

US Senate Designation of Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps as Terrorist Organization

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Kyl-Lieberman Measure Calls for Designation of Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps as Terrorist Organization

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - The U.S. Senate today adopted a measure authored by U.S. Senators Jon Kyl (R-Ariz.) and Joe Lieberman (ID-Conn.) that calls on the U.S. State Department to designate the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist organization. The measure was adopted as an amendment to the Defense Authorization bill by a vote of 76 to 22.

The measure comes on the heels of mounting evidence that through proxy organizations, Iran is waging a proxy war against the United States in Iraq, providing weapons, training, funding, and direction to radical Shi'a militias who are responsible in turn for the murder of hundreds of American soldiers. Also today, in response to concern that the measure was a possible declaration of war, the amendment was modified to clarify its intent.

"Our military leaders, diplomats, and intelligence reports say that there is clear evidence Iran is exerting negative influence in Iraq," said Kyl. "I believe that the Senate's adoption of this measure sends a message to Iran that the U.S. will not tolerate any interference to progress in Iraq. It is now incumbent upon the State Department to add the Iranian Revolutionary Guard to the list of terrorist organizations."

"It is vital to the national security interests of the United States that the Iranian government not be allowed to prevail in its proxy war against us in Iraq," said Lieberman. "This amendment makes it clear - both to our enemies and our friends - that the United States will not retreat in the face of Iranian terrorism."

In Congressional testimony before the House and Senate earlier this month, General David Petraeus, the commander of Multi-National Forces-Iraq, stated that, "it is increasingly apparent to both collation and Iraqi leaders that Iran, through the use of Iranian Republican Guard Corps Qods Force, seeks to turn the Shi'a militia extremists into a Hezbollah-like force to serve its interests and fight a proxy war against the Iraqi state and coalition forces in Iraq."

United States Ambassador to Iraq Ryan Crocker stated in the same hearing: "Iran plays a harmful role in Iraq. While claiming to support Iraq in its transition, Iran has actively undermined it by providing lethal capabilities to the enemies of the Iraqi state."

U.S. Senators Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), Norm Coleman (R-Minn.), Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.), John Ensign (R-Nev.), Bob Corker (R-Tenn.), and John Thune (R-N.D.) are also co-sponsors of the amendment.

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U.S. Senate Roll Call Votes 110th Congress - 1st Session

as compiled through Senate LIS by the Senate Bill Clerk under the direction of the Secretary of the Senate

Vote Summary

Question: On the Amendment (Kyl Amdt. No. 3017 as Modified)

Vote Number: 349 Vote Date: September 26, 2007, 12:44 PM

Required For Majority: 3/5 Vote Result: Amendment Agreed to

Amendment Number: S.Amdt. 3017 to S.Amdt. 2011 to H.R. 1585 (National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008)

Statement of Purpose: To express the sense of the Senate regarding Iran.

Vote Counts:
 YEAs 76
 NAYs 22
 Not Voting 2

 A Hill veteran sends along the Kyl-Lieberman amendment on Iran (.pdf), saying it may come up for a vote as early as tomorrow. "In particular, take a look at Section (5) in the Operative portion." He adds, "This will be a hard amendment for Members to oppose ... because a no vote can be spun as 'You don't care about Iranian munitions killing American troops.'"

Tuesday Update: "Votes got postponed until tomorrow morning, but Kyl-Lieberman is on tap for tomorrow. Schumer allegedly working on a side by side. Levin will likely vote yes, while ... Reid is likely to vote no. ... The alternative will still condemn Iran, but probably use less inflammatory language and likely make clear that it is not authorizing force in any manner."

Wednesday Update: "It passed 76-22. They agreed to remove Sections 3 and 4 from the operative portion of the amendment, which included the language many feared as a backdoor authorization for force. So it was much better. That said, the language on the IRGC designation as a terrorist organization remained. Remember, this was just a Sense of Senate and has no binding force. But that may strengthen the hand of [those] inside the Administration who are arguing for designation of the entire IGRC, not just the Qods Force or other individual elements." Here's a breakdown of the vote.

 110th Congress

S.Amdt. 3017: To express the sense of the Senate regarding Iran.

An amendment to H.R. 1585: National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008.

Offered: Sep 20, 2007

Sponsor: Sen. Jon Kyl [R-AZ]

Actions: Sep 20, 2007: Amendment SA 3017 proposed by Senator Kyl to Amendment SA 2011.

Sep 21, 2007: Considered by Senate.

Sep 25, 2007: Considered by Senate.

Sep 26, 2007: Considered by Senate.

Sep 26, 2007: Amendment SA 3017 as modified agreed to in Senate by Yea-Nay Vote. 76 - 22. Record Vote Number: 349. (consideration: CR S12093, 12095-12096) [Vote Details]

Text of amendment

SA 3017. Mr. KYL (for himself, Mr. Lieberman, and Mr. Coleman) proposed an amendment to amendment SA 2011 proposed by Mr. Nelson of Nebraska (for Mr. Levin) to the bill H.R. 1585, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2008 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; as follows:

At the end of subtitle C of title XV, add the following:

SEC. 1535. SENSE OF SENATE ON IRAN.

(a) Findings.--The Senate makes the following findings:

(1) General David Petraeus, commander of the Multi-National Force Iraq, stated in testimony before a joint session of the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives on September 10, 2007, that "[i]t is increasingly apparent to both coalition and Iraqi leaders that Iran, through the use of the Iranian Republican Guard Corps Qods Force, seeks to turn the Shi'a militia extremists into a Hezbollah-like force to serve its interests and fight

a proxy war against the Iraqi state and coalition forces in Iraq".

(2) Ambassador Ryan Crocker, United States Ambassador to Iraq, stated in testimony before a joint session of the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives on September 10, 2007, that "Iran plays a harmful role in Iraq. While claiming to support Iraq in its transition, Iran has actively undermined it by providing lethal capabilities to the enemies of the Iraqi state".

(3) The most recent National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq, published in August 2007, states that "Iran has been

intensifying aspects of its lethal support for select groups of Iraqi Shia militants, particularly the JAM [Jaysh al-Mahdi], since at least the beginning of 2006. Explosively formed penetrator (EFP) attacks have risen dramatically".

(4) The Report of the Independent Commission on the Security Forces of Iraq, released on September 6, 2007, states that "[t]he Commission concludes that the evidence of Iran's increasing activism in the southeastern part of the country, including Basra and Diyala provinces, is compelling. It is an accepted fact that most of the sophisticated weapons being used to 'defeat' our armor protection comes across the border from Iran with relative impunity".

(5) General (Ret.) James Jones, chairman of the Independent Commission on the Security Forces of Iraq, stated in testimony before the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate on September 6, 2007, that "[w]e judge that the goings-on across the Iranian border in particular are of extreme severity and have the potential of at least delaying our efforts inside the country. Many of the arms and weapons that kill and maim our soldiers are coming from across the Iranian border".

(6) General Petraeus said of Iranian support for extremist activity in Iraq on April 26, 2007, that "[w]e know that it goes as high as [Brig. Gen. Qassem] Suleimani, who is the head of the Qods Force. We believe that he works directly for the supreme leader of the country".

(7) Mahmoud Ahmedinejad, the president of Iran, stated on August 28, 2007, with respect to the United States presence in Iraq, that "[t]he political power of the occupiers is collapsing rapidly. Soon we will see a huge power vacuum in the region. Of course we are prepared to fill the gap".

(8) Ambassador Crocker testified to Congress, with respect to President Ahmedinejad's statement, on September 11, 2007, that "[t]he Iranian involvement in Iraq--its support for extremist militias, training, connections to Lebanese Hezbollah, provision of munitions that are used against our force as well as the Iraqis--are all, in my view, a pretty clear demonstration that Ahmedinejad means what he says, and is already trying to implement it to the best of his ability".

(9) General Petraeus stated on September 12, 2007, with respect to evidence of the complicity of Iran in the murder of members of the Armed Forces of the United States in Iraq, that "[t]he evidence is very, very clear. We captured it when we captured Qais Khazali, the Lebanese Hezbollah deputy commander, and others, and it's in black and white. We interrogated these individuals. We have on tape. Qais Khazali himself. When asked, could you have done what you have done without Iranian

support, he literally throws up his hands and laughs and says, of course not. So they told us about the amounts of money that they have received. They told us about the training that they received. They told us about the ammunition and sophisticated weaponry and all of that that they received".

(10) General Petraeus further stated on September 14, 2007, that "[w]hat we have got is evidence. This is not intelligence. This is evidence, off computers that we captured, documents and so forth. In one case, a 22-page document that lays out the planning, reconnaissance, rehearsal, conduct, and aftermath of the operation conducted that resulted in the death of five of our soldiers in Karbala back in January".

(11) The Department of Defense report to Congress entitled "Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq" and released on September 18, 2007, consistent with section 9010 of Public Law 109-289, states that "[t]here has been no decrease in Iranian training and funding of illegal Shi'a militias in Iraq that attack Iraqi and Coalition forces and civilians..... Tehran's support for these groups is one of the greatest impediments to progress on reconciliation".

(12) The Department of Defense report further states, with respect to Iranian support for Shi'a extremist groups in Iraq, that "[m]ost of the explosives and ammunition used by these groups are provided by the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force..... For the period of June through the end of August, [explosively formed penetrator] events are projected to rise by 39 percent over the period of March through May".

(13) Since May 2007, Ambassador Crocker has held three rounds of talks in Baghdad on Iraq security with representatives of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

(14) Ambassador Crocker testified before Congress on September 10, 2007, with respect to these talks, stating that "I laid out the concerns we had over Iranian activity that was damaging to Iraq's security, but found no readiness on Iranians' side at all to engage seriously on these issues. The impression I came with after a couple rounds is that the Iranians were interested simply in the appearance of discussions, of being seen to be at the table with the U.S. as an arbiter of Iraq's present

and future, rather than actually doing serious business. Right now, I haven't seen any sign of earnest or seriousness on the Iranian side".

(15) Ambassador Crocker testified before Congress on September 11, 2007, stating that "[w]e have seen nothing on the

ground that would suggest that the Iranians are altering what they're doing in support of extremist elements that are going after our forces as well as the Iraqis".

(b) Sense of Senate.--It is the sense of the Senate--

(1) that the manner in which the United States transitions and structures its military presence in Iraq will have critical long-term consequences for the future of the Persian Gulf and the Middle East, in particular with regard to the capability of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to pose a threat to the security of the region, the prospects for democracy for the people of the region, and the health of the global economy;

(2) that it is a vital national interest of the United States to prevent the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran from turning Shi'a militia extremists in Iraq into a Hezbollah-like force that could serve its interests inside Iraq, including by overwhelming, subverting, or co-opting institutions of the legitimate Government of Iraq;

(3) that it should be the policy of the United States to combat, contain, and roll back the violent activities and destabilizing influence inside Iraq of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, its foreign facilitators such as Lebanese Hezbollah, and its indigenous Iraqi proxies;

(4) to support the prudent and calibrated use of all instruments of United States national power in Iraq, including diplomatic, economic, intelligence, and military instruments, in support of the policy described in paragraph (3) with respect to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and its proxies;

(5) that the United States should designate the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps as a foreign terrorist organization under section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act and place the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps on the list of Specially Designated Global Terrorists, as established under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act and initiated under Executive Order 13224; and

(6) that the Department of the Treasury should act with all possible expediency to complete the listing of those entities targeted under United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1737 and 1747 adopted unanimously on December 23, 2006 and March 24, 2007, respectively.

(As printed in the Congressional Record for the Senate on Sep 20, 2007.)