

nuclear agreement as early as next month—tens of billions of dollars to the world's largest terrorist regime—sanctions are going to be lifted to allow them to continue their provocative activities against the United States, our allies, and our citizens.

What we are saying, one-third of the Members of this body, is that we shouldn't be doing that. The President should heed the advice of Senator AYOTTE's letter. Additionally, I think a strong argument—and people need to look at this issue—that can be made about Iran's recent behavior is that we cannot lift these sanctions pursuant to the terms of the nuclear deal. The nuclear agreement that was debated in this body states that before sanctions are lifted on implementation day, Iran must be in accord with U.N. Security Council Resolution 2231, which among other things calls upon Iran not to undertake activity related to ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons.

Do you see how they are related? The nuclear agreement that this body agreed to, the implementation plan of the nuclear agreement, paragraph 34(3) says that Iran has to be in accord with this provision in order for sanctions to be lifted.

Iran is not in accord with this provision. The U.N. has said that. Ambassador Power said that. The bottom line is, if Iran is already violating this U.N. Security Council resolution, then under paragraph 34(3) of the implementation plan of the nuclear deal by the Obama administration, sanctions shouldn't be lifted.

Here is how the President put it when he was selling the deal. "If Iran violates this deal, the sanctions we imposed that have helped cripple the Iranian economy—the sanctions that helped make this deal possible—would snap back into place promptly."

I agree that is what we should be doing, but here is the key point. The President doesn't need to wait for the sanctions to snap back. He can and he should take action now, before it is too late, before billions of dollars flood into Iran—the world's largest state sponsor of terrorism.

That is why over one-third of the Members of this body wrote the President yesterday. I urge my colleagues—particularly my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who I know are concerned about these issues because I have had discussions with a number of them—that they should be writing the President as well. They should be telling the President the same thing: Mr. President, Iran is violating the agreement; don't lift the sanctions. He can and should act now.

The President should not lift sanctions against Iran. He needs to go back and reread his own nuclear agreement, and he needs to heed the advice of his former Secretary of State to "act quickly and harshly against Iran" when it violates the agreement by not allowing them access to tens of billions

of dollars. The President needs to do that now.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### MAINTAINING AMERICA'S DEFENSE

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to a man who has dutifully served our Nation as a public servant for more than 30 years—Mr. John B. Johns. John will retire from his role as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Maintenance Policy and Programs at the end of this year. We will miss his leadership, his tenacity in tackling the impossible, and his courage in the face of adversity.

I have had the privilege of knowing John for several years and have always been amazed at his commitment to our country and his devotion to our military. In his current role, he is responsible for the oversight of the Department of Defense's maintenance program that exceeds an annual budget of \$80 billion. During his distinguished career, John has been deployed twice—first to Iraq in 2010, where he served as the director of the training and advisory mission and the director of logistics for the Iraqi Security Forces; and second to Afghanistan in 2013, where he served as the executive director of Afghan National Security Forces Sustainment for the International Security Assistance Force.

One of John's primary duties in his current position is to host the annual Department of Defense Maintenance Symposium that recognizes excellence in maintenance activities within the Armed Services and the Coast Guard. During this event, the Department recognizes leaders and organizations for the superior service they render to promote the readiness of the U.S. military. I wanted to read the remarks that John offered at this year's symposium last week. The title of John's address is "Maintaining America's Defense." His words are as follows:

"For seven years this community has been very kind to me; you have been gracious and patient as I spoke from this stage. I now ask you to indulge me one last time as I speak of maintaining America's defense.

Brave warriors have fought and died, and their brothers and sisters stand watch today, in harm's way, to both secure and maintain peace, to deter and defeat forces that are committed to a future fundamentally different than the one you and I envision. The world is a complex, dangerous, and unstable

place with evolving threats, both new and old. The reality is we are facing skilled, determined enemies that would just as soon strike at us as they would take a breath. They clearly do not share the same view on humanity, nor the value of life, as we do. This environment demands the flexibility, agility and lethality that only our United States Military can provide.

From the first shots that signaled the birth of our country, men at arms have served as an instrument of state, and their strength, as individuals and as a force, have enabled and secured both victory and peace. Today, the presence of United States Forces, controlling the battle space, conducting strike operations with the ability to see but remain unseen, to dominate the land, sea, and air, to rain fire and destruction, provide clarity to all those that contemplate harm to us or our interests. That aggression will not be tolerated. But, as you know, we have not always acted properly, nor responded with appropriate speed, to events in the world that have demanded our attention. We make many mistakes, and it is true we are slow to anger. But, once our limit has been breached and restraint abandoned, there is nothing on this planet, nor has there ever been, like the hell unleashed from coiled fury of the United States Military.

You should all be proud of the role you play in maintaining that capability—most recently, maintaining readiness of our forces over a decade of continuous combat, in two complex theaters, in unforgiving environments, while maintaining a credible presence throughout the rest of the world. You enabled this, and for that, you should be proud. All of you in this room know a ship not ready to sail, or an aircraft not ready to fly, has no value. And, since we have had the need for weapons, we have had the need for those that maintain them. This eternal bond is a covenant, a sacred promise, between those that generate readiness and those that apply it, and we seal this covenant with a commitment to excellence. All of you in this room, and those you represent, should be rightfully proud, an embodiment of this covenant and commitment, reminding any who mistakenly underestimate the power and will of our United States Military that we are capable of striking with speed and violence.

So where, then, should we expect the approach of danger; what will be its origin? I suggest our greatest enemy, our greatest threat, is not Russia; our greatest enemy is not ISIS, ISIL, DEASH, or whatever we are calling them now; it's not China, it's not North Korea, and it's certainly not climate change. Yes, of course, they are all threats; I would never say they're not. But they are born of something much more fundamental. I suggest our greatest threat is the dangerous mix of mediocrity, poor judgment, and tolerance—here, on our ground.

In his Lyceum address, Lincoln said, 'Shall we expect some transatlantic

military giant to step the ocean and crush us at a blow? Never! All the armies of Europe, Asia, and Africa combined, with all the treasure of the earth in their military chest, with a Bonaparte for a commander, could not by force, take a drink from the Ohio or make a track on the Blue Ridge, in a trial of a thousand years. At what point then is the approach of danger to be expected? I answer—If it ever reach us, it must spring up amongst us; it cannot come from abroad. If destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be its author, and finisher. As a nation of freemen, we must live through all time, or die by suicide.'

Our greatest enemy is the dangerous mix of tolerance and mediocrity—mediocrity fueled by those lacking honor, judgment, courage and determination, and the tyranny of tolerance characterized by slumbering apathy, a comfortable denial of reality, and paralyzing bureaucracy. This toxic mix, this deadly combination, creates or fuels all other threats, allowing what would be a simple challenge to evolve into danger. Our enemies demand greatness of us; our partners in the world, to which we have made commitments, demand greatness of us; our soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, coastguardsmen demand greatness of us; those that have made the ultimate sacrifice demand greatness of us. And we should demand it from ourselves. But, absent clear and present danger, we approach greatness hesitantly and inefficiently, only when compelled, operating at the edge of greatness, at risk of losing it.

We have many examples of those who have achieved greatness. Some we will recognize tonight just as we have in the past. And we should continue to recognize those that rise above and achieve truly uncommon things, but contemplate that word "uncommon." It means some stand on the pinnacle of true greatness and others do not. As hard as that is to accept, we all know it to be true, and the slope to that pinnacle of greatness is steep. Many never make it to the top, and many can't find a way to stay there. It takes much to climb and takes even more to remain there. Those that stand at the top, however, are those that change the world. They set an uncommon path to achieve uncommon things, and we see this greatness through their achievements and their character.

But let's be careful because they are not the only ones with claims on the future. Those at the bottom, and even those that occupy the middle ground, can also claim this power to change the world but, clearly, not in the same way as we desire. So what differentiates those that carry the banner of greatness? What allows those to scale that slope to the peak of performance? What robs those at the bottom from the ability to climb? What defines the middle ground of mediocrity? What do we need to know about standing on the pinnacle? And how do we avoid a fall from greatness?

For this I refer to four words used so well by John F. Kennedy in a speech to the Massachusetts State Legislature one month before he was inaugurated as President of the United States. He said, 'When the High Court of History sits in judgment of us all, no matter our station, our success or failure, will be measured by the answer to four questions. Were we truly men of honor? Were we truly men of judgment? Were we truly men of courage? And, were we truly men of determination?'

Honor—to do the right thing and treat others with respect. Judgment—to see the future and the path to get there. Courage—to take action and speak the truth. Determination—to produce required results and finish what we start. These are the words that define greatness; words that serve as our test that guide our every thought, our every decision, our every action; words that should determine who we consider friends with whom we surround ourselves and how we choose leaders; words that should fill both our minds and our hearts. And where we fall on the scale defined by these words will determine not only our success or failure as individuals but also our contribution to our organizations, our country, and the world. Where we fall on this scale will determine our legacy.

There is much at stake and we cannot afford to aspire to anything less than greatness. And we should remember our actions, or inaction, affect the strength of our military, the posture of our country, and the security of the world. I would not be speaking to you this way if they did not, if somehow the world spun on, immune to our words and behavior, but that is not the case. Every day we send soldiers, marines, sailors, airmen, and coastguardsmen into harm's way. We send them to defeat an enemy that tests the will of our United States Military. We send them to provide aid and comfort to those in need, and we send them to mature foreign security forces and governments struggling to shape their own destiny. In executing these missions they not only secure our liberty but also serve as the single greatest symbol of liberty in the world. Collectively, they are the most capable force that has ever existed. Every day they signal to a world at war that both the hand of compassion and the sword of justice extend across the world.

There is great honor in this, and many have worn that badge. Many of those are still with us, but too many are not, having paid the ultimate price, made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of our country. But, after all we have done and the price we have paid, the world remains a chaotic, complex, and dangerous place. To see this all you have to do is pay even a little attention to the situations in Iraq, Syria, Iran, Afghanistan, Russia, Ukraine, Western Pacific, Nigeria, Libya, in our board rooms, on our production floors, in our class rooms, on our televisions, and in our governments.

Now, I could say, let's just all work it out. Let's bring everybody together on any infinite number of problems, conflicts, disagreements, and just work through them. How simple that sounds. Surely that would work. But haven't we tried that before? How many times have we tried that before? And, yet, here we are still facing some of the most vexing problems we have ever faced. In fact, at times it seems that we are reliving some things we thought we had solved, only to see them re-emerge. Among many questions we must ask—why has it taken over a decade to develop the sustainment strategy for our new strike fighter, figure out the basic rules that govern a global spares pool, and appropriately budget to stand up supporting depot maintenance capability? Why, after diligent collaboration and full transparency, could the Department, Industry, and Congress, with all our might, find ourselves incapable of passing common-sense revisions to the depot maintenance-related statutes that would have benefited all of us? Why, after over half a decade and endless debate, could we not implement an enterprise, performance-based approach integrating a collection of individually executed contracts across the Military Departments that would have offered greatly improved supply availability and reduced cost? Why have we seen nearly a decade-long decline in naval aviation readiness with misleading and confusing explanations for root causes and corrective actions, from denial that there even is a problem to the use of false narratives underlying recovery strategies? Why, after a completely integrated, multi-service team approach, taking nearly half a decade, can we not make a much-needed unmanned air system software depot source of repair assignment? And why, after a decade long effort to develop the capability and capacity of the Iraqi and Afghan Security Forces, have we seen the near complete disintegration of those forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, defying all comprehension, a failed supply system, and a dysfunctional maintenance strategy that violates all reasonable logic?

How is this possible? Why do we tolerate this? Some may think my thoughts lack sophistication or I simply don't understand. I'll acknowledge that we face complex situations, but I assure you, I understand all too well.

The fact is we tolerate too much. We tolerate mediocrity or even incompetence. We tolerate lies and half-truths. We tolerate irresponsible self-interest. We tolerate political expediency. We tolerate any other innumerable demonstrations of misbehavior. But let's not confuse tolerance with much needed compassion, empathy, and flexibility. Certainly, we need to see other perspectives and accept alternative paths. And we know empathy and flexibility are key ingredients in collaboration, but that doesn't mean we need to tolerate things that are fundamentally wrong, things that will

lead us down the path to ruin. I see no honor in this, no judgment, no courage.

In these cases, we must have absolutely no tolerance—no tolerance for incompetence, no tolerance for those without integrity, and no tolerance for self-interest that overrides the greater good. And, just to be clear, this is purely and simply an issue of leadership. Some may not see it. And some may be misled, burdened with the inability to differentiate between true leadership and those impersonating leaders. But those that are tired of political correctness, the endless pursuit of consensus, unprofessional behavior, and paralyzing bureaucracy, they understand.

And those that expect vision, those that expect strategy, those that expect executable plans, those that expect fairness, honor, judgment, courage, determination from our leaders, they understand. And we should certainly not tolerate the behaviors of the few with cavalier disregard of the facts, the few that masquerade as leaders, and those that can't recognize it or lack the will to deal with it as they should, those that are threatened by honesty and candor that send the signal that this is ok and that even reward it. Tolerance here is insidious and dangerous. It doesn't take many examples to poison a culture and affect generations. We cannot afford to let this happen. We cannot afford anything less than greatness. This is why I am speaking this way.

We must have the courage to recognize good performance, regardless of whether it is politically correct, and deal appropriately with bad performance. We must have the courage to speak truth to those below us, around us, and above us. Ambiguity, half-truths, misleading messages, and lies demonstrate poor judgment and lack of courage. Tolerance of this, at best, creates inefficiency and weakness, and at its worst, danger. We all should have the judgment and courage to recognize this, call it for what it is, and dedicate ourselves to eliminating it.

In this moment we require leaders. We require leaders that are capable of seeing new patterns in complexity and conflict and applying new methods to achieve unconventional and uncommon outcomes. We need leaders at all levels that have no tolerance for status quo and mediocrity. We need leaders with competence and courage, with the ability to learn and adapt quickly. We need leaders that are comfortable making decisions and taking action in the face of significant ambiguity, unclear guidance, and near impossible timelines. We need leaders that know how to generate both unity of command and unity of effort. It remains all our duty to recognize and contribute to the greater good. We must be able to understand the interests of others and exercise the flexibility and skill in accommodating those interests while protecting our own.

And just because we can see the need for collaboration doesn't mean we can

just wish it into being. There is a science to collaboration and we must be well practiced at it. In fact, we should all be experts because we must accept the simple fact that no truly great thing is achievable without others. No great accomplishment was, or ever will be, possible without collaborative effort. In fact, the more complex a thing, the more challenges we face, the more disciplines are involved, the more integration is required, and the more collaboration is demanded. It is time for collaboration based on respect—respect for well-argued positions, respect for expertise, respect for remarkable performance. It is time for collaboration rooted in both art and science. It is time to put in place principles that bind us by covenants and not just contracts or legal documents. It is time to evolve from practitioners to experts and evangelists.

There is clearly science in this, but science is not enough. We need the 'artist.' We need the artist to apply the principals of this science. Like any great piece of art, it is not simply a collection of canvas and paint applied in the correct order. There is an ingredient that only the artist can provide, an ingredient that differentiates a common work from one that is uncommon. And what makes relationships so difficult is that more than one person is painting on the canvas at the same time and, still, the result must look as though only one artist held the brush. We need the artists; we need the leaders that know this and have the skill to execute it.

It is time, it is always the time, to carefully and ruthlessly choose these leaders—leaders that understand what I have just said; leaders that demonstrate extraordinary courage, honor, determination, and judgment; leaders that understand how to nurture and protect innovation; leaders that understand and can enable collaboration. For it will be only those leaders that will take us to new heights of performance and to deeper connections between all parties necessary to solve the most complex problems of our time. It will be only those leaders that will move us aggressively forward in the right direction, intolerant of misbehavior and relentless in the pursuit of excellence.

For us, we see this as our duty. We are determined to the produce results that are required by our military and our country—to fight and win on any battlefield, of any kind, at any time. The future is ours to shape. And make no mistake, the high court of history will hold each of us accountable with the lives of those we send to stand on future battlefields. I ask you to consider what I have just said.

In this job I have had the honor to see the work of patriots, those that generate readiness for those that apply it, to support and serve beside those that stand in harm's way, and to place coins in the hands of thousands that embody the words honor, judgment,

courage, and determination. And what is left for me to do now is simply say thank you. Thank you to those that secure our freedom, no matter their position. Thank you to those for which I have great admiration and to which I will always be in debt.'

John's speech is a lesson to us all. I personally will strive to answer the call and live up to the virtues he praises: honor, judgment, courage, and determination. As I stated in a video message to this year's symposium attendees, I count myself fortunate and blessed to call John a friend and wish him continued success in his future endeavors.

Thank you.

#### TRIBUTE TO JORDAN SMITH

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, today I wish to give tribute to a Kentuckian who has become a local icon and a national celebrity. Jordan Smith from Harlan, KY, has risen to fame over the past few months for his astounding performances throughout this season of the television show *The Voice*. He sang his way into the hearts of Americans, and following his rendition of Queen's "Somebody to Love" on December 16, the show's viewers voted him to a first place win.

I know I speak for my fellow Kentuckians when I say we are so proud to have someone like Jordan representing our State. This proud Kentucky Wildcat fan not only clinched a first place win in the competition, he also rose to a No. 1 spot on iTunes for record sales, beating out superstars like Adele. I think we have so many talented individuals like Jordan in Kentucky, and I am so glad that everyone else thinks so, too.

A homecoming parade in Jordan's honor is scheduled for Monday, December 21, in his hometown. Kentucky is excited to welcome him home and even more so to see what he will do with his amazing talent in the future. I would like to congratulate Jordan Smith for all his success. I am certain we will be hearing much more from him in the years to come.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that an article about Jordan's historic win from the Harlan Daily Enterprise be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Harlan Daily Enterprise, Dec. 15, 2015]

SMITH IS SEASON 9 VOICE WINNER

(By Reina P. Cunningham)

After months of show-stopping performances, Harlan native Jordan Smith has been announced as Season 9 winner of the hit reality television show 'The Voice,' winning \$100,000 and a recording contract with Republic Records.

Going into the show, Smith was sitting pretty at the No. 1 spots on both 'The Voice' and the Top 100 iTunes charts with his most recent single, 'Mary Did You Know.' Sitting at the No. 1 spot is nothing new for the young man who beat out national singing