

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. HOEVEN. I want to take several minutes to respond to some of the comments that were made here in regard to the farm bill, and specifically the Sugar Program. We have got a vote coming up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We currently have an order to move to the consideration of S. Res. 65 at 3:45 p.m.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, that is my resolution with Senator MENENDEZ. I do not mind yielding a couple of minutes to the Senator to make his points.

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

Mr. HOEVEN. I thank my colleague. I do want to respond to some comments that were made in regard to the Sugar Program and the cost of sugar for American consumers. It is very important to understand that the price of sugar in the United States is actually less than the international price. So because of the Sugar Program we have, American consumers benefit. Again, I want to reiterate that point.

Also I want to express how important it is to understand that we have low-cost producers in this country who are precluded from selling their sugar in markets such as the European Union because of tariffs and restrictions. As an individual who strongly supports international commerce and trade, on many of these issues I am down here talking about how we want to continue to expand our ability to export. I believe that. But at the same time, we have to make sure our companies and our farmers, our ranchers and our producers, particularly when we are talking about a farm bill, are treated fairly.

We have a situation where they operate internationally and they are precluded from many markets throughout the world, even though they are low-cost producers. That is what our Sugar Program is designed to do, to try to level that playing field. It does so effectively. The Sugar Program has cost this country nothing over the last decade. In fact, consumers in this country benefit from lower sugar prices than the international price, not higher prices.

I yield the floor.

SUPPORTING SANCTIONS ON IRAN

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 65, which the clerk will report by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 65) strongly supporting the full implementation of the United States and international sanctions on Iran and urging the President to continue to strengthen enforcement of sanctions legislation.

The Senate proceeded to consider the resolution, which had been reported

from the Committee on Foreign Relations, with an amendment.

[Strike the part printed in boldface brackets and insert the part printed in italic.]

S. RES. 65

Whereas, on May 14, 1948, the people of Israel proclaimed the establishment of the sovereign and independent State of Israel;

Whereas, on March 28, 1949, the United States Government recognized the establishment of the new State of Israel and established full diplomatic relations;

Whereas, since its establishment nearly 65 years ago, the modern State of Israel has rebuilt a nation, forged a new and dynamic democratic society, and created a thriving economic, political, cultural, and intellectual life despite the heavy costs of war, terrorism, and unjustified diplomatic and economic boycotts against the people of Israel;

Whereas the people of Israel have established a vibrant, pluralistic, democratic political system, including freedom of speech, association, and religion; a vigorously free press; free, fair, and open elections; the rule of law; a fully independent judiciary; and other democratic principles and practices;

Whereas, since the 1979 revolution in Iran, the leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran have repeatedly made threats against the existence of the State of Israel and sponsored acts of terrorism and violence against its citizens;

Whereas, on October 27, 2005, President of Iran Mahmoud Ahmadinejad called for a world without America and Zionism;

Whereas, in February 2012, Supreme Leader of Iran Ali Khamenei said of Israel, "The Zionist regime is a true cancer tumor on this region that should be cut off. And it definitely will be cut off.";

Whereas, in August 2012, Supreme Leader Khamenei said of Israel, "This bogus and fake Zionist outgrowth will disappear off the landscape of geography.";

Whereas, in August 2012, President Ahmadinejad said that "in the new Middle East . . . there will be no trace of the American presence and the Zionists";

Whereas the Department of State has designated the Islamic Republic of Iran as a state sponsor of terrorism since 1984 and has characterized the Islamic Republic of Iran as the "most active state sponsor of terrorism" in the world;

Whereas the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has provided weapons, training, funding, and direction to terrorist groups, including Hamas, Hizballah, and Shiite militias in Iraq that are responsible for the murder of hundreds of United States service members and innocent civilians;

Whereas the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has provided weapons, training, and funding to the regime of Bashar al Assad that has been used to suppress and murder its own people;

Whereas, since at least the late 1980s, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has engaged in a sustained and well-documented pattern of illicit and deceptive activities to acquire a nuclear weapons capability;

Whereas, since September 2005, the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has found the Islamic Republic of Iran to be in non-compliance with its safeguards agreement with the IAEA, which Iran is obligated to undertake as a non-nuclear-weapon State Party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, done at Washington, London, and Moscow July 1, 1968, and entered into force March 5, 1970 (NPT);

Whereas the United Nations Security Council has adopted multiple resolutions

since 2006 demanding of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran its full and sustained suspension of all uranium enrichment-related and reprocessing activities and its full cooperation with the IAEA on all outstanding issues related to its nuclear activities, particularly those concerning the possible military dimensions of its nuclear program;

Whereas the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has refused to comply with United Nations Security Council resolutions or to fully cooperate with the IAEA;

Whereas, in November 2011, the IAEA Director General issued a report that documented "serious concerns regarding possible military dimensions to Iran's nuclear programme," and affirmed that information available to the IAEA indicates that "Iran has carried out activities relevant to the development of a nuclear explosive device" and that some activities may be ongoing;

Whereas the Government of Iran stands in violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights for denying its citizens basic freedoms, including the freedoms of expression, religion, peaceful assembly and movement, and for flagrantly abusing the rights of minorities and women;

Whereas in his State of the Union Address on January 24, 2012, President Barack Obama stated, "Let there be no doubt: America is determined to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon, and I will take no options off the table to achieve that goal.";

Whereas Congress has passed and the President has signed into law legislation imposing significant economic and diplomatic sanctions on Iran to encourage the Government of Iran to abandon its pursuit of nuclear weapons and end its support for terrorism;

Whereas these sanctions, while having significant effect, have yet to persuade Iran to abandon its illicit pursuits and comply with United Nations Security Council resolutions;

Whereas more stringent enforcement of sanctions legislation, including elements targeting oil exports and access to foreign exchange, could still lead the Government of Iran to change course;

Whereas, in his State of the Union Address on February 12, 2013, President Obama reiterated, "The leaders of Iran must recognize that now is the time for a diplomatic solution, because a coalition stands united in demanding that they meet their obligations. And we will do what is necessary to prevent them from getting a nuclear weapon.";

Whereas, on March 4, 2012, President Obama stated, "Iran's leaders should understand that I do not have a policy of containment; I have a policy to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.";

Whereas, on October 22, 2012, President Obama said of Iran, "The clock is ticking . . . And we're going to make sure that if they do not meet the demands of the international community, then we are going to take all options necessary to make sure they don't have a nuclear weapon.";

Whereas, on May 19, 2011, President Obama stated, "Every state has the right to self-defense, and Israel must be able to defend itself, by itself, against any threat.";

Whereas, on September 21, 2011, President Obama stated, "America's commitment to Israel's security is unshakable. Our friendship with Israel is deep and enduring.";

Whereas, on March 4, 2012, President Obama stated, "And whenever an effort is made to delegitimize the state of Israel, my administration has opposed them. So there should not be a shred of doubt by now: when the chips are down, I have Israel's back.";

Whereas, on October 22, 2012, President Obama stated, "Israel is a true friend. And if Israel is attacked, America will stand with

Israel. I've made that clear throughout my presidency . . . I will stand with Israel if they are attacked.”;

Whereas, in December 2012, 74 United States Senators wrote to President Obama “As you begin your second term as President, we ask you to reiterate your readiness to take military action against Iran if it continues its efforts to acquire a nuclear weapon. In addition, we urge you to work with our European and Middle Eastern allies to demonstrate to the Iranians that a credible and capable multilateral coalition exists that would support a military strike if, in the end, this is unfortunately necessary.”; and

Whereas the United States-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-150) stated that it is United States policy to support Israel's inherent right to self-defense: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved,

SECTION 1. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

Congress—

(1) reaffirms the special bonds of friendship and cooperation that have existed between the United States and the State of Israel for more than sixty years and that enjoy overwhelming bipartisan support in Congress and among the people of the United States;

(2) strongly supports the close military, intelligence, and security cooperation that President Obama has pursued with Israel and urges this cooperation to continue and deepen;

(3) deplors and condemns, in the strongest possible terms, the reprehensible statements and policies of the leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran threatening the security and existence of Israel;

(4) recognizes the tremendous threat posed to the United States, the West, and Israel by the Government of Iran's continuing pursuit of a nuclear weapons capability;

(5) reiterates that the policy of the United States is to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon capability and to take such action as may be necessary to implement this policy;

(6) reaffirms its strong support for the full implementation of United States and international sanctions on Iran and urges the President to continue and strengthen enforcement of sanctions legislation;

(7) declares that the United States has a vital national interest in, and unbreakable commitment to, ensuring the existence, survival, and security of the State of Israel, and reaffirms United States support for Israel's right to self-defense; and

[(8) urges that, if the Government of Israel is compelled to take military action in self-defense, the United States Government should stand with Israel and provide diplomatic, military, and economic support to the Government of Israel in its defense of its territory, people, and existence.]

(8) urges that, if the Government of Israel is compelled to take military action in legitimate self-defense against Iran's nuclear weapons program, the United States Government should stand with Israel and provide, in accordance with United States law and the constitutional responsibility of Congress to authorize the use of military force, diplomatic, military, and economic support to the Government of Israel in its defense of its territory, people, and existence.

SEC. 2. RULES OF CONSTRUCTION.

Nothing in this resolution shall be construed as an authorization for the use of force or a declaration of war.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be now be 50 minutes for debate, with the Republicans controlling 30 minutes and the majority controlling 20 minutes.

The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, this is a debate where it does not matter who is speaking, Republican or Democrat, because we are speaking with one voice. That very seldom happens in American politics today, unfortunately. There will be 50 minutes divided, but really there is no division here.

S. Res. 65 has 91 cosponsors. That is very difficult to do. The Presiding Officer, Senator COONS, was an original cosponsor of the legislation.

What is S. Res. 65 all about? It is about the following: On March 4, 2012, President Obama stated:

Whenever an effort is made to delegitimize the State of Israel, my administration has opposed them. So there should not be a shred of doubt by now. When the chips are down, I have Israel's back.

This resolution is in support of the President's statement. When I heard that statement, it was music to my ears, because the Iranian nuclear program, the efforts of the Iranians to develop a nuclear capability, marches on as I speak.

Today, May 22, there are two articles, one in the Associated Press, one in Reuters, talking about AIEA reports and diplomats saying that Iran is pressing forward with the construction of a research reactor that would add to their nuclear capability in terms of enriching uranium to make a bomb, and that they have increased the number of centrifuges dramatically since April.

We have been trying to sanction Iran—very successfully, I might add. Senator MENENDEZ, my cosponsor here, the original cosponsor, will be here around 4. As to BOB MENENDEZ, there is no stronger supporter of the U.S.-Israel relationship than BOB, who is chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee.

We have worked on a resolution. The guts of this resolution basically are as follows: It declares the United States has a vital national interest in and an unbreakable commitment to ensuring the existence, survival, and security of the state of Israel. It reaffirms the support of the United States for Israel's right to legitimate self-defense. In the last paragraph, it is not an authorization to use force, but it says the following: That if Israel is compelled to take military action in self-defense, the United States will stand with Israel and provide diplomatic, military, economic support in its defense of its territory, people, and existence.

The whole resolution is about Israel having to defend herself against a nuclear-capable Iran. So when our President said in 2012 that “we have Israel's back,” that his administration has Israel's back, this is a chance for the Senate to say we also have Israel's back.

From my point of view, you cannot separate the threat the nuclear program in Iran creates from the United States and Israel. They are the same. The same threat Israel faces from a nuclear-armed Iran, a nuclear-capable

Iran, we face as a Nation. So people wonder, what will happen if that day ever comes? What would America do? Well, this is a statement by every Senator who votes yes—not an authorization to use force, but a statement—that if that day comes and Israel has to justifiably defend itself from a breakout by the Iranian regime to build a nuclear weapon, which could be the end of the Jewish state, we will have Israel's back economically, militarily, and diplomatically.

I cannot stress how important it is for that statement to be made by the Senate. Time is running out. Time is not on our side. As to the threat from Iran, since 1984 they have been characterized as the most active state sponsor of terrorism in the world. As we have sanctioned them to stop their nuclear ambitions, the amount of enriched uranium has grown. As we talk, they enrich.

We are going to have several Senators come down to voice their support for this resolution.

With that, I would yield to Senator HOEVEN for 2 minutes. The Senator has been an unwavering supporter of the United States-Israel relationship.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. I appreciate the opportunity to join my esteemed colleague from the great State of South Carolina in support of S. Res. 65, expressing our strong support for our close friend and ally, Israel.

This resolution right up front says—I want to read from the subheading in the resolution—“Strongly supports the full implementation of the United States and international sanctions on Iran, and urging the President to continue to strengthen enforcement of sanctions legislation.”

This is very important. I want to buttress a comment made by the good Senator from South Carolina, and that is through Kirk-Menendez and other legislation, we have provided authority for the administration to put the strongest possible sanctions in place against Iran to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon. We need to do it. We need to stand with Israel. We need to support our ally. This is not just about Israel, this is about security for the United States. This is about preventing Iran from getting a nuclear weapon.

Essentially what these sanctions do is they provide any country or company that buys oil from Iran cannot do business with our banking system. Think about that. Countries that buy oil from Iran would not be able to transact with the United States and U.S. companies. That would preclude them from buying Iranian oil.

Okay. Think about that. If Iran cannot sell its oil, it has no revenue. If it has no revenue, it is forced to stop its efforts to build a nuclear weapon. So the point is this: We cannot only have sanctions. What we are trying to do in this legislation is not only express support for Israel, again as the Senator

from South Carolina pointed out, but encourage and support the administration in completely enforcing the strongest possible sanctions against Iran so we do not have to go to the option of a military strike to take out their nuclear weapon capability. That is what this is all about. This is bipartisan—as the Senator said, 91 cosponsors. This is about saying we can get this done but we have got to impose these sanctions as strongly as we can. We have got to do it now.

Mr. GRAHAM. I thank the Senator from North Dakota.

Now I wish to recognize Senator AYOTTE for 4 minutes. We have got a lot of speakers here to talk about S. Res. 65. She has been there at every step of the way.

Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, let me thank Senator GRAHAM and Senator MENEDEZ for their leadership on this important Senate resolution, S. Res. 65. This is a resolution that is very straightforward. It says to our friend and ally Israel: We have your back. That means right now. If you look at the dangers confronting Israel, they are unprecedented dangers, from the situation in Syria, to threats from Hamas and Hezbollah, to the situation in the Sinai. But the greatest threat of all is Iran acquiring nuclear weapons capability. It is a country that has threatened to wipe Israel off the map.

Rightly so, the Israelis have said never again. As our country, we say never again. Because it is not just that the Iranians could acquire nuclear weapons capability and launch a missile against our country, it is that they are the largest state sponsor of terrorism. They could give that nuclear weapon to a terrorist. Then it is not just a threat to Israel, this is a threat to the safety of the world. That is why I fully support this resolution and why it has so many cosponsors in the Senate. To understand the deep friendship we have with Israel, what we share in terms of democracy in the Middle East, ultimately this threat is not just a threat to Israel, this is a threat to the safety of the United States of America.

This resolution is clear. If Israel is compelled to take military action in self-defense against Iran's nuclear weapons program, it urges the U.S. Government to stand with Israel, diplomatically, militarily, and economically. It also reiterates what my friend from North Dakota talked about, which is the policy of the United States to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon and reaffirms that we will continue to press for the toughest of economic sanctions.

To the leaders in Iran, understand there is much we do not agree on in this body. When we pass this resolution today, you need to know we are unified when it comes to stopping you from acquiring nuclear weapons capability, and that we will stand with our friend and ally Israel to make sure you do not present that type of grave danger to the safety of the entire world.

I thank my colleague from South Carolina. I thank my colleagues here who have supported this incredibly important resolution. Think about it. How often do we come together with 91 Senators to support legislation? This is about the security of this country. I look forward to this body passing this important resolution.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, at this time I wish to recognize a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, one of the strongest voices on national security in the body, a new member but someone who understands the world and is a tremendous supporter of the United States-Israel relationship, Senator MARCO RUBIO from Florida, for 4 minutes.

Mr. RUBIO. I thank the Senator.

I rise in support of these sanctions as well. Americans are perhaps tempted these days to take a step back from the problems in places in the Middle East and wonder why do we need to be active in resolving these thorny issues that often seem unsolvable. But yesterday in the Foreign Relations Committee, for example, we discussed Syrian legislation and debated how to address the growing repercussions of our policy of inaction as violence and instability spreads beyond Syria's borders. We cannot stand idly by and ignore the fallout from Syria. Americans need to remember that Iran is not just Israel's problem, it is ours as well.

Iran has been sponsoring terrorism and killing Americans for decades, most recently in places such as Iraq and Afghanistan. Iran has pursued an anti-American agenda, and its foreign policy has supported tyrants. It has undermined U.S. allies, and not just in the Middle East, through its terrorist proxies such as Hezbollah and what they are doing now to defend Assad in Syria, but they have even done it in our own hemisphere.

On top of these issues, Iranian leaders have denied that the Holocaust even happened. They threaten Israel's very existence. So we do need to strengthen our sanctions. We need to actually follow through with them. That is what this resolution calls on the administration to do.

But we also have to ensure that our international partners do that as well. I am pleased that this resolution calls on the administration to fully implement the sanctions we have already passed and approved.

These sanctions have not changed Iran's calculus. The sanctions alone are not enough because, as we have seen, Iran has added centrifuges, so they continue to enrich uranium and they get closer to a nuclear capability. Similarly, the approach of this administration to talk to Iran, trying what our European partners have attempted to do in the past, has also been unsuccessful. For more than 10 years now we and the Europeans have tried to negotiate—all with no results. Iran has only gotten closer and closer to a nuclear capability.

We need a new approach. One avenue that has not been adequately explored is using perhaps our greatest weapon, what Ronald Reagan called “the will and moral courage of free men and women.” That means speaking out more forcefully about the human rights situation in Iran.

This regime is brutally oppressive. It represses its own people. Read the 2012 State Department report. It talks about disappearances; cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment or punishment, including judicially sanctioned amputations and flogging; politically motivated violence and repression, such as beatings and rape; harsh and life-threatening conditions in detention and prison facilities. This is not even a comprehensive list of the abuses that exist in Iran.

Currently, there is an American pastor in Iran, Saeed Abedini, who is serving 8 years in prison because he is a Christian and practices Christianity.

Yesterday the Iranian Government disqualified two Presidential candidates. This will be a sham election in the coming months. As one State Department official put it to the Foreign Relations Committee, the Green Movement in Iran today is virtually nonexistent.

Instead of denigrating the freedom fighters in Iran who have suffered from inaction and lack of support, we need to be doing everything possible in the weeks to come to speak frankly about the lack of fundamental freedoms in Iran and reject the notion that this regime is legitimate or a credible negotiating partner.

We need to make clear that a crack-down against the Iranian people similar to the one that occurred in June of 2009 after a fraudulent Presidential election will have real consequences this time. We can't be everywhere. America can't be everywhere and do everything, but we can't outsource the solutions to all our problems either.

Israel faces an unprecedented security environment. I saw this firsthand during my recent visit to the Middle East in February. In every direction, Israel sees uncertainty and potential instability, from an all-out civil war on its northern border in Syria, to neighbors going through delicate political transitions in the wake of the Arab spring. But even with all these changes in its neighborhood, the greatest challenge facing Israel today is the threat of a nuclear Iran.

We need to stand with Israel and provide diplomatic, military, and economic support in its defense of its territory, its people, and its existence. We need to remind Tehran that the United States will not allow Iran to obtain nuclear weapons, as this resolution states, and that is why I am supporting it. I urge all of my colleagues to support it as well.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWN). The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. I thank the Senator for a terrific speech.

I would ask whether Senator MENENDEZ minds if Senator MCCAIN speaks.

Mr. MENENDEZ. I am always willing to allow Senator MCCAIN to speak.

Mr. GRAHAM. We will do this by age. Senator MCCAIN is recognized for 5 minutes. That is not quite a minute a decade, but that will get us going.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Arizona is recognized.

Mr. MCCAIN. I thank the Chair, and I hope the Chair will discipline this disrespect that is being displayed because of my advanced age. This would never have happened in the Coolidge administration, in which I first served.

I thank the Senator. I also thank my dear friend LINDSEY GRAHAM for bringing this important resolution to the Senate.

Resolutions happen all the time. This is a very important one. It wouldn't have happened without the leadership and support of the distinguished chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. I would like to thank him for his continued leadership, including the passage of the resolution that was passed through the Foreign Relations Committee yesterday concerning the situation in Syria.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD three articles that are of importance for our colleagues.

One is from the Washington Post: "Iran paves over suspected nuclear testing site despite U.N. protests."

The second is another Washington Post article, by the Associated Press: "Iran expands nuke technology for program that could be used to make weapons."

Of interest is another one, also from the Washington Post: "Iranian soldiers fighting for Assad in Syria, says State Department official."

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

[From the Washington Post, May 22, 2013]

IRAN PAVES OVER SUSPECTED NUCLEAR TESTING SITE DESPITE U.N. PROTESTS

(By Joby Warrick)

Iran has begun paving over a former military site where its scientists are suspected to have conducted nuclear-weapons-related experiments, according to a new U.N. report, a move that could doom efforts to reconstruct a critical part of Iran's nuclear history.

Satellite photos of the site, known as Parchin, show fresh asphalt covering a broad area where suspicious tests were carried out several years ago, the International Atomic Energy Agency said in an internal report that was prepared for diplomats.

The paving appears to have occurred within the past few weeks, at a time when the United Nations' nuclear watchdog was meeting with Iranian officials to try to negotiate access to the site to investigate allegations of secret weapons research.

Iran has repeatedly denied IAEA inspectors entry to the site, and previous satellite photos have shown a series of efforts to alter it by razing buildings and even scraping away topsoil around what was once a chamber used for military explosives testing. U.N. officials believe that the facility may have

been used to test a special kind of detonator used in nuclear explosions.

Since February, Iran "has conducted further spreading, leveling and compacting of material over most of the site, a significant proportion of which it has also asphalted," the IAEA said in its report, a copy of which was obtained by The Washington Post.

The alterations to the site "have seriously undermined the Agency's ability to undertake effective verification" of Iran's claims that its nuclear program is entirely peaceful, the report said.

Iran denies that it ever conducted nuclear weapons research and says the IAEA has no mandate for investigating a military base with no ties to its nuclear program.

The IAEA, which conducts routine monitoring of Iran's civilian nuclear facilities, met with Iranian officials earlier this month in the latest in a string of failed efforts to clear up concerns over suspicious experiments by Iranian scientists. U.S. intelligence officials believe Iran was testing components for nuclear weapons as recently as 2003, when the work was abruptly halted.

Since then, Iran has amassed a large stockpile of enriched uranium—a key ingredient in nuclear weapons—but has not yet decided whether to take the risk of building and testing a bomb, U.S. officials say.

The IAEA report also documented Iran's continued progress in increasing its supply of enriched uranium, including the addition of still more advanced centrifuges that produce nuclear fuel more efficiently than the outdated machines formerly used by Iran. At the same time, Iran has continued to convert some of its uranium stockpile into metal fuel plates, a step that would make it more difficult to use the material in a future weapons program.

[From the Washington Post, May 22, 2013]

IRAN EXPANDS NUKE TECHNOLOGY FOR PROGRAM THAT COULD BE USED TO MAKE WEAPONS

(By The Associated Press)

VIENNA.—The U.N. atomic agency on Wednesday detailed rapid Iranian progress in two programs that the West fears are geared toward making nuclear weapons, saying Tehran has upgraded its uranium enrichment facilities and advanced in building a plutonium-producing reactor.

In a confidential report obtained by The Associated Press, the International Atomic Energy Agency said Tehran had installed close to 700 high-tech centrifuges used for uranium enrichment, which can produce the core of nuclear weapons. It also said Tehran had added hundreds of older-generation machines at its main enrichment site to bring the total number to over 13,000.

Iran denies that either its enrichment program or the reactor will be used to make nuclear arms. Most international concern has focused on its enrichment, because it is further advanced than the reactor and already has the capacity to enrich to weapons-grade uranium.

But the IAEA devoted more space to the reactor Wednesday than it has in previous reports. While its language was technical, a senior diplomat who closely follows the IAEA's monitoring of Iran's nuclear facilities said that reflected increased international concerns about the potential proliferation dangers it represents as a completion date approaches.

He demanded anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss confidential IAEA information.

The report also touched upon a more than six-year stalemate in agency efforts to probe suspicions Tehran may have worked on nuclear weapons. It said that—barring Iran's

cooperation—it may not be able to resolve questions about "possible military dimensions to Iran's nuclear program."

The U.S., Israel and Iran's other critics say the reactor at Arak, in central Iran, will be able to produce plutonium for several bombs a year once it starts up. They have said Tehran's plan to put it on line late next year is too optimistic.

But the report said the Islamic Republic had told IAEA experts that it was holding to that timeline. The IAEA noted that much work needed to be done at the reactor site, but it said Iranian technicians there already had taken delivery of a huge reactor vessel to contain the facility's fuel. It also detailed progress in Tehran's plans to test the fuel.

Installations of the new IR-2m centrifuges are also of concern for nations fearing that Iran may want to make nuclear arms, because they are believed to be able to enrich two to five times faster than Tehran's old machines.

The IAEA first reported initial installations in February. It said then that agency inspectors counted 180 of the advanced IR-2m centrifuges at Natanz, Tehran's main enrichment site, less than a month after Iran's Jan. 23 announcement that it would start installing them.

Diplomats said none of the machines appeared to be operating and some may only be partially set up. But the rapid pace of installations indicates that Iran possesses the technology and materials to mass-produce the centrifuges and make its enrichment program much more potent.

Iranian nuclear chief Fereidoun Abbasi said earlier this year that more than 3,000 high-tech centrifuges have already been produced and will soon phase out its older-generation enriching machines at Natanz, south of Tehran.

The report also noted Iran's decision to keep its stockpile of uranium enriched to a level just a technical step away from weapons-grade to below the amount needed for a bomb.

More than six years of international negotiations have failed to persuade Tehran to stop enrichment and mothball the Arak reactor.

[From the Washington Post, May 21, 2013]

IRANIAN SOLDIERS FIGHTING FOR ASSAD IN SYRIA, SAYS STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL

(By Anne Gearan)

MUSCAT, OMAN.—Iran has sent soldiers to Syria to fight alongside forces loyal to President Bashar al-Assad and those of the Lebanon-based Hezbollah militia, a senior State Department official said Tuesday.

An unknown number of Iranians are fighting in Syria, the official said, citing accounts from members of the opposition Free Syrian Army, which is backed by the United States. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity to preview a strategy session that Secretary of State John F. Kerry is to hold Wednesday with key supporters of the Syrian opposition.

Rebel forces have alleged for weeks that Iran is sending trained fighters to Syria, and the Iran-backed Hezbollah has said baldly that it will not let Assad fall.

But with the British, French and American governments considering providing arms to the Syrian opposition on a scale not yet seen in the civil war, the U.S. official's allegation was a tacit acknowledgment that the two-year-old Syrian conflict has become a regional war and a de facto U.S. proxy fight with Iran.

"This is an important thing to note: the direct implication of foreigners fighting on Syrian soil now for the regime," the official said.

Kerry is in the Middle East this week to foster political talks between Assad's resurgent regime and the embattled rebels and to inaugurate a new round of peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians.

The State Department official said the Syrian opposition, which is badly split, has not finalized its representative to the talks in Amman, Jordan, on Wednesday. The Amman session is intended to align strategies ahead of a larger conference in Switzerland that would bring together the Russian- and Iranian-backed Assad regime and the Western-backed rebels.

Russia appears to be hedging its bets, as the U.S. official acknowledged Tuesday. Assad's forces are being resupplied from somewhere, the official said, and not all of the armaments can be explained away as part of a continuation of weapons contracts that predate the conflict.

Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov agreed two weeks ago to jointly lobby the opposition and Assad's government to sit down for negotiations. The goal would be a transitional government with members chosen by mutual consent. The United States says that would mean Assad's eventual exit; Russia says not necessarily.

Kerry stopped in Oman on Tuesday to solidify a partnership with a rare Sunni Arab nation that has friendly relations with both Iran and the United States. He was readying plans with Sultan Qaboos bin Said for Oman's purchase of an estimated \$2.1 billion air-defense system. The Raytheon-built system is part of a coordinated, U.S.-led detection and defense network intended to counter Iran's sophisticated missile systems.

The State Department official would not say whether Iran was welcome at the Syria conference in Geneva, tentatively set for June.

In Washington on Tuesday, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee passed legislation authorizing President Obama to send weapons to vetted Syrian opposition groups. Although the administration has not decided whether to provide lethal aid and does not need congressional approval to do so, the measure would strengthen Obama's case against those lawmakers who disapprove of stepped-up U.S. involvement in Syria.

The bill, co-sponsored by Sen. Robert Menendez (D-N.J.), the committee chairman, and Sen. Bob Corker (R-Tenn.), the ranking minority member, also creates a \$250 million annual transition fund—from reprogrammed, not newly appropriated, money—to help the civilian opposition preserve government institutions and strengthen sanctions against anyone providing arms or selling oil to Assad.

Menendez acknowledged concerns that U.S. weapons could fall into the hands of Islamist extremists fighting on the side of the opposition. But, he said, "if we stand aside and do nothing," such worries "will become self-fulfilling prophecy."

The bill, which passed the committee on a bipartisan 15 to 3 vote, still requires approval by the entire Senate and by the House, which has no companion version pending.

Karen DeYoung in Washington contributed to this report.

Mr. McCAIN. I join with 90 Members of the Senate to support this resolution. This resolution has extraordinary bipartisan support. The Senate will send a clear and unequivocal message to the regime in Tehran, and that is this: The United States will not allow you to get a nuclear weapons capability.

The dangers of a nuclear Iran cannot be denied, diminished, or dismissed. We

must continue to ratchet up the pressure through sanctions, as this resolution suggests. At the end of the day, sanctions are a means to an end, not an end unto themselves. Unfortunately, despite the unprecedented international sanctions that have been put in place, Iran is today closer to a nuclear weapons capacity than ever before, and the facts speak for themselves.

In January 2009, according to the IAEA, the Iranians had approximately 1,000 kilograms of uranium enriched to 3.5 percent. Today they have more than 8,000 kilograms. In January 2009 Iran had not enriched to 20 percent. Today the IAEA reported that Iran has produced 324 kilograms of 20 percent-enriched uranium. That is 44 kilograms more than 3 months ago. It means they are moving unabated and unhindered toward the development of a nuclear weapon, and they continue to deny IAEA inspectors entry into nuclear facilities while the centrifuges continue to increase dramatically. Just a few hours ago, the IAEA issued a report that says Iran has installed close to 700 high-tech centrifuges, which will exponentially increase the speed with which Iran will be able to enrich uranium.

Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons capability cannot be divorced from its other destabilizing actions. The threat from Iran is comprehensive. It includes ongoing threats against Israel and other allied Arab governments across the region, it includes a decades-long campaign of unconventional warfare, and it includes Iran's ongoing role as the No. 1 state sponsor of terrorism in the world.

Let's not forget that Iran has bolstered violent extremist groups such as Hezbollah and Shiite militias in Iraq who are responsible for the murders of hundreds of young American forces and innocent civilians or that senior leaders of the Quds Force were implicated in a terrorist plot to assassinate Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to the United States on U.S. soil.

The Iranian regime continues to undertake its full-fledged campaign of brutality to keep Bashar al-Assad in power in Syria. Senior Iranian officials are advising and assisting the Syrian military with intelligence support and weapons. They have undertaken, together with Hezbollah, a large-scale training effort of as many as 50,000 militiamen. As today's Washington Post makes clear, Iranian soldiers are fighting on the ground in Syria, supporting the regime as it massacres its civilians.

I ask whether this is in America's national security interest.

The threat in Iran is more deadly and more serious than any I have seen in my lifetime. I don't think this threat will be fully resolved until a very different set of leaders is in power in Tehran and until we see an Iranian Government that reflects the will of the Iranian people. I am confident that the current regime that rules Iran will not last forever for the simple reason

that the Iranian people want the same freedoms and rights as people elsewhere.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this amendment.

Again, I thank the Senator from South Carolina Mr. GRAHAM for his hard work on this resolution for a change.

Mr. GRAHAM. I wish to thank Senator MCCAIN for his voice on this topic and any other topic that keeps America safe. I also thank Senator MENENDEZ, without whom there would be no resolution. Senator REID is not here, but I thank him for making the time available to have this vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, is there a division of time?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority controls 20 minutes.

Mr. MENENDEZ. I recognize myself for such time as I may consume.

Let me start off by thanking and congratulating my colleague Senator GRAHAM for joining with me, for engaging me on this critical question. He knows my concerns about Iran's march toward nuclear weapons, and together we thought it was an important statement to make. I appreciate his leadership on this issue and bringing us to a point where I think we will have a remarkably strong bipartisan vote today to send a very clear message. The message is that we seek full implementation of U.S. and international sanctions on Iran and urge the President to continue to strengthen enforcement of those sanctions.

I cannot emphasize enough my strong concerns about Iran's nuclear program and the extraordinary threat it poses, yes, to Israel but, very importantly, to the United States of America and to the entire international community. Iran's provocative actions threaten to not just undo regional stability, but they pose an existential threat to our ally Israel and clearly a very clear threat to the national security of the United States. Iran continues to export terrorist activity directly and through proxies, such as Hezbollah. It continues to actively support the Assad regime Syria with fighters, arms, and petroleum. It continues its unrelenting drive for nuclear weapons, placing it at the top of our list of national security concerns. In my view it remains the paramount national security challenge we face, certainly in the Middle East, if not the world.

We are at a crossroads in our Iran policy, and the question today is, What do we do next? The Obama administration, in concert with the Congress, has pursued a dual-track approach of diplomacy and sanctions. Two weeks ago members of the Foreign Relations Committee met with Lady Ashton, who has led the diplomatic track with the P5+1, along with Under Secretary Sherman. The talks have been central in demonstrating to the world that it is

Iran and not the United States that is acting in bad faith and it is Iran that, through its obstinacy, has helped galvanize the international community to increase the pressure. But the talks have failed to achieve their central objective, which is getting Iran to make concessions on its nuclear program.

It is clear to me that we cannot allow the Iranians to continue to drag their feet by talking, while all the while they grow their nuclear program. Iran is proceeding at a fast pace. Today, as has been mentioned, the International Atomic Energy Agency, in its quarterly report, said that Iran has installed almost 700 advanced IR2m centrifuges at Natanz, an increase of more than 500 centrifuges since February of this year. These are centrifuges that can more efficiently and more quickly enrich uranium. The IAEA's report also again expressed concern about the possible military dimensions of Iran's nuclear program.

We cannot allow Iran to buy more time by talking even as the centrifuges keep spinning. There is no doubt and there has never been a doubt—certainly not in my mind—that a nuclear-armed Iran is not an option for U.S. national security. That is why I have been fully dedicated to doing everything we can to stop Iran from ever crossing that threshold. That is why I introduced, along with Senator GRAHAM, this resolution that makes clear that a nuclear Iran is not an option and that the United States has Israel's back. It is why I have come to this floor time after time as an author of some of the toughest sanctions that one country has ever levied against another, the sanctions against Iran.

Working closely with my colleague Senator KIRK and with the Obama administration, we have implemented these sanctions in a way that is truly strangling the Iranian economy. Iran's leaders must understand that unless they change their course, their situation will only get worse and economic struggles and international isolation will grow. They must understand that at the end of the day their pursuit of a nuclear weapons capability will make them less, not more, secure.

I also want to say something about Iran's unacceptable and deplorable approach to the State of Israel and its continued threats to the Jewish State. As the President has made clear time and again, America's commitment to Israel's security is unshakeable. I share the President's commitment to Israel's security, and I know my colleagues do as well. Every time Iran makes outrageous threats, it only succeeds in further uniting the world against it and strengthening America's resolve.

I strongly support the close and unprecedented security cooperation that the administration has pursued with Israel, and I know this cooperation will only continue. I am deeply committed to doing everything I can to ensure that Israel is able to defend itself.

While this resolution makes absolutely clear we are not authorizing the

use of force, it does also make clear that we have Israel's back and, specifically, that if Israel is compelled to take military action in self-defense against Iran's nuclear program, we should stand with Israel, using all the tools of our national power to assist Israel in defense of its territory, its people, and its very existence.

The bottom line is that Israel should always understand the United States has its back; that we will not allow Iran to obtain nuclear weapons capability, and if we are forced to, we will take whatever means necessary to prevent this outcome.

As the President has reiterated on numerous occasions, all options—all options—are on the table. That message, along with the solidarity of this Chamber, I intend to take with me on my visit to Israel later this week.

The simple fact is we need to continue to apply pressure and we must bring along the international community in our effort. This has been incredibly important, because while we have led, we have had a multiplier effect with the multilateral support of the European Union and others so our sanctions can bite, and they have been biting. Iran's crude oil exports have been cut in half, from 2½ million barrels per day in 2011 to approximately 1.25 million barrels now per day. Iran still had energy sector exports, however, of \$83 billion in 2012, including \$60 billion in oil and another \$23 billion in natural gas, fuel oil, and condensates. The sanctions are working, but they aren't enough, and they aren't working fast enough.

In my view, we need to double down on four fronts.

First, we need to encourage further reductions in energy sector purchases from Iran, including purchases of petroleum, fuel oil, and condensates and prevent Iran from engaging in trade in precious metals to circumvent sanctions; second, we need to ensure we have prohibited trade with Iran with respect to all dual-use items that can be used in Iran's nuclear program. That means adding additional industry sectors to the trade prohibition list; third, we need to ask the international community to ramp up the pressure and change Teheran's calculus. A nuclear Iran, after all, isn't only an American problem; and fourth, the time may have also come to look more seriously at all options and that would include increasing military presence and pressure against Iran.

I believe there still may be time for diplomacy to work, but increased military pressure could signal to the supreme leader a nuclear program will undermine the security of his regime, not improve it.

Fundamentally, the challenge remains a difficult one and we are walking a fine line. But this resolution says to the supreme leader of Iran that we will not let up, we will continue to apply pressure, and this continued pursuit of nuclear weapons is threatening the very existence of his regime.

I urge my colleagues to support the Graham-Menendez resolution and full implementation of U.S. international sanctions on Iran. We are considering other options before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, as well as working with our colleagues on the Senate Banking Committee to make it very clear we will exercise and exhaust all options that are peaceful diplomacy to achieve our ultimate goal.

This resolution makes it very clear to the world we stand behind the President as he stands behind Israel, and it says to Israel: We continue to be your faithful ally. We recognize you as a clear democracy in a challenging part of the world, as a major security partner of the United States, and the one country most likely to be voting with us in international organizations in common cause with common values.

That is what I think this vote will be about tonight.

I reserve the remainder of my time because I do believe I have a colleague who wishes to speak, but I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina is recognized.

There is 8 minutes remaining on the Republican side and 9 minutes remaining on the majority side.

MR. GRAHAM. At this time, I yield 2 minutes to my friend from Mississippi, Senator WICKER, who is a member of the Armed Services Committee.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

MR. WICKER. Mr. President, I rise in strong support of this resolution because Iran represents the single largest threat to freedom and peace in the Middle East. Our State Department classifies Iran as the most active state sponsor of terrorism, period.

A troubling news account from Reuters released just yesterday reveals a United Nations nuclear agency report due this week is "expected to show Iran further increasing its capacity to produce material that . . . could eventually be put to developing atomic bombs."

The clock is ticking. This is a moment to be resolute. The forceful words we just heard from the distinguished chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, and previously from the distinguished senior Senator from Arizona, demonstrate our firm bipartisan position on this matter. The world can ill afford the prospect of a nuclear-armed Iran. That is why it is incumbent on the Congress and the President to take every action necessary to prevent Iran from acquiring a weapon of mass destruction. All options must be on the table, as the resolution indicates, to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran.

Israel is a nation under siege by terrorist organizations, many of which are being directly funded by the Iranian regime. The United States must not waiver in its support and obligation to our friends in Israel. I am pleased this resolution reaffirms our commitment to Israel, particularly in the event

Israel is forced to exercise its sovereign right to defend itself.

I urge my colleagues to take a firm stand against nuclear proliferation by voting for strengthened sanctions and for the adoption of this resolution.

I yield back whatever time I may have remaining.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I rise to express my strong support for this resolution and to thank our colleagues Senator GRAHAM and Senator MENENDEZ for their leadership and to thank them also for giving me the privilege of working with them over the last years on this vitally important national security issue. It is vital not just to the existence of Israel—it is an existential issue for Israel—but to the national security of the United States.

I believe Israel is a crucial ally of the United States and a successful democratic state in the Middle East. Recent turmoil in that region adds urgency and importance to ensuring that Israel remains a secure, stable, independent state.

This resolution is a reaffirmation of the readiness of the United States of America to assist Israel, our steadfast partner in the region, to thwart any measure of aggression made toward Israel by Iran.

It is also a reaffirmation of the policy long supported by this body—by our colleagues here, by all of us in a very personal and direct way—that we have the back of the President of the United States in his insisting on strong sanctions against Iran as long as it continues its development of a nuclear capability.

In the coming days, I will be introducing, along with my colleague the senior Senator from North Dakota, Mr. HOEVEN, a resolution that calls for free and fair elections in Iran. Regardless of the outcome of these elections—and they are likely to be sham elections—we can't avoid the sad fact that Iran has maintained its course and commitment to nuclear development. The centrifuges are spinning, they are going, and more are brought online every day in this breakout for nuclear capacity. So we have to be wary of false signals of hope and remain vigilant in our constant effort to secure against Iran faithfully pursuing nuclear weapons.

Fruitless negotiations can't be our reason to call a halt to these sanctions. That can come only with compliance—verified compliance. We have to remain vigilant and remember that Iran has threatened to attack not only Israel but the United States. It has substantiated those words with attacks on our troops in Iraq and on American civilians visiting or living in Israel.

It is Israel who helps diffuse those threats from Hamas and Hezbollah and all who have targeted America. If Iran chooses to declare war on Israel, if it ignores the path of peace the international community has repeatedly laid down for it, they must know they do it at their peril.

The United States supports our strategic partner Israel, and that is why I support S. Res. 65, because it demonstrates our full, unyielding, unstinting support for Israel if the unthinkable and the avoidable happens.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. At this time, I yield 5 minutes to my good friend from Texas, a strong supporter of the United States-Israel relationship, Senator CORNYN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, back in October 2012, two Iran experts at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies wrote a sobering article about the Iranian nuclear program. They concluded that, despite years of international and unilateral sanctions, Iran's economy had been allowed to remain healthy enough to leave a vanishingly short period of time for sanctions to do the work that might possibly head off military action.

Seven months have passed since that article was written, and over that period of time the following things have happened: The Iranians have upgraded their biggest uranium enrichment plant. The head of the International Atomic Energy Agency has found credible evidence that Tehran has secretly been pursuing nuclear weapons technology. The United States renewed sanction waivers for countries that import substantial amounts of Iranian oil. President Obama installed a harsh critic of Iran sanctions as his Secretary of Defense. The Iranians have continued to prop up Syria and its dictator Bashar Asad and transport dangerous weapons to Hezbollah as well.

In short, the Iranians are feeling emboldened, America's credibility is being tested, and time is running out. For these reasons, I am a proud cosponsor of S. Res. 65, which would send a clear message we are determined not just to contain Iran but to prevent the Iranians from acquiring a nuclear weapon.

It would also send a clear message the United States will stand with Israel if our democratic ally is forced to take military action in legitimate self-defense.

I would also add that I have joined my colleague from Illinois Senator KIRK in introducing a separate bill, the Iran Export Embargo Act, which would further expand U.S. sanctions by prohibiting companies from doing business with any entity that is owned or controlled by the Government of Iran.

More specifically, our bill would prohibit all export-related transactions conducted on behalf of Iranian Government entities, and it would block their assets.

One final point. The Iranians are not just waiting to see how we beef up sanctions, they are also waiting to see how we respond to Syria's apparent use

of poison gas. After all, President Obama famously warned the Asad regime that deploying chemical weapons would be tantamount to crossing a red line. Yet the White House is walking back its red line comments and issuing retroactive qualifiers.

We can be sure the mullahs are taking notes, and we can be sure the outcome of the Syrian civil war will help determine the outcome of the Iranian nuclear crisis.

I yield the floor.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I rise in support of S. Res. 65, an important and timely resolution that restates U.S. policy to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability and expresses U.S. support should Israel be compelled to take military action against Iran in its own legitimate self-defense.

I would like to take this time to thank my colleagues Senator MENENDEZ, Senator GRAHAM, Senator HOEVEN, and Senator BLUMENTHAL for joining forces to introduce this important bipartisan resolution that recognizes and reaffirms the special bonds of friendship and cooperation that have existed between the United States and the State of Israel for more than six decades.

Make no mistake—the diplomatic, security, and economic relationship between Israel and the United States is stronger than it has ever been, and nothing can break that everlasting bond. But let's be completely frank. Right now, our friend Israel faces one of the gravest threats it has confronted in more than a half a century.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is dangerously obsessed with the goal of acquiring a nuclear weapons capability. And we are getting closer and closer to “crunch time” in terms of Iran developing that nuclear weapons capability.

Time is of the essence, but unfortunately the latest talks between the United States, our international partners, and Iran in Almaty, Kazakhstan, failed to achieve any progress toward curbing Tehran's nuclear ambitions. “Talks” about the “future talks” are ongoing, but the centrifuges continue to spin in Iran, with more advanced centrifuges on the way.

And who can deny the horrific actions of the Iranian regime. From its support of the vicious Asad regime in Syria, which is spearheading a human rights catastrophe that has led to the deaths of more than 70,000 people, to its backing of murderous terrorist organizations like Hamas and Hezbollah, the Iranian regime is getting more and more dangerous by the day. All the while, Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad continues to guide his people down a very perilous path.

That is why this bipartisan resolution is so timely. It recognizes the tremendous threat posed to the United States, the West, and Israel by Iran's continuing pursuit of a nuclear weapons capability, and it deplores and condemns in the strongest possible terms

the reprehensible statements and policies of the leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran threatening the security and existence of Israel.

The United States must do everything we can—as quickly as we can—to convince the Iranian Government that it is in its interest to abandon its pursuit of nuclear weapons. This resolution sends a blunt message to the Government of Iran the United States will take whatever steps are necessary to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability.

This resolution states that nothing in this text shall be construed as an authorization for the use of force or a declaration of war. But rest assured, I believe that when it comes to Iran, we should never take the military option off the table. President Obama has stated that Israel is a true friend. And if Israel is attacked, America will stand with Israel. Most importantly, President Obama has said that Iran's leaders should understand that he does not have a policy of containment; rather President Obama has a policy to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon." I take the President at his word, and so should the Government of Iran. But we need to ratchet up the sanctions and the pressure on Iran now.

And rest assured—Congress has given the President a powerful package of economic sanctions that will paralyze the Iranian economy and I am confident we in Congress will do more and this Administration will do more to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapons capability.

I strongly urge my colleagues in the Senate to support this important resolution and I look forward to its swift passage.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I rise today in advocacy for each of my colleagues to come to the floor this afternoon and vote in support of Senate Resolution 65. This vital resolution makes a clear statement to Iran—both to the current regime and to Iranian citizens who wish for real and true change from the status quo—that the United States will not tolerate its development of a nuclear weapon. Additionally, Senate Resolution 65 expresses the United States' unconditional support for Israel's right to self-defense against the threat of a nuclear Iran.

These vital statements come at a time when change could happen with Iran's elections next month. But unfortunately, there is little reason to believe things will change. According to the State Department, Iran remains the most active state sponsor of terrorism. This is a statistic that must be addressed. Iran's continual material and financial support to Hezbollah and Hamas, expanding involvement in Syria, and serial deception of its nuclear program are unlikely to be different a month from now; a year from now; perhaps, a decade from now. Especially as Iran continues to reject the United Nation's International Atomic

Energy Agency's, IAEA, regulatory authority and oversight, the United States must reiterate the plain and simple fact that a nuclear Iran is unacceptable.

When looking at the bigger picture, the recent terrorist attacks and killings in Boston and Benghazi remind all Americans that our war on terrorism continues. Even as troop numbers dwindle in Afghanistan, this fight and its core focus are far from over. We must continue to combat the terrorist threat around the world and strengthen our allied relationships as this fight continues. Iran's funneling of weapons and aid to terrorist cells increases their threat beyond the neighborhood. Iran is not only a threat to Israel but to the United States as well. Senate Resolution 65 reminds us of this fact and of the long and important strategic relationship our nations have shared, one which has been built of mutual trust and strengthened through security cooperation.

I strongly support the United States' determination to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. I strongly support this resolution as it makes our determination unequivocal. All options are on the table.

To avoid our option of last resort, armed conflict, it is important that this Congress continue to push for full implementation of sanctions against the current regime in Iran to cripple their ability to acquire a nuclear weapon. I encourage all of my colleagues to join me in advocating for this—not only this administration, but for the European Union and democracies around the world to strengthen their sanctions on this rogue regime, as Iran's beliefs, rhetoric, and actions threaten every nation who calls for democracy and freedom.

Of greatest importance, this resolution makes it crystal clear that the United States stands firmly behind Israel and her right to self-defense by pledging full support should Israel take military action against the threat of Iran's nuclear program. This is not an authorization for use of military force or a declaration of war. However, it sends the right message to Iran and the rest of the world. The United States stands strong behind our allies. Even in this time of necessary financial restraint, the United States will never leave an ally to fight alone.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I rise in strong support of S. Res. 65, a resolution which sends Israel, Iran, and the region a clear message: We stand with our friends in Israel as they face the looming threat of a nuclear-capable Iran.

I thank Senators GRAHAM and MENENDEZ for submitting this critical resolution, which comes as we face a dangerous crossroads in the Middle East.

Iran's quest for a nuclear weapons capability is moving closer and closer to fruition. Talks with Iran have yet to achieve the progress necessary to re-

strain Iran's nuclear ambitions and to compel Iran to comply with the standards and norms expected of members of the world community. And while sanctions are having a significant impact on Iran's economy, they have not yet caused Iran's leaders to alter their course.

Just yesterday, Iran's leaders again showed their uncompromising and hard-line stance by excluding viable opposition candidates from their upcoming Presidential election.

There has been a special bond of friendship and cooperation between the U.S. and the State of Israel for over 60 years, which continues to retain broad bipartisan support. We should continue to support and expand the close military, intelligence, and security cooperation between our two countries.

In this context, S. Res. 65 makes three vital points.

First, it reiterates that it is U.S. policy to prevent Iran from achieving a nuclear weapons capability.

Second, it calls for the full implementation of United States and international sanctions on Iran and urges the President to continue and strengthen enforcement of sanctions legislation, including closing loopholes that allow the regime to skirt sanctions.

And third, it makes clear the U.S. should stand in support of Israel in case Israel is compelled to take military action in self-defense, in accordance with U.S. law and Congress's constitutional responsibility to authorize the use of force.

Now is not the time for America to project any ambiguity concerning Iran's nuclear program.

While we hope that sanctions will ultimately prove successful in persuading the regime to halt its nuclear ambitions, we must at the same time make clear to Tehran that we will stand with Israel. Any other message will simply encourage the mullahs to believe that Iran can pursue its nuclear ambitions with impunity—and may facilitate precisely the sort of crisis that we all hope to avoid.

I urge my colleagues to stand with Israel by voting in favor of S. Res. 65.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I support the resolution on Iran that we are voting on today, and I hope it sends a strong message to Iran as it continues to flout the international community in pursuit of a nuclear program that is a significant challenge to our Nation, our allies, and the world.

While a diplomatic arrangement in which Iran rejoins the responsible community of nations remains far and away the preferred outcome, there is a consensus in that a nuclear-armed Iran is not acceptable and that all options—including military options—must remain available to prevent such an outcome.

However, according to a New York Times report today, Iran is pressing ahead with the construction of a research reactor that could offer it another way to produce material for a nuclear weapon should it decide to do so.

If true, this is further evidence that Iran is not interested in a diplomatic solution, but rather in walking up to the line of a nuclear weapon capability to fuel an arms race in the region, increase the risk of proliferation, and challenge the global community.

Over the past 2 years, the National Defense Authorization Act has included sanctions provisions that have ratcheted up the pressure on Iran's ability to facilitate and support its illicit network of nuclear suppliers and has made it more difficult for the government of Iran to conduct business as usual until Iran changes its course. I will continue to support additional unilateral and multilateral sanctions regimes that further increase the pressure on Iran's economy.

I look forward to supporting this resolution today, and I urge my colleagues to support it as well.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, how much time remains?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 2 minutes remaining.

Mr. GRAHAM. I thank Senator CORNYN and every person who spoke today and all the Senators who cosponsored this resolution. I thank Senator REID for making the time available. Senator MENENDEZ has been a terrific partner, the strongest voice one could hope for in having a partner on the Democratic side to stand at a time when it matters.

In conclusion, on March 4, 2012, the President, President Obama, said "when the chips are down, I have Israel's back."

Mr. President, you were right then. Today the Senate will speak with one voice echoing what you said.

There is a lot of wonderment about what is going to happen with the Iranian nuclear program. I hope and pray they stop their nuclear ambitions because they don't want a nuclear reactor, they want a nuclear weapon. If they ever get one we will never be safe, Israel will be under the gun for the rest of its existence, and they will share the technology with the terrorists. Every Sunni Arab state will want a nuclear weapon to counter the Shia Persians and all hell will break out beyond what it is today in the Mid-East.

How do we prevent that? Sanctions, diplomacy, but the one thing we cannot have in doubt is what we would do if Israel had to act in her self-defense to stop the nuclear ambitions of an Iranian regime that has promised to wipe the State of Israel off the map.

After today, in about 10 or 15 minutes, I believe every Member of the Senate will be telling the Iranians we are not going to allow them to get a nuclear weapon because if we do, they will throw the world in chaos. It will threaten our very existence, as well as the State of Israel, but most important we are going to tell everybody in the Mid-East, throughout the world, in Tehran, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv that if there is a conflict where Israel is justified in defending herself against a nu-

clear-capable Iran, we will be there for them. We will have their back. Where I come from, when we tell somebody, "I have your back," that means if they get into a fight for their very life, they can count on us to be there.

In this case, Israel can count on the American people, the Senate, and our Commander in Chief to be there. If that day ever comes, and I pray it does not, but if that day ever comes where Israel has to take military action, to our friends in Israel: We will be there with you every step of the way, diplomatically, economically, and, yes, militarily.

To the Iranian people: We would love to have a better relationship with you. To the Iranian regime: You are one of the biggest evils on the planet. We will stand up to you. We will stand by our friends. And your desire to throw the world in chaos is never going to happen because we will be there when necessary to stop your ambitions.

To every colleague who has taken time out to sponsor this resolution, taken time out to speak on the floor: Thank you. There is not much we agree on 100 percent, but I think today will be a major milestone in our efforts to secure Israel and the United States. I think today we will have 100 percent support by the Senate and stand by our friends in Israel and stand up to the thugs in Iran.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana is recognized.

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from South Carolina for bringing this forward. We have implemented now another set of sanctions. There is still some question as to whether sanctions will succeed and bring about the result we want, but I particularly commend my colleague for his statement just a few moments ago relative to the commitment of the United States toward the security, safety and preservation of Israel in light of this threat that exists in Iran.

For years and years the clock has been ticking as the Iranians pursue nuclear weapons capability. We know that for a fact. We need to exert every possible measure that we can to give them reason not to go forward and do this. That involves everything from diplomacy to pressure through multinational organizations, through sanctions and ever-tightening, ever-ratcheting sanctions against them, but also the commitment to use whatever force may be necessary. I, along with my colleague, pray this does not happen. But Iran absolutely has to know that the United States will be standing shoulder to shoulder with the nation of Israel. If they level their gun sights at Israel, they are going to see us in the scope, standing shoulder to shoulder. We are committed to that. We are committed to doing everything we possibly can to prohibit and prevent Iran from achieving this nuclear capability. We will take whatever steps are necessary if they use it—if they gain that and use

it for inappropriate purposes or any purposes other than production of medical devices and products as well as providing nuclear power.

I trust also that we have a 100-percent vote on this so we send a very strong signal to the Iranians that we will not tolerate them going forward with this plan.

I thank the Senator for yielding time.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, notwithstanding the previous order with respect to S. Res. 65, I ask consent that the committee-reported amendment be agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GRAHAM. I do not see any other speakers. I yield the remainder of the time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back. The question is on adoption of S. Res. 65, as amended.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG) is necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 99, nays 0, not voting 1, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 133 Leg.]

YEAS—99

Alexander	Flake	Moran
Ayotte	Franken	Murkowski
Baldwin	Gillibrand	Murphy
Barrasso	Graham	Murray
Baucus	Grassley	Nelson
Begich	Hagan	Paul
Bennet	Harkin	Portman
Blumenthal	Hatch	Pryor
Blunt	Heinrich	Reed
Boozman	Heitkamp	Reid
Boxer	Heller	Risch
Brown	Hirono	Roberts
Burr	Hoeven	Rockefeller
Cantwell	Inhofe	Rubio
Cardin	Isakson	Sanders
Carper	Johanns	Schatz
Casey	Johnson (SD)	Schumer
Chambliss	Johnson (WI)	Scott
Coats	Kaine	Sessions
Coburn	King	Shaheen
Cochran	Kirk	Shelby
Collins	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Coons	Landrieu	Tester
Corker	Leahy	Thune
Cornyn	Lee	Toomey
Cowan	Levin	Udall (CO)
Crapo	Manchin	Udall (NM)
Cruz	McCain	Vitter
Donnelly	McCaskill	Warner
Durbin	McConnell	Warren
Enzi	Menendez	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Merkley	Wicker
Fischer	Mikulski	Wyden

NOT VOTING—1

Lautenberg

The resolution (S. Res. 65), as amended, was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the preamble is agreed to and the motions to reconsider are considered made and laid upon the table.

The resolution (S. Res. 65), as amended, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 65

Whereas, on May 14, 1948, the people of Israel proclaimed the establishment of the sovereign and independent State of Israel;

Whereas, on March 28, 1949, the United States Government recognized the establishment of the new State of Israel and established full diplomatic relations;

Whereas, since its establishment nearly 65 years ago, the modern State of Israel has rebuilt a nation, forged a new and dynamic democratic society, and created a thriving economic, political, cultural, and intellectual life despite the heavy costs of war, terrorism, and unjustified diplomatic and economic boycotts against the people of Israel;

Whereas the people of Israel have established a vibrant, pluralistic, democratic political system, including freedom of speech, association, and religion; a vigorously free press; free, fair, and open elections; the rule of law; a fully independent judiciary; and other democratic principles and practices;

Whereas, since the 1979 revolution in Iran, the leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran have repeatedly made threats against the existence of the State of Israel and sponsored acts of terrorism and violence against its citizens;

Whereas, on October 27, 2005, President of Iran Mahmoud Ahmadinejad called for a world without America and Zionism;

Whereas, in February 2012, Supreme Leader of Iran Ali Khamenei said of Israel, "The Zionist regime is a true cancer tumor on this region that should be cut off. And it definitely will be cut off.";

Whereas, in August 2012, Supreme Leader Khamenei said of Israel, "This bogus and fake Zionist outgrowth will disappear off the landscape of geography.";

Whereas, in August 2012, President Ahmadinejad said that "in the new Middle East . . . there will be no trace of the American presence and the Zionists";

Whereas the Department of State has designated the Islamic Republic of Iran as a state sponsor of terrorism since 1984 and has characterized the Islamic Republic of Iran as the "most active state sponsor of terrorism" in the world;

Whereas the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has provided weapons, training, funding, and direction to terrorist groups, including Hamas, Hizballah, and Shiite militias in Iraq that are responsible for the murder of hundreds of United States service members and innocent civilians;

Whereas the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has provided weapons, training, and funding to the regime of Bashar al Assad that has been used to suppress and murder its own people;

Whereas, since at least the late 1980s, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has engaged in a sustained and well-documented pattern of illicit and deceptive activities to acquire a nuclear weapons capability;

Whereas, since September 2005, the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has found the Islamic Republic of Iran to be in non-compliance with its safeguards agreement with the IAEA, which Iran is obligated to undertake as a non-nuclear-weapon State Party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, done at Washington, London, and Moscow July 1, 1968, and entered into force March 5, 1970 (NPT);

Whereas the United Nations Security Council has adopted multiple resolutions since 2006 demanding of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran its full and sustained suspension of all uranium enrich-

ment-related and reprocessing activities and its full cooperation with the IAEA on all outstanding issues related to its nuclear activities, particularly those concerning the possible military dimensions of its nuclear program;

Whereas the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has refused to comply with United Nations Security Council resolutions or to fully cooperate with the IAEA;

Whereas, in November 2011, the IAEA Director General issued a report that documented "serious concerns regarding possible military dimensions to Iran's nuclear programme," and affirmed that information available to the IAEA indicates that "Iran has carried out activities relevant to the development of a nuclear explosive device" and that some activities may be ongoing;

Whereas the Government of Iran stands in violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights for denying its citizens basic freedoms, including the freedoms of expression, religion, peaceful assembly and movement, and for flagrantly abusing the rights of minorities and women;

Whereas in his State of the Union Address on January 24, 2012, President Barack Obama stated, "Let there be no doubt: America is determined to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon, and I will take no options off the table to achieve that goal.";

Whereas Congress has passed and the President has signed into law legislation imposing significant economic and diplomatic sanctions on Iran to encourage the Government of Iran to abandon its pursuit of nuclear weapons and end its support for terrorism;

Whereas these sanctions, while having significant effect, have yet to persuade Iran to abandon its illicit pursuits and comply with United Nations Security Council resolutions;

Whereas more stringent enforcement of sanctions legislation, including elements targeting oil exports and access to foreign exchange, could still lead the Government of Iran to change course;

Whereas, in his State of the Union Address on February 12, 2013, President Obama reiterated, "The leaders of Iran must recognize that now is the time for a diplomatic solution, because a coalition stands united in demanding that they meet their obligations. And we will do what is necessary to prevent them from getting a nuclear weapon.";

Whereas, on March 4, 2012, President Obama stated, "Iran's leaders should understand that I do not have a policy of containment; I have a policy to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.";

Whereas, on October 22, 2012, President Obama said of Iran, "The clock is ticking . . . And we're going to make sure that if they do not meet the demands of the international community, then we are going to take all options necessary to make sure they don't have a nuclear weapon.";

Whereas, on May 19, 2011, President Obama stated, "Every state has the right to self-defense, and Israel must be able to defend itself, by itself, against any threat.";

Whereas, on September 21, 2011, President Obama stated, "America's commitment to Israel's security is unshakable. Our friendship with Israel is deep and enduring.";

Whereas, on March 4, 2012, President Obama stated, "And whenever an effort is made to delegitimize the state of Israel, my administration has opposed them. So there should not be a shred of doubt by now: when the chips are down, I have Israel's back.";

Whereas, on October 22, 2012, President Obama stated, "Israel is a true friend. And if Israel is attacked, America will stand with Israel. I've made that clear throughout my presidency . . . I will stand with Israel if they are attacked.";

Whereas, in December 2012, 74 United States Senators wrote to President Obama "As you begin your second term as President, we ask you to reiterate your readiness to take military action against Iran if it continues its efforts to acquire a nuclear weapon. In addition, we urge you to work with our European and Middle Eastern allies to demonstrate to the Iranians that a credible and capable multilateral coalition exists that would support a military strike if, in the end, this is unfortunately necessary.";

Whereas the United States-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-150) stated that it is United States policy to support Israel's inherent right to self-defense: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved,

SECTION 1. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

Congress—

(1) reaffirms the special bonds of friendship and cooperation that have existed between the United States and the State of Israel for more than sixty years and that enjoy overwhelming bipartisan support in Congress and among the people of the United States;

(2) strongly supports the close military, intelligence, and security cooperation that President Obama has pursued with Israel and urges this cooperation to continue and deepen;

(3) deplores and condemns, in the strongest possible terms, the reprehensible statements and policies of the leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran threatening the security and existence of Israel;

(4) recognizes the tremendous threat posed to the United States, the West, and Israel by the Government of Iran's continuing pursuit of a nuclear weapons capability;

(5) reiterates that the policy of the United States is to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon capability and to take such action as may be necessary to implement this policy;

(6) reaffirms its strong support for the full implementation of United States and international sanctions on Iran and urges the President to continue and strengthen enforcement of sanctions legislation;

(7) declares that the United States has a vital national interest in, and unbreakable commitment to, ensuring the existence, survival, and security of the State of Israel, and reaffirms United States support for Israel's right to self-defense; and

(8) urges that, if the Government of Israel is compelled to take military action in legitimate self-defense against Iran's nuclear weapons program, the United States Government should stand with Israel and provide, in accordance with United States law and the constitutional responsibility of Congress to authorize the use of military force, diplomatic, military, and economic support to the Government of Israel in its defense of its territory, people, and existence.

SEC. 2. RULES OF CONSTRUCTION.

Nothing in this resolution shall be construed as an authorization for the use of force or a declaration of war.

AGRICULTURE REFORM, FOOD AND JOBS ACT OF 2013—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 954.

AMENDMENT NO. 925

Under the previous order, there will be 2 minutes of debate equally divided in the usual form prior to a vote in relation to the Shaheen amendment No. 925. Debate will commence on the Shaheen amendment No. 925.