

## **S. 722 Endangers U.S. Troops and Pushes Trump to Violate the Iran Nuclear Deal**

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). Despite ongoing concerns that the bill as amended would still pose a risk of sparking conflict with Iran and pushing President Trump to violate the JCPOA, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC) [passed](#) the legislation out of committee 18-3.

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

Sec. 5 would direct the Trump administration to 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). This remains unchanged after the SFRC markup. 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.

### **S.722 would still interfere with U.S. obligations to lift sanctions on Transition Day.**

Section 8, as amended, does not fully resolve concerns that the provision could prevent the President from de-listing Iranian parties scheduled to be removed from U.S. sanctions lists on Transition Day, thus placing the United States in non-compliance with its JCPOA obligations. If, for instance, an Iranian person scheduled for removal from U.S. sanctions lists on Transition Day engages in activities that contribute to Iran's ballistic missile program, the President is required to designate that person under Executive Order 13382 (or, if already designated under that Order, to add such legal basis for designation to the person's evidentiary record). In doing so, the President may be precluded from removing the person from U.S. sanctions lists on Transition Day, as the person will now be the subject of a non-nuclear sanction imposed following the implementation of the JCPOA. Such an occurrence would place the U.S. in clear violation of the nuclear accord.

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

Sec. 4 mandates the President to impose sanctions on any individual that "knowingly engages in any activity that materially contributes to the activities of the Government of Iran with respect to its ballistic missile program." It remains unclear how the Trump administration will utilize this new green light for additional sanctions pressure on Iran's missile program, and could interpret the provision in an overly broad manner that threatens U.S. compliance under the JCPOA. Given the President's withdrawal from the Paris climate accord and pending reversal of President

Obama's opening to Cuba, Congress must act with restraint and the expectation that Trump intends to reverse the significant progress Obama made on Iran policy.

**The sanctions would backfire by empowering Iranian hardliners.**

Iran has reelected Hassan Rouhani over a hardliner after he campaigned for openness at home and further negotiations with the West. The Senate threatens to immediately negate that mandate. Escalating sanctions now will only serve to empower those hardliners that thrive under sanctions and the threat of war, like the IRGC, while undermining Rouhani as he seeks to cooperate with the West and to rein in provocative hardline forces.