing ovations for standing tall and standing hard and saying the very future existence of my nation is at risk here. He made the point that a bad deal is not better than no deal, that a bad deal could be worse than no deal, and that there are ways around this.

We cannot ignore the major risk that Iran will follow through with their often-repeated threats of obliterating the State of Israel—a threat that was just repeated by the Supreme Leader yesterday.

I ask unanimous consent for 1 additional minute to conclude.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. COATS. I thank my colleagues.

In conclusion, with this agreement, we have paid too much and gained too little. The risks are not adequately acknowledged and not effectively addressed. I cannot support this agreement. I cannot approve the misguided desperation that led to it.

I cannot understand those who claim this is a great victory for diplomacy nor those who turn a blind eye to its obvious failings because of the appeal of party discipline nor those who have fallen prey to the Obama administration's manipulation of the deal with the U.N. prior to Congress having any say in this.

When I read about the gloating, the boastful joy in Iran—in Tehran, their capital—that all their needs were met and none of their redlines were crossed, I despaired. I despaired because this misadventure has been a failure of vision, a failure of will, and a historic failure of leadership. I fear these failures will lead to great suffering.

We have seen this before. Peace at any price is not peace. Peace at any price sometimes leads to tragic consequences. In the last century we saw the loss of tens of millions of lives because the goal was to seek peace at any price. We cannot make that mistake again.

I yield the floor.

Mr. CORKER. Again, Madam President, I thank my colleague very much for his passionate comments and his concern from day one about this agreement.

I think we ran over a little bit. I know Senator BROWN of Ohio ran over. If I can ask how much time remains on our side, I think we maybe go to 1:04 p.m., at least, or something like that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Twenty-eight minutes for the majority.

Mr. CORKER. So I know you all each asked for 15. If we could make it, instead, 14 each, so it is equally divided, Senator ROBERTS will enjoy that. This will be equally divided between our distinguished Senator GRASSLEY and Senator ROBERTS, and I thank them for letting me intervene and thank them both for being here.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, this is a critically important debate on a nuclear deal that is going to have long-lasting impacts on our national security and the security of our friends and our allies. This debate is happening because 98 Senators expressed the desire to have a say on this agreement. This process will allow the American people to speak through their elected representatives, and I can say the American people overwhelmingly oppose this agreement. New public opinion polls released in just the last few days indicate that Americans in general are opposed to this deal by a margin of 2 to 1. Only 21 percent support it.

I participated in meetings with constituents in 25 of Iowa's 99 counties during the August work period. The message I received was overwhelmingly in opposition to this agreement. That is the same message I am hearing from Iowans who have written or called since the deal was announced in July.

After many weeks of studying the terms of the Iranian deal, also hearing from experts and attending classified briefings, and engaging in dialogue with my constituents, my initial skepticism has been confirmed. I have come to the conclusion this agreement presented to us is a bad deal that will not increase our national security or the security of our friends and allies and should be rejected.

The United States began the negotiations from a position of very real

strength. The international sanctions were obviously hurting Iran, and Iran wanted out from under those sanctions. The sanctions regime that Congress put in place over the objections of President Obama drove Iran to the negotiating table.

The administration, leading up to the negotiations and throughout the entire process, outlined the conditions for a good deal. President Obama and Secretary Kerry both made important statements about the goals of the negotiations. The goal was, of course, to dismantle Iran's nuclear program. Secretary Kerry himself said in the fall of 2013 that Iran has "no right to enrich," and that a good deal with Iran would "help Iran dismantle its nuclear program."

Despite all these assurances that negotiations would include "anytime, anywhere" inspections, the deal falls real short. President Obama negotiated away from these positions over the course of these negotiations.

This agreement accepts and legitimizes Iran as a nuclear threshold state. Iran will not dismantle many important parts of its uranium enrichment infrastructure, contrary to past U.S. policies that Iran not be allowed to enrich.

Iran also is permitted to continue a vast research and development program. Many of the significant limitations expire after 10 short years, leaving Iran an internationally legitimate nuclear program.

Iran could fully abide by this deal and be a nuclear threshold state, contrary to what we were promised by this administration and the initial goals that were announced by the President.

Now, with respect to inspections, international inspectors will not have anytime, anywhere access. They will have what is termed "managed access." In fact, the deal provides Iran with a 24-day process to further delay—we know what will happen—and hide prohibited activities. Iran has a track record of cheating, otherwise I couldn't say those things. They have cheated on past agreements. This deal allows Iran to stonewall the inspectors for up to 24 days.

The agreement also includes side agreements between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency that we can't review. Even the administration has not seen them. And people in this country expect us to read before we vote.

Of course, we can read the agreement, but we can't read side agreements that the law requires be given to the Congress to read under this special law. So we are going to be voting on things which we haven't seen and which the law says we should see.

The Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act, which passed the Senate 98 to 1, requires the administration to provide to Congress access to all "annexes, appendices, codicils, side agreements, implementing material, documents, and guidance, technical or other under-

standings and any related agreements" as part of our agreement with the President. It seems in this case we are being asked to put our faith in the Iranian regime to not cheat, contrary to what we know about them.

Iran has not provided details on the past military dimensions of its nuclear program even though the U.S. position was, very simply, that Iran had to come clean about that history before any sanctions relief. It is critical, for a robust verification regime to work, that the International Atomic Energy Agency have a full accounting of Iran's past efforts and stockpiles. Yet it appears that Iran will be allowed to supervise itself by conducting its own inspections and collect samples from its secretive military facility in Parchin, where much of the military dimensions of its nuclear program had been carried out.

I also oppose the last-minute decision to lift the embargo on conventional arms and ballistic missiles. GEN Martin Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee in July that "we should under no circumstances relieve pressure on Iran relative to ballistic missile capabilities and arms trafficking."

They didn't listen to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. So under this agreement, after just 5 years the conventional arms embargo will be lifted. After just 8 years the ballistic missile embargo will be lifted. Iran has long sought the technology to develop intercontinental ballistic missiles, which would be a direct threat to the United States and our allies. And Iran's past arms trafficking to the Hezbollah, Hamas, and other terrorist organizations has long threatened the State of Israel and other Middle Eastern allies as well, and it of course threatens stability—very much so—in the region.

Once Iran has complied with the initial restraints on its nuclear program, many sanctions will be lifted. This will release somewhere around \$100 billion of frozen Iranian assets. The lifting of sanctions and release of these funds will only exacerbate Iran's support for terror and tradition of terror, with Iran having access to tens of billions of frozen assets to bolster its conventional military and further support global terrorism.

Even Obama administration officials have said that Iran is likely to use some of the funds to purchase weapons and fund terrorism that would threaten Americans and Israelis. Now, isn't that something—this administration negotiating an agreement where it is assumed that we are going to give them further resources to support efforts to kill Americans and Western Europeans.

The concept of "snapping back" these sanctions is another issue that has been discussed. These sanctions also appear less effective on the issue of snapping back than originally claimed. The complicated process to reimpose sanctions is unlikely to work

even if Iran fails to comply with the agreement. Iran views snapback sanctions as grounds to walk away from the agreement, so any effort to reimpose sanctions will be regarded by all parties as to whether or not to dissolve the agreement and impose sanctions.

I support a robust diplomatic effort that will prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapons capability, but I also strongly disagree with proponents of this agreement who argue that the only alternative to this deal is war. That, of course, is a false choice and intellectually dishonest.

Iran came to the negotiation table because it desperately sought sanctions relief. If this deal were rejected, we could impose even tougher sanctions, allowing our diplomats to negotiate a better deal that would more adequately safeguard our Nation's security interests and that of our allies. A better deal would not legitimize Iran as a nuclear threshold state, it would not trade massive sanctions relief for limited temporary constraints, and it would not provide concessions that will trigger a regional nuclear arms race.

If we reject this deal, we could push for an international agreement that would truly dismantle Iran's nuclear program and verifiably prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability.

A better deal would not ignore Iran's past bad behavior. Iran has for many years been the most active state sponsor of terrorism. Iran has an egregious record of human rights violations and the persecution of religious minorities. It continues to imprison U.S. citizens. At least 500 U.S. military deaths in Iraq and Afghanistan are directly linked to Iran and its support for anti-American militants.

This agreement will free up tens of billions of dollars in frozen Iranian assets without addressing any of these issues. We know Iran will use some of that money to support terrorist activities throughout the Middle East, and those are extended into the United States and Western Europe. Iran provides support for the brutal Assad regime in Syria, the Houthi rebels in Yemen, and provides weapons, funding, and support to Hamas and Hezbollah.

This deal appears to be the result of desperation on our side for a deal—any deal—and the Iranians knew that and took advantage of our weakness.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I will put the remainder in the RECORD.

Mr. CORKER. Madam President, he may conclude.

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

Mr. GRASSLEY. This deal is a result of President Obama's philosophy of leading from behind. As a result of this philosophy, we now have enemies who don't fear us and friends and allies who don't follow us because they question our credibility and they question our leadership. We have a more dangerous world because of it.

President Obama himself said that it is better to have no deal than a bad deal. This deal has far too many shortcomings and will fail to make America and our allies safer. It will not prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons, while providing a windfall that will allow them to ramp up their bad behavior.

Obviously I oppose this deal, and I hope we can send a signal to the administration and Iran that we need a deal that improves our national security and the security of our friends and allies in the region and responds to the common sense of the American people who, through the polls, have shown they know this to be a bad deal.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. ROBERTS. Madam President, we all come here to make a difference, and we have on the floor two Senators who have done just that—Senator CORKER and his counterpart on the Democrat side, Senator CARDIN, who is a good friend of mine. Both are good friends of mine. History will note in salutary terms what both of them have contributed in regard to leadership, perseverance, and trying to make a bad situation much better. I thank them for that.

I rise today concerned, disheartened, and fearful about the vote—or, to be more accurate, not even having a vote—regarding the issue before us that affects our national security and that of others worldwide.

We have before us the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, an Executive agreement whose original goal was to prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear-armed state. In keeping with our constitutional responsibility and Senate tradition, what we should have before us is a treaty, but we do not. Were the Senate taking up a treaty, we could be having debate on rational, commonsense, and effective amendments that would protect our country and reduce the flames of turmoil in the Middle East and in Europe, but we are not. We are voting on a resolution of disapproval, and we may well end up voting not to vote at all—a probability I find inexplicable and outrageous. In the Senate's 226-year history, it has taken up almost 1,900 treaties and only rejected 22, many of which have dealt with subjects of much less consequence.

I deeply regret that the administration would not even consider the Senate allowing a vote on this crucial foreign policy and national security issue as a treaty. During debate on the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act in April, I voted in favor of Senator JOHNSON's amendment to do just that. We had the opportunity. The Senate failed to seize it.

I believe this agreement to be deeply flawed, and our failure to truly debate and fix what is in it represents an abrogation of our responsibilities—this in the face of an agreement or a “deal”

that is already adversely affecting the daily lives and well-being of individuals all around the world. Refugees throughout the Middle East recognize the United States is yielding both power and persuasion to Iran, and they are fleeing for their lives.

As if failure to consider this agreement is not enough, now consider the fact that there are those in this distinguished body who will try to block cloture and in doing so prevent even a simple yes-or-no vote on the resolution. Talk about an upside down, “Alice in Wonderland” exercise.

The Senate has already voted 98 to 2 to have a vote, and yet we stand here today ready to abrogate that vote.

So, my colleagues, what are we doing? We are simply debating a flawed agreement submitted to us by the President. We are not amending or voting on the agreement at all; we are just debating. The path which we take today—a detour into a box canyon, achieving nothing—has been forced upon us by the very same people who made the Senate swallow the nuclear option.

Where on Earth has the Senate gone? Well, the President has been breaking arms and political legs, urging my colleagues to use Senate procedure and deny Senators the right to vote. It is pretty simple: The President doesn't want the Senate to vote no on what he considers his foreign policy legacy.

However, on occasion, the Senate has put partisanship aside and debated issues of deep conviction and diverging opinions. This should be one of those times, but it is not. We should find a path forward that enables bipartisan accord as a legislative body. That path always starts when respect trumps partisanship. I regret that is not today, not this week, not this issue, not this President.

Given the fact that we are where we are, I think it is imperative that we fully understand how Iran interprets this agreement. The shoe is on the Iranian foot, and judging by the statements of their leaders, they believe it fits just fine.

We have heard in detail from Secretary Kerry. We have heard from and been lectured by the President. But Members should also know what Iranian President Hasan Ruhani and Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei told the Iranian people after the agreement was finalized. The difference is both pertinent and remarkable. Speaking before his constituency in Tehran, President Ruhani perfectly articulated where the United States began these so-called negotiations and where the United States made enormous concessions. According to him, we did not negotiate at all, we conceded.

It is a paradox of enormous irony that in order to know the truth about this agreement—highly praised by this administration and well-received by a determined minority in this Senate—to learn the unfortunate truth about who negotiated and who conceded, we have

to read and understand the remarks of President Ruhani of Iran to get the full picture.

President Ruhani stated that in the beginning, the United States capped the number of centrifuges to 100. Today, Iran is allowed over 6,000. Where original restriction and oversight were set for 20 years, today it is 8. With regard to research and development, the United States abandoned any limits on developing systems for enriching uranium. Instead, Iran is free to develop centrifuges to the highest level they desire—the IR-8. The administration placed a redline on heavy water production at the Iraq facility. Today the reactor will continue operating and produce heavy water.

We said sanctions would be lifted incrementally. Today they are virtually nonexistent. Soon Iran will receive a windfall of approximately \$100 to \$150 billion for whatever use it wishes—read, terrorism; read, anti-missile defense systems. Of greatest importance, what happened to the inspections regime? This administration said anytime, anywhere, but Iran walked away holding the key to who, how, and when inspectors will get in.

It is not so much what we in the United States know or believe. It is, rather, what Iran believes, in the words of their President and Supreme Leader. Their remarks not only put into absolute focus what the Iranian Government understands as their responsibility in regard to this agreement, but it also puts into perspective which side demanded and which side conceded.

The administration will argue President Ruhani's statements are but a show for the Iranian public; that Iran wants to claim they can become a stable influence in the Middle East. Sure, tell that to Israel. But the question remains, are we voting on an agreement or are we voting on concessions? According to President Ruhani, it is the latter.

Perhaps the proud boasting of President Ruhani is one thing, but the vows of the Ayatollah are quite another. His speech—punctuated by cheers of "Death to America," "Death to Israel"—vowed that regardless of the deals' approval, Iran would never stop supporting their friends in Palestine, Yemen, Syria, Iraq or Lebanon; the exact places Iran had been found backing terrorist organizations, which led to its listing as a State sponsor of terrorism by the State Department. But I have just listed the concessions and vows that Iran's leaders have made public. What about the ones that will never be revealed—the agreed-upon arrangements between Iran and the United Nations' International Atomic Energy Agency.

Today all Senators should be gravely concerned about these negotiations and agreements. Do we have access? No. Do we have information? No. Do we have transparency? No. Do we know what processes will be allowed? No. Well, actually we do.

Under the agreement's dispute resolution mechanisms, this agreement sets up a tortured path that does not just involve the much publicized 24-day waiting period. After 24 days, any dispute would be referred to a joint commission where there will be a 15-day waiting period. Then the dispute would be referred to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs with another 15-day day waiting period. Finally, the dispute would end up before an advisory board with—you guessed it—another 15-day waiting period. All of this, of course, can be delayed if the parties agree on an extension for further discussion, which they will.

Instead of resolution, we have an unending series of switchbacks to get to the top of a mountain which in fact we will never see. "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results." We have tried IAEA inspections with Iran before, and they failed miserably. It seems nothing short of insane to say that we can trust Iran today.

This deal does more than give Iran the power to self-regulate, filibuster, and avoid inspections. It gives Iran the ability to remain unaccountable and rogue. This debate is not just about what the administration, this body or the American public thinks of an agreement with Iran, this is also very much about what the Iranians think we have and will accept.

I worry that we are looking at this so-called agreement through rose-colored glasses, based on hope and the misguided idea that any deal is better than no deal because the alternative is war. Why do I say "rose-colored glasses"? It is because civilized nations do that—nations such as America. We naturally want to believe that disaster and chaos will not happen but unfortunately they do.

Now, 14 years ago tomorrow, while heading into work I heard the news of the World Trade Center being attacked. My heart fell and my stomach churned because as a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee at that time, I had been repeating over and over again that the oceans no longer protected us and the nature of warfare was dramatically changing.

At the time of the attacks, coming up on 395, I could see black smoke billowing from the Pentagon. I knew the Capitol would be next. If it were not for the heroes of flight 93 who made the declaration "let's roll" a national rolling cry, my instincts would have been right and the Capitol would have been hit. The probability is I would not be making these remarks today had that happened.

Madam President, my colleagues, everybody watching, close your eyes. Imagine the terrible ramifications had that plane hit the Capitol. Where we sit today would have been rubble. Imagine that happening tomorrow.

Throughout our history, periods of peace, stability, and prosperity have unfortunately been the aberration, not

the norm. As a result, we have learned the hard way, as Americans who made the ultimate sacrifice in so many conflicts throughout our history. Around the world, we have witnessed man's inhumanity to man: the Holocaust, Cambodia, Rwanda, and now with the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria and their savage caliphate threatening almost indiscriminately against all those who do not subscribe to their Sharia law, and especially to our best ally in the region, the State of Israel.

My colleagues, despite our best efforts, our hope, our optimism, and the siren song, "It can't happen," I would only remind you that history tells us that it has happened, and it will happen again unless we have the courage to take off the rose-colored glasses and come to the realization with regard to the consequences of what we are doing or, more aptly put, not doing and whom we are dealing with. Today we are dealing with a State sponsor of terrorism and they will continue. Iran will become a nuclear-armed state.

As we mark the 14th anniversary of the horrific terrorist attacks and loss of over 3,000 Americans on September 11, 2001, I want to make it clear that I do not trust Iran, and I will never support concessions which will allow them to become a nuclear-armed state.

It is my hope to vote yes on the resolution of disapproval. As my good friend and colleague Senator CORNYN emphasized yesterday: Every Senator here should have—

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). The majority's time has expired.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for 30 seconds.

Mr. CORKER. I agree.

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

Mr. ROBERTS. Every Senator should have the opportunity to vote on this issue, given the irony that Iran's leadership has given that power and privilege to its own Parliament. At least give me and others the privilege today, as a Senator, to cast the most important vote of my 35 years in public service.

I yield back my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. I understand we have 60 minutes under Democratic control. I would ask unanimous consent that up to 7 minutes be available to Senator MERKLEY, up to 7 minutes to Senator MANCHIN, up to 6 minutes to Senator DONNELLY, up to 18 minutes to Senator FRANKEN, and up to 5 minutes to Senator HIRONO, and up to 10 minutes to Senator MARKEY.

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

The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, the United States, our citizens, our President, and I believe every single Member of Congress stand united in our commitment to block Iran from securing a nuclear weapon. The question we

are debating is the pathway that is best for ensuring that outcome. Is the international agreement negotiated between Iran and the P5+1 nations the best strategy for blocking Iran's potential pursuit of a nuclear weapon or is there some other route that yields better probability, better outcome? That is the issue we are considering.

Over the last month, I have explored the strengths of every argument and counterargument. I have met with policy experts, intelligence analysts, advocates, and the Ambassadors of our partner nations. I have sought and received the counsel of Oregonians on both sides of this issue. Taking all of this into account, this deal is the best available strategy for blocking Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon.

The plan's strength is that for 15 years it creates an effective framework for blocking Iran's three pathways to securing a nuclear weapon: the uranium path, the plutonium path, and the covert path. It blocks the uranium path by requiring Iran to dismantle two-thirds of its centrifuges; more importantly, to reduce its stockpile of enriched uranium by 97 percent; and to limit enrichment of uranium to 3.67 percent—far below the 90 percent required for a nuclear weapon.

It blocks Iran's plutonium pathway by requiring Iran to pull the core of its Arak reactor and to fill it with concrete, to build any replacement reactor with a design that will not produce weapons-grade plutonium, and to forgo the reprocessing of spent fuel which is essential to the plutonium path. The agreement also blocks a covert path to a bomb by imposing extensive inspections and monitoring. This includes providing onsite inspections anywhere a violation is suspected. Unprecedented procedures have been put in place to guarantee that Iran cannot indefinitely stall these inspections, including setting a maximum number of days for access and number of days that is guaranteed to ensure that we can, with confidence, detect any work with radioactive materials. The result—attested to by 75 nonproliferation experts and diplomats in a recent letter—is that it is “very likely that any future effort by Iran to pursue nuclear weapons, even a clandestine program, would be detected promptly.”

As many have pointed out on the floor today, the agreement is not without shortcomings. It has not sustained the current U.N. ban on Iran's importation of conventional arms. Iran could acquire conventional arms up to 5 years and missile technology after 8 years.

It does not dictate how Iran can spend the dollars it reclaims from cash assets that are frozen. It does not permanently maintain bright lines on Iran's nuclear research or nuclear energy program, lifting the 300-kilogram stockpile limit and 3.77 percent enrichment limit after 15 years. These exclusions are trouble.

It is possible, perhaps probable, that Iran will use some of that additional

cash and access to conventional arms to increase its support for terrorist groups. It is possible that Iran will use a nuclear research program and a nuclear energy program as the foundation for a future nuclear weapons program. That is a substantial concern.

For this reason, many have come to this floor and argued the United States, instead of implementing this agreement, should withdraw from it and negotiate a better deal. The prospects for that possibility, however, are slim.

Our P5+1 partners—and I have met with all of their Ambassadors to explore this issue—have committed the good faith of their governments behind this agreement. They believe this is the best path, the best opportunity to stop Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. They plan to honor the deal they have signed on to with or without the United States as long as Iran does as well. Iran has every reason to honor this agreement, even if the United States rejects it because agreement fulfills Iran's goal of lifting the international sanctions and it sets the stage for valuable trade and investment partnerships.

If Iran were to follow this course, it would gain many benefits while leaving the United States at odds with the balance of our partners, undermining, in a dramatic international fashion, American influence with strategic and security consequences throughout a large spectrum. On the other hand, if Iran exits this agreement and responds to its rejection by the United States, our country then is the one that stands in the pathway of a potential diplomatic solution to this incredibly important international security issue. It will be the United States blocking a plan with high confidence of stopping Iran from acquiring a nuclear bomb. Furthermore, the international support for economic sanctions would fray, giving Iran some of the economic relief it is seeking without the burden of intrusive inspections.

In short, this course would shatter diplomacy, impact and diminish American leadership, and shred our economic leverage, increasing reliance on one leftover tool—military options—while at the same time dramatically diminishing our confidence in the actual state of Iran's nuclear program. Less information, more reliance, and less confidence would be a dangerous combination.

The most effective strategy for blocking Iran's access to a nuclear bomb is to utilize this agreement and maximize American participation to hold Iran strictly accountable, not through the first 15 years but through the next decades that follow, where Iran is still completely constrained by its commitment to never develop a nuclear weapon.

After 15 years, Iran will be subject to the deal's requirement that it will never “seek, develop or acquire any nuclear weapons.” And Iran will continue

to be subject to ongoing intensive monitoring and verification by the International Atomic Energy Agency, or IAEA.

We, the United States, can greatly strengthen this framework. The United States should use a massive intelligence program to back up the plan in the first 15 years and strengthen the IAEA's monitoring after the first 15 years. The United States should lead the international community in defining the boundary that constitutes the difference between a nuclear research program and a nuclear energy program versus a nuclear weapons program. Those bright lines that are diminished are replaced with a commitment that has to be defined, and it is through participation and agreement that the United States can ensure that the international community sustains a clear line and enforces that clear line.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for 30 more seconds.

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

Mr. MERKLEY. In conclusion, no foreign policy choice comes with guarantees. The future, whether we approve or reject this deal, is unknowable and carries risks. But this agreement, with its verification and full U.S. participation, offers the best prospect for stopping Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon at any point here forward, and for that reason I will support it.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, when I go home to my beautiful State of West Virginia, I have always said that if I can't explain it, I can't vote for it.

When this process began, I was supportive of the diplomatic efforts led by Secretaries Kerry and Moniz. I have always believed that to truly be a superpower, you must engage in superdiplomacy. Whenever I am able, I will choose diplomacy over war because the stakes are so high for West Virginia and our entire country.

In our State of West Virginia, we have one of the highest rates of military service in the Nation, participation-wise. But as I struggled with this decision, I could not ignore the fact that Iran, the country that will benefit most from the sanctions being lifted, refuses to change its 36-year history of sponsoring terrorism.

For me, this deal had to be about more than preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon for the next 10 to 15 years. For me, this deal had to address Iran's terrorist actions. Without doing so, it would reward Iran's 36 years of deplorable behavior and do nothing to prevent its destructive activities.

In fact, even during the negotiating process that we have been watching unfold, it has continued to hold four American hostages, support terrorism

around the world, breed anti-American sentiment, and acquire arms from Russia. The continued actions by Iran and its recent activities with Russia have proven to me that when we catch Iran violating the agreement—and I believe we will—I have grave doubts that we will have unified committed partners willing to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

I also cannot, in good conscience, agree to Iran receiving up to \$100 billion in funds that everyone knows will be used—at least in some part—to continue funding terrorism and further destabilize the Middle East. Lifting sanctions without ensuring that Iran's sponsorship of terrorism is neutralized is dangerous to regional and American security.

The administration has accepted what I consider to be a false choice—that this is only about nuclear weapons and not terrorism. However, the fact of the matter is that we are concerned about Iran having a bomb because, in large part, it is the world's largest state sponsor of terror. Asking us to set aside the terrorist question is irresponsible and misses the point.

Over the last 36 years, Iran has carried out thousands of acts of terror that have killed thousands of innocent lives, and not just in the Middle East but around the world. They have defied international sanctions and treaties, continued to call for an attempt to violently destroy the State of Israel, bombed diplomatic buildings, and murdered innocent civilians. On top of it all, Iran is directly responsible for the deaths of hundreds of U.S. soldiers. This regime has shown no signs that its deplorable behavior will change, and the deal does nothing to guarantee that behavior change.

The deal places real constraints on Iran's nuclear program for the next 10 to 15 years. After that term, Iran will be able to produce enough enriched uranium for a nuclear weapon in a very short period of time. While I hope its behavior will change in that span, I cannot gamble our security and that of our allies on the hope that Iran will conduct itself differently than it has for the last 36 years. It is because of that belief and a month of thoughtful consideration that I must cast a vote against this deal.

I do not believe that supporting this deal will prevent Iran from eventually acquiring a nuclear weapon or from continuing to be a leading sponsor of terrorism against Americans and our allies around the world. To those who are upset by my deliberations, I will simply say that the decision to pursue diplomacy is every bit as consequential as the decision to pursue war, and in many cases—possibly even this one—the choice to abandon the first path leads inevitably to the second. I, like most Americans and West Virginians, have already seen too much American sacrifice in the Middle East to push us down the path towards war. However, I don't believe a vote against this deal

forces us to abandon the diplomatic path. We must continue to pursue peace but on terms that promise a lasting peace for the United States and our allies.

I met with and spoke to every national security expert I could. I attended every secured briefing that was made available to me. I spoke with representatives of every Middle Eastern country, and most importantly, I listened to the good citizens of West Virginia. I thank all of my constituents who reached out to my office and to the many advisers who took their time to help me reach this decision.

I will continue to listen to my constituents, and I will support a path towards peace and diplomacy over war and aggression. But make no mistake about it. I will vote to use all of our military might to protect our homeland whenever it is threatened, defend our allies whenever they are put in harm's way, and to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon.

To be a superpower I believe you must possess superdiplomatic skills, and I believe we can use these skills to negotiate a better deal. We need a deal that citizens of West Virginia, our country, and the world know will make us safer.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, as Indiana's Senator, my top priority and most fundamental responsibility is to ensure the security of the people of Indiana and our Nation, as well as the security of our friends and allies, including Israel and the Gulf States. It is through the lens of these solemn obligations that I have carefully reviewed and evaluated the proposed nuclear agreement.

In making this decision, I bring to bear not only my responsibilities as a Senator but as the ranking member of the Armed Services Subcommittee on Strategic Forces, overseeing our Nation's own nuclear arsenal and global nonproliferation efforts, and my convictions as a strong supporter of Israel and my concerns as a Hoosier who has attended the funerals of too many young men and women lost protecting our Nation in this conflict-ridden region.

After exhaustive assessment and careful thought, I determined that despite my questions about Iran's intentions, the most responsible course of action is to give this agreement the opportunity to succeed. It is not the agreement I would have written, but it is the one we have to make a decision on, and I believe the alternative is much more dangerous to our country and to Israel.

While reasonable people can disagree on the substance of the agreement, we can all agree that a nuclear-armed Iran poses an unacceptable threat to global security and the Iranian leadership should not and cannot be trusted. The question then becomes this: How can

we most effectively eliminate Iran's nuclear threat?

This agreement rolls back Iran's nuclear capabilities, shrinks its program, and gives us unprecedented access with the most intrusive inspections and verification regime ever put into place. Iran must get rid of 98 percent of their stockpiled uranium, more than two-thirds of their centrifuges, and the existing core of their heavy water plutonium reactor.

These measures not only give us the opportunity to restrain Iran's nuclear capabilities but also, according to our military leadership, improve the effectiveness of our military option should that one day become necessary. Without this agreement, we risk the worst of both worlds. The united front we have formed with the international community against Iran's nuclear program would break apart, the agreement would dissolve, sanctions relief would flow into Iran from those countries that are no longer willing to hold the line, and Iran is left with tens of thousands of centrifuges capable of producing highly enriched uranium, a heavy water reactor capable of producing weapons-grade plutonium, and a breakout time of just 2 to 3 months.

While I support this agreement, I also recognize that the only true guarantee that Iran will never become a nuclear-armed state is the steadfast resolve of the United States and our allies to do whatever is necessary to stop them and to put in place the policies to make that happen. With or without this deal, the day may come when we are left with no alternative but to take military action to prevent Iran from crossing a nuclear threshold. The burden and danger would, as always, be on the shoulders of our servicemembers, who put their lives on the line for our country.

Indiana is home to the Nation's fourth largest National Guard contingent, with more than 14,000 Hoosiers standing ready to serve their communities and our country. These men and women and the thousands of Hoosiers who serve in the Reserves and on Active Duty across the country and around the world have been called to serve time and time again. They have done so with honor and distinction. They make up the greatest fighting force the world has ever seen, and I have every confidence in their ability to meet any challenge put before them.

If the day does come that I am faced with a vote on whether to authorize military action against Iran, I owe it to our Armed Forces and to the people of Indiana to have tried all other options to stop Iran before we consider putting our servicemembers into harm's way.

We stand ready to take military action if needed, but we owe it to the young men and women who protect our country on the frontlines—from Terre Haute, Angola, Evansville, and Indianapolis—to at least try to find a peaceful solution. They should be able to expect at least that much from us here in

the Senate, and if that solution does not succeed, they stand ready.

While I share the concerns expressed by the agreement's critics about what may happen 10 years or 15 years or 20 years from now, I cannot in good conscience take action that would shift the potential risks of 2026 and 2031 to 2016.

I believe this agreement is, as my predecessor and friend, former U.S. Senator Richard Lugar, recently said, "our best chance to stop an Iranian bomb without another war in the Middle East." I owe Senator Lugar and my other fellow Hoosier, former Congressman Lee Hamilton, a great debt of gratitude for their input and expertise throughout this process.

This deal will not resolve every problem we have were Iran. It must be part of a comprehensive strategy to counter the broader threat Iran poses through their support for terrorists and other proxies across Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen, and elsewhere.

I remain committed to working with my colleagues and friends on both sides of the aisle to confront these challenges with a clear, decisive strategy in the Middle East.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I yield back my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I rise today to express strong support for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the diplomatic agreement that the United States and our international partners reached with Iran in July. I urge my colleagues to support the agreement and to reject the resolution of disapproval.

This is not a decision I came to lightly. Since the agreement was announced, I have consulted with nuclear and sanctions experts inside and outside the government, Obama administration officials, including Secretary of State John Kerry and Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz, Ambassadors from the other countries who negotiated alongside of us, our intelligence communities, advocates for Israel on both sides of the issue, my constituents in Minnesota, and, of course, with my colleagues in the Senate.

Many have expressed reservations about the agreement, and I share some of those reservations. It is not a perfect agreement, but it is a strong one. Many people have said no deal is better than a bad deal, but that doesn't mean that the only deal we can agree to is a perfect deal. The last perfect deal we got was on the deck of the USS *Missouri*. What a cost we had to pay for that, including the only use of a nuclear weapon in war—actually, two weapons.

This agreement is, in my opinion, the most effective, realistic option available to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon anytime in the next 15 years and beyond. Iran must never, ever have a nuclear weapon. And after 15 years, we will still have every option we currently have, up to and including

the use of military force, to prevent Iran from getting a bomb. Moreover, while critics have eagerly pointed out what they see as flaws in the deal, I have heard no persuasive arguments that there is a better alternative.

The agreement imposes a series of physical limits on Iran's nuclear program, especially its production of the fissile material it would require to make a bomb. The agreement's verification provisions are extremely strong, with 24/7 monitoring of and unfettered access to Iran's nuclear sites and ongoing surveillance of Iran's nuclear supply chain.

Let me briefly review the central limits on its nuclear program that Iran has agreed to and the verification provisions. Together they are designed to prevent Iran from trying to get a nuclear weapon and to detect them, if they do, with enough time to respond forcefully and effectively.

The agreement will prevent Iran from using weapons-grade plutonium as the fissile material for a nuclear weapon by requiring Iran to redesign and rebuild the Arak nuclear reactor, which, if completed as planned, could have produced enough weapons-grade plutonium for one or two bombs each year. Under the agreement, it won't be able to do that. Iran has to pull out the core of the nuclear reactor and fill it with concrete to destroy it. And Iran can't get any sanctions relief until it does that.

The agreement also significantly reduces and limits Iran's production of uranium which, in its highly enriched form, can also be used in a bomb. Iran currently has about 19,500 centrifuges capable of enriching uranium, and it has stockpiled about 10 tons of low-enriched uranium. Under the agreement, Iran has to go down to about 5,000 first-generation centrifuges for enriching uranium and down to 300 kilograms of low-enriched uranium—a 98-percent reduction. Iran does not get any sanctions relief until it does that.

Right now, it would take Iran about 2 to 3 months to get one weapon's worth of weapons-grade uranium. That is called the breakout time. The longer the breakout time is, of course, the better. This agreement will increase the breakout time to 1 year for the first decade. Because of the inspections included in the agreement, if Iran tried to cheat at their nuclear facilities and dash for a bomb, we would catch them almost instantaneously and have more than enough time to respond effectively. Iran's nuclear facilities will be subject to 24/7 monitoring and unfettered access by the inspectors of the International Atomic Energy Agency, or the IAEA. Limitations on Iran's nuclear facilities and strict verification make it impossible for Iran to dash for a bomb at its known nuclear facilities for the next 15 years.

But the verification provisions are also important for another reason. They make it much more difficult for Iran to be able to go for a bomb in se-

cret as well. Beyond the 24/7 monitoring of and unfettered access to Iran's nuclear sites, international inspectors will also be guaranteed access to any site in Iran that they have suspicions about, including military sites.

Now, a lot has been made about a provision in the agreement for resolving disputes when the IAEA seeks to access suspicious sites in Iran. That process can take up to 24 days. A lot of confusing and misleading things have been said about this. First of all, it is important to again emphasize that there is continuous monitoring at Iran's declared nuclear sites and unique safeguards on Iran's nuclear supply chain. That is not what the 24-day controversy is about.

Where the 24 days come in is in those cases where Iran disputes the IAEA's demand for access to a suspicious, undeclared site. People have expressed concerns that 24 days is too long. Prime Minister Netanyahu has likened this to giving a drug dealer 24-days' notice before you check his premises, saying that is a lot of time for a drug dealer to flush a lot of drugs down the toilet.

But here is the problem for Iran and the problem with this criticism. You can't hide radioactive material such as uranium. It leaves traces behind, and they can be detected for far, far longer than 24 days. One nuclear expert has said:

If Iran were to flush the evidence down the toilet, they'd have a radioactive toilet. And if they were to rip out the toilet, they'd have a radioactive hole in the ground.

Uranium-235 has a half-life of over 700 million years, and the half-life of uranium-238 is over 4 billion years. The IAEA will catch Iran after 24 days.

Now, it is true that there are some activities—related to weapons design, for example—that don't use nuclear materials and are much easier to hide. That is a genuine challenge that inspectors and our intelligence efforts will face. But the fact is that you can move a computer that you are doing design work on in 24 seconds or erase stuff in 24 milliseconds. I am sure it is actually a lot faster than that. But Iran is still not allowed to conduct those activities under the agreement and will face severe consequences if they get caught.

So the bottom line is that the IAEA's guaranteed access to suspicious sites will help support the verification of the agreement.

Perhaps more importantly, we will also have ongoing surveillance of Iran's nuclear supply chain. That means that in order to make a nuclear weapon in the next 15 years, and even beyond, Iran would have to reconstruct every individual piece of the chain—the mining, the milling, the production of centrifuges, and more—separately and in secret. And it would have to make sure it didn't get caught in any of the steps. This agreement—plus our own comprehensive intelligence efforts—would make it exceedingly unlikely that Iran

would be able to get away with any of that. And Iran would therefore risk losing everything it gained from the deal and the reimposition of sanctions, to say nothing of military attack.

We don't have to trust the regime's intentions to understand the reality it would face. Attempting to cheat on this agreement would carry an overwhelming likelihood of getting caught and serious consequences if it does.

We still have work to do to diminish the threat Iran poses to our national security and, of course, to the safety of our allies in the Middle East, beginning with Israel. As sanctions are lifted, the non-nuclear threat to the region may very well grow. We will need to bolster our support to regional counterweights such as Saudi Arabia. And, of course, we will need to maintain our terrorism-related sanctions, which are unaffected by the deal.

We also need to work very closely with Israel, our greatest friend in the region, in order to assure its security. As a Jew, I feel a deep bond with Israel. As a Senator, I have worked very hard to strengthen our country's bond with that nation and to bolster its security, and I will continue to do that. A nuclear-armed Iran would be a truly grave threat to Israel, and so I believe this agreement will contribute to the security of Israel because it is the most effective available means of preventing Iran from becoming nuclear armed, so do a number of very senior Israeli security experts, including some of the former heads of Israel's security services.

There is no doubt in my mind that this deal represents a significant step forward for our own national security.

One concern has been raised about what happens after year 15 when many of the restrictions in the deal expire. Well, there will still be major checks on Iran's nuclear program after that date. Under the deal, Iran will be subject to permanent, specific prohibitions on several of the steps necessary to build a bomb. Iran's nuclear program will still be subject to heightened monitoring by the IAEA and Iran's nuclear supply chain will still be subject to uniquely intrusive monitoring, which will limit Iran's ability to divert nuclear materials and equipment to a secret program without being detected.

Iran must never, ever have a nuclear weapon. We will still have every option we currently have, up to and including the use of military force, to prevent that from happening.

But we also must begin now to make the case to the world that the danger posed by an Iranian nuclear weapon will not expire in 15 years, and remind Iran that should it begin to take worrisome steps, such as enrichment inconsistent with a peaceful program, we stand ready to intervene.

That said, we don't know what the world will look like in 15 years. As long as this regime holds power, Iran will represent a dangerous threat to our security. But it is possible that by 2031,

Iran may no longer be controlled by hardliners determined to harm our interests. More than 60 percent of Iran's population is now under the age of 30. These young Iranians are increasingly well educated and pro American.

We don't know how this tension within Iran will work out. But I think if we reject this agreement, we will lose this opportunity with the people of Iran. If we back out of a deal we have agreed to, we will only embolden the hardliners who insist that America cannot be trusted. We will be doing self-inflicted damage to American global leadership and to the cause of international diplomacy.

What is more, the alternatives that I have heard run the gamut from unrealistic to horrifying. For example, some say that should the Senate reject this agreement, we would be in a position to negotiate a better one. But I have spoken to the Ambassadors or Deputy Chiefs of Mission of each of the five nations who helped broker the deal with us, and they all agree that this simply would not be the case. Instead, these diplomats have told me that we would not be able to come back to the bargaining table at all and that the sanction regimes would likely erode or just fall apart completely, giving Iran's leaders more money and more leverage and diminishing both our moral authority throughout the world and our own leverage. That is just the reality. And of course Iran would be able to move forward on its nuclear program, endangering our interests in the region—especially Israel—and making it far more likely that we will find ourselves engaged in a military conflict there. If Iran cheats on this agreement and we are a part of it, we will have a say in the international response. If we are not a part of this agreement, we will not.

Now, most opponents of the agreement do not seek or want war with Iran—even if opposition to the agreement makes such a war, in my opinion, more likely—but some of them do. One of my colleagues suggested that we should simply attack Iran now—an exercise he believes would be quick and painless to the United States. In fact, he compared it to Operation Desert Fox, intimating that it would be over and done with in a matter of days. But this is pure fantasy, at least according to what our security and intelligence experts tell us, and it is certainly not the lesson anyone should have learned from the disastrous invasion of Iraq.

The Middle East is an unstable, unpredictable, largely unfriendly region. We know that military undertakings in the region are likely to bring very painful, unpredictable consequences. That is partly why we should give diplomacy a chance. Yet, a number of my colleagues and others were intent on opposing such a diplomatic solution even before the agreement was reached.

In March—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. FRANKEN. I ask unanimous consent for another 2 minutes.

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

Mr. FRANKEN. Thank you, Mr. President.

In March, 47 of my Republican colleagues took the unprecedented step of sending a letter to Iran's leaders just as these sensitive negotiations were nearing an accord. It was a clear attempt to undermine American diplomacy and signaled that they would oppose any deal with Iran, no matter what the terms. So it is not surprising that these critics now oppose the finished deal, but it is disappointing that they refuse to acknowledge, let alone take responsibility for the dire consequences that would almost certainly result from killing it.

It is possible that there would not be a war if we reject the agreement, but what seems undeniable is that if we and we alone were to walk away from an agreement that we negotiated alongside our international partners, that would be a severe blow to our standing and our leadership in the world.

Diplomacy requires cooperation and compromise. You don't negotiate with your friends; you negotiate with your enemies.

Indeed, no one who is for this deal has any illusions about the Iranian regime, any more than the American Presidents who made nuclear arms agreements with the Soviet Union had illusions about the nature of the Communist regime there.

For a long time, it looked as if our only options when it came to Iran would be allowing it to have a nuclear weapon or having to bomb the country ourselves. This agreement represents a chance to break out of that no-win scenario. To take the extraordinary step of rejecting it because of clearly unrealistic expectations, because of a hunger to send Americans into another war, or, worst of all, because of petty partisanship would be a terrible mistake.

I therefore urge my colleagues to prevent this resolution of disapproval from moving forward and to vote in support of the agreement.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I support the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action that we have agreed to with our international partners and with Iran. This agreement, implemented effectively, is the best option we have to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon.

I sit on the Armed Services and Intelligence Committees. We have had numerous hearings. I have engaged with the administration. I have met with our international partners. I have studied the deal itself. I have read the commentary and analyses from all different perspectives. I have asked hard

questions. I have reached my conclusions based on the facts before us. This decision was not easy and should not be easy.

Like every Member of this body, I am committed to Israel's security. I am concerned about the alarming statements against Israel and Iran's support for terrorism. These concerns are real and valid.

Nuclear proliferation is one of the most consequential national security matters facing the world. Clearly, a nuclear Iran is unacceptable to all of us. So I would expect that any agreement to stop Iran from getting a nuclear weapon would be given serious, thoughtful consideration. Yet, there are those in this body and elsewhere who oppose even the idea of a diplomatic solution—at least one negotiated by the Obama administration. They have made clear their intention to oppose the agreement even while the negotiations were taking place.

For the first time I am aware of in U.S. history, dozens of Senators signed an open letter to a foreign government—the government of an adversary, no less—stating that any agreement reached by this administration would be undone. Before the actual ink was put to paper on the agreement, that was their message. Then, within hours of the deal's announcement, the same voices that opposed negotiations in the first place started denouncing it as a bad deal. Some claimed we could get a better deal. Others said that no deal was preferable, despite the fact that Iran was within 2 to 3 months of getting a nuclear bomb. I am fairly certain these people hadn't read the deal before they made such statements at the very outset. That is not how we should conduct foreign policy. Our national security, the security of Israel, and the stability of the Middle East are too important to turn into campaign ads or political rhetoric.

As we prepare to vote this afternoon, I would ask my colleagues to set politics aside and focus on the facts. The fact is, this agreement is the best option we have to stop Iran from getting a nuclear weapon.

First, we reached this agreement with the backing of our international partners, including China and Russia. I, along with some of my colleagues, met with Ambassadors of these countries, and I asked them point-blank: Would you come back to the table to bargain for another agreement if the United States walked away?

They said: No. There already is an agreement. It is the one that Congress should be supporting.

The Ambassador to the United States from the UK also said no.

I would remind my colleagues that after decades of U.S. unilateral sanctions against Iran, it was the weight of international sanctions that forced Iran to the table. We need our partners to make this deal work, and our partners have committed that if we choose this path, they will stand with us, they will be with us.

Second, the terms of this agreement, implemented effectively, cut off Iran's ability to create a bomb. Their uranium stockpiles will be all but eliminated. We will have unprecedented oversight over the entire nuclear supply chain.

The U.S. intelligence community has indicated that it will gain valuable new insights through this agreement. Indeed, with the information that can be garnered through this agreement, our intelligence community will be able to provide information that will enable us to make sure Iran stands up and abides by the provisions of this deal.

We will have veto authority of what goes into Iran and we will know what comes out of Iran.

These unprecedented oversight provisions have the support of arms control experts, nuclear scientists, diplomats, and military and intelligence leaders, all of whom believe this deal will make the difference.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Ms. HIRONO. I ask unanimous consent for 1 more minute.

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

Ms. HIRONO. Finally, this agreement isn't about trust. The deal requires verification that Iran is cooperating before sanctions can be lifted. If Iran cheats, we can snap back sanctions with international support. We can initiate military operations if we need to. Let me repeat. The deal before us does not prevent the United States from taking military action if needed.

This agreement is not perfect; however, rejecting this deal means risking our international cooperation, our security, and our ability to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon.

Based on the facts before us, this agreement deserves our support. Let's put politics aside. I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing the resolution before us today. I urge my colleagues to support the agreement.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, for more than half a century, the United States has led global efforts to stop the spread of nuclear weapons. Since the 1970s, the international community has set rules and procedures to prevent these weapons from spreading, particularly to unstable regions plagued by international and civil war.

Today, the world faces precisely this challenge in Iran. A nuclear weapon in the hands of Iran is a very real and dangerous threat not only to Israel and the entire Middle East but to all of humanity.

We are in unanimous agreement that Iran must never become a nuclear weapons state. Iran has given us good reason to be skeptical of its intentions. It has misled the world about its nuclear program, is a state sponsor of terrorism, and is a destabilizing force in the Middle East. With nuclear weapons,

the threat posed by Iran would increase exponentially. Because of these factors, we cannot ever trust Iran or ever give it a free pass on its destabilizing activity in the region and around the globe. As we speak today, Iran has the capability to develop a nuclear weapon within 3 months. With the Iran nuclear agreement, that will no longer be possible.

I believe that our negotiators achieved as much as possible and that if the agreement they negotiated is strictly implemented, it can do the job. On the other hand, if we walk away now, our diplomatic coalition will likely fall apart and the prospects for any renewed efforts would not be promising.

Together with many other Senators, I met with the Ambassadors of the five countries that joined in the effort to reach this agreement—Great Britain, France, Germany, China, and Russia. Their message was unified and crystal clear: If the United States walks away right now, we will be on our own and they will not come back to the table.

I acknowledge that the agreement carries risks, but, as recently stated in a letter signed by 29 leading American nuclear scientists, including six Nobel laureates, this agreement contains "more stringent constraints than any previous negotiated nonproliferation framework."

The agreement puts strict limits on Iran's nuclear program for the next 15 years. It reduces Iran's existing nuclear program to a fraction of its current size. It virtually eliminates Iran's plutonium capabilities and reduces its uranium capability by two-thirds. It pushes back the time required before Iran would be capable of building a nuclear bomb from 3 months to more than 1 year.

As I said earlier, this agreement is not based on trust. It imposes the most invasive, stringent, and technologically innovative verification regime ever negotiated. The agreement empowers inspectors to use the most advanced and intrusive methods to monitor Iran's compliance. This verification system will provide an unprecedented amount of reliable information and insight into Iran's nuclear program, ensuring that if Iran ever tries to develop a nuclear weapon, we will find out about it in time to stop them.

After 15 years, under both this agreement and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Iran will remain bound never to seek nuclear weapons. In paragraph 3 of the agreement, Iran categorically makes the following binding obligation: "Under no circumstances will Iran ever seek, develop or acquire any nuclear weapons."

Under the agreement, Iran will be required to give the IAEA detailed plans for how it intends to develop nuclear technology for peaceful use. It will remain forever subject to IAEA inspection to verify that it never seeks nuclear weapons or engages in any nuclear weapons-related activities. If the

IAEA ever finds anything suspicious—not just in 10 or 15 or 25 or 40 years but forever—then it will be the IAEA's duty to promptly report its suspicions to the world. The IAEA's ability to verify Iran's compliance is the key to this agreement.

It will be critical to provide international inspectors with the support they require to detect, investigate, and respond to any suspicious nuclear activity before Iran has time to cover up the evidence.

With our support, the IAEA can and must aggressively investigate any indication of Iranian nuclear weapons activities and report promptly and unequivocally if Iran cheats. Likewise, we must be prepared to react at any time if the IAEA sounds the alarm.

I supported the tough sanctions that brought Iran to the negotiating table in the first place. There are mechanisms in this agreement to snap back sanctions quickly and prevent a Chinese or Russian veto.

Even without nuclear weapons, Iran poses very real risks, particularly to Israel, our closest friend in the region, and to our partners in the Arabian Peninsula. The administration has assured us that it is working closely with regional partners to enhance their security. Congress must be an active, insistent, and bipartisan partner in this effort, both with this President and his successors.

We must increase our security assistance to Israel to unprecedented levels. I have always been a strong supporter of Israel. When Saddam Hussein was developing nuclear weapons in 1981, I supported Israel's decision to bomb the Osirak reactor. When Israel needed more funding for a missile defense system in 2010, I voted to accelerate the development of the Iron Dome system. When Hamas attacked Israel in 2012, I supported its right to self-defense. We must continue to ensure Israel's qualitative military edge in the region and promptly finalize our new 10-year memorandum of understanding to cement our security assistance commitments. Likewise, we must strengthen our relationships with all of our regional partners. The countries of the Arabian Peninsula require our assistance to counter threats from Iran.

Our cooperation in ballistic missile defense and countering violent extremists through intelligence sharing and interdiction must continue and be enhanced. Over the past 2 months, I have consulted with many stakeholders, groups, advocates, and concerned constituents on both sides of this debate. Without exception, their passion is born of an unwavering desire to secure a lasting peace for the Middle East, Israel, the United States, and the world. This is a passion I share.

The world has come together in a historic way. With the agreement, we gain much, but most importantly, we avoid missing the significant diplomatic opportunity to ensure that Iran never emerges as a nuclear weapons state.

With this agreement, we will maintain the international solidarity that will enable us to reimpose sanctions if Iran ever does try to get a nuclear weapon. We will keep and continue to improve all of our capabilities required to prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear weapons state, including a military option.

I thank Secretary Kerry, Secretary Moniz, and the entire U.S. negotiating team for their tireless efforts and service to our country in helping reach this agreement. I also thank President Obama for his leadership and commitment to diplomacy.

I urge the Senate to come together to support this diplomatic effort to prevent Iran from ever getting a nuclear weapon—not just this month or this year but forever. We must be ever-vigilant to ensure that every part of this agreement is verified.

I yield the floor.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, Congress presently has the heavy responsibility to conduct a thorough and rigorous review of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran. After numerous briefings from officials involved in the negotiations, consultation with scientific and diplomatic experts, meetings with Rhode Islanders, and a great deal of personal reflection, I have decided to support the plan. I do so because it blocks the pathways through which Iran could pursue a nuclear weapon, establishes unprecedented inspections of Iran's nuclear facilities and other sites of concern to the international community, and preserves our ability to respond militarily if necessary. The agreement also ensures the international sanctions regime against Iran can snap back into place if the Iranian Government reneges on its commitments.

This agreement, reached by the United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany, China, Russia, and Iran, establishes strict and comprehensive monitoring by the International Atomic Energy Agency to verify compliance and prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. The agreement does not take any options off the table for President Obama, or for future Presidents. It ensures no sanctions relief will be provided unless the Iranian Government undertakes a series of significant steps to satisfy IAEA requirements.

This agreement is the product of a joint effort among six sovereign countries, which working together have more force and effect than separated. I am encouraged that the other countries party to this agreement have committed to enforce this agreement and to ramp up enforcement of other international agreements against Iran's terror activities. I have also heard their warnings that if we walk away from this agreement before even giving it a try, the prospect of further multilateral negotiations yielding any better result is "far-fetched." Joining with other world powers in this impor-

tant effort bears a price in the United States' ability to negotiate unilaterally. That should be a surprise to no one. Critics of this agreement fail to acknowledge the leverage and strength behind a unified, international effort to block Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, and no one has offered a credible alternative that would lead to a nuclear weapons-free Iran.

This hard-fought bargain is the product of the canny determination of Secretary of State John Kerry, Energy Secretary and nuclear physicist Ernest Moniz, and Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Wendy Sherman, and of many months of hard work on the part of many dedicated American officials. It is also a testament to President Obama's steadfast resolve to reach a diplomatic solution to one of the most pressing security challenges of our time.

As more than 100 former American Ambassadors emphasized in their letter to the President endorsing the agreement, "the most effective way to protect U.S. national security, and that of our allies and friends, is to ensure that tough-minded diplomacy has a chance to succeed before considering other more costly and risky alternatives."

This agreement is also supported by more than two dozen leading American scientists, who found the deal to be "technically sound, stringent, and innovative" in its restrictions on Iran's nuclear capabilities and its monitoring and verification of Iran's compliance with the agreement.

By eliminating Iran's ability to gain a nuclear weapons capability for at least a decade, the deal allows the United States and the international community to focus needed energy and resources on other critical challenges Iran poses to the region, such as its support for Hezbollah and Syrian President Bashar Assad, as well as its human rights abuses.

Bilateral cooperation between the United States and Israel will be as important as ever as we go forward. This should include tangible demonstrations of support for Israel through deepened military and intelligence cooperation. President Obama has already declared his intention to provide "unprecedented" levels of military financing and equipment to Israel, on top of the record support already in place.

As former Israeli Deputy National Security Advisor Chuck Freilich has said, "The agreement, a painful compromise, not the one the U.S. or anyone else wanted, but the one it was able to negotiate, serves Israel's security." This conclusion is echoed in the words of officials from our Gulf Cooperation Council partners, like Qatar's Foreign Minister Khalid al-Attiyah, who said "This was the best option among other options," and "we are confident that what they [the negotiators] undertook makes this region safer and more stable."

I appreciate the thoughtful input of the many Rhode Islanders with whom I

met and who have reached out to me with opinions on both sides of this issue. It is, of course, a hallmark of our great democracy that we can openly and civilly debate these important questions. So too, I believe that through international engagement we can encourage a freer and more liberal society to emerge from the grip of the ayatollahs. That, with strong multilateral efforts to contain Iran's continuing mischief in the surrounding Middle East, provides the prospect of this becoming an historic turning point.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HOEVEN). The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I have been watching this debate as carefully as I possibly can. I think it has been very thoughtful. I think it is interesting that Members of this body have read the same agreement and come to different conclusions. It is not surprising. There are a lot of complications in this. Nobody can really know exactly how everything is going to turn out. So it does not surprise me that people have come to different conclusions.

I also agree with the Members of this body when they say this is probably one of the most important votes they will ever take. We are talking about a nuclear Iran and how we can potentially prevent that. That, obviously, would be a threat to world peace.

I know that sitting back in Oshkosh, WI, well before I ever became a Senator, I heard Members of parties declare definitively: We cannot allow Iran to obtain a nuclear weapon. Well, the sad fact is, I think this agreement puts it on a path to obtaining that weapon.

I also agree with President Obama in his speech really chastising those of us who don't agree with him when he says this is a pretty simple decision. I think it is a pretty simple decision. I just come at it from a totally different perspective and obviously draw a completely different conclusion from that.

Let me read a couple quotes that have been brought forth by Members of this body during this debate.

First:

Most importantly, this agreement cannot be based on hope or trust. History belies both in our experience with Iran. This deal is not the agreement I have long sought.

Another Senator:

We are legitimizing a vast and expanding nuclear program in Iran. We are, in effect, rewarding years of deception, deceit, and wanton disregard for international law.

Another Senator:

This agreement with the duplicitous and untrustworthy Iranian regime falls short of what I had envisioned.

Yet another:

This deal is not perfect and no one trusts Iran.

In my 4½ years in the Senate, I have been trying to find those areas of agreement. I agree with those comments. But what is kind of surprising about all of those quotes, these are

quotes from individual Senators—I won't name them—Senators who are going to vote to approve this awful deal. I think something else we can all agree on is that Iran is our enemy.

Let me read a couple other quotes.

Early this year, after his congregation broke out with a death to America chant, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei said: Yes, of course. Yes, death to America, because America is the original source of this pressure. Death to America. Death to America.

Then only 2 days ago the Supreme Leader said: I say that you Israelis will not see the coming 25 years. And, God willing, there will not be something named the Zionist regime in the next 25 years.

So I agree that we cannot trust Iran. We cannot trust the Supreme Leader. I agree that Iran is our enemy. So my decision to vote for disapproval of this deal rests on a very simple premise: Why in the world would we ever enter a deal that will give tens of billions and eventually hundreds of billions of dollars to our enemy, our avowed enemy—an enemy that I have to remind this body was responsible, because of their IEDs, for the killing of 196 troops in Iraq and many more wounded and maimed, a regime that back in the late 1970s took 52 U.S. hostages for 444 days? That regime has not changed its behavior in all these intervening years. They are our enemy. Again, let me point out, why in the world would we ever agree to a deal that will strengthen our enemy's economy and our enemy's military? It seems pretty obvious. I agree with President Obama. This is a simple decision. But I disagree. He thinks it is a good deal. I think it is a very bad deal.

In my remaining time—I want to be respectful of my colleagues—I do want to talk about what this debate and what this vote is actually about. This is not a straight up-or-down vote to approve an international agreement that would be deemed a treaty. This body gave up our ability to deem this a treaty and provide advice and consent when we voted on my amendment to deem it a treaty.

President Obama, on his own authority, his article II powers, said: No, something this important, this consequential is not a treaty, it is an Executive agreement, and I can go it alone. And he basically did until the Senators from Tennessee and Maryland came together and recognized the fact that a key part of this deal is the waiver or lifting of the congressionally imposed sanctions that we put in place—against the President's objection, by the way—in 2012. What this debate is all about is whether President Obama can retain that waiver authority.

Regardless of how this turns out, President Obama, again, has negotiated this deal. He has run to the United Nations Security Council and gotten them to agree to it. The process will be put in place to lift those sanctions from the United Nations that, by

the way, were put in place in resolutions that would have required the suspension or halting of the uranium enrichment capability, which is not part of this deal, unfortunately.

So it is extremely important for the American people to understand that we are not debating and we are not going to be voting on the actual deal itself. We are going to be voting on something that has pretty weak involvement, pretty minor involvement, because President Obama has pretty well blocked us, blocked the American people from having a voice on a deal which is so important, so consequential, and which I believe is going to be so damaging to America's long-term interest, a deal which I believe really will put Iran on a path to obtaining a nuclear weapon. We are going to be lifting the arms embargo. We are already lifting the embargo on ballistic missile technology. And let me reiterate that we are going to be injecting tens of billions and eventually hundreds of billions of dollars to strengthen the economy and the military of our avowed enemy.

It is a simple decision for me, which is why I will vote to disapprove this very bad deal.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Wisconsin for his comments.

I rise today in opposition to this agreement. I do so because I believe it is bad for our country and bad for the world.

There are very few votes we take here in the Senate that have such a profound effect on our national security and the kind of world our kids and our grandkids are going to inherit as this upcoming vote we will take next week on this nuclear deal.

Over the past couple of months, I have taken the time to read the agreement carefully. I have attended the classified briefings. I have listened to my colleagues. I have talked to a lot of experts on both sides of the issue. I did take my time in coming to a decision because I was hopeful that we would be able to have an agreement that I could support and others could as well.

I have also listened to my constituents back home in Ohio. They have looked at this agreement too. They understand what is at stake. They have strong views on it. My calls and letters and emails are overwhelmingly opposed.

Through the process, what I did was I measured the agreement not based on just some abstract concept I might have, I actually based it on the actual objectives and criteria that were set out by the international community, the United Nations, and the United States of America, our government. I looked at it based on the redlines we had drawn. One of my great concerns about this agreement is that those redlines have not been honored. The broad

goal, of course, the biggest redline is that Congress, the Obama administration, the United Nations Security Council—everyone was very clear: Iran must stop and dismantle its nuclear weapons program. That is the most basic redline.

You have to remember that when Congress on a bipartisan basis enacted these crippling sanctions on Iran, it was not just to bring Iran to the table, which was the result, it was actually to get them to abandon their nuclear weapons program. That was the point.

I supported tougher sanctions to give leverage to the Obama administration even though, seriously, they did not want that leverage. They resisted Congress increasing those sanctions. In fact, they initially opposed any role for Congress in reviewing the agreement.

The Senator from Tennessee is here, the chairman of the committee, and he will tell you they are somehow reluctant even for Congress to have a role here, even to help them to be able to negotiate a better agreement. That was probably an indication of where we were going.

Despite that resistance, serious sanctions were enacted and Iran did come to the table. I had hoped then that with firm U.S. leadership—leading from the front, not from behind—we would be able to bring the international community along to ensure that we did meet the criteria I talked about earlier, longstanding, U.S.-international criteria. Unfortunately, after reviewing the terms of this agreement, it is explicitly clear that these redlines, these objectives, the criteria we have set out, have not been met.

We now have an obligation to reject this deal and begin to restore the consensus, both at home and abroad, that the Iranian Government must be isolated economically and diplomatically until it agrees to the longstanding terms on which the United States and the international community have long insisted. Some will say that is fine, but that is impossible. I respectfully disagree.

I respectfully quote President Obama, who has said repeatedly that no agreement is better than a bad agreement; meaning keeping the sanctions in place is better than a bad agreement. I believe that is where we are. This is a bad agreement.

Among the many serious flaws of this deal is the fact that Iran can continue research and development on more advanced centrifuges and can resume enrichment in 15 years, providing, at best, only temporary relief. Inspections, one of the most important safeguards we have, are not anywhere, anytime, as was talked about by the administration. Under this deal, Iran can delay the inspection of suspected nuclear sites for up to 24 days—and there is even a process to get to those 24 days. If the Iranians cheat, as they have in the past, we would have to employ a convoluted process to convince the international community to re-

store sanctions, a process I don't think we can rely on.

It is also important to note that other than reimposition of sanctions, the agreement does not specify any clear mechanism to enforce outcomes of the dispute resolution process, nor does it identify penalties for failure to comply. This means that the only realistic preagreed punishment for any violation—no matter how big or how small—is full reimposition of sanctions.

In a way, as I look at this, this is like having the death penalty as the only punishment for all crimes. I don't think that is realistic. I don't think you are going to get the international community to go along with that. That is why I worry about the compliance and the sanctions.

Given that only a full-blown Iranian violation would likely convince enough countries to reimpose all sanctions, I don't think the agreement provides the concrete tools to address less overt but still subversive forms of Iranian cheating that are designed to test international resolve and establish a new baseline for acceptable behavior. By the way, based on past behavior, this is likely.

In addition, of course, the inspections regime is subject to side deals between the United Nations, the International Atomic Agency, and Iran that none of us are allowed to see. This is contrary, by the way, to the Iran review act that was passed by Congress and was signed into law by the President of the United States. The language of that legislation is pretty clear. It requires the law to transmit to Congress “the agreement as defined in subsection (h)(1) including all related materials and annexes.”

Then, when it talks about what that means it means, it says “including annexes, appendices, codicils, side agreements, implementing materials, documents, guidance, technical or other understandings,” and so on and so forth. It is all here. That is in the agreement that we had with the President of the United States because it was part of the review act that he signed into law.

Based on recent press reporting, of course we are also hearing that Iran will be allowed to self-inspect, use its own inspectors and equipment to report on possible military dimensions of past suspected nuclear activity at one of its most secretive and important military facilities at Parchin.

Allowing a country accused of hiding a secret and illegal nuclear weapons program to implement verification measures for a facility where this program is believed to have been hidden certainly undermines the President's claim that the Iran deal “is not built on trust, it is built on verification.”

Perhaps, most troubling is that this agreement ends Iran's international isolation without ending the behavior that caused Iran to be isolated in the first place.

As the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism, based on our own State

Department analysis, Iran's nuclear program is just one part of a broader strategy that is dangerous and destabilizing. According to some estimates, of course, Iran will receive up to \$150 billion in sanctions relief early in the agreement—by the way, with or without sustained compliance—which will encourage the Iranians to cause trouble, to further support terrorist groups they sponsor.

National Security Advisor Susan Rice acknowledged something that I think is pretty plain. She said:

Iran is sending money to these groups now while they're under sanctions and they'll have more money to do it when sanctions are relieved.

Within 5 years, the agreement lifts the embargo on conventional weapons and lifts the ballistic missile embargo within 8 years—a last-minute concession to Iran in the rush by the administration to get to yes. At a minimum, this deal will ensure that Iran remains a threshold nuclear power but with a new set of tools and more resources to hurt our interests and those of our allies in the region, including Israel.

I believe it is clear that the deal, as currently written, will set up a conventional arms race in the Middle East. The President says the alternative to this deal is war. In fact, a Middle East bristling with arms will increase the risks of war—increase the risks of war because of this deal.

I have been involved in international negotiations. As U.S. Trade Representative, I understand they can be tough. I know both sides have to make concessions, but I also know that does not mean the United States of America concedes on fundamental principles, on the redlines. We have to have the courage to stand behind our legitimate public pronouncements, whether it is with the use of chemical weapons by the Assad regime in Syria, whether it is the violation of both Minsk cease-fire agreements by the Russians and their proxies in eastern Ukraine or our commitment that Iran must stop and dismantle its march toward nuclear weapons. These are all things you negotiate. These are all things you have to be firm on and tough on. It is not easy, but as Americans that is what we do.

There was a speech written that was never given, that was meant to be given on November 23, 1963. It was the day John F. Kennedy was assassinated. He said in that speech about America's role: Our generation, our Nation, by destiny—rather than choice—are the watch guards on the walls of world freedom.

That is who we are. We have to be tough in these negotiations and stand tall. Other countries look to us to be tall, to help build the consensus. That is what we had to do, and I believe we did not do in this what I am sure was a very difficult negotiation.

We have to honor our redlines. If we expect them to be effective in promoting peace and stability, we must lead. In particular, we have to say

what we mean and mean what we say if we are going to stop nuclear proliferation. The way this agreement developed I think will encourage other countries who are interested in pursuing nuclear weapons to say: I don't care what the U.N. says. I don't care what the United States says. What I see here is everything is negotiable. That is the message, I am afraid, this agreement will send.

The administration's position is that the only alternative to this agreement is war. That is what they are saying. As noted, if anything, I think this agreement will further destabilize an already turbulent region, but there is an alternative. The alternative to this bad deal is a better deal. Supporters of this agreement have compared this agreement to Ronald Reagan's arms control negotiations with the Soviets.

I want to just touch on that for a moment because I have heard a lot of that on the floor. I take a very different lesson from that analogy to Ronald Reagan. President Reagan succeeded by raising the pressure, not reducing it. He increased the cost of bad behavior until that behavior changed. He didn't strike a deal unless it fulfilled the core goals he had laid out, his redlines. He didn't want a deal for a deal's sake, and he was patient. At the Reykjavik summit in 1986, Ronald Reagan walked away from what would have been a major nuclear disarmament treaty with the Soviets because he felt the costs to U.S. national security were too high. He was criticized for walking away, but he kept trying. He held firm, and 1 year later he successfully concluded negotiations on the intermediate nuclear forces treaty.

This body must not sign off on an agreement that fails to honor our redlines, that strengthens Iran's destabilizing influence in the region, and does nothing to address the behavior that threatens our allies and our legitimate national security interests in this country.

We should reject this agreement with Iran and tighten those sanctions on a bipartisan basis. The President should then use the leverage that only America possesses to negotiate an international agreement that does meet the longstanding goals of the United Nations, of the international community, of the United States of America, of this Congress, and of the President himself.

We can't afford to get this one wrong, folks. We owe it to our children and grandchildren to get this right. As I noted in the beginning of my remarks, this is about what kind of a world they are going to inherit.

I urge my colleagues in the Senate to join me in rejecting the deal and pursuing a better way.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, for 23 years as a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the Senate

Foreign Relations Committee, I have had the privilege of dealing with major foreign policy and national security issues.

Many of those have been of a momentous nature. This is one of those moments.

I come to the issue of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran as someone who has followed Iran's nuclear ambition for the better part of two decades.

Unlike President Obama's characterization of those who have raised serious questions about the agreement or who have opposed it, I did not vote for the war in Iraq, I opposed it—unlike the Vice President and the Secretary of State who both supported it. My vote against the Iraq war was unpopular at the time, but it was one of the best decisions I have ever made. I have not hesitated to diplomatically negotiate with our adversaries or enemies, as is evidenced, for example, by my vote for the New START treaty with Russia.

I also don't come to the question as someone—unlike some of my Republican colleagues—who reflexively opposes everything the President proposes.

In fact, I have supported President Obama—according to Congressional Quarterly—98 percent of the time in 2013 and 2014. On key policies—ranging from voting for the Affordable Care Act to Wall Street reform, to supporting the President's Supreme Court nominees, defending the administration's actions in the Benghazi tragedy, shepherding within 1 vote for the authorization for use of military force to stop President Assad's use of chemical weapons when I was chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, to so much more—I have been a reliable supporter of the President, but my support is not and has not been driven by party loyalty but rather by principled agreement, not political expediency. When I have disagreed, it is based on principled disagreement.

The issue before the Senate now is whether to vote to approve or disapprove the agreement struck by the President and our P5+1 partners with Iran. This is one of the most serious national security, nuclear nonproliferation arms control issues of our time. It is not an issue of supporting or opposing the President. This issue is much greater and graver than that, and it deserves a vote.

With this agreement, I believe we have now abandoned our long-held policy of preventing nuclear proliferation, and we are now embarked not upon preventing it but on managing it or containing it, which leaves us with a far less desirable, less secure, and less certain world order.

So I am deeply concerned that this is a significant shift in our nonproliferation policy and about what it will mean in terms of a potential arms race in an already dangerous region.

Why does Iran, which has the world's fourth largest proven oil reserves, with

157 billion barrels of crude oil, and the world's second largest proven natural gas reserves, with 1,193 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, need nuclear power for domestic energy?

We know that despite the fact that Iran claims their nuclear program is for peaceful purposes, they have violated the international will, as expressed by various U.N. Security Council resolutions, and by deceit, deception, and delay advanced their program to the point of being a threshold nuclear State.

It is because of these facts and the fact that the world believes Iran was weaponizing its nuclear program at the Parchin military base—as well as developing a covert uranium enrichment facility in Fordow, built deep inside a mountain, raising serious doubts about the peaceful nature of their civilian program—and their sponsorship of state terrorism that the world united against Iran's nuclear program.

So in that context let's remind ourselves of the stated purpose of our negotiations with Iran. Simply put, it was to dismantle significant parts of Iran's illicit nuclear infrastructure to ensure that it would not have nuclear weapons capability at any time. We said we would accommodate Iran's practical national needs but not leave the region and the world facing the threat of a nuclear-armed Iran at a time of its choosing. In essence, we thought the agreement would be roll-back for rollback. You roll back your infrastructure, we roll back our sanctions. At the end of the day, what we appear to have is a roll back of sanctions and Iran only limiting its capability but not dismantling it or rolling back.

What did we get? We get an alarm bell should they decide to violate their commitments and a system for inspections to verify their compliance. That, in my view, is a far cry from dismantling.

Now, while I have many specific concerns about the agreement, my overarching concern is that it requires no dismantling of Iran's nuclear infrastructure and only mothballs that infrastructure for 10 years. Not even one centrifuge will be destroyed under this agreement. Fordow will be repurposed, Arak redesigned. The fact is everyone needs to understand what this agreement does and does not do so they can determine whether providing Iran permanent relief in exchange for short-term promises is a fair trade.

This deal does not require Iran to destroy or fully decommission a single uranium enrichment centrifuge. In fact, over half of Iran's currently operating centrifuges will continue to spin at its Natanz facility. The remainder, including more than 5,000 operating centrifuges and 10,000 not yet functioning, will merely be disconnected and transferred to another hall at Natanz, where they could be quickly reinstalled to enrich uranium.

Yet we, along with our allies, have agreed to lift the sanctions and allow

billions of dollars to flow back into Iran's economy. We lift sanctions, but even during the first 10 years of the agreement Iran will be allowed to continue R&D activity on a range of centrifuges, allowing them to improve their effectiveness over the course of the agreement.

Clearly, the question is: What did we get from this agreement in terms of what we originally sought? We lift sanctions, and at year 8 Iran can actually start manufacturing and testing advanced IR-6 and IR-8 centrifuges that enrich up to 15 times the speed of its current models. At year 15, Iran can start enriching uranium beyond 3.67 percent, the level at which we become concerned about fissile material for a bomb. At year 15, Iran will have no limits on its uranium stockpile.

This deal grants Iran permanent sanctions relief in exchange for only temporary—temporary—limitations on its nuclear program. Not a rolling back, not dismantlement, but temporary limits. In fact, at year 10, the U.N. Security Council resolution will disappear, along with the dispute resolution mechanism needed to snap back U.N. sanctions and the 24-day mandatory access provision for suspicious sites in Iran.

The deal enshrines for Iran and, in fact, commits the international community to assisting Iran in developing an industrial-scale nuclear program, complete with industrial-scale enrichment.

Now, while I understand this program will be subject to Iran's obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, I think it fails to appreciate Iran's history of deception in its nuclear program and its violations of the NPT. It will, in the long run, if we believe there is a violation, make it much harder to demonstrate that Iran's program is not in fact being used for peaceful purposes because Iran will have legitimate reasons to have advanced centrifuges and a robust enrichment program. We will then have to demonstrate its intention is dual use and not justified by its industrial nuclear power program.

Within about a year of Iran meeting its initial obligations, Iran will receive sanctions relief to the tune of \$100 billion to \$150 billion, not just in the release of frozen assets that don't amount to that amount, but also in renewed oil sales of another million barrels a day as well as relief from sectoral sanctions in the petrochemical, shipbuilding, shipping, port sectors, gold and other precious metals, and software and automotive sectors.

Iran will also benefit from the removal of designated entities, including major banks, shipping companies, oil and gas firms from the U.S. Treasury list of sanctioned entities. "Of the nearly 650 entities that have been designated by the U.S. Treasury for their role in Iran's nuclear and missile program or for being controlled by the government of Iran, more than 67 per-

cent will be delisted within 6 to 12 months," according to testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

For Iran, all this relief comes likely within a year, even though its obligations stretch out for a decade or more. Considering the fact it was President Rouhani who, after conducting its fiscal audit after his election, likely convinced the Ayatollah that Iran's regime could not sustain itself under the sanctions and knew that only a negotiated agreement would get Iran the relief it critically needed to sustain the regime and the revolution, the negotiating leverage was and still is greatly on our side.

However, the JCPOA, in paragraph 26 of the sanctions heading of the agreement, says, "The U.S. Administration, acting consistently with the respective roles of the President and the Congress, will refrain from reintroducing or reimposing sanctions specified in Annex II, that it has ceased applying under this JCPOA."

I repeat: The United States will have to refrain from reintroducing or reimposing the Iran sanctions act that we passed unanimously, which expires next year and was critical in bringing Iran to the table in the first place.

In two hearings I asked Treasury Secretary Lew and Under Secretary of State Wendy Sherman whether the United States has the right to reauthorize sanctions to have something to snap back to, and neither would answer the question, saying only it was too early to discuss reauthorization.

But I did get my answer from the Iranian Ambassador to the United Nations who, in a letter dated July 25 of this year, said:

It is clearly spelled out in the JCPOA that both the European Union and the United States will refrain from reintroducing or reimposing the sanctions and restrictive measures lifted under the JCPOA. It is understood that the reintroduction or reimposition, including through extension of the sanctions and restrictive measures will constitute significant nonperformance which would relieve Iran from its commitments in part or in whole.

The administration cannot argue sanctions policy both ways. Either they were effective in getting Iran to the negotiating table or they were not. Sanctions are either a deterrent to breakout or a violation of the agreement or they are not. Frankly, in my view, the overall sanctions relief being provided, given the Iranians' understanding of restrictions on the reauthorization of sanctions, along with the lifting of the arms and missile embargo well before Iranian compliance over years is established, leaves us in a weaker position and, to me, is unacceptable.

If anything is a fantasy, it is the belief that snapback without congressionally mandated sanctions, with EU sanctions gone and companies from around the world doing permissible business in Iran, will have any real effect. As the largest state sponsor of

terrorism, Iran—which has exported its revolution to Assad in Syria, the Houthis in Yemen, Hezbollah in Lebanon, directed and supported attacks against American troops in Iraq—will be flush with money not only to invest in their domestic economy but to further pursue their destabilizing hegemonic goals in the region.

If Iran can afford to destabilize the region with an economy staggering under sanctions and rocked by falling oil prices, what will Iran and the Quds Force do when they have a cash infusion of more than 20 percent of their GDP—the equivalent of an infusion of \$3.4 trillion into our economy?

And if there is a fear of war in the region, it will be one fueled by Iran and its proxies, exacerbated by an agreement that allows Iran to possess an industrial-sized nuclear program and enough money in sanctions relief to significantly continue to fund its hegemonic intentions throughout the region.

This brings me to another major concern with the JCPOA, namely the issue of Iran coming clean about the possible military dimension of its program. For well over a decade, the world has been concerned about the secret weaponization efforts conducted at the military base called Parchin. The goal we in the international community have long sought is to know what Iran accomplished at Parchin, not necessarily to get Iran to declare culpability but to determine how far along they were in their nuclear weaponization program so that we know what signatures to look for in the future.

David Albright, a physicist and former nuclear weapons inspector and founder of the Institute for Science and International Security, has said, "Addressing the IAEA's concerns about the military dimensions of Iran's nuclear programs is fundamental to any long-term agreement . . . an agreement that sidesteps the military issue would risk being unverifiable."

The reason he says an agreement that sidesteps the military issues would be unverifiable is because it makes a difference if you are 90 percent down the road in your weaponization efforts or only 10 percent advanced. How far advanced Iran's weaponizing abilities are has a significant impact on what Iran's breakout time to an actual deliverable weapon will be.

The list of scientists the P5+1 wanted the IAEA to interview were rejected outright by Iran. After waiting over 10 years to inspect Parchin, they are now given 3 months to do all of their review and analysis before they must deliver a report in December of this year.

How the inspections and soil and other samples are to be collected are outlined in two secret agreements the U.S. Congress is not privy to. The answer as to why we cannot see those documents is because they have a confidentiality agreement between the

IAEA and Iran which, they say, is customary, but this issue is anything but customary.

Let me quote from an AP story of August 14:

They say the agency will be able to report in December. But that assessment is unlikely to be unequivocal because chances are slim that Iran will present all the evidence the agency wants, or give it the total freedom of movement it needs to follow up the allegations. Still, the report is expected to be approved by the IAEA's board, which includes the United States and other powerful nations that negotiated the July 14 agreement. They do not want to upend their July 14 deal, and will see the December report as closing the books on the issue.

It would seem to me what we are doing is sweeping this critical issue under the rug.

Our willingness to accept this process in Parchin is only exacerbated by the inability to achieve anytime, anywhere inspections, which the administration always held out as one of those essential elements we would insist on and could rely on in any deal. Instead, we have a dispute resolution mechanism that shifts the burden of proof to the United States and its partners to provide sensitive intelligence, possibly revealing our sources and methods by which we collected the information, and allow the Iranians to delay access for nearly a month—a delay that would allow them to remove evidence of a violation, particularly when it comes to centrifuge research and development and weaponization efforts that can be easily hidden and would leave little or no signatures.

The administration suggests that other than Iraq, no country was subjected to anytime, anywhere inspections. But Iran's defiance of the world's position, as recognized in a series of U.N. Security Council resolutions, does not make it any other country. It is their violations of the NPT and the Security Council resolutions that created the necessity for a unique regime and for anytime, anywhere inspections. The willingness to accept these limitations are a dangerous bellwether of our willingness to enforce violations of the agreement as we move forward.

If what President Obama said in his NPR interview of April 7, 2015—"a more relevant fear would be that in year 13, 14, 15 they have advanced centrifuges that enrich uranium fairly rapidly, and at that point breakout times would have shrunk almost down to zero"—is true, it seems to me, in essence, this deal, at best, does nothing more than that kick today's problem down the road for 10 to 15 years. At the same time it undermines the arguments and evidence of suspected violations we will need because of the dual-use nature of their program to convince the Security Council and the international community to take action.

It is erroneous to say this agreement permanently stops Iran from having a nuclear bomb. Let us be clear. What the agreement does is to recommit Iran

not to pursue a nuclear bomb—a promise they have already violated in the past. It recommits them to the NPT treaty—an agreement they have already violated in the past. It commits them to a new Security Council resolution outlining their obligations, but they have violated those in the past as well.

So the suggestion of permanence in this case is only possible for so long as Iran complies and performs according to the agreement because the bottom line is, this agreement leaves Iran with the core elements of its robust nuclear infrastructure.

The fact is, success is not a question of Iran's conforming and performing according to the agreement. If that was all that was needed, if Iran had abided by its commitments all along, we wouldn't be faced with this challenge now. The test of success must be, if Iran violates the agreement and attempts to break out, how well will we be positioned to deal with Iran at that point?

Trying to reassemble the sanctions regime, including the time to give countries and companies notice of sanctionable activity, which had been permissible up to then, would take up most of the breakout time, assuming we could even get compliance after significant national and private investments had taken place. That, indeed, would be a fantasy. It would likely leave the next President, upon an Iranian decision to break out, with one of two choices: Accept Iran as a nuclear weapons state or take military action. Neither is desired, especially when Iran will be stronger, economically resurgent, a more consequential actor in the region, and with greater defensive capabilities, such as the S-300 missile defense system being sold to them by Russia.

So the suggestion of permanency in stopping Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon depends on performance. Based on the long history of Iran's broken promises, defiance, and violations, that is hopeful. Significant dismantlement, however, would establish performance up front, and therefore the threat of the capability to develop a nuclear weapon would truly be permanent, and any attempt to rebuild that infrastructure would give the world far more than 1 year's time.

The President and Secretary Kerry have repeatedly said the choice is between this agreement or war. I reject that proposition, as have most witnesses—including past and present administration members involved in this issue—who have testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and who support the deal but reject the binary choice between the agreement or war. If the P5 had not actually achieved an agreement with Iran, would we be at war with Iran today? I don't believe so.

I believe we can still get a better deal, and here is how: We can disapprove this agreement without reject-

ing the entire agreement. We should direct the administration to renegotiate by authorizing the continuation of negotiations and the joint plan of action—including Iran's \$700 million-a-month lifeline, which to date has accrued to Iran's benefit to the tune of \$10 billion—and pausing further reductions of purchases of Iranian oil and other sanctions pursuant to the original JPOA. Iran will continue to want such relief as well as avoid a possible military attack, so they are incentivized to come back to the negotiating table.

We can provide specific parameters for the administration to guide their continued negotiations and ensure that a new agreement does not run afoul of Congress. A continuation of talks would allow the reconsideration of just a few but a critical few issues, including the following:

First, the immediate ratification by Iran of the Additional Protocol to ensure that we have a permanent international agreement with Iran for access to suspect sites.

Second, a ban on centrifuge R&D for the duration of the agreement to ensure that Iran won't have the capacity to quickly break out just as the U.N. Security Council resolution and snapback sanctions are off the table.

Third, close the Fordow enrichment facility. The sole purpose of Fordow was to harden Iran's nuclear program to a military attack. We need to close the facility and foreclose Iran's future ability to use this facility. If Iran has nothing to hide, they shouldn't need to put it deep under a mountain.

Fourth, the full resolution of the "possible military dimensions" of Iran's program. We need an arrangement that isn't set to whitewash this issue. Iran and the IAEA must resolve the issue before permanent sanctions relief, and failure of Iran to cooperate with a comprehensive review should result in automatic sanctions snapback.

Fifth, extend the duration of the agreement. One of the single most concerning elements of the deal is its 10- to 15-year sunset of restrictions on Iran's program, with off-ramps starting after year 8. We were promised an agreement of significant duration, and we got less than half of what we are looking for. Iran should have to comply for as long as they deceived the world's position, so at least 20 years.

Sixth, we need agreement now about what penalties will be collectively imposed by P5+1 for Iranian violations, both small and midsized, as well as a clear statement as to the so-called grandfather clause in paragraph 37 of the JCPOA, to ensure that the U.S. position about not shielding contracts entered into legally upon reimposition of sanctions is shared by our allies.

Separately from the agreement but at the same time, we should extend the authorization of the Iran Sanctions Act, which expires in 2016, to ensure that we have an effective snapback option.

We should immediately implement the security measures offered to our partners in the gulf summit at Camp David, while preserving Israel's qualitative military edge.

The President should unequivocally affirm and Congress should endorse a declaration of U.S. policy that we will use all means necessary to prevent Iran from producing enough enriched uranium for a nuclear bomb, as well as building or buying one, both during and after any agreement. After all, that is what Iran is committing to. We should authorize now the means for Israel to address the Iranian threat on their own in the event Iran accelerates its program.

We must send a message to Iran that neither their regional behavior nor nuclear ambitions are permissible. If we push back regionally, they will be less likely to test the limits of our tolerance toward any violation of a nuclear agreement.

The agreement that has been reached 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, in my view, it authorizes and supports the very roadmap Iran will need to achieve its target.

I know the administration will say that our partners will not follow us, that the sanctions regime will collapse and that they will allow Iran to proceed—as if our allies weren't worried about Iran crossing the nuclear weapons capability threshold anymore. I heard similar arguments from Secretary Kerry when he was chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, as well as from Wendy Sherman, David Cohen, and others, when I was leading the charge to impose new sanctions on Iran. That didn't happen then, and I don't believe it will happen now.

Despite what some of our P5+1 Ambassadors have said in trying to rally support for the agreement—clearly, since they want this deal, they are not going to tell us they are willing to pursue another deal, echoing the administration's admonition that it is a "take it or leave it" proposition—our P5+1 partners will still be worried about Iran's nuclear weapons desire and the capability to achieve it, and the United States is the indispensable partner to ultimately ensure that doesn't happen.

They and the businesses from their countries and elsewhere will truly care more about their ability to do business in a U.S. economy of \$17 trillion than an Iranian economy of \$415 billion. And the importance of that economic relationship is palpable as we negotiate T-TIP, the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership agreement.

At this point, it is important to note that, over history, Congress has rejected outright or demanded changes to more than 200 treaties and international agreements, including 80 that were multilateral.

Whether or not the supporters admit it, this deal is based on hope—hope

that when the nuclear sunset clause expires, Iran will have succumbed to the benefits of commerce and global integration; hope that the hardliners will have lost their power and the revolution will end its hegemonic goals; and hope that the regime will allow the Iranian people to decide their fate, unlike the green revolution of 2009. Hope is part of human nature, but unfortunately it is not a national security strategy. The Iranian regime, led by the Ayatollah, wants above all to preserve the regime and its revolution, so it stretches incredulity to believe they signed on to a deal that would in any way weaken the regime or threaten the goals of the revolution.

I understand this deal represents a tradeoff, a hope that things may be different in Iran in 10 to 15 years. Maybe Iran will desist from its nuclear ambitions. Maybe they will stop exporting and supporting terrorism. Maybe they will stop holding innocent Americans hostage. Maybe they will stop burning American flags. Maybe their leadership will stop chanting "Death to America" in the streets of Tehran. Or maybe they won't.

I know that in many respects it would be far easier to support this deal, as it would have been to vote for the war in Iraq at the time. But I didn't choose the easier path then, and I am not going to now. My devotion to principle may once again lead me to an unpopular course, but if Iran is to acquire a nuclear bomb, it will not have my name on it.

It is for these reasons that I will vote for cloture and to disapprove the agreement.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, just inquiring—it is my understanding that Senator WARNER and Senator COONS are to speak now. Is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is no order to that effect.

Mr. CORKER. It is my understanding that we have agreed to that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Time is under the control of the Democratic leader.

Mr. CORKER. How much time is left? That is really what I was getting at.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant Democrat leader.

Mr. DURBIN. I would say to the Senator from Tennessee through the Chair, it is my understanding that we have two 5-minute segments now. Senator WARNER and Senator COONS each claim 5 minutes.

Mr. CORKER. It is my understanding, then, that we will have that and then we move to an alternating session until the time of the vote. Is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is equally divided time until the vote, after the time allotted for the Democratic leader.

Mr. CORKER. And there is 10 minutes left on the Democratic side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Fifteen minutes.

Mr. CORKER. I thank the Presiding Officer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant Democratic leader.

Mr. DURBIN. The Senator from Virginia can proceed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I rise to join my colleagues in speaking on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

While this deal is far from perfect, I believe it is the best option available to us right now for preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

I share many of the concerns with this agreement that have been expressed by my colleagues, but the choice I ultimately had to make was between accepting an imperfect deal or facing the serious ramifications throughout the world if Congress rejects a deal that has the support of the international community, including many of our allies.

As I reviewed this agreement, I kept two fundamental questions in mind: No. 1, does this agreement advance the goal of keeping Iran free of nuclear weapons, and No. 2, is there a viable alternative that would be superior to this deal?

As many colleagues before me have outlined, this deal outlines a significant reduction in Iran's fissile material stockpile, reducing their uranium stockpile by 98 percent. It restricts Iran's production capacity and completely removes their ability to produce weapons-grade plutonium. It further limits Iran's research and development activities. These reductions and restrictions on Iran's nuclear infrastructure will extend Iran's breakout time from a matter of months to at least 1 year over the next 15 years.

This agreement also established a verification regime that includes continuous inspections. With the assistance of our intelligence community, verification goes beyond the four corners of this agreement. What this means is that we will have significantly more information about Iran's nuclear program with this deal than we would have without it.

The other major question we have to ask is, Is there a viable alternative to this deal? I have given those opponents numerous opportunities to convince me there was a viable alternative. The conclusion I have reached is that there is not.

I have been a strong supporter of tough international sanctions that helped bring Iran to the negotiating table in the first place. Since I have been in the Senate, I have supported every important piece of sanctions legislation passed by Congress. But during my deliberations, I spoke with representatives of many foreign governments—not the EU or the P5+1 entirely but also those nations, particularly in Asia—about whether they would be

willing to uphold sanctions to pressure Iran if we turned this deal down. In virtually every case, the response I got from allies was that if Congress were to reject this deal, the vast international sanctions that we have in place would fall apart. As we saw in the literally dozens of years prior, just U.S. unilateral sanctions alone are not enough.

I have determined that moving forward with this international agreement is our best option now to advance U.S. and world security.

I know we have other Members who want to speak, but let me add a couple of final comments.

While I support this deal, I believe there are additional actions Congress can and should take to strengthen it. I want to make sure that we—the United States—have the ability to respond to any Iranian activities with all means at our disposal.

While the inspections provided in this deal will give us better insight, there is more we can do. I am working with my colleagues—both supporters and opponents of the deal—on efforts to shore up its weaker points. I will work to clarify that Congress retains the ability to pass sanctions against Iran for nonnuclear misbehavior. My hope is that in future legislation, we will spell out that this agreement will not shield foreign companies if sanctions must be reimposed because of Iranian violations. And I will seek more reporting from the administration, including on how Iran uses any funds received through sanctions relief.

Moving forward, I will work with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to ensure Israel's security. I will press the administration and work with my colleagues to ensure that Israel preserves a qualitative military edge. I will look for ways to strengthen our commitments to Israel and support additional efforts to stop Iran from advancing both the nuclear agenda and from other efforts to destabilize the region.

Let me assure you that this agreement is the beginning and not the end of our combined international efforts to keep Iran free—not just today and not just for the next 15 years but forever—from having a nuclear weapon.

Before my colleague from Delaware speaks, I want to thank him for his efforts and many of us who spent a great deal of time the last few weeks of August talking about how we could build upon this agreement to make it stronger. He received assurances from the President and letters. I know that he and I and others are working on how we can even move beyond those assurances to make sure that we can look back on this agreement and recognize that we move not only the issue of peace but the issue of security going forward.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASIDY). The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I would like to thank my colleague from the great State of Virginia and a number of

other colleagues who have dedicated a great deal of time to reflecting and to consulting together about what is the wisest and best path forward. The Senator from Maryland who is ably leading the floor debate and is the minority ranking member on the Foreign Relations Committee and my colleague, and the Senator from Colorado, who will speak following me, are among many whom I have closely consulted. As was just remarked upon on the floor by the talented Senator from Virginia, this is a deal with flaws and with challenges that we must work together to address. I am hopeful and eager to find that path with the administration and with my colleagues to ensure that we do everything we can to deploy the full measure of America's military and economic capabilities to ensure the security of Israel and to ensure that this agreement—now that it is clear it will move forward—is fully, thoughtfully, and thoroughly implemented.

I want to rise briefly to address what I understand is now a scheduled cloture vote at 3:45 today. On critical and historic issues such as the nuclear agreement with Iran, I think the American people deserve to know how their individual Members of Congress—whether in the Senate or the House—will vote as their representatives. Over the years that I have served here, there have been far too many issues that were decided by a procedural vote—by a cloture vote—rather than by getting to the substance of the underlying issue. I think the American people deserve better than to have a critical issue such as this complex deal ultimately resolved with a procedural vote.

As we proceed to that vote later today, I wanted to let those who are watching know that is not the end of debate on this issue. If the cloture vote fails, as I believe it will, it means we will simply continue the debate and may take up another vote or several votes next week.

This morning leader REID made a fair offer to Senator MCCONNELL, the majority leader, on this floor to have a single up-or-down vote by a 60-vote margin, to clearly show the American people how every Member of this Chamber feels about this deal—to allow us to vote on the substance. It is my hope that the majority leader will reconsider and that either today or next week we will have the opportunity to have that up-or-down vote and to let the American people know exactly where each of us stands and then get to the demanding and difficult work of building a bipartisan coalition to deal with the challenges of this deal, to insist on effective deterrence of Iran's nuclear ambitions and to find a path together to joining the international community that is joined in the implementation of this deal.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I would like to speak on the agreement the

P5+1 powers reached on Iran's nuclear program.

I was an early cosponsor of the bill that gave Congress an opportunity to evaluate the agreement. Because of that legislation, we have had extensive discussion and debate. This Chamber has a history of voting on critical national security issues at a 60-vote threshold, and I would have preferred an up-or-down vote on the merits. But, as too often happens, politics have prevailed, and this will likely be the only vote we will have on this agreement. So this vote serves as the vote on the substance.

In 2003, Iran was operating approximately 164 centrifuges and had virtually no enriched uranium. By 2009, when the current administration took office, Iran had between 4,000 and 5,000 centrifuges installed.

Over the next few years, Congress passed increasingly tough sanctions that the administration, to its credit, set out to implement. As a member of the banking committee in 2010, I helped write and pass those sanctions.

By 2013, even in the grasp of the toughest international sanctions regime, Iran's nuclear program had raced forward.

The country had 19,000 centrifuges installed, 10 bombs worth of enriched uranium, and 2 to 3 months' breakout time to a bomb.

The harsh reality is that today Iran stands on the threshold of a nuclear weapon.

So we have to weigh the agreement against this set of facts.

Our goal throughout this process has been clear: to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon.

Like many Members of this Chamber, I have undertaken an exhaustive review of the agreement and a lengthy consultation process.

This included briefings from our own national security and intelligence experts, international verification experts, regional experts, former Israeli military and intelligence officials, and the P5+1 Ambassadors as well as Israel's Ambassador to the United States.

My conclusion is that the JCPOA is more likely to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon than the plausible alternatives. For that reason, I will vote to support the agreement.

It is no surprise to me that there are sincere, heartfelt differences of opinion about the merits of this deal. I have deep concerns about what the shape of Iran's nuclear program could look like beyond the 15 year horizon. But I also believe that implementation of this agreement is the best of bad options.

If Congress rejects this agreement, Iran will receive billions of dollars of sanctions relief and there will be no oversight of its nuclear program. That is an unacceptable result.

Some have argued that the United States could reject this agreement in favor of returning to the negotiating table. But this logic only holds if the

international coalition holds, and everything I heard this summer tells me that won't happen.

While this agreement has flaws, it is clearly better than the alternatives. The agreement is the best option for preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon, and it maintains all of our options to respond to a move by Iran to break out to a bomb.

The agreement doesn't eliminate the deep concerns I hold about Iran's horrific acts of terror and its hegemonic pursuits, but all of Iran's malevolent acts would only be more dangerous if backed by a nuclear weapon.

We must also help our closest ally in the region, the State of Israel, defend itself. Let me be clear. The survival of the State of Israel is essential to the security of the Jewish people, and, as far as I am concerned, Israel's survival is essential to our humanity.

For these reasons and for our own security, we cannot allow Iran to acquire a nuclear weapon, and we must be crystal clear that we will use force to prevent it from doing so. In fact, we will have more credibility to use force if this agreement is in place, and we will have more legitimacy when we work to build an international coalition to respond to Iranian cheating.

There are risks to the successful implementation of the agreement, and the President and Congress must now work to make it stronger. I have worked with others in the Senate to push the administration toward that goal.

Since the announcement of the agreement, I have also worked with Senator CARDIN to develop a legislative package to address the accumulated shortcomings of our policies towards Iran and to strengthen the agreement.

Among other measures, our legislation will ensure that we track the resources Iran obtains from sanctions relief and work with our regional partners to counter conventional Iranian threats. It also invests in our intelligence capabilities and provides Israel deterrence to ensure Iran cannot shield covert systems and facilities, no matter how deeply they are buried.

As we implement this agreement, we must set in place a strategy with our partners to ensure that Iran appreciates the consequences of its violations, for the next 15 years and beyond.

My grandparents, John and Halina Klejman, and my mother Susanne Klejman had everyone and everything they knew taken from them in the Holocaust. Yet, as my grandmother always told me, they were the lucky ones—they had the chance to rebuild their shattered lives in a country that accepted them and let them succeed beyond their wildest dreams.

We live in dangerous times, and whether you support the agreement or not, we must develop a cohesive strategy for U.S. policy in the Middle East that addresses the grave security concerns in the region. Separate from Iran's nuclear program, the region is

threatened by war, sectarian violence, a terrible refugee crisis, and acts of barbaric brutality that belong to another century. We should seize this opportunity to play a constructive role in addressing these threats.

Our young men and women in the Armed Forces have been asked to sacrifice so much. None of us can have any doubt that, if called upon again, they would rise to any challenge, anywhere in the world. We honor their courage and spirit of sacrifice by exhausting diplomatic options before we turn to military ones. This isn't a sign of weakness but proof of our strength. And it will help us rally our allies to our side if ultimately we need to turn to military action.

Our primary objectives are to prevent Iran from having a nuclear weapon, make sure Israel is safe, and, if possible, avoid another war in the Middle East. This agreement represents a flawed but important step to accomplish those goals. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, it is my understanding that we are now going to have brief comments, alternating between the two sides. We will begin with Senator GARDNER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I wish to thank the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee for his work to get us to this point, the countless hearings he has held, the briefings that we have had to fully understand the fine details and to scrutinize every aspect of the agreement that is now before us. I also wish to thank the ranking member and the Senator from New Jersey for their tireless efforts on the committee when it comes to the process that is before us.

Make no mistake. There is not a single Member in this body, in the Senate or House of Representatives, or the American public who would complain about the President's initial goals—the goals he laid out as recently as October of 2012, as he began negotiations with Iran.

I quote the President:

Our goal is to get Iran to recognize it needs to give up its nuclear program and abide by the U.N. resolutions that have been in place. . . . But the deal we'll accept is—they end their nuclear program. It's very straightforward.

But the deal we got from the administration is anything but the straightforward ending of a nuclear program. I have listened very carefully to the hearings we have held. I have listened to the classified briefings. I have studied the language of the text—language that says things such as this: "Requests for access pursuant to provisions of this JCPOA will be made in good faith, with due observance of the sovereign rights of Iran, and kept to the minimum necessary to effectively implement the verification responsibilities under this JCPOA."

Senator COLLINS from Maine a couple of days ago said it very well: "Not only will Iran retain its nuclear capability, but also it will be a far richer nation and one that has more conventional weapons and military technology than it possesses today."

This doesn't end the nuclear program as the President stated was his goals. It continues it. It paves a patient pathway to an industrialized nuclear complex in Iran. With the blessings of the world community, a flourishing economy, a lifting of the conventional arms embargo, a lifting of the ballistic missile embargo—and that is a good deal for us?

Over the last several days, I have heard colleague after colleague who are supporting this deal come to the floor to say things such as: This deal is flawed. It is not the best. It needs improvement. Since when did a bad option in the Senate become the only option in the Senate? Since when did second, third, fourth, fifth best for this country become the best for this country?

Several months ago I had the opportunity—as have many colleagues—to visit with Prime Minister Netanyahu to talk about the dance of porcupines created by entering this deal—the nuclear tripwire that will be set up because this does not end Iran's nuclear program. Through this deal, we have given up the golden nuggets of leverage that we had with Iran—our leverage of sanctions that were beginning to work. In fact, in the briefings that we have all attended, analysts have said that our sanctions are eroding support for the regime daily, hurting their economy, devaluing their currency, and bringing them to the table. Yet the deal that we have allows continued uranium enrichment, repeal of U.N. resolutions, and removal of the Iran nuclear issue from their agenda. That is the benefit of the bargain that the United States is about to enter into.

We heard talk over the past several days about status quo versus hypothetical. Here is the status quo that we will be entering into: a status quo that in 5 years allows conventional arms to resume in Iran, a status quo that will allow ballistic missiles to resume in 8 years and advanced centrifuge research to continue.

As the chairman of the committee stated yesterday, talking about how one IRH centrifuge could replace vast numbers of the current centrifuges they have today, they will be allowed to keep apparently all for radioisotope purposes.

Why do they need ballistic missiles and conventional arms for radiation treatment? We have desanctioned and delisted numerous individuals, people who were the fathers of the Iranian nuclear program, the A.Q. Khan of Iran, delisted, desanctioned under this deal.

Conglomerates of companies like IKO are delisted and desanctioned under this deal. These are a group of companies that were sanctioned in 2003 not

because of nuclear arms-related issues but because of their threat to the world financial system. That conglomerate is now desanctioned under the terms of the deal. Sure, the United States gets to sanction them on our own, but as we heard today, yesterday, and the day before, the sanctions the United States has apparently aren't enough, and that is why we have to enter into this deal. Yet we have, as Juan Zarate said, the Sword of Damocles holding over Iran's head with the snapback provisions that apparently are good enough when we do them on our own.

One of the things that hasn't been talked about very much over the past several weeks is a letter that Secretary Kerry sent to every Senator on September 2. I think that was around the same day that enough votes were achieved to block or sustain the President's filibuster.

In the first paragraph of this letter that every Senator received, there are two sentences that I want to make sure everybody here recognizes.

We share the concern expressed by many in Congress regarding Iran's continued support for terrorist and proxy groups throughout the region, its propping up of the Assad regime in Syria, its efforts to undermine the stability of its regional neighbors, and the threat it poses to Israel.

In the very next sentence, Secretary Kerry goes on to say:

We have no illusion that this behavior will change following implementation of the JCPOA.

We have no illusion that Iran's behavior will change. That is the status quo.

The letter goes on to detail what we are going to do once this deal is entered into:

Additional U.S.-GCC working groups are focused on counterterrorism, military preparedness . . . and the goal of building political support for multilateral U.S.-GCC ballistic missile defense (BMD) cooperation.

So we are going to enter into some deals to fight ballistic missiles that this deal allows in 8 years.

The letter goes on to say that we will push back against Iran's arms transfers. Conventional arms embargoes will be lifted in 5 years. The letter then goes on to say that we will work on Iran's Missile Technology Control Regime guidelines about the transfer of sensitive systems, such as ballistic missile technology, and yet this deal allows ballistic missiles in 8 years.

The letter goes on to say:

U.S. support for Israel and our Gulf partners has never been a partisan issue, and we believe these proposals would receive wide bipartisan support.

This is a partisan deal with bipartisan opposition, and I will submit that the only element of bipartisanship on the Senate floor today is the opposition.

I urge my colleagues to vote to invoke cloture. The American people deserve to know where the United States Senate stands and deserves to know where their Members of the Senate stand with the United States.

I yield back my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, in accordance with the law, Congress has been reviewing the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action for the past 53 days. I have spent countless hours reading, being briefed and poring over the intelligence. I have diligently worked to make an informed decision, one that weighs risk and considers a future 10, 15, 25 years from now. Without question, this vote is among the most serious I have taken. This vote has monumental and enduring consequences.

Throughout my review of this deal, my questions have been: How does this deal affect the safety and security of the United States? And how does this deal affect the safety, security and viability of Israel?

For all my time in both the House and Senate, I have been an unabashed and unwavering supporter of Israel. I have persistently supported the sanctions that brought Iran to the table. I have been insistent on foreign aid and military assistance to Israel that maintains its qualitative military edge on missile defense. With the horrors of the Holocaust in mind, I have been deeply committed to the need for a Jewish homeland, the State of Israel, and its inherent ability to defend itself, and for the United States to be an unwavering partner in Israel's defense. I have been and always will be committed to those principles.

I took an extensive review of this deal. I took a workman-like approach, covering every aspect of the deal: military, intelligence, diplomatic, economic. I actually read the deal, both the classified and the unclassified annex. I met the U.S. diplomats, nuclear experts and the national security staff who negotiated the deal. I actively participated in every classified and unclassified briefing available to me. I took the additional step of traveling to Vienna to meet with the Director General of the IAEA and his technical staff to evaluate for myself, first hand, the inspection and verification requirements. I have listened to my constituents, including leaders in the Jewish community. I did my homework.

Throughout, I asked the tough questions. And I questioned the answers to those questions. These were my key questions: No. 1, does this agreement block the four pathways to a nuclear bomb: highly enriched uranium at Natanz, highly enriched uranium at Fordow, weapons grade plutonium, and covert attempts to produce fissile material? No. 2, is it verifiable? No. 3, do inspections work to detect overt and covert violations of the agreement? No. 4, what is the impact of a 24-day delay to get an inspection? No. 5, does the IAEA have the capacity to implement the agreement? No. 6, what sanctions will be lifted, when and under what conditions? No. 7, do snapback sanctions really have a snap? No. 8, if we

reject this deal, what are the alternatives that would be effective and achievable?

The answer to my first question—does it block the four pathways to a nuclear bomb?—is yes. This deal sufficiently blocks the four pathways to get to a bomb. There is no shortcut to a nuclear bomb. This deal fundamentally addresses that fact.

First, it blocks Iran's ability to have weapons-grade plutonium. The Arak reactor would be redesigned. Spent fuel would be sent out of Iran in perpetuity. Efforts to use Arak for weapons-grade plutonium would be detected.

Second, it drastically cuts Iran's uranium enrichment capabilities by reducing Iran's inventory of active centrifuges at Fordow and Natanz. The deal also monitors the uranium supply chain and procurement channel for 25 years.

Third, it reduces Iran's uranium stockpile below levels needed to make a single bomb. It cuts the uranium stockpile by 98 percent, to 300 kilograms, for 15 years. It puts uranium enrichment of the remaining stockpile at 3.67 percent.

Fourth, by blocking the pathways, it makes it very difficult for Iran to develop a separate covert program.

In answering my second and third questions—is it verifiable? do inspections work to detect overt and covert violations of the agreement?—I have found that this deal provides sufficient verification and inspection mechanisms. The IAEA has extensive access to Iran's declared nuclear sites, making the detection of violations and a covert program more likely. The IAEA also has direct access to centrifuge manufacturing sites to conduct inspections on short notice. Under Iran's additional protocol, the verification and inspection process has also been scientifically reviewed and validated by the U.S. Department of Energy's nuclear scientists and endorsed by 29 of the Nation's top scientists, including several Nobel prizewinners who described the inspection process as "innovative and stringent."

In answer to my fourth question—what is the impact of a 24-day delay to get inspections?—the IAEA will have daily access to Iran's declared nuclear facilities: Natanz, Arak and Fordo. The 24-day process would apply to undeclared sites only. These would be sites where the IAEA suspects Iran is conducting covert nuclear activities.

In answer to my fifth question—does the IAEA have the capacity to implement the agreement?—I would say, yes. After visiting the IAEA in Vienna and delving into the organization, I believe that it has sufficient expertise to implement this deal. But all nations involved in its funding, including but not limited to the United States, have to be aggressively involved in monitoring the resources of the organization.

In answer to my sixth question—what sanctions will be lifted, when and under what conditions?—the parts of

the agreement that would lift sanctions are among its most complicated and controversial elements. I would have preferred a glidepath over a 3-year period, or longer, for sanctions relief. Under the agreement, however, no sanctions will be lifted until Iran takes key steps: limits its uranium enrichment program, resolves issues with possible military dimensions, converts the Arak facility, and allows for proper inspections. And these steps must be certified by the IAEA, which will deliver its key assessment of possible military dimensions on December 15.

When these requirements are met, the U.S. will lift sanctions in key sectors: oil and gas; banking and financial services; insurance related; shipping, ship building and transport; gold and precious metals; software; and people, including international travel visas. That process will take 6 months to 1 year. The sanctions are lifted, not terminated, and can be snapped back, per the agreement.

Which takes us to my seventh question—do snapback sanctions really have a snap? Russia, China, India, and our European partners were very active members of the negotiations with a common interest in Iran not having a nuclear weapon. I believe they would support a snapback in sanctions if a violation was identified and verified. But the snapback sanctions mechanism, while innovative, is untested.

Finally, I have asked if we reject this deal what the alternatives are that would be effective and achievable. I have considered the alternatives very closely, but in the end, they don't present a more viable option to this deal. The two alternatives are more sanctions or military action.

Some have suggested we reject this deal and impose unilateral sanctions to force Iran back to the table, but maintaining or stepping up sanctions will only work if the sanction coalition holds together. It is unclear if the European Union, Russia, China, India, and others would continue sanctions if Congress rejects this deal. At best, sanctions would be porous or limited to unilateral sanctions by the U.S., but these are the same reasons that the efficacy of the snapback provision is questioned. If you don't think snapback works, enhanced sanctions won't work either.

There are also those who have proposed military action as an alternative to end Iran's nuclear program, but taking military airstrikes against Iran would only set the program back for 3 years. It would not terminate the program. Iran would continue to possess the knowledge of how to build a bomb and could redouble its resolve to obtain a weapon, completely unchecked. Iran would almost certainly use Hezbollah or other proxies to attack Israel or conduct terrorist or cyber attacks against U.S. interests. The military option is always on the table for the United States. We are not afraid to use it. But military action should be the

last resort, since it will have only temporary effects versus the longer term effects of this deal.

No deal is perfect, especially one negotiated with the Iranian regime. I have concluded that this Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action is the best option available to block Iran from having a nuclear bomb. For these reasons, I will vote in favor of this deal. However, Congress must also reaffirm our commitment to the safety and security of Israel.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, please advise both sides of the time remaining.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republicans have 11 minutes 20 seconds, Democrats have 5 minutes 5 seconds.

The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, over the past 5 months, we have learned much about the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and the intentions of Iran's ayatollahs. We know the nuclear deal will release billions of dollars to the terrorist-sponsoring Iranian regime. We know Qasem Soleimani and other terrorists who have killed Americans will be relieved of international sanctions. We know the side deals between the IAEA and Iran—side deals we have yet to see in this Senate—may entrust the Iranian regime to collect its own verification samples at its most secret nuclear facilities, allowing Iran to monitor itself instead of insisting on real, verifiable, and independent inspections.

We know the right to enrich at all, which this administration conceded early on in these negotiations, will trigger an arms race in the Middle East. Just this week, the ambassador from the United Arab Emirates told the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee that if this deal goes through, the UAE may no longer abide by its nonproliferation agreements and may begin an enrichment program. I fear Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and other countries may follow suit.

We know the ayatollahs—fresh from the negotiating table at Vienna—continue to lead Quds Day crowds in chants of “Death to America” and issue threats at our president and our people.

And, yes, we know that the deal will begin to expire in a mere 10 to 15 years, unleashing a nuclear-capable Iran on the world, free of international sanctions, with a healthier economy, and without the restraints that American diplomacy has painstakingly cultivated over the past decade.

But, in the end, our vote on the Iran nuclear deal won't turn on any of these particulars. Ultimately, this vote isn't about specific centrifuge numbers or enrichment levels or the exact scope of sanctions relief. No, it is simpler than that.

This vote is about history. It is about the responsibility of this Senate and the greatest Republic in history. It is

about where we want the course of history to lead for our children and our grandchildren.

This vote is not about a party or a President. After all, the Iranians chant “Death to America,” not “Death to Democrats,” not “Death to Republicans,” not “Death to our President,” but “Death to America.” Just this week, the Iranians again labeled America the Great Satan.

So this vote is about empowering an evil, terror-sponsoring regime and continuing this history or seizing the moment to change history. If this deal is approved, in just a few years, Iran may test a nuclear device, as North Korea did in 2006, just 12 years after a similar nuclear agreement. With a rumbling explosion that will shake the Earth, Iran may announce its status as a nuclear power and the opening of a second nuclear age that our Nation has struggled so long to prevent.

If Iran goes nuclear, history will not remember kindly the Senators who supported this nuclear deal. It won't remember your hand-wringing, your anguished speeches, your brow-furrowing. It won't remember your glib beliefs about the flawed inspection system or unworkable enforcement mechanisms. It won't remember your soft rationalizations that this deal is “better than nothing” or “the only alternative to war.”

History will remember your vote and only your vote. It will remember that you opened the gate to Iran's path to a nuclear weapon. It will remember you as the ones who flipped the strategic balance of the Middle East and the world toward the favor of our enemies. And it will remember you, this Senate and this President, as the ones who, when given the chance to stop the world's worst sponsor of terrorism from obtaining the world's worst weapon, blinked when confronted with this evil.

A world menaced by a nuclear-capable Iran is a terrifying prospect. Over the past three decades, Iran has waged a low-intensity war on the United States and our partners. Iran has financed and trained Hezbollah and Hamas terrorists to do its bidding as their proxy. Iran fueled the virulent insurgency whose roadside bombs and suicide attacks devastated Iraq and sadly killed or maimed thousands of American troops. And Iran has sowed unrest throughout the Middle East and propped up Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad, creating a crisis that has engulfed the entire region and that is fast spreading beyond its borders and other parts of the world.

Iran has done all of this without nuclear weapons. Should it be allowed to continue enrichment and conduct research and development on nuclear technology—as this deal lets it—the ayatollahs will grow even more brazen, fearsome, reckless, and insulated from conventional forms of deterrence and pressure. Upon the expiration of this deal—or its repudiation by the ayatollahs at a time of their choosing—

Iran's strategy of terror and intimidation will become nuclearized.

That is the world we may face in a few short years because of your votes. That is the threat we will confront if you bestow your blessing on a nuclear program run by the anti-American, anti-Israel, Jihadist regime in Tehran.

So we should soberly recognize that the context of this vote isn't a debate that is fast coming to a close. The context isn't demagoguery or backroom pressure from a lameduck President, and it isn't the effect of this vote on our political fortunes.

The context for this vote is the broad sweep of history.

In late 1936, Winston Churchill spoke on the years of British appeasement in the face of German rearmament. He observed:

The era of procrastination, of half-measures, of soothing and baffling expedients, of delays, is coming to a close. In its place we are entering a period of consequences.

Churchill's words are as true today as they were then. We are entering a period of consequences. Because of your vote today, the consequences may well be nuclear. God help us all if they are.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I am pleased that shortly we will have a chance to vote. I would have preferred the vote to be on the final passage of the resolution with the 60-vote threshold. I regret that was not agreed to.

I will vote what I think is in the best interest of our country, to keep Iran from becoming a nuclear weapons state, and our best chance to avoid a military option. I have already indicated that I intend to oppose the agreement and I have given my reasons on the floor and I will not repeat them at this moment.

But I wish to speak about what happens after this vote is over and whatever votes take place next week, with the deadline being next Thursday. At that time, I hope everyone here recognizes that it is important for us to put division aside. I wish to remind some of my colleagues of what happened 14 years ago on a vote with Iraq, the authorization for force. I voted against that resolution. And when that vote was over, Democrats and Republicans, proponents and opponents, joined together to support our troops and our mission under the leadership of President Bush to give America the best chance for its foreign policy to succeed.

So when the votes are over, I hope that Democrats and Republicans, proponents and opponents of the plan will work towards congressional involvement. Working with the President gives us our best opportunity to prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear weapons state and gives us the least risk of using a military option. I say that because my colleague from Maryland outlined that very clearly. A mili-

tary option—although we must have that option in our quill—a military option will not solve the problem and it has a lot of collateral consequences.

I hope we can work together, because that is what is in the best interest of the U.S. Senate. That is what is in the best interest of the United States of America.

I look forward to working with Senator CORKER and all members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the U.S. Senate to see how Congress can work together with our President so that we can achieve that goal.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I will be brief. I know the Senator from Tennessee would like to close on this matter.

I think everything that needs to be said about the details of this deal has already been said. I do want to be recorded for history's purposes, although I know what is going to happen in regards to this if it goes through. Iran will immediately use the money in sanctions relief to begin building up its conventional capabilities. It will establish the most dominant military power in the region outside of the United States, and it will raise the price of us operating in the region. They are going to build anti-access capabilities, rockets capable of destroying our aircraft carriers and ships, continue to build these swift boats, these fast boats that are able to swarm our naval assets so that it will make it harder and harder for U.S. troops to be in the region. They will also work with other terrorist groups in the region to target American service men and women. They may or may not deny that they are involved, but they will target us and raise the price of our presence in the Middle East until they hope to completely pull us out of that region. They will also continue to build long-range missiles capable of reaching the United States. Those are not affected by this deal, and they will continue to build them as they have been doing.

Then, at some point in the near future, when the time is right, they will build a nuclear weapon, and they will do so because at that point they will know that they have become immune, that we will no longer be able to strike their nuclear program, because the price of doing so will be too high.

This is not just the work of imagination; it exists in the world today. It is called North Korea, where a lunatic possesses dozens of nuclear weapons and a long-range rocket that can already reach the United States, and we cannot do anything about it. An attack on North Korea today would result in an attack on Tokyo or Seoul or Guam or Hawaii or California. So the world must now live with a lunatic in possession of nuclear weapons.

This is the goal Iran has as well—to reach a point where they become im-

mune to any sort of credible military threat because the price of a military strike would be too high, and then they become an established nuclear weapons power. Never in the history of the world has such a regime ever possessed weapons so capable of destruction.

Iran is led by a supreme leader who is a radical Shia cleric with an apocalyptic vision of the future. He is not a traditional geopolitical actor who makes decisions on the basis of borders or simply history or because of ambition. He has a religious apocalyptic vision of the future—one that calls for triggering a conflict between the non-Muslim world and the Muslim world, one that he feels especially obligated to trigger. And he is going to possess nuclear weapons? This is the world that we are on the verge of leaving our children to inherit and perhaps we ourselves will have to share in.

So I want to be recorded for history's purposes if nothing else to say that those of us who opposed this deal understood where it would lead, and we are making a terrible mistake. I fear that the passage of this deal will make it even harder for us to prevent it. I hope there is still time to change our minds.

But here is the good news. Iran may have a Supreme Leader, but America does not. In this Nation, we have a republic, and soon we will have new leaders, perhaps in this chamber but also in the executive branch. I pray on their first day in office they will reverse this deal and reimpose the sanctions and back them up with a credible threat of military force, or history will condemn us for not doing what needed to be done in the world's history.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, a lot has been said about the impact of this agreement. I would like to speak for a moment about the impact of no agreement. What if the Republicans and those who oppose this agreement have their way and this agreement goes away? Iran is still a nuclear threshold state. If you have your way and stop this agreement, the result will be literally leaving in Iran the capacity to build 10 nuclear weapons today. And the timing on that: 2 to 3 months before they have the fissile material for a nuclear weapon—if you have your way and kill this agreement.

That is some holiday surprise, that if we walk away from this agreement, this effort for inspection, Iran could develop a nuclear weapon. That is the reality. If you have your way, there will be no inspectors. Iran will be closed off to the world. How can that possibly make the Middle East safer for Israel or for any other country in the world? How can it make it safer if we as a coalition who have worked so hard to build this agreement fail in the effort?

What I have listened for during the last 3 days of debate is any suggestion from the other side of the aisle about

what is the alternative to this agreement. Now, some have been bold enough to say it is military, and we shouldn't wince at the prospect of a military solution. One Senator on the other side of the aisle said 4 days is all we need to take them out; we will take care of Iran. I have heard that before, I say to my friends. I heard it before the invasion of Iraq where we were going to be greeted as liberators, and it would be a matter of weeks before our troops would be coming home. It didn't turn out that way.

What we are trying to do and what the President is trying to do is to start a diplomatic process to avoid the military option, to avoid a war. That is why I am supporting it. I think it is the right thing to do. I am sorry that the vote we are about to cast here is a procedural vote. Twice, Senator REID has asked Senator MCCONNELL to give us a straight, up-or-down, clean vote on this question of disapproval by a 60-vote margin, and twice Senator MCCONNELL has objected and insisted instead on this procedural vote. We know where everyone stands. Everyone in this chamber has publicly declared where they stand on this matter. That should be the rollcall that we take next. Unfortunately, we are faced with a procedural rollcall.

I will close by saying one word about the Members on this side of the aisle. For 6 weeks I have contacted them—and in fact harassed them—asking them what they were going to do on this important question. For any people who are critical of this Senate, believing it is too superficial and too partisan, I will tell you that on this side of the aisle they took their time, they read the agreements, they were briefed by the intelligence agencies and Department of Defense, and they made up their mind and announced their position publicly. It is a proud moment for this institution because I think that is what we all believe to be our responsibility.

As we close this debate, I ask those who support the agreement to vote no on the cloture motion.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, before I make closing comments, I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum call with respect to the cloture vote this afternoon.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I wish to begin by thanking the vast majority of this body for the fact that over—four times since 2010, Members of this body almost unanimously passed sanctions that brought Iran to the table—people on both sides of the aisle. I want to thank people for that.

I want to thank this body for another reason. When we realized that the President was going to negotiate with Iran and do so through what was called

a nonbinding political commitment and that he was going to take this agreement directly to the U.N. Security Council—he was not going to cause it to be a treaty, but he was going to cause it to be an agreement that he could execute without our involvement—because of the fact that we brought Iran to the table through the sanctions that we collectively put in place, we rose up and we passed a bill on a 98-to-1 basis that allowed us to go through this process we are going through today.

I want to thank Senator CARDIN, who has been an outstanding ranking member. I want to thank Senator MENENDEZ before him, who was an outstanding chairman and ranking member.

What this agreement said we would do is we would debate. I want to stop there and say that I think we have had a dignified debate. People on both sides of the aisle have handled themselves as Senators, and I am very proud of that.

The other piece of that was that we would vote, that we would let the people of this country know where we stood. We have a bipartisan majority that disapproves of this deal. The most substantial foreign policy people on the Democratic side oppose this deal. Always we have known that yes, we were going to do this under regular order, and under regular order what that means is there is this procedural vote where the Senate decides that debate has ended and we are going to move to a final vote. We are at that juncture, and I ask my colleagues on the other side of the aisle that on a 98-to-1 basis voted to allow us to vote to now vote yes on this cloture motion, to allow the Members of this Senate, who have handled themselves so responsibly, to be able to record on a majority basis where we stand on this issue.

The majority of the people in the Senate believe that this deal that has been negotiated is not in the national interest of this country, will not make our Nation or the Middle East safer, and I hope that all of us are going to have that opportunity to vote after we pass this procedural hurdle. I hope that all Members will vote to allow this to proceed to a final vote within the next few days.

With that, I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The 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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on amendment No. 2640, offered by the Senator from Kentucky, Mr. MCCONNELL, to H.J. Res. 61, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 58, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 264 Leg.]

YEAS—58

Alexander	Fischer	Paul
Ayotte	Flake	Perdue
Barrasso	Gardner	Portman
Blunt	Graham	Risch
Boozman	Grassley	Roberts
Burr	Hatch	Rounds
Capito	Heller	Rubio
Cardin	Hoeben	Sasse
Cassidy	Inhofe	Schumer
Coats	Isakson	Scott
Cochran	Johnson	Sessions
Collins	Kirk	Shelby
Corker	Lankford	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lee	Thune
Cotton	Manchin	Tillis
Crapo	McCain	Toomey
Cruz	McConnell	Vitter
Daines	Menendez	Wicker
Enzi	Moran	
Ernst	Murkowski	

NAYS—42

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Nelson
Bennet	Heinrich	Peters
Blumenthal	Heitkamp	Reed
Booker	Hirono	Reid
Boxer	Kaine	Sanders
Brown	King	Schatz
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Markey	Tester
Coons	McCaskill	Udall
Donnelly	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Mikulski	Warren
Feinstein	Murphy	Whitehouse
Franken	Murray	Wyden

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 58, the nays are 42.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

The majority leader.

CLOTURE MOTION WITHDRAWN

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to withdraw the cloture motion with respect to H.J. Res. 61.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. REID. No objection.

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

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk for 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 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, John Barrasso, Bob Corker, Steve Daines, David Perdue, Tom Cotton, Susan M.

Collins, Deb Fischer, Shelley Moore Capito, Mike Crapo, Ron Johnson, Cory Gardner, Marco Rubio, Lamar Alexander, James M. Inhofe, Mike Rounds.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk for 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 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, John Barrasso, Bob Corker, Steve Daines, David Perdue, Tom Cotton, Susan M. Collins, Deb Fischer, Shelley Moore Capito, Mike Crapo, Ron Johnson, Cory Gardner, Marco Rubio, Lamar Alexander, James M. Inhofe, Mike Rounds.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the issue before us is of immense consequence to our country. The American people are entitled to a real voice and to know where their elected Senators stand on this important issue.

Until recently, this was a principle Members of both parties seemed to endorse rather overwhelmingly. In fact, not a single Democrat—not one—voted against the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act. We all recall it passed 98 to 1. They told us this was an issue too important for political games.

This is what one Democratic colleague said just last week:

As a caucus that was opposed to games with filibusters over the last four years, I would think it would be really regrettable if we didn't ultimately go to the floor and cast our votes for or against this deal.

But that was last week, apparently. Democratic Senators just voted to filibuster and block the American people from even having a real vote on one of the most consequential foreign policy issues of our time.

It is telling that Democrats would go to such extreme lengths to prevent President Obama from even having to consider legislation on this issue. If the President is so proud of this deal, then he shouldn't be afraid.

We all know the amount of time the administration has spent here asking all of these guys to take a bullet for the team—and, of course, the team is Team Obama. They all wanted to have a say. When it came time to have a say, they said it was more important that the President not have to veto a resolution of disapproval—more important to him than to them.

This is a deal that was designed to go around Congress and the American peo-

ple from the very start. We all remember the President didn't want to submit it to us at all. It was going to be an executive agreement, it is still an executive agreement, and he didn't want us to have any say at all.

Senator CORKER and Senator CARDIN worked together and developed a proposal—overwhelmingly proposed and supported—to give us a chance to weigh in on this important deal.

It would empower Iran to maintain thousands of centrifuges and to become a recognized nuclear-threshold state, forever on the edge of developing a nuclear weapon. That is what is before us.

It would effectively subsidize Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Assad regime in Syria—which, by the way, is now going to apparently include a Russian military base in Syria—by showering tens of billions of dollars on their benefactors in Tehran.

It would leave Iran with an enrichment capability just as the Iranian leadership is again calling for Israel's destruction and praying every day for our destruction. This deal is sure to have many consequences that will last well beyond this administration.

Yet as things presently stand, it would limp along with little or no buy-in or input from Congress or from the American people—who we know overwhelmingly opposed the deal in spite of the President's best efforts to sell it to them. This shouldn't be an acceptable outcome for our friends on the other side, even those who support the deal. I predicted earlier—and I predict again today—we are going to have a raft of new bash-Iran proposals introduced by our friends on the other side, who are going to be born again Iran bashers.

So let me make it clear to all of our colleagues, we have voted, we are going to vote again, but we are voting on the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act. We are not going to be taking up bills that have fewer than enough cosponsors to override a Presidential veto. If we want to make a law, as we did with Corker-Cardin, show us enough cosponsors to make a law, but we are not interested in using floor time for get-well efforts over on the other side to try to fool their constituents into thinking: Oh, I really, really was serious about Iran, in spite of the fact that I voted for the deal that you hate.

We only have so much floor time in the Senate. We are going to try to use it on serious proposals that have a chance of becoming law, and my assumption is the President is not going to want to revisit this issue. He got what he wanted. He is not going to want to revisit this issue. So if we want to do anything further about this Iranian regime, bring me a bill with enough cosponsors to override a Presidential veto, and we will take a look at it.

Otherwise, the American people will give us their judgment about the appropriateness of this measure 1 year from November because this is not an ordinary issue. This is an issue with a

real shelf life. This is a regime that is still going to be there a year and a half from now.

And, of course, as we know, it is an Executive agreement only. So if, perchance, there is a President of a different party, I would say to our Iranian observers of the debate that it will be looked at anew based upon Iranian behavior between now and then.

As others have said, the Iranian Parliament is apparently going to get to weigh in. I heard the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee say that. I guess they are going to get a vote.

But our friends on the other side want to employ a procedural device, which, as the Democratic leader has pointed out, is commonly used here, but the question is, on what kind of measure is it used?

This is no ordinary measure. This is different.

So we will have another opportunity to see whether we want to move past this procedural device.

The President is proud of the deal. I don't know why he would be reluctant to veto a resolution of disapproval that is put on his desk. He is having press conferences about it. He is bragging about it. He thinks this is really great.

I don't know what they are protecting him from. I would think he would have a veto ceremony and invite all you guys to join him and celebrate. What are you protecting him from?

We will have a chance next week, one more chance, to allow him to say how he feels about the resolution of disapproval. We know how he feels about it already. For the life of me, I can't get why he is reluctant to veto this resolution of disapproval, in effect, underscoring again what a great deal he thinks it is for America.

So we will revisit the issue next week and see if maybe any folks want to change their minds and give us a chance to remove the procedural roadblock and give the President what he has been asking for.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I want to be as respectful of my friend as I need to be, but let's speak reality.

We are in a Congress that is dominated by the Republicans. They control the House by a large margin, and they control the Senate by a large margin.

The legislation that is before this body was proposed, legislated, and brought to us by Republican leadership. It is their legislation, not ours.

I didn't spend all my time in my office visiting with people today; I watched the speeches. It was stunning—the nonreality that is facing my Republican friends. They dwelled, a number of them, on what is going on in the Middle East. Not once—not once—did anyone mention the worst foreign-policy decision ever made by our great country, the invasion of Iraq. It has destabilized that part of the world for a long, long time to come. For what? So

my friends can blame all the problems in the Middle East on the President, but they are blaming the wrong person. We can't take what we have because they want to rewrite history. History is as it is, and people are writing history as it is.

Now the part of history that they are trying to rewrite is history that is taking place in this body. We offered, on two separate occasions, publicly before the American people and in this body: Do you want a vote? We will let you have a vote. Both times it was objected to because in the convoluted reasoning, I guess, of my friend, he thinks that people who are watching all of this have no common sense and can't understand the English language.

We offered to have a vote on this on two separate occasions. It was objected to both times. Now, the inane response is you are filibustering this. I know why there are filibusters because we have had to file cloture more than 600 times because of filibusters by the Republicans. Never in the history of the country has there ever been anything close to it.

Now, what were most of those filibusters on? On motions to proceed. On this legislation that came before this body, we said we don't need a vote on a motion to proceed, go to the bill, go to it. We also said, as part of the agreement, let the leader offer the first amendment, and he did that.

Now, a 60-vote threshold, my friend talks as if: Oh, wowee, where in the world did this come from? Why would they ever consider 60 votes on this?

First, I know it is late in the day. I didn't bring the subject up, but my friend the Republican leader is talking about a world that doesn't exist anymore. And who created this world that doesn't exist anymore? My Republican friends.

This is July 30, 2011, from Senator MCCONNELL:

Now, look, we know that on controversial matters in the Senate, it has for quite some time required 60 votes. So I would say again to my friend, [that is me] it is pretty hard to make a credible case that denying a vote on your own proposal is anything other than a filibuster.

A little while later:

I wish to make clear to the American people Senate Republicans are ready to vote on cloture on the Reid proposal in 30 minutes, in an hour, as soon as we can get our colleagues over to the floor. We are ready to vote. By requiring 60 votes, particularly on a matter of this enormous importance, it is not at all unusual. It is the way the Senate operates.

Another one, a few months later:

Mr. President, I can only quote my good friend [that is me] the majority leader who has repeatedly said, most recently in early 2007, that in the Senate it has always been the case we need 60 votes. This is my good friend the majority leader when he was the leader of this majority in March of 2007, and he said it repeatedly both when he was in the minority or leader of the majority, that it requires 60 votes certainly on measures that are controversial.

There is no question the measure before this body—using the words of my

friend the Republican leader—is something that is important. There is no question that this measure has been controversial. Also, using his words, is this legislation of enormous importance? I think so. At least that is my mind.

Quoting from a little while later:

So who gets to decide who is wasting time around here? None of us have that authority to decide who is wasting time. But the way you make things happen is you get 60 votes at some point, and you move the matter to conclusion, and the best way to do that is to have an open amendment process. That is the way this place used to operate.

And I say "used to operate." That is my own editorial comment.

Two or three months later:

Madam President, reserving the right to object, what we are talking about is a perpetual debt ceiling grant, in effect, to the President. Matters of this level of controversy always require 60 votes. So I would ask my friend, the majority leader—

Referring to me as the majority leader—

if he would modify his consent request and set the threshold for this vote at 60?

I am not going to be reading these forever, but I will read one more:

Well, as we all know, it takes 60 votes to do everything except the budget process. We anticipate having a vote to proceed to the 20-week Pain-Capable bill sometime before the end of the year as well.

That was just the early part of August of this year.

So, Mr. President, my friend is in a dire situation, and I understand that. The House is in a terrible state of disarray. They do not know what they are going to do. On one hand, what they say they are going to do is—the President can't send the papers to them. So they want to have a vote on that. The papers didn't come to them. And then they turn right around and are going to vote on a resolution of approval. I guess they do not need the papers for that. Then they are going to vote on more sanctions. Then they don't know what they are going to do. It is very unusual, when one party controls both branches of the bicameral legislature, that they do not know how to work together, but obviously they are not working together here. So I understand my friend's frustration. This is a situation where he has lost the vote, and it is a situation where he is simply not in touch with reality as it exists.

So I want to say to everyone within the sound of my voice that the Senate has spoken and has spoken with a clarion voice and declared that the historic agreement to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon will stand. That is what this agreement is all about. It is about whether Iran should have a nuclear weapon. And the countries you wouldn't think would be involved in supporting something such as this—they know the importance of it themselves, and they agreed to go along with this agreement. They helped us negotiate it. China, Russia—they agreed to it. The Senate has spoken with a clarion voice and declared that

this historic agreement to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon will stand.

So I say, my fellow Americans—and I say that with all respect for everybody who is out there listening or will read about this—our allies and negotiating partners around the world should know that today's outcome was clear, decisive, and final. There is now no doubt whatsoever that the United States Congress will allow this historic agreement to proceed. Efforts by opponents to derail this agreement were soundly rejected by a margin much larger than anyone thought achievable even a few days ago.

Any future attempts, as my friend is talking about, to relitigate this issue—I guess we will be in a position like with the Affordable Care Act. Are we going to try to repeal it 60 times? Are we going to try to break that record? Any future attempts to relitigate this issue in the Senate will meet the same outcome and will be nothing more than wasted time—time we can't afford to waste with a government shutdown looming in a matter of weeks, more of the disarray of my friends the Republicans. We are not making up closing government. The government was closed 2 years ago for almost 3 weeks. So we take those threats seriously. And I would hope we could get around to doing something about that rather than having wasted cloture motions on something on which we agreed to have a vote. Filibusters are an effort to stop debate. We said when I came in here Tuesday—Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday—if you want more time than that to debate, go ahead and do it. We are not in any way stopping debate, as was done by my Republican colleagues hundreds of times in years past. So this can be relitigated. Let's do it over 60 times to try to break the Affordable Care Act record, if you choose, but this matter is over with. It is something of such importance, but we should move on to something else. We have so much to do in this body—so much to do.

We have our highway situation that is deteriorating. We have hundreds of thousands of bridges that are in a state of disrepair and need refurbishing and some of them need to be replaced. Today I met with the regional transportation authority, someone who represents 80 percent of the population in our State. We are in desperate shape all over Nevada as far as doing something about highways, but we are not doing anything about highways, we are fiddling around on that patching stuff. We had something done, and I was happy to get that done.

We have cyber security issues. As we are here talking right now in this body, we have groups, individuals, and countries trying to hack us—they are not trying; they are doing it. We have not had the ability to get cyber security legislation before this body. It is something we have brought up as an afterthought. We have Senator BURR and Senator FEINSTEIN and the bill they

produced. It is not my favorite. I think we could do better than that. But I support their legislation. We have to do something. Let's start someplace doing something that is important for the American people.

So I say to everyone here that it is time we move on to something else. This matter is over. You can continue to relitigate it, but it is going to have the same result.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, as the Democratic leader frequently reminded me when he was the majority leader, the majority leader always gets the last word.

I enjoyed hearing the Democratic leader's history lesson, going back, as I recount—I am sure I will leave some out—to the Iraq war resolution, which he voted for, as did Hillary Clinton, to a recitation of past debates from ObamaCare, to you name it, including complaining about highways, a bill Senator BOXER and I worked on and actually passed that he voted against, which hopefully will soon be in conference, but none of that has anything to do with what is before us today.

The issue before us today is the Iran nuclear agreement. We know how the American people feel about it. They are overwhelmingly opposed to it. We know how the Israelis feel about it. They are overwhelmingly opposed to it. We know our Sunni-Arab allies are now visiting the Russians to talk about arms purchases because they do not trust us anymore. We know the President wanted to transform the Middle East, and, by golly, he has. Our friends don't trust us and our enemies are emboldened.

So the issue is not over. The Democratic leader saying the issue is over doesn't make it over.

This agreement and the foreign policy of this administration is best summed up by Jimmy Carter. A couple of months ago, he was asked to sum up the Obama administration's foreign policy, and this is almost a direct quote. He said he couldn't think of a single place in the world where we are in better shape now than we were when the President came to office. That is Jimmy Carter.

Foreign policy will be a big issue going into 2016, and this agreement is a metaphor for all of the mistakes this President has made. You name the area of the world, and you will see the results. So no amount of saying the issue is over makes it over. It is still on the floor of the Senate. We will have an opportunity again next week to move past this procedural snag to give all Members of the Senate an opportunity to vote up or down on a resolution of disapproval, which we know is supported on a bipartisan basis.

And I end with this: There is bipartisan opposition to this deal—bipartisan opposition to this deal. Only Democrats support it. So if the President is so proud of it, I can't figure out

what these folks over here are protecting him from.

You guys should all be invited down to the veto signing. Break out the champagne, celebrate, take credit for it. You own it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, one last thing. I recognize my friend is going to be next, and I am going to be very short here.

I am glad my friend brought up my vote on Iraq. I have stated on national TV, I have stated every chance I get that the biggest mistake I ever made in my public service was voting for that bill. And I learned it quickly. It was just a matter of a few short months after I voted that I realized I had been misled in voting for that. But that doesn't matter. I voted for it, and, as some say in some circles, I have repented publicly for having done that. So my feeling about the Iraq war has not changed, the mere fact I had voted for that.

I would also say this in closing: I hope the one thing we can agree on here as Democrats and Republicans is that the ability of Iran for the next 15 years to build a nuclear weapon is pretty well taken care of. No one has to agree with that part of my statement, but the one thing I hope we can agree on—I would hope we would work together to make sure we continue, as indicated in the letter Senator Kerry wrote to everybody, all of us, and the Cardin legislation—I hope everyone will take a look at that because, as I said in a statement I gave on Tuesday morning, I have looked at what was suggested in the Kerry letter to make Israel more safe and more secure and some of the suggestions that Senator CARDIN had in his outline. These are things on which I hope we can work together. Put this to one side for the time being. Let's hope in the future we can work together to make sure the only true democracy in that part of the world, this ally of ours, is safe and secure. And we will continue everything we can to make sure they are, I repeat, safe and secure.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, there is no question the Israelis need a lot of reinforcement, no question they need to know for sure we are on their side because this administration has just entered into an agreement that by all objective standards could even threaten their very existence. So I think there is no question the Israelis need every reassurance we can possibly give them.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I want to rise and offer some thoughts on the comments we just heard from the majority leader and from our leader. I want to say a word about process, and

I want to say a word about partisanship.

Let me start with a word to all of my colleagues. I respect your position on this deal however you voted. I am not here to stand and name-call or chastise anybody who reaches a different position on this bill than I do because it is a hard matter, and I don't think we serve the body well by challenging folks who reach a different position.

Let me say a word about process. The allegation has been made on the floor in recent days that this vote, including the vote that was just taken, was somehow a procedural blocking of the vote on the deal. That is just not the case.

I was one of the coauthors of the review act that is currently before us, and as we worked on the act in the Foreign Relations Committee, everyone understood that it would take 60 votes to pass either a motion of approval or disapproval. We worked on the act in January and February—months before a framework was on the table. Democrats wanted a 60-vote threshold for a motion of disapproval, but Republicans wanted a 60-vote threshold for a motion of approval, and that was the understanding of everyone in the committee when we cast a 19-to-0 vote to pass this in early April, and it was clearly understood when we cast a 98-to-1 vote on the floor of this body.

A 60-vote threshold was understood. It was so clearly understood that that is the way we do things around here that 47 Members of the Senate put that in a letter to the leaders of Iran. So this is not an unusual thing to ask for a 60-vote threshold. In fact, the Democrats have asked twice in last 3 days: Let's have an up-or-down vote on the motion of disapproval with a 60-vote threshold—and our request for a vote on the merits has been twice blocked by the majority.

I hope we will have a chance to vote on the merits again next week under the 60-vote threshold that we all agreed to, but regardless of whether we do or whether we don't, this is a completely transparent vote because all 100 Members of the Senate have indicated what their position is. I respect everybody's position, but it is very clear, and the clear rule is, under the review act we just passed, by this vote this deal will now go forward as we agreed it would a few months back.

Partisanship. The majority leader suggested the position that is being taken on this side of the aisle is just to protect the President. I find that insulting. That is basically saying that on this side of the aisle my colleagues didn't do the work to dig into the deal. So let me just say a word about my colleagues—my colleagues in the minority in this body.

This deal was announced on the 15th of July. Did anyone on this side of the aisle run out and take a position on the deal within hours after it was out? Did anyone on this side of the aisle say, yes, I know what I am going to do and

I haven't even read the bill. Has this side of the aisle in lockstep all taken exactly the same position with respect to this bill? No.

On this side of the aisle, we haven't approached it in a partisan way. On this side of the aisle, every Member took the time to master the details and make their own decision. Some announced their decision a few days after the deal was announced, some announced their decision 7 weeks after the deal was announced. On this side of the aisle there is a difference of opinion—42 of us support the deal, 4 of us do not support the deal—but we respect each other's opinions, and we have approached it as a matter of conscience.

So I categorically reject the statement and the implication by the majority leader that this is just something over here that is being done casually to protect the President. I would ask my colleagues in the majority: Compare the diversity of opinion and the time it took to reach an opinion and the respect that we have for each other's position—compare that on this side of the aisle with your own track record on this bill, with the speed with which people announced that they were opposing it, some even admitting they were opposing it before they read it.

Contrary to the claim of the majority leader that there is no bipartisan support for this deal, I have to say, Senator John Warner, Republican, 36-year Member of the Senate, chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee, wrote with Senator Carl Levin, former chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee, "Why Hawks Should Support the Iran Deal"; Brent Scowcroft, National Security Advisor for two Republican Presidents and general, strongly supports this deal; GEN Colin Powell, Republican, Secretary of State, strongly supports this deal. There is bipartisan support for this deal. It is just that in this body the minority has been willing to have differences of opinion and respect those differences and not approach this in a partisan manner. That is not exactly the case with respect to the other side. I applaud my colleagues for treating this as a matter of conscience, for reaching the conclusions they reached, even differences of opinion, and respecting each other's views.

Under the terms of the review act, as we agreed to it, we have now taken a vote. Unless the majority will allow us to have a vote on the merits, pursuant to the 60-vote threshold, this vote will stand and the deal will go forward. I hope we can vote on the merits. I hope the majority will agree to let us do what we agreed to do when we passed the review act just a couple of months ago.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I was not planning to speak—I know Senator CAPITO is next in line—but I am really disappointed in my friend from Vir-

ginia indicating that somehow people on this side of the aisle did not study this deal, did not spend time understanding the details, and somehow people on this side of the aisle, in a knee-jerk way, made their decision. That is an insult, not something I would expect—not something I would expect to come from my friend on the other side of the aisle.

I have enjoyed so much working with him and I will continue to. I respect him greatly. But, look, I don't want to start tit-for-tatting this. Certainly Senator FEINSTEIN came out immediately in support of this, NANCY PELOSI came out immediately in support of this, and no doubt there were some people on this side of the aisle that did the same. I came out in opposition for this after—after—two Democrats had come out in opposition. So I wish those comments had not been made.

We had 12 hearings in the Foreign Relations Committee, well attended by people on both sides of the aisle. I just take offense that somehow, because there is bipartisan opposition and only partisan support—that somehow those who support are more bipartisan. Now, I don't know. That is a leap I have not heard.

I have said hundreds of times that if this deal achieved what the President said it was going to achieve, I would be voting for it. If this dismantled Iran's nuclear program, I would be voting for it. If this didn't industrialize their program, I would be voting for it. He said it would end their nuclear program. There would be 100 votes on the floor for that. This is a far cry from that.

So I am sorry to have this kind of conversation on the Senate floor, but I have to say I have sat here listening to the speeches. I think people on both sides of the aisle have thought a great deal about this. I do think there has been extreme pressure. My friends on the other side of the aisle have told me they have never been addressed in such a personal manner by the administration—never. So, yes, there has been pressure. I understand that, by the way. If the shoe were on the other foot, it would be taking place. I got that.

But, look, I think the debate has been thoughtful. I think, by and large, the vast majority of people on both sides of the aisle have been thoughtful. After the debate we have had, I am discouraged that my friend on the other side of the aisle would indicate that somehow because there is bipartisan opposition—bipartisan opposition—the most informed Members on the other side of the aisle, the ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee and the former ranking member and chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, are voting against that—and because we happen to agree with the leading Members on the Democratic side, we are partisan? So I am sorry.

Now, back to the procedure. There is no question—I have said this over and

over—I understand regular order, and this bill was drafted under regular order. I got it. I understand that certainly the procedures in this body are that cloture is to end debate, and that takes 60 votes. I got it. It doesn't take but about a week here to understand the importance of cloture.

So I have always known, and I have said this, that a threshold to get us to a place for final passage was going to be 60 votes. But we also passed the bill with 98 votes that said we wanted to vote. One Senator was missing who supported it. It would have been 99 to 1.

So, look, I understand there can be debate about filibuster and all of that, but to say there was some preagreement—I mean, the text of the deal, the text of the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act says that we are going to go through regular order. We caught a lot of grief over that as a matter of fact. I am sorry.

A lot of people on our side wanted a privileged motion. We understand the leader on the other side didn't like privileged vehicles because he felt he lost control of the floor. We discussed that thoroughly last January.

So, look, I understand how cloture is used. I understand how cloture is used. I got it. I understand it takes 60 votes, people in here saying, yes, we agree that we should end debate and, yes, we want to move on. I know that hasn't happened today. I understand a lot of times cloture is used as a vote, as you just indicated you believe that it does, but I just want to say, again, there has been no agreement. We understand the threshold. We understand the hurdle. We understand we didn't achieve it today. But to say that Members on this side somehow—because we agree with the leading Members on the other side that this deal doesn't accomplish the goals the President said he wanted to achieve, that that makes us partisan, I am sorry, I disagree.

We had many discussions in our office about the merits of this and the demerits of this. The fact is, I do think this agreement is fatally flawed. I am despondent over the fact that when we had a boot on the neck of this rogue nation that is the No. 1 exporter of terrorism around the world—when we had a boot on their neck—we gave away our leverage, and in 9 months—in 9 months—they are going to have all their money back, the major sanctions relieved, and no apparent change of behavior. Even Secretary Kerry in his letter to us said he doesn't expect that.

So, look, I am disappointed that we have agreed, that the administration has agreed, and that, unfortunately, a minority of people in this body agree, and they have kept us from being able to send a disapproval to the President to veto. I am disappointed, when an agreement has been agreed to by this the President and by others that allows them to industrialize their nuclear program and gives them incredible—incredible—economic access.

I think maybe the Senator might have responded to some recent comments on the floor. I hope that is the case. But I haven't seen anything but dignity on this floor over the last several days, people being incredibly knowledgeable—which they never would have been without this bill that the Senator from Virginia helped us bring about, crucial, in helping make that occur.

But what has happened here is everybody in this body now knows more about this than they ever would have. Everyone has taken the time, I think, to understand this in great detail. And just because there are a few people who come out quickly on our side and on your side—and on your side—that doesn't diminish the fact that people have arrived at their decisions based on conscience as to whether they support it or not. I am disappointed, on the other hand, that we weren't able to move beyond cloture and to a final vote.

With that, I yield the floor.

My understanding is Senator CAPITO now has the floor.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, could I ask my friend to yield to me for 2 minutes? And I apologize to my colleague, but two of my favorite members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Through the Chair, two of my favorite members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee who have been critically important to us having this debate on foreign policy—Senator KAINE and Senator CORKER—they are two Members I deeply respect.

Let me just make this observation. I think Senator CORKER is absolutely correct. As a result of Senator KAINE and Senator CORKER—and I am proud of the role I played—the Members of the United States Senate have had more information about a major foreign policy issue than in the history of this country. We have had the exposure to classified briefings. We have had the incredible opportunity to try to understand the JCPOA and to make our independent judgments on that. So I think this process has worked the way it should work.

I share disappointment that we couldn't go to a vote on the merits with a 60-vote threshold because I think that was what was anticipated, and we all understood it was going to take 60 votes to move this. I think it would have been better if we went directly to that type of a vote rather than what has gone forward. So I just want to underscore that.

The other point I want to underscore—and I agree with Senator CORKER and Senator KAINE—is that many Members of the Senate, in a relatively short period of time, made a decision. They didn't think it was a close call, so they made their judgments. In reality, it was a lot more Republicans than Democrats. But that was the case. A lot of Members took a lot of time to

try to understand this and really labored on the issue. I know that because I made my official position known just about a week ago, and I know in talking to many colleagues the process they went through.

I don't question the motives of any Member. I think each Member is trying to do what they believe is in the best interests of our country. I know the two Senators—I know them personally. I am just making my own observations. I know that is how they believe also. But I do think the process we set up lent itself to getting the material, waiting for the hearings, listening to the administration make their point, reading the classified documents, trying to understand how the IAEA interacts in the review process—that it was important to understand all of that before drawing a conclusion.

I applaud most Members of the Senate who dove into it in order for that to be the case. I needed to make that point. I can tell you this: With Senator CORKER and Senator KAINE, I really feel blessed to serve on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I think our country is well served by both. I know that we are going to work together to provide our country the strength it needs to deal with the international challenge and to carry out the responsibility of the Senate.

I thank the Senator for yielding.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, before I start my formal remarks, I would like to make a few comments about what has occurred in terms of the cloture vote and in terms of some of the discussion that we have had most recently.

I wanted to react, first of all, to something the minority leader said in his remarks. He basically said that we, as Republicans, are trying to rewrite history. He went into a long explanation of why he believed that. It really struck me, with these young folks who are sitting right here in front of us. We are not trying to rewrite history. We are trying to write a future for these young kids that is safer, that is strong, where we as the United States are making agreements that are in their best interests—not just for tomorrow or the next 5 years or 6 years but the next 30, 35, 40 years. I am not interested in rewriting history. But writing history for the future I am interested in.

The other reaction I have is that I am very disappointed in what has happened here, that we can't have a straight up-or-down vote. When I was in the West Virginia Legislature, in the house of delegates, believe it or not, our votes were not taken. They were voice votes, except in very rare occasions when we would have a rollcall. We all know the difference between a voice vote and a rollcall vote. A rollcall vote is a part of history. People see exactly what you are intending and

how you are going to vote. On a voice vote, you can almost say: Well, I voted yes or I voted no. Nobody can really pin you down on that.

I was one of the few Republicans in the house of delegates who voted in favor of making every single vote we had a rollcall vote. I am pleased to say, the legislature didn't change it that year but they finally did change it.

As the Senator from Virginia said, everybody knows what everybody is going to do on this vote. I don't understand what the controversy is to move forward over the procedural motions and to then have that vote to have it as a part of history. This is your rollcall vote. This is your voice on this Iran agreement. I hope next week the body changes its mind, we move forward, and we have an affirmative vote on the motion of disapproval.

Today I want to talk, obviously, about these issue because I have deep concerns about them. I believe that this debate should revolve around three key questions. Will this agreement eliminate Iran's path to a nuclear weapon? Will it improve the security situation in the Middle East? Will it make America safer for the young, for us, and for the future generations?

Unfortunately, after much study I have concluded that the answer is no to all of these questions. I do not believe the President's agreement would make America safer or our allies safer. To the contrary, the agreement will provide Iran with the resources to continue to finance terror throughout the Middle East and around the world.

Even if Iran were to comply with this agreement in full, this deal virtually guarantees that Iran will become a nuclear threshold nation with an industrial nuclear program. We know that. It is legitimized in this agreement. Iran is the world's largest state sponsor of terrorism. Everybody has said that in this body. It is acknowledged nationwide. The windfall of cash that will flow to Iran—the signing bonus and the continuing impact of sanctions relief under this deal—will only increase its ability to prop up the Syrian regime, finance Hezbollah, and threaten America's allies such as Israel.

One of the actions you learn when you grow up is that past behavior is a great predictor of future action. Even as its own economy has been hampered by the economic sanctions and the pressure from those sanctions brought Iran to the table, in the name of “our people are suffering”—whether it is food or whether it is economic conditions—what have they been doing? They have been financing terror in their region. Terrorism is a priority for them, even as their own people are suffering.

National Security Advisor Susan Rice agrees. She says: “We should expect that some portion of that money would go to the Iranian military and could potentially be used for the kinds of bad behavior that we have seen in the region up until now.”

That is the National Security Advisor. The President and the Secretary of State have said that the sanctions will snap back into place if Iran violates this agreement. I have been in Washington now for 15 years. I have never seen anything snap anywhere in the Halls of Congress. We know that the current sanctions against Iran cannot be easily snapped back. We know that. It doesn't even pass the sniff test, as we say.

It took more than a decade for the United States, working with our allies, to construct the sanctions that brought Iran to the table. This type of effective sanctions regime cannot be brought back over and over. I have listened to a lot of speeches. A lot of my colleagues on both sides, no matter how they voted, what they believe, have said exactly the same thing. On another note, we need to examine the end of the international restrictions on selling ballistic missile technology to Iran and the end of the conventional arms embargo contained in this agreement.

The Chairman of our Joint Chiefs of Staff told the Senate Armed Services Committee in July that "under no circumstances should we relieve pressure on Iran relative to ballistic missile capabilities and arms trafficking." The administration chose to reject this advice. It really surprised many of us who did not know that these were even on the table. We didn't even know they were part of a bargaining chip that anybody was going to play.

The President's agreement would remove all international limitations on Iran's missile program in 8 years, contradicting early promises from the administration that restrictions would remain in place. Ballistic missiles are not a necessary component of a peaceful nuclear program. Iran's continued efforts to improve this technology should send a clear message to this Chamber of their intentions. In addition, the arms embargo on conventional arms will be lifted in 5 years.

Indeed, Iran's President said last month: "We will buy, sell and develop any weapons we need and we will not ask permission or abide by any resolution for that."

The end of the arms embargo and ballistic missile restrictions will strengthen Iran's ability to threaten Americans, our allied forces, and our citizens. The President's agreement does not contain the necessary enforcement measures to protect future generations from a nuclear Iran. Any agreement worthy of congressional approval should include rigorous, immediate inspections of suspected nuclear sites.

Senior administration officials publicly called for "anywhere, anyplace"—I heard it repeatedly—inspections. Yet the President's agreement fails to live up to that. Indeed, Iran can block access to suspected nuclear facilities for 24 days or even longer. We have not even seen these side deals. This is part of the discussion. The bill that we

passed that said that we were going to have the right to debate this says explicitly in the language that the side agreements were to be turned over to Congress for our inspection before we made this vote.

Finally, those who support ratifying the Iran agreement frequently argue that the only alternative is war. I disagree. I reject that notion. Under that false misguided premise, the American people are being told we should simply accept any deal, regardless of how flawed it may be. When asked if our only option was the agreement or war, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said that "we have a range of options."

The President's agreement does not live up to the administration's prior statements on important items such as inspections, elimination of advanced centrifuges, and ballistic missiles. A better agreement with Iran could be forged from the positions taken by senior administration officials during the negotiation.

A better deal was possible. The American people should accept nothing less. Some argue that we should approve this deal, despite its faults, and then use the threat of separate legislation or tough talk to keep Iran in check. To me that is just seeking cover. Those of us who are going to vote in agreement with this Iran deal are then going to turn around in a week, 10 days or 2 days and say: Let's get tough on Iran on this. Let's make sure we protect Israel. Let's give more military aid to Israel. All of the rhetoric you are already hearing we can do now. We can do that now by disagreeing with the Iran agreement that the President has put forward. The better course for us is to reject this agreement and reopen negotiations.

I believe that stronger sanctions could also force Iran to accept a better agreement that will improve the security of the Middle East and the world. The danger to the United States, Israel, and other American allies posed by Iran is real. As the current refugee crisis and prior acts of terror clearly demonstrate, instability and violence in the Middle East reverberates into other parts of the world.

I do not believe that the President's agreement reduces that threat of violence or adds to the stability of the region. Instead, the agreement will strengthen Iran's position—you can already tell by their swaggering bravado of rhetoric that we hear—and leave the United States with fewer ways to combat nuclear proliferation. For those reasons, I will vote to reject the President's nuclear agreement with Iran.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I rise today for the 110th time to ask my colleagues to wake up to climate change. Long after today's debate has died down, it will still be looming and

threatening. We stand now at the precipice of an environmental catastrophe. The burning of fossil fuels has unleashed a flood of carbon pollution that is pushing the climate system planetwide into conditions that are unprecedented in human history. It has already permanently altered the world that we will leave to future generations. If we keep sleepwalking through this and allow the carbon flood to continue, we will leave even bigger changes and risk absolute catastrophe.

Last month marked the 10th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. When that storm made landfall in Southeast Louisiana on August 29, 2005, it was a category 3 hurricane. Katrina's 125-mile-per-hour winds pushed a massive storm surge before it that overtopped New Orleans' systems of levees and flooded the city. By the end, Katrina killed an estimated 1,200 people and caused more than \$100 billion in damage. Images of broken levees, flooded streets, and people stranded on their rooftops are seared into our national memory. This natural disaster—compounded by man-made errors—showed how vulnerable we are to major storms and how vigilant we must be in planning for these extreme events.

We can't say that climate change caused Katrina, but we do know that climate change increases the risk posed by future storms. The oceans are warming, and warmer water temperatures load the dice for more intense storms and heavier rainfall. Meanwhile, sea levels rise on the shores of the gulf coast and the Southeastern States. Storm surges riding in on higher seas will push even more floodwater inland. For those who suffered in the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, we owe them to learn from that catastrophe and take to heart the human threat we face from climate change—lost lives, lost property, and scarred communities. But that seems unacceptable to some on the Republican side. That would be admitting to the scale of the problem, would oblige them to offer a solution, and would offend the fossil fuel industry. The polluters' grip on the Republican Party is remorseless.

President Obama went to New Orleans to honor the memory of those lost in Katrina and to hail the city's resurgence. But get this: Before the President's visit, Louisiana Governor and Republican Presidential candidate Bobby Jindal sent a letter to President Obama urging him not to talk about climate change, not to insert what he called "the divisive political agenda of liberal environmental activism." Really? So when is it OK to talk about climate change, and what does Governor Jindal have to say about it? "I'm sure that human activity is having an impact on the climate," he said. "But I would leave it to the scientists to decide how much, what that means, and what are the consequences." Sounds to me like just another version of that Republican climate denial classic, "I'm not a scientist."

OK, Governor. Let's leave it to the scientists. The scientific community has determined that human activity is responsible for just about all of the warming we have observed around the globe since the 1950s.

In 2012, scientists from Louisiana State University and the Southern Climate Impacts Planning Program, which is a consortium of researchers from NOAA, LSU, Texas A&M, and the University of Oklahoma, reported on the risks climate change poses for Louisiana and the gulf coast. Through their research, they found the following:

Over the past century, both air and water temperatures have been on the rise across the region.

Rising ocean temperatures heighten hurricane intensity, and recent years have seen a number of large, damaging hurricanes.

In some Gulf Coast locations, local sea level is increasing at over 10 times the global rate, increasing the risk of severe flooding.

Saltwater intrusion from rising sea levels damages wetlands, an important line of coastal defense against storm surge and spawning grounds for commercially valuable fish and shellfish.

I don't need to tell the Presiding Officer the importance of the fish and shellfish industry to the State of Louisiana.

The study's lead author, Hal Needham, said:

Climate change is already taking a toll on the Gulf Coast, but if we act now to become more resilient, we can reduce the risks, save billions in future costs, and preserve a way of life.

I certainly don't need to tell the Presiding Officer about the way of life.

Dr. Needham continues:

The Gulf Coast is one of the first regions to feel the impacts of climate change.

Sea level rise is already an immediate problem for Louisiana, and it is one that is going to get rapidly worse.

This chart comes from the New Orleans Times-Picayune. It shows how sea level rise will inundate the Louisiana coast. This area on the chart is New Orleans. Red areas, such as these, will be lost underneath 1 foot of sea level rise, 2 feet of sea level rise will inundate the orange areas, and the yellow areas will be lost and will disappear under water at 3.3 feet—1 meter—of sea level rise.

According to analysis from the Risky Business Project, mean sea level at Grand Isle, LA, will likely rise up to 2.4 feet by 2050. That takes us over the orange. It will rise up to 5.8 feet by 2100—i.e., at the end of this century. All of the red, all of the orange, all of the yellow, and more will be inundated. The Risky Business Project estimates that by 2030, almost \$20 billion in existing coastal property in Louisiana will likely be below mean sea level. People own that property. That is \$20 billion that will be lost. That is a lot to ask people to pay. By 2050, that number—the value of lost land to sea level rise—increases to between \$33 billion and \$45 billion.

The science is clear. Just look to the scientists at LSU, Tiger scientists. The

threat is real. Yet, for Governor Jindal, climate change should not be mentioned. It is inconvenient.

Republican Presidential candidates—except one, the senior Senator from South Carolina—would rather avoid any talk of it. They all protest the President's Clean Power Plan to limit carbon emissions from powerplants, but which of them offers an alternative? None. And, like his fellow candidates, Governor Jindal's stated position is to have no plan.

State and national scientific agencies and experts, local officials around the country, corporate leaders, military professionals, physicians and health care professionals, and faith leaders are all telling us this is a problem and begging us to wake up. Yet, the Republican Presidential candidates and, frankly, the Republican Party here in the Senate have nothing—nothing. They don't even want to talk about it.

The American people are in favor of action. Polling from Stanford University and the New York Times shows that two-thirds of Americans, including half of Republicans, favor government action to reduce global warming, and two-thirds, including half of Republicans, would be more likely to vote for a candidate who campaigns on fighting climate change. So why doesn't the GOP have a climate plan?

Regular Louisianans are doing their part to rebuild their State's natural defenses. Common Ground Relief, a Lower Ninth Ward-based operation aimed at creating resilient gulf coast communities, has been planting marsh grass and trees—about 10,000 trees every year—in the wetlands and barrier islands along the Louisiana coast. Those natural barriers can absorb some of the power of big storms and take some of the pressure off the new levees. Last July, New Orleans mayor Mitch Landrieu joined Pope Francis at the Vatican to discuss global challenges, including climate change. Mayor Landrieu recalled the memory of Katrina. I will quote him:

We have now become a warning to all the others. Neglected environmental degradation has consequences. The poor are hit the hardest and they suffer the most. The levees broke, the water flooded in, and in the blink of an eye, the Gulf of Mexico surged over the rooftops of a great American city. Thousands of us, many of the most vulnerable who couldn't find a way to evacuate the city, were left behind as if their lives did not have value.

We know that we are loading the dice for more damaging weather with our relentless carbon pollution. To pretend this threat does not exist is to put property at risk, to put communities at risk, and to put American lives at risk. And incidentally, it is also to put our heads in the sand.

Eventually the Republican Party is going to have to break itself free from the clutches of the fossil fuel industry. They are going to have to. They are losing the American people, their own young voters. And they are going to

have to rise up to their duty to serve the people of their States and of this country. It is my hope that when they get around to doing that, it won't be too late, but it is time to wake up.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The esteemed Senator from Alaska.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I rise to add my voice for the bipartisan disapproval of the President's nuclear agreement with Iran that we have been debating all week and that we will continue to debate. I do so in the spirit that resulted in 83 U.S. Senators from both sides of the aisle writing a letter just last year to the President of the United States. This letter hasn't gotten a lot of attention in this debate, and I certainly think it should.

In that spirit, the Senate, in an incredibly bipartisan way—by the way, several of those Senators are still here. There were 41 Democrats, 41 Republicans, and 1 Independent who signed this letter to the President of the United States saying: These are the strategic goals we want in this agreement, these are the goals we should have for the security of the United States, and these are the goals we think will protect America and our allies. None of these have been met in the nuclear agreement we have been debating. This letter says that Iran must dismantle its nuclear weapons program and it must be prevented from ever having a path to a nuclear bomb. It also states that Iran should have no inherent right to enrichment.

I commend my colleagues to reread this letter. The President's nuclear deal clearly does not meet the goals that are laid out in the letter. Nonetheless, it has become clear that a number of Senators on the other side of the aisle are going to vote to support the President's agreement despite having signed that letter. That is going to be a personal decision for them, but if you are a signatory, you ought to take another look at the letter you signed to the President and the American people in 2014.

I will lay out a few of my concerns about the deal. I think many of my colleagues have done a fantastic job this week. I don't want to name names, but there are so many on both sides of the aisle—again, bipartisan—who have raised their concerns about the President's Iranian nuclear deal.

One of the biggest frustrations I think so many of us have seen as we have done our sacred duty in this body—to read the agreement, to understand the details, to go to all of the hearings and briefings, to reach out to experts in the field—as we have raised questions about this agreement, what we don't get is straight talk. What we have been getting, unfortunately, is spin.

I think Senator COATS did a great job yesterday of explaining how this agreement is filled with ambiguities, with language that allows it to mean so many different things to so many different people, including Iranians. Let

me provide a few examples that many of us have raised and that I have spoken on the floor about in the past, but I think they are important enough and they bear repeating.

First, Secretary Kerry came and said to us: There is no grandfather clause in this agreement. So we see Europeans rushing now to invest in Iran. The Secretary said there is no grandfather clause. Here is what paragraph 37 of the agreement says:

In such an event that sanctions are reimposed, the provisions in this paragraph would not apply with retroactive effect to contracts signed between any party in Iran or Iranian individuals and entities prior to the date of application.

That sure sounds like a grandfather clause to me, but we are told it is not.

Second, there has been much talk about this snapback provision, but there is no provision in this agreement that says “snap back.” We talked about how we are going to immediately increase sanctions overnight.

I had the opportunity to be a part of the Bush administration’s team that was economically isolating Iran. We went around the world to our allies—we had to threaten, in many cases, our European and other allies to divest out of Iran. That is how we got the economic isolation of Iran. It took years to do this. It took years. Yet, this administration is saying: Overnight, despite the fact that European companies are already in Tehran investing, we are going to snapback sanctions overnight. It is not a snap. Divestiture out of Iran is a slog, and it will take years, again. The snapback is a fallacy.

Finally, Senator AYOTTE and others have done a great job of raising questions about a basic scenario that is laid out—very important—with regard to other paragraphs in this agreement. In an important hypothetical, which is actually very likely, we have asked Secretary Kerry and Secretary Lew—a number of us: Let’s assume sanctions are lifted. In six to nine months, the economy starts humming, the Annex II sanctions are lifted, is Iran still a sponsor of terrorism—the world’s largest sponsor of terrorism—and they commit an act of terror. This body goes to reimpose sanctions; whoever the next President is agrees because of some heinous act of terrorism. What Iran can do is cite either paragraph 26 or paragraph 37 that states: “If sanctions are reinstated, in whole or in part, Iran will treat that as grounds to cease performing its commitments” under the entire agreement.

So what happens? We resanction Iran for a terrorist action that they are likely to take. They say: Hey, we can legally walk. Read paragraph 26. Read paragraph 37. Read our letter to the U.N. Security Council. It is all laid out there. They walk, legally; the sanctions are lifted, they are still the No. 1 sponsor of terrorism in the world, their economy is humming, and they are on the verge of getting a nuclear weapon.

We have asked that question to the administration leaders who negotiated

this deal time and time again, and they have never given us an answer as to why that is not a correct reading of this agreement—because it is.

These are just a few examples. Many of my colleagues have done an outstanding job of looking at different parts of this agreement and expressing our concerns, but just as important is what our constituents think. What do Alaskans think? What do the American people think? Like all of my colleagues, I spent my recess back home in Alaska, and I spoke to hundreds of my fellow Alaskans at townhall meetings, roundtable discussions, our State fair.

Remarkably, I did not have one Alaskan come up to me saying: I really think you should support that Iranian nuclear deal of the President’s. Every single interaction I had was in opposition to this agreement, and it was visceral, particularly among Alaska veterans. We are a proud State. We have the largest number of veterans per capita of any State in the Union. But whether they were recent vets from Iraq or Afghanistan or Vietnam vets, they literally would look at me and say: What on Earth are we doing? Help me understand that, Senator SULLIVAN. What are we doing? Visceral.

During this debate this week, even some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle—they are not big supporters—are using terms such as “seriously flawed,” “deeply flawed,” “serious concerns,” “falls short in many areas.” Across the country, Americans are overwhelmingly opposed to this deal by a margin of 2 to 1. And the more the public knows about the deal, the more they dislike it. These poll numbers in terms of support are dropping. Right now, the latest poll, 21 percent of Americans—that is it—support this deal.

The people are wise. They elected us to listen, and we should do so. They might not know all the details as some of us do, but they know—they know—I saw it from my constituents—that something is fundamentally wrong with this agreement.

So we have to ask ourselves why. Why? Why are Americans—the more the President and John Kerry talk about this agreement, the more Americans become opposed to it. And why are even the supporters, as we saw this week, so tepid in their support?

Now, all negotiations require compromise. All negotiations require concessions. We all know this. We have negotiated. In fact, many of my colleagues, particularly on the other side, emphasize this. Concessions are part of what we do. They are part of an agreement, but at a certain point, concessions become humiliations. If they are too significant and too frequent, concessions are humiliations. No one likes to be humiliated, but especially proud citizens of a great Nation like the United States do not like to be humiliated.

That is what I believe is going on here. This, I believe, explains the vis-

ceral reaction we have seen in opposition to this deal. Americans feel that our concessions not just to any country, but to the world’s No. 1 sponsor of terrorism, have gone so far that they are humiliating to our great country. People feel that our concessions have gone so far, it is as if we are treating Iran as an equal, and Iran is not an equal to the United States of America.

I first started to realize this and sense it during a closed briefing with Under Secretary of State Wendy Sherman. She was sent to brief the Senate on the secret side deal between the IAEA and Iran involving the inspection regime at the Parchin military facility, long suspected as Iran’s premier nuclear weapons facility. Senator MCCAIN spoke about this briefing yesterday. For those of us—again, Democrats and Republicans—who went to this briefing, it was pretty remarkable, and I am not saying that in a positive way. It was actually unbelievable to have a senior member of the Obama negotiating team first begin the briefing by telling us she had seen this secret side deal, but she didn’t have a copy of it, and she wasn’t allowed to have a copy of it because it was just between Iran and the IAEA. So the Iranians had it, they were reading it, but not us. No matter that the President had just signed a law—the Corker-Cardin law—that required the administration to provide this agreement to the Congress. No matter that the United States is a board member of the IAEA—not only a board member; we are the country that came up with the idea of the IAEA. This was an American initiative in the 1950s. Our board member could have demanded this agreement, but we were told it was just between Iran and the IAEA.

This, of course, was an affront to the law, to the American people, but the worst was yet to come. Under Secretary Sherman then actually described the substance of this secret side deal, the essence of which we all know now because it was eventually leaked to the press. Here is the essence of that side deal: Iran will conduct the inspections at the Parchin nuclear facility by themselves, with no one else present. Let me repeat that. No one else is allowed in that facility. Iran will conduct the inspections by itself. They will take air samples. They will take environmental samples. She was literally describing Iranian officials with a camera filming themselves in the facility with no one else there, and they were going to give this film and these samples—whose chain of custody we can’t trust—to IAEA officials, who are not allowed in the facility.

Every jaw in that room dropped, every Senator—Democrat, Republican. I remember looking around the room. We couldn’t believe it. Heads were shaking. The U.S. Senate was stunned.

After claims by the President that his agreement had the most intrusive inspection regime ever, after being told by the President that his agreement

had nothing to do with having to trust Iran—it wasn't about trusting Iran—we are told in a briefing by one of his top negotiators that with regard to the most suspicious nuclear weapons facility site in Iran, the Iranians will inspect themselves.

The AP broke the story, and when they did, they stated that the secret side deal at Parchin will “let the Iranians themselves look for signs of the very activity they deny—past work on nuclear weapons.”

Let me repeat that. This is the AP. The side deal—that we are agreeing to, by the way, in the Senate, or that some of my colleagues are—will “let the Iranians themselves look for signs of the very activity they deny—past work on nuclear weapons.”

This secret side deal is absurd on its face. This secret side deal will let Iran cheat with impunity. This secret side deal is fully and unequivocally based on trusting the Iranians, regardless of what the administration officials say about the deal. And this secret side deal is not just some kind of concession; it is a humiliation. The IAEA has never done this with any country, ever—especially a country that is a serial cheater and continues to be the world's No. 1 sponsor of international terrorism.

For these reasons alone, as Senator PERDUE mentioned yesterday, the Senate should reject the President's deal. It certainly doesn't square with many of the demands in the March 2014 Senate letter from 83 U.S. Senators last year, one of which was: We believe Iran must fully resolve concerns addressed in the United Nations Security Council resolutions, including any military dimensions of its nuclear program. Well, that is not going to happen in Parchin. We believe Iran must also submit to a long-term and intrusive inspection and verification regime—83 Senators said this to the President. That is not going to happen at Parchin either. But these kind of absurd concessions go much further than the Parchin inspection side deal, and they are the driving force for why so many Americans reject this deal so overwhelmingly.

When we agreed to lift sanctions on General Soleimani, the head of the Quds Force, that wasn't a concession, that was a humiliation. Senator ERNST said last night it was a slap in the face to our veterans, many of whom were killed by IEDs supplied by General Soleimani.

When the leader of Russia, one of our so-called international partners, met with General Soleimani recently to discuss arms transfers, that wasn't a concession, that was an outrage.

When the United States, in the President's agreement, states that it wants “a new relationship with Iran” and they don't respond in kind in the agreement but respond by saying “Death to America” in their weekly chants, that is not a concession, that is a humiliation.

When we agree in the agreement to “protect Iran from nuclear security

threats, including sabotage”—that is in the agreement—that is not a concession, that is an outrage.

When the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff says that under no circumstances should Iran ever obtain ballistic missiles and only days later the Secretary of State agrees to lift the ban on ballistic missiles and conventional weapons, that is not a concession, that is an abdication.

When we go into minute detail in this agreement—dozens of pages on our obligations to lift sanctions, including our obligations to literally import Iranian pistachios—that kind of detail—yet we can't get four American hostages released, that is not a concession, that is a humiliation.

Finally, when we give the world's largest state sponsor of terrorism up-front relief and tens of billions of dollars in a signing bonus and we are told by administration officials that certainly Iran is going to use some of those proceeds to conduct terrorism activities against Americans and our allies, that is not a concession, that is a surrender.

It is a culmination of the so-called concessions that give our constituents the sinking feeling that the President's agreement is decidedly not in our interest. That is dangerous for our country, and it is the scope and number of these concessions that solidify the sense that during these negotiations we have slowly and subtly ceded our power to a country that just recently was considered the world's No. 1 pariah state.

When these negotiations began, every country in the world was standing against Iran and international sanctions were crippling them. That is what brought them to the table, as Senator CORKER mentioned earlier today. And guess what. This was due not to the international community's leadership, not to China, not to Russia, not to the European Union, this was due to the leadership of the United States of America, the Members in the Democratic Party and Republican Party of the Congress, and members of the Bush administration and the Obama administration. That is what brought them to the table—American leadership, Congress, and the executive branch working together.

Remarkably, the deal the President and the administration have negotiated has flipped all of this on its head. It is incredible that we are at this point, as if we are treating Iran as an equal, blessed by all the world's great powers. Make no mistake, we are, as Senator CARDIN and others mentioned—this deal legitimizes Iran's nuclear program and it blesses Iran as a threshold nuclear power.

So the question has to be asked: Why not stick the original goals set out by the Senate just a year ago, in 2014, in the letter to the President to dismantle Iran's nuclear capabilities, to prevent them from having enrichment capability.

Well, according to the President, he has stated, “There is no one who thinks that Iran would or could ever accept that, and the international community does not take that view that Iran can't have a peaceful nuclear program.”

The Congress of the United States and the Senate of the United States thought that just a year ago. So it is remarkable that the President says now there is no way we can get that done. Why not go back to Iran and the P5+1 and get a better deal, one without the serious flaws that so many Members, Democratic and Republican, have stated over the last week?

In a remarkable interview with the Atlantic Monthly, Secretary Kerry talks about how, if we sought a better deal, if he went back and sought a better deal—a deal, by the way, that 83 Senators said we needed to have—we would be “screwing Iran and the Ayatollah, and we will be confirming the Ayatollah's suspicion that the United States is untrustworthy.” That is a quote from the Secretary of State of the United States. In another interview, Secretary Kerry said he would “be embarrassed” to go out and try for a better deal.

What is most remarkable of all is that in attempts to sell this deal to the Congress and the American people, the President and his team no longer emphasized that Iran, the world's biggest sponsor of terrorism, is isolated, is a pariah state, but instead they emphasized that our most important ally in the Middle East, Israel, is, and so, too, is the Congress, and so, too, will be the United States if we don't approve the President's deal.

On August 5, the President stated that “every nation in the world that has commented publicly supports this agreement, except Israel.” And U.N. Ambassador Samantha Power, our Ambassador, recently stated, “If we walk away, there is no rewrite of the deal on the table. We would go from a situation in which Iran is isolated to one in which the United States is isolated.”

This rhetoric represents a fundamental shift in a world view. We have been debating this Iranian deal for the past week, but we really are debating America's role in the world. There is a world view that is taking hold with this administration, one where America is no longer the leader of the free world but a player as part of an international partnership, one where we don't lead by example but are being led by others, one where we are leading from behind, one where we are embarrassed—that is in the Secretary of State's words—rather than steadfast, and one where we are more worried about “screwing” the head of a pariah state than standing with our most steadfast ally in the region, the nation of Israel.

This kind of deal that we are debating today is what an echo chamber produces. This is what happens when you want a deal too badly, when you will

not walk away from the table during negotiations, when your view of America's leadership role in the world is tentative, tepid, and not confident, and this is what happens when you fail to listen to the American people. This is what happens. Right turns wrong, good turns bad, a country that recently was a pariah state, the largest state sponsor of terrorism, is steering the negotiations and welcomed to the community of nations, and top officials in the United States of America are afraid that we will become isolated if we demand a stronger deal that keeps us and our allies safe. This, in effect, is how bad and dangerous policy is made.

I would like to conclude by talking about our role with regard to this agreement. History has shown that on most major foreign policy issues, when the United States of America is most effective and most strong is when the Congress and the Executive are working together. That is the way our Constitution was structured, and that has been America's history since the founding of the Republic. The examples abound from this Chamber. The Louisiana Purchase—something important to you, Mr. President—passed the Senate, bipartisan majority vote 24 to 7; NATO was ratified by bipartisan majority, 82 to 13; the first strategic arms limitations negotiations with the Soviet Union, bipartisan majority, 88 to 2; even something as controversial as relinquishing control of the Panama Canal to Panama, bipartisan majority, 68 to 32.

More recently in 2010, this body voted to further reduce nuclear arms with the Russians, bipartisan majority, 71 to 26.

One common area of agreement is that everybody who has talked about this agreement this week on both sides of the aisle has stated it was one of the most important national security issues facing the United States in a generation, whether and how and to what degree the world's largest sponsor of terrorism is going to obtain a nuclear weapon.

But perhaps for the first time in U.S. history, an agreement that is so grave and important for the national security of our great Nation is going to move forward, not with a bipartisan majority in the U.S. Senate but a partisan minority in both Houses. Such result will undermine America's strength and I believe shows a profound disregard for our constitutional form of government. Even the Iranian Parliament is going to need a majority to pass this agreement, but the world's greatest democracy will not, and I believe that is another humiliation.

Finally, just a few hours ago we saw what has been a theme throughout this entire process—how the administration has been dismissive of the American people, not wanting a role for the American people through their representatives in Congress to weigh in on this deal.

If the President is so proud of this agreement, he shouldn't be directing

Democrats to filibuster it. I believe the vote we just took is a sad day for the U.S. Senate. If this deal was good for the country and our allies, I would certainly be gladly supporting it, but it is not, and a bipartisan majority of the Senate knows it. That is why a bipartisan majority of this body is voting against it. We are doing so because it is a bad deal, a deal that will make the world more dangerous, and we are doing so because the American people see that, too, and they are counting on us to protect them.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise to discuss the agreement reached in July on Iran's nuclear program.

Preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon is one of the most important objectives of our national security policy. I have strongly advocated for and supported the economic sanctions that brought Iran to the negotiating table. While the agreement is by no means perfect, I have concluded it is our best available option to put the brakes on Iran's development of a nuclear weapon, and that is why I support it.

I do this with my eyes wide open to the nature of the Iranian regime, including its human rights abuses, its unjustified detention of American citizens, its threats against Israel, and its destabilizing actions in the region, including its support for terrorist groups.

Over the last several weeks, I have reviewed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action as agreed to by the P5+1 nations and Iran. I have attended briefings with national security and nuclear experts. I have spoken with Minnesotans who hold strong views on both sides of this issue. Finally, I have met with the Ambassadors from the other five nations involved in these negotiations and asked detailed questions about what their countries and others would do if Congress does not approve the agreement.

After a lot of thought and discussion, I have concluded that an Iran in possession of a nuclear weapon would make an already volatile situation much worse by greatly increasing the danger to Israel and our other allies in the Mideast. If we were to reject this agreement, Iran would be able to continue all of its destabilizing activities while continuing its pursuit of the most destructive weapon in the world.

I have deep respect for those who hold different views on this subject and acknowledge that this was a difficult decision. As I have proven through my votes and my actions since coming to the Senate, I am deeply committed to protecting Israel's security, including full aid funding and support for security measures such as Iron Dome.

In conjunction with my support for this agreement, I will push the administration and my colleagues in Congress for additional assistance to Israel and our other regional allies to

strengthen their security. I will also continue to support efforts to combat terrorist groups in the Mideast.

These are the reasons that led to my decision.

First of all, I believe this agreement, while imperfect, curbs Iran's ability to develop a nuclear weapon. Before negotiations began in 2013, we were moving steadily closer to the nightmare scenario of Iran obtaining a nuclear weapon. Even under the pressure of massive economic sanctions, Iran was continuing to build its nuclear infrastructure. It was installing more and more centrifuges, accumulating a stockpile of enriched uranium, and building a reactor capable of producing spent fuel that can be reprocessed into plutonium.

That point deserves to be emphasized. The situation prior to the negotiations was not a good one. We had the strongest sanctions regime in place, and it has brought Iran to the table, but Iran was still on the path to developing a nuclear weapon. We have heard that without the restrictions imposed on its program, Iran could produce a weapon in as little as 2 to 3 months. This negotiated agreement will put the brakes on Iran's development of a nuclear weapon.

As recently noted in an open letter by 29 top American nuclear scientists, including 6 Nobel Laureates, the agreement contains "more stringent constraints than any previously negotiated nonproliferation framework."

Specifically, the agreement requires Iran to first of all give up 98 percent of its stockpile of enriched uranium and not enrich uranium to the levels needed to create nuclear weapons. It would require Iran to disconnect two-thirds of its centrifuges, with restrictions on where and how it can operate the remaining ones. It limits uranium enrichment to a single facility. Fordow, the fortified site that Iran long sought to hide from the world, will be converted into a research facility. The core of Arak, the heavy water reactor, will be removed and filled with cement, rendering it unusable for the production of weapons-grade plutonium.

It will open its nuclear facilities to continuous monitoring and allow stringent inspections of its uranium supply chain. It will permanently commit to never seeking, developing, or acquiring nuclear weapons.

Second, if Iran cheats on this deal, sanctions can be reimposed or, as they say, snapped back. In addition—and this is very important to me—U.S. military options remain on the table, just as they were before the deal. We are not bringing back ships. We have not agreed to do anything to take the military option off the table. This agreement by no means limits or lessens our country's ability to use force against Iran if it violates this agreement and pursues nuclear weapons.

If Iran attempts to develop a nuclear weapon, the terms of this agreement

will have given us more information and more limited targets in the event that military action becomes necessary.

It should also be noted that this agreement does not in any way constrain the ability of future Presidents or Congresses to authorize military force against Iran.

Third, rejecting the agreement would lead to a splintering of the international partnership that has been critical to preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, that has been critical to bringing them to the table, and that has been critical to these economic sanctions. They would not be nearly as effective if we had done them alone.

Some have argued that we should reject this deal so we can return to the negotiating table. Yet, I recently met with the Ambassadors representing the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Russia, and China. Not one of them believed that abandoning this deal would result in a better deal. Instead, it would allow Iran more time to build up its nuclear infrastructure. The countries that have been our partners in this effort would no longer be unified. The sanctions regime would start to fray, splintering the international consensus on Iran and leaving its nuclear program unconstrained.

Finally, this agreement must move in parallel with increased commitment to security assistance for Israel and our other allies in the region. In my view, the most troubling issue with this agreement that one of my colleagues has addressed is that sanctions relief Iran will receive after it implements key restrictions on its nuclear program will provide it with additional funds, and a certain portion of those funds could be funneled into Iran's destabilizing activities around the region.

I am deeply committed to the security of our allies and want to ensure that we are taking steps, in parallel with this nuclear agreement, to enhance our allies' ability to defend themselves. I want to see further enhancements of our security assistance to Israel, greater defense cooperation with our Arab allies, and stronger actions to counter Iranian militant activities.

We are in the midst of discussing other initiatives in this Chamber to provide additional assistance and enhance the security of Israel and our allies in the region. I will work with my colleagues and the administration as we move forward. That is how I will end. I call upon the administration and all of my colleagues to work together to help ensure that this agreement works and to help ensure that we provide the assistance necessary to protect Israel and our allies.

As I said earlier, I have deep respect for people who have different views. We have had a lengthy debate. We have looked at this agreement now for over a month and had time to ask questions of the Energy Secretary and the Sec-

retary of State and anyone we could about this agreement. So the time is now here where I believe this agreement should be approved. And, again, we have different views. I think it is very important, given the heated nature at times of this debate, that we come together when this is over to stand up for Israel, our beacon of democracy in the Mideast, and continue to work together on a bipartisan basis on our Mideastern policy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I would like to thank the majority leader for scheduling this debate about the agreement struck by the Obama administration and the leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran. It is important to highlight right up front what this deal is. It is nothing more than a political agreement between President Obama and the current leaders of Iran. This deal does not have the support of the American people, nor will it have the consent of their elected representatives here in Congress. At no point in the course of negotiating this deal did the Obama administration seek the advice and consent of the Senate or display any respect for the constitutional limits of the Executive in foreign affairs.

Nevertheless, I am glad the Senate has been debating this agreement because this is how the Senate is supposed to function, on the basis of open and robust deliberation. I hope it is how the Senate will function well into the future on matters of national security and domestic policy.

But if the debate we are trying to have today could be congressional deliberation at its best, the Obama administration's deal with Iran is the product of diplomacy at its worst. As the negotiations neared completion earlier this year, President Obama began building his case for the deal on the specious claim that the only alternative to the deal was war.

This black-or-white setup—the notion that the art of statesmanship is little more than navigating a series of binary either-or propositions—is plainly absurd. It misses the mark. We learned this from the fiasco following the New START treaty in 2010. At that time, President Obama and Secretary Clinton warned that it was the only way to reset the relationship with Russia. But now, 5 years later, we know it was, in fact, the starting point for the worst era of U.S.-Russia relations since the Cold War. But the Obama administration has repeated this “my way or war” maxim with such faithful devotion and emotional conviction that it appears at some point along the way they began to believe it themselves. They actually started to believe it, even though it was wrong.

Just look at the facts regarding this deal.

Fact No. 1: The centerpiece of the agreement is the lifting of significant portions of the multilateral financial,

energy, and transportation sanctions currently imposed against Iran. Lifting these sanctions—lifting them prior to any meaningful action by Iran in exchange—will immediately give the world's largest supporter of terrorism access to tens of billions of dollars in currently frozen assets. That is just on day one. Welcoming Iran with open arms to the global marketplace will provide untold future riches to Tehran's revolutionary government.

The current sanctions are not perfect, but they are in place for a very good reason: to restrict Iran's access to resources we know its radical leaders will use to acquire nuclear weapons and continue exporting terrorism not only throughout the region but throughout the world. This is not a matter of speculation. It is not a matter of hyperbole. It is exactly what Iran's own leaders have told us in no uncertain terms.

Those sanctions were originally put in place in response to Iran's repeated violations of previous nuclear agreements. It is complete fantasy to believe they can be revived in the future when—not if but when—they cheat on this deal.

Fact No. 2: Nothing in the agreement will prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon. It won't. Under the terms of this deal, the Iranian Government will be allowed to conduct research on more advanced nuclear centrifuges after only 8 years. After 15 years, there will be no limits whatsoever on their nuclear fuel production—no limits whatsoever. To believe that this deal will stop the Iranian nuclear weapons program requires an act of blind faith. In fact, it requires us to disregard the facts altogether.

Fact No. 3: This agreement will increase Iran's access to conventional weapons and ballistic missiles. It will do this by providing for the removal of the U.N. conventional arms and ballistic missile technology embargo. If this seems out of place in an agreement that was supposed to be about Iran's nuclear weapons program, well, that is because it is. It is entirely out of place for this type of an agreement. It was never supposed to be part of the deal. But you see, in the eleventh-hour negotiations, the Ayatollah demanded it, sensing—rightly—that the Obama administration was unlikely to object.

This deal is not the work of savvy negotiation. No, this deal is the product of desperate capitulation. For years, this administration has been dead set on reaching a deal, any deal with the mullahs in Iran. That is why they got the deal they did, an agreement that fulfills a wish list for the Iranians and the sprawling network of terrorist groups that depend on their largesse, including Hezbollah, Hamas, the Houthis in Yemen, and Bashar al-Assad's tyrannical regime in Syria.

And what does the United States get in exchange? Well, we get a promise from the Ayatollah to abandon Iran's 35-year quest for deliverable nuclear

weapons—weapons they crave for the explicit purpose, as they put it, of wiping Israel off the face of the Earth and fulfilling the aspiration of their infamous motto “Death to America.”

Evidently, this is good enough for the Obama administration and for the supporters of this deal, but it is not good enough for the American people—not even close.

In fact, the public opposes the proposed deal by a 2-to-1 margin, but not because they are clamoring for war with Iran. The truth is that most Americans would prefer a diplomatic solution to the problems posed by Iran’s apocalyptic, nuclear, ambitious theocracy. But this is not a diplomatic solution. This diplomacy won’t solve anything.

I would note that the public’s overwhelming opposition to the Iran deal did not catch the Obama administration by surprise. In fact, public opposition to the deal was one of the primary reasons why the administration decided not to submit the agreement to the Senate for ratification as a treaty.

When Secretary Kerry testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee just a few weeks ago, I asked him to explain why the agreement with Iran was not submitted to the Senate as a treaty for ratification—ratification requiring two-thirds of the Members of this body who support it. His answer was, in effect, to say that the deal does not amount to a treaty because it is a multilateral agreement, one that involves more countries than just Iran and the United States.

But the inclusion of multiple parties to an international agreement has absolutely no bearing whatsoever on whether it can be considered a treaty. There is no shortage of examples of this, of examples of multilateral agreements that have been ratified by the Senate, including the Chemical Weapons Convention, including the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

In fact, as I pointed out to Secretary Kerry at the time, the State Department’s own Web site provides a definition of the word “treaty” that includes multilateral agreements, which is why I think the more honest and troubling answer was the one that he provided just 1 day earlier when Congressman REID RIBBLE of Wisconsin asked Secretary Kerry the exact same question: Why does the Obama administration not consider the Iran deal to be a treaty?

This was Secretary Kerry’s response to that question asked just 1 day earlier in the other body. Secretary of State John Kerry said as follows:

Well, Congressman, I spent quite a few years trying to get a lot of treaties through the United States Senate, and frankly, it’s become physically impossible. That’s why. Because you can’t pass a treaty anymore.

This is indefensible. Secretary Kerry’s appeal to expedience shows an ignorance of—or disdain for—both principle and precedent. The Senate has not lost the ability to ratify a treaty.

No, the Senate is perfectly capable of ratifying treaties, as it did 160 times during the George W. Bush administration. It is just reluctant to ratify unpopular treaties and treaties that undermine U.S. interests. There is a distinction between these two types of treaties.

From the Obama administration’s perspective, this is a problem with the Senate. But from the perspective of the Constitution, this is the purpose of the Senate, and it is exactly why the framers included the Senate in the treaty-making process.

Article II, section 2 of the Constitution states that the President “shall have power, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, to make treaties, provided two-thirds of the senators present concur.”

The sharing of the treaty-making power between the Executive and the Senate is not a quirk, nor is it optional. It is a constitutional command. Both branches are essential. They are essential to this process. Without both branches, you cannot make a treaty and have it take effect.

The Executive is best suited to manage negotiations with foreign nations, but only legislative consent can grant the kind of broad political consensus necessary to ensure that the United States lives up to the terms of an agreement in the long run.

In “The Federalist,” Alexander Hamilton defended the sharing of treaty-making power between the Executive and the Senate. He wrote: “The history of human conduct does not warrant that exalted opinion of human virtue which would make it wise in a nation to commit interests of so delicate and momentous a kind, as those which concern its intercourse with the rest of the world, to the sole disposal of [the] President of the United States.”

Of course, not all international agreements are treaties, and those that aren’t do not need legislative consent in order to go into effect. But, historically, agreements that make long-term commitments or include significant changes to the United States’ relationship to another country have been considered treaties and have, therefore, been submitted to the Senate for approval.

As I see it, the Iran deal fits both of these categories quite comfortably. The terms of the deal purport to extend well beyond President Obama’s remaining time in office. According to the administration’s own reckoning, this agreement will fundamentally alter the relationship between the United States and Iran.

People of good faith can disagree about whether the Iran deal should be considered a treaty or merely an executive agreement, though not on the farcical grounds provided by Secretary Kerry.

But this debate is worth having. This is the debate that we should be having. It is worth it for the sake of our national security and for the health of

our political institutions, and it is a debate that must include the Senate, just as the Constitution itself requires.

The past few months have been a case study of the dysfunction and the danger that result when the Executive chooses to ignore, instead of engage with, the Senate in order to determine whether an international agreement should be considered a treaty.

The President’s go-it-alone approach has become all too familiar in the realm of domestic policy.

President Obama has spent much of the last 6½ years justifying his will-to-power Presidency on the basis of expediency. Constitutional restraints and historical precedent have only slowed—never stopped—the President’s routine abuse of power to unilaterally impose his domestic policy preferences on the country. Now, with this Iran deal failing to receive the support of even half of the Senate, the President appears willing to extend his imperial Presidency, even to the area of foreign policy.

We must do everything in our power to stop this Iran agreement from receiving congressional sanction. The facts are clear. This is a bad deal for global security, it is a bad deal for our allies—including, especially, Israel, our strongest ally in the Middle East—and it is a bad deal for the American people. But we must also learn from this experience.

Later this year, the Obama administration will negotiate a major climate change agreement, what will be known as the Paris Protocol. Already the administration has indicated it does not intend to submit the protocol to the Senate for ratification, even though the agreement would call for a significant expansion of the already broad powers of our Federal regulatory regime.

It would empower unelected, unaccountable bureaucrats to seize even more control over the American energy sector and insert themselves ever further into the everyday lives of the American people.

On account of its expected size, scope, cause, and effect on the American economy, failure to submit the Paris Protocol to the Senate as a treaty would be an unprecedented and dangerous abuse of Executive power.

Now is the time to make clear to ourselves, to the White House, and to the American people that the Senate understands and plans to defend the centrality of the treaty-making process to the negotiation of international trade agreements and the full and rightful role of the Senate in that important process.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from the great State of Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I join my colleagues this afternoon in speaking on a joint resolution on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran.

I wanted to make clear my position on this agreement. We use the term

“deal” in the Senate talking about the Iran deal. I almost feel like we need to put it in quotation marks because in my mind a deal is something that has been negotiated in give-and-take, back-and-forth, and there is an agreement that is relatively evenhanded or fair on both sides. I do not believe that this deal is a fair deal. I will support the resolution of disapproval when we have that opportunity for that vote.

This is not where I hoped I would be on this because I do believe—and I do believe strongly—that diplomacy is the way that we solve disagreements around the world. I think that most of us were actually very hopeful when the administration began negotiation some years ago with the aim and with the purpose that Iran would cease its nuclear program and end its progress toward a nuclear weapon.

I believe that our world would be safer if we were able to achieve those goals—without question—and these are goals that the President himself articulated. He stated specifically that this was his aim.

But, unfortunately, this agreement fails to meet those goals. Simply put, this agreement is not in our national interest.

After considerable study and considering the terms of the agreement and the views of experts on both sides, the many closed hearings that we had, the many public hearings that were out there, I have concluded that this is not just a bad deal, but I think this is a sad deal. I think this is a sad time for us because of this deal.

In fact, this is a deal that borders on capitulation and appeasement, a deal that rewards nuclear extortion. Those are pretty tough words, but that is where I feel we are—a deal which is far worse than no deal at all.

I reject, absolutely out of hand, the statement from our President that we have no choice, that it is either this deal or it is war. That is a false choice, and I think it is wrong to put it that way before the American people.

Certainly, these negotiations were hard. They were very difficult. That is the nature of these negotiations and deliberations.

But other options do exist, and we have been on the floor for several days talking back and forth about them. Well, what else is there? Well, first, there are the sanctions that got Iran to the table in the first place. There are even stronger sanctions that can be imposed. There is continued diplomacy. It is not an apt description to say it is this deal or it is war.

Before I discuss my specific objections to the agreement, I would like to place my views on this agreement in context with my views on international agreements in general. I am certainly not opposed to joining with international partners in making the world a better and a more peaceful place. On issues ranging from the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to the new START treaty,

I have worked with the administration. I have been there.

I approach these issues with an open mind and an open heart, and I have strived to maintain an open mind on this agreement. But quite honestly it is hard, it is really hard, if not impossible, to maintain an open heart when it comes to Iran. Iran is not a country that is open to resetting relations with a world that clearly is seeking peace and a civil society. Before it entered into this agreement, Iran wasn't talking about a reset here, and it has shown no evidence of changing its ways because of where we are with this agreement now.

We hear every day that Iran's senior leaders are leading the chant “Death to America.” And they said this before the agreement. One would think maybe now there has been this agreement that tone would change. But no, despite all the efforts of Secretary Kerry and others, they are still chanting “Death to America” today. That hasn't changed.

In fact, just yesterday the Supreme Leader called again for the obliteration of Israel. These are not rabble rousers in the street. These are the leaders in Iran who are calling repeatedly for “Death to America” and to wipe Israel off the map. Say what you will about the reportedly moderate President Rouhani, but the facts speak for themselves.

We have The Washington Post's Tehran correspondent who has been in jail since July of 2014. Iran continues to hold him on trumped-up espionage charges, and he is not alone. Iran also holds an American pastor, a U.S. marine who traveled to Iran to visit family members, and it is believed to hold Robert Levinson, who was kidnapped from an island off of Iran's coast. Iran continues to persecute Christians and Baha'is in its own country. These are flagrant human rights violations.

The facts do not suggest to me this is a regime that is ready for reform. I am not speaking about human rights violations that occurred at an early time in history. This is here, this is now. These persecutions, these human rights violations, these imprisonments are right here, right now.

If this were not enough to cause one to question whether we can trust Iran to change its ways, consider this. Iran is a key funder of Hamas and Hezbollah, committed to the destruction of the State of Israel. It funds the rockets which are launched into Israel's sovereign territory from Gaza, southern Lebanon from Syria, and these rockets don't just threaten Iran's sworn enemy, the State of Israel. They also endanger civilian populations in the countries from which they are launched by inviting, if not demanding, immediate retaliation from Israel. So one has to ask the question: Is this a nation that is committed to peace and good global citizenship? Hardly. It just is not.

I think we recognize—and the Presiding Officer, in his capacity before

coming to the Senate, has been engaged in diplomatic negotiations, and he knows that in diplomacy we often end up negotiating with those who don't share our views, don't share our values. It is important for us to look at what Iran gives the world in return for this agreement. In light of the progress Iran has made in its quest to develop a nuclear weapon, it was imperative to me that an agreement—if we were going to get to an agreement—must not simply arrest Iran's nuclear ambition but require the abandonment of those ambitions. It had to stop those nuclear ambitions. The agreement before us, viewed in absolutely the most favorable light, simply does not accomplish this goal. At best we have pushed the pause button. At best it puts a pause on Iran's final preparations towards becoming a full-fledged nuclear state.

And even then, to regard that pause as meaningful requires me to suspend disbelief. I have to suspend my disbelief that Iran can be trusted to live up to the terms of the agreement. I must believe that even though Iran is not required to fully disclose the military dimensions of its existing nuclear program, the international verification mechanisms are indeed effective. I can't do that.

I must also believe that other nations will be inclined to meaningfully call out Iran on violations and not simply rationalize them away in order to keep up the appearances this deal is working. I don't think that is going to happen.

Each of these assumptions is just a bridge too far. I can't get there. And I hear from Alaskans, as I know my colleague in the Chair does, when they are asking me: Hey, what happened to these anytime, anywhere inspections this administration was promising? Now they are not there. They are asking about these snapback sanctions. It is a pretty catchy word, but what exactly does it mean? How feasible is it? Is it practicable in its implementation?

And I can't look at them squarely in the eye and say: Sure, you can count on those snapback provisions to come into play. And even if we could get them back in, we know those sanctions would be weaker, would be less effective than what we have now.

Alaskans are also asking: Well, what about these side agreements—these side agreements between Iran and the IAEA—how is it only they know what is going on there?

And we can't go back to our constituents, we can't go back to the good people of the great State of Alaska and say with confidence: Yes, we have these provisions on verification that give us that security; yes, snapback sanctions are practicable; no, there are no side, secret agreements. We can't do that.

Before causing the release of billions of dollars in frozen Iranian assets and allowing sanctions to expire, I need some clear and convincing and unequivocal evidence this agreement will

achieve what it set out to achieve. Ideally, I seek Iran's commitment to change its ways, to act as a responsible player on the world stage. It was through sanctions—and we keep hearing this on both sides, whether you support this agreement or do not support this agreement—that Iran was brought to the table in the first place by crippling sanctions. We will lose our leverage with Iran once those sanctions are dialed back. Whether it is 9 months or longer, we lose that leverage. So I am very concerned about where we are with unfreezing assets and releasing sanctions.

Many of us have spoken on the floor here about how Iran will now have billions of dollars to spend creating further chaos in the Middle East or arming Israel's enemies or developing rockets which someday might be used to deliver nuclear weapons. You can count me as one of the skeptics. I do not believe Iran will choose to do good with these newfound sources of revenue. I do not believe that they are going to be putting these resources into rebuilding roads and hospitals and infrastructure. I am that skeptic, and I think I join many here in noting what we have seen even under crippling sanctions, when Iran didn't have access to the frozen resources and funds that will be available to them under the deal, they still found a way to direct and finance acts of terrorism throughout the Middle East. Should we give them more money in their hands to do more mischief? Count me as a skeptic.

As you know, I focus a great deal on the energy issues as the chairman of the energy committee. I am very concerned about the opportunities this agreement affords Iran's oil sector—opportunities that come at the expense of America's energy producers and our overall economy in the near term. The Energy Information Administration here in Washington and the International Energy Agency in Paris estimates that lifting sanctions on Iran could raise Iranian output by some 700,000 barrels per day.

Now, we recognize that production is going to take some time to ramp up and to bring back online—perhaps well into next year and beyond—but it will come. What we do have in place and ready to go is Iran's floating storage facilities. They are ready to go now and to move that oil out onto the market. And these supplies will do what? They will work to push down global oil prices.

We know that will be a good thing for consumers everywhere, but what do we do here in this country? We ban the exports of our oil. In effect, we sanction ourselves. So we are going to let Iran have access to the global oil market, put some 700,000 barrels a day of oil out there, gain new revenues to help their economy, and also do whatever else they may do—create that havoc and chaos and mischief, and fund terrorism.

We are going to see oil tankers filling up at Kharg Island instead of Gal-

veston. They are going to be setting sail for our allies in South Korea, Japan, and elsewhere. Our diplomacy is going to benefit Iranian producers while our antiquated domestic export ban is going to harm American producers.

This misalignment—and I have outlined it in several white papers out there—can be corrected. We can correct it legislatively, and the administration can correct it. And now that the President claims he has his veto-proof margin of support for the Iran deal, I think there is even greater urgency for this Congress to move on this issue. That is another issue, but I think it is important to raise. It is just one of the many issues that I believe demonstrates that Iran is looking at this as a good deal for them. They got the most out of this negotiation and gave the least.

Iran's strategy of nuclear extortion has not been disabled. To the contrary, it has been rewarded. What do they get? What do they get? They get a pathway to nuclear weapons, ICBM program, conventional weapons, sanctions gone, and a stronger economy. It sounds like a pretty good deal for Iran. It sounds like a pretty good deal for Iran but certainly not for the security of this country and not for the security of our allies.

I suspect that many of my colleagues, even some who are voting for this agreement, concur with my conclusion that Iran is getting a better deal. We have seen a flurry of comments not only in print but we have certainly heard great discussion on the floor that this agreement is flawed, it is not what we wanted, and it is not what we would have negotiated.

The comments from colleagues supporting this say we have to take it because there is no other option here. The President has said it is this or it is war; there is no other option. If you don't like this plan, what is your plan? Then they say we can't have the administration walk away because American prestige will suffer if Congress forces the administration to walk away from this deal. This is not about American prestige, and this should not be about a President's legacy. This is about our security as a nation.

Just this morning, I met with a family with three young girls in high school from Juneau, AK. They were doing a walk-through of the Capitol, and they came over to my hideaway. We were talking, and I let them know I was finishing the comments on my statement here. We got to talking about this agreement, and they wanted to know my position on it. I said: Quite simply, I cannot support an agreement that fails to make our Nation a safer place, that fails to make the world a safer place.

It has been suggested that this agreement is better than no deal; in other words, that a bad deal is better than no deal at all. I cannot accept this. I cannot accept this, and I don't think this is a situation where we are holding out

for the perfect; to use the expression, we can't let the perfect be the enemy of the good. I am not looking for a perfect deal. I am not looking for a perfect deal, but I am demanding one that makes our Nation a safer place—safer with the deal than without—and this agreement doesn't do it. I place the blame firmly with the administration.

The President did not work with this Congress. He did not throughout the course of the negotiations try to align our expectations with the direction he was taking to determine what a good agreement might look like that we could all concur with.

So I am not surprised that this deal remains so unpopular with the American public. There are a bunch of polls out there. The latest one from Pew says only about 20 percent of the American people support this agreement. I do think it is important to note that on this floor we do have a bipartisan majority of Members in who oppose this deal. I understand that is true in the House as well. I think that is important. And I do think it is unfortunate, with the vote we took just hours ago, that we are not able to get to a straight up or down vote on the resolution of disapproval at this point in time. The whole premise of the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act—something that 98 of us agreed voted for, was that we, as the representatives from our respective States around the country, would be able to speak yea or nay to this issue by way of a vote.

The American people want Iran out of the nuclear weapons business—it is pretty simple—and that means dismantlement. The American people want their President to demonstrate backbone in the negotiations, not capitulation, not appeasement—not appeasement of Iran, whose leaders seem to take continued pride in this pattern of unacceptable and often reprehensible behavior. This deal simply does not get us there. That is why I join so many others in opposition.

I thank the Presiding Officer for the privilege of the time on the floor, and I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

MR. ENZI. Mr. President, I rise to urge my colleagues to oppose this agreement with Iran. And they are going to have another chance.

Traveling around Wyoming during August and part of September, I talked to hundreds of people. I found four who thought maybe we ought to give this a try—until I asked them this key question. I asked: Do you trust Iran? Now, I have 100 percent of the people saying no.

A contractor who had done business in Iran said that right after he signed the contract over there, the Iranian who was working the negotiations with him said: You do realize that when you sign the contract is when the negotiations begin. That is whom we are working with on this.

Iran's nuclear program is one of the most significant threats facing the

United States and the world today. The implications of this deal will have serious consequences for the Middle East and especially our allies in the Middle East.

Russia and China are especially interested in this deal because of how it changes the international playing field. The President was so pleased that Russia signed on. Well, of course they did. They get to sell unlimited arms and technology. They gave up nothing.

Ultimately, this deal will have serious consequences for the national security of the United States. I ask you, Do you trust Iran?

Several of my colleagues said there is no other alternative. That is how it always is with a contract or a treaty or an agreement. You have to vote for or against it. I am very disappointed in our negotiators. I don't think they were negotiators.

I remember the President saying we would be able to have inspections anytime. That is just as believable as when we were going through ObamaCare and he said: If you like your insurance policy, you can keep it. Nobody got to. This is in that same category, except this is more serious. We are talking about world peace. We are talking about security.

Sanctions brought them to the table. It was leverage. It worked. Then we gave that up so we could sit down and talk to them, and then we didn't leave the table when they wouldn't agree to things that were absolutely needed. What kind of negotiation is that? That is where you trust the Iranians?

Iran's goal is to use its nuclear program to extort its neighbors and threaten its enemies, and it has made it very clear that it considers the United States their No. 1 enemy. We cannot afford to make the kind of strategic blunder that would give Iran a nuclear weapon. We should not give up the advantages we have that were working to prevent Iran's nuclear ambitions. That is why we should oppose this deal. Again I ask: Do you trust Iran?

President Obama has said that if we don't accept this deal, then the only other option is war with Iran, but this isn't true. I don't think anybody believes that. It is the President's way of trying to convince the American people that his way is the only way—just like ObamaCare—and that is not true.

One of the advantages of the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act that was passed out of the Senate committee unanimously is that by requiring the President to submit the deal to Congress for review, both the House and the Senate as well as the public can see what is in the deal—kind of see what is in the deal.

I really object to the other side saying we didn't read that. We read what was available. I reviewed the deal. I have heard the administration's arguments in favor of it, and I don't believe this deal is the best way to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon. I

don't think it prevents them from getting a nuclear weapon.

I have heard from experts in diplomacy, from experts in arms control and proliferation, from experts in the military, from national security and intelligence experts who say that this deal is not the only way to prevent Iran's nuclear ambitions. Do you trust Iran?

I mentioned that the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act is important because it requires the deal and all its documents to be sent to Congress for review, but I do understand there are separate side agreements between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency—and so far as I can tell nobody from the United States has looked at those. Those have not been reviewed by Congress because they haven't been submitted for our review. I am told these side agreements deal with the military dimensions of Iran's nuclear program—the parts of Iran's program that will allow them to launch a nuclear weapon against Israel or American forces in the Middle East or eventually, with enough work, anywhere in the world, including America. You don't sell someone a weapon whose intent is to kill you. Do you trust Iran?

I am deeply concerned that we don't have all the facts about this deal. We need the facts about Iran's military program—facts about how confident the administration can be that Iran is complying with the rules. We should not move forward with any agreement until we have a full understanding of all of the components that are part of it and are convinced it is a good deal. Do you trust Iran?

Understanding all of the components of this deal isn't just about the documents that were submitted to Congress; it is also about understanding what happens when Iran has the freedom and resources to grab for power and position in the region. Do you trust Iran?

The administration has said this deal is a pathway to security and stability. Unfortunately, this administration has consistently misjudged critical moments in the region—most recently, for not taking the Islamic State seriously and developing a real strategy to defeat it. Agreeing to this deal is yet another example of the administration misjudging the difficult and dangerous situation in the Middle East by believing Iran will not take advantage of the situation to attack our allies and undermine American interests.

There are numerous ways Iran can take advantage of this deal, such as—mentioned frequently—using the huge cash infusion that comes with this deal to support Hezbollah or buying arms from Russia. This agreement is not a pathway to peace or stability. It is Iran's springboard to grow into the Middle East's most dangerous bully.

There is even a little provision in here that any contracts entered into before snapback can't be broken. How many contracts do we think they will hurry up and do if they get the right to

do them? They will do every one they need to do—exactly what they want to do. Do you trust Iran?

For more than a decade, the United States and our allies have used sanctions effectively to prevent Iran from achieving its nuclear ambitions. Those sanctions took years to implement and demonstrated the commitment of our international partners to prevent an outcome that would be a disaster. Under this agreement, we would be giving up those sanctions in exchange for the hope that we can trust Iran. It sounds to me like we are giving up the most important tool we have to prevent a nuclear-capable Iran in exchange for nothing. Do you trust Iran?

I urge my colleagues to oppose this deal. It is not the best we can get. We will have another opportunity to vote. It ignores the reality of the complex and dangerous political situation in the Middle East, and it relies on nothing more than hope that Iran will keep its promise, despite all the times Iran has failed to do so in the past. It trades an effective system of sanctions that has worked to prevent Iran's nuclear ambition for nothing. It gives Iran everything it needs to pour money and resources into attacking our allies and making the region more dangerous. I don't trust Iran, and I didn't find anybody in Wyoming who does.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN ECUADOR

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to call the Senate's attention to a situation I have spoken about previously, which is the ongoing crackdown by the Correa Government on what little remains of the independent media in Ecuador.

One of the things we have come to expect is that the press—and civil society organizations that expose corruption and challenge the officially sanctioned version of reality—are the first casualties in countries whose leaders are determined to remain in power at any cost.

Ecuador is a prime example. In 2013, President Rafael Correa issued a decree granting the government broad powers to intervene in the operations of non-governmental organizations, NGOs, including dissolving groups on the vague grounds that they have "compromise[d] public peace" or have engaged in activities that were not listed when they registered with the government. A modified version of the