

James Clapper, underscored the widespread instability when he testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee last month. It is important to compare Director Clapper's testimony with that of the Secretary of State earlier. Director Clapper, our Director of National Intelligence, said there were more deaths from state-sponsored mass killings, more people displaced from their homes, and a higher rate of political instability last year than we have seen in decades. In fact, 2014 was the most lethal year on record for terrorism. We are now facing unpredictable instability as the "new normal," according to this administration's Director of National Intelligence.

The White House's foreign policy team, however, seems unwilling to accept these harsh truths. Listen to the words of Secretary of State John Kerry, our chief negotiator with Iran, in contrast to the words of our Director of National Intelligence. Senator Kerry said:

We are actually living in a period of less daily threat to Americans and to people in the world than normally; less deaths, less violent deaths today, than through the last century.

It is hard to square the testimony of our chief negotiator with Iran with the words of our Director of National Intelligence.

Particularly troubling is the administration's past reliance on empty promises from adversaries. Under President Obama's watch, Vladimir Putin has invaded and annexed part of Ukraine, continued to support the brutal regime of Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad, and violated the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

On February 27, we saw yet another troubling development in Moscow. Opposition leader Boris Nemtsov was gunned down in cold blood on the street after dinner in a secure, well-protected part of Moscow, just steps away from the Kremlin. The Russian Government has denounced Mr. Nemtsov's assassination, but this is not the first time one of President Putin's opponents or critics has been murdered. I will only note that Mr. Nemtsov is only the latest in a line of Putin critics who have mysteriously met their demise over time, and Russia's record of corruption and shameful disregard for human rights continues.

In conclusion, U.S. leadership is of the utmost importance to global security and stability at this pivotal time. Director Clapper was frank in his testimony that "pervasive uncertainty makes it all the harder to predict the future." That is why we must remain vigilant. America can succeed if we demonstrate the fortitude and resolve necessary to defend freedom and stop those who threaten it. This includes taking an honest look at Iran's past and present behavior before we cut a deal we will later regret.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate in morning business and to enter into a colloquy with the Senator from South Carolina.

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

#### NEGOTIATIONS WITH IRAN

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, first of all, I wish to make reference to the famous letter by Senator COTTON to the Iranians conveying to them the realities of the U.S. Constitution and the situation as it will prevail, hopefully, and that is that the Congress of the United States must ratify any agreement between the United States and Iran. Anybody who says we shouldn't ignore history and ignores the impact of this treaty.

I signed that letter, and I believe it is a direct result of the President's statement that he would veto any role the U.S. Congress should play in the ratification or nonratification of a pending agreement. That is what triggered the letter from Senator COTTON, and that is why I stand by it.

Seventy-one percent of Americans believe negotiation with Tehran will not make a difference in preventing Iran from producing nuclear weapons, and 71 percent of the American people are right.

Now I wish to speak with my friend from South Carolina about the situation in Iraq today—specifically, the role Iran is playing and, even more specifically, the combat that is taking place around the city of Tikrit.

Tikrit is the hometown of Saddam Hussein. Tikrit is a Sunni stronghold. Tikrit is now under attack—the ISIS people who are occupying it—by Shia militia, including, specifically, the Badr brigades, and they are led and trained by Iranians. An individual named Soleimani, who is the head of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, is now the most visible leader. Soleimani is the same guy who sent copper-tipped IEDs into Iraq which killed hundreds of American soldiers and marines. We now are somehow accommodating the individual who is responsible for the deaths of brave young Americans. That is not only unbelievable, it is totally unacceptable.

The question is, When these Shia militias get into Tikrit, how are they going to behave? There are well-documented human rights abuses by these Shia militias. Again, these are the same Badr brigades that we fought against in the Battle of Sadr City during the surge. And now the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of staff said in January: "As long as the Iraqi government remains committed to inclusivity of all the various groups inside the country, then I think Iranian influence will be positive." I am not making that up.

There is an AP story today that I wish to quote from entitled "Little progress in key plank of Obama anti-IS struggle."

Instead of reaching out for Sunnis, the Iraqi government has bolstered its already close ties to Iran and to Iranian-backed Shiite militias that have been credibly accused of massacring Sunnis, U.S. officials acknowledge. The Iraqi military's reliance on Shiite militias this week to retake Tikrit, a Sunni stronghold, has complicated the prospects of political reconciliation, experts say.

Human Rights Watch said in a March 4 report that it has documented "numerous" atrocities against Sunni civilians by the Shiite militias . . .

"They see it as a Persian invasion of the Sunni heartland," said John Maguire, a former CIA case officer with long Middle East experience who travels frequently to Iraq.

I am interested in the reaction of my friend from South Carolina to this:

After meeting with Abadi, Dempsey—

That is our Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—

told reporters he was given firm assurances that the Shiite-led government is committed to reconciling with the Sunnis. Asked in an interview whether he considered those assurances credible Dempsey said, "They seemed credible today."

Dempsey noted that during his helicopter flight over Baghdad, he saw worrisome signs of Iranian influence. He spotted a "plethora of flags" at checkpoints and elsewhere in the capital, "only one of which happens to be the Iraqi flag," he said, alluding to the banners of Iranian-backed Shiite militias.

Can we get real, I ask my friend from South Carolina, as to what is taking place?

The Iranians are now in Sana'a, they are in Baghdad, they are in Beirut, they are in Damascus, and they are on the move. Meanwhile, this administration, this President, and this Secretary of State pursue the mirage of a nuclear agreement that will somehow change the entire equation.

I would also be interested in the views of the Senator from South Carolina of what the Saudis are doing, which is accommodating in their own way and possibly making plans to acquire their own nuclear weapons along with other nations in the Middle East.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, just to sum it up, our foreign policy is in a free-for-all. It is incompetent at its core.

No one can feel good about Shia-led groups going into Tikrit with Iranian command and control. If we know anything about Iraq, the hope for Iraq is for the Sunnis, the Shias, and the Kurds to accommodate each other's interests and to work together. So when we see a Shia-led effort against, as the Senator from Arizona said, the Sunni stronghold, with an Iranian commander on the ground who was responsible for killing Americans, and we think that is a good day for us, that is nuts. That is a bad day for America.

Let's talk a little bit about the Iranian nuclear negotiations. I did not sign Senator COTTON's letter until the President threatened to veto congressional legislation to make sure that we would have a say about relieving the sanctions we created. When President Obama told the Congress—a bipartisan

group was being formed to make sure that Congress would have a say about relieving the sanctions that were created—that “I will veto your efforts to have a say,” then all bets were off at that point for me.

So I want the Iranians to know, in case they are listening, the Obama administration, the P5+1, the U.N., cannot relieve congressional sanctions without our approval. I don't know what kind of system they have in Iran; I am pretty well sure it is not Democratic.

To President Obama: When you indicated that the letter that was written—the open letter to the Ayatollahs about Congress's insistence that we have a say about sanctions we are creating—you said: You have empowered the hard-liners.

All I can say is that if the President of the United States believes there is a hard line and moderate split in Iran, I want to look at the deal now more than ever. Please name the moderate elements who are in the Government in Iran. And if these people are moderate, God forbid the hard-liners ever get in charge. The idea that there is a split is ridiculous. The President of Iran, the Foreign Minister of Iran are playing the oldest game in the Mideast. The moderates were gunned down in 2009. I can show my colleagues a moderate who was a young lady who was killed in the streets. Every moderate voice was crushed by force of arms, and our President in 2009 sat on the sidelines because he didn't want to disrupt his chance to reach an agreement with the Ayatollahs.

Mr. President: You scare me when you say you believe there is a moderate element in charge of Iran. Look what they are doing as you negotiate regarding their nuclear ambitions. They have taken down a pro-American government in Yemen that allowed us a platform to watch and attack Al Qaeda in the Arabian peninsula, the terrorist organization responsible for the terrorist attack. The Houthis, an Iranian-backed group within Yemen, was able to take down the government that we were working with in providing us counter-terrorism platforms. The Iranians are supporting Assad, who has killed 220,000 of his own people, and the instability from Assad's brutality is putting the King of Jordan and everyone else at risk. Over 1 million Syrians have left Syria to go to Lebanon and Jordan. That is not a moderate regime. Moderate regimes do not support insurgencies that, through the force of arm, take down elected governments. Hezbollah is not a moderate voice in Lebanon. They are supported by the Iranians. They have had a record of attacking Israel and killing us for decades. So Iran's support of Hezbollah, of the Houthis, and of Assad—that is not what moderate people do. Now, in Iraq itself, the Shia militia who are roaming around Iraq are committing war crimes as I speak.

So you are completely disconnected from the behavior of the people you are

negotiating with, and you don't understand the Iranians at all. You are dangerously in denial or delusional about the threats we face and whom we are dealing with.

So I am glad we wrote the letter to bring some certainty to the process. If the President of the United States negotiates a deal with Iran and that deal includes lifting the congressional sanctions and he does it without our input, he will change a balance of power that has existed for hundreds of years in this country.

We created congressional sanctions by a 100-0 vote over your objection. We are not going to let you tell us we have no voice in lifting the sanctions we created. We are not going to let the United Nations lift sanctions we created.

The Iranians need to understand the following: If there is a deal between the P5+1 and they are telling you congressional sanctions will be lifted by signing the deal, that is not accurate. They won't be lifted unless we agree. I would vote to lift sanctions if I thought we had a good deal. I would vote against a bad deal because a bad deal will start a new arms race in the Middle East.

I will sum this up. I have never been more worried than I am today with what is happening in the Middle East. You have people in our military celebrate Iranian ground activity in Iraq that will expand sectarian conflict. When the Iranians are marching on Tikrit, that is not a sign that Iraq is coming together. To anybody on the American side who believes that is a good idea, what movie have been you been watching?

To the President of the United States: We are going to insist to have a say about sanctions we created before you can negotiate their relief. I am sorry you may not like that. You may find this inconvenient, but we have a say, too.

The bill we are talking about only deals with the sanctions we created. So I hope my Democratic colleagues who are so disappointed will understand why we, at least on this side, are pretty offended at the idea that the President can negotiate away sanctions we created without an input. You should be equally worried. The Israelis and the Arabs have told us one thing: Iran is the most destabilizing force in the Middle East. This President and this administration negotiate a nuclear deal without saying a word about the havoc Iran is creating on the ground.

If I were President, I would tell the Iranians we are not going to talk to you anymore about your nuclear ambitions until you stop destabilizing the region and invading your neighbors. We are not going to talk to you about your nuclear ambitions until you stop building ICBMs that can threaten us, until you stop sponsoring terrorist organizations. But not only has the President remained silent about Iran's wreaking havoc throughout the region, he is negotiating a deal—at least from what I

have been able to find out about it—that is a North Korea in the making, and he wants us to be silent.

To my Democratic colleagues and the President, we are not going to be silenced. We are going to have a say. We are going to have a vote. I hope in a bipartisan fashion, we will vote a good deal in and a bad deal down. Under the construct, you have to get 60 votes to disapprove the deal, so Republicans alone cannot kill it.

If it is a good deal, we will know it. It will be a deal that gives the Iranians what they say they want, a peaceful nuclear power program. A bad deal is a deal that will allow them to have a nuclear weapon one day. The only thing between a nuclear weapon, us, and Israel is the United Nations. Forget that. That is what we had in North Korea.

Mr. MCCAIN. Could I ask my friend if he recalls the recent testimony by Henry Kissinger, probably the most highly regarded individual in America today? He voiced his concern. His fundamental problem was that, as he put it, we have gone from negotiations to rid Iran from ever having the capability of developing nuclear weapons to delaying it. So that on its face—and again, I want to remind my friend from South Carolina that he and I and our beloved friend, former Member of this body, Joe Lieberman, made visit after visit to Baghdad and to Iraq. We probably were everywhere in that country on many occasions. And how well we remember the fight the surge brought on to bring stability to Iraq. It did bring stability. You remember the battle of Sadr City. Who was it that our forces, our young men and women, were fighting against, the Badr Brigades? Guess who is fighting in Tikrit today. The Badr Brigades.

The Senator and I have been to Walter Reed and many other places like that and have seen our wounded. Wounded by what? By IEDs, the copper-tipped IEDs that Soleimani made sure came into Iraq, that would penetrate armor and wreak havoc and wounded so many and killed so many young Americans.

It is now Soleimani who is visibly leading the fight in Tikrit. Strangely enough, our Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff saw so many flags—guess what—with the banners of the Iranian-backed Shia militias.

I would ask my friend, isn't this in some ways a Greek tragedy? Isn't this in some ways a situation where we sacrifice so much? And thanks to the inspired, fantastic leadership of General Petraeus and Colonel McFarland and all of those individuals who fought so well and led so well, we had it won, it was stabilized. And now because of the President's decision not to leave a residual force, we are seeing capitals in the Middle East—whether it be Sana'a, Baghdad, Beirut, or Damascus—we are now seeing an overwhelming Iranian presence that is dedicated, among other things, to the extinction of the State of Israel.

Mr. GRAHAM. All I can say is to the soldiers and to the military personnel who participated in the Iraq fight, you did your job. President Bush made mistakes. To his credit, he adjusted. He made a lot of mistakes upfront, but he did adjust because the surge did work.

President Obama was dealt a pretty good hand when it came to Iraq. Things were better on the security front. Economic and political progress was well noted. His decision not to leave a residual force behind has come back to haunt us, Iraq, and the entire region. It was his decision. We tried to blame the Iraqis. That is just rewriting the history. When he decided to turn down the entire recommendation of his national security team—the national security team's entire recommendation—about doing a no-fly zone and helping the Free Syrian Army 3 years ago, everything Senator MCCAIN said about that decision has come true. Radical Islamists filled in that vacuum.

What you see in the Middle East is as a result of bad policy choices, but what you see today is the beginning of the worst decision, which would be a bad deal with Iran in dealing Congress out.

To the American people, here is one thing I promise you. We and the Congress in a bipartisan fashion will make sure that any deal, if there is one, negotiating with the Iranians, will come to this body to be openly debated so you will know what is in it, and every Member of this Senate is going to take a vote as to whether it is good enough to lift congressional sanctions that we created.

I promise we are not going to allow the most historic decision any President will make any time soon to go without checks and balances. It will come to this body. We will have a vote. I promise you this: If this administration believes there is a hard-line moderate split between those who govern Iran, it should scare you because it scares me. Given what Senator MCCAIN has described, do you really believe there is a moderate element in Iran?

I hope we can reach a diplomatic conclusion to the Iranian nuclear ambitions. They have been lying about their nuclear program for 20 years. I would like to see a good deal, but I will insist on voting on a deal that leads to congressional sanctions.

To the Germans, our friends in Germany, the Foreign Minister of Germany said the letter empowered the Iranians. With all due respect to our German allies, that is the most ridiculous statement I think I have ever heard. Requiring a deal between the Iranians and involving congressional sanctions to come back to the Congress should not embolden anybody. I don't know if the deal you are negotiating goes to the Parliament—the Bundestag in Germany—but we do things a certain way. The efforts of the French and the Germans to discipline Putin, how well has that turned out? We have a group of nations trying to deal with the most thuggish regime in the world

acting like the Keystone Kops, in my view.

Mr. MCCAIN. Could I remind the Senator that it is the same German Foreign Minister who criticized us and sat by and watched the dismemberment of a European nation for the first time in 70 years; the same Foreign Minister who keeps threatening Vladimir Putin if he keeps this up, and Vladimir Putin continues his aggression and will continue his aggression as well.

I can't give up the floor without mentioning, again, my sorrow at the passage of and murder of my friend, Boris Nemstov. The recent arrests by Vladimir Putin's crack law enforcement team is reminiscent—they rounded up some Chechens—of everybody's favorite film “Casablanca” where at the end, Claude Raine says, “Round up the usual suspects.” We have seen a scene from that movie again as the Russians have rounded up the usual suspects. Under this regime in Russia, we will never know who the murderers are of Boris Nemstov; and that, my friends, is a tragedy.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, today I rise to support the Justice for Trafficking Victims Act, and I want to commend the numerous Senators—CORNYN, KLOBUCHAR, and so many others—who have worked so hard to move this act forward.

I realize there are many of us who are new to this body, and I certainly am still learning my way around the procedural maze here. However, it is easy to see how frustrating this maze can be and how it keeps us from getting good things done for the people who elected us and sent us here.

Last year I traveled my State, Alaska, and one of the top concerns I heard from Alaskans is that they were tired of the gridlock, and they want to see a functioning government and an open process in the Senate. So here we are on a bill that is of immense importance to the country and to Alaska—a bill that has very broad bipartisan support. It comes to the floor with a promise of an open amendment process so all Senators can be heard. Yet, a few of my friends on the other side of the aisle are preventing us from moving forward on a bill that will protect some of the Nation's most vulnerable citizens. Evidently a provision in the bill that has been the law of the land for decades has now become an excuse among some not to move the bill forward.

That is a shame for the country, and particularly for the victims who have

been snared in the heinous world of human trafficking. As a former attorney general of the great State of Alaska, I have seen the horrible pain and suffering that human trafficking and cases of domestic violence and sexual assault can cause among our fellow citizens. I hail from a great State. We are proud Alaskans, proud of many things that are wonderful about our State. But like most States, we have problems. We have some of the highest rates of sexual abuse and exploitation in the country. Human trafficking is a big problem in my State, just as it is throughout the rest of the country. Since the human trafficking bill was placed on the calendar, I have been working closely with all of my colleagues, not only on this bill but on an amendment that I plan on offering with many others, the Mann Act cooperation amendment. This is an amendment that would be a rare thing in Washington today, a truly win-win amendment for the Federal Government, State governments, and most importantly, for victims of human trafficking.

Now, human trafficking is a problem that, unfortunately, comes in many forms and in many States—all States, in fact—in all corners of our Nation. In order to best combat human trafficking, we must work toward a seamless Federal and State partnership in order to stop this growing problem.

To that end, I have been proud to have worked with many Senators on both sides of the aisle—Senators HEITKAMP, GILLIBRAND, AYOTTE, and MURKOWSKI—on a simple yet straightforward amendment that incentivizes State and Federal cooperation on this important issue.

The Mann Act cooperation amendment will free Federal resources by allowing State attorneys general and local DAs to prosecute human trafficking cases that would otherwise be assigned to Federal Government prosecutors; or if Federal Government prosecutors do not have the resources to take on such cases, oftentimes they are not going to be pursued.

At the same time, this amendment preserves the Federal prosecutor's ability to exercise prosecutorial options while, importantly, increasing transparency about decisions made on human trafficking cases.

In human trafficking cases, it is often local investigators and local prosecutors who have the most information on these cases. As Alaska's attorney general, I saw this firsthand. We usually had great cooperation with our partners in the Federal Government.

But when the Feds can't take on human trafficking cases due to limited resources, they should be encouraged to allow State officials to take on such cases. That is the key goal of this amendment—to enable the resources and cooperation between State and Federal prosecutors to ensure that all cases of human trafficking are pursued, victims have justice, and perpetrators