

LAWMAKERS & EXPERTS AGREE:

IRAN'S PRESENCE IN SYRIA ENDANGERS ISRAEL AND U.S. INTERESTS

MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

// Should Iran be allowed to maintain a permanent military presence in Syria, it would pose a significant threat to Israel, Jordan, and United States interests. A permanent Iranian presence in Syria would connect Lebanon-based Hezbollah to Iran via Iraq and Syria...Any agreement or policy that allows Iran to station forces on or near Israel and Jordan's border does not serve U.S. interests. //

— Bipartisan letter sent by 43 U.S. Representatives to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, Nov. 14, 2017



// This [the region] is a powder keg. This makes it all the more critical that we stop Iran from completing a "land bridge" from Iran to Iraq to Syria to Lebanon. This would be an unacceptable risk and, frankly, a strategic defeat. It is not just Israel's security on the line. //

— Rep. Ed Royce (R-CA), Chairman of the U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Oct. 11, 2017

// Iran's relationship with Russia, which is cemented in the battlefield defending the Assad regime, has made it possible, in my opinion, for Iran to make inroads in Syria, putting Israel's security at risk and threatening to further destabilize Lebanon and Iraq. //

— Rep. Eliot Engel (D-NY), Ranking Member of the U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Oct. 11, 2017



// A permanent Iranian military presence in Syria would greatly harm U.S. interests in the region...A permanent Iranian military base in Syria, potentially near the border with Israel or Jordan, would increase Iran's operational capacity to inflict serious damage against two of our closest allies in the region. //

— Bipartisan letter from Reps. Peter Roskam (R-IL) and Ted Deutch (D-FL) to Sec. Tillerson and Secretary of Defense James Mattis, May 25, 2017

POLICY EXPERTS

// What the Iranians have done across the Middle East is fuel and accelerate cycles of violence so that they can take advantage of chaos and weak states to make them dependent on Iran for support...[A]bout 80 percent of Assad fighters are Iranian proxies in Syria to establish a land bridge over into the Mediterranean. //

— H.R. McMaster, U.S. National Security Adviser, Dec. 2, 2017



// We [The United States] don't control the sand. That is what they [Iran] want to do. It is a lot easier to move things by semi-trailer than it is by even jumbo jet, and the Iranians don't have many of them. The things they want to move are weapon systems, particularly, as you said, even more advanced rockets, missile systems, and components, so that Hezbollah can build such systems—we are seeing that now in Israel and Syria—to threaten Israel and threaten other allies. //

— James F. Jeffrey, former U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, Turkey, and Albania, Oct. 11, 2017

// Syria is a crucible—it is a critical theater for Iran's efforts to expand its influence in the region...the Iranians are on the march in Syria today to a much more significant degree than they even were 1 year ago. And Israeli concern about that is reaching new heights. //

— Jake Sullivan, former National Security Adviser to Vice President Joe Biden and former Director of Policy Planning at the U.S. Department of State, Oct. 11, 2017

