

would like to think I have some track record of doing what I think is best for the country. So if it is a good deal, Israel and the Arabs will tell us, and I will gladly vote to approve it. But the construct, I say to Senator HOEVEN, is that to disapprove the deal, you have to get 60 votes. That means some Democratic colleagues have to join with Republicans to say this is not good enough, go back and try again. It is not that we want to end negotiations; we don't want to legitimize an industrial-strength nuclear program that is on the verge of a breakout such as North Korea in the making. We are not going to sit on the sidelines where a deal is negotiated where they have thousands of centrifuges and the only thing between them and a nuclear breakout is the United Nations. That did not work well in North Korea. We are not going to do that again.

So we are going to look at the deal. I think every Senator should want to look at the deal, and it allows your constituents to have a say. Not one person is having any input regarding the P5+1 talks. But if it comes back to the Congress, you have a person you can call. You can pick up the phone and call your Member of the House and Senate. You can say something about the deal because you are affected. It is not just Israel that is in the crosshairs of these people, it is us, the United States.

I worry they would share the technology with a terrorist organization and it would work its way here. Name one weapon they developed that they haven't shared with terrorists. This bipartisan approach is sound. It is consistent with what we have done 24 different times with other nations, and I hope we can have an overwhelming vote here soon.

Do your best job. Let us look at it. If it is a good deal, we will vote yes, and if it is a bad deal we will vote no, and try harder to get another deal.

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

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for 30 seconds to wrap up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. HOEVEN. I wish to thank my colleagues from South Carolina and New Hampshire. This is a bipartisan effort to join with the administration, and on a matter of this importance I believe Congress must be involved. So, again, we appeal to our colleagues on the other side of the aisle to join with us on this effort.

I will conclude by saying we look forward very much to having the Prime Minister speak to us this morning.

Thank you, Mr. President.

APPOINTMENT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. For the information of the Senate, the Chair makes the following announcement:

The President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, pursuant to the provisions of section 201(a)(2) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, have appointed Dr. Homer Keith Hall as Director of the Congressional Budget Office, effective April 1, 2015, for the term expiring January 3, 2019.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant Democratic leader.

THE ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH TO CONGRESS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, at 11 a.m. this morning there will be a historic joint session of Congress. Usually a leader from some other country speaking at a joint session of Congress doesn't make history. It has happened over 100 times. I have attended many of those during the time I have served in the House and the Senate. What is historic about this session is that it was called unilaterally by the Republican Speaker of the House, JOHN BOEHNER. Usually and consistently, joint sessions of Congress have been called on a bipartisan basis and in most cases involve the administration and executive branch. In this case Speaker BOEHNER made history his own way by saying he would announce a joint session of Congress welcoming the Prime Minister of Israel.

I also checked with the Senate Historian, and it turns out there is another piece of history being made today. He can find no precedent where Members of Congress came forward from both the House and the Senate and announced publicly they would not attend a joint session of Congress, and that has happened today.

That is a personal and private decision by each Member of Congress as to whether they wish to attend the joint session this morning. I am going to attend it primarily because of my respect for the State of Israel and the fact that throughout my public career in the House and Senate, I have valued the bipartisan support of Israel which I found in both the House and the Senate.

I am proud that it was President Harry Truman—a Democrat—who was the first Executive in the world to recognize the nation of Israel. I am proud that throughout history Democratic and Republican Presidents alike have supported the State of Israel, and I have tried to do the same as a Member of the U.S. House and Senate.

This meeting with Prime Minister Netanyahu comes at an awkward moment. He is 2 weeks away from a national election in Israel. Some have questioned the timing of this. I will not raise that question because I don't know the political scene in Israel. I don't know if this visit helps him or hurts him, but it is, in fact, 2 weeks away from this important election.

What we all agree on, I hope, both Democrats and Republicans, is one starting point: A nuclear Iran is unacceptable. We have to do everything we

can to stop that possibility because it would invite an arms race in the Middle East—many other countries would race to become nuclear powers, and that would be destabilizing—and also because we know the agenda of Iran. It has been engaged in terrorist activities throughout the Middle East and around the world. Putting a nuclear weapon in the hands of a country that is dedicated to terrorism is the kind of concern that I hope all of us share when we look to the future.

As Democrats and Republicans gather for the joint session, we are in common purpose: to stop the development of a nuclear Iran. What troubles me greatly is the criticisms I have heard on this floor and in the past week or two about the Obama administration and this issue. President Obama has made it clear from the start that he is opposed to having a nuclearized Iran. In fact, it was President Obama, using his power as President, who has really brought together the sanctions regime that is working to bring Iran to the negotiating table. He didn't do it alone, as one of my colleagues from South Carolina noted. There were times when Congress wanted to push harder than the President. But we have to concede the obvious: Were it not for the President's dogged determination, we would not have this alliance, this coalition imposing sanctions on Iran today that have made a difference and brought Iran to the negotiating table. Give President Obama credit for that. Whether it is Prime Minister Netanyahu or the Republicans, who are generally critical of the President, at least acknowledge the obvious. The President made his position clear that he opposes a nuclear Iran, and he made it clear that he would put his resources and energy into building a coalition to stop that possibility.

Secondly, it is this President's leadership which has created the Iron Dome defense—the missile defense—which has protected Israel. That has been a very effective defense mechanism. I know that as chairman of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, we appropriated hundreds of millions of dollars for that protection. President Obama initiated—if not initiated, was an early supporter of this effort and has funded it throughout his Presidency, and now it has kept Israel safe. I hope the Republicans and Prime Minister Netanyahu will give the administration credit for that effort to keep their nation safe.

I will also say about negotiations that here is the reality: We have countries around the world joining us in a regime to impose sanctions on Iran in order to bring Iran to the negotiating table, and they are there. The negotiations are at a delicate moment—literally weeks away from seeing whether we can move forward. I hope they are successful. The President has said at best there is a 50/50 chance of success. It is just that challenging. But let's consider what the alternative will be if negotiations fail.

First, if we can reach an agreement, we have to verify it. We can't take the word of Iran. We need to make certain that when they promise they will destroy certain equipment, they will not go forward in developing a nuclear weapon, we can verify that. Without verification, the agreement is worthless, and the President has said as much.

Let's assume the worst case: Either the negotiations break down or the verification proves Iran did not negotiate in good faith. What then is the alternative? Well, if the coalition that imposed the sanctions believes we made good-faith efforts to bring Iran to a peaceful place and they failed, then we can continue the sanctions regime and put more pressure on them to move forward to a good solution. But if there is a feeling among our coalition that we have not negotiated in good faith, that we didn't make an honest effort to find common ground with Iran that avoids nuclearizing, we could lose the sanctions regime, and then it would become next to impossible to put the pressure on Iran to make them change.

What the President is trying to do is to achieve through negotiations a peaceful end to this global challenge and secondly to make sure the sanctions regime—the countries that have joined us, P5+1 and others—will continue to believe we are operating in good faith and continue to support us. The alternative is to allow Iran to develop a nuclear weapon. That is unthinkable. If it starts to occur, there will be a military response, and it will be deadly. I don't know the scope or nature of it. There is no way to guess. But we understand what it would mean if military action is taken against Iran because of the development of these nuclear weapons.

Let me also say that I am considering and reviewing the so-called Corker-Menendez proposal that the Congress will review any agreement that is reached with the Iranians. I have not reached a decision yet because I think it raises a serious and important question of policy and the Constitution. We know that if we are dealing with a treaty, it is up to the Senate to step forward and approve such a treaty. But this is not a treaty; this is in the nature of an agreement. We have had nuclear arms agreements in the past that were not subject to congressional approval. We have had agreements on the environment and other issues that were not subject to congressional approval. I need to look and review carefully whether the Corker-Menendez legislation that has been proposed is a reasonable assertion of congressional authority.

I will also add that it is obvious—and I wish to state it because it was raised as a question in the earlier comments—any congressionally imposed sanctions will require congressional action to suspend them. Ultimately, Congress has the last word on sanctions we have

put into law. I don't think there is any question about that. Those sanctions imposed by the executive branch the President may remove or change by Executive order should he choose, but the congressional authority to continue sanctions or even propose new ones is not diminished by any agreement which is reached by the President.

Earlier I listened to the majority leader as he came to the floor and spoke about a number of issues. I would like to address one of the issues he raised in criticism of the President. He criticized the President for proposing the closure of Guantanamo as a prison for those who we suspect are engaged in terrorism. The President's position on this has been very clear, and I have supported it for two reasons. First, we know Guantanamo has become a symbol around the world—a symbol which has been used against the United States when they want to recruit terrorists to attack our country. I think Guantanamo has outlived its usefulness and should be closed.

The second point is one that is very obvious. We have over 300 convicted terrorists currently serving their time in the existing Federal prison system. In Federal prisons across this Nation, including my State of Illinois, we have convicted terrorists who are reporting to their cells every day and are no threat to the community at large. They are being handled in a professional, thoughtful way by the men and women who work for the Bureau of Prisons, and there has never been any question as to whether the terrorists in this system are somehow a threat to this country. In fact, they are well contained and have been for a long time.

The alternative at Guantanamo is one that even fiscal conservatives ought to think about twice. We are currently spending up to \$3 million per Guantanamo prisoner each year to incarcerate them—almost \$3 million a prisoner. What does it cost to keep the most dangerous prisoners in the Federal prison system in the maximum security prisons? No more than \$60,000 a year—\$60,000 to keep them in the Federal prison system and \$3 million to keep them in Guantanamo. It is 50 times the cost, if my calculations are correct. That suggests to me a horrible waste of money—money that could be better spent to keep America safe rather than maintain this symbol of Guantanamo.

Secondly, an argument was made by the majority leader earlier that we made the mistake of bringing our troops home from Iraq and Afghanistan. I disagree. This notion of a permanent army of occupation by the United States in the Middle East is certainly not one that I welcome. We need to encourage those countries—Iraq and Afghanistan—to develop their own capacity to protect their own countries. The United States can be helpful. We can provide support. But ultimately we have to call on these countries to step

forward and to defend themselves with our support so long as they are fighting the forces of terrorism.

I see my colleague Senator MENENDEZ is on the floor.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I appreciate my distinguished colleague yielding some time to me.

I rise in anticipation of the speech of our ally and our partner, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, to the soon-to-be joint meeting of Congress.

I agree with many of my colleagues that the political timing of the Prime Minister's speech to the Congress is a challenging one and one that didn't derive itself under the best of circumstances. But I also think very clearly that it is important to listen to what the elected leader of the people of Israel—the one true democracy in the Middle East, a major trading partner of the United States, a major security ally of the United States, and the one country most likely to be voting with us in common cause in international forums—has to say.

There is a history here that I think drives the leader of the Jewish people to the circumstances in which he feels so passionately about the security of his country. If you traveled to Israel, as I have, and I think many Members here have as well, here is a country in which you can go from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem on a good day in 45 minutes. It is a country which—if you fly its width, it would take just a couple of minutes. It is a country which has its back to the sea and which is surrounded by neighbors who, generally speaking, are hostile. It is a country whose people have a history in which there are those who have sought to annihilate them. Maybe we cannot fathom those challenges, but those are the challenges of the people of Israel. So when you have an issue such as Iran's march toward nuclear weapons, you have an understanding of why the people of Israel have a concern for the existential threat that Iran, if it achieves nuclear weapons, is ultimately capable of creating.

I have worked as hard as anyone else. As a matter of fact, I started my focus on Iran when I was in the House of Representatives and found out that the United States was sending voluntary contributions to the International Atomic Energy Administration beyond our membership dues to do what? To create operational capacity of the Bushehr nuclear facility—not in the national interest and security of the United States, not in the interest of our ally, the State of Israel, and I led a drive to stop those voluntary contributions.

Since then—it has been almost 20 years now—I have been following Iran's march toward nuclear power, not for peaceful purposes—because, let's be honest, a country that has one of the

world's largest oil and other reserves doesn't need nuclear power for domestic consumption, and because of what we clearly believe was the militarization of its efforts at Parchin that, in fact, there were purposes that were not benign.

We all hope for a deal. Although today when Foreign Minister Zarif said in response to President Obama's comments that 10 years should be the minimum timeframe for a deal, he—Foreign Minister Zarif—said that is unacceptable, illogical, and excessive, that is a problem.

So I look forward to listening to what the Prime Minister has to say about the challenge to all of us—our national security and to Israel's national security—and to understand all of the dimensions, historical and otherwise, so we can conclude and make our own judgments. If Prime Minister Cameron can come here and lobby the Congress on sanctions, which is fine with me, then I think it is also fair to listen to what the Prime Minister of Israel has to say, and I look forward to hearing what he has to say.

With that, I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

JOINT MEETING OF THE TWO HOUSES—ADDRESS BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF ISRAEL

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 10:30 a.m., took a recess, and the Senate, preceded by the Secretary of the Senate, Julie E. Adams; the Deputy Sergeant at Arms, James Morhard; and the President pro tempore (ORRIN G. HATCH), proceeded to the Hall of the House of Representatives to hear an address delivered by His Excellency Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of Israel.

(The address delivered by the Prime Minister of Israel to the joint meeting of the two Houses of Congress is printed in the proceedings of the House of Representatives in today's RECORD.)

At 2:15 p.m., the Senate, having returned to its Chamber, reassembled and was called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PORTMAN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 625

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the first time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 625) to provide for congressional review and oversight of agreements relating to Iran's nuclear program, and for other purposes.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I now ask for a second reading and, in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The bill will be read for the second time on the next legislative day.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, this morning Prime Minister Netanyahu laid out the threat posed by a nuclear Iran in very clear terms—not just to Israel, not just to the United States, but to the entire world. He reminded us that no deal with Iran is better than a bad deal with Iran.

That seems to run counter to the Obama administration's thinking on the issue, which is worrying enough. What is also worrying is its seeming determination to pursue a deal on its own, without the input of the people's elected representatives. Remember, it was Congress that helped bring Iran to the table by putting sanctions in place, actually against—against—the wishes of the administration.

Congress was right then. And Congress and the American people need to be a part of this discussion too. That is why I am acting to place this bipartisan bill on the legislative calendar. It is legislation crafted by Members of both parties that would ensure the American people have a say in any deal. Senators CORKER, GRAHAM, and others worked on similar legislation, and they will mark that bill up in committee.

Congress must be involved in reviewing and voting on an agreement reached between this White House and Iran, and this bill would ensure that happens.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF A RULE SUBMITTED BY THE NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, pursuant to the provisions of the Congressional Review Act, I move to proceed to S.J. Res. 8, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval of the rule submitted by the National Labor Relations Board relating to representation case procedures, and I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

This motion is not debatable.

The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk (Sara Schwartzman) called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. McCASKILL) is necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 53, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 66 Leg.]

YEAS—53

Alexander	Fischer	Paul
Ayotte	Flake	Perdue
Barrasso	Gardner	Portman
Boozman	Graham	Risch
Burr	Grassley	Roberts
Capito	Hatch	Rounds
Cassidy	Heller	Rubio
Coats	Hoehn	Sasse
Cochran	Inhofe	Scott
Collins	Isakson	Sessions
Corker	Johnson	Shelby
Cornyn	Kirk	Sullivan
Cotton	Lankford	Thune
Crapo	Lee	Tillis
Cruz	McCain	Toomey
Daines	McConnell	Vitter
Enzi	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	

NAYS—45

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Nelson
Bennet	Heinrich	Peters
Blumenthal	Heitkamp	Reed
Booker	Hirono	Reid
Boxer	Kaine	Sanders
Brown	King	Schatz
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cardin	Leahy	Shaheen
Carper	Manchin	Stabenow
Casey	Markey	Tester
Coons	Menendez	Udall
Donnelly	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Mikulski	Warren
Feinstein	Murphy	Whitehouse
Franken	Murray	Wyden

NOT VOTING—2

Blunt
McCaskill

The motion was agreed to.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF A RULE SUBMITTED BY THE NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will now report the joint resolution.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (S.J. Res. 8) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the National Labor Relations Board relating to representation case procedures.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to the Congressional Review Act, there will now be up to 10 hours for debate, equally divided between those favoring and those opposing the joint resolution.

The Senator from Tennessee is recognized.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I have come to the floor today to discuss the Congressional Review Act resolution that Senator MCCONNELL, the Republican leader, Senator ENZI, the Senator from Wyoming, and I have filed to stop a new National Labor Relations Board rule. Last December, the National Labor Relations Board issued a