

Senator Corker reiterates with Iran deal implemented, a bipartisan concern exists over perception of Middle East realignment

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Senator Corker reiterated his opposition to the Iran deal

Chattanooga, January 20, 2016 - At the first committee hearing since implementation of the Iran nuclear agreement, Senator Bob Corker reiterated his opposition to the Iran deal and warned of the perception of realignment in the Middle East. Senator Corker also said he feared the decline, or eventual collapse, of the international coalition assembled to hold Iran accountable as investment in Iran grows.

“I think all of us have been very concerned about how the agreement is going to affect the region,” said Senator Corker.

“And I think there’s no question that our friends in the region believe there is a realignment that’s taking place relative to how the administration is approaching the region. I know that there are a lot of concerns on both sides of the aisle within the committee here as to how that’s going to take shape.

“We want to make sure that as a committee we’re doing everything we can to deter Iran from doing the kinds of things that we all have feared after receiving the large amounts of money that they are obviously receiving now.”

Providing testimony on Wednesday were Michael Singh of The Washington Institute and Brian Katulis of the Center for American Progress. Mr. Singh emphasized the need for a new U.S. strategy in the wake of the nuclear deal (known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or JCPOA) that addresses the continuing risk of nuclear proliferation and establishes a more serious and coordinated effort with American allies to counter Iranian aggression, especially in Syria and in the Arabian Gulf.

“We need to focus on not just preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon...but also countering the Iranian threat to regional stability and enhancing the security and capability of our allies,” said Mr. Singh. “The JCPOA isn’t strong enough to provide assurance that Iran can’t clandestinely develop a nuclear weapon. Second, it leaves unaddressed how we are going to approach Iran in 10 to 15 years when all these restrictions expire. And third, it creates this clear incentive for other states, which I’ve heard again in the aftermath of the JCPOA, to pursue their own nuclear capabilities.”

Citing the failure of the [United Nations](#) Security Council to address Iran’s recent violations of the ban on ballistic missile tests, Senator Corker said he doubted an international coalition could respond effectively over time to violations of the nuclear deal as European countries begin doing business with Iran.

“The thinking that we are going to easily put that coalition back if there is something so out of bounds and egregious when everybody is in Tehran doing business right now is just not going to happen,” said Senator Corker. “There now is no coalition and to me that is one of the greatest flaws of this deal now that they have what they want in this deal.”

In December, Senator Corker and ranking member Senator Ben Cardin announced the committee’s plan for vigorous oversight of the nuclear deal utilizing authority granted by the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act that became law last year. In addition to permitting congressional review of the deal, INARA requires the administration to provide Congress regular certifications and reports on Iranian compliance and evidence of potential breaches of the agreement. They said the administration’s failure to certify Iran’s compliance or a determination of a material breach would trigger expedited procedures for legislation to reimpose sanctions.