

So I hope, notwithstanding the differences that exist in the vote we had earlier, that tomorrow when we take up this legislation again we will get the votes that are necessary to proceed to the bill and begin to move forward with the process in the hopes that we might get something to the House that they might be able to act on and then we can get it to the President's desk. Then, at least for the foreseeable future, we can get this issue dealt with so we don't have to come back and do this every 6 months or every 3 months or whatever those 33 extensions have consisted of over the past few years.

NUCLEAR AGREEMENT WITH IRAN

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, former President Jimmy Carter was recently asked about President Obama's successes on the world stage. He said in response:

I think they've been minimal. . . . [O]n the world stage, just to be as objective about it as I can, I can't think of many nations in the world where we have a better relationship now than we did when he took over.

He went on to say:

If you look at Russia, if you look at England, if you look at China, if you look at Egypt and so forth—I'm not saying it's his fault—but we have not improved our relationship with individual countries and I would say that the United States influence and prestige and respect in the world is probably lower now than it was six or seven years ago.

That is former President Jimmy Carter describing current President Obama's foreign policies. Unfortunately, that is an accurate assessment of President Obama's rocky history on foreign policy.

Last week's deal with Iran does not look likely to improve the President's record of minimal success on the world stage. Last week the administration announced that the United States—along with five other nations—had reached an agreement with Iran that the administration claims will prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. The contents of the agreement, however, were met with skepticism and concern from a number of quarters.

Former Senator and Democratic Presidential candidate Jim Webb said that the deal sends a signal that “we, the United States, are accepting the eventuality that they will acquire a nuclear weapon.”

The senior Senator from New Jersey said, “The bottom line is: The deal doesn't end Iran's nuclear program—it preserves it.”

The Washington Post noted that Tehran “fought for, and won, some troubling compromises” on inspections, especially considering Iran's record of violations. The Post also pointed out what many Republicans have noted—that “Mr. Obama settled for terms far short of those he originally aimed for.”

Israel, the only functioning democracy in the Middle East, called this

deal a “historic mistake,” and neighboring countries like Saudi Arabia expressed concern that this agreement may actually increase the threat Iran poses to their security.

Then, of course, there was Iran's reaction. Iran's President hailed the agreement, while Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei praised negotiators.

Lest anyone think this marked a softening of Iran's attitude toward the United States, however, Khamenei emphasized that “our policy toward the arrogant U.S. government won't change at all.” Echoing the chants coming from the people, he stated, “You heard ‘Death to Israel,’ ‘Death to the U.S.’ . . . we ask Almighty God to accept these prayers by the people of Iran.”

These are not the words of a reliable partner. These are the words of the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism.

There is good reason to be concerned about this agreement. This deal not only fails to provide reassurance that Iran will not acquire a nuclear weapon, it may actually enhance Iran's chances of acquiring a bomb.

For starters, this deal fails to include any adequate method of verifying that Iran is complying with the agreement. Time and time again, Iran has made it clear that it cannot be trusted to comply with any deal. Iran has a history of building nuclear facilities in secret. The enrichment facility at Fordow, which will remain in place as part of this agreement, is just one example of an enrichment facility that was originally hidden from the outside world. The fact that Iran cannot be relied on to follow the outlines of an agreement means that verification—specifically, “anytime, anywhere” inspections of suspicious sites—is an essential part of any credible deal. But the final deal that emerged doesn't come close to ensuring anytime, anywhere inspections. It does provide for 24/7 inspections of Iran's currently known nuclear sites, but it forces inspectors to request access to any other site they deem suspicious. Iran can refuse requests, and appealing those refusals could take close to a month, leaving the Iranians plenty of time to hide evidence of suspicious activity.

Forcing Iran to dismantle its nuclear infrastructure and halt uranium enrichment would have provided some assurance that Iran's quest for a bomb had been halted. But the nuclear agreement the administration helped reach doesn't require Iran to dismantle any of its nuclear infrastructure. The agreement does require Iran to take some of its centrifuges offline, but they do not have to be removed or dismantled—simply put into storage.

The agreement also explicitly allows Iran to continue enriching uranium. While it prohibits Iran from enriching uranium to the level required for a nuclear weapon, the restriction is of limited value considering that Iran retains

the equipment and production capacity it would need to build a bomb.

I haven't even mentioned other areas of concern with this agreement.

In exchange for Iran's agreeing to—supposedly—stop its effort to acquire a nuclear weapon, billions of dollars in Iranian assets will be unfrozen and the sanctions that have crippled the Iranian economy will be lifted. Right now, despite its struggling economy, Iran manages to provide funding and other support to Syria's oppressive government, to Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in the Gaza Strip, to Houthi rebels in Yemen, and to militias in Iraq. It is not hard to imagine what it will do with the billions of dollars it will gain access to under this agreement.

The deal negotiators reached with Iran will also expand Iranian access to conventional weapons and intercontinental ballistic missiles, which are generally used as a vehicle for the delivery of nuclear weapons. While the deal does temporarily extend restrictions on the import of these weapons, it does so for just 5 years in the case of conventional weapons and for just 8 years in the case of ballistic missiles. That means that in as few as 8 years, Iran will be able to purchase a ballistic missile capable of delivering a nuclear warhead.

Obviously, there is a lot to be concerned about when it comes to this deal, and after the agreement was released last week, both Democrats and Republicans expressed the desire to examine those provisions and hear from members of the administration. So what did the President do? He declared that the agreement was a triumph of diplomacy and took immediate action to send the bill to the United Nations for a vote. That is right. The President didn't wait to hear from Members of Congress or the American people; he just went ahead and asked the United Nations for its approval. In other words, the President unilaterally committed the United States to supporting the deal without knowing whether the United States Congress or the American people are in favor of the agreement. This is especially disappointing considering that just 2½ months ago, Democrats and Republicans in the Senate voted overwhelmingly to require that the President submit full details of any nuclear agreement to Congress before it could be agreed to. The President signed this legislation—the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act—into law on May 22, but apparently he feels free to ignore the spirit, if not the letter, of the act.

When word emerged that the President was going to send a resolution directly to the U.N. without waiting for the American people or Congress to weigh in, both Democrats and Republicans asked the President to hold off. Democrats who requested that the President wait to submit the agreement included the leading Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, who characterized the White

House's decision as "somewhat presumptuous," and the Democratic whip in the House of Representatives, who said, "I believe that waiting to go to the United Nations until such time as Congress has acted would be consistent with the intent and substance of the Nuclear Agreement Review Act."

Circumventing elected Members of Congress to gain the U.N.'s approval before Congress has had a chance to review the agreement suggests that the President has a higher regard for the United Nation's opinion than for the opinion of the American people.

President Obama is apparently betting on the chance that in 10 years' time, Iran's views toward the rest of the world will have changed and will no longer be seeking death to Israel and America or furthering terrorism in the Middle East. It is a nice notion, but nothing in Iran's history of terrorism, violence, and deceit suggests it is a scenario that is likely to come to pass. And if it doesn't happen, as a result of this agreement, Iran will be in a much better position to develop a nuclear weapon than it is today, as even the supporters of this deal acknowledge, not to mention that Iran will be in a position to purchase the missiles necessary to deliver nuclear weapons to locations in the Middle East and beyond.

During negotiations on this deal, it became obvious that the President was determined to make reaching an agreement with Iran his legacy. It is possible that he will get his wish, but it may not be the legacy he wanted.

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. WHITEHOUSE. 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. WHITEHOUSE. I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business for 20 minutes.

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, as the Presiding Officer knows, as he has suffered through a considerable number of them, this is the 107th time I have come to the floor to urge my colleagues to wake up to the threat of climate change. All over the United States, State by State by State, we are already seeing the real effects of carbon pollution. We see it in our atmosphere, we see it in our oceans, and we see it in our weather, in habitats, and in species.

The American people see it. Two-thirds of Americans, including half of Republicans, favor government action to reduce global warming, and two-thirds, including half of Republicans, would be more likely to vote for a can-

didate who campaigns on fighting climate change.

Polling from the Florida Atlantic University shows that more than 73 percent of U.S. Hispanics—a pretty key voting block—think global warming is a serious problem. Sixty-two percent of Republican Hispanics are concerned about this. And I have said this before: If you ask Republican voters under the age of 35, they will tell us that climate denial is "out of touch," "ignorant," or "crazy." Those are the words they selected in the poll—not my words.

So we might expect Presidential hopefuls to incorporate climate action into their campaign platforms. We might expect the Republican candidates to address this problem in an honest and straightforward manner. But we would be wrong. What have we seen from the Presidential hopefuls? These candidates avoid any serious talk of climate change even as their own home States face climate and ocean disruptions.

So in the weeks ahead, I will take a look at the Presidential candidates on climate change and what is up in their home States. Today I will look at Florida, home to 20 million Americans, including two of the top Republican Presidential candidates.

A swing State with 29 electoral votes, Florida is a major political prize. Florida is also ground zero for climate change. With over 1,200 miles of coastline, Florida is uniquely vulnerable, for instance, to sea level rise. So what do Florida's two Presidential candidates have to say about climate change? Well, it seems they are not sure.

"I don't think the science is clear of what percentage is man-made and what percentage is natural. It's convoluted," says former Florida Governor Jeb Bush.

"[T]here's never been a moment where the climate is not changing," says Florida's junior Senator. "The question is: what percentage of that . . . is due to human activity?"

Scientists tell us that warming is "unequivocal"—that is a strong word for scientists to use, unequivocal—and that human activity is the dominant cause of the changes we have seen—in- deed, the only plausibly valid explanation.

Both Presidential hopefuls from Florida have invoked the now classic denial line "I am not a scientist." Well, good thing, then, that we are not elected to be scientists. We are elected to listen to them. And if these two Floridians were listening to their own best scientists, they would learn a lot.

In fact, 42 scientists from Florida colleges and universities wrote an open letter to Florida State officials. "It is crucial for policymakers to understand," they wrote, "that human activity is affecting the composition of the atmosphere which will lead to adverse effects on human economies, health and well being"—not so convoluted after all.

The letter continued:

The problem of climate change is not a hypothetical. Thousands of scientists have

studied the issue from a variety of angles and disciplines over many decades. Those of us signing this statement have spent hundreds of years combined studying this problem, not from any partisan political perspective, but as scientists—seekers of evidence and explanations. As a result, we feel uniquely qualified to assist policymakers in finding solutions to adapt and mitigate so we can protect the people of this state and their enterprises and property.

So it is OK if we are not scientists. The scientists are there to help. They have offered to, and they understand this.

While my Senate colleague from Florida is unsure about his own home State climate science, he seems quite certain about the economics of policies to curb carbon pollution, such as cap and trade. "I can tell you with certainty," he has said, "it would have a devastating impact on our economy."

I would suggest that the Senator from Florida take a closer look at the facts because his position on these two issues boils down to wrong and wronger. I know this because my home State is one of nine Northeastern States that require utilities to buy carbon emissions allowances. We are actually doing it. The proceeds are directed back into the regional economy through things such as energy efficiency investments and renewable energy projects. And we have the results. The results are in. Just from 2012 to 2014, the program generated \$1.3 billion in economic benefits for New England, and it saved consumers over \$400 million in energy costs. This climate solution was a boost to the economy, and it cut carbon dioxide emissions in the region by a quarter.

The Republican candidates from Florida are running against the facts and they are running against the opinions of experts and local leaders in their own home State. In a June 19 editorial, the Sun Sentinel praised Pope Francis's recent encyclical on climate change and its call to swift action, because of the threat climate change poses to South Florida. The editors wrote that "the Pope's declaration puts pressure on [the candidates] . . . because they are Floridians . . . and because they aspire to be national leaders." The editors continue: "Candidates who aspire to be inclusive, effective leaders cannot see . . . science through a political lens." That is the Sun Sentinel.

Archbishop Thomas Wenski of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Miami explained Pope Francis's message to the Miami Herald. "What the Pope is saying is, 'Let's talk about this,'" the archbishop said. "And that requires—whether you're a Democrat or Republican or left or right—it requires that you transcend your particular interest or ideological lens and look at the issue from the common good."

For Florida, that common good is imperiled by climate change. South Florida has seen almost 1 foot of sea level rise in the last 100 years. The Southeast Florida Regional Climate