

Iran went to a breakout time of 2 to 3 months to a breakout time under the agreement of more than a year, to, today, a breakout time of 2 months—arguably less than the breakout time prior to the deal.

But it is important to also note that during these last 4 years, none of Iran's other malevolent activities in the region have abated. In fact, arguably, they have gotten worse. Iran continues to support proxy armies in Syria, Yemen, Lebanon. In fact, their connection with Hezbollah in Lebanon and with the Houthis in Yemen is probably stronger today than it was during the JCPOA.

After President Trump backed out of the JCPOA, Iran restarted attacks on U.S. troops. Now, Iran has been engaged in permanent destabilizing activities in Iraq since the outset of that war, but during the period of time that we were in the JCPOA, they were not shooting directly at U.S. troops. Their proxy armies had stood down. Once we were outside of the JCPOA, those attacks started again. In fact, one rocket that was sent by a proxy army at a U.S. staff base in Iraq could have killed 100 U.S. troop members. It just narrowly missed.

The Iranians have undertaken attacks against the Saudis that they never would have contemplated while the JCPOA was in effect, taking action against Saudi oil facilities, including a high-profile attack against Saudi Aramco.

And their proxy armies, similarly, are firing at our friends in the Gulf. Just in the last few months, we have seen an increased level of drone attacks and missile attacks against Saudi Arabia and the UAE from inside Yemen.

One of my Republican colleagues here in this body claimed that Trump's Iran policy had "restored deterrence." That is a laughable proposition because it did exactly the opposite. Once we got out of that agreement, Iran started their nuclear research program to the point that it is stronger than it was prior to the JCPOA in some ways. They didn't stop any of their other destabilizing activity. It got worse, and they didn't come back to the table.

The whole point of the critics of the Obama policy was that if we had just kept on applying sanctions, Iran would come to the table on everything. Trump tried it. It didn't work. Iran didn't come to the table on anything.

Their actions in the region, their actions against the United States, their nuclear research program just got more serious and worse.

Listen, diplomacy is not weakness. News flash: Occasionally there are diplomatic agreements that are in the best interests of the United States, and the JCPOA was inarguably one of them. The data tells a clear story.

Iran wasn't a good actor during the JCPOA. They were still engaged in all sorts of deleterious activity. But Donald Trump inherited the ability to use

that coalition that was built to build the JCPOA to take on that other activity. He inherited a nuclear research program which was controlled, and he threw it all away.

What is interesting is that many of our allies who were very skeptical of the JCPOA when it was signed are now very supportive of the United States reentering it. It tells you that they see the same story that I am telling you.

Our Gulf allies, who were among the most vocal opponents of the JCPOA in 2014 and 2015, sent out a joint statement urging "a mutual return to full compliance of the JCPOA." This was a deal that the Gulf nations opposed, and they now support the United States entering back into it.

And a cavalcade of Israeli officials—former intelligence and defense officials who can now feel freer to speak about their personal views—have been equally clear about the need to get back into this agreement.

Tamir Pardo was the former director of Mossad. For 5 years he directed the Mossad. He said:

What happened in 2018 was a tragedy. It was an unforgivable strategy, the fact that Israel pushed the United States to withdraw from the agreement 10 years early. It was a strategic mistake.

Amos Yadlin, the former chief of the IDF military intelligence unit, a job he held for 4 years, said: "If we want to be honest, what postponed Iranian progress towards achieving nuclear weapons was the nuclear agreement—and not military action. . . . [Iran is] closer now than they have ever been before. And that is because of the very wrong policy . . ." of withdrawing from the agreement.

Gadi Eisenkot, former IDF chief of staff said that "the fact that the U.S. withdrew in 2018 from the . . . deal released Iran from all restrictions and inspections in the deal, even if there were holes [in the agreement], and brought Iran to the most advanced position today with regard to its nuclear program."

And so, so many of our friends in the region see the need to get back into this agreement. The status quo is not acceptable.

Now, it is not going to be easy because there are elements of Iran's progress in nuclear research that are difficult, if not impossible, to undo given how much new research, how many advanced centrifuges they have built since President Trump left the agreement.

And, quite frankly, there are some sanctions that we have applied to Iran since the nuclear agreement that we aren't going to release, because we told the Iranians and the world that we were going to apply sanctions to Iran relevant to their ballistic missile program and their support for terrorist organizations, and we did that—some of them under President Trump. Those aren't going to go away.

But it is important for the Biden administration to see that many of the

sanctions that Trump put in place during that period of time may have sounded good, but they had no impact on Iranian behavior.

I would put on that list the sanctioning of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard and the sanctioning of the Supreme Leader. These aren't good people, but those sanctions didn't change Iran's behavior for the better. In fact, during that period of time, their behavior got worse. Their nuclear research program became more advanced. And so, if releasing those designations or sanctions are required in order to make the world safer and get Iran back into the nuclear box, then I hope the administration will give serious consideration.

I hope the administration understands the vital importance of getting back into this agreement and being willing to do the tough things in order to achieve a new nuclear agreement with the Iranians.

The Iranians are going to have to make concessions as well. The Iranians are going to have to make some serious changes to their current scope of nuclear research. But it is the only way to unlock sanctions relief for a country that badly needs it. There is no way for the current President of Iran to make good on all the promises he made without the sanctions relief.

But time is of the essence. Time is of the essence. President Biden promised to restart diplomacy with Iran to make the world a safer place by getting back into a nuclear agreement. This is the moment to do it, and I would urge the administration to take all of the smart steps necessary in order to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, making the region and the world a safer place.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PETERS). The Senator from Connecticut.

ORDER OF BUSINESS—MOTION TO DISCHARGE

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I yield back all time on the motion to discharge.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Duly noted.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the following nomination: Calendar No. 362, Homer L. Wilkes, to be Under Secretary of Agriculture for Natural Resources and Environment; that the cloture motion be withdrawn; that the Senate vote on the nomination without any intervening action or debate; that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the RECORD; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Homer L. Wilkes, of Mississippi, to be Under Secretary of Agriculture for Natural Resources and Environment.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Wilkes nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

TRIBUTE TO DAVID FERRIERO

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, it is appropriate to take a moment here in the Senate to recognize David Ferriero, the 10th Archivist of the United States. Mr. Ferriero has held the top position at the National Archives since 2009, overseeing the maintenance and preservation of critical documents like the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, along with 10 million maps, 13 million pages of text, and tens of millions of photographs. On January 13, 2022, Mr. Ferriero announced his intention to retire in April.

Prior to his nomination and confirmation to be Archivist of the United States, David Ferriero spent decades as a librarian and library administrator for some of the largest research institutions and public library networks. After service in the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam war, Mr. Ferriero worked as a librarian at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology for over three decades. In 1996, he moved to North Carolina, where he served as the vice provost for library affairs at Duke University, where he helped to develop the Triangle Research Library Network to facilitate greater access to research materials and collaboration across universities. Later, Mr. Ferriero was appointed the Andrew W. Mellon director and chief executive of the research libraries of the New York Public Library system.

David Ferriero was nominated by President Obama and confirmed to be Archivist of the United States by the Senate in November 2009. Throughout his tenure as the leader of the National Archives, Mr. Ferriero made it his goal to bring the Archives and its vast range of historical records into the 21st century. He focused on digitizing the Archives' materials and improving availability of these materials online so that more Americans could access and benefit from these primary source records. Under his leadership, the Na-

tional Archives also embraced social media and worked hard to bring more Americans into the creation, organization, and maintenance of our Nation's history and records.

The documents and records maintained by the National Archives reflect the foundation and continuing story of our democracy and our Nation. They outline and define the evolution of the United States, documented throughout the pages of history, and preserved at the Archives as original source material. At this critical juncture in our endless march toward a more perfect union, our history becomes even more instructive.

Mr. Ferriero's commitment to making our Nation's archives more open and more available to all of us is to be commended and will be a hallmark of his tenure as the Archivist of the United States. I wish Mr. Ferriero and his wife, Gail, all the best in the next chapter of their lives.

I ask unanimous consent that a profile of Mr. Ferriero, appearing in *The Washington Post* on January 13, 2022, be printed in the *RECORD*.

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

[From the *Washington Post*, Jan. 13, 2022]

DAVID S. FERRIERO, ARCHIVIST OF THE UNITED STATES, IS RETIRING
(By Michael E. Ruane)

David S. Ferriero, who has been the archivist of the United States for more than a decade under three presidents, is planning to retire in April.

Ferriero, 76, has been head of the National Archives and Records Administration since he was appointed by President Barack Obama and confirmed by the Senate in 2009.

"It has been the honor of a lifetime," Ferriero wrote in a note to his staff Wednesday. "My time here has been filled with opportunities, challenges, and awesome responsibilities. . . . I am humbled and awestruck and so deeply grateful—grateful to all of you."

In addition to housing national treasures such as the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, the National Archives holds 13 billion pages of text, 10 million maps, charts and drawings, as well as tens of millions of photographs, films and other records.

The archives is also responsible for the nation's 13 brick-and-mortar presidential libraries.

Before coming to the agency, Ferriero was director of the New York Public Libraries and served in top positions at the libraries of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Duke University. A native of Beverly, Mass., he served as a Navy hospital corpsman during the Vietnam War.

A self-described introvert, he is reserved and has a dry sense of humor. On his watch in 2014, the National Archives held its first sleepover.

He has pushed the digitization of the archives, and he embraced social media. In November, he noted in a blog post, "We know that not everyone can come to our facilities [for research] and providing these records online democratizes access."

He has also promoted the role of "citizen archivists" who volunteer to transcribe and review historic documents online.

"I have met or known half of all Archivists of the United States . . . and none has done

better" than Ferriero, historian Michael Beschloss tweeted.

One of the items framed in Ferriero's office is a copy of a letter he wrote to President John F. Kennedy when he was in high school. The letter had been found at the Kennedy Presidential Library in Boston.

The future archivist asked about the Peace Corps and requested a photo of JFK.

Later, the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library found two letters Ferriero had written to President Eisenhower as a youngster, and the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library found one he had written to President Johnson. Ferriero had them framed in his office, too.

In 2020, the National Archives faced criticism when it posted in its headquarters building an exhibit with a picture that had been altered to blur out words suggesting criticism of President Donald Trump.

The large color photograph, designed to celebrate the centennial of women's suffrage, showed a massive protest crowd on Pennsylvania Avenue during the Women's March on Jan. 21, 2017, the day after Trump's inauguration. The original photo had been altered to obscure some words on signs held by marchers.

A placard that proclaimed "God Hates Trump" had "Trump" blotted out so that it read "God Hates." A sign that read "Trump & GOP—Hands Off Women" had the word "Trump" blurred out.

Less than 24 hours after *Washington Post* reporter Joe Heim pointed out the alterations, the National Archives apologized.

"We made a mistake," it said in a statement. "As the National Archives of the United States, we are and have always been completely committed to preserving our archival holdings, without alteration."

"We were wrong to alter the image," it said. "We apologize, and will immediately start a thorough review of our exhibit policies and procedures so that this does not happen again."

The altered picture was removed and replaced with an unaltered one.

"Our credibility, so important to our mission, understandably has been questioned," Ferriero wrote on his blog. "I take full responsibility for this decision and the broader concerns it has raised . . . [and] pledge to restore public confidence in this great institution."

The National Archives is headquartered in a massive 84-year-old granite and limestone landmark on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington's Federal Triangle. A "temple to American history," Ferriero called it.

The agency also has a large, more modern complex in College Park, Md.

Deputy Archivist Debra Steidel Wall will serve as acting archivist until the president nominates and the Senate confirms a successor.

"It is not easy to leave you with our important work continuing, especially initiatives to foster equity and enhance the employee and customer experiences," Ferriero told his staff. "However, our profession is one of stewardship, where despite our enduring responsibilities, we are here for what amounts to a brief period of time."

RECOGNIZING LANDMARK MAPLE WOODCRAFT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the holiday season having just passed is a wonderful reminder that the products of many small, local businesses often make the best gifts. I would like to take some time today to highlight Maple Landmark Woodcraft, a