

aggressively its sphere of influence across the greater Middle East.

The regime's belligerent behavior in the Strait of Hormuz was just another reminder of that fact. But it reminds us of something else, too—our need to invest in the naval and seaborne expeditionary capabilities in the Persian Gulf, which will be necessary not just to retain dominance at sea but to contain Iran's military and irregular forces, as well.

Today, though—today—we are focused on one point above all else—that the American people and Congress deserve a say before any congressional sanctions are lifted. At the very least, sanctions should not be lifted before the Iranians fully disclose all aspects of research and development as it relates to the potential military dimensions of their nuclear program. Yet the interim agreement, as it has been explained to Congress, would bestow international recognition to Iran's research and development program, along with an international blessing for Iran to become a nuclear threshold state poised at the edge of developing a nuclear weapon. It is frightening to think what Iran might be able to achieve covertly in that context.

Now, to a lot of Americans this all sounds quite different from what they were led to believe a deal with Iran would actually be about—preventing Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons and dismantling Iran's enrichment capability. But that apparently has already been given away. So the American people deserve a say through their Members of Congress. The Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act will ensure Congress gets a vote either to approve or disapprove of the comprehensive agreement.

Just as President Obama's successor will need to modernize our military to deal with the challenges posed by Iran's aggression, so will the President's successor want to consider Congress's view of any comprehensive deal. A failed resolution of approval, as the bill before us would permit, would send an unmistakable signal about congressional opposition to lifting sanctions. Let me say that again. A failed resolution of approval, permitted under this bill, would send an unmistakable signal about congressional opposition to lifting sanctions.

So now is the time for Congress to invest in the capabilities President Obama's successor may need to use to end Iran's nuclear weapons program if the Iranians covertly pursue a weapon or violate the terms of the ultimate agreement. And now is the time for Congress to pass the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act.

THE BUDGET

Mr. McCONNELL. Now, on a different matter, Mr. President, I was glad to see yesterday's announcement of a budget conference agreement. That means Congress is now one step closer

to passing a balanced budget that supports a healthy economy, funds national defense, strengthens Medicare, and begins to tackle our debt problems without taking more money from hard-working Americans.

It is a balanced budget that could help lead to more than 1 million additional jobs and boost our economy by nearly half a trillion dollars, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office. In short, it is a balanced budget that is all about the future. That is also why it provides a tool for the Senate majority to repeal a failed policy of the past—ObamaCare—so we can start over with real patient-centered health reform.

This is a good balanced budget every Senator should want to support, and I look forward to the Senate taking up the budget agreement next week.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

PROTECTING VOLUNTEER FIRE-FIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY RESPONDERS ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 1191, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1191) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Pending:

Corker/Cardin amendment No. 1140, in the nature of a substitute.

Corker/Cardin amendment No. 1179 (to amendment No. 1140), to require submission of all Persian text included in the agreement.

Blunt amendment No. 1155 (to amendment No. 1140), to extend the requirement for annual Department of Defense reports on the military power of Iran.

Vitter modified amendment No. 1186 (to amendment No. 1179), to require an assessment of inadequacies in the international monitoring and verification system as they relate to a nuclear agreement with Iran.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment and call up my amendment No. 1149 to declare that any agreement reached by the President relating to the nuclear program of Iran is a congressional-executive agreement to be considered under the expedited procedure in both Houses of Congress.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. CARDIN. Reserving the right to object, Mr. President, we have been proceeding now for about a week. We have had a good debate on issues. Many Members are working with Senator

CORKER and me to clear their amendments so they are consistent with the overall objective that was supported by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee by a 19-to-0 vote, and we are going to continue to work on that process in the orderly consideration of amendments.

For that reason, I must object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. JOHNSON. Perhaps if the Senator from Maryland will listen to my explanation of what this amendment does, he will withdraw his objection.

During our debate on Tuesday, when I offered an amendment to deem the agreement between Iran and America—well, actually and the world—a treaty subject to the advice and consent of the Senate, the Senator from Maryland spoke about one of the objections to the treaty. He said:

Secondly, I don't know how we are going to explain it to our colleagues in the House of Representatives. The Presiding Officer served in the House. I served in the House. Senator Menendez served in the House. The last time I checked, we imposed these sanctions because the bill passed both the Senate and the House, and now we are saying that the approval process is going to ignore the House of Representatives, solely going to be a matter for the U.S. Senate on a ratification of a treaty? That does not seem like a workable solution.

Now, Mr. President, I appreciate the fact that the Senator from Tennessee and the Senator from Maryland did not object to my raising my first amendment to deem it a treaty. And of course this body then voted on that, and I appreciate that fact. And I accept the verdict of this Chamber that they did not want to deem this agreement a treaty—fair enough.

But I would like to quote, in addition to the Senator from Maryland, the Senator from Tennessee in arguing against deeming this a treaty. The Senator from Tennessee said: "We think the President has the ability to negotiate things."

Well, first off all, I agree with that. Article II, section 2 states: "He [The President] shall have Power, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, to make Treaties, provided two thirds of the Senators present concur."

So that actually is the constitutional method for making agreements between nations—having the President negotiate that. I completely agree. We can't have 535 negotiators. But we certainly should have this body involved in those agreements. We should have a role. We should have a robust role. And, of course, I believe it is so important, that this has such an effect and that it risks so much for this Nation, that I believe it should be a treaty. But again, fair enough—this body deemed it would not be a treaty. The Senator from Tennessee went on to say:

We had no idea this President would consider suspending these sanctions ad infinitum, forever—no idea. I think even people on the other side of the aisle were shocked.

We were shocked. Yes, we granted those waivers for national security. We did not believe those waivers would be abused the way they are being abused right now.

The Senator from Tennessee also went on to say: "This is one of the biggest geopolitical issues that will potentially happen if an agreement is reached in our lifetime here in the Senate."

Once again, I agree with the Senator from Tennessee. This is a huge geopolitical issue. And right now this administration deems that agreement on its own authority, an executive agreement, and really, at this point in time, we have no role. There is no involvement. The Senator from Tennessee went on to say: "Look, I have strong agreement with the sentiment of our Senator from Wisconsin." Again, he is agreeing with the fact that this really should rise to the level of a treaty.

He also went on to say: "Without the bill that is on the floor, the American people will never see it."

Think of that. Think of an agreement between Iran, as it is being described—and, as I say, nobody really knows yet, but what I believe is being described to us—puts Iran on a path for a nuclear weapon. How many years has it been that Presidents from both parties and Members of Congress from both parties have stood and said very forcefully that we simply cannot allow Iran to have a nuclear weapon? Now we may be facing an agreement between this country, other nations of the world, and Iran that actually puts Iran on a path for a nuclear agreement.

The Senator from Tennessee is correct. I hope he is not correct, but I think he may be correct that right now this President has no duty to bring that agreement to the American people. I do happen to believe that public pressure would be so great that the American people would not tolerate that level of brazenness, that level of arrogance on the part of any administration or any President to do a deal, to make an agreement of such import that before implementing that agreement the President of the United States would not bring that agreement to the American people and subject it to, in some shape or form, the advice and consent of either this Chamber or Congress as a whole.

The final quote from the Senator from Tennessee is this. He said:

Now, look, if I could wave a magic wand or all of a sudden donkeys flew around the Capitol, I would love for us to have the ability to deem this a treaty. I really would.

Well, if the agreement that President Obama is talking about in its current framework is agreed to between this administration and the other negotiating partners and Iran, we better all hope that donkeys start flying around the Capitol, because that agreement, as it is being described to us, would put Iran on the path to be a nuclear power. That would destabilize not only the region, but it would destabilize the

world. It would lead to an enormous amount of nuclear proliferation within the region. It is a very bad deal. It is very risky for this Nation. It affects this Nation.

Let me just go through the three forms of international agreements. There are no set criteria in terms of what is a treaty, what is a congressional-executive agreement or what is simply an executive agreement. There are considerations. There is precedent.

I go to the Foreign Affairs Manual at the State Department, and they lay out the considerations; what should be considered in determining what an agreement is—a treaty, a congressional-executive agreement or just an executive agreement. The first consideration is the extent to which the agreement involves commitments or risks affecting the Nation as a whole.

The third consideration is whether the agreement can be given effect without the enactment of subsequent legislation by Congress.

Well, the fact that we have this bill proves the fact that it needs subsequent legislation by Congress.

The fifth consideration is the preference of the Congress as to a particular type of agreement. Well, that is what we are talking about here—the Congress weighing in, in the form of my amendment, to say we want a role, we want a more robust role than is currently offered in this bill.

The seventh is the proposed duration of the agreement. We are going to be living with the impact, the effect, the results, the collateral damage of this agreement between Iran and the other negotiating parties for a very, very, very long time. So based on those considerations, based on the fact that in the State Department's own Foreign Affairs Manual in determining whether something is a treaty or an executive agreement or a congressional executive agreement, there should be consultation with Congress. I consider this amendment consultation with Congress.

Again, all I am asking in this amendment is to provide a minimal—a minimal constitutional threshold, a minimal constitutional role for Congress in affirmatively approving a deal between Iran and the rest of the world and America.

So all this amendment really does, in effect, is just asks the President to bring the agreement before the American people, before this Congress, allow us to have input, to affirmatively approve this in both Chambers, both the House and the Senate, with a mere majority vote of both Chambers. Because what is currently on the floor in this bill—and, again, I have a great deal of respect for the Senator from Tennessee. I know in his heart he believes this Senate, this Congress, should have a far more robust role and involvement in such a consequential agreement, but I also realize the challenge he has had dealing with our friends on the other side of the aisle and how very little in-

volvement they are willing to agree to for this Senate and for this Congress.

If the bill is passed, we need to clarify what that means in terms of approval. Probably the best way for me to point that out is I had a third amendment I tried to offer. It was an amendment that was going to specifically describe what this bill does with a vote of disapproval, what that threshold really means in terms of approval of this very consequential deal. So I offered an amendment: I called it a very low threshold for approval of a congressional-executive agreement. It would have allowed the agreement between Iran and the rest of the world to be approved by this body, by this Congress, with a majority vote in the House and a vote of only 34 Senators in this body.

Now, very appropriately, that amendment was ruled out of order. It was ruled unconstitutional by the Parliamentarian, as it should have been, because that is not approval of a process. That is not the way Congress should weigh in, have input, be involved in such a consequential agreement. But that is exactly—in a very convoluted process of votes of disapproval, that would have to be, first of all, voted on by 60 Senators. Then, of course, if that is vetoed, we would have to override that veto with 67 Senators and two-thirds majority in the House.

Again, what this bill does, it will allow a very bad deal—potentially very bad deal—between Iran and the rest of the world and America to be approved with a majority vote in the House and a vote of only 34 Senators in this Chamber.

Again, with that reality, with that clarity of what this bill does, the minimum role, the minimum role that this bill allows, I would urge all of my colleagues to support my amendment that provides for what should be the minimum involvement of Congress: a majority vote, an affirmative vote of approval in both the House and the Senate to any deal this administration concludes with Iran.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

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

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Wisconsin for his great service on the Foreign Relations Committee.

I think he knows there is another amendment offered by another Senator, the Senator from Texas, that I think is very similar to this, and we are working right now with the other side to try to bring that up.

Mr. JOHNSON. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. CORKER. Sure.

Mr. JOHNSON. The difference between the two, as I understand them, is the amendment of the Senator from Texas would actually have a higher threshold. I think it would rise to a 60-vote threshold. I am not asking that. I am actually asking something less than that, to again clarify what this

bill allows in terms of approval by this Chamber.

So even though we discussed this earlier, I don't believe I can combine the two because I think it is important to clarify the issue with an amendment that requires what I really do believe—truly believe—should be the minimum, the minimum role, the minimum affirmative approval of disagreement: a mere majority vote in both Chambers. That is so reasonable. That is the minimum role the American people ought to have in terms of having a say in this.

I have never insisted on an amendment in 4 years in the Senate. I feel so deeply about this that I really ask both the Senator from Maryland and the Senator from Tennessee, please, just allow a vote on this one amendment.

Mr. CORKER. If I could, Mr. President, the Senator is right; he doesn't offer many amendments, nor do I. But the very first amendment we voted on was the amendment of the Senator from Wisconsin.

We had a conversation yesterday which I thought led to us considering combining this request with the request from Senator CRUZ, and I know we are working on that particular issue. But I understand, and we are trying to process these. I think he knows we are trying to process votes, and the very first one we processed was the one from the Senator from Wisconsin.

I do appreciate his concerns. I think he knows I share his concerns about this agreement. I am trying to get done what is possible. Again, if I could wave a wand and cause the national security waivers that Senator JOHNSON, myself, Senator CARDIN, and others voted for years ago when we put the sanctions in place—if I could wave a wand and those would go away, then we would be in a position where we would actually need to have an affirmative vote.

But I do appreciate his concerns. I think he knows we are trying to work through amendments down here, and I appreciate his patience as we do so.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I join Senator CORKER. Senator JOHNSON is a very valued member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I enjoy working with him on U.N. issues. The two of us are the Senate representatives to the United Nations this year and I know his passion on these issues, but I just want to underscore a couple points.

Right now, as of last night, there were 66 amendments that had been filed to this bill that came out of the committee 19 to 0. The number of Republican amendments were 66; the number of Democratic amendments were zero.

I point that out because we are trying to maintain the bipartisan cooperation we have had through this process so the Senate can speak with a united voice, because that gives us the strong-

est possible message as to the congressional role.

I must state, this is a delicate balance how we brought this bill forward. I don't think I am underestimating the surprise we received from our colleagues when they heard there was a 19-to-0 vote in our committee.

There are so many Members who are working with us who have filed amendments—and I thank each one of them—trying to find areas where we, as we worked in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, can find a common spot to be able to advance those amendments. I am optimistic and Senator CORKER is optimistic that we are going to be able to deal with many of the issues the Republican Members have brought up and the amendments they have filed.

But in direct response to Senator JOHNSON, let me point out, the sanctions were imposed by the U.S. Congress, by votes of the House and the Senate, and the signature of the President. What is being negotiated between our negotiating partners, the United States, and Iran, is an agreement—if they are successful, if the deal is struck—that will prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear weapons state and will provide, over time, relief from Iran from the international and U.S. sanctions that have been imposed. That is the framework.

We know the sanctions brought them to the table. We all understand that, and we are very proud of the role we played, but it is Congress, and only Congress, that can permanently change or modify that sanctions regime.

We are going to have to act. So I just take exception with Senator JOHNSON's view that we are not going to act. We are going to act because only we can permanently change the regime. But what this bill gives us is an orderly way to consider the congressional review of this agreement or deal when it is finally reached.

I just wish my colleagues would not prejudge this. I have heard so many people say something is going to happen. We don't know what the agreement is going to be. We don't even know if they are going to be able to come in with an agreement, but I will say this about the Obama administration. When they came out with the framework agreement, there were many Members of this Chamber who said Iran will never live up to the commitments in the framework agreement; that they would break out, they would not pull back, as they are committed to doing, and the sanctions regime would not be able to stay in effect. And guess what. A year later they have complied with the framework agreement, and they have in fact—the sanction regime has held tight during this period of time with our negotiating partners.

Do I share many of the concerns of my friend from Wisconsin? I do. I do share those concerns. I am concerned as to whether the agreement will, in

fact, be strong enough to prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear weapons state. That is what we are going to look at in our committee, if we can pass this bill in the same bipartisan manner in which we did in committee—if we can do that, the Senator from Wisconsin, the chairman, the ranking member, all of us in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee are going to get all the documents, we are going to have time to review it and be able to answer those questions. The vote we are having on the floor this week is whether we are going to have that opportunity.

I know these amendments are well intended. I understand that. I understand the deep feelings each Member has. But the bottom line, if the amendment my friend is talking about got on the bill, we are not going to get that review, we are not going to have that orderly process. That is the fact.

So I think the debate on the floor is critically important. We have been debating this bill for a week. We started last Thursday, 19-to-0 vote in committee, not a single Democratic amendment. We think it is time to move this bill forward to the United States House of Representatives.

And, yes, Senator CORKER and I are going to accommodate the suggestions that have been made by Members. We are finding a way to do that, and we are going to continue to work that path. But at the end of the day, this is a very serious issue, and I agree completely with Senator GRAHAM and the comments he has made. This is an extremely important issue. It has to rise above our individual desires so, collectively, we can achieve something for the American people. That is what they want us to do. We have it in our grasps.

I applaud the leadership of Senator CORKER. He has to work with all the Republican amendments that have been filed. Believe me, there is a lot of frustration on the Democratic caucus, also as to why this bill is still on the floor and hasn't passed by now. But if we get everybody's patience, I am confident Senator CORKER and I will be able to work together so we can accommodate the reasonable requests of our Members and get this bill moving to the United States House of Representatives.

But let us maintain the balance that the Senator Foreign Relations Committee did, and let us do what the American people want us to do and that is to listen to each other. We have different views. I understand that. But the way we can reach common ground is to listen to each other and reach a reasonable compromise that doesn't compromise the principles of what we are trying to achieve. That is exactly what the Senate Foreign Relations Committee bill does. I urge my colleagues to exercise some restraint. Let's get this bill to the House of Representatives.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I wish to respond to the point frequently made by the supporters of this bill that this is the only way—the only way—that this body, the Congress, the Senate and the House, will receive the details of the deal. What the Senator from Maryland is saying is that this President, our Commander in Chief, will be so brazen, so arrogant as to negotiate and conclude an agreement of such import, of such consequence, and he would then keep it secret from the American people in this Congress. I hope that is not so. But if that is truly the belief, I would be happy to modify my amendment to require that same disclosure of the information of the details of the agreement. I would be happy to do that. I would be happy to work with the other side to do so. But barring that agreement, I am still urging my colleagues and I am urging this body to allow a vote on my amendment, to clarify what this bill is and what it is not. It is not advice and consent. It is the minimum—the minimum—threshold, the minimum involvement, the minimum input on the part of the American people through their elected representatives to pass judgment to approve affirmatively such a consequential agreement with a mere majority of votes of both Chambers of Congress. Is that asking so much?

It is true that we passed this bill out of the Foreign Relations Committee with a unanimous vote, because we were granted assurances. I realize this is a delicate negotiation. I realize our friends on the other side of the aisle simply refuse to have what I consider a minimum involvement.

Again, I appreciate and applaud Senator CORKER for doing a bipartisan agreement, for reaching that agreement. But our understanding was that this would be a completely open amendment process.

The Senator from Maryland points out that there are 66 amendments to 1. Let's start voting on them. We will vote on the one Democratic amendment. Let's start voting on ours. Eventually, we will tire. Eventually, we will have made our points. Eventually, we will convey to the American public what this bill is and what it is not.

Again, let me say, for a final time, what this bill provides. If passed, sure, we get the information which we should get, regardless, but it sets up a process—a very convoluted process—of votes of disapproval which would require 60 votes in this Chamber to pass. We assume it would be vetoed. Then it would require 67 votes in this Chamber to override the veto and two-thirds of a vote in the House to override that veto.

In effect—let me clarify one last time—instead of requiring the bare minimum of an affirmative vote of a majority of Members of both Chambers of Congress, this bill would allow approval of this agreement by a simple

majority in the House and only 34 Senators providing that rubber stamp of approval to a bill that could be incredibly consequential and of which we will live with the consequences—the results—for many, many years to come.

I yield the floor.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, again, I thank the Senator from Wisconsin and appreciate his service and his support of this bill. I agree with him, and I wish it were different than it is. The fact is that we will have a right to vote whether to approve or disapprove the lifting in the normal way, but that will occur 4 or 5 years down the road. I think most of us want to weigh in now before the sanctions regime totally dissipates.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to proceed as in morning business in order to introduce a bill.

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

(The remarks of Ms. COLLINS pertaining to the introduction of S. 1141 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RUBIO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mr. BARRASSO pertaining to the introduction of S. 1140 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. BARRASSO. 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. COTTON. 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. COTTON. Mr. President, I send two amendments to the desk, one for my own and one on behalf of Senator RUBIO of Florida.

Mr. President, I have said time and again—

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, has there been a unanimous consent request?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The quorum call has been vitiated.

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I have said time and again that a nuclear-armed Iran is the greatest threat this country faces. I have said time and again that the Senate needs to have votes on the merits of this agreement.

The President has taken us down a very dangerous path. The President has backtracked on his own words. He said that Iran needed to live up to all of its obligations under international law. Yet Iran still has not disclosed the past military dimensions of its nuclear program.

The President said, after this negotiating process began in December of 2013, that Iran has no need for a fortified underground military bunker in Fordow. Yet our negotiators have conceded the existence, with centrifuge cascades, of that underground military bunker.

The President has said we have to have fully verifiable, anywhere, anytime access to all sites in Iran to ensure they are not cheating on any agreement—to include their military sites. Yet the leaders of Iran continue to say that we won't be able to access their military sites. There will be no intrusive inspections.

I and the Senator from Florida, as well as many other Senators, have submitted multiple amendments to ask for votes on these points. We have been consistently blocked from bringing up these amendments for a vote.

It is fine if you want to vote no. If you think Iran should keep an underground fortified military bunker with centrifuge cascades. It is fine if you don't think they should have to disclose the past military dimensions of their nuclear program, but we need to vote. We need to vote now.

It is even fine if you agree with those points and that you think this is a delicate agreement that has to be prevented from being amended in any way. But we need to vote.

If you don't want to vote, you shouldn't have come to the Senate. If you are in the Senate and you don't want to vote, you should leave. As the Senator from Florida said yesterday, be a talk show host, be a columnist. It is time we have a vote at a simple majority threshold on all of these critical points.

We are talking about a nuclear Iran, the most dangerous threat to our national security.

So the amendment I am offering first would simply take the language of the bill that came out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and add those three points. First, that Iran shouldn't keep its nuclear facility before it gets sanctions relief; that Iran can't get sanctions relief until they disclose the past military dimensions of their nuclear program. They can't get sanctions relief until they accept a fully verifiable inspections regime.

We deserve a vote on this.

AMENDMENT NO. 1197

(Purpose: Amendment of a perfecting nature)

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I call up my amendment No. 1197 at the desk to the text proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 1140.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Arkansas [Mr. COTTON] proposes an amendment numbered 1197 to the language proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 1140.

Mr. COTTON. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

AMENDMENT NO. 1198 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1197

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I also call up for Senator RUBIO a second-degree amendment, amendment No. 1198 to amendment No. 1197.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Arkansas [Mr. COTTON], for Mr. RUBIO, proposes an amendment numbered 1198 to amendment No. 1197.

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To require a certification that Iran's leaders have publically accepted Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state)

On page 3, line 20, of the amendment, strike "purpose." and insert the following: "purpose; and

"(iii) the President determines Iran's leaders have publically accepted Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state.

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, again, these amendments would do two very simple things: First, they would require a vote on whether Iran should get sanctions relief before it discloses past military dimensions of its nuclear program, before it closes its underground fortified bunker at Fordow, and before it submits to a fully verifiable, anytime, anywhere, no-notice inspections regime. Second, they would require Iran to acknowledge Israel's right to exist as a Jewish democratic state before they get nuclear weapons because they continue to say that Israel would be wiped off the map, and if they get nuclear weapons, they will have the means to do so.

It is my intent to insist upon a recorded vote on these amendments at a simple-majority threshold. The Senate needs to vote. If you disagree with these policies, vote no. If you agree with these policies and you think this will upset a delicate compromise, then vote no and explain that. But we need to vote, and we should start voting.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, let me point out a couple things. There are

now 67 amendments, all of which have been filed by Republicans, none by Democrats.

This bill passed the Senate Foreign Relations Committee 19 to 0. Senator CORKER and I have been working with Republicans who have filed amendments to try to accommodate them, and we have been making progress. We have been trying to schedule additional votes. I thank Senator CORKER and those who are cooperating with us in a way that we can try to move this bill forward.

We are prepared to have votes, but I think some of the tactics that are now being deployed are going to make it much more difficult for us to be able to proceed in an orderly way. It is every Member's right to take whatever actions they want to take, but I want to tell you that for those of us who want to get this bill to the finish line, it gets a little frustrating.

We will continue to focus on a way forward on this legislation. But I want to make it clear that we have been prepared to find an orderly way to proceed with votes and to deal with the issues Members have been concerned about, but at times it becomes difficult with the procedures that are being used.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I thank the ranking member and the ranking member's staff. I thank the minority leader's office for working with us on what was going to be a series of votes, tough votes. I have a sense that the context of this has just changed, and I regret that.

I have been working with numbers of Senators on some really controversial votes that we were willing to make, as we already have. As a matter of fact, the only two votes we have had thus far were considered poison pill votes. My friend from Maryland was willing to have more poison pill votes—if you want to call them that—tough votes, but I sense the context of this may have just changed.

I yield the floor.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, let's talk about poison pill amendments. I would say these aren't poison pills; these are vitamin pills. They are designed to strengthen this legislation and to strengthen the U.S. negotiating position.

Who could object that Israel has a right to exist as a Jewish state and that Iran should not be allowed a nuclear weapon if they won't recognize that right? The President himself said

they should close their underground fortified military bunker before they get sanctions relief. We are simply asking for a vote on what the President himself has said.

If the Senator from Maryland wants to talk about procedural tactics, let's be perfectly clear what has happened here. The very first amendment brought to the floor on this bill was designed to stop any other amendments from being offered.

For those of you watching, you should know that the only thing that amendment says is that any final agreement must be submitted in Farsi as well as English. That is a non-controversial proposal which I am sure we could adopt by voice vote and move on in an orderly fashion to any other amendments. Yet, they continue to object to unanimous consent to bring up any other amendments, designed to stop the Senate from having to cast these votes.

The amendments we have offered are no more of a procedural tactic than what the Senator from Maryland himself is doing—an amendment that could have been offered in committee, an amendment that could have been voted on easily on Tuesday when it was offered but is being used to block consideration of any other amendment.

These are not tough votes. These should be easy votes. Again, if you want to vote no, vote no. If you want to vote no and say it is designed to protect a compromise, do that. But we should be voting.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. Madam President, I know the Senator from Arkansas knows I have no issue with taking tough votes, and I would take them all day long.

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. CORNYN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

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

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, under the previous order, I ask that the Chair lay before the Senate the veto message to accompany S.J. Res. 8.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the veto message.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Veto message to accompany S.J. Res. 8, a joint resolution 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.