

there is no doubt in the mind of this Senator or any objective observer's mind what would happen if a conflict developed here. But we need to be realistic, we need to seek to avoid conflict, but we need to pursue policies that will make sure we don't allow our citizens to fall under a risk of a nuclear missile attack.

So they are pursuing, under Ahmadi-nejad's leadership, the means to kill millions of people with the single push of a button. When Iran's Shehab-3 missiles are paraded through the streets of Iran, they are draped with banners stating, "Israel must be wiped off the map." That is what they put on their missiles. With a range of 1,300 kilometers and a payload capacity of over 700 kilograms, the Shehab-3 has the capacities to implement Ahmadi-Nejad's genocidal agenda. Iran is also working hard to develop missiles that can reach Europe and the States. The Shehab-4 is well along in development and will reportedly be able to reach most of continental Europe. The Shehab-5 and Shehab-6 have also been discussed in open sources. They are developing those advanced missiles. These sources claim these models will have the capacity to reach the eastern seaboard of the United States.

Iran's ability to develop nuclear warheads for those missiles are proceeding apace as well. In April, in a speech at the Natanz nuclear enrichment facility, there in Iran, Ahmadi-Nejad stated:

I declare that as of today our dear country has joined the nuclear club of nations and can produce nuclear fuel on an industrial scale.

International Atomic Energy Agency later confirmed that Iranian enrichment capabilities were developing rapidly while our knowledge and understanding of their nuclear program was decreasing. This uncertainty is very disturbing.

Yesterday, the Washington Post reported the construction of an underground tunnel complex near its enrichment facilities at Natanz. It appears, therefore, that Iran is preparing to protect and hide its nuclear capabilities.

Nothing about Iran's behavior recently suggests that it will use these capabilities in a responsible manner. In fact, to the contrary, we expect Ahmadinejad to use nuclear-tipped missiles to threaten, blackmail, and terrorize the nations that oppose its radical agenda and using them, actually using them based on some of the extreme statements he has made, cannot be placed out of the question.

We all remember last March when Iran seized 15 British sailors and held them as hostages. Imagine a time in the not-too-distant future when Iran could take the whole city of London as a hostage with a nuclear threat. According to reports in the Washington Post, the intelligence community assesses that Iran's ICBMs and its nuclear weapons capability will both mature in 2015. That is not that far away.

As a result, the cities of the eastern seaboard and of Europe are expected to face the threat of nuclear attack from Iran in less than 8 years.

Keep in mind that 2015 is the midpoint of the estimated range. Iran's capability could come online in 2017, later, or even by 2013, if things proceed faster than expected. That may seem like a long way away, but an adequate defense will take a long time to build and we need to start now. According to the Missile Defense Agency, even if Congress fully funded the European defense site—which I hope that we will. We refer to it as the "third site," and it is funded every year—the system would not be up and running until 2013. Any delay to that schedule—which could happen for a number of reasons—could open up a window of vulnerability during which Iran would have the means to attack us and our allies, perhaps with nuclear weapons, and we will have no means of defending the American people or our allies against them.

The good news is we have it in our power to prevent this window of vulnerability and keep it from opening if we commit as a nation to doing so. My amendment represents an opportunity for the Senate to go on record with such a commitment. An effective missile defense, which we would promptly begin to deploy, could convince the Iranian leadership that developing such missiles for their nuclear weapons is a futile undertaking. Perhaps we may have already missed, however, that opportunity to actually deter them in this way, making it all the more important that we get moving on development of the means to defend ourselves and our allies.

This amendment is more than about setting U.S. policy on missile defense, it is about sending a message to the rest of the world, our friends and enemies alike, that we take this Iranian threat seriously and we intend to stand up to it. The debate over the third site is being watched with great interest around the world. Some may be drawing conclusions about our commitment to meet this threat head on and doubting that we are committed. In fact, I will note that we effectively deployed and continue to upgrade a national missile defense system that can meet the North Korean missile threat, which is somewhat more advanced than Iran's but not a lot. We know we have this capability and we should do it with Iran also.

Imagine sitting in Mr. Ahmadinejad's shoes today. He provides sophisticated weapons to our enemies in Iraq, killing hundreds of American troops in the process. In response, one of our colleagues proposed legislation to prohibit the President from attacking Iran without congressional authorization. Ahmadinejad rushes headlong toward a nuclear weapon and long-range delivery capability and both the Senate and the House cut funding for missile defenses that could neutralize

the threat. Ahmadi-Nejad must not feel like his bluster and threats will be effective.

They will not be. Imagine the conclusions that Vladimir Putin is drawing from those media reports. In February of 2007, Mr. Putin and the Russian Army Chief of Staff, Yury Baluyevsky, threatened to unilaterally withdraw from the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty, which prohibits the United States and Russia from deploying arsenals of short- and medium-range missiles in Europe. Mr. Putin later suspended Russia's obligations under the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty, which historically allowed NATO and the Warsaw Pact to remove much of the military personnel and material that was arrayed along Europe's central front during the height of the Cold War.

Finally, in June of this year, Putin directly threatened to focus Russia's nuclear arsenal on "new targets in Europe." Putin claimed that "the strategic balance in the world is being upset" and that Russia "will be creating a system of countering that anti-missile system."

These threats coincided with Russian tests of an advanced ICBM, the RS-24, by Russia.

It ought not. Of course, any third site in Europe will be ineffective against the massive missile capability of Russia. We don't have any capability of doing that. We can create a system that will be very effective against anything the Iranians can do in the decades to come but not Russia. Our plans have no intention of affecting Russia. But we also need not be affected by Mr. Putin's bluster or that we be slowed down in our legitimate interests in protecting our country and our allies from Iranian threats by these kinds of comments from the Russians.

We reduced somewhat—not greatly—but \$84 million in funding for the third site in Europe. Colleagues felt that money could not be effectively spent. They did not believe it was necessary in this year's budget. The problem might be that some would conclude the action by our committee in taking those steps to trim the budget would be a plan to kill missile defenses in Europe.

Yesterday, an article in the Christian Science Monitor entitled "Obstacles Ahead for Missile Defense," stated the Senate was opposed to building defenses against Iranian missiles, in effect, saying:

In Washington, the Democratic-controlled Congress appears reluctant to fund the move, scrambling its near-term prospects.

I don't think that is true. I think there is bipartisan support for creating a missile defense system, but a firm belief exists on the part of my Democratic colleagues that we should not go so fast that it is not done wisely.

We have reached a proposal in the legislation as written that we can live with. However, there has been some confusion as to our seriousness in this commitment.