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**Heller, Bipartisan Group of Senators Introduce Bill Calling for Additional Sanctions to Crack Down on the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps**

**WASHINGTON** – U.S. Senator Dean Heller (R-NV) today joined U.S. Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and a group of bipartisan senators to introduce legislation that helps combat the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), the main facilitator of the Iranian government’s sponsorship of terrorism and threats internationally. The IRGC Economic Exclusion Act targets the IRGC’s assets by authorizing the administration to sanction entities in which the organization has an ownership stake of less than fifty percent. It also calls for additional sanctions on any individuals supporting or conducting transactions with the IRGC or other sanctioned groups or individuals.

Amid the instability that continues to spread across the Middle East, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has appeared as the most lethal and sophisticated arm of the Iranian government’s nefarious activities. In particular, the IRGC has been an ardent supporter of the brutal regime of Bashar al- Assad, with IRGC commanders actively fighting and training in Syria. The organization has also significantly expanded the scope and scale of Hezbollah’s capabilities in Lebanon, and has been a key factor in the escalation of hostilities on the border with Israel – most recently, rockets launched from Iranian bases in Syria into the Golan Heights on May 10. This legislation provides an opportunity for the United States and its partners to broaden options for exerting greater pressure on the Iranian government in response to its destabilizing activities.

“The murderous Iranian regime is responsible for committing heinous human rights abuses and spreading terror throughout the Middle East and around the globe,” **said Heller.** “We cannot afford to turn a blind eye to the regime’s belligerence, and our bipartisan legislation is an important step toward holding Iran accountable by authorizing additional sanctions against the regime’s enablers.”

“The list of Iran’s destructive activities at home and across the region is long, and it ranges from human rights abuses to its support to terrorist groups to facilitating the use of chemical weapons,” **said Hatch.** “Our bill hits the regime where it hurts at a time when it matters most by targeting the assets of Iran’s Revolutionary Guard Corps, the Iranian government’s main vehicle for much of this criminal activity. It is a step that allows the United States to use the full range of options to exert pressure on the Iranian government and its proxies. We must hold Iran’s leaders to account, and this legislation will help us do exactly that.”

The United States has taken aggressive steps to deter anyone trading with IRGC- affiliated companies or dealing with the group in any way, and has added the organization to the State Department’s Foreign Terrorist Organizations list. In recognition of the new scope and depth of IRGC activities, particularly its promotion of the Assad regime in Syria, the legislation calls for the following measures:

* **Additional Sanctions:** Calls for imposing sanctions on any entity in which the IRGC has an ownership interest of less than fifty percent. Additionally, the legislation calls for additional sanctions on any individuals supporting or conducting transactions with the IRGC or other sanctioned groups or individuals.
* **Restrictions from WTO:** The legislation requires that it be part of US policy to prevent Iran’s membership in the World Trade Organization and other international bodies until the Secretary of State determines that the Government of Iran no longer provides support to international terrorism.
* **Report:** Requires reports on IRGC’s influence on the Iranian economy and state-owned enterprises that facilitate terrorism. Additionally, the legislation requires a report on the foreign and domestic supply chains of the IRGC, specifying the channels and entities that support or facilitate its financial interests.
* **Briefing:** In addition to briefing the appropriate committees on a classified version of the report, the legislation calls for the public availability of an unclassified version of the report to be posted on the website of the Departments of the Treasury and State.

Additional cosponsors of the bipartisan legislation include U.S. Senators Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND), John Cornyn (R-TX), Roger Wicker (R-MS), Thom Tillis (R-NC), Mike Rounds (R-SD), Susan Collins (R-ME), and Deb Fischer (R-NE).

“We need tough, smart national security strategies to keep American families safe, and that’s exactly what this bipartisan bill would help accomplish,” **said Heitkamp.** “The United States cannot tolerate Iran’s support for terrorism and it must also rein in Iran’s nuclear and ballistic missile programs and human rights abuses. I’ve long supported and helped pass the sanctions now in place against Iran to punish it for supporting terrorism and pursuing ballistic missiles. Our bill would build on those efforts by specifically targeting Iran’s Revolutionary Guard Corps and holding Iran’s feet to the fire as long as it backs terrorism.”

“The Iranian regime employs the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps to promote terror and suppress human rights in their country and throughout the Middle East,” **said Wicker**. “This bill would help cut off the flow of capital the IRGC uses to carry out attacks, destabilize the region, and threaten world peace.”

“For too long, the IRGC has been one of the world’s greatest facilitators and financers of terrorism around the world,” **said Tillis.**“This bipartisan legislation will put sanctions in place that are needed to target the entities funding these threats and combat this rogue regime, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to get this legislation passed and hold the Iranian leaders accountable for their actions.”

“Iran’s Revolutionary Guard Corps leads the charge for Iran’s terrorist activity in the Middle East and around the world,” **said Rounds.** “The more we can do to damage their abilities to operate, the faster we can make an impact in slowing Iran’s aggressive agenda. Our legislation will help do that.”

“For far too long, Iran’s Revolutionary Guard Corps has worked to promote violence and terrorism around the world, including through its support for the Assad regime, funding of Iran’s ballistic missile program, and assistance to terrorist groups,” **said Collins**. “Our bipartisan bill will increase economic pressure on the IRGC by imposing additional sanctions, blocking Iran’s access to the WTO, and requiring additional monitoring of the IRGC until Iran stops its destabilizing and destructive actions.”

“Iran continues to be the number one state-sponsor of terror, and the central role of the IRGC in this and other malign activity is undisputed,” **said Fischer.** “Our bipartisan effort would further support the administration’s goal of disrupting the commercial networks facilitating Iran’s dangerous and destabilizing behavior.”

**Statements of Support:**

**Alireza Nader, Chief Executive Officer, New Iran**

"This legislation will put much needed additional pressure on the IRGC, a force responsible for repressing the Iranian people and for spreading terror across the Middle East. Congressional authorization of sanctions against the Iranian regime should be commended as the Iranian people struggle for their freedom. Senator Hatch’s support for Iranians fighting for their freedoms is greatly appreciated by the Iranian-American community."

**Sandra Hagee Parker, Chairwoman, Christians United for Israel Action Fund**

"Christians United for Israel (CUFI) Action Fund supports and commends Senator Hatch's efforts to hold the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) accountable for funding vicious acts of terrorism. Exacting repercussions on the number one state sponsor of terrorism, and their proxies, is an uncontroversial action that should be unanimously agreed upon without delay. If implemented, the Senator's bill seeks to carry out crippling economic constraints on the brutal behavior carried out by the IRGC. We thank Senator Hatch and urge other Senators to offer their support and sponsorship of his bill.”

**Mark Dubowitz, Chief Executive Officer, Foundation for Defense of Democracies**

“The IRGC has deeply penetrated the Iranian economy through their ownership interests in strategic sectors of most interest to international businesses. The US government should impose sanctions on IRGC holdings below the 50 percent threshold and help international companies avoid transactions with one of the most dangerous and destructive players in the Islamic Republic. Senator Hatch’s bill provides an essential statutory framework to help unravel the IRGC’s malign networks.”

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