that, upon further processing, could build three to four nuclear weapons.

In response to Iran's continued nuclear program and its defiance of United Nations' Security Council resolutions, the United States and many of our allies have adopted sanctions on Iran. Sanctions are having a significant impact on the Iranian economy. In March, Iran's oil exports fell nearly 300,000 barrels per day or 12 percent, according to foreign reports. Iran's currency has lost roughly half its value in the past year, and inflation is more than 20 percent. The new European Union sanctions are scheduled to take effect this summer. These would make it even more difficult for Iran to ship oil globally.

Once the EU sanctions go into effect in July, the Congressional Research Service estimates that oil sales could fall by up to 40 percent.

In addition, a major Chinese insurance provider has announced it will no longer insure ships carrying Iranian oil. These are important developments that will increase economic pressure on the Iranian regime. Yet neither sanctions nor past negotiations have stopped Iran's nuclear program and its quest for a nuclear weapon.

Iran's nuclear program threatens American interests. First, Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons increases the risk of global nuclear proliferation, which would jeopardize the security of the United States. The last two nations to acquire nuclear weapons—Pakistan and North Korea—have presented numerous challenges to American security interests.

North Korea provoked international condemnation last week when it launched its rocket. In Pakistan, a December report in the Atlantic called into question the security of that country's nuclear arsenal, stating that Pakistan regularly transports nuclear weapons through city streets without much security.

If Iran obtains a nuclear weapon other nations in the Middle East may soon follow. Saudi Arabia has already said it will consider seeking nuclear capability if Iran's program is not stopped.

Second, a nuclear Iran could increase its support of terrorism. Iran is already one of the world's leading state sponsors of terrorism, funneling money and weapons and supporting training for terrorist groups, including Hezbollah and Hamas. With a nuclear weapon Iran and its terrorist allies may be emboldened to carry out even more attacks. Furthermore, what would prevent Iran from giving nuclear weapons to one of the terrorist groups it supports, sharing its capabilities with one of the terrorist groups?

Third, a nuclear Iran could exert more influence over world oil markets. A direct link exists between volatile oil prices and Iran's nuclear program. Prices have risen when tensions have increased, and when tensions recede prices typically decline. American consumers and businesses are directly affected by these volatile prices that negatively impact our economic well-being.

Although Saudi Arabia has pledged to boost production to make up for the loss of Iranian oil on the market, this will reduce spare production capacity and leave our country and the global economy vulnerable to any reduction in supplies, whether from conflicts within oil-producing nations or from natural disaster.

Finally, a nuclear Iran would threaten the safety of American troops serving abroad in the Middle East. For years Iran has fought American presence in the Middle East and has supported terrorist groups who have targeted and killed American troops. American officials believe Iran supported the terrorists responsible for the 1996 attack on a U.S. military residence in Saudi Arabia that killed 19 of our servicemen.

Iran also has long-range missiles that could hit U.S. military bases in the region, including ones in Turkey, Afghanistan, Bahrain, and Kuwait. Iran's nuclear program also threatens the existence of our ally, Israel.

The President of Iran has called for Israel to be ''wiped off the map.'' If Iran acquires a nuclear weapon, its leaders would have the capability to do the destructive things of which they speak. Understandably, Israel is worried. Israelis know all too well the price of war because they have witnessed war and destruction. They know what can happen when evil men gain the ability to carry out evil deeds.

While some would have us believe Iran is Israel's problem, we should not be fooled. Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons threatens all nations that care about global peace and stability. We cannot leave Israel to deal with this crisis alone. American leadership is needed now more than ever to stop Iran. We can begin by passing the Iran Sanctions Accountability and Human Rights Act. This legislation, which came through the Banking Committee, on which I serve, earlier this year strengthens and expands existing sanctions and for the first time makes it official U.S. policy to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons. The administration and President Obama must also fully enforce U.S. law and penalize those who violate U.S. sanctions.

In addition, the U.S. should use current negotiations to bring about an end to Iran's nuclear program. As a party to the nonproliferation treaty, Iran must adhere to its obligations under that treaty and provide transparency to international inspectors.

The longer Iran's nuclear program continues, the greater the danger grows for the United States and all nations. Last month, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu spoke in Washington. He is an incredible leader, and his speech to Congress last year was one of the best I have ever heard. While speaking in Washington last month, he laid out very clearly why a nuclear Iran would be such a grave danger. He said for the last 15 years he has been warning the world about a nuclear Iran.

We must not be fooled by negotiations that only stall and continue to create the opportunity for greater disaster down the road. Prime Minister Netanyahu said no one would be happier than he if Iran gave up its nuclear quest. But there are many around the world who would be happy because we all know the world would be a far safer, more peaceful place without a nuclear Iran. While we all desire a peaceful resolution, negotiations must not be a stalling tactic or an excuse for inaction.

Thursday of this week is Holocaust Remembrance Day. As we pause to remember and reflect on this past tragedy, the United States must act to prevent a nuclear Iran and the real possibility of a future tragedy. The world cannot again look the other way.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AID TO EGYPT

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I rise today to speak to an amendment that would end aid to Egypt until they end the prosecution of our U.S. citizens. I offered this amendment earlier this spring when Egypt was detaining our citizens—these prodemocracy workers—and was not letting them leave the country. Since then, they have let them leave the country but sort of in an insulting fashion in the sense they have let them leave when we paid, basically, ransom. We had to pay about $5 million in ransom—$300,000 per person—to let these people leave Egypt.

So they came home, but Egypt still could only get its aid if the administration certified they were pro democracy. Within days, Secretary Clinton did release the aid and said they were achieving their democratic goals. I wrote a letter to Secretary Clinton asking her not to do this because the prosecutions still go on. These American citizens who were allowed to leave the country had to pay $300,000 in bail but they also had to sign a statement saying they were coming back for the trial.

Everybody said, well, I doubt they are ever going back to Egypt for these show trials. But it gets worse. It turns out in December of last year, President Obama signed an Executive order—this is Order No. 13524—that gives Interpol, the international police organization, immunity in our country. We also have an extradition treaty with Egypt,

meaning if you are accused of a crime in Egypt, we can send you back.

The danger is whether these pro-democracy workers are safe in the United States. We have Interpol agents in the United States who now have immunity and we have an extradition treaty with Egypt. There are definitely problems with allowing this to go on. This is an indication to me that maybe Egypt is not pursuing democratic goals, and that certifying them as a democratic country is perhaps not in our best interest, and maybe sending nearly $2 billion of taxpayer money to Egypt, which continues to prosecute our citizens, is not a good idea.

Let me give an example of what Interpol is doing. Interpol recently took a Saudi journalist from Malaysia and sent him back to Saudi Arabia. Do you know what the crime was? He was accused of blasphemy. He was accused of the religious crime of apostasy. Do you know what the penalty in Saudi Arabia for blasphemy is? The death penalty. So we are now using an international police agency to go into a sovereign nation, where someone is accused of a religious crime and is sent back to a country where they can be put to death. This alarms me.

People say, oh, that could never happen in America. Well, right now, the President has allowed Interpol, through an Executive order, through the President's signature, to have diplomatic immunity in our country. For all I know, Interpol could be at this very moment looking for American citizens in this country and trying to get those people and extradite them to Egypt. This is a problem. This is why you don't want an international police force to operate within your sovereign Nation. There can be cooperation, but you don't want impunity and immunity for an international police force within your borders.

So I will introduce again an amendment to this bill and this amendment will say no aid to Egypt until they end this prosecution; no aid to Egypt until they end these red letter warrants they have asked for on U.S. citizens to be extradited to Egypt. We can't allow U.S. citizens to be sent to a foreign country to be tried in that country where blasphemy is a crime. Those are not American values, those are not American ways, and we cannot allow U.S. citizens to be subject to foreign laws and foreign crimes.

I will ask today for a vote on an amendment that will end Egyptian aid or at least delay Egyptian foreign aid until they relinquish this prosecution of our citizens.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MANCHIN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

21ST CENTURY POSTAL SERVICE ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to proceed to the motion to reconsider the vote by which cloture was not invoked on the motion to proceed to S. 1789 is agreed to. The motion to reconsider the vote is agreed to, and the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to S. 1789, upon reconsideration. The Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 296, S. 1789, a bill to improve, sustain, and transform the United States Postal Service.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 10 minutes of debate equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I rise to urge all of our colleagues to support the pending cloture motion filed by the leaders so we can begin a debate that will help decide whether the U.S. Postal Service—this iconic American institution created more than two centuries ago, embedded in the Constitution, created in the age of inkwells and quill pens—will survive in the age of e-mail and the Internet.

To me, this cloture vote should be an easy one because if we vote against cloture, we are essentially saying two things: One is we don't want to do anything. If we don't do anything, the Postal Service is going to run out of money and hit its borrowing limit later this year, forcing us to miss payments and unnecessarily begin to shut back or close down operations, which is the last thing the country needs at this point.

Frankly, the other thing we will do if we think we should do nothing is to leave the Postmaster General, the Postal Service, with an unlimited right to take steps that I believe a majority of Members of this body don't want to be taken precipitously without considering the alternative. That alternative is closing thousands of post offices around the country, including small towns in rural areas, and dramatically and quickly cutting back on the number of mail processing facilities, and therefore the standards by which mail is delivered and the speed with which it is delivered in this country. So I hope our colleagues consider this an easy vote, which is simply not to turn away from the crisis the Postal Service is in.

Senator COLLINS and I are joined by Senator CARPER and Senator SCOTT BROWN. We have a substitute that is a bipartisan proposal that I think will help save the post office but also force it to begin to make tough cost-efficient steps to keep itself in fiscal balance.

Let me give a sense of the scope of this matter. The Postal Service today, if it were a private corporation, would be the 35th largest company in the United States based on revenue, putting it just ahead of Apple. It would be the country's second largest employer just behind Walmart. The 32,000 post offices in America represent more domestic retail outlets than Walmart, Starbucks, and McDonald's combined.

These are big numbers, and the post office has a storied history. But today it is a troubled business and, frankly, on the verge of insolvency if we don't act—in part because of the recent economic recession but mostly because of the transformational impact of the Internet. The Postal Service has had a 21-percent drop in mail volume in the past 5 years, and, of course, a corresponding cut in revenue. As more businesses and communication move online, mail volume is inevitably going to continue to decrease.

In fiscal year 2011 the Postal Service took in $65.7 billion but had expenses of $70.6 billion. This $5 billion loss would have actually been twice that if Congress had not delayed the due date for a statutorily required payment to the retiree health plan due at the end of the fiscal year. That followed record losses of $8.5 billion in 2010. This simply cannot continue. As I said earlier, if nothing is done, the Postal Service will not have enough money to pay its bill.

Please vote for cloture. We have a good, solid substitute that is a major reform with some due process that will make the post office leaner and more efficient. It will dramatically reduce the number of employees and the number of facilities the post office maintains, but it will do so in a way that I think is evolutionary and not Draconian either to the Postal Service or the impact it would have on the millions of people who depend on the post office and will continue to every day.

There are a lot of different ideas about how to fix the post office. Some people don't want us to make any changes, and that is the road to bankruptcy. Some people want us to make Draconian changes right away, and I don't think that is appropriate. So I ask for a vote for cloture.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I am very pleased to join with the chairman of the Homeland Security Committee in urging all of our colleagues to cast a vote for cloture on the motion to proceed to this vitally important bill.

There are many different views on how to save the Postal Service, but there can be no doubt that the Postal