

whether it will, and here are a few of them: Will the agreement allow for anytime, anywhere inspections of military installations and research and development facilities?

Will the agreement compel the Iranians to disclose the possible military dimensions of their nuclear program?

Will the agreement make any real impact on Iran's ability to continue researching and developing advanced centrifuges?

Will the agreement's sanctions relief be tied to Iran's strict adherence to the terms of the deal, and will we have any real way to verify its compliance?

These parameters will also help us determine just how successful the Iranians have been in extracting concessions from the White House. So we will be examining them very closely.

I will remind colleagues of the deadly seriousness of the issue at hand. This should not be about some political legacy project. This is not some game either.

It is certainly not the time for more tired, obviously untrue talking points about the choice here between a bad deal and war. No serious person would believe that is true. Even the people saying these things have to know they are not true, and they probably know that the very opposite is, in fact, more likely. So the country doesn't have time to waste on more White House messaging exercises when the seriousness of the moment calls for intellectually honest debate. The choices made today are sure to affect our country for years—probably decades—to come.

The future we leave to our children is at issue as well. The Senate should engage in serious consideration of what faces us in the years ahead. I invite every Democrat and every Republican to join us in that critical conversation. Our country deserves no less. What we must decide now is whether this is really the right time to be reducing pressure on the world's leading state sponsor of terror and for what in return. We already know what the Quds Force is capable of under the sanctions regime. What will Iran's support of terrorism look like with the additional funding obtained from sanctions relief?

Let's not forget that Iran is pursuing a full-spectrum campaign to expand its sphere of influence and undermine American security and standing in the region. Iran's continued support of terrorism and its determination to expand ballistic missile and conventional military capabilities should be gravely concerning to each of us. They certainly are to me. They pose significant challenges to our country and President Obama's successor.

This comes on top of the many other threats that challenge our country today and into the future from groups such as the Taliban, Al Qaeda, and ISIL to increasingly aggressive regimes in Moscow and Beijing. A bad deal won't make any of those threats go away. Pretending otherwise isn't going to make us safer. A bad deal will

only ensure that Iran has more funding to threaten us with renewed vigor. It will only ensure that Iran expands its stockpile of missiles and that it strengthens terrorist proxies such as Hezbollah, the Houthi insurgents in Yemen, and the Assad regime in Syria.

In fact, here is a Reuters headline from this morning. Listen to this: "Syria's Assad sees more Iranian support after nuclear deal." That is the reaction from the Syrian regime. "Syria's Assad sees more Iranian support after the nuclear deal."

Look, the White House needs to know that the Congress elected by the people is prepared to do anything it can to make America safer. We want to work collaboratively with the President to advance that goal, but if we have to work against a bad agreement to do so—a flawed deal that threatens our country and our allies—I assure you, we will.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The Democratic leader is recognized.

NUCLEAR AGREEMENT WITH IRAN

MR. REID. Mr. President, I issued a statement earlier this morning. Today's historic accord is the result of years of hard work by President Obama and his administration. The world community agrees that a nuclear-armed Iran is unacceptable and a threat to our national security, to the safety of Israel, and to the stability of the whole Middle East. Now it is incumbent on the Congress to review this agreement with a thoughtful, level-headed process and to give this agreement the review it deserves.

EDUCATION BILL AND APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS

MR. REID. Mr. President, in the Chamber this morning we have the chairman of the education committee, a man for whom I have the utmost respect. He is a person who understands education. He was the Governor of the State of Tennessee. He was the Secretary of Education, and he has been an outstanding Senator.

But something occurred last night that I think is really outside the specter of reasonableness. Cloture was filed on the education bill last night, meaning we are going to have a vote on it tomorrow morning.

We have worked on a few amendments, and basically all of them could have been accepted with voice votes. There was not a single difficult amendment that was brought up. So now cloture is being sought, and in the process, ignoring Democratic amendments that we have been waiting to offer for some time now. We are not going to allow cloture to succeed unless we have

a pathway forward on these amendments.

The ranking member of the committee, the senior Senator from Washington, knows this. She has talked with the chairman of the committee about this, and we are going to have to have a reasonable time to debate those amendments and have votes on those amendments. Otherwise, we are not going to complete this bill. It is an important bill. We should complete the bill.

Senate Democrats have said for months that Republicans are running a sham on the appropriations process. From the very beginning, the Republicans have proceeded with an appropriations process that is designed to fail. They moved forward bills they know Democrats cannot support. Republican leaders in Congress simply have shown no interest in funding our government in a fair and responsible manner.

This past week, even we were surprised how House Republican leadership has handled the appropriations process. Republicans brought their interior and environment appropriations bill before the House for debate. This legislation is nothing short of a disaster. In fact, the bill that they brought to the floor is so bad that President Obama has made it clear already that it will be vetoed.

What does it do? It strangles the Environmental Protection Agency's budget, cutting it by 9 percent, \$700 million. It prohibits completion and implementation of pollution standards for dirty powerplants to address climate change. It cuts funding for State drinking water infrastructure. It cuts funding for National Parks.

We have such an infrastructure deficit in our National Park System that it is a crying shame. Yet they cut more from this program. We are the envy of the rest of the world with our national parks, but with how the Republicans have treated this wonderful system of parks we have, they are really being depleted. It allows corporations to shift costs of their toxic waste bills to taxpayers.

We have had for decades a very successful program to clean up these very, very dirty spills dealing with chemicals and other substances that shouldn't be on the ground. It is called Superfund. What it does is make sure that these environmental disasters are paid for by the people who created the disaster. What does the House do on this? They change this and say: No, we are not going to have the people that messed up the environment clean it up; we are going to have the taxpayers clean it up. That is wrong.

This bill that was in the House last week blocks hydraulic fracking rules for public lands designed to provide transparency and protect communities that host oil and gas drilling. Rules for public lands, not private lands—they eliminate that.

Those are only a small number of the devastating provisions the Republicans

have piled into this funding bill. But even more shocking was what occurred next, as legislation pertaining to the removal of the Confederate flag brought the Republicans' appropriations bill to a screeching halt. In an attempt to avoid voting on amendments that would outlaw the use of Confederate emblems, the House leadership shut down their own spending bill.

The Confederate flag issue was brought up by Republicans. They accepted it the day before this debacle took place on the House floor. But then they wanted more debate on the Confederate flag, and it didn't sell. What did they do? They figured out a way to drop this bill totally and take it off the floor.

Listen to a few of the headlines that were in the newspapers that follow.

From the Atlantic: "Republican Defenders of the Confederate Flag Derail a Spending Bill."

From Politico: "GOP Leaders Yank Bill after Confederate Flag Fracas."

From Roll Call: "The Confederate Flag Imperils Republican Goal to Finish Spending Bills by August."

Finally, from the Wall Street Journal: "Confederate Flag Debate Prompts House to Pull Spending Bill."

It is very disappointing that this is what the Republican Party of the 21st century stands for—protecting emblems of racism and our tragic past. The Congress should not be protecting the Confederate flag. Protecting the Confederate flag certainly is not worthy of bringing the entire U.S. Government to a standstill. But that is what the Republicans have been doing all along with their bogus appropriations bills—bringing our country to a standstill.

It has been clear for months that the only way Congress will arrive at a responsible budget is by Republicans and Democrats, Senate and House, sitting down together and finding a path forward. Now is the time to negotiate—not in September, not in October.

We know that the Republicans are experienced in shutting down the government. They did it before for several weeks. It was devastating to our economy, and it was a real shock to the worldwide community. Sequestration is another ingenious method of the Republicans to hurt the American middle class.

Republicans are experienced in shutting down the government. They did it 2 years ago. We know how the American economy suffered.

Senate Democrats aren't the only ones calling on Republican leaders to sit down for bipartisan funding talks. Listen to what was said by congressional Republicans. HAL ROGERS is dean of the Kentucky delegation and chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. Here is what he said:

If we wait until the end of the fiscal year, then we're going to have to pass a C.R. . . . then try to cobble together something in the meantime like we've been doing, but under pressure. And that's not the best way to legislate.

House Appropriations subcommittee chairman MIKE SIMPSON of Idaho said:

Under sequestration, the way it currently exists, you can't pass appropriations bills. It ensures that what you've got is a C.R. for the rest of your life.

House Appropriations subcommittee chairman TOM COLE said:

The reality is we still live in a divided government. It's not as if the Democrats can be shut out, but they can't dictate to us any more than we can dictate to them. It's time to sit down and see if we can make a deal.

CHARLIE DENT, Appropriations subcommittee chairman in the House, from Pennsylvania, said:

We all know there's going to have to be a short-term C.R. to take us from September to December. And I would hope sometime between now and then, we'll have a negotiated budget agreement.

These are just a few of the quotes of the House Republic chairmen. The only way we are going to avoid another Republican Government shutdown is by both parties sitting down to construct a bipartisan agreement.

Let's skip all of the unnecessary drama by starting today to work together to avoid another government shutdown.

What is the business of the day, Mr. President?

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

EVERY CHILD ACHIEVES ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 1177, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1177) to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to ensure that every child achieves.

Pending:

Alexander/Murray amendment No. 2089, in the nature of a substitute.

Murray (for Peters) amendment No. 2095 (to amendment No. 2089), to allow local educational agencies to use parent and family engagement funds for financial literacy activities.

Murray (for Warren/Gardner) amendment No. 2120 (to amendment No. 2089), to amend section 1111(d) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 regarding the cross-tabulation of student data.

Alexander (for Kirk) amendment No. 2161 (to amendment No. 2089), to ensure that States measure and report on indicators of student access to critical educational resources and identify disparities in such resources.

Alexander (for Scott) amendment No. 2132 (to amendment No. 2089), to expand opportunity by allowing Title I funds to follow low-income children.

Murray (for Franken) amendment No. 2093 (to amendment No. 2089), to end discrimination based on actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity in public schools.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, the Democratic leader expressed the hope that we could have a path to the end on amendments, and I can assure him that Senator MURRAY and I agree with him wholeheartedly. We are working together to try to be able to do that. In the committee, we adopted 29 amendments. Most of those were Democratic amendments. We have adopted 22 on the floor, and the majority of those are Democratic amendments. The Democratic leader has been very helpful to allow us to come to the floor without delay, and I can assure him and the majority leader that Senator MURRAY and I intend to try to resolve the couple of issues we have right now and be able to recommend to the leadership a path forward. It would be my hope that we don't even have to have a cloture vote—that we didn't have to have one to get on the floor, and I hope we don't have to have one to get off the floor. I am not prepared to say we can do that yet, but we agree with him, and we will do our best to do that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. REID. Through the Chair to my friend, the senior Senator from Tennessee, the way the rules now exist, now after coming in tomorrow, there will be a cloture vote. I say to my friend that we need an agreement prior to that or we are not going to get cloture on the bill, on the substitute, which would be a shame. I hope that we can have adequate debate on these amendments. If we have 5 minutes per amendment, that won't work. I know that my friend is a fair man, but we are trying to understand why there was a rush on filing cloture on this bill.

I know there is a lot of work to do around here, but you can't shortchange one bill in an effort to get to something else that may not work either. We have two cloture votes on this bill. We can avoid the cloture vote, and that would be great. Maybe we can avoid the cloture vote on the bill itself. I hope so. But until my Senators are protected, we are not going to invoke cloture tomorrow morning.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I understand what the Democratic leader is saying. I think the best thing for Senator MURRAY and me to do is to continue to work as we have with other Senators. I believe we know almost all of the amendments that are to be adopted. Not only have we adopted the ones in committee and the ones on the floor, but Senator MURRAY and I have several dozen other amendments that we are prepared to recommend to the full Senate be adopted in the substitute agreement. I would say to Senators that if there is any other amendment, I hope you will let us know about it. The filing deadline is 2:30 this afternoon. I hope we have all of the amendments that we need to have.

Occasionally, I am asked: Why do the Senators argue all the time? My answer usually is this: That is what we