

U.S. Senate, I want you to know that you are loved; I want you to know that your grandmother in Heaven, that your daughter as she grows, that your parents and all of us who love you, we recognize you, we celebrate you, and we thank you for showing a level of patriotism that is the core of what we have talked about for years—that patriotism is love of country and you cannot love your country unless you love—truly love—all your country men and women.

Thank you, Sarah, for 13 years of service. Thank you for loving and living so large. Thank you for making an indelible difference in your service to the U.S. Senate.

SENATE PAGES

Mr. President, I want to note something to you, sir. The pages that are serving right now—they seem great. They have been here for, what, 10 days, sir? I don't know if you recognize the fact, though, that as admirably and deserving, as kind and generous as they are, they are kind of half-pages because they are not taking class. They are classless pages. I would like the RECORD of the Senate to remark that they have no class. I mean that in a literal sense. I mean, they are very polite people. But I just wanted to add that into the RECORD, today, sir.

Do you agree, Mr. President? Without objection, I would like to make that known.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. I think it is well known that they are here without class.

Mr. BOOKER. Yes.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

IRAN

Mr. Kaine. Mr. President and to all here, I rise today to speak about the breaking news that the President has entered into a memorandum of understanding with Iran to end the war he started on February 28.

The news has included a release from the White House of a memorandum of understanding with Iran about the end to the war. We in the Senate have not been briefed on this. We have received news accounts from journalists that have the terms of the memorandum. But the White House has confirmed that those terms are accurately reported.

So I want to rise today and take some time to analyze the memorandum, what we know about it but also what we don't know about it since there are some agreements that are still needing to be forthcoming in the next 60 days.

First, I want to tell everyone how we got here. The United States and Iran have been engaged in a back-and-forth sort of war attrition against each other since about the 1950s. The sad reality is we were friends; we were allies in World War II. The Iranian people loved the United States because the United States helped guarantee their independent sovereignty and borders at a

conference in Tehran that took place in the middle of World War II.

But for some reason that is just so tragic to contemplate, the United States decided to topple the democratic elected Government of Iran in 1953 and install a dictatorship over the Iranian people. That then led to intense resentment of the United States.

When the Iranian people overthrew the dictatorship in 1979, those who took control of Iran were hardliners. They hated the United States because of this 26-year dictatorship that they suffered under. And since that moment in 1979, it has been back and forth between our two nations.

Iran invaded our Embassy, violating international law, and held dozens of Americans hostage for 400-plus days. The United States funded Iraq to wage a war against Iran in which hundreds of thousands of Iranians were killed.

Iran funded proxy terror groups that bombed the U.S. Marine barracks and Embassy in Beirut, killing hundreds of Americans. The United States shot down an Iranian commercial aircraft in 1989, killing nearly 300 Iranian civilians.

The United States invaded both of Iran's next door neighbors to topple their governments. Iran then funded proxy groups to attack U.S. soldiers in their region.

We have been back and forth, the United States and Iran, sadly—beginning as friends—since the 1953 decision of the United States to topple the Iranian Government. If more war with Iran were the answer, we would have found it a long time ago.

So I took to the floor of the Senate immediately after the President started this war to say the war was illegal because he had not consulted with Congress before waging it, the war was foolish because 25 years of war in the Middle East should have taught us something, and the war was likely to lead to very, very significant negative consequences for the United States. That has, in fact, happened. Fourteen U.S. troops have lost their lives. We have spent probably already in excess of \$50 billion in taxpayer money to prosecute this war, and we have a huge bill still to pay, both to reconstitute infrastructure that Iran has attacked in the region and replenish munition stocks that have been depleted. Thousands of civilians in Iran, including schoolchildren, have been killed during this campaign.

I am very thankful that we found an off-ramp to this war. Even though the war was illegal and stupid and foolish and destructive, finding an off-ramp is a good thing. So I am happy that the administration has negotiated an end to the war, and I pray that the negotiation and the end to the war will hold.

But I want to remind everybody who is paying attention to this that there was a different path, and it was a path of diplomacy.

President Obama, in his first term—but it really began more in his second

term—determined that 50 years of hostilities between the United States and Iran was just too much and we needed to find a path forward in the relationship.

We don't have a magic wand to wave to make the Iranian Government a good government, a nondictatorial government, we can't affect completely how Iran treats its people, but we can start to find some path to start building some kind of a relationship after war being a constant essentially since 1953.

And so President Obama and his team, especially Secretary of State John Kerry and Secretary of Energy Ernie Moniz, worked over the course of many years to find an Iranian nuclear deal to control Iran's nuclear ambitions.

That deal, the runup to the deal was announced in late 2013, and between 2013 and 2015, when the deal was finalized, the administration briefed us repeatedly—I am on the Foreign Relations Committee, I am on the Armed Services Committee—from the very announcement that “we are going to try to find a deal” to the deal being finalized 2 years later, dozens of dozens of briefings with administration officials, visits to the region to talk to nations in the region, allied nations, European nations about the deal and, finally, the deal was done.

And that deal controlled Iran's nuclear ambitions peacefully, without a single bomb being dropped, without a single school being destroyed, without a single schoolchild being killed—the United States in our best tradition. In our best tradition, we are a diplomatic nation.

Teddy Roosevelt won the Nobel Prize for helping broker the end of the Russo-Japanese war, and since then many Nobel Prizes have gone to Americans, American leaders, not just Presidents but diplomats like Ralph Bunche and others for putting the United States forward as a diplomatic nation, and that nuclear deal with Iran, though not perfect—few deals are perfect—and though not covering all aspects of Iranian bad behavior, finally, got the United States and Iran in the same room where they could communicate and hopefully find a path to get out of a state of back-and-forth war that essentially had been constant since 1953.

When Donald Trump became President in 2017, he said he wanted to destroy the Obama nuclear deal. I am convinced the President didn't understand the deal. I am convinced he wanted to destroy the deal for one reason, President Barack Obama, who is opening his Presidential library in Chicago today.

Donald Trump wanted to destroy it because President Barack Obama had done it. That was the only thing he understood about the deal, and that was all he needed to know about the deal.

And so he set out to do what no American President had ever done. The United States has never backed out of

diplomatic deals before. Other nations do, but we lead diplomatic deals; we don't shatter them.

President Trump was told by his first Secretary of Defense Gen. Jim Mattis, courageous Marine general: Don't back out of this deal. Don't back out of the deal. His own Secretary of Defense.

President Trump was told by his first Secretary of State Rex Tillerson: Don't back out of this deal. Don't back out of it. President Trump's top two National Security Advisors told him: Maintain the deal. He ignored them. He ignored them.

I visited allies throughout the region and around the world. They said this deal is working. Iran is complying with it. Iran is not magically transformed into a working democracy or a nation that respects human rights, but we have controlled their nuclear program. And we have other tools to control other aspects of their bad behavior that we are free to use. Don't get out of this deal.

But President Trump tore up the deal. He tore up the deal early into his first-term Presidency, despite all the advice that he shouldn't. Many of us in the Senate said: If you tear up this deal and make diplomacy impossible, you will make war inevitable. American troops are likely to die if you destroy diplomacy.

And that has now proven to be true. We told President Trump something else: If you take a nuclear deal that is working and tear it up, North Korea will back away from the table in nuclear negotiations because why would they agree to enter into a nuclear agreement with the United States if the United States would just walk out of a deal that was working?

And we have essentially been correct in that because there has been no meaningful forward progress on nuclear negotiations with North Korea since Donald Trump made the foolish decision to tear up that deal.

The reasons they asserted for tearing up the deal were very vague at the time: It doesn't go far enough. Obama was a disaster. The deal was a disaster.

His officials would come before the committees, and we would ask them basic questions about the deal. I remember once asking a Trump national security nominee who was trashing the deal: Have you even read the first page of this deal? Tell me what is on the first page of the deal—on the first page. The official could not.

All they knew is we have got to get rid of this because President Obama did it, and this Nation and the region have suffered as a result. And, OK, so now, now we have a new deal announced by President Trump, this memorandum of understanding.

And what I want to do for the next few minutes is compare the deal that Donald Trump tore up with the memorandum of understanding that he has just announced.

Let's start with the most important thing, what I call the forever promise.

Both Presidents Obama and Trump wanted a forever promise that Iran would not get nuclear weapons. That was kind of like the headline. Other things are really important details, but both have said Iran cannot get a nuclear weapon.

Let me read from page 1 of the JCPOA, the deal that President Obama and his administration negotiated. Page 1:

Iran reaffirms that under no circumstances will Iran ever seek, develop, or acquire any nuclear weapons.

That is a forever promise.

"[U]nder no circumstances will Iran ever seek, develop, or acquire any nuclear weapons."

Donald Trump tore up a forever promise. What is the language in the memorandum that has just been announced? It is point 8 of the memorandum.

Iran reaffirms that it shall not procure or develop nuclear weapons.

Now, you might read these things and say: Well, they are basically the same, but notice the difference in the language.

In the JCPOA, "[U]nder no circumstances will Iran ever seek, develop, or acquire any nuclear weapons." The reference is to today, but it is to the infinite future, ever, under no circumstances, any weapons. All of that language is out in point 8 in the memorandum.

Iran reaffirms it shall not [produce] or develop nuclear weapons.

An English teacher can tell us whether those two phrases mean the same thing, but the JCPOA language talks about "forever," and the Trump MOU does not.

Why did Donald Trump tear up the forever promise? Why did Donald Trump prefer going to war than getting a forever promise to avoid war and save lives and save taxpayer money?

Now, the deal and the JCPOA have other terms as well, and I want to walk through them with you. I am walking through terms.

On the left, you see the JCPOA. This is the deal that the Obama administration negotiated in 2015. And the MOU refers to the 14-point memorandum that was released yesterday by the Trump administration.

Limitation on centrifuges that used to enrich uranium: The JCPOA had significant limitations on centrifuges; the MOU has none.

Now, to be fair, the MOU says we are going to continue to negotiate for 60 days, and that period can be extended by mutual agreement, but the deal that Donald Trump tore up had limitations on centrifuges and the memorandum that he signed at Versailles yesterday does not.

How about limitations on enrichment? Centrifuges are just machines that are designed to enrich uranium, but what about actual limitations on the enrichment of uranium?

Well, the JCPOA, negotiated over the course of many years, had significant

limits on Iran enriching uranium. The memorandum of understanding, who knows? There are no limits in the memorandum. There is an agreement to keep talking for the next 60 days or potentially to extend it, but as of now, this MOU contains no limitations on the enrichment of uranium.

How about limitations on research? Research into nuclear weapons is a key component of any nuclear program, to do the research to know how to convert enriched uranium into a weapon and a weapon that can be delivered via some system to impose damage on military and civilian targets.

The JCPOA that Donald Trump tore up, the forever promise that he tore up, had very significant limitations on Iran doing nuclear research. The memorandum of understanding has no limitations.

Now, it may be that there will be agreements about limitations in the next 60 days, but as of now, there are none.

How about the destruction of uranium? When the JCPOA was done, Iran had a stockpile of enriched uranium, so even if you limit enrichment, well, what do you do with the stockpile? What do you do with the stockpile of uranium that can be used for a nuclear weapon? In the JCPOA, Iran agreed to destroy its stockpile of enriched uranium, and that meant that when Donald Trump became President, Iran had precisely zero kilograms of enriched uranium.

Well, what does the memorandum that Donald Trump has put before us, that he signed at Versailles, what does it say about uranium destruction? It does not compel uranium destruction. It is not even a question mark like we don't know for the next 60 days.

What the MOU says about enriched uranium is that Iran agrees to downblend its enriched uranium. And what that means is, you take uranium that has been enriched to a high percentage of 60 percent or north that is much more able to quickly be converted into weapons grade, and then you dilute it backward, downblending it backward with the addition of non-uranium materials so that the enrichment level is lower, but they haven't agreed to destroy it. And there is a problem with that. Anybody who downblends uranium can then spin it back up to the enriched level.

And so, in this particular area, it is not even a question mark what the MOU does. What the MOU requires is not the destruction of the enriched uranium but a downblending of the uranium that can be reconstituted to weapons grade. Why would we have accepted that?

Finally, one of the most important parts of any agreement with Iran is inspections because just because somebody says they are going to do something, you don't know that they are going to do something. They might lie. And Iran has lied and Iran has cheated and other nations have, too, when it comes to their nuclear programs.

There is a famous example. The United States many, many decades ago got into a nuclear agreement with North Korea, and North Korea hid activities. And so the international agency that monitors nuclear weaponry and material around the world, the International Atomic Energy Agency based in Vienna, they had already developed an inspection protocol that North Korea was following, but they were end running it by hiding stuff. And so the IAEA had to develop something called the additional protocol that means we have to do these additional steps to make sure we catch cheating.

The JCPOA mandated the most intrusive inspections of the world for Iran—the normal protocol of inspections, but Iran also agreed in the JCPOA, as a forever promise, this did not have an expiration date on it, to allow the more intrusive inspections mandated under the additional protocol written by the IAEA, precisely to catch nations that would be prone to cheat.

Well, what about the MOU and inspections? We don't know. We are going to agree to talk for the next 60 days or maybe longer, but the MOU has no guarantee about inspecting the Iranian regime's nuclear activities, a regime that has cheated in the past and will cheat again if we don't have a significant inspection regime.

So the forever deal that Donald Trump tore up had all of these provisions in it. And by tearing up the forever promise, he put us on a path that one day was going to lead to war and the death of American troops.

And what have we gotten in return? We don't know. We don't know. We don't know. We don't know. And we will get uranium downblending, not uranium destruction.

All right. Let's keep looking at this comparison.

Sanctions—there are numerous sanctions against Iran, and there are basically three kinds of sanctions. There are sanctions that are imposed by Congress. There are sanctions that are imposed by the Executive—the President. And there are sanctions that are imposed by the United Nations, international sanctions—three kinds of sanctions.

Iran, in giving up any nuclear program, wants relief from sanctions. Those sanctions have punished the Iranian economy. And I give applause to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle. If we had not done sanctions legislation, Iran wouldn't be at the table right now. So this is something that Congress can take some credit in.

What did the JCPOA do with respect to sanctions? Under the JCPOA, Iran was relieved from nuclear sanctions with snapback upon violation. So if Iran violated any of the terms of the nuclear deal, the sanctions were still on the books, and they would snap back.

But get this. On the JCPOA, it specifically said that nonnuclear sanc-

tions remain. They are not frozen. They are not eliminated. They are not waived. They remain in place because the United States and the international community have sanctions against Iran for its ballistic missile program and we have sanctions against Iran for gross human rights violations and we have sanctions against Iran for terrorism and funding proxies in the region.

And the JCPOA that we did in 2015 said: Listen, we will give you relief from nuclear sanctions, but we are not giving you relief from all these other sanctions. We are going to keep using them against you until you correct the other bad behavior that you are engaged in. Pretty good deal. Pretty good deal.

And that was why Secretaries Mattis and Tillerson told President Trump: Don't tear up the deal. Maintain the deal on the nuclear program and keep using—because it is working—and keep using all the sanctions against Iran for all their other bad behavior. So keep the deal and then keep the pressure on. You can do both, and you will improve Iranian behavior.

But Donald Trump tore up the forever deal. And what did we get instead in the memorandum of understanding? The point that deals with sanctions says the United States will move to terminate all sanctions: nuclear, non-nuclear, congressional, executive, international. It will get the U.N. to drop international sanctions. The MOU says the United States will not impose further sanctions, giving up so much more leverage than was given in the JCPOA.

Why would we give relief from sanctions against the missile program or against human rights abuses to get a nuclear deal? Why not just give relief from nuclear sanctions? But the MOU suggests it is complete sanctions relief for Iran.

Let's talk about some things that Iran gets in addition to sanctions relief. In a couple of these areas, the JCPOA and the MOU are somewhat the same.

How about Iranian assets? Iran has a lot of assets around the world in banks and bank accounts, and they have been frozen in connection with the sanctions policy—hundreds of billions of dollars of Iran's money that they cannot use.

Both the JCPOA and the MOU suggest that Iranian assets should be unfrozen with some time and, you know, testing along the way, but there are basically some similarities between the two agreements in the unfreezing of Iranian assets. How about Iranian oil? That is one of the main features of their economy, the sanctions of a blockade of Iran being able to sell oil.

Both the JCPOA and the memorandum have basically said Iran should be able to sell their oil. Again, this could be phased, but both are similar kind of in the concept that Iran should be able to sell oil just like the United States sells oil and other nations sell oil.

How about this little tricky issue: payments to Iran? In addition to releasing assets, which isn't really a payment—it is just letting them use their own money—in addition to oil, which is not really a payment—it is just letting them use their own oil—what about payments to Iran?

The JCPOA had a payment to Iran that many criticized heavily. It was a \$1.7 billion payment. Why did the United States pay that money to Iran in the JCPOA? It was the repayment of a debt.

Iran had paid the United States for weapons right before the revolution in 1979, and the United States never delivered the weapons. And so \$1.7 billion in the JCPOA was the United States paying in 2015—repaying the debt that Iran had given us money, and we hadn't given them the weapons—with interest. And so, yes, there was a \$1.7 billion repayment of the debt.

How does it compare to the MOU? Well, if you don't like \$1.7 billion, I am going to tell you this: You are not going to like \$300 billion. The MOU says the United States and regional partners will do a—at least—at least—\$300 billion reconstruction fund in Iran to help them rebuild what we bombed since February 27.

I was here on the floor and heard a lot of my colleagues complain about this \$1.7 billion repayment of a debt. I am very interested what they think about a guaranteed reparations fund whereby the United States and other nations will work to put \$300 billion into rebuilding the Iranian economy.

Getting near the end here. How about this? How about the engagement of other countries in trying to craft a diplomatic deal? The JCPOA was crafted by a group called the P5+1. It was every permanent member—P5—P for “permanent”—every permanent member of the U.N. Security Council—and that is—let's see—France, U.K., United States, China, Russia, plus one—Germany. Germany was not a permanent member of the Security Council.

And it was the six nations, and it is an interesting six. We are not around the table much with China and Russia these days. We are often not trying to do something with them; we are often checked off against them. But on this issue, these adversaries had the same interest we had. They did not want Iran to have a nuclear weapon.

Russia borders with Iran. There has been a history of some challenges there. China wants to limit the number of nations in the nuclear club. And so they were glad to join us, and the negotiation took place with all of these allies around the table.

What about the MOU? Who was engaged as allies in the United States in negotiating this agreement? Nobody. The greatest Nation in the world with the greatest set of alliances—NATO and the Quad, AUKUS and all these nations—who did Donald Trump include in negotiating this deal? No one.

He talked to Israel about it. They are furious about the deal. He didn't talk

to our European allies. He started the war and then said: Oh, you got to help us with the strait.

You started this war without even talking to us, and now you expect us to come in?

None of our allies—and the United States is chief in the world in having the best network of alliances. Donald Trump not only wouldn't consult with Congress—and I am used to that—he wouldn't even consult with our allies, and he wouldn't even bring to the table these nations that had been our adversaries who also don't want Iran to have a nuclear weapon.

Look, if you go into a war without a plan, without a rationale, without the support of Congress, without the support of the American people, and without the support of allies, what are the odds that it is not going to go the way you want?

How about a dispute resolution mechanism? Like, you do a deal, and one side thinks the other side is cheating. Well, the JCPOA had one. All the parties to the deal could say Iran is cheating and file a complaint with the International Atomic Energy Agency that was doing the inspections, and there was a mechanism for figuring out who was cheating and who wasn't.

And so, for example, if Iran was found cheating on its nuclear obligation, say, with the destruction of enriched uranium, the sanctions could snap back, or there could be other consequences.

What about a dispute resolution under the MOU? There is none. Donald Trump was asked about this. What about a—well, we will just start dropping bombs on their heads again.

That is not a dispute resolution mechanism. That is just, like: Well, let's just go back to war—maybe more American troops at risk, maybe more damage done to the economy, maybe people paying more at the gas pump.

Hopefully in the discussions over the next 60 days, which could be extended by mutual consent, there will be a dispute resolution mechanism, but there is not one now.

What about the Strait of Hormuz? Critical chokepoint for petroleum and other aspects of the global economy. Under President Obama and under the JCPOA, the strait was never closed. They remained open to global commerce, not only for Iran, but other nations too. President Trump's war led to the closing of the Strait of Hormuz, to enormous economic damage to America and the world.

And, yes, as part of the MOU, Iran has agreed that the strait will be opened. Better that they should never have been closed than that you have to do a deal and give up a lot to get them to reopen.

Let's talk about one other thing about the Strait of Hormuz. This one was an unusual provision of the MOU: future control of the Strait of Hormuz—future control of the Strait of Hormuz.

The MOU says that Iran and Oman will administer traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, will develop a plan to do so, and the plan has to be in accord with international law.

The United States has never said that before, acknowledged the power, acknowledged the right of Iran to be the administrator of the Strait of Hormuz. The JCPOA certainly didn't recognize Iranian control of the Strait of Hormuz, but the memorandum of understanding does.

And I believe that poses very, very severe risk of continued chokepoints in the strait in ways that can harm global commerce and ultimately harm American families.

All right. So that is my assessment of the comparison of the JCPOA and the MOU. The JCPOA had an ironclad forever promise about no nuclear weapons ever, not any, under any circumstances ever.

Donald Trump tore that up, and he got a watered-down promise that might also be a forever promise, but it is certainly watered down from what was in the JCPOA.

And then you see in all these areas the limitations that the JCPOA had to cement that forever promise. The MOU doesn't have it.

You see the United States giving up on sanctions for nonnuclear activity—international sanctions, congressional sanctions—and the JCPOA didn't give that up.

And you see the United States agreeing for the first time that Iran and Oman will have the right, the role, to administer traffic in the Strait of Hormuz.

So let's compare. Let's compare the forever deal that Donald Trump tore up, that led us to an illegal and foolish war, to the memorandum that he just announced yesterday.

It ain't hard. It is not hard. Giving a lot more to get a lot less, that is what the MOU is when you compare it to the forever deal that Donald Trump tore up.

One of the 14 servicemembers who died was from Virginia—Robert Marzan—who was a senior warrant officer in the Army. He was in his 50s. He was very close to retirement—Spotsylvania County, which is about an hour south of here, deployed all over the world in his role.

He died early in that attack on the position in Kuwait. Because we didn't really let allies know what we were doing, when Iran started firing at United States' positions in nations like Kuwait, we weren't ready for it. And Robert Marzan was one of the people killed right at the start of this war, right about the same time as all those schoolkids in Iran were killed, when we mistakenly bombed a school.

When you make a mistake in something like this, people lose their lives who shouldn't: troops, children, innocent bystanders. Our military is the best in the world, and when it comes to operations, they perform the best in

the world. The only problem they ever get into is when they are subjected to decisions by civilian leaders who are stupid.

Most agree now that the Vietnam war was a huge disaster. It wasn't a disaster because our troops didn't do well. Our troops did great. They served honorably. But for some reason, our civilian leadership decided to take over the failed French colonial project in Southeast Asia and step into France's shoes, when we had never done that before, and inherited a war we had no business being in. I think the number of deaths in the Vietnam war was about 56,000 U.S. troops because civilian leaders made a stupid decision.

In Iraq, our troops performed bravely. They performed heroically. I was the Governor of Virginia, and I went to an awful lot of deployments and a lot of homecomings. I went to the wakes, and I went to the funerals of Virginians who were Active Duty or in the Reserves, and many were in the Virginia National Guard. They performed heroically and ably, but they were undermined by stupid decisions by a national leadership that persuaded Congress in 2002 that we needed to go to war because Iran had weapons of mass destruction when they didn't. All the after studies suggested that that intel was false. We went to war because civilian leaders sent our kids into war under false pretenses, and so many never came home. In Iraq and Afghanistan together, there were 14,000 deaths and more than 60,000 injuries—so many in Iraq. We never should have been there to begin with except leaders made horrible decisions.

I believe the history of this Iran war is going to be written, and the history is going to start with a decision to tear up a forever diplomatic deal; to walk away from diplomacy, which is something the United States never should do; that when we tore up the deal—and Iran said: Fine. We can enrich again. Fine. We can have centrifuges again, and we can have uranium again—that the tearing up of that deal was essentially lighting the spark that led to an unnecessary war and to unnecessary death.

An off ramp to an illegal and stupid war is still something to be applauded. My prayer is that this holds. As weak as it is compared to what we had and as tragic as it is that we have incurred the losses we have incurred because we decided to walk away from diplomacy, I hope it holds. I hope it holds and we put behind us needless U.S. wars in the Middle East and we invest those billions of dollars on our own people and in our own schools and in our own healthcare system instead of foolishly waging unnecessary and illegal wars far from home.

I come from the most, I think, military State in the country. We have Active Duty, Guard, Reserve, DOD civilian, DOD contractor, military families. Virginia's map is a map of American

military history: Appomattox, Yorktown, the Pentagon. We train all marine officers at Quantico. We have the biggest naval base in the world in Norfolk. The biggest military office in the world is the Pentagon in Arlington. I come from the most military State in this country. One of my kids is a marine. We are so pro-military.

But what my military families ask me is: Make sure we have the tools to do the job, but don't ask us to do a stupid job. Don't order our best and brightest—don't order our kids—to do foolish missions based on inadequate deliberation without a clear plan or rationale or without allies or without consulting with Congress and with the American public.

We will hear a lot about this deal, I am sure, in the days to come because under a bill that I authored with some colleagues back in 2015, the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act, this memorandum has to be submitted to Congress for a review. So I am sure we will hear a lot more about it on the floor.

I have spent some time digging deeply back into the JCPOA—I was very involved in it at the time—and digging into this MOU, and I will just conclude with this conclusion: We gave an awful lot more to get an awful lot less than what we had and foolishly destroyed when President Trump walked out of the diplomatic deal that was working.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MORENO). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that, notwithstanding rule XXII, at a time to be determined by the majority leader in consultation with the Democratic leader, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination: Calendar No. 758, Darrell Owens, to be U.S. Representative to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe; that the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate; that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Sen-

ators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

CUBA

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, whatever one thinks of the Cuban Government—and I am one who believes its repressive policies and mismanagement of the economy have caused immense hardship for the Cuban people—the depth of misery and desperation people in Cuba are currently experiencing is largely due to the oil blockade, for which the United States is responsible.

More than 84 percent of Cuba's total energy supply relies on oil and petroleum products. Cuba's economy is entirely dependent on imported fuel to power its electrical grid, agriculture, and transportation needs, the country typically requiring around 100,000 barrels per day to function normally. Since January 30, the United States has imposed an illegal blockade on oil shipments to Cuba, so the island is entirely dependent on domestic production which consists of heavy, high-sulfur crude that cannot be easily refined.

When asked about the humanitarian crisis on the island, where electricity is unavailable most hours of the day and night and hospitals, schools, and factories have all but ceased to function, the Trump administration routinely blames the Cuban authorities. Any objective observer knows that is a convenient oversimplification.

Imagine if there was no electricity in this country for lack of access to oil, due to the hostile acts of another government. We would rightly condemn it as an act of war. Cuba is a bankrupt country the size of Virginia that poses no threat to the United States. And today, Cuba's economy has all but collapsed.

According to the United Nations, the impact of the oil blockade has been devastating for Cuba's health system. More than 100,000 surgeries have been delayed, including 12,000 pediatric procedures, due to acute shortages of medicines and medical supplies. Survival rates for children with cancer have fallen from 85 percent to 65 percent. That amounts to thousands of children who would otherwise be alive today.

More than 2.5 million people are experiencing water shortages—more than one-fifth of the total Cuban population. The national water system is functioning with only 37 percent of the fuel required, and 84 percent of water pumping runs on electricity. Food prices have increased by 18 percent. Energy shortages are disrupting agricultural production, food processing, refrigeration, and distribution. Hunger and malnutrition are widespread.

The lack of electricity and water, combined with food shortages, is causing psychological distress and exhaustion, especially among children, the elderly, and caregivers.

The streets are overflowing with rotting garbage. The hurricane season is beginning, and rising temperatures are creating conditions for a surge in vector-borne and waterborne diseases when the health system is already stretched to its limits.

The bottom line is this: All basic services, from potable water and sanitation to food production and healthcare, are being severely impacted by the lack of fuel and electricity caused by the U.S. oil blockade.

The energy crisis is also limiting the ability of the UN and other humanitarian agencies to deliver aid already committed, with dozens of containers of food and medical supplies reportedly still sitting in ports due to the lack of fuel. The UN's Plan of Action to respond to the crisis is only 21 percent funded. The U.S. has offered \$100 million through private mechanisms like the Catholic Church, but it has not yet been delivered.

We would all like to see a better government in Cuba, one that cares more about the Cuban people than in holding onto power and enriching themselves. I would say the same about other corrupt, undemocratic governments, including some we treat as partners. But the American people have always opposed using food and medicine as a weapon. That has been a bedrock principle that Republican and Democratic administrations, and the Congress, have reaffirmed over decades. By cutting off the oil, we are imposing collective punishment on Cuba's most vulnerable people. Children and the elderly are dying needlessly.

I urge Secretary of State Rubio to consider the human cost of the administration's oil blockade. It is illegal. It is immoral. It is preventable. And it is beneath this country.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. GALLEGO. Mr. President, I missed the following votes, but had I been present, I would have voted:

No on rollcall vote No. 177, Confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 760, Michelle Steel, of California, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Korea.

No on rollcall vote No. 178, Motion to invoke cloture on Executive Calendar No. 763, George Holding, of North Carolina, to be United States Director of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Yes on rollcall vote No. 179, Motion to discharge S. Res. 616, a resolution requesting information on Honduras's human rights practices pursuant to section 502B(c) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING GRONEN

• Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, as chair of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each