

So I thank my colleagues for joining me in supporting this legislation to double down on the successes in the U.S.-Mexico partnership. I thank Chairman ROYCE, I thank the sponsors of this bill, I thank Mr. CUELLAR, and I thank all our colleagues for supporting this bill. I urge its immediate passage.

The U.S.-Mexico partnership is one of our most important partnerships, and the House of Representatives ought to be doing everything it can to enhance that relationship, and that is one of the things we are doing by passing this bill today.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to again stress that this is one of America's most important relationships.

I would also like to stress my appreciation for the work of Congressman HENRY CUELLAR not just on this bill, but on the overall relationship with Mexico. I have had the opportunity to work with him in the past. I know his passion on this, and I appreciate his effectiveness.

I thank Representative CASTRO as well, and, of course, the ranking member of this committee, Mr. ENGEL. And I should mention the work, also, of the chairman of our Homeland Security Committee, MIKE MCCAUL. They all worked on the legislation we are considering today.

I think that educational and professional exchanges really allow young American and Mexican students and young professionals the chance to not only experience a new culture for them, but also to ensure that our young people graduate from school and enter the workforce with the skills, the credentials, the experience, and the knowledge also about our neighbors, the knowledge they need in the 21st century.

I urge all of my colleagues to join us in supporting this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE of Texas). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1567, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PREVENTING DESTABILIZATION OF IRAQ ACT OF 2018

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4591) to impose sanctions with respect to Iranian persons that threaten the peace or stability of Iraq or the Government of Iraq, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.
The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4591

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Preventing Destabilization of Iraq Act of 2018".

SEC. 2. IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS WITH RESPECT TO FOREIGN PERSONS THREATENING PEACE OR STABILITY IN IRAQ.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of State should continue to implement Executive Order 13438 (50 U.S.C. 1701 note; relating to blocking property of certain persons who threaten stabilization efforts in Iraq).

(b) IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS.—The President shall impose the sanctions described in subsection (c) with respect to any foreign person that the President determines knowingly commits a significant act of violence that has the direct purpose or effect of—

(1) threatening the peace or stability of Iraq or the Government of Iraq;

(2) undermining the democratic process in Iraq; or

(3) undermining significantly efforts to promote economic reconstruction and political reform in Iraq or to provide humanitarian assistance to the Iraqi people.

(c) SANCTIONS DESCRIBED.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The sanctions described in this subsection are the following:

(A) ASSET BLOCKING.—The exercise of all powers granted to the President by the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) to the extent necessary to block and prohibit all transactions in all property and interests in property of a foreign person determined by the President to be subject to subsection (b) if such property and interests in property are in the United States, come within the United States, or are or come within the possession or control of a United States person.

(B) ALIENS INELIGIBLE FOR VISAS, ADMISSION, OR PAROLE.—

(i) VISAS, ADMISSION, OR PAROLE.—An alien who the Secretary of State or the Secretary of Homeland Security (or a designee of one of such Secretaries) determines is subject to subsection (b) is—

(I) inadmissible to the United States;

(II) ineligible to receive a visa or other documentation to enter the United States; and

(III) otherwise ineligible to be admitted or paroled into the United States or to receive any other benefit under the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.).

(ii) CURRENT VISAS REVOKED.—

(I) IN GENERAL.—Any visa or other documentation issued to an alien who is a foreign person that is described in subsection (b) regardless of when such visa or other documentation was issued, shall be revoked and such alien shall be denied admission to the United States.

(II) EFFECT OF REVOCATION.—A revocation under subclause (I) shall take effect immediately and shall automatically cancel any other valid visa or entry documentation that is in the alien's possession.

(2) PENALTIES.—A person that is subject to sanctions described in paragraph (1)(A) shall be subject to the penalties set forth in subsections (b) and (c) of section 206 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1705) to the same extent as a person that commits an unlawful act described in subsection (a) of that section.

(3) EXCEPTION TO COMPLY WITH UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS AGREEMENT.—Sanctions

under paragraph (1)(B) shall not apply to an alien if admitting the alien into the United States is necessary to permit the United States to comply with the Agreement regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations, signed at Lake Success June 26, 1947, and entered into force November 21, 1947, between the United Nations and the United States, or other applicable international obligations.

(d) WAIVER.—The President may, on a case-by-case basis and for periods not to exceed 180 days, waive the application of sanctions in this section with respect to a foreign person if the President certifies to the appropriate congressional committees at least 15 days before such waiver is to take effect that such waiver is vital to the national security interests of the United States.

(e) IMPLEMENTATION AUTHORITY.—The President may exercise all authorities provided to the President under sections 203 and 205 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1702 and 1704) for purposes of carrying out this section.

(f) REGULATORY AUTHORITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The President shall, not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, promulgate regulations as necessary for the implementation of this section.

(2) NOTIFICATION TO CONGRESS.—Not less than 10 days before the promulgation of regulations under paragraph (1), the President shall notify and provide to the appropriate congressional committees the proposed regulations and the provisions of this section that the regulations are implementing.

(g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

(1) ADMITTED; ALIEN.—The terms "admitted" and "alien" have the meanings given those terms in section 101(3) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(3)).

(2) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term "appropriate congressional committees" means—

(A) the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on the Judiciary, the Committee on Ways and Means, and the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives; and

(B) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate.

(3) FOREIGN PERSON.—The term "foreign person" means a person that is not a United States person.

(4) GOVERNMENT OF IRAQ.—The term "Government of Iraq" has the meaning given that term in section 576.310 of title 31, Code of Federal Regulations, as in effect on June 22, 2016.

(5) KNOWINGLY.—The term "knowingly", with respect to conduct, a circumstance, or a result, means that a person has actual knowledge, or should have known, of the conduct, the circumstance, or the result.

(6) PERSON.—The term "person" has the meaning given that term in section 576.311 of title 31, Code of Federal Regulations, as in effect on June 22, 2016.

(7) PROPERTY; PROPERTY INTEREST.—The terms "property" and "property interest" have the meanings given those terms in section 576.312 of title 31, Code of Federal Regulations, as in effect on June 22, 2016.

(8) UNITED STATES PERSON.—The term "United States person" has the meaning given that term in section 576.317 of title 31, Code of Federal Regulations, as in effect on June 22, 2016.

(h) SUNSET.—This section shall cease to be effective beginning on January 1, 2022.

SEC. 3. DETERMINATION WITH RESPECT TO THE IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS.

(a) DETERMINATION.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall submit to the

appropriate congressional committees a determination, including a detailed justification, on whether Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq, Harakat Hizballah al-Nujaba, Liwa Fatemiyoun, Liwa Zainebiyoun, and any foreign person that is an official, agent, affiliate of, or owned or controlled by Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq, Harakat Hizballah al-Nujaba, Liwa Fatemiyoun, or Liwa Zainebiyoun meets the criteria for—

(1) designation as a foreign terrorist organization pursuant to section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1189);

(2) the application of sanctions pursuant to Executive Order 13224 (50 U.S.C. 1701 note; relating to blocking property and prohibiting transactions with persons who commit, threaten to commit, or support terrorism); or

(3) the application of sanctions pursuant to section 2 of this Act.

(b) ADDITIONAL DETERMINATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State shall include in the determination submitted under subsection (a) an additional determination, including a detailed justification, on whether any of the individuals described in paragraph (2) meets the criteria for the application of sanctions described in paragraph (2) or (3) of subsection (a).

(2) INDIVIDUALS DESCRIBED.—The individuals described in this paragraph are the following:

- (A) Qais al-Khazali.
- (B) Laith al-Khazali.
- (C) Akram Abbas al-Kaabi.
- (D) Shibl al-Zaydi.
- (E) Kazim al-Ta'i.
- (F) Hamid al-Jazairi.
- (G) Ali al-Yasiri.

(c) FORM.—The determination in subsection (a) and the additional determination in subsection (b) shall be submitted in unclassified form but may contain a classified annex.

(d) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(1) the Committee on Armed Services, the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, the Committee on Financial Services, and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives; and

(2) the Committee on Armed Services, the Committee on Foreign Relations, the Select Committee on Intelligence, the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, and the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate.

SEC. 4. WATCHLISTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State shall annually establish, maintain, and publish a list of armed groups, militias, or proxy forces in Iraq receiving logistical, military, or financial assistance from Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps or over which Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps exerts any form of control or influence.

(b) PUBLICATION.—The lists required under subsection (a) shall be published at the same time as the Department of State's Annual Country Reports on Terrorism, beginning with the first such Country Reports published after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(c) FORM.—If the Secretary of State determines that it is appropriate to do so, the Secretary may, not later than 30 days after publication of the Annual Country Reports on Terrorism referred to in subsection (b), submit to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate a classified annex.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from

California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on this measure.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this past September, thousands of Iraqis protested throughout the south of the country calling for Iran to stop meddling in their democracy. Yet, as these protesters shouted out, “Iran out,” their pleas were met with bullets by militias funded by and commanded by Iranians.

This latest bout of violence in Iraq is not surprising. Iran has used the fight against ISIS as an excuse to expand its footprint inside Iraq and to fund tens of thousands of militia forces. Even as ISIS has receded in Iraq, Iranian-backed militias have continued to expand throughout the country and to expand into Syria, where these militias have helped the brutal Assad regime commit countless war crimes.

These Iranian-backed militias not only threaten the Syrian and Iraqi people, they also pose a serious threat to U.S. personnel serving overseas, and I will tell you why.

Mr. Speaker, 2 months ago, one of these militias launched mortars at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, prompting a stern warning from the administration that the U.S. will hold the Iranian regime accountable for any attack by these militias against any U.S. personnel or U.S. Government facility.

These militias also pose a direct threat to Israel. Some have formed a so-called Golan Liberation Brigade, with the explicit intent to attack Israel. The U.N. Ambassador, Nikki Haley, has cited reports alleging that Iran has begun transferring ballistic missiles to these militias that are in Iraq.

Despite all this, many of these Iranian-backed militias have not been designated as terrorist organizations nor are they otherwise subject to U.S. sanctions, despite being affiliates of Iran's Revolutionary Guard. This oversight could allow these militias to access the U.S. financial system.

Mr. Speaker, this bipartisan legislation will allow support and it will bring that support to democracy in Iraq, and it will counter Iran's deadly influence there. This bill is narrowly tailored to go after those militias directly funded and commanded by the IRGC—the same militias that have attacked our soldiers; the same militias that continue to threaten those in the region.

I am pleased that this bill also includes provisions to establish a watch list of Iranian-backed militias in Iraq, which will allow Congress to continually monitor Iran's activity in the country, including new militias which may emerge in the future.

The Iraqi people deserve and want genuine political reform and democracy, and above all else, they want peace. This cannot happen so long as Iran continues to fund and command militias within Iraq.

Empowering Iranian militias is a step backwards for Iraq. Instead, it would introduce the Hezbollah model and all the chaos that goes along with it. Iranian influence will only perpetuate the cycle of violence and increase the sectarian polarization, once again creating the conditions for the reemergence of ISIS, al-Qaida, and other radical Islamist groups.

For all these reasons, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,
Washington, DC, November 27, 2018.

Hon. EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ROYCE: I write with respect to H.R. 4591, the “Preventing Iranian Destabilization of Iraq Act.” As a result of your having consulted with us on provisions within H.R. 4591 that fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on the Judiciary, I forego any further consideration of this bill so that it may proceed expeditiously to the House floor for consideration.

The Judiciary Committee takes this action with our mutual understanding that by foregoing consideration of H.R. 4591 at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over subject matter contained in this or similar legislation and that our committee will be appropriately consulted and involved as this bill or similar legislation moves forward so that we may address any remaining issues in our jurisdiction. Our committee also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this or similar legislation and asks that you support any such request.

I would appreciate a response to this letter confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 4591 and would ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill.

Sincerely,

BOB GOODLATTE,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, November 27, 2018.

Hon. BOB GOODLATTE,
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN GOODLATTE: Thank you for consulting with the Foreign Affairs Committee and agreeing to be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 4591, the Preventing Iranian Destabilization of Iraq Act, so that the bill may proceed expeditiously to the House floor.

I agree that your forgoing further action on this measure does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of your committee, or prejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this bill or similar legislation in

the future. I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees from your committee to any House-Senate conference on this legislation. I will seek to place our letters on H.R. 4591 into the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work together as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,
Washington, DC, November 26, 2018.

Hon. EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ROYCE: I write to you regarding H.R. 4591, the "Preventing Iranian Destabilization of Iraq Act of 2017", which the Committee on Ways and Means has jurisdictional interest.

As a result of your having consulted with us on provisions in H.R. 4591 that fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on Ways and Means, including asset blocking, I agree to waive formal consideration of this bill. The Committee on Ways and Means takes this action with the mutual understanding that we do not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this or similar legislation, and the Committee will be appropriately consulted and involved as the bill or similar legislation moves forward so that we may address any remaining issues that fall within our jurisdiction. The Committee also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this or similar legislation, and requests your support for such request.

I would appreciate your response confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 4591 and ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the Congressional Record during consideration of the bill on the House floor.

Sincerely,

KEVIN BRADY,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, November 27, 2018.

Hon. KEVIN BRADY,
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BRADY: Thank you for consulting with the Foreign Affairs Committee and agreeing to forgo a sequential referral request on H.R. 4591, the Preventing Iranian Destabilization of Iraq Act, so that the bill may proceed expeditiously to the House floor.

I agree that your forgoing further action on this measure does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of your committee, or prejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this bill or similar legislation in the future.

I will seek to place our letters on H.R. 4591 into the Congressional Record during floor consideration. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work together as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman.

□ 1715

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill, and I thank Representatives KINZINGER, POE, and SUOZZI for their bipartisan leadership on this legislation. And, of course, I thank Chairman ROYCE for working with me to get this legislation into shape for the floor.

The vision that Democrats and Republicans have for Iraq is very similar. We all want to see Iraqis work together to provide for a more prosperous future for their country. We want the greatest number of Iraqis to access the wealth of their country's natural resources. We want to see Iraqis focus more on what unites them than what divides them. We want to prevent the resurgence of ISIS and the next generation of ISIS or al-Qaida. We want to protect religious minorities.

That is why it is so important to bring this legislation to the floor today. That is why Republicans and Democrats worked together to find common ground on American policies in Iraq. Especially after the Iraqi election, when it remains unclear which path Iraq will choose, we want to demonstrate to the Iraqi people that we support their efforts to build a better country.

This bill penalizes those who want to exploit Iraq's sectarian differences and those who use violence toward those ends. It also establishes a separate watch list to help keep track of proxy groups in Iraq that are doing the bidding of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

It sends the message that those in power must prioritize answering to the Iraqi people and not to Iran. We hope that this legislation will empower those who seek a better future for Iraq and its people.

I am glad to support H.R. 4591, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KINZINGER). A member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, he is the author of this bill, and his service to our Nation includes the time he spent as an Air Force pilot serving in Iraq and in Afghanistan.

Mr. KINZINGER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding and for his many years of service.

I rise today in strong support of H.R. 4591, the Preventing Destabilization of Iraq of 2018, which I introduced with my colleague, Representative SUOZZI.

Since the toppling of Saddam Hussein, Iran has been working to gain access and influence in Iraq by dismantling American efforts to stabilize the country and the region. It is abundantly clear that Iran is working to gain influence in Iraq to further their radical agenda, and we must do everything in our power to counter their tyrannical regime and provide hope for the Iraqi people.

I am troubled by the growing influence of Iranian-backed Popular Mobilization Forces, which are being set up as a parallel military structure to undermine the Iraqi security forces.

Just this week, we saw the head of a powerful PMF, which would be sanctioned under this legislation, demanding that the Iraqi Government allow these militias to secure the border with Syria. Not only would this legitimize the PMF, but it would also give the Iranians one of their greatest desires, a secure land bridge to supply weapons and troops from Tehran to the Mediterranean.

Over the past few months, we have seen the security situation in Iraq slip further into despair. The U.S. compounds in Baghdad and Basra were attacked by Iranian-backed groups, resulting in the latter shutting its doors.

I believe retreating will only hurt the Iraqis and make the region a more dangerous place, a lesson that we have already learned once.

Following the elections in Iraq this year, we saw Iranian proxies and militias, as well as Iraqis working on behalf of the Iranians, attempting to form a coalition government in Baghdad.

This act, which passed the committee unanimously, would impose sanctions on Iranians or any other person who threatens the peace and stability of Iraq. It will also sanction several terrorist organizations, as well as their leaders, many of which are trained and funded by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps.

Passage of this legislation ensures that the Iranians are not given a free pass to meddle in the affairs of the Iraqi people. I thank all my colleagues for their work on this legislation.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, it is now my pleasure to yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. SUOZZI), an original cosponsor of the bill.

Mr. SUOZZI. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ranking Member ENGEL and Chairman ROYCE for their bipartisan cooperation in this committee, and I thank Representative KINZINGER for his leadership on promoting stability in the Middle East overall.

Mr. Speaker, I stand in support of the bipartisan H.R. 4591, the Preventing Destabilization of Iraq Act of 2018.

At the 2018 United Nations General Assembly, Iranian President Rouhani spoke against foreign interventions and impositions of "alien wishes of the people of the region." Iran's Foreign Minister Javad Zarif complained about countries that support "nonstate actors who wreak havoc through terror." They both might want to look in the mirror.

In Iraq, Iranian-backed militias have committed human rights abuses for years, executing and beating civilians and looting homes. These same militias have taken roles in trying to influence Iraq's nascent political system.

In Iraq's recent elections, IRGC Commander Qasem Soleimani personally meddled in Iraq's political process by coercing Shiite parties with differing views to form a parliamentary majority, one that presumably would favor

Iran's agenda. This, of course, is only one example of Iranian activities across the Middle East.

In Syria, Iranian-backed militias have done their own share of murdering and looting. In Yemen, the Iranian-backed Houthis oppress their own people and fire ballistic missiles at civilians in Saudi Arabia. From Bahrain to Lebanon, Iran has played a destabilizing role.

H.R. 4591 would sanction any foreign person, not just Iranians, conducting significant destabilizing activities in Iraq.

Corruption is endemic and rampant in Iraq's political system. Iraq's long-term stability depends on a representative government that reflects the will of the people.

This bill requires our government to review the status of two of Tehran's proxies in Iran, HHN and AAH, and assess whether the State Department should designate them as foreign terrorist organizations.

By 2011, AAH claimed responsibility for thousands of attacks on U.S. and coalition forces, including the tragic 2007 attack on the Karbala provincial headquarters, which resulted in the execution of four Americans. The group is notorious for its use of explosively formed penetrators, the devastating IEDs that have killed and maimed far too many American troops and civilians.

HHN, a hybrid of fighters from AAH and Hezbollah Brigades of Iraq, played an active role against Americans during the Iraq war, and now in Syria's civil war, boasting of a unit in the Golan Heights targeting Israel.

These groups claim they exist to protect Iraqis, but as the evidence clearly demonstrates, they terrorize their countrymen and innocents across the region.

But these militias are not the only security threat in Iraq. Although the Islamic State has largely been driven from Iraq, the country still faces a myriad of economic and political challenges. Left unaddressed, Iraq could once again destabilize, creating a void for ISIS or other extremists to fill and, once again, throw the region into chaos and turmoil.

This summer, citizens of Basra, Iraq's second largest city, openly protested the corruption and mismanagement that has tainted their water supply and left their electrical grid in tatters. They directed some of their anger at the Iranian-backed militias that have enriched themselves while ordinary Iraqis suffered.

The Iraqi Government cannot provide the services its citizens so desperately need while so much power is controlled by the militias. We need to stand with and aid Iraqis that merely want to root out corruption and malign foreign interference in their internal affairs.

For these reasons, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 4591.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentle-

woman from Florida, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, chairman emeritus of the Foreign Affairs Committee, who chairs the Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman, Chairman ROYCE, and I commend both the Speaker and Ranking Member ENGEL. I am going to miss serving with you, ELIOT, as Chairman ROYCE and I say bye-bye in just a few weeks. But I thank them for always bringing to the floor bipartisan bills that make America a stronger place.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of Mr. KINZINGER's bill, H.R. 4591, the Preventing Destabilization of Iraq Act of 2018. This timely bill will impose sanctions against a multitude of Iranian militias, proxies, terrorist groups, and other nefarious entities that are operating in Iraq. And it makes it clear that the United States will not allow Iran to continue undermining the stability of Iraq.

This bill also includes important language authored by our presiding officer, Judge POE, ensuring that the State Department determines that if certain Iranian-affiliated individuals are operating as terrorists, then they should be designated as terrorists.

It further includes language by our great friend Congressman JOE WILSON of South Carolina, requiring a determination on whether Afghan and Pakistani brigades, under the control of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, should also be designated.

This is common sense, Mr. Speaker. As ADAM KINZINGER knows firsthand, Iran has been working against U.S. interests in Iraq for years, and it is directly responsible for American casualties and is intent on continuing to destabilize Iraq for its own purposes.

We have to ensure that there are penalties for Iran's activities by doing everything that we can to block their proxies' assets, to cut off their funding, and to restrict their travel.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. ROYCE and Mr. ENGEL. As we know, Iraq is a very important partner. This bill prioritizes its stability, and I thank the sponsor, Mr. KINZINGER, for authoring this bill. I encourage all of my colleagues to support it.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This is both a happy and sad moment for me. I am happy because, in the new Congress, I will be in the majority. But I am sad because so many of my friends are retiring, not coming back.

I mentioned my good friend Mr. POE before, and I just want to mention our now Speaker up here, my good friend, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN. We have been working together for more than 25 years in passing all kinds of important legislation involving people's support around the world, making lives a little bit better for people, and working here to promote democracy at home.

I want to have the opportunity to say that this Congress will be missing you.

I know I will be missing you, and I know we will be in touch. You are the kind of Member that we need more of, someone who always reached across the aisle, someone who always worked in a bipartisan manner, and someone who was effective and intelligent. I am just proud to call you my friend. I had to say that.

So I am going to close and say that Iraq is at a crossroads.

We have another speaker? I am sorry. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas, Judge TED POE, chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade.

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I want to reiterate that when the Foreign Affairs Committee meets and makes a decision, we do that almost in unison, Republicans and Democrats, looking out for the best foreign policy of the United States. And Chairman ROYCE and Mr. ENGEL, Chairman ENGEL, will do a great job in leading that effort, as you have done in the past when you were chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

I am proud to support Representative KINZINGER's bill, the Preventing Destabilization of Iraq Act of 2018.

For too long, Iraq has been the center of chaos and instability in the Middle East. While much of this is due to terrorist groups, its expansionist, saber-rattling neighbor to the east also bears enormous responsibility for undermining Iraq's sovereignty and security.

Iran is determined, in my opinion, to make Iraq a puppet state of its tyranny. For years, Iran has armed and financed thousands of Iraqi militia fighters loyal to Tehran to spread its influence and fight its foreign wars. Many of these militiamen have American blood on their hands as well as their own countrymen's.

Earlier this year, Iran's proxies in Iraq seized more seats in Iraq's parliament and used violence to crush anti-Iranian protests.

This legislation codifies crucial authorities to target Iran's destabilizing activity.

□ 1730

The bill also includes parts of my Iranian Proxies Terrorist Sanctions bill, which calls for the designation of two of the deadliest Iraqi militia groups backed by Iran: AAH and HHN.

These killers have attacked Americans, including firing rockets at U.S. diplomatic facilities in Iraq as recently as this past August.

They have participated in Bashar al-Assad's slaughter of the Syrian people and expressed a desire to attack Israel. War is in the mind of the Ayatollah.

We must battle Iran in the arenas it hopes to control. Iraq is one of those key arenas.

This legislation is a step towards confronting Iran's conquest of the Middle East.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote for this important legislation and for the Senate to quickly bring it to the floor to help stop Iran, the world's number one state sponsor of terror, from spreading its violent hate.

And that is just the way it is, Madam Speaker.

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Madam Speaker, it seems like we are playing revolving or musical chairs, but it is so good, because I get to see all my friends from different angles.

Madam Speaker, Iraq is at a crossroads. And as someone who wants to see Iraq succeed in promoting pluralism and tolerance, I support this legislation because it will help Iraqis build a better future.

This bill makes it clear that the United States will not side with those who continue to foment sectarian strife. No matter where you are from, if you undermine the democratic process in Iraq, if you threaten peace and stability there, if you prevent the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the Iraqi people, you will be penalized. That is why this bill is so important.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to pass H.R. 4591 and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleagues for their bipartisan work on this important legislation. This measure will send a clear message to the Iraqi people that the U.S. supports them in their quest for peace and stability and democracy.

Still recovering from the atrocities and desolation left by ISIS, the Iraqi people deserve a chance to establish a stable democracy free of Iranian meddling.

To be clear, these Iranian-backed militias are not just a threat to the Iraqi people. These same militias have launched mortars at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad and continue to threaten Israel. It is well past the time that these militias face justice and accountability for their war crimes.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE of Texas). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4591, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO DEMOCRACY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2018

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and

pass the bill (H.R. 6207) to support democracy and accountability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6207

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Democratic Republic of the Congo Democracy and Accountability Act of 2018”.

SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the Democratic Republic of Congo has historically faced election-related political instability, endemic corruption, armed conflict, gross human rights abuses, and humanitarian crises, which destabilizes the region and causes massive human suffering;

(2) the United States has provided billions of dollars to help stabilize the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including through humanitarian aid, development assistance, and support for peacekeeping operations, since the end of the civil and regional war in 2003;

(3) the stability of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a strategic priority for the United States on the African continent and it is in the national security interest of the United States to support accountable governance in the Democratic Republic of Congo;

(4) United States policy with respect to the Democratic Republic of Congo should focus on helping the country become more stable and democratic, including through supporting legitimate state authority, such that the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo is better able to respond to and provide for the basic needs of its citizens and live in peaceful coexistence with its neighbors;

(5) the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo should comply with all obligations under its Constitution, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ratified on November 1, 1976, and the December 2016 Saint Sylvestre agreement brokered by the Congolese Conference of Catholic Bishops, by—

(A) immediately lifting restrictions on the freedoms of assembly, expression, and association;

(B) releasing all political prisoners, including those detained for peacefully exercising their rights;

(C) ensuring that state security forces protect the rights of peaceful demonstrators;

(D) bringing to justice security force personnel accused of serious abuses against citizens, including against protesters or opposition supporters; and

(E) allowing private media outlets to operate freely;

(6) the United States should continue to support efforts to hold free, fair, and democratic elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including by supporting the completion of an inclusive, transparent voter registration process and civic education, preventing or mitigating violence, and facilitating credible election observation by the African Union, the Southern African Development Community, and other appropriate civil society entities.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS ON HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO.—It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of State, in coordination with the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, should continue to

provide humanitarian and development assistance to the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo through credible and independent nongovernmental organizations, including local partners, human rights organizations, women-led organizations, and faith-based or non-faith-based organizations. In providing such assistance, the Secretary and Administrator should prioritize—

(1) promoting partnerships with organizations that have had a long-term presence in the country and have achieved measurable impact, including by building the capacity of local partners, human rights organizations, women-led organizations, or faith-based or non-faith-based organizations to address local needs;

(A) placing the country on a trajectory toward ending the need for foreign assistance; and

(2) evaluating the comparative merits of grants, cooperative agreements, contracts, and other methods for providing foreign assistance.

(c) SENSE OF CONGRESS ON SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AND CONFLICT MITIGATION MECHANISMS IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO.—It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of State and the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development should—

(1) continue to—

(A) support long-term peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo by strengthening democratic institutions and promoting respect for the rule of law at the national, provincial, and local levels;

(B) support the capacity of civil society actors to promote transparency, accountability, freedom of expression, and anti-corruption efforts;

(C) support conflict prevention and mitigation activities where appropriate, particularly in the Kasai region, the Tanganyika Province, the North and South Kivu Provinces, and the Ituri Province; and

(D) work to address the root causes of chronic violence and fragility, with a focus on youth empowerment, education, and the promotion of justice and accountability mechanisms; and

(2) seek to work directly with and through credible, independent, nongovernmental organizations, including local partners, human rights organizations, women-led organizations, and faith-based or non-faith-based organizations, to—

(A) defend internationally recognized democratic rights;

(B) support freedom of expression, including through media broadcasting;

(C) combat public corruption; and

(D) improve the transparency and accountability of governing institutions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

SEC. 3. SUPPORT FOR EFFORTS AT THE UNITED NATIONS ON THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO.

The President should instruct the Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations to use the voice, vote, and influence of the United States at the United Nations to—

(1) emphasize the importance of implementing the December 2016 Saint Sylvestre agreement to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including the need to lift restrictions on the freedoms of assembly, expression, and association, and the need to conduct free, fair, and democratic elections;

(2) keep the humanitarian and political crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the regular agenda of the United Nations Security Council until the completion of a peaceful transfer of power through free, fair, and democratic elections;