



Congressional Update

By Roxanne Perugino

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I. Palestine

Palestinian Children's' Rights. On April 28, 2016, Representative Betty McCollum (D-Minnesota) circulated a [letter](#) to her colleagues urging President Obama to appoint a “Special Envoy for Palestinian Children.” As proposed, the envoy would travel to the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Israel to collect and analyze data, monitor developments on behalf of Palestinian children, and work to hold Israeli and Palestinian governments accountable to their obligations under international law. The deadline for congressional signatures is May 20, 2016. According to the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation, by the end of February 2016, there were 440 Palestinian children held in the Israeli prison system.

II. Foreign Disinformation and Propaganda

Countering Foreign Disinformation and Propaganda. On May 10, Representatives Adam Kinzinger (R-Illinois), Ted Lieu (R-California), Mike Fitzpatrick (R-Georgia), Dan Lipinski (D-Illinois), Doug Lamborn (R-Colorado), Mark Takai (D-Hawaii), Todd Young (R-Indiana), David Cicilline (D-Rhode Island), Elise Stefanik (R-New York), Mike Quigley (D-Illinois), Brett Guthrie (R-Kentucky), and Brendan Boyle (D-Pennsylvania) introduced **HR5181, a bill to counter foreign disinformation and propaganda**. The bill has been referred to the House Foreign Affairs Committee (HFAC).

In his [press release](#), Kinzinger specifically calls out Russia and China for their practice of disinformation and “false narratives,” which undermines worldwide stability and security. However, it appears the legislation could apply to other countries as well. The bill calls for a “whole-of-government approach” to combat foreign disinformation and manipulation that have an impact on global stability and security. The House bill is the companion bill to **S2692** introduced by Senators Rob Portman (R-Ohio) and Christopher Murphy (D-Connecticut) on March 16, 2016. **S2692** has been referred to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

III. National Defense Authorization Act

On Monday, May 16, the House Rules Committee is scheduled to consider the rule governing debate on the **HR4909 FY 2017 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)**, which the House will consider later the same week. Amendments to the bill were submitted to the Rules Committee the previous week. Following are Middle East-related amendments submitted to the Rules Committee, but at present it is unclear if all these amendments will be ruled “in order” by the Committee.



Israel Palestine-related amendments

(1) Offered by Representative Peter Roskam (R-Illinois), that establishes the sense of Congress that Israel should receive the defensive equipment necessary to ensure its independent capability to remove any existential threats and defend its vital national interests. It also requires the President to report on the necessary defensive mechanisms required and on the availability for sale or transfer of these items to Israel. In short, the amendment gives Israel a green light to attack anything it perceives as a threat to its national interests, including Iran.

(2) Offered by Representative Doug Lamborn (R-Colorado) that expressing the sense of Congress that it is in the US national security interest for Israel to maintain control of the Golan Heights.

(3) Offered by Brian Higgins (D-New York) and Barry Loudermilk (R-Georgia), the amendment authorizes the provision of maritime assistance to Israel in order to protect its offshore energy resources and infrastructure from state and non-state actors. Higgins and Loudermilk have also introduced separate legislation to protect Israel's coastline and natural gas fields (HR5066); a bill pending before the HFAC and House Armed Services Committee (HASC).

(4) Offered by Representative Steve King (R-Iowa), the amendment would prohibit the use of funds authorized by the NDAA from being used to transfer weapons or other military assistance to the Palestinian Authority (PA). Clearly, King does not understand that no funds authorized by the NDAA are provided to the PA. Funding for the PA comes entirely from the State, Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill, including from the Economic Support Fund, and other categories. The US does not provide weapons to the PA and King should know this fact. The Rules Committee is likely to reject this amendment.

Syria-related Amendments

(1) Offered by Representative Gwen Moore (D-Wisconsin), the amendment expresses the sense of Congress regarding the intentional targeting of attacks against medical facilities and medical providers in Syria.

(2) Offered by Representative Richard Nolan (D-Minnesota), the amendment would prohibit funding from the Syria Train and Equip Program to recipients that engage in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights.

(3) Offered by Representatives Rosa DeLauro (D-Connecticut) and Kay Granger (R-Texas), the amendment would prohibit the Defense Department from entering into a contract or subcontract with Russia's state-arms dealer Rosoboronexport unless the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretary of State and Director of National Intelligence, certifies that (i) the firm ceased transferring weapons to Syria, (ii) Russia pulled out of Crimea, (iii) Russian forces have withdrawn from the eastern boarder of Ukraine, and (iv) that Russia is not otherwise actively destabilizing Ukraine. Any such certification would be reviewed by the Defense Department Inspector General.



(4) Offered by Representatives Tulsi Gabbard (D-Hawaii), Richard Nolan (D-Minnesota), Mark Takai (D-Hawaii) and Walter Jones (R-North Carolina), the amendment would remove the extension of authority for the Syria Train and Equip Program.

(5) Offered by Representatives Ted Yoho (R-Florida) and Scott Peters (D-California), the amendment expresses the sense of Congress condemning Assad's regime for its use of chemical weapons, including chlorine, on the people of Syria. It also includes a sense of Congress that the President should offer material support for the collection of evidence regarding the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

(6) Offered by Representatives Ted Yoho (R-Florida) and John Conyers (D-Michigan), the amendment would prohibit the transfer of a man-portable air defense to any entity in Syria.

Saudi Arabia-related amendments

(1) Offered by Representatives Conyers, Raul Grijalva (D-Arizona), Keith Ellison (D-Minnesota) and James McGovern (D-Massachusetts), the amendment states that none of the funds authorized under the NDAA or otherwise made available for FY 2017 for the Defense Department may be obligated or expended to transfer or authorize the transfer of any cluster munitions to Saudi Arabia.

Iran-related amendments

(1) Offered by Representative Peter Roskam (R-Illinois), the amendment requires the President to report on the use by the Iranian government of commercial aircraft and related services for illicit military activities. Roskam opposes any aircraft sales to Saudi Arabia by Boeing, and this amendment appears to be related to that opposition.

(2) Offered by Representatives Jacki Walorski (R-Indiana) and Peter Roskam (R-Illinois), the amendment would prevent the Defense Department from using FY 2017 funds to contract, or conduct significant transactions with Iranian persons such as those who are part of the IRGC, or part of the Government of Iran.

(3) Offered by Representatives Doug Lamborn (R-Colorado), Trent Franks (R-Arizona), Mike Pompeo (R-Kansas) and Vicky Hartzler (R-Missouri), the amendment expresses the sense of Congress that none of the funds authorized by this Act or otherwise made available to any Federal department or agency should be obligated or expended to purchase heavy water produced in Iran.

(4) Offered by Representative Sean Maloney (D-New York), the amendment would require the Director of National Intelligence to establish an integration cell among intelligence agencies to monitor Iranian implementation of and compliance with the JCPOA. Also encourages the creation of a joint intelligence fusion cell to combat Iranian support for terrorist proxy entities.

(5) Offered by Representatives Mike Pompeo and Dan Lipinski (D-Illinois), the amendment would require the Secretary of Defense to submit a report to Congress on cooperation between



Iran and the Russian Federation and to what extent such cooperation affects United States national security and strategic interests.

(6) Offered by Representatives Keith Ellison (D-Minnesota) and Walter Jones (R-North Carolina), the amendment adds language clarifying that the bill does not authorize the use of military force against Iran.

(7) Offered by Representative Raul Ruiz (D-California), the amendment authorizes assistance and training to countries bordering the Persian Gulf, Arabian Sea, or Mediterranean Sea in an effort to deter and counter illicit smuggling and related maritime activity by Iran. The program is to run through FY 2020.

(8) Offered by Representative Scott Peters (D-California), the amendment expresses the sense of Congress that the US should work with its GCC allies to encourage and enable an integrated ballistic missile defense system to prevent an attack by Iran against such countries.

IV. Israel

On May 11, the House Appropriations Defense Subcommittee marked up the FY 2017 Defense Appropriation bill. (The full Committee is scheduled to mark up the bill on Tuesday, May 17.) The draft bill earmarks \$600,730,000 for Israeli Cooperative programs as follows:

-- \$62,000,000 for procurement of the Iron Dome defense system.

-- \$266,511,000 for the Short Range Ballistic Missile Defense (SRBMD) program, including cruise missile defense research and development under the SRBMD program, of which \$150,000,000 shall be for co-production activities of SRBMD missiles in the United States and in Israel to meet Israel's defense requirements consistent with each nation's laws, regulations, and procedures, of which not more than \$90,000,000, subject to previously established transfer procedures, may be obligated or expended until establishment of a US-Israeli co-production agreement for SRBMD.

-- \$204,893,000 for an upper-tier component to the Israeli Missile Defense Architecture, of which \$120,000,000 shall be for co-production activities of Arrow 3 Upper Tier missiles in the United States and in Israel to meet Israel's defense requirements consistent with each nation's laws, regulations, and procedures, of which not more than \$70,000,000, subject to previously established transfer procedures, may be obligated or expended until establishment of a US-Israeli co-production agreement for Arrow 3 Upper Tier.

-- \$67,331,000 for the Arrow System Improvement Program including development of a long range, ground and airborne, detection suite.

V. Russia-Iran

On May 11, Representatives Mike Pompeo (R-Kansas) and Dan Lipinski (D-Illinois) introduced **HR5200, to direct the Secretary of Defense to report on cooperation between Iran and the Russian Federation**. The bill has been referred to the HASC and the HFAC.

VI. Upcoming Hearings – Week of May 16-20, 2016



On Tuesday, May 17, 2016 the SFRC will hold a hearing entitled “War in Syria: Next Steps to Mitigate the Crisis” with Robert Ford, Senior Fellow at the Middle East Institute and former US Ambassador to Syria; Nancy Lindborg, President of the United States Institute of Peace; and Tamara Cofman Wittes, Director of the Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution, at 11:00am in Room 419 Dirksen Senate Office Building.

On Tuesday, May 17, 2016 the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee will hold a hearing entitled “White House Narratives On the Iran Nuclear Deal” with Ben Rhodes, Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Communications and Speechwriting; Michael Rubin, American Enterprise Institute; Michael Doran, Hudson Institute; John Hannah, Senior Counselor, Foundation for Defense of Democracy; and Senator Tom Cotton (R-Arkansas). 10:00am in Room 2154 of Rayburn House Office Building,

On Tuesday, May 17, 2016, the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission will hold a hearing entitled “Ten Years Later: The Status of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)” with Keith Harper, US Representative to UNHRC; Erin Barclay, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for International Organizational Affairs; Scott Busby, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor; Mark Lagon, President of Freedom House; Ted Piccone, Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution; and Hillel Neuer, Executive Director of UN Watch, at 2:00pm in Room 2161 of Rayburn House Office Building.

On Wednesday, May 18, 2016 the HFAC will mark up several bills and resolutions including **S284, Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act, a bill to impose sanctions with respect to foreign persons responsible for gross violations of internationally recognized human rights** at 10:00am in Room 2172 of Rayburn House Office Building.

On Thursday, May 19, 2016 the SFRC will hold a business meeting to consider draft legislation, to extend certain privileges and immunities to the Gulf Cooperation Council, at 11:30am in Room S-116 the Capitol.