

month is that government funding will be gone. We have to do something about that. And we know, as we have heard all the threats by Republican Senators, that we are not going to fund the government unless something is done with Planned Parenthood. Those things take time. We have to get to that. Every day we waste here on the floor, trying to figure out what the Republicans want to do, is time that we should be spending on how we are going to fund the government.

There is no question that the Republican leader now has a very real and important decision to make. We have a lot of work to do this month. We can't afford to waste time with unnecessary procedural votes.

We also have some things we have to be involved in here that are going to slow up what we do. We have the President of China coming toward the end of the month. We have the Pope coming. We expect as many as 500,000 people here on both sides of the Capitol during the short time the Pope is here on Capitol Hill.

We have so many things to do. We need to have a path forward, as I mentioned already, to keep the Federal Government from shutting down because of a lack of funding. We need to figure out a way to keep our highway trust fund solvent, which it is not now. We need to do something about cyber security, and we need to consider important tax extenders legislation, as well as how to avoid default on the debt limit. They are all going to converge at about the same time.

Senate Democrats and Senate Republicans have very real deadlines that we must meet. We can't meet them because of the procedure in the Senate unless the Republican leader allows us to have some time on the floor. What we don't have is time to waste on Republican-contrived procedural fights that have no basis in fact or reality. It is time for Republicans to abandon their plans to slow down a vote on final passage of the Iran nuclear agreement resolution of disapproval and move on to other matters.

Mr. President, would the Chair announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

HIRE MORE HEROES ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.J. Res. 61, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 61) amending the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt employees with health coverage under TRICARE or the Veterans Administration from being taken into account for purposes of determining the employers to which the

employer mandate applies under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Pending:

McConnell amendment No. 2640, of a perfecting nature.

McConnell amendment No. 2641 (to amend No. 2640), to change the enactment date.

McConnell amendment No. 2642 (to amend No. 2641), of a perfecting nature.

McConnell amendment No. 2643 (to the language proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 2640), to change the enactment date.

McConnell amendment No. 2644 (to amendment No. 2643), of a perfecting nature.

McConnell motion to commit the joint resolution to the Committee on Foreign Relations, with instructions, McConnell amendment No. 2645, to change the enactment date.

McConnell amendment No. 2646 (to (the instructions) amendment No. 2645), of a perfecting nature.

McConnell amendment No. 2647 (to amendment No. 2646), of a perfecting nature.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 12:30 p.m. will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that until 12:30 p.m. today, the time during quorum calls be equally divided.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, if I might, through the Chair, if Senator CORKER would like to take his 5 minutes first, I am happy to allow that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I thank the Senator for her tremendous courtesy, and I will actually take 1 minute.

This afternoon we are going to have a very sober and dignified debate about a foreign policy issue of huge consequence to our Nation and certainly to the world. I wish to thank Senator McCONNELL and Senator REID for setting up a format that reflects that. I know many of my friends on the other side of the aisle have been concerned about amendments that may call for this to be a different type of debate. I would like to point out that the leader yesterday filled the tree. I just want people to know that.

I wish to thank Senator CARDIN and Senator MENENDEZ before him for the way we have all been able to work through a lot of issues that have come up. What I hope doesn't happen today is that, somehow or another, we begin referring back to incidents and trying to turn this into some type of partisan debate. We worked through August. Things happened all along the way. We worked through those. We ended up with the ability as a Congress, on an executive agreement, which we all know was meant to be implemented without any congressional involvement whatsoever, going straight to the U.N. Security Council—we all worked together to figure out a way to have this debate and then vote on the substance of this legislation.

So I want to thank my friends on both sides of the aisle. It passed over-

whelmingly—98 to 1. I think, actually, the Senator from California was absent on that day. I look forward to a very substantive debate taking place on this most important issue.

Later today, I will have longer and more formal comments to make about the substance of what was agreed to by the administration and other countries involved in the process.

I am looking forward to this. I want to say again to my friends on the other side of the aisle that I think we set this up in a manner to be a dignified, sober debate about one of the most important foreign policy issues that will come before us. Thankfully it is coming before us because we all forced it to come before us, to have this debate, and to be able to weigh in.

I yield the floor. I thank very much the Senator from California for her courtesy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I wish to thank my chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Senator CORKER, for his courtesies. We do not agree on this particular matter, but there are a lot of matters when it comes to foreign policy on which we do agree. I do agree this should be a very straightforward debate—either you are for this agreement or you are not.

I think the fact that Congress is voting on it is good. I did support that in the committee. That calls for regular order as far as the way we treat this very important vote.

I am very proud to stand here today as the longest serving member sitting on the Foreign Relations Committee today. Out of all of the members, I have been there the longest. When I got there, I did not have these gray hairs. I am not blaming any of the topics that came before us for these gray hairs; however, we have had some tough debates, and this certainly is one of them. I know my friend has a lot to do. I just want to say I was pleased to yield to him because I think he has set the right tone.

Colleagues, this is a vote we are going to long remember, a vote on an arms control agreement that came about for only one reason. That reason is, our President and his team—former Senator John Kerry, now Secretary of State; Wendy Sherman, the chief negotiator—they were part of the team, and many others worked tirelessly against the most vitriolic opposition.

The President stood firm. I want to say to him today: Thank you, Mr. President. In that race for President that you ran, you were very clear that you were going to reach out your hand and see if we could avoid another war in the Middle East. I hope and pray this Senate will give us and the world this opportunity.

As the President has said, a military option is always on the table. It is in our Constitution that the President can respond to a threat. So nothing in this agreement takes a military response off the table. But it does say

that diplomacy should have a chance to work. This diplomacy includes much of the world. That is why it is so remarkable.

I also want to give special thanks to two former Secretaries of State—Colin Powell, a Republican, and Hillary Clinton, a Democrat—for weighing in on the side of diplomacy. As Senators, we deal with thousands of issues in the course of our careers, but we will long remember those that actually change the course of history. Those kinds of votes are votes of conscience, and they are votes about which we must look deeply into our hearts and into our minds. We have to look at the facts. Facts are stubborn things. No matter what 30-second ad there is, no matter what newspaper ad there is, there are facts that are obvious. I want to go through those facts. I have them here on this chart.

One, this agreement cuts off the uranium pathway to a bomb. It does it by reducing Iran's stockpile of enriched uranium by 98 percent and severely restricting its ability to enrich uranium. That is No. 1.

Two, it cuts off the plutonium pathway to a bomb. They do that by dismantling Iran's Arak reactor's core and replacing it with a core that cannot produce weapons-grade plutonium. That is the second part of the agreement.

Three, it includes the most intrusive inspections regime ever negotiated. Let me repeat that. The deal includes the most intrusive inspections regime ever negotiated. This means 24/7 monitoring of Iran's declared sites as well as inspections to the entire nuclear supply chain, from its uranium mines and mills, to its conversion facility, to its centrifuge manufacturing and storage facility. This is critical. It provides the International Atomic Energy Agency—you will hear it referred to as the IAEA—with the mechanism to require that Iran grant access to its suspicious sites. No other international agreement has ever done this before. So when you hear colleagues say, "Well, Iran has 24 days, you know, to hide things," all the experts will tell you that you can hide a computer, but you cannot hide nuclear material. It has a half-life of thousands of years. But no other international agreement, not even the agreements we have with the IAEA, say that the IAEA has a deadline where access has to be granted to suspicious sites.

Next, it requires the Iranians to disclose their past nuclear activities before they can receive any sanctions relief. Let me say that again. The Iranians have to disclose their past nuclear activities before they can receive any sanctions relief.

Lastly, if Iran cheats, the United States and our allies will be able to snap back multilateral sanctions. There is a process there that gives us a lot of power to do that.

Because of all of this, more than 100 nations support this deal, including

many of our closest allies, such as the United Kingdom, Germany, Australia, France, Japan, and Canada—100 nations. That is why 29 of the Nation's top scientists, including 6 Nobel laureates, call the deal "innovative and stringent" and even say it can serve as a "guidepost for future agreements." One hundred nations, 29 of our Nation's top scientists. That is also why 60 bipartisan national security leaders support it, including leaders such as Madeline Albright, Thomas Pickering, and Ryan Crocker. You know those names. You know those people. They have integrity. They have intelligence. They have experience. They were appointed by Republicans and Democrats alike. They point out that there are no viable alternatives to this agreement. They are right.

Anyone—you are going to hear this from my Republican friends—anyone who says we should go back to the bargaining table—and you are going to hear this over and over again: Oh, just go back to the bargaining table. Any-one who says that after 20 months of negotiations and huge support in the world is either engaging in fantasy or they truly want to sink this deal. So if you hear somebody say, "Oh, just go back to the table. Just forget the support of the 100 nations. Just go back and renegotiate this deal," let me tell you, they are either engaging in fantasy or they want to sink this deal. There is a hard, cold truth here: If we walk away, there will be no agreement. Let's be clear. If that is your position, why don't you say it? But don't say "Go back to the negotiating table. No problem." If we walk away, there will be no agreement. America will be isolating itself and undermining its role as a global leader on arms control. That is why more than 100 former U.S. Ambassadors say that without this deal, "the risks to the security of the United States and our friends and allies would be far greater." Let me say that again. One hundred former U.S. Ambassadors from both parties say that "the risks to the security of the United States and our friends and allies would be far greater" than if we do the deal.

We know right now that Iran has enough nuclear material to build 10 nuclear weapons. So whom are you kidding when you say the world will be safer if this agreement falls and Iran is left to continue the dangerous course it began way back in 1984? We passed sanctions. We did it right here. I spoke on that. I said: We have to keep our eye on Iran. We don't trust them. So they came to the table.

Opposing this agreement means walking away—walking away from the very strategy we embraced when we placed sanctions on Iran. It means walking away from our best friends, our allies, and our trading partners.

When you probe the opponents of this deal and you say, "Well, if you go back to the table, you are going to lose 100 nations, many of them our best

friends," do you know what they say? "Oh, we can just sanction those friends. We can just sanction those allies. We can just sanction those trading partners." Can you imagine going after our best friends? Is that a winning strategy? That is another example of the opponents dreaming or scheming—dreaming of a successful go-it-alone strategy or scheming for another war in the Middle East. Those options—go it alone or a war—are self-inflicted wounds we can ill afford.

Let's put up the statement by Philip Hammond, the United Kingdom Foreign Secretary. This is what he said. In a meeting with the various Ambassadors of the countries that cut this deal, the same thing was said, but let's say it the way he did. This is the United Kingdom Foreign Secretary:

If the United States were to walk away from this deal, international unity would disintegrate. The hardliners in Iran would be strengthened, and we would lose the most effective path to stop Iran from developing a nuclear weapon.

Philip Hammond, the UK Foreign Secretary.

So, again, look at what he is saying. He is saying that if we walk away, the hardliners in Iran would be strengthened. They would win. So I ask opponents of this deal: Why do you want to stand with the hardliners in Iran? Because you are standing with the hardliners in Iran who shout "Death to America," "Death to Israel." You are standing with them. They want to kill the deal.

I am under no illusion that this agreement solves all of our problems with Iran. I am under no illusions that this agreement will make Iran suddenly some positive player on the world stage that we can cozy up to. No. No. That is why this agreement is not based on trust. As Hillary Clinton said today, it is based on distrust and verification. She is right. This agreement is also based on the most stringent inspection regime ever negotiated. Iran is a bad and a dangerous actor. I do not think there is any disagreement on that. That is why its nonnuclear activities will remain subject to tough sanctions. But here is the ultimate question each of us must ask ourselves: Would we rather have a bad and dangerous actor with a nuclear bomb or a bad and dangerous actor without a nuclear bomb? My kids would say that is a no-brainer. The answer is obvious. We don't want Iran with a nuclear bomb. That is why we need this deal. If Iran cheats, it will be in front of the whole world. I will be among the first to consider any and all options.

I began by saying this is one of the most important votes we will ever cast in our lifetime. I am reminded of another one, my vote against the Iraq war. It was lonely then—only 23 of us—but you have to look at the situation. Some of the leading voices against this deal were the very same people who brought us the Iraq war.

Remember Paul Wolfowitz saying the Iraqis would "greet us as liberators"?

Remember Dick Cheney, who is out there now saying: Vote no on this deal. Oh, it is terrible.

Remember what he said as he drew us into Iraq? He said there was “no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction.” And remember when he said the whole war would be “weeks rather than months”? I remember that after 10 years of war.

Remember Bill Kristol saying we would “be vindicated when we discover the weapons of mass destruction”?

And, remember, some of our colleagues who are here today pushed hard for the Iraq war and said it would be great for America and great for Israel. Well, they were wrong then, and they are wrong now.

Look, it is no secret that the Prime Minister of our great ally, Israel, is on the other side of this argument, but we must also remember that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was a cheerleader for the Iraq war and said in 2002: “If you take out . . . Saddam’s regime, I guarantee you that it will have enormous positive reverberations on the region.” Prime Minister Netanyahu argued for the Iraq war saying: “I guarantee you that it will have enormous positive reverberations on the region.”

Positive reverberations? Instead, devastating consequences. More than 4,000 of our brave American men and women were killed and nearly 32,000 wounded. We know that a lot of the Baathists joined ISIS, and the Baathists were loyal to Saddam. Now they are guiding ISIS. No positive reverberations there, devastating consequences.

If we were completely honest and we really asked the question: Who won the war in Iraq? The answer comes back, Iran. Iran. They have never had more influence in modern times on Iraq than they have today. That is why, as a stalwart supporter of Israel and the Israeli-American relationship, I strongly support this deal.

I am the proud author of the last two United States-Israel security bills passed by Congress. They were called the United States-Israel Enhanced Security Cooperation Act of 2012 and the United States-Israel Strategic Partnership Act of 2014. I believe, as the author of those two bills that President Obama signed, this deal makes the United States safer, it makes Israel safer, and it makes the entire world safer.

I said that Prime Minister Netanyahu is very clearly opposed, but let’s look at some of the top military experts in Israel—experts who understand what is paramount to Israel’s security.

Let’s look at Ami Ayalon. He is a former head of Shin Bet, Israel’s internal security service. He said: “When it comes to Iran’s nuclear capability, this [deal] is the best option. . . .” Now this isn’t just some citizen in the street; this is the former head of Shin Bet, Israel’s internal security service, saying this.

Then there is Amram Mitzna, a retired major general in the Israel De-

fense Forces, the IDF, former member of the Knesset and former mayor of Haifa, who said: “For Israel’s sake and all the people of the Middle East, we must not miss this opportunity.”

Then there is Elfraim Halevy, former director of the Mossad, who said: “Without an agreement, Iran will be free to act as it wishes. . . .”

Let me repeat that. This is the former director of the Mossad, who said: “Without an agreement, Iran will be free to act as it wishes. . . .”

These leaders from Israel whom I have quoted are some of the most knowledgeable in the world when it comes to Israel’s security, and they believe this deal will make Israel safer. It doesn’t change the fact that the Israeli Government opposes this. I agree with that; I understand that. But there is a split in Israel, and it is worth commenting on it.

With their expertise and their knowledge, these endorsements by these Israelis should be taken seriously. Also, the endorsements from our current and former colleagues in Congress should be taken seriously.

Eleven Jewish former Members have weighed in, saying: “We championed the U.S.-Israel alliance . . . and we all strongly support this agreement because it will enhance the security of the U.S., the State of Israel, and the entire world.”

I thank them for weighing in. This is one of those debates that is very hard—regardless of your position—because it is emotional, it is difficult, and yet they weighed in, as did the Israeli security experts. Believe me, the pressure on them not to talk was enormous.

This deal also has the support of some of the most knowledgeable and respected foreign policy lawmakers who ever served in Congress.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD two opinion pieces, one written by Senators Carl Levin and John Warner and another by Senators Sam Nunn and Richard Lugar.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[Aug. 13, 2015]

WHY HAWKS SHOULD ALSO BACK THE IRAN DEAL

(By Carl Levin and John Warner)

We both were elected to the Senate in 1978 and privileged to have served together on the Senate Armed Services Committee for 30 years, during which we each held committee leadership positions of chairman or ranking minority member. We support the Iran Agreement negotiated by the United States and other leading world powers for many reasons, including its limitations on Iran’s nuclear activities, its strong inspections regime, and the ability to quickly re-impose sanctions should Iran violate its provisions.

But we also see a compelling reason to support the agreement that has gotten little attention: Rejecting it would weaken the deterrent value of America’s military option.

As former chairmen of the Senate Armed Services Committee, we have always believed that the U.S. should keep a strong military option on the table. If Iran pursues

a nuclear weapon, some believe that military action is inevitable if we’re to prevent it from reaching its goal. We don’t subscribe to that notion, but we are skeptical that, should Iran attempt to consider moving to a nuclear weapon, we could deter them from pursuing it through economic sanctions alone.

How does rejecting the agreement give America a weaker military hand to play? Let’s imagine a world in which the United States rejects the nuclear accord that all other parties have embraced. The sanctions now in place would likely not be maintained and enforced by all the parties to the agreement, so those would lose their strong deterrent value. Iran would effectively argue to the world that it had been willing to negotiate an agreement, only to have that agreement rejected by a recalcitrant America.

In that world, should we find credible evidence that Iran is starting to move toward a nuclear weapon, the United States would almost certainly consider use of the military option to stop that program. But it’s highly unlikely that our traditional European allies, let alone China and Russia, would support the use of the military option since we had undermined the diplomatic path. Iran surely would know this, and so from the start, would have less fear of a military option than if it faced a unified coalition.

While the United States would certainly provide the greatest combat power in any military action, allies and other partners make valuable contributions—not just in direct participation, but also in access rights, logistics, intelligence, and other critical support. If we reject the agreement, we risk isolating ourselves and damaging our ability to assemble the strongest possible coalition to stop Iran.

In short, then, rejecting the Iran deal would erode the current deterrent value of the military option, making it more likely Iran might choose to pursue a nuclear weapon, and would then make it more costly for the U.S. to mount any subsequent military operation. It would tie the hands of any future president trying to build international participation and support for military force against Iran should that be necessary.

Those who think the use of force against Iran is almost inevitable should want the military option to be as credible and effective as possible, both as a deterrent to Iran’s nuclear ambitions and in destroying Iran’s nuclear weapons program should that become necessary. For that to be the case, the United States needs to be a party to the agreement rather than being the cause of its collapse.

In our many years on the Armed Services Committee, we saw time and again how America is stronger when we fight alongside allies. Iran must constantly be kept aware that a collective framework of deterrence stands resolute, and that if credible evidence evolves that Iran is taking steps towards a nuclear arsenal, it would face the real possibility of military action by a unified coalition of nations to stop their efforts.

The deal on the table is a strong agreement on many counts, and it leaves in place the robust deterrence and credibility of a military option. We urge our former colleagues not to take any action which would undermine the deterrent value of a coalition that participates in and could support the use of a military option. The failure of the United States to join the agreement would have that effect.

[Aug. 30, 2015]

THERE ARE NO PERFECT NUCLEAR DEALS

(By Sam Nunn and Richard Lugar)

During the Cold War both Republican and Democratic presidents accepted less-than-

perfect arms pacts with the Soviets. We need to do the same with Iran.

At the height of the Cold War, the Soviet Union had thousands of nuclear warheads aimed at American cities, and the Soviets were subject to numerous arms controls agreements. But progress was hard-fought and incremental at best. In an ideal world, the Soviet Union would have agreed to more severe constraints than those agreed by Presidents Kennedy, Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan and Bush, for example. It would have dismantled all of its nuclear weapons, stopped its human rights abuses and halted its meddling around the world.

But, as all of these presidents—Democratic and Republican—understood, holding out for the impossible is a recipe for no progress at all. Congress should take the same approach today to the Iran nuclear deal.

We know something about the long history of such agreements. During our combined 60 years in the U.S. Senate, we participated in countless meetings, hearings and trips around the globe focused on reducing the threats posed by weapons of mass destruction. The centerpiece of our efforts was the Nunn-Lugar Act, passed in 1991, which was the basis for two decades of hard work that resulted in the safeguarding and deactivation of more than 7,000 nuclear warheads, hundreds of missiles and bombers, and numerous other elements of the former Soviet Union's WMD programs.

These experiences underscored for us that arms control agreements are rarely finished absolutes. Inevitably, their success depends on many factors that play out after the agreement is signed, including alliance cohesion, congressional funding for implementation and the political will of the parties to ensure verification and enforcement.

Over the next several weeks, every member of Congress will have the opportunity to weigh the terms of the nuclear agreement against all viable alternatives. In our view, the key questions regarding this agreement are: Will it stop Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon? What are the risks of going forward with this agreement? And what are the risks if Congress rejects the agreement?

The plus-sides of this deal are clear. It includes severe restrictions on uranium enrichment and plutonium production, required transparency into Iranian activities and inspection provisions to assure the international community that Iran's nuclear program is, and remains, peaceful. Reports that Iran will simply inspect itself to address unresolved allegations about its nuclear behavior have been refuted by the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, who has stated that the arrangements are technically sound, consistent with the IAEA's long-established practices and do not compromise IAEA safeguards standards in any way. Importantly, the agreement taken as a whole will help deter Iranian cheating and provide the means to detect violations in time to take strong action if required.

Could we conceive a stronger deal? Of course—that has been true of every arms control negotiation. We have heard critics suggest that Iran would have agreed to entirely dismantle its nuclear enrichment facilities and stop all activities related to its civil nuclear program if only the U.S. had been tougher in negotiations. But had the U.S. taken such an approach in the early 1990s, we would not have encouraged and helped Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Belarus safely accelerate the destruction of their weapons and materials of mass destruction, and the risk of accidents or catastrophic terrorism would have been far higher over the past 20 years.

Although there are no absolute guarantees, nor can there be in diplomatic accords, our

bottom line is that this agreement makes it far less likely that the Iranians will acquire a nuclear weapon over the next 15 years.

As to risks in going forward with the agreement, Congress must listen carefully to both our intelligence community and the IAEA's views on any possible weaknesses in the verification regime, and then work with these entities to mitigate any vulnerabilities, both now and in the years ahead.

As with other agreements, Congress must recognize that there is no such thing as "perfect" verification. What is crucial, however, is whether "effective" verification can be achieved. Can cheating be detected in time to take action before Iran could achieve a militarily significant advance? We believe the answer to that question is yes. The monitoring and verification provisions of this agreement are unprecedented in the history of arms control in their comprehensiveness and intrusiveness, and together with our intelligence capabilities should give us powerful tools to achieve effective verification.

Opponents of this agreement have offered criticism that sanctions relief would provide Iran with additional resources that would enable it to intensify its destabilizing behavior in the region. This is a risk, but the argument that this risk can be avoided or reduced by the defeat of this agreement rests on a patently false assumption. Anyone believing that the present effective economic sanctions will be continued by Russia, China, India and other nations if Congress rejects this agreement is in a dream world. This agreement and the alliance that brought Iran to the negotiating table through sanctions has focused on Iran's nuclear activities, not its regional behavior, though both are serious dangers. This alliance could never have been brought or held together to pursue a broad, nuclear and regional agenda on which alliance partners themselves strongly disagree.

With or without this agreement, the U.S. must continue and intensify our efforts with other partners to challenge and counter Iran's destabilizing regional activities and strengthen our cooperation with Israel and the Gulf States. If this agreement is rejected, both of these objectives become more difficult.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, members of Congress must think long and hard about the consequences if this agreement is turned down. There is no escaping the conclusion that there will inevitably be grave implications for U.S. security and for U.S. international leadership in the decades ahead. Sanctions allies will go their own way, reducing the effectiveness of our financial tools and leaving Iran in a stronger position across the board. Any future effort by this president or the next to assemble a "sanctions coalition" relating to Iran or other security challenges will be weakened. U.S. leadership, diplomacy and credibility, including efforts to achieve support for possible military action against Iran, will all be severely damaged.

If, however, the Iran agreement is upheld by Congress, the hard work of monitoring and enforcement is just beginning. This Congress and future Congresses, as well as future presidents, have a large and continuing role to play in the decades ahead if "stopping the Iranian bomb" is to become a reality. Congress must insist that Iran be held to its commitments while not obstructing the agreement. The U.S. must make clear our commitment to the security of our allies and friends in the Middle East, through security assistance and a clear policy that Iranian meddling in the region will be firmly resisted. It must be clear which congressional committees are responsible for oversight and

monitoring of implementation and compliance. There should also be clear requirements for the president to report to Congress on intelligence associated with Iran. In addition, Congress must provide funding to the IAEA for its activities in monitoring Iranian compliance with this agreement as well as other nuclear proliferation activities in the Gulf region.

These crucial September votes will require members to search their own consciences. Whether they vote "yea" or "nay," they must first look in the mirror and ask whether they are putting our nation's interest first.

Our own conviction is that this agreement represents our best chance to stop an Iranian bomb without another war in the Middle East.

Mrs. BOXER. These are two Democrats, two Republicans, leaders all—respected, effective. These former colleagues understand the risks of military action, and they are right. They know this deal doesn't rule out the use of military force. The United States can strike if we need to, but we must first try diplomacy. Since when are we afraid of that?

We can try diplomacy because we are the most powerful Nation on Earth. We should try diplomacy, and if it fails, we always have all options on the table—as our President has said, as I have said, as everyone has said.

It is striking to me that we don't have one Republican for this. I am kind of amazed. All of the focus was on the Democrats, really. A few are opposing and a vast majority are for it.

I am surprised that a Richard Lugar couldn't sway anybody, that a Colin Powell couldn't sway anybody, that a John Warner couldn't sway anybody, and, also, the religious communities across the United States apparently aren't swaying anybody. It is telling that 340 U.S. rabbis fear that if the United States rejects the deal: ". . . the outcome will be the collapse of the international sanctions regime, an Iranian race for nuclear weapons . . . [and] isolation of Israel and the United States from international partners."

There is also support from more than 53 Christian leaders and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, who referred to Pope Francis's hope for a deal that he says is a "definitive step toward a more secure and fraternal world."

I don't know why we haven't been able to really see bipartisan support in the Senate. I am puzzled by it. I am saddened by it. It appears to me this is political. President Obama wants it. He worked hard for it. They don't like it. This is what I think.

I may be wrong, but it is hard for me to imagine, with all of these solid Republicans in favor of this deal outside of the Senate and the House, we cannot seem to have bipartisanship. These faith leaders are speaking on behalf of their synagogues, on behalf their congregations, and their faithful. They are speaking for so many Americans, so many Americans who have prayed on this issue and have come to the conclusion that it is best for our Nation.

Believe me, it is easier to say no. You can always say: Well, I don't like page 4, line 2.

A deal by its very nature is not perfect. It is not. That is why it is a deal. Otherwise it would be a fiat. Oh, I want this. OK. We make deals. We do it here all the time, but somehow this deal—because it isn't perfect and everyone agrees it isn't perfect—somehow we cannot seem to get bipartisanship. It breaks my heart, frankly.

Colleagues, this is really a major moment for us, as individuals and for our Nation. We will be judged on this vote, and we should be judged on this vote. We should be judged on votes that could lead to another war in the Middle East. At least one of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle admitted his truthful position. I respect that. He said we can "set Iran's nuclear facilities back to day zero" using military force.

He is voting no on this agreement, and anyone else who joins him should know this: to walk away means Iran could continue its nuclear program at will. This is not acceptable, and it means a path to war.

Let us not tiptoe around this. This option, the option of no agreement, isn't going back to the bargaining table because everyone has said—very clearly, all our allies—they are not going back to the bargaining table.

So we have no agreement, and to walk away means the international sanctions collapse. If we think that we, ourselves, can now turn to our best friends and allies, such as the United Kingdom, and say: Well, if you don't go along with us, we are not trading with you anymore—that is not going to happen.

To walk away means Iran continues its nuclear program because there won't be a deal. To walk away means we will find ourselves isolated from some of our best allies in the world. Remember, 100 nations support this deal, including the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Australia, Japan, and Canada. To walk away—I believe—means war, and the other side would say: Oh, that is just a scare tactic.

It is not a scare tactic. If you cannot go back to the negotiating table because nobody is going back there with you—you can go back. You will be there by yourself. Iran walks away. They continue with their program, and we are not going to stand for that. We have all said that.

So to walk away, in my view, means war. Because when we walk away, there is no deal. Iran keeps its nuclear program, and that cannot be allowed to happen.

Another one of our colleagues whom we serve with—and I have a lot of respect for and a good friendship with—one said: Bomb, bomb, bomb, bomb Iran.

You remember that. He is going to vote no on this deal, and that is going to move us more toward his reality.

Wars are easy to start, and they are hard to end. Wars are a stain on the

human race, and we should do everything in our power to avoid war. Now, avoiding war does not mean giving up strength because, again, a military response to Iran is always on the table. And if Iran violates the deal, the whole world will know it. It will be right out there, and the whole world will stand with us in taking action.

Diplomacy is the first resort; war is the last resort. I have voted for war, OK. I said: Let's go after bin Laden. I voted for that war. It is easy to start, hard to end.

So, my colleagues, I will say it again. This is our chance, and this is our choice. History will judge us.

With this one vote, we have the chance to seize a historic opportunity to once again make America a shining example of leadership. With this vote, we have a chance, a real chance, to make this world safer right now for our children and our grandchildren.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from California for her service on the Foreign Relations Committee and her passionate comments. Obviously, I am in a very different place policywise than she is.

I do want to point out there is bipartisanship here. There is bipartisan disapproval. While I know the Senator from California knows a great deal about foreign policy, as she is the longest serving member on the committee, the two who have spent more time than anyone understanding the nature of this deal, the impact it is going to have on the region—more time because there has been more meetings with them—are the two Democrats, the ranking member today and the former ranking member, who both oppose this. So there is bipartisanship.

I don't view this as political at all. I think we have been able to establish a strong bipartisan bill to vote on this. We have strong bipartisanship in both bodies, I might say, in the House and the Senate, in opposing this.

I hope what we will be able to do is not cast aspersions about people's motives but really debate this on the substance.

If I could, and then I will be glad to take my colleague's question.

Without objection, I would like to yield the remainder of Republican time as in morning business in this manner: 20 minutes to Senator CRUZ, who I think will be here momentarily; 20 minutes to Senator MCCAIN; 15 minutes to Senator VITTER; and 5 minutes to Senator KIRK.

I don't want to burn up a lot of our time, but if there is no objection.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Hearing none, it is so ordered.

Mr. CORKER. I will be glad to take my colleague's question briefly, but I don't want to burn up a lot of our time.

Mrs. BOXER. Briefly, this is not a lot.

What I wanted to point out is exactly that; that you do have a few Democrats, I think four Democrats, who have come down "no," but we don't have one Republican on the other side. That was the only point I was making.

So my colleague is right. You have bipartisanship, but I am asking where are the Republicans supporting this? It just seems odd to me. And to me it does feel political from your side because when you have Colin Powell, who is for the agreement, and you have John Warner and other Republicans—former ambassadors and military people—it just seems odd. I was making that point.

But my colleague is right. You do have bipartisan support on your side, and I am lamenting the fact that we don't have it on ours because it doesn't feel right to me, having gone through these debates in the past.

Mr. CORKER. I think in closing—I will leave the floor, so I am not burning up any more of our time—but I think there are very legitimate concerns about the fact we began this to dismantle Iran's nuclear program, to end their program, per the President, and by approval of this deal we actually are approving the industrialization of Iran's nuclear program—the greatest state sponsor of terror in the world. Obviously, that creates a lot of issues and concerns. That is why, I believe, we see so many people disapproving of this agreement.

With that, Mr. President, 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.

Mr. CRUZ. 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. CRUZ. Mr. President, let's start out with a little simple math: 58 to 42 is not a victory for the side with 42. Even in the case of ObamaCare—a truly disastrous piece of legislation which was forced through the Congress on purely partisan lines—that legislation received a majority. This isn't even close. Because not only has the Republican caucus held firm and unanimously rejected this catastrophic deal, we have also been joined by colleagues from across the aisle who are not blinded by partisan politics and understand the threat that is posed by President Obama's proposed nuclear deal with Iran.

I want to take a moment to acknowledge them, as they are among those who know best how bad this deal is. First, Senator CHUCK SCHUMER of New York, who has been a long-time advocate for the State of Israel. It is no secret Senator SCHUMER and I have had our disagreements on a great many issues, but I have been proud to stand with him for Israel and against this Iranian nuclear deal, and I was proud

to stand with Senator SCHUMER when Congress voted unanimously on the legislation I introduced to ban a known terrorist—Hamid Aboutalebi, who participated in the 1979 Iranian hostage-taking—from becoming Iran's Ambassador to the United Nations.

Senator BOB MENENDEZ of New Jersey, the former chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, has likewise come out against this catastrophic deal. Senator MENENDEZ and I have worked together on a wide range of issues, including legislation to provide a Rewards for Justice reward last summer of \$5 million for the capture or kill of the Hamas terrorist who murdered Israeli American teenager Naftali Fraenkel and his two teenage friends.

Senator BEN CARDIN of Maryland, the ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee, whose name is on the legislation on which we are scheduled to vote this week. Certainly Senator CARDIN knows as much about this deal as anyone, and his opposition should make all Senators, particularly Democratic Senators, take note.

Senator JOE MANCHIN of West Virginia, my colleague on the Senate Committee on Armed Services, who understands the threats to national security posed by this Iranian nuclear deal, I was honored to work with him and have his support for the resolution I introduced condemning Hamas's use of human shields during Israel's action in Gaza last summer—a disgusting terrorist tactic that was aided and abetted by Hamas's Iranian sponsors.

Democrats should take note that the ranking member on the Foreign Relations Committee, the former ranking member on the Foreign Relations Committee, and the Democrat scheduled to be the next Democratic leader have all come out and valued national security above partisan loyalty. That ought to be reason to cause every other Democratic Member of this body to take a second assessment of their own decisions.

I also want to mention Senator CHRIS COONS of Delaware, who even though he plans, unfortunately, to vote in favor of this deal, maintains it should go to a vote and not go into effect by default because the minority can block cloture through a filibuster. In these dark times, it is at least encouraging to know there are still a handful of Democrats who, in the tradition of Scoop Jackson, JFK, and Joe Lieberman, are willing to put country in front of party, are willing to defend national security. That used to be a robust tradition on the Democratic side of the aisle. I would that there were more Scoop Jackson Democrats in the United States Senate. I would that there were more JFK Democrats in the United States Senate. I would that there were more Joe Lieberman Democrats in the United States Senate.

It is also telling that not a single Republican was persuaded by the President and Secretary of State when they

told us this is the only option; that it is this deal, this catastrophic deal, or war and that this is the very best deal we could have gotten. If that is so, we shouldn't have been negotiating in the first place.

Indeed, as Israel's Prime Minister Netanyahu noted, the one person telling the truth about this deal is Iran's President Ruhani, who observed that Iran has gotten everything they wanted from this deal because this deal is, as Prime Minister Netanyahu predicted, a very bad deal and a historic mistake.

First and foremost, this terrible deal will not stop a virulently anti-American and anti-Israeli regime from getting a nuclear bomb. The so-called Supreme Leader, the Ayatollah Khamenei, declared that Israel—which he calls the Little Satan—would be nothing in 25 years and that those 25 years would be made miserable because of the heroic attacks of radical Islamic jihadists. America, he said, was the Great Satan. He didn't say this in 1979. He tweeted it yesterday.

This is the Ayatollah Khamenei, the person with whom the administration is making a deal that facilitates his having nuclear weapons. He is being candid. He is telling us he intends to do everything possible to murder as many Israelis as possible and to murder as many Americans as possible.

President Obama's deal, if it goes through, will allow Khamenei and his fellow mullahs to retain their centrifuges. They have established their "right to enrich" uranium. They have rejected attempts to inspect their sites with possible military dimensions related to their nuclear program. Indeed, this deal is without any credible inspection mechanism.

Not long ago, the administration was promising the American people so-called "anytime, anywhere inspections." Those inspections quickly morphed into inspections with 24 days' advance notice—plenty of time to ensure that the inspections will never uncover the cheating.

But even more laughable, even more farcical, this deal doesn't rely on American inspectors; it doesn't rely on international inspectors. This deal trusts the Iranians to inspect themselves. It is not much of an exaggeration to say the inspection regime envisioned in this deal is simply picking up the phone, calling the Ayatollah Khamenei, and asking: Are you developing nuclear weapons? No. Very good; thank you.

That is a regime designed to facilitate cheating, to facilitate surreptitious development of nuclear weapons with \$150 billion to fuel and fund that development.

Beyond that, the deal actually obligates signatories to assist Iran in developing their program, which, remarkably, the Secretary of State suggests will be used to try to cure cancer, and, even more remarkably, obligates signatories to assist Iran in defending

against efforts by the nation of Israel to stop a nuclear weapons regime. That is a remarkable commitment Senate Democrats have signed on to.

In addition, this terrible deal makes concessions to Iran completely unrelated to the nuclear program. For example, it provides sanctions relief for designated terrorists such as General Suleimani, the head of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard's elite Quds Force, who should have no association with the Iranian nuclear program whatsoever. Iran and the Iranian regime maintain that the nuclear program is not a military program. Then why is a military general covered in this agreement—this man, General Suleimani, who has blood on his hands from the IEDs that he funneled into Iraq that murdered and maimed hundreds of American service men and women?

And even while Iranians such as Suleimani get relief, four Americans were cruelly excluded from this deal: Pastor Saeed Abedini, an American citizen imprisoned for 8 years in an Iranian prison for the crime of preaching the Gospel; former marine Amir Hekmati; Washington Post reporter Jason Rezaian; and Bob Levinson. It is a disgrace on our Nation that we agreed to any deal with Tehran before they were liberated.

Finally, this terrible deal provides Iran with some \$150 billion in economic relief, which will inevitably be used to finance the violent terrorist mayhem that has been a signature of the Islamic Republic since the 1979 revolution. It will, in effect, make the U.S. Government the leading international financier of terrorism. We haven't even voted yet on this deal, and we are already seeing the consequences play out in real time. Senior Iranian officials, including Suleimani, who is technically still under a U.N. travel ban, have traveled to Moscow to make arms deals with Vladimir Putin—arms that will flow to Iran's terrorist proxies, from Yemen to Gaza to Lebanon to Syria. Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad has gotten an economic lifeline in the form of a \$1 billion line of credit. Senior Iranian officials have announced to the media they will redouble their support for Hamas because they "reject the existence of any Israeli on this earth."

If we want to understand who we are dealing with, that clarifies exactly what their intent is. In other words, the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism, Iran, just got a \$150 billion windfall courtesy of the U.S. Government.

The grim consequences of this activity can be seen on our TV screens as we witness hundreds of thousands of panicked refugees fleeing out of places where Iran's proxies are active. Of course, ISIS and its affiliates bear significant responsibility for this crisis. But make no mistake about it; Tehran's bloody fingerprints are all over it as well. From the Houthis to Hamas to Hezbollah, they are enabling

and financing the radical Islamic terrorists who are making life, from North Africa to the Middle East, utterly untenable. They are murdering Christians and Jews and other Muslims who do not embrace their radical jihadist dream.

This isn't complicated. The American people know this is a terrible deal. That is why President Obama has only been able to persuade a minority of their duly elected representatives to support it. It is why, as Secretary Kerry frankly admitted, they didn't even try to submit their deal to the Senate as a treaty, as they should have done. They prefer to jam it through by default or by Presidential veto—anything to get what they believe will be a domestic political legacy. How typical it is of the Washington cartel that one-third of one House of Congress is trying to force this catastrophic deal on our country.

Yet even in the face of 42 Democrats making a decision to value partisan loyalty over the national security of our country, over standing with our friend and ally the nation of Israel, and over protecting the lives of millions of Americans—even in the face of that—there are still serious steps we can take right now. There are two individuals in Washington, DC, who have the capacity still to stop this deal. Their names are Majority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL and Speaker of the House JOHN BOEHNER. Corker-Cardin was, unfortunately, a very weak piece of review legislation, but it did have one small bit of teeth in it that ought to be used. Under Corker-Cardin, the review period does not start until the administration submits the entirety of the deal to Congress. That entirety is defined under Corker-Cardin to include any and all side deals.

This deal has at least two side deals with the IAEA concerning inspections. It is the laughable inspection regime that trusts the Iranians to inspect themselves. Those side deals have not been submitted to Congress. Under the terms of Corker-Cardin, the review period has not started and does not start until the entire deal is submitted to Congress, and the President cannot lift these sanctions until the review period expires.

So therefore, I call upon the leadership of my party—Leader MCCONNELL, Speaker BOEHNER—simply to enforce the terms of Corker-Cardin. The administration has not submitted the deal. Accordingly, we should not be voting on a resolution of disapproval because the Corker-Cardin clock never began to start, and under Corker-Cardin, until the clock starts, the sanctions can't be lifted.

Republicans in this body should not be facilitating this President's yet again disregarding the law and doing so in contravention of the national security interests of this country.

Two final observations: If and when we vote on this deal, for every Member of this body, I agree with my former

colleague, former Senator Joe Lieberman, who said this may well be the most important vote any Senator casts in his or her career. I implore every Democrat who has come out in support of this deal, search your conscience. You can make a choice other than standing with your own party. You can stand up to your own party. Trust me; I have done it myself. It is not the end of the world.

I implore every Democrat: Go home and pray. Go home and ask yourself how you will look in the eyes of the mother or father whose son was blown to bits by an Iranian IED that came directly from General Suleimani, on whom we are now lifting sanctions; how you will explain your vote that “your son or daughter’s life didn’t matter enough to me, that I was willing to reward their murderer.” I can tell you that is not a conversation I would ever like to have. I ask every Democrat who has said they support this deal to ask yourself that question.

I ask you to ask the question how you will look in the eyes of the mothers and fathers and sons and daughters of those who will be murdered by Hamas, by Hezbollah, by the Houthis, by radical Islamic terrorists across the globe with the over \$100 billion that this deal gives them.

Osama bin Laden murdered nearly 3,000 people on September 11, 2001. Bin Laden never had \$100 billion at his disposal. This deal gives people every bit as evil, every bit as consumed with bilious hatred resources, billions of dollars. And, if this deal goes through, we know to an absolute certainty that Americans will be murdered, Israelis will be murdered, and Europeans will be murdered. I ask every Democratic Member of this body to think before you cast a vote: How will you look in the eyes of the children of those who are murdered by terrorists who use the billions that this deal gives them to kill them? That is blood you can't wash your hands of. When you knowingly and willingly send billions of dollars to jihadists who have declared their intention to murder us, there is no excuse you can hide behind when they carry through on the intention using the billions of dollars you have given.

And, if—God forbid—Iran ever acquires a nuclear weapon, the odds are unacceptably high they would, No. 1, use that nuclear weapon above our friend and ally the nation of Israel. For every Democrat who maintains he or she is a friend of Israel, you need to be prepared to explain how you facilitated a day that could see a nuclear warhead detonating over Tel-Aviv, murdering millions.

When Prime Minister Netanyahu spoke to a joint session of Congress, I participated in a panel discussion that my office organized with Elie Wiesel, a Nobel laureate who survived the Holocaust, and when Elie Wiesel says “never again,” it means never again. The one threat that could kill 6 million

Jews again is a nuclear Iran. Listen to Elie Wiesel.

The single-most dangerous thing Iran could do with a nuclear weapon is launch it from a ship in the Atlantic into the atmosphere and set off an electromagnetic pulse, or an EMP, that would take down the electrical grid and could kill tens of millions of Americans. To every Democrat, listen to those voices.

Finally, if the Democrats refuse to put our national security interests first, then it will be incumbent on the next President to undo the damage. Any competent Commander in Chief should be prepared on the first day—on January 20, 2017—to rip to shreds this catastrophic Iranian deal and to make clear to the Ayatollah Khamenei and to every other jihadist that under no circumstances will the nation of Iran, led by a theocratic Ayatollah who chants “Death to America,” be allowed to acquire nuclear weapons.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). The minority whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, what time is remaining on the Democratic side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Thirty-six minutes.

Mr. DURBIN. How much on the other side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Forty-one minutes.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would like to respond very briefly—very briefly—before yielding to Senator NELSON of Florida.

I would say to the junior Senator from Texas that I hope he listened carefully last Sunday when General Colin Powell, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—a man who risked his life in battle for America, a man who served as Secretary of State under Republican President George W. Bush—came forward and endorsed this agreement that has been proposed before the Senate. So to suggest that General Powell and so many others are not aware of the security aspects of this agreement I don't believe is a fair characterization. General Powell and others understand better than I can, better than the Senator from Texas can what it means to face these security issues. I would like to quote what he said. He said that “with respect to the Iranians, don't trust, never trust, and always verify.” So he comes to his conclusion supporting this agreement with the same degree of skepticism that many of us do.

I would not discount for a minute some of the activities that have been cataloged by the junior Senator from Texas when it comes to Iran, but if you think those were terrible—and they were—imagine Iran with a nuclear weapon. That is what is at stake in this debate. Currently Iran has the capacity to build 10 nuclear weapons—10. We want to stop them from doing that, put inspectors in place. So when you list the litany of horrors coming out of Iran's terrorist activities, imagine

those activities with a nuclear weapon. Our goal is to stop the development of a nuclear weapon in Iran.

I yield the floor to the Senator from Florida.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I will vote for the joint agreement. I want the Senate and my colleagues from Florida to understand. I gave a lengthy speech as to why I would support this some 5 weeks ago, in the early part of August before we adjourned. Indeed, I, like most every other Senator here, feel this is one of the most important votes we will cast. I bring to the table the attempted insight given the fact of 6 years being a member of the Intelligence Committee and now having the privilege of being a senior member of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

The question is, Does this agreement prevent Iran from having a nuclear bomb? That is the essential question. Does this agreement do that? This is not an agreement to stop the bad behavior of Iran, which, of course, I wish we could. This is not a question of whether we are going to get Iran to suddenly change its attitude about Israel, which I wish we could. This is a question of preventing Iran from building and producing a nuclear bomb. I believe this agreement does it, and I believe it does it at both the declared sites and a future cheating at a covert site. Now, there are three declared sites. Those are going to be completely dismantled. The whole program is going to be dismantled.

This is misunderstood when you talk about their centrifuges, of which they have the generation of centrifuge that is very modernized. All of those are going to be cut in a third, from approximately 19,000, and they are all going to be first-generation, which is not the modernized centrifuges. That is one thing. But also they have 12,000 kilograms of enriched uranium. Do you know how much that is? That is over 13 tons, to put it in the lingo Americans understand. That is going to be reduced under this agreement by 98 percent to 300 kilograms—in other words, less than one-fifth to make a bomb. And by the way, that enriched uranium is going to be cut down not to 90 percent to build a bomb but 3.67 percent enriched uranium.

Also, going forward, we are going to have the inspection from cradle to grave, from the very uranium mines where they dig up the uranium rocks, to the processing, which is crushing it into the yellowcake—we are going to have constant surveillance of all of this—taking the yellowcake, making it into a gas, putting that gas into centrifuges, and spinning it so that the uranium comes out of the gas in more concentrated forms, and in the cascade of these centrifuges, then bringing it down to the enriched uranium in order to make a bomb.

The same thing with plutonium. What about plutonium? In the one de-

clared site, Arak, they are going to fill it up with concrete, and all of the existing plutonium is going to be shipped out of the country. I hope we are going to have lots of pictures of that as they do this.

Oh, by the way, as they shut down this program—talking about this money which is held in the banks of five foreign countries, which is the Iranian oil money they will eventually get—you hear all these figures: 150, 100. When you subtract the Iranian obligations, the net amount is still a lot of money—\$56 billion—but they don't get that until they do all of this. And when is that going to be? It will probably be a year from now before they ever get the money that is held in the banks of Japan, South Korea, China, India, and Taiwan, banks that are in countries that need oil, that want Iranian oil, especially if in the future Iran sells them oil at discounted prices. Do you think those banks, those countries are going to keep that money if we walk away from this deal? No. The sanctions are going to dissipate. The money is going to flow.

Thank goodness, because of the joint agreement, that money is not going to flow—probably a year from now—until they have done all of these things that are required in the agreement of dismantling their program.

What this agreement does is it vastly reduces their ability to produce a bomb unless they cheat. Let's talk about that. Now, I said from the very beginning—and this was part of my speech 5, 6 weeks ago. President Reagan said "trust, but verify" in dealing with the Soviet Union. I say don't trust, but verify. So the whole point is that if we think they are going to cheat—and I can tell you that this Senator thinks they are going to try to cheat, although I think they clearly are going to comply with this. And I think the outset—the preamble of the agreement says that it is understood that Iran will never have a nuclear weapon. Never ever. But are some elements of their society, their government, going to try to cheat? This Senator thinks they will. Can we catch them? Well, I think we clearly will.

First of all, we are going to have a lot more insight into their attempted nuclear program than we do now. And by the way, we have a vast intelligence network out there, along with our allies, that will penetrate. But on top of that, other than the three declared sites of Iraq, Natanz, and Fordow, which will all be dismantled in the reductions that I just mentioned—we will have immediate access to those sites. Any other site that we suspect, that we say we want to inspect, the max that they can rope-a-dope us is 24 days.

So if they are trying to cheat, could they do a nuclear detonator? Probably. But can they build a bomb? The answer is no. Why is it no without us knowing? Because when that site is suspected and we go in and have the inspection, you cannot hide energized, enriched

uranium or plutonium. The half-life of this stuff is thousands of years. You can't paint over it. You can't asphalt over it. We will find it because the radioactivity will be there.

If they cheat, what happens? The fact that we have caused them to reduce all of these things that I have mentioned means we have a year in advance to deal with it, whether it is a military strike, whether it is the sanctions going back into place.

By the way, this is structured so that the United Nations sanctions go right back into place. You say: How in the world can you do that? The U.N. Security Council—any one of those other countries, such as China or Russia, can object.

No, that is not how this deal is structured. With the United States saying the sanctions go back—by ourselves—if they have cheated, the economic sanctions of the P5+1—the UK, France, Germany, China, Russia, and the United States—go back into place.

So we are going to have a year advance if they are cheating. Compare that, please, to if we walk away from the deal today. They can have a nuclear bomb within a few months, and the sanctions of our allies will dissipate because they have all told us they will dissipate if we walk away from the deal.

I will conclude with this: If this Senator knows that we are in a situation where if we reject the deal, Iran is going to have a nuclear bomb in a few months as opposed to any prospect in the future of them having a nuclear bomb with us having a year's advance notice but the likelihood that it is 10, 15, 20, 25 years—this Senator feels that the world is going to be a very different place in 15 to 20 years and that for the protection of the interests of the United States and our allies right now, including our strong ally Israel, it is important that Iran not have a nuclear weapon, that we are dealing with an Iran that does not have a nuclear weapon in the immediate future and instead that we penetrate their society with a much better understanding with them not having the capability of a nuclear weapon until years and years in the future.

For all of those reasons—and you can tell this is coming right out of my heart and is not some written, read speech—it is in the interest of the United States that this Senator will vote to support the deal.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate as in morning business for such time as I may consume.

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

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, in response to the Senator from Florida's—I am sure heartfelt—remarks, only 21 percent of the American people agree with his stated position there, and I am

sure he will hear from his constituents, as he should.

I did not come to the floor this morning to talk about the agreement. I will save my remarks, which I have been asked to make, for this afternoon.

REFUGEE CRISIS AND AMERICAN LEADERSHIP

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I call attention to the urgent refugee crisis that is happening in our midst. Men, women, and children are fleeing by the thousands from the violence and destruction that has engulfed the Middle East and North Africa. This crisis didn't come out of nowhere like an earthquake or a tornado. Instead, it is the predictable result of this administration's policies of leading from behind as conflicts metastasized in the vacuum created through years of inaction by President Obama and a total lack of American leadership. This did not happen by accident. It happened because of leading from behind. It happened because this President has refused to lead. When a vacuum is created, this is the predictable result which many of us predicted.

As we know, the vast majority of these refugees are from Syria, a country which has known little but death and destruction for 4 years as a murderous dictatorship and a homicidal cult have fought a war against a common enemy, the Syrian people. As Assad and ISIL fight to rule, cruelty and atrocity reign.

According to the United Nations Refugee Agency, about 63 percent of European asylum seekers in the past 2 years are Syrians, but the truth is, the refugee crisis is much bigger than what we are seeing today in Europe. Since 2011, well over 200,000 Syrians have been killed, 1 million injured, 8 million displaced, 4 million forced to seek refuge abroad in countries such as Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, and Egypt where the situation is not much better. The United Nations has described this crisis as "the greatest humanitarian crisis tragedy of our times."

As conditions at refugee camps in the region continue to deteriorate with overcrowding, disease, violence, and exploitation, those who can are attempting to escape further west to safer places in Europe. The United Nations estimates that at least 850,000 people will seek refuge in Europe between 2015 and 2016. About a quarter of them will be children. These children are increasingly leaving their families and homes to make dangerous journeys by sea and land. While they are risking their lives to escape the threat of abduction, sexual abuse, torture and murder, they face an entirely new set of threats on this desperate journey for asylum. Many are on traversing unsafe routes, suffering from starvation, facing the threat of human trafficking, enduring debilitating psychological trauma, and, of course, many are dying.

The U.N. Refugee Agency has stated that about 2,600 people have died while attempting to cross the Mediterranean

this year alone, including 3-year-old Aylan Kurdi. Aylan grew up in the Syrian city of Kobani, a city situated on the border of Turkey, which in recent years has been under siege by ISIL militants and the Assad regime. Facing increasing turmoil and unrest, Aylan's father, Abdullah, and mother, Rehen, did what any parent would do for their children. They attempted to move Aylan and his 4-year-old brother Galip to a safer home. Abdullah arranged for his family to board a boat bound for Sweden by way of Greece, a trip that many of his fellow Syrians have attempted over the years. But when the Kurdi family met their smugglers in Turkey, they were surprised how crowded the small, flimsy fiberglass boat was. Despite repeated questions about the safety of the voyage, the smugglers assured Abdullah they would be OK.

Shortly into the trip, the waters became increasingly rough, crashing into the boat and rocking it back and forth until it capsized, launching the passengers—including Aylan, his mother, and 4-year-old brother—into the rough waters. Despite Abdullah's strongest attempts, he was unable to save his family.

This photo, which was taken shortly after Aylan's dead body was washed ashore, has opened the world's eyes to this devastating crisis. Within hours of this photo being posted, people across the world began to share it on social media using a hashtag in Arabic that translates to "humanity washed ashore." This image has haunted the world, but what should haunt us even more than the horror unfolding before our eyes is the thought that the United States will continue to do nothing meaningful about it.

The conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen, and elsewhere in the Middle East and North Africa that have taken the lives of Aylan and countless other desperate refugees are not only a threat to our security, but a crisis of conscience. They challenge the moral fabric of our Nation and the foundation of global leadership. Let's be clear. The current crisis before us is not a migrant issue. They are not migrants. Migrants leave for economic reasons. It is a mass exodus of refugees who are fleeing conflicts that this administration has refused to address for years. As the U.N. High Commissioner stated last week: "This is a primarily refugee crisis, not only a migration phenomenon. The vast majority of those arriving in Greece come from conflict zones like Syria, Iraq or Afghanistan and are simply running for their lives."

I say to the media: Stop calling them migrants. They are not migrants. They are refugees who are attempting to escape from torture, murder, killing, and genocide. Statements and images like these should not just be a source of heartbreak and sympathy; they should be a call to action. The following quote is from the Wall Street Journal editorial this morning.

Another Syria Failure

It's hard to believe, but the debacle that is the Obama Administration's Syria policy could get worse. U.S. sources have been leaking that Russia may be preparing for a major military deployment to keep Bashar Assad in power in Damascus. By some reports quoting Western diplomats, a Russian expeditionary force is already in Syria preparing for the arrival of jets and attack helicopters to carry out strikes against Islamic State . . . Mr. Assad is a Russian ally, and Vladimir Putin isn't about to let the Syrian government fall without a bigger fight. Like so much else in the Middle East, President Obama has created an opening for this Russian intervention by minimizing U.S. interests in the outcome of Syria's civil war. He has refused to offer more than token help to pro-Western Syrians, thus ceding the battleground to radical Islamists or the Assad-Russia-Iran-Hezbollah axis. Don't expect a decline in the flow of refugees anytime soon.

Just a few months after the revolution in Syria began in 2011, President Obama issued his Presidential Study Directive stating: "Preventing mass atrocities and genocide is a core national security interest and a core moral responsibility of the United States."

He went on to say: "Our security is affected when masses of civilians are slaughtered, refugees flow across borders, and murderers wreak havoc on regional stability and livelihoods."

In 2013, President Obama, speaking at the U.S. Holocaust Museum, said: "Too often, the world has failed to prevent the killing of innocents on a massive scale. And we are haunted by the atrocities that we did not stop and the lives we did not save."

In a 2013 address to the U.N. General Assembly, President Obama said:

[The principle of sovereignty is at the center of our international order. But sovereignty cannot be a shield for tyrants to commit wanton murder, or an excuse for the international community to turn a blind eye. While we need to be modest in our belief that we can remedy every evil, while we need to be mindful that the world is full of unintended consequences, should we really accept the notion that the world is powerless in the face of a Rwanda, or Srebrenica? If that's the world that people want to live in, they should say so, and reckon with the cold logic of mass graves.

I strongly suggest, given the fact that there is no policy, no strategy, and no effective way of stemming this horror, that the President of the United States should say so and reckon with the cold logic of mass graves. That was our President. By the way, I agree with every word he said, but how can the American people reconcile these words with pictures of dead children and desperate refugees literally running for their lives? How can President Obama say it is our moral obligation to do what we can to prevent the worst atrocities in our world but refuse to do anything to stop the atrocities that are occurring every single day in Syria and across the Middle East?

Where is that President Obama today? Where is the President Obama who has spoken so movingly of the moral responsibilities that great power confers?

Unfortunately, the administration is still “considering a range of options”—I am not making this up—to respond to this issue, a National Security Council spokesman stated this week. In the meantime, the President and his cabinet officials continue to push through an agreement that legitimizes Iran, which is not only the leading state sponsor of terror in the world, but the patron of the Assad regime responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of innocent Syrians. After this deal, Iran’s power in the region will only be enhanced, and it is safe to assume that it will use the billions of dollars in sanctions relief to boost arms supplies to Iran’s terrorist proxies, to sow chaos and instability across the region, and to prop up Assad right when he needs it most.

As the administration stands by, Russia is capitalizing on America’s inaction to provide additional support for the Assad regime. According to numerous press reports, Russia is establishing a base at an airfield near an Assad stronghold in western Syria. Russia could soon deploy 1,000 or more military personnel into Syria to conduct air operations in support of Assad’s forces.

Our government is doing what it has sadly done too often in the past, receding our strength and averting our eyes. We try to comfort our guilty consciences by telling ourselves that we are not doing nothing, but it is a claim made in bad faith, for everyone concedes that nothing we are doing is equal to the horrors we face. We are telling ourselves: We’re too tired or weary to get more involved, that this is not our problem, that helping to resolve this crisis is not our responsibility, and that there are no options to end the conflicts around the world today. The truth is there was plenty that could have been done to avoid the devastation unfolding before our eyes in 2011, in 2012, in 2013, in 2014. And there is still more we can do today to respond to this growing crisis.

My friends, my colleagues, my fellow Americans, I fear the longer this violence goes on, the more difficult it will be to bring it to an end. Failing to do so will leave a dangerous vacuum that enables extremism and instability to grow and provides terrorists the space, resources, and recruits they need to wreak havoc on the region and threaten the United States of America.

It is not too late. We must not avert our eyes from Aylan and the millions of other refugees running for their lives. We must commit to a strategy to defeat the malign forces in the region that are sowing chaos and mass destruction. Failing to act now leaves us with even fewer options to rectify this terrible chapter in our history.

Speaking of history, I am a student of history. I don’t believe there are exact parallels in American history, but there are certain areas where a failure to lead leads to catastrophic consequences. In 1938, on October 5, a

man named Winston Churchill—who was shunned by his colleagues and ridiculed in the House of Commons for his constant speaking and warning—in one of my favorites of the appearances he made in the House of Commons before his fellow citizens, he said:

And do not suppose this is the end. This is only the beginning of the reckoning. This is only the first sip, the first foretaste of a bitter cup which will be proffered to us year by year unless by a supreme recovery of moral health and martial vigour, we arise again and take our stand for freedom as in olden time.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I come to the floor to speak to the nuclear agreement with Iran. First, having just come back from the region after having spent Sunday morning in one of the biggest refugee camps inside Syria—where 80,000, more than half of them children under the age of 18, with more than 250 every day leaving the camp because they have lost hope and they are, frankly, more willing to live inside a dangerous Syria with their lives in danger than to continue to live inside of this camp—let me associate myself with the imperative that Senator McCAIN laid before us, that we can do more. I don’t agree with his diagnosis of how we got here, nor will I likely agree with his solution in terms of prescriptions to solve the problem, but I certainly agree that this body and the administration should be standing up and bearing our share of the burden when it comes to this humanitarian crisis, having seen it now firsthand for myself.

Peace is a messy business. As Yitzhak Rabin said upon the recognition of the PLO—a really hard thing for the Israelis to do—he said, “You don’t make peace with your friends, you make it with very unsavory enemies.” It makes sense, right? The definition of peace is the settlement of old disputes or even just one big dispute with someone with whom one has a long history of disagreement or conflict. And unless peace comes from unconditional surrender—and that frankly doesn’t happen very much in the postnuclear age—then peace by nature is going to be a compromise. It doesn’t come from one side getting everything it wants. Thus, by definition, it is going to feel fairly unsatisfactory.

I say this because viewing the Iran deal through that prism allows me to understand why so many people are voting no, and it allows me to understand why many of those who are voting yes took a long time to get there, but what I have trouble understanding is all of the revisionist history that is crowding this Chamber right now. I don’t think there is a single Member of the Senate who didn’t in principle support the idea of negotiating an end to Iran’s nuclear weapons program. And I don’t remember anyone who didn’t understand that the sanctions we layered

upon Iran were directed at their nuclear program, not their support for Hezbollah or their detainment of hostages or any other malevolent behavior in the region. Why? Because we had a whole different set of sanctions on that activity.

But now there is all sorts of Sturm und Drang in Congress over the idea that this deal represents a give-and-take between the United States and Iran. Why didn’t we get everything, a lot of people are asking; and the failure of this agreement to settle all our disputes with Iran at once—but they still do bad stuff, people say. I view these protests largely as cover for a “no” vote that is likely about something else because we always knew this was going to be a negotiation. We can complain about the end balance, but we can’t engage in a straight-faced argument about the outrageousness of Iran getting to keep a few centrifuges. And we can all rage about Iran’s support for terrorism or their dangerous talk about our sacred ally, Israel, but we all passed sanctions bills knowing they were about their nuclear program, not all of these other activities. Thus, it must stand to reason that these sanctions would be removed if Iran came to the table and satisfied our concerns about their nuclear program, not our concerns about everything else they do that is terrible.

Peace is never perfect. Diplomacy is, frankly, mostly ugly, but it matters. Because why on Earth do we spend \$500 billion every year on the world’s biggest, baddest, most capable military force if we aren’t willing to use it? I don’t mean use it in the way that Senator GRAHAM or Senator COTTON may mean “use it,” I mean use it by entering into peaceful agreements that are held in place by the threat of overwhelming U.S. military force. Our planes and our bombs and our brigades, these are the muscle that ensures that agreements are lived up to, not the muscle that substitutes for a diplomatic agreement. America, more than any other country in the world, can afford to take a diplomatic risk because we can clean it up fast if it goes wrong. Now, I don’t think this agreement is going to go wrong, but I sure like knowing that a bunker-busting bomb is waiting in the wings if it does. And I will sleep better at night knowing that by agreeing to this deal, we are keeping together an unprecedented international coalition that will stand with us if we need to drop that bomb—something they would not do if we dropped it without this agreement.

This body often seems to forget that American power is not simply exercised through the blunt force of military power. And President Obama, frankly, is not the first President to be pressed by hawks in Congress, and outside of Congress, to forsake diplomacy in favor of war.

In the first meeting with legislative leaders after the announcement of Russian missiles inside Cuba, the bipartisan congressional leadership, meeting

with President Kennedy, was unanimous in its support for an attack and ultimately the possible invasion of Cuba. All of them thought that talking to Russia about a negotiated solution equaled weakness. President Kennedy didn't listen, and over 13 days he worked out a peaceful solution to the Cuban Missile Crisis that history looks very kindly upon.

President Reagan, upon signing the IMF treaty with Russia, leaned over to Gorbachev as they announced the deal and said: "The hardliners in both our countries are bleeding when we shake hands today." Hawks in Congress didn't want an agreement with our sworn enemy, Russia. They didn't understand why we signed a nuclear agreement with a country that was still out for American blood on so many other fronts. But history tells us that the IMF treaty was an important piece of our strategy to weaken hardliners inside Russia and open that country to reform.

I hear this analogy to 1938 and Munich almost every day, and it doesn't just come with respect to this agreement. Almost every time we sit across the table from someone we have a disagreement with, the claim is that it is Munich all over again, but Munich is the exception, not the rule. There are plenty more diplomatic agreements to avert war that went right rather than those that went wrong. It doesn't mean we don't use 1938 as a caution, but it doesn't mean it is an automatic parallel to every single time we are trying to settle our disputes with an adversary at the negotiating table rather than through the means of arms.

Our partners in the Middle East largely get this. I just returned from this trip, as I mentioned, to the region—Qatar, UAE, Iraq, Kuwait, and Jordan—with Senator PETERS. In every country we visited, we heard about Iran's dangerous activity in the region, including support for the Houthis in Yemen, funding Shiite militias in Iraq, propping up the murderous Bashar al-Assad in Syria, pumping money into Hezbollah and Hamas to threaten Israel, but despite these provocations, every Arab political leader whom we met with—every single one—supports this agreement. They give two basic reasons, and I want to share them because they mirror the reasons for my support as well.

First, they know that no matter how dangerous Iran is today, they shudder to think how much more dangerous Iran would be if they possessed a nuclear weapon. They believe, as I do, that this agreement is the best way to keep Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, and they support it, to a country, first and foremost for that reason.

Before this deal, Iran had 19,000 centrifuges spinning. After it, they are going to have just a few thousand. Before this deal, Iran was enriching up to 20 percent and was only a few months from being able to enrich to a level in which they could get on a pathway to

a bomb. After this deal, enrichment will be down to 3.7 percent. Before this deal, Iran had an enormous stockpile of enriched uranium, and after this deal that stockpile is, for all intents and purposes, eliminated—reduced by 97 percent. Before this deal, the only way we knew what was going on in the nuclear program was through covert surveillance. After the deal, we are going to have a network of inspectors crawling over every inch of their nuclear program to make sure they aren't cheating.

Second, our Arab partners whom we visited within the region know that all of the problems in the region can't be solved without Iran at the table, and while they aren't sure this agreement by itself will draw Iran into peaceful negotiations over Syria or Yemen or Iraq—and I think none of us can be sure that is how this will play out—they are certain that a rejection of the agreement by the United States Congress will virtually guarantee that Iran will not come to the table. They talk openly about fearing a newly isolated Iran, the rejection of this agreement empowering the hardliners, punishing the moderates, and pushing Iran away from any constructive dialogue in the region. Our Arab partners don't love the terms of this agreement any more than the U.S. Senate does, but they know the alternative—a retrenched Iran with a green light to start back up their nuclear program—is the most dangerous outcome of all.

Our partners understand what supporters of the deal understand; that this idea that if Congress were to reject the agreement, we could come back to the table and get a better one is pure fiction. It is pure political fiction made up by people who don't want to sound like they don't have an alternative plan, when they really don't. No one with any credible diplomatic experience in the Middle East believes that Iran will come back to the table if Congress rejects this deal, and our international partners have told us to our face that they will not come back to the table if we reject this deal. A better deal is fantasy, plain and simple.

Here is what happens. Here is what really happens if Congress rejects this deal that is supported by all of our negotiating partners—Britain, France, Germany, China, Russia—the entirety of the Security Council and all of our Arab partners in the region. What happens is that Iran starts back up their nuclear program, centrifuges climb to 25,000, 30,000, enrichment gets closer to the level necessary for a bomb, the inspectors get kicked out—our eyes on a nuclear program disappear—and sanctions fray at first and likely fall apart over time and Iran gets everything it wants. It gets its nuclear program and it gets sanctions relief. What a catastrophic outcome that would be.

But as bad as that reality would be, it actually gets worse. We know the hardliners have been marginalized as a result of this deal, and the moderates,

which I admit is, frankly, a relative term inside Iran, are gaining power. Rejection of this deal would just be a gift to hardliners and would likely lead to Ruhani being replaced by a Revolutionary Guard proxy who would lead Iran down a path that is even more dangerous—hard to believe—than the path they are on today.

Lastly, the United States would just become an international pariah. With all of our partners at the negotiating table, almost every nation around the world supporting this agreement, what would it say if the U.S. Congress walked away? Our power as a nation would be irreparably damaged.

Now, I heard Senator CRUZ on the floor earlier today chastising Democrats, yelling at us, about how could we live with ourselves doing a deal with our mortal enemy Iran. So let me ask him and others who oppose this agreement, with the rhetoric that he uses, a question in return: How could opponents of this deal live with themselves if a rejection of this deal would result in, No. 1, Iran restarting its nuclear program; No. 2, sanctions dramatically weakening; No. 3, inspections ending; and, No. 4, hard-liners being in power inside Iran?

The fact is that many Republicans opposed this agreement before they read it. Senator CRUZ opposed it within an hour of its announcement. So I don't know how some opponents of this deal can live with themselves having made a political decision to oppose the most important diplomatic agreement that most of us will vote on during our time here.

This is not a perfect deal, but no diplomatic agreement ever is. Peace, as the great Israeli leader Yitzhak Rabin told us, is never easy. History almost always judges that it is worthwhile.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. VITTER. Madam President, I rise to urge all of our colleagues, Republicans and Democrats, to strongly oppose the proposed nuclear deal with Iran and to effectively block it for the sake of the country and our national security by supporting the motion of disapproval on the Senate floor.

I have served in the Senate and the House for about 15 years. It has been an enormous honor and a serious responsibility. I have taken it very seriously. When I think through all of that service, all of the votes we have cast, all of the debates we have had, I cannot think of any more serious than the issue we are debating and voting on here, the Iran nuclear deal. Maybe there are a few that rank in a similar way—after 9/11, starting that effort to

root out terrorists and to oppose those who inflicted massive death in our country—but there is none that is more important and more significant because this deal, this issue goes to the fundamental security of America, our future. Are we going to be free from the threat of attack with nuclear weapons by a wildly radical and unstable regime? It does not get more basic, more serious than that.

The first point I want to make is that this is a dead-serious issue because the consequences do involve life or death, massive numbers of lives or deaths. So if there is any debate, any vote that should be completely devoid of partisan political considerations, it is this one. I urge all of our colleagues on both sides of the aisle to leave the partisanship at the door. This is way more important than that. I would hope that would be obvious.

With that in mind, it is troubling that President Obama has tried to make this a partisan debate. He has actively, obviously sought to inflict partisanship into it, I think simply because that is the way he thinks he can hold enough Democratic votes on his side. I think that is really a shame. I hope everyone proves him wrong in terms of the nature of the debate and vote we have in this important body.

When you look at the agreement, at the specifics of the agreement—I will not go into all of the weeds and all of the issues. I could spend days alone on that. But I do want to focus on two key considerations that are absolutely top in my mind.

The first is the very premise and outcome of the agreement because we have gone from a negotiation that was supposed to be about preventing Iran from ever developing nuclear weapons to a discussion of when they are going to do it. We have gone from if to when. This agreement ensures that they will have the ability to get there even if they live under the full terms of the agreement, and obviously there is a concern, which I will get to in my second point, that they won't. This puts our nuclear nonproliferation policy, including the nonproliferation treaty, which has been the cornerstone of our policy regarding the proliferation of nuclear weapons and particularly in the Middle East for 45 years—this throws it out the window. This puts it on its head.

With this agreement, the United States has agreed that at the end of a timeline, Iran has full authority to enrich uranium, will be completely within its rights to do so with no fear of economic or political repercussions by the major powers, full authority for them to go against 45 years of standing nonproliferation policy. So what started as strong action, including meaningful sanctions that were having an impact to make sure Iran never got nuclear weapons, now concedes that they will get there; it is simply a debate about when. That is at the core of this agreement. That is at the core of the

reason we all must say no and pass the motion of disapproval.

If there is any region of the world where we need to maintain this tough nonproliferation policy, it is the Middle East. This agreement obliterates that. Iran won't be the only new nuclear power over time. There will be a race among Middle Eastern countries to develop nuclear weapons because Iran is going to get one. That is inevitable, in my mind.

The second major point I want to make—the second major issue is verification, our ability under the agreement to see that Iran lives by it. First, as I said, even under the agreement, we are conceding their ability to develop nuclear weapons. That is absolutely wrong. But then within the agreement, we also have nothing near the tools and the assurances we need with regard to verification every step of the way.

Iran has proved over and over that they will violate these sorts of agreements, that they will lie. International agencies have caught them in those lies, including the IAEA. That agency and others have noted the difficulty of verification in dealing with Iran. Then we get to this agreement, which makes that difficulty move from significant to monumental.

There are lots of details we could look at, but the single most telling is the detail that is in a side agreement between Iran and the IAEA that we are not allowed to read. We are having this debate. We have to vote on this motion of disapproval. Yet we are not allowed to read this critical side agreement which goes to the heart of the ability of the world to verify compliance.

I brought up this fairly basic issue a few weeks ago when Wendy Sherman, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, testified before our committee on banking and urban affairs. I asked her point-blank: This side agreement between the IAEA and Iran, have you read it?

She answered: Yes.

I will be honest with you, I am not certain if that is true, but she answered yes.

Then I asked her: Am I, as a representative of the people of Louisiana, allowed to read that agreement?

She answered through nonresponses: No.

I asked her: Do you have to vote on this agreement in your responsibility?

No.

But I do; correct, Ms. Sherman?

Yes.

But I don't get to read this critical side agreement with regard to verification that goes to the heart of our ability to make sure Iran is even following these rules, as lax as they are?

Again, through her nonanswer, the answer was clear: No, I don't get to read it. The Presiding Officer does not get to read it. Nobody in the Senate who is voting on this gets to read it. Nobody in the House of Representatives who is voting on this gets to read it. Forget about any slight on the Pre-

siding Officer and me and others personally. It is not about that. We are here to represent the people. I am here to represent the people of Louisiana. I cannot read what we are voting on? That is absolutely ridiculous.

Then, to add insult to injury, come press reports about what we are not allowed to read. Of course, the most significant were the press reports from several weeks ago from the AP saying that this side agreement had an extremely unusual provision with regard to inspections at at least one of Iran's most sensitive military facilities—the biggest concern we have probably in all of Iran. In at least that most sensitive military facility and perhaps others, Iran gets to collect the samples. Iran gets to choose and control those who do. The IAEA, the international community, and America do not and are not allowed on site. That just does not pass, I would say, the laugh test. But it is a very serious matter. That is like someone like Alex Rodriguez collecting his own urine and mailing it in. That does not work at a basic level. Yet that, according to very credible reports, is in this side agreement that, oh, by the way, we are not allowed to read.

For all of these reasons, for our security, for our kids' future, for freedom around the world, for Israel's security, for nonproliferation in the Middle East so that we do not have an explosive Middle Eastern nuclear arms race, we must pass this motion of disapproval.

Again, this goes way beyond politics. This is about our physical security, our kids' and grandkids' future. We must all come together, look at the substance of this, and do the right thing. That certainly involves invoking cloture on this motion so we go to a final vote. I believe that clearly involves passing this motion of disapproval. I urge all of our colleagues to do exactly that.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, as do virtually all of the Members of this body, I believe we must prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon. Because of that, I support the international agreement that the Senate is debating this week because I am convinced it is the best way to achieve that objective.

We can stop Iran's nuclear weapons program in one of two ways, either diplomatically or militarily. Powerful international sanctions, which I have strongly supported, have brought Iran to the negotiating table. And on July 14, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, China, and the European Union—the so-called P5+1

powers—concluded an agreement with Iran that, if it is implemented as it was agreed to, promises a peaceful, diplomatic solution. Thanks to the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act, Congress has had ample time to review the agreement.

I have spent hours and hours studying the text of the agreement and scrutinizing our intelligence agencies' classified assessment of their ability to verify Iran's compliance.

As a member of both the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Senate Armed Services Committee, I attended more than a dozen hearings and briefings with administration officials and outside experts—both for and against the agreement. In the end, I have concluded that this agreement effectively blocks Iran's pathways to develop a nuclear weapon for well over a decade.

Right now, what we heard from testimony from both those people who support and oppose the agreement is that Iran can acquire enough fissile nuclear material to make a bomb in less than 3 months. The agreement extends this breakout time to at least 1 year by slashing Iran's stockpile of enriched uranium by 98 percent and banning enrichment above 3.67 percent, which is far below weapons grade, for 15 years.

The agreement also reduces Iran's number of centrifuges by more than two-thirds for a decade, and it maintains inspectors' access to Iran's uranium mines and mills—so the whole life cycle of uranium—for a quarter of a century. These are just some of the many restrictions the agreement imposes on Iran.

In addition, Iran is bound by the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and other agreements to a permanent commitment not to pursue nuclear weapons and, as part of that agreement, to permit access by inspectors to any suspected sites. Of critical importance, the Iran agreement is not based on trust—none of us trust Iran—but it is based on an inspections regime that is more rigorous and more intrusive than any previous negotiated agreement. Nuclear experts are confident that we will be able to detect violations by Iran. Thanks to language in the agreement that allows the United States to respond unilaterally to a violation by reimposing U.S. and U.N. sanctions, Iran knows that it faces crippling consequences if it violates the agreement.

If Congress rejects the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the Iran agreement, all of these advantages go away. The risk of an Iranian nuclear breakout and a regional nuclear arms race will increase dramatically. We will be left with no credible, non-military option for stopping Iran's nuclear program.

Now, I certainly respect the views of my colleagues who oppose this agreement, and I have listened carefully to their arguments. Some of them assert that Iran will find a way to cheat and, therefore, no diplomatic resolution is

possible. However, most opponents are careful to avoid talk of military conflict and argue that we can reject this deal, that we can rally the world to impose harsher sanctions, and that Iran will eventually capitulate.

But sadly, that premise is at odds with the facts as they currently exist. Our negotiating partners in this deal—Britain, France, Russia, China, and the European Union—have concluded that this is a fair agreement. In a briefing for Senators last month, the Ambassadors from these nations told us in no uncertain terms that there will be no going back to the bargaining table if Congress rejects this agreement. If the deal is rejected, the most likely outcome is that the international sanctions regime against Iran would unravel. The United States would be isolated, and we would lose credibility as a reliable negotiating partner. So, yes, we would retain the ability to act unilaterally, but unilateral sanctions have their limits, as we have heard in this body. Our military commanders counsel us that even a robust military option would delay, but it would not prevent, Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon because they already have the nuclear know-how.

This agreement is not about becoming friends with Iran or turning a blind eye to its efforts to destabilize the Middle East. In fact, we must redouble our efforts to help our allies counter Iran's malign influence in the region.

In particular, our commitment to the defense of Israel should remain unshakeable. In addition, we must maintain vigorous sanctions against Iran for its support for terrorism and for its violations of human rights.

Now, while there are risks to whatever course we take with respect to Iran, I believe that the choice is clear. Either we recognize that this agreement is the best available option or we chase some fantasy agreement on our own as international sanctions collapse and Iran's nuclear program continues unchecked and our options for stopping it are narrowed.

I am convinced that the agreement negotiated by the United States and our allies is the least risky approach, and it is the approach that is most likely to succeed. As I said last month in New Hampshire, I intend to vote to support this deal.

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.

Mr. KIRK. Madam President, I ask unanimous that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. KIRK. Madam President, as I rise, many who fear the pending Iran vote feel that it could deliver a mortal blow to the Senate's historic support for the safety of the families of Israel.

Have no fear. No matter what, we will always have a capable majority of Americans who support the free and democratic tolerant society of Israel. No matter what the Iranians do, America's commitment will remain to that shining city on Jerusalem's hills, to a nation that has proved that democracy and tolerance can thrive in a place even as hostile as the Middle East and will remain strong.

I represent many people who have survived the Holocaust. Their spirit is within the State of Illinois. They prevailed over the worst evil that has ever disgraced our time. That spirit unites the free and tolerant people of the United States and Israel that we will prevail no matter what.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

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

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:28 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

HIRE MORE HEROES ACT OF 2015—Continued

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, in anticipation of the majority leader and minority leader coming to the floor in a moment, I will begin the debate, a debate on the most consequential vote I will ever take as an elected official. Certainly, in my 41 years of public service, I have never had a decision to make as serious, as complex, and as meaningful as the decision we will make on the Iran nuclear deal negotiated by the administration and the President.

I rise in opposition to that agreement and to explain why I will vote against it, but before I do, I want to compliment three or four members in particular on the Foreign Relations Committee: former Chairman MENENDEZ from New Jersey, Ranking Member CARDIN from Maryland, and Chairman CORKER from Tennessee. Throughout the entire debate on the Iran nuclear deal, they have been forthright in being sure everybody got every question they wanted answered, that every issue was exposed, and that everybody had the time to participate to the fullest degree possible. Great leadership on the part of Senator CORKER, great leadership on the part of Senator CARDIN, and great assistance on the part of Senator MENENDEZ.

In the end, in committee, I voted for the resolution of disapproval to vote against the nuclear arrangement with the Iranians, and I want to talk about why. First of all, the President said a vote against the deal is a vote for war. I argue with that conclusion. In fact, I think a vote against the deal is a vote of strength. A vote for the deal is an