

place, Iran could reach the requisite uranium stockpile in as little as 6 months, if not sooner. Iran is closer today to a nuclear weapon than it was a week or so ago, and certainly it is closer to a nuclear weapon since 2018, when the administration withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. That is one consequence we have to consider. Iran is closer to a nuclear weapon.

No. 2 is ISIS. If the President's October 2019 withdrawal of U.S. forces from Syria and the concurrent abandonment of our Kurdish allies—if that did not create space for the resurgence of ISIS in the Middle East, the President's recent action will almost certainly allow for ISIS to regain a foothold in the region. Just 3 days after the Soleimani strike, the New York Times reported that, and here is the headline, "U.S.-Led Coalition Halts ISIS Fight as it Steels for Iranian Attacks"—halts ISIS fight. NATO has already suspended its operations against ISIS. We have to consider, how does that outcome make us safer?

Next, No. 3, we have to consider what is happening in Iraq. Iraq voted to expel U.S. troops from their country as a result of the strike. If we fully withdraw from Iraq, where are we going to launch counter-ISIS operations in both Iraq and Syria from? How do we do that—from where? Where was the effort to work with the Iraqi Government in quashing Kataib Hezbollah and countering Iranian influence in Iraq? Now that the Iraqi Government opposes U.S. troop presence in its country, what is the plan? How does the administration plan to restart conversations with Iran to negotiate a "better" nuclear deal that will ensure Iran never has a nuclear bomb? How do they restart those negotiations? This strike looks more like another step forward in a policy of regime change rather than a coherent strategy designed to keep our Nation safe by using tough diplomacy and alliance-building to confront Iran.

I have been one of the most determined advocates of being tough on Iran, especially regarding sanctions. Since I came to the Senate in 2007, I have been part of almost every sanctions push in efforts to so-call tighten the screws on the Iranian regime and hold them fully accountable for their actions. All those steps that I have been a part of, and people of both parties have been a part of, were part of a strategy to get the results we saw when the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action was signed.

Now, 2 years and after one particularly dangerous week, President Trump has badly undermined all that progress. The advocates of regime change in Iran are closer than ever to getting the United States into a shooting war with Iran.

The events of the last few weeks remind me of the lead-up to the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003. Across both the House and the Senate, Congress held

only seven hearings that dealt directly with the proposed 2002 authorization for the use of military force to authorize the Iraq war. AUMF is the acronym for that. Are seven hearings, over a period of 3 weeks between the House and the Senate, sufficient discussion and debate prior to voting to go to war with Iraq? No. No, that is not sufficient time and not a sufficient number of hearings.

At last count, 201 Pennsylvanians were killed in Iraq and over 1,200 were wounded. Have we learned from the mistakes of 2002 and 2003 that led to those deaths and all those Pennsylvanians being wounded and many thousands beyond that killed and wounded in the Iraq war? Have we learned? Have we learned those lessons yet? We have a duty—an abiding obligation—not to repeat the mistakes of the past and to constrain the actions of a President who may endanger the lives of U.S. servicemembers and Americans abroad.

Before we get too far down this path, Congress must reassert its constitutional duty to debate and authorize war. Prior to authorizing a strike, we must assess—and I hope the administration did this—whether such an action would have an adverse impact on our national security. Before we march our sons and daughters off to fight another war, we need to make sure we are doing everything possible to prevent the loss of American lives.

I have been clear in opposing a direct confrontation with Iran without—without a clear authorization from Congress. The Trump administration acted without a congressionally approved authorization for the use of military force last week. That is why I and many others have cosponsored Senator TIM KAINE's bipartisan S.J. Res. 68 to prevent the President from going to war with Iran without congressional authorization. If you want to go to war with Iran, you ought to be compelled to vote for it, up or down—vote for or against as a Member of Congress. Specifically, this resolution, S.J. Res. 68, requires the President to "terminate the use of the United States Armed Forces for hostilities against the Islamic Republic of Iran or any part of its government or military unless explicitly authorized by a declaration of war or a specific authorization for the use of military force" as enacted by Congress. Nothing in this resolution prevents the United States from "defending itself against imminent attack." Those are the exact words.

It is authorization or declaration before you go to war with Iran. I think a lot of Americans—most Americans—believe that is not just the right thing to do but that is our duty, no matter who is President.

When the administration fails to brief Congress on threats we face and concurrently takes unilateral actions that could lead to all-out war, we must act quickly and decisively to prevent further escalation and demand a strategy. We owe it to Pennsylvanians, and

we owe it to all Americans, especially our men and women in uniform and their families, to engage in a substantial, robust public debate on what engaging in hostilities with Iran would mean for U.S. national security and how it could endanger American lives. The House vote of last Thursday was to reassert this congressional authority, and the Senate will vote this week. I urge a vote in support of S.J. Res. 68, which has several bipartisan cosponsors.

This is a dark time, and I cannot overstate my level of concern. I know that concern is shared widely here in Congress but also across the country. As to Iran, we are headed down a path to war, one which could be more bloody, more complicated, and more protracted than any in my lifetime. We have been walking down this path since President Trump pulled out of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Every week since, we are a little closer to an armed conflict, and the events of these past weeks have likely turbocharged the dangerous path we are on.

Going back to the time of the Vietnam war and thereafter, elected leaders of both political parties have lied to the American people. The American people were told we were making progress, when we weren't. The American people were told that insurgencies were in their "last throes," when the opposite was true. The American people demand that politicians don't make serious mistakes that lead to war.

The good news is, we still have time. We have time to get it right. We have time to engage in hard-nosed diplomacy. We have time to reject a policy of regime change regarding Iran. There is time for this administration to outline and implement an effective Iran strategy that substantially reduces the likelihood of war in a nuclear-armed Iran, but time is running short.

The administration may be committed to a policy of regime change, but the Senate can act. We can pass the bipartisan S.J. Res. 68 and other measures to make sure this administration cannot take us recklessly to war with Iran without congressional authorization or a declaration of war. We owe it to the American people and to our servicemembers to do this.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CHINA TRADE DEAL

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, over the past few months, we have spent a great deal of time in this Chamber discussing our adversarial relationships with other countries, but

today I want to draw attention to a truly great economic and foreign policy victory negotiated with one of our adversaries. In fact, it was signed just a few hours ago.

When it comes to trade, we have devoted most of our energy to drafting and promoting the benefits of the USMCA, but we have also gotten a great start on two other trade deals—those that were negotiated with Japan that went into effect January 1 and also with China, signed today. We are looking forward to this Chamber passing the USMCA this week and sending it to the President's desk.

Back home in Tennessee, what I hear from our agriculture community is, we want trade—consistent, dependable, respectful, and fair trade. Entrepreneurs depend on consistent, productive trade relations to keep their businesses up and running and to put food on their employees' tables.

These Tennesseans play a special role in the U.S. relationship with China. In 2017, we exported \$2.7 billion worth of goods to China. That is from the State of Tennessee. Imports from China accounted for 7.3 percent of Tennessee's GDP in 2018. They are our third largest trading partner, after Canada and Mexico.

Let me tell you, when things go south with the Chinese, Tennesseans feel the heat because of our ag trade. They are really paying attention to the ins and outs of our dealings with China, the good and the bad. They see the news stories about China's behavior in Hong Kong and Taiwan, about spying, about intellectual property theft, and about those shady apps that children have probably downloaded onto their phones and their tablets. Yes, indeed, they are rightfully concerned. They are concerned because they see all of this in the context of their day-to-day lives, and they know that diplomatic tensions have just as much potential to derail their operations as economic tensions.

Make no mistake—today's signed deal with China is critical because it couples desperately needed relief with backstops that will help to keep our friends in Beijing in line. What does that look like? China agreed to increase purchases of American products and services by at least \$200 billion over the next 2 years, which will reduce our trade deficit and take care of our farmers, our energy producers, and our manufacturers. They committed to reducing nontariff barriers to agriculture products and ease restrictions on the approval of new biotechnology.

American producers are covered in terms of free-flowing goods and when it comes to the nuts and bolts of the business of innovation. The phase one deal includes stronger Chinese legal protections for patents, trademarks, and copyrights. We wrote in improved criminal and civil procedures to combat online infringement and the exchange of pirated and counterfeit goods. These are good signs for our cre-

ative community in Tennessee. It contains commitments by China to follow through on pledges to eliminate pressure on foreign companies to transfer technology to Chinese firms before they are given market access.

I will tell you, we are going to be keeping an eagle eye on this one as we move to the phase two negotiations. It also includes new pledges by China to refrain from competitive currency devaluations and exchange rate manipulation. All of this is covered by enforcement measures U.S. officials can trigger if we discover Beijing is acting in bad faith.

I will tell you, so many in our agriculture community have said of these enforcement mechanisms that this is what is going to make a difference in their ability to count on trade. Now, these protections are more than just an ace up our sleeve; it is peace of mind for every American who depends on trade to support their family.

So phase one is in the books. What is next? More of the nuts and bolts that I just talked about.

If you have been following the past few years of our relations with China, you know that businesses trying to deal with Beijing run the constant risk of losing control over their own inventions. Intellectual property theft and forced technology transfers have defined China's relationship with foreign businesses. This is what they complain about. They steal those inventions and sometimes actually beat them or match them moving into the marketplace.

In phase two, we will be negotiating a deal that ensures participation in the Chinese market is not dependent on these unbalanced arrangements. Our efforts will be backed by previously passed legislation that enhanced our controls on the export of new technology—like advanced robotics and artificial intelligence—and strengthened reviews of foreign investment in the United States. We know it is an uphill battle. We certainly believe it can be done.

I want to make it clear that no trade deal is ever going to be perfect. It is impossible. However, the first phase of this is a good, solid first step. We are taking care of our producers, taking care of our workers, and opening up the flow of goods and services. We are protecting our innovators in a way that will allow them to prospect in one of the globe's most competitive markets without risking the loss of their intellectual property. We are giving business owners and families peace of mind in the form of enforcement mechanisms that will kick in the moment officials determine our relationship with China is about to go off the rails.

Today, our President signed this deal on behalf of the American people, and I encourage my colleagues to get involved now as we move forward with discussions for phase two.

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

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

UNITED STATES-MEXICO-CANADA AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 406, H.R. 5430.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 406, H.R. 5430, a bill to implement the Agreement between the United States of America, the United Mexican States, and Canada attached as an Annex to the Protocol Replacing the North American Free Trade Agreement.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is not debatable.

The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the title of the bill.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 5430) to implement the Agreement between the United States of America, the United Mexican States, and Canada attached as an Annex to the Protocol Replacing the North American Free Trade Agreement.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. In accordance with section 151 of the Trade Act, there will now be 20 hours of debate equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

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

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

PUERTO RICO

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, a lot is happening right now across our country and in Washington, DC, and in the House and the Senate—and across the globe, for that matter. There are a lot of issues. There is one that has not received the attention it should, which is about a group of Americans who have suffered enormous calamity in the last few days who deserve our attention and our focus.

I am speaking, of course, about the devastation in Puerto Rico. Seismologists report that over 1,200 tremors, earthquakes, and aftershocks have struck the island since January 1. More