

S. 722 Violates the Iran Nuclear Deal & Endangers U.S. Troops

S. 722 - the Countering Iran's Destabilizing Activities Act of 2017 - introduced by Sen. Bob Corker (R-TN), is the first new Iran sanctions bill that has a serious chance of passing into law since the implementation of the Iran nuclear deal, or Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). While some in the Senate have cosponsored the bill under the false belief that is compliant with the Iran deal, key provisions would [violate or disrupt the JCPOA](#) and take provocative new steps opposed by multiple past Presidents that could endanger U.S. troops in the region and put the U.S. on course for war with Iran.

S.722 would move the goalposts on the Iran deal by blocking the lifting of sanctions as required under the deal.

Sec. 8 of the bill would block the President from lifting certain sanctions as required under the nuclear deal unless sanctioned individuals take additional steps beyond the nuclear deal related to ballistic missiles and terrorism. This moves the goalposts on the nuclear deal and would be a violation of the JCPOA.

Former Obama administration officials who negotiated the Iran deal warn that S.722 violates the deal.

Seven former Obama administration officials - including Former Deputy Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken and former White House Deputy National Security Advisor Avril Haines - [outlined their serious concerns](#) that the legislation would risk “giving an impulsive president license to take steps that could undermine a deal that is working, isolate the United States, and put U.S. troops at risk.” Similarly, former Principal Deputy Coordinator for Sanctions Policy at the Department of State Richard Nephew has [warned](#) that “changes do need to be made to make the bill JCPOA compliant.”

S.722 gives the Trump administration new authorities to undermine the deal.

Sec. 4 mandates the President to impose sanctions on any individual engaging in activities that materially contribute or that [pose a risk](#) of materially contributing to Iran’s ballistic missile program. This language is overly broad and could be used by the Trump administration to reimpose sanctions on Iranian entities in a manner that violates the accord.

S.722 risks conflict by designating the IRGC a terrorist organization despite a decade of warnings from the Pentagon.

Sec. 8 would designate the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) - Iran's main military force - a [terrorist organization](#) under the U.S. Specially Designated Global Terrorist program (SDGT). Multiple administrations - including under George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and even Donald Trump - have declined to take this unprecedented step and the Pentagon has warned since at least 2007 that it would endanger U.S. troops and expose them to similar counter-designations. This dangerous move risks endangering U.S. troops, undermining the fight against ISIS, and leading to a confrontation that could result in a war with Iran.

The sanctions would backfire by empowering Iranian hardliners.

Iran is in the midst of a Presidential election that has been a referendum on the Iran deal - with hardliners claiming diplomacy is a failed approach and moderates arguing that hardliners seek to deny civil rights and undermine international engagement. Escalating sanctions now will only serve to empower those hardliners that thrive under sanctions and the threat of war, like the IRGC, while undermining moderates that seek cooperation with the West and to rein in provocative hardline forces.