

the President's deal with Iran will allow it to further ballistic missile research and strengthen its economy. In short, by almost any measure, we know Iran will emerge stronger from this deal in nearly every aspect of its national power and better positioned to expand its sphere of influence.

The Iranian nuclear program was never intended to produce nuclear energy for peaceful civilian purposes. That was never what they had in mind. Certainly Iran does not need an underground enrichment facility for those purposes or long-range ballistic missiles. Iran has employed every aspect of national power to defend the regime and the Islamic revolution to include support for terrorism, unconventional warfare, public diplomacy, cyber warfare, suppression of internal dissent, and, of course, support for proxies and terrorist groups.

We already know Iran is undertaking many activities relevant to the development of a nuclear explosive device. As the International Atomic Energy Agency revealed in a November 2011 report, it has attempted to, No. 1, procure nuclear-related equipment and materials through individuals and entities related to the military; No. 2, develop pathways for the production of nuclear material; No. 3, acquire nuclear weapons development information and documentation from a clandestine nuclear supply network; and No. 4, develop an indigenous design of a nuclear weapon, as well as test components. All of that has been done, according to the IAEA.

Moreover, as Secretaries of State Henry Kissinger and George Shultz recently observed:

The final stages of the nuclear talks have coincided with Iran's intensified efforts to expand and entrench its power in neighboring states.

They warned:

Iranian or Iranian client forces are now the pre-eminent military or political element in multiple Arab countries. Unless political restraint is linked to nuclear restraint, an agreement freeing Iran from sanctions risks empowering Iran's hegemonic efforts.

I will have more to say later in the week concerning my opposition to this agreement, and I expect every Senator will wish to explain his or her respective vote. But I would ask every Senator to keep this in mind as well: The President has said that "no deal is better than a bad deal." And while he will be out of office in a few months, the rest of the country and the world will have to deal with the predictable consequences of the President's deal for far longer than the next year and a half.

If lawmakers determine that this deal is indeed a bad one, then they have a duty to vote that way. We can work together to prepare suitable sanctions legislation and other measures required to maintain our capabilities to deal with the threat from Iran, but no matter what, we should conduct a respectful and serious debate that is

consistent with the serious ramifications of this agreement.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader is recognized.

WELCOMING EVERYONE BACK

Mr. REID. Mr. President, first of all, I am very happy to welcome everyone back from our long recess. I am sure everyone worked as hard as I did. I had a week off, and I enjoyed it very much.

I also think it is important to recognize the new class of pages we have. I am always very happy to see these bright young men and women here who will devote the rest of the semester to us. They do so much and get so little recognition for it, so I appreciate all they do for us.

NUCLEAR AGREEMENT WITH IRAN

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I gave a speech this morning at Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and it is, I think, directly how I feel about this. I am glad it got some coverage this morning.

I ask unanimous consent that the full remarks of the speech I made this morning at 10 o'clock be printed in the RECORD.

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

SENATOR HARRY REID: REMARKS ON IRAN NUCLEAR AGREEMENT, CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE, WASHINGTON, D.C.

When the Senate is gavelled into session a few hours from now, a debate that has ignited passions from Tehran to Tel Aviv, from Beijing to Berlin, and from coast to coast across the United States will take center stage in the world's greatest deliberative body.

The question at hand is no small matter: Is the agreement between Iran and the international community, led by the United States, the best pathway to peace and security for America, Israel and our partners and interests?

I believe the answer is yes. And today I am gratified to say to my fellow Americans, our negotiating partners, and our allies around the world: this agreement will stand. America will uphold its commitment and we will seize this opportunity to stop Iran from getting a nuclear weapon.

While the formal debate begins this afternoon, the private negotiations that brought us to this point have been going on for years—and the public's review of the agreement has gone on for months.

During that long period, President Obama and Secretary Kerry were clear in their goals: above all, that the United States will not allow Iran to obtain a nuclear weapon.

The United States also would not sign any agreement that takes Iran at its word or relies on trust Iran has not earned.

And at the most difficult crossroads of this time-consuming and technical negotiation, President Obama and Secretary Kerry made clear that the hard choices belonged to Iran.

Now it's our turn. Now the United States has a choice to make: We can enforce an

agreement that forces Iran to walk away from any nuclear-weapons program, or we can walk away from that agreement and assume responsibility for the consequences.

We can take the strongest step ever toward blocking Iran from getting a nuclear bomb, or we can block this agreement and all but ensure Iran will have the fissile material it would need to make a bomb in a matter of months. But we cannot have it both ways.

Make no mistake: blocking the bomb and blocking this agreement are two distinct choices that lead to very different futures.

I've spent a lot of time talking, listening, and thinking about the various elements of this agreement, and so have my colleagues. I've heard from nuclear scientists, the intelligence community and our military leaders.

I've listened to diplomats and experts.

I've been briefed by Secretary Kerry and Undersecretary Sherman, by Secretaries Lew and Moniz—the brilliant nuclear physicist who knows more than almost anyone of the reality of this threat, the science behind the agreement and the agreement itself.

I've heard ardent supporters and passionate opponents. I've talked with Nevadans from all walks of life. I've spoken with Israel's leaders, including Prime Minister Netanyahu and Ambassador Dermer. And I've read the text of this agreement carefully.

In all my years, I cannot think of another debate with so much expertise, passions and good faith on both sides.

It is clear to me and to the overwhelming majority of my caucus that this agreement gives us the best chance to avoid one of the worst threats in today's world—a nuclear-armed Iran. In fact, I believe this agreement is not just our best chance to avert what we fear most—I fear it is our last best chance to do so.

Before I explain why, let me first acknowledge some of the people who helped us get to this historic moment.

I mentioned President Obama and his Cabinet Secretaries, who achieved a remarkable diplomatic breakthrough.

I also want to acknowledge my colleagues, led by Senator Menendez, who helped set the stage for those negotiations by rallying the Senate and the world behind sanctions that brought Iran to the negotiating table.

I also acknowledge Senators Cardin and Corker for their leadership. The legislation they wrote created the process to review the agreement in the Congress.

I support this agreement—and the United States Senate will support President Obama's veto of any effort to undermine it—for two simple reasons:

First, this agreement will do a tremendous amount of good.

And second, blocking this agreement would lead to a tremendous amount of bad outcomes.

The bottom line is that enforcing this agreement can prevent the things we most dread—but undermining it would permit those very same dreadful consequences.

And those consequences are, in fact, unacceptable.

We all recognize the threat Iran poses to Israel, with powerful weapons and hateful words, with anti-Semitic smears and pledges of the Jewish state's destruction. No one can underestimate this menace. And no one should dismiss how much more dangerous Iran would be in this regard if it were armed with a nuclear bomb.

We also recognize the threat of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps—the threat from Iran's support for Hezbollah and Assad—of Iran's brazen human rights violations toward its own people and the Americans it holds as political prisoners and those who have disappeared. We recognize the danger Iran poses