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S. RES. 515

Condemning attacks by Iranian military proxies on the Armed Forces of the United States in Iraq and Syria and emphasizing the urgency of responding to and deterring such attacks.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

DECEMBER 19, 2023

Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. CRUZ, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. MANCHIN, Mrs. BRITT, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. HAGERTY, Mr. BENNET, Mrs. BLACKBURN, and Mr. SULLIVAN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

RESOLUTION

Condemning attacks by Iranian military proxies on the Armed Forces of the United States in Iraq and Syria and emphasizing the urgency of responding to and deterring such attacks.

Whereas, since the Iranian Revolution in 1979, the Islamic Republic of Iran and its proxies have terrorized neighboring countries and fueled regional instability and violence, including insurgencies and civil wars in Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen and attacks on Israel and United States allies in the Persian Gulf;

Whereas the Islamic Republic of Iran, including through the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, continues to provide

financing, training, and other forms of support to militia groups in Iraq and Syria;

Whereas Iran-controlled militia groups operating in Iraq and Syria include Kata'ib Hizbullah, Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq, Harakat Hizbullah al-Nujaba, and Kata'ib Sayyid al-Shuhada;

Whereas Iran-backed militia groups frequently target United States Armed Forces in Iraq and Syria, including through loitering munitions, improvised explosive devices, rockets, and ballistic missiles;

Whereas, in November 2023, individuals associated with Kata'ib Hizbullah and Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq claimed that such groups were responsible for attacks on United States Armed Forces, along with Harakat Hizbullah al-Nujaba and Kata'ib Sayyid al-Shuhada;

Whereas the rate of attacks by Iran-backed militia groups against United States Armed Forces in the Middle East increased significantly following Hamas' October 7, 2023, terrorist attack against Israel;

Whereas, since mid-October 2023, Iran-backed militia groups have attacked United States Armed Forces at least 115 times in Iraq and Syria;

Whereas such attacks have injured more than 60 United States military personnel, including through shrapnel wounds, perforated eardrums, and traumatic brain injuries;

Whereas such attacks have damaged the military infrastructure of partner countries, including barracks housing members of the United States Armed Forces at Erbil Air Base, and pose an ongoing risk to the security of personnel, facilities, and citizens of partner countries;

Whereas, on December 8, 2023, Iran-controlled militias attacked the United States embassy in Baghdad with mortar fire;

Whereas, since the October 7 Hamas attack, the administration of President Joseph R. Biden, Jr., has moved warships, combat aircraft, air defense systems, and additional members of the United States Armed Forces to the Middle East to deter militant groups from widening the conflict;

Whereas United States Armed Forces have carried out a series of strikes in Iraq and Syria in direct response to attacks or impending attacks by Iran-backed militia groups against United States and coalition forces, including—

(1) on December 3, 2023, when United States Armed Forces engaged 5 militants near Kirkuk, Iraq, preparing to launch a one-way attack drone;

(2) on November 22, 2023, when United States Armed Forces conducted airstrikes against 2 facilities in Iraq;

(3) on November 21, 2023, when a United States AC-130 gunship engaged individuals responsible for launching a missile attack on United States and coalition forces at Al Assad Airbase, Iraq;

(4) on November 12, 2023, when United States Armed Forces conducted airstrikes against facilities associated with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and affiliated groups near the cities of Abu Kamal and Mayadin, Syria;

(5) on November 8, 2023, when United States Armed Forces conducted airstrikes on a weapons storage facility in eastern Syria used by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and affiliated groups; and

(6) on October 26, 2023, when United States Armed Forces conducted self-defense strikes on 2 facilities in eastern Syria used by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and affiliated groups;

Whereas the United States maintains 900 members of the Armed Forces in Syria and 2,500 members in Iraq to advise and assist local forces to prevent a resurgence of the Islamic State;

Whereas United States Armed Forces in Iraq also provide support to North Atlantic Treaty Organization Mission Iraq;

Whereas United States Armed Forces remain present in Iraq at the invitation of the Government of Iraq;

Whereas Iran-backed Houthi rebels have conducted a series of attacks on commercial ships traveling through the Red Sea, a vital global trade route, including—

(1) on December 3, 2023, when ballistic missiles fired by Houthi rebels struck 3 commercial ships in the Red Sea while a United States warship shot down 3 drones in self-defense;

(2) on December 13, 2023, when 2 missiles fired from territory held by Houthi rebels missed a commercial tanker loaded with jet fuel near the Bab el-Mandab Strait;

(3) on December 14, 2023, when a missile fired from Houthi-controlled territory missed a container ship in the Bab el-Mandab Strait;

(4) on December 15, 2023, when a ballistic missile fired by Houthi rebels struck a container ship and caused it to catch fire; and

(5) on December 18, 2023, when Houthi rebels attacked 2 commercial ships in the Red Sea with naval drones;

Whereas such attacks threaten the safety of ships carrying oil, grain, and other goods through the Red Sea, many of which include cargo and energy shipments vital to the United States and partners in Europe and Asia;

Whereas such attacks have forced global shipping companies including MSC, Maersk, CMA CGM, BP, and others to stop using the Red Sea as a travel route for shipments; and

Whereas, on December 19, 2023, the United States announced Operation Prosperity Guardian, an expanded maritime protection force involving certain countries in the Middle East to combat attacks on vessels traveling through the Red Sea: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) condemns attacks by Iran-backed militia
3 groups on members of the United States Armed
4 Forces in Iraq and Syria and support by Iran for
5 such attacks;

6 (2) calls on the administration of President Jo-
7 seph R. Biden, Jr., to increase pressure on the Is-
8 lamic Republic of Iran to stop such attacks and
9 cease support for militia groups that target members
10 of the United States Armed Forces in Iraq and
11 Syria;

1 (3) recognizes that maintaining United States
2 Armed Forces in Iraq and Syria is critical to secur-
3 ing the national interests of the United States by
4 maintaining regional stability and combatting ter-
5 rorism;

6 (4) supports the priorities of the Commander of
7 the United States Central Command to deter the Is-
8 lamic Republic of Iran, counter violent extremist or-
9 ganizations, and compete strategically;

10 (5) commends the mission focus and resiliency
11 of the United States Armed Forces in conducting
12 self-defense strikes against Iran-backed militia
13 groups that pose a threat to United States Armed
14 Forces and interests in Iraq and Syria;

15 (6) recognizes the decision of the Biden admin-
16 istration to increase the presence of United States
17 Armed Forces in the Middle East to deter Iran-
18 backed militia groups from attacking members of
19 the United States and undermining the national in-
20 terests of the United States; and

21 (7) urges the Biden administration—

22 (A) to take steps necessary to deter the Is-
23 lamic Republic of Iran from supporting further
24 attacks; and

1 (B) to declare that further provocations by
2 the Islamic Republic of Iran will be met with a
3 swift and decisive response in full coordination
4 with United States allies and partners to ad-
5 dress the threat Iran-backed militia groups pose
6 to the United States and allied forces in the
7 Middle East.

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