

Preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon is one of the most pressing security challenges of our generation. A nuclear-armed Iran is a threat to the national security of the United States, the State of Israel, and the world.

Last summer I announced my support for the historic nuclear agreement the United States and the global community made with Iran. This agreement required Iran to take significant steps to ensure that its nuclear infrastructure could not be used to build a nuclear bomb. These steps include, among other things, dismantling thousands and thousands of centrifuges that are used to enrich uranium, removing from Iran its enriched uranium, thus reducing its stockpile and eliminating the core of its plutonium reactor. The end result of these steps is that Iran's breakout time—the time it takes to make enough fissile material to build a bomb—has been extended from a matter of a few months to a year, and some experts would say much, much longer.

Over the weekend, the International Atomic Energy Agency confirmed that Iran successfully implemented these initial requirements, an important next act in the implementation of the nuclear agreement.

I applaud President Obama, Secretary of State John Kerry, Secretary of Energy Dr. Ernest Moniz, and Under Secretary of State Wendy Sherman for using America's diplomatic power to make the world a safer place. This diplomatic approach also avoids the significant costs and risks a military option would pose. One need only look at Iraq to find out what military options cost—trillions of dollars—because of the worst foreign policy decision in the history of our country: the invasion of Iraq. Hundreds of thousands of people are dead, millions have been displaced, thousands of Americans are dead, and tens of thousands badly wounded. The diplomatic approach avoids the costs and risks the nuclear option poses.

No one should think all of the components of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action have been completed. They have not been. We are now at the beginning of a critical period where Iran must allow unprecedented inspections designed to allow the international community to know if Iran tries to break out and race toward building a nuclear weapon. We will know about it.

Iran poses a threat to our Nation's most supportive ally in the Middle East, the State of Israel. Over my four decades in Congress, the safety and security of the Israeli people have been of the utmost importance to me and to this Congress generally, as you can see with the results of the last four decades. We must do everything and we must strive to protect the Israeli people, and that is why Iran must be held accountable for any action it takes that poses a threat to that small, little democracy.

Iran must never obtain a missile capable of delivering a nuclear warhead.

I am pleased the administration announced it would impose sanctions on individuals and companies for providing support to Iran's ballistic missile program. These tests were in clear violation of the United Nations Security Council resolutions. One thing is clear: Iran must continue to be monitored with intense scrutiny.

I remain concerned about Iran's ongoing human rights abuses and political oppression. Iran also remains a state sponsor of terrorism, using its proxies against Israel and against our interests throughout the Middle East.

Congress must accept the critical role we play in providing vigorous oversight of the Iran agreement and Iran's compliance with the agreement, addressing Iran's ballistic missile program and monitoring Iran's actions in the region. This past weekend marked a key step forward to ensuring Iran never gains access to a nuclear weapon. We should always remember that the Iran deal, as it has been called, was to stop Iran from having nuclear weapon capability, and that has been accomplished.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to keep Iran accountable and preserving the national security of both this Nation and our ally, the State of Israel.

SUPREME COURT REVIEW OF IMMIGRATION RULING

Mr. REID. On another subject, Mr. President, this morning the Supreme Court announced its decision to review the Fifth Circuit Court's illogical ruling on President Obama's Executive actions on immigration. It was only a question of time as to when it would come up because the action of the appellate court was so out of line and unprecedented.

I am pleased with the Supreme Court's decision to take a look at this case. The President's Executive actions rely on well-established constitutional authority, and I have full confidence the Constitution will rule that these programs can be implemented.

While I was home recently, I met with undocumented parents of U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents. Instead of having the peace of mind that comes with deferred action, these law-abiding men and women, young and old, continue to live in constant fear of being separated from their families. They must be allowed to vacate the shadows and fully contribute to the country they love and call home.

Mr. President, what is the schedule of the Senate this afternoon?

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be

in a period of morning business until 5 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I see no one else on the floor, so 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. NELSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

DRONES

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, have you ever flown a drone? It used to be that you had to fly helicopters or it used to be that you would fly what we call unmanned aerial vehicles, the ones that have been so helpful to us in the war against terror. That would usually be an Air Force pilot. But now people can go to Best Buy or to Walgreens or to the hobby shop and buy a drone this big. If it is an older model, it would cost \$100. If it is a newer model, it would cost \$500. People can have a lot of fun. As a matter of fact, I can't wait until they finish development of the drones they are testing right now that I can sit on, and then I can go from point A to point B and avoid the red lights and the traffic jams and so forth.

Along with this new technology comes some, certainly, new challenges. So as our commerce committee is approaching work on the FAA bill, the Federal Aviation Administration reauthorization—otherwise, in a couple of months that authorization law expires—we are going to have to address the issue of drones because we have had now a number of near misses of drones.

A study in December came out: 241 near misses. As a matter of fact, the New York area airports clearly had the most with, in this study period, 86, but my State of Florida had both Miami and Orlando with a substantial number. At most of the major metropolitan area airports across the entire country—Los Angeles, 39 near misses, and Chicago and Boston; we can go over the entire country—there is a substantial number.

Another report that came out just at the end of last year pointed out that just in September there were 122 incidents and just in October there were 137 incidents. If a seagull sucked into the jet engines of US Airways could cause the complete loss of power so that Captain Sully Sullenberger—since he couldn't get to an emergency landing in a field—had to put it down in the Hudson River, and if a seagull with flesh and blood and seagull bones and webbed feet sucked into the engines can stall out a jet engine, we can imagine what a drone that you buy at Best Buy this big made of plastic, but with metal parts such as the camera, what that would do, and it is just a matter of time, unless we take action.

Now, I have a picture here. I would like to zero-in on this. This is a drone, the size that I just showed with my arms, flying past a palm tree in my State of Florida. But if that drone goes higher—higher than the FAA limit right now of 400 feet—and gets into the flightpath of an incoming airliner or one that is outbound, then we have a major disaster on our hands.

We want creativity. We want inventiveness. This is a new technology and it is great. Look at what we can do now with aerial photography so we don't have to rent an airplane. Look, however, how it is being used. Did my colleagues know drones are being used to go over a prison wall and deliver contraband? How about the reverse: Getting messages out? So, obviously, the government is going to have to get into it one way or another.

Now, one thing that we could do with this technology is we could require the software to be put in these drones that would prohibit it from getting close to an airport. There is that kind of technology. I suppose we could put the software in it that would prohibit it from getting above a certain altitude. But the question is this: When somebody breaks those limits, how do we go about identifying them? Should there be some kind of registration number? Should there, in fact, even be licensure? We probably don't have to worry about commercial uses such as aerial photography because those users are going to be very careful. However, for the hobbyist or the kid who can now go and purchase a drone, we see the probabilities of an accident waiting to happen.

Now, I don't have the answer. But in the next two months, as we are getting ready on the FAA bill, we are going to have to come up with some answers.

So I raise this issue for the Senate. It is a real problem. We have to face it. We have to address it. We have to prevent these kinds of terrible accidents that can occur if we do nothing.

I intend to do something on the commerce committee.

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

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

FAST ACT

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I want to talk about something that was overlooked late in the year as we passed the surface transportation bill—the highway bill. It was called the Fix America's Surface Transportation Act or the FAST Act. It wasn't very fast.

I am glad to see the President signed the law last month. It is one of the things people understand they can't do

for themselves—along with defending the country—having a transportation system that works and taking advantage of who we are as a nation, being strategically located in as fine a place as you can be to do business, to create jobs and opportunity all over the world.

The FAST Act in my State would provide \$5 billion to Missouri over the next 5 years to improve our roads, bridges, and rail system. That is the amount of money we will send in over the next 5 years. We are either slightly a donee State or slightly a donor State. We might be better off if we kept all the money, but that is not what is happening right now.

We are certainly better off if we know what the highway program looks like for 5 years. An effective transportation plan is good for the country, but it is particularly good where I live. If you look at any map of the river structure of the country or any railroad map of the country or any highway map of the country, a significant part of coming together of all three of those—rail, water, and highways—all happens right where we live.

Because we are the hub of the railway, highway, and water systems, it is very important that we have a system that makes the most of that where we live. When I had a chance to speak to the Missouri House of Representatives in Jefferson City over the first week of the year, I told the Missouri General Assembly that this is a competitive advantage for us, but we need to make the most of it. When we had the highway bill that we have had in the 5 years the Presiding Officer and I have served in the Senate, nobody could rely on anything.

This is the first 5-year bill we have had in 17 years. But before 2009, we just ended a 4-year highway bill. Then, since 2009, we have had 37 short-term extensions of the highway bill. So if there is anything fast about the FAST Act, it certainly wasn't quickly getting to a highway bill that works. The longest of those 37 extensions was 2 years. I think the second longest may have been 6 months. Not only is that no way to build roads and bridges, but it is clearly no way for legislators to have an idea in our home States of how to respond to that plan. By the time you try to figure out how to respond to the plan, how you can maximize it to the advantage of your State—my State or anybody else's—and how we can maximize that plan to our advantage, the plan is over with.

By the time you have a legislative session, look at the plan, the State department of transportation analyzes it, and you start talking about it, the 6-month extension of the highway bill is over—or even the 2-year extension. There are all kinds of studies that indicate a significant loss of what you can buy with the money you are spending if the highway bill is 2 years or less. I think the discount is about 30 percent because people don't bid as competi-

tively as they would bid to be part of those projects. They are not willing to move people to where a major project needs to occur. They cannot buy the equipment and plan to depreciate it out. So you wind up paying a lot more than you would have to pay. That is where we have been since 2009.

The States have been the place where they didn't have any way to maximize a Federal program because the Federal program was gone before they could really calculate how they could most take advantage of it.

So I hope that now we do one of the things that people really expect the government to do—one of the reasons they pay the taxes and one of the reasons the tax for transportation has always been pretty well received. People think: OK, I pay a tax when I fill up my car with gasoline, fill up my car with diesel, fill up my truck with diesel or fill up my truck with fuel. When I do that, I pay a tax and then I use the roads. So that seems fairer to people than most taxes, but we haven't had a system that allowed us to make the most of that.

In our State, 22 percent of the major roads of Missouri are now considered in poor condition. The American Society of Civil Engineers gives us a C, and this is one of the areas where we would want to be an A. If you are a C instead of an A, the average Missouri motorist pays about \$400 more a year in extra maintenance because we are trying to maintain a system that has gotten into poor condition.

Some 44 percent of our highways are congested. Congestion costs motorists a lot of money in just wasted fuel. You don't have to spend much time around Washington in a car to realize how much time you can waste in traffic, but we see that happening more and more all over the country.

In our State we have more bridges than any other State, and they are in among the worst conditions of the country, with 30 percent of our bridges rated as structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. There was just a TIGER grant awarded to replace the Champ Clark Bridge across the Mississippi River, which I believe was built in 1919. If that bridge has to be shut down before it can be replaced or would have been shut down, the detour to get to where that bridge gets you is 75 or 80 miles driving around to where that bridge currently takes people.

We have many bridges in our State that are county bridges; they are not State bridges. I have talked to county commissioners, and one of their principal concerns is this: What about the fund that helps us with our off-system bridges? Senator CASEY and I created a fund to do this in 2012. We added it to the 2012 highway bill. Since then, it has provided about \$775 million annually to States. Out of that State fund, whenever you are part of the off-system road system, the State pays 85 percent of a bridge that the county otherwise in most cases wouldn't be able to replace. We have one county that I think