#### Reid barely won – senate sanctions bill still has potential for a vote

Luke **Johnson 2/12**, Over 100 House Members Say Hold Off On Iran Sanctions Vote, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/02/12/house-iran-sanctions-vote\_n\_4775072.html

WASHINGTON -- A bipartisan group of 104 House members urged Congress in a letter sent Wednesday to President Barack Obama not to vote on an Iran sanctions bill while an interim agreement between the Iran and the West is in place.¶ "We understand that there is no assurance of success and that, if talks break down or Iran reneges on pledges it made in the interim agreement, Congress may be compelled to act as it has in the past by enacting additional sanctions legislation," wrote the members. "At present, however, we believe that Congress must give diplomacy a chance. A bill or resolution that risks fracturing our international coalition or, worse yet, undermining our credibility in future negotiations and jeopardizing hard-won progress toward a verifiable final agreement, must be avoided."¶ The effort represents a momentum shift in the House against sanctions. A bill backing sanctions passed in the chamber by a 400-20 vote in July.¶ Reps. Lloyd Doggett (D-Texas) and David Price (D-N.C.) gathered support for the letter, which as of Feb. 3 had more than 70 signatories. They also picked up four Republican signatories -- Reps. John Duncan Jr. (Tenn.), Richard Hanna (N.Y.), Walter Jones (N.C.) and Thomas Massie (Ky.). The only member of the Democratic leadership to sign onto the letter was Assistant Democratic Leader Rep. Jim Clyburn (D-S.C.); House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), House Democratic Whip Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) and House Democratic Caucus Chairman Rep. Xavier Becerra (D-Calif.) did not sign.¶ The letter comes as the effort by Sens. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) and Robert Menendez (D-N.J.) to pass an Iran sanctions bill has lost steam in the Senate. That bill would hit Iran with more sanctions unless it agreed to restrictions on uranium enrichment that go beyond the current six-month interim agreement negotiated with Western powers. Iran's foreign minister has warned that additional sanctions would kill the interim deal.¶ Even the America-Israel Public Affairs Committee, a prime driver behind the sanctions push, has backed off the idea of holding a vote.¶ Talks between the West and Iran on a permanent agreement for its nuclear program are slated to begin in mid-February.

#### Plan kills pc

**Padgett ‘10 (Tim, Latin America Bureau Chief at Time, 8/23,** <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2013820,00.html>**)**

**Proponents** of doing just that **insist there's more consensus** than ever in the U.S. to ditch the Cuba embargo and its travel ban, which, after almost 50 years, have utterly failed to dislodge the Castro regime. Opening Cuba to Americans, they believe, will do more to stimulate democratization there than isolating it has. Even a majority of Cuban Americans now agree. Still, for all the good vibes the bill's backers feel from the White House right now, **some note** warily that Obama has been loath to spend political capital in Cuba, or the rest of Latin America for that matter. Critics, for example, point to his decision last year to stop applying pressure against coup leaders in Honduras, who'd ousted a leftist President, **when conservative Republicans in Congress objected.** Embargo supporters, including Cuban-American Senator Robert Menendez of New Jersey, a Democrat, are already blasting Obama's plans to relax Cuba travel. "This is not the time to ease the pressure on the Castro regime," Menendez said this month, insisting it will only give the brothers "a much needed infusion of dollars that will only extend their reign of oppression." As a result, says one congressional aide who asked not to be identified, when it comes time for the White House to give the bill more full-throated support, "there's a fear they may just decide thatthe fight's not worth it."

#### PC is key – GOP goes all in on pushing Senate vote – flips Dems

Josh **Rogin**, Daily Beast, **2/5**/14, GOP Will Force Reid to Save Obama’s Iran Policy—Over and Over Again, www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/02/05/gop-will-force-reid-to-save-obama-s-iran-policy-over-and-over-again.html

Dozens of Republican senators joined Wednesday to demand that Harry Reid allow a floor vote on a new Iran sanctions bill. If he doesn’t, they are planning to make his life miserable.¶ The Republican Senate caucus is planning to use every parliamentary trick in the book to push Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid to allow a floor vote on a new Iran sanctions bill that the Obama administration strenuously opposes. The Obama White House has succeeded in keeping most Democrats in line against supporting quick passage of the “Nuclear Weapon Free Iran Act,” which currently has 59 co-sponsors, including 13 Democrats. Reid has faithfully shelved the bill, pending the outcome of negotiations between Iran and the world’s major powers—the so-called “P5+1.” But tomorrow, Republicans plan to respond by using an array of floor tactics—including bringing up the bill and forcing Reid to publicly oppose it—as a means of putting public pressure on Reid and Democrats who may be on the fence. “Now we have come to a crossroads. Will the Senate allow Iran to keep its illicit nuclear infrastructure in place, rebuild its teetering economy and ultimately develop nuclear weapons at some point in the future?” 42 GOP senators wrote in a letter sent to Reid late Wednesday and obtained by The Daily Beast. “The answer to this question will be determined by whether you allow a vote on S. 1881, the bipartisan Nuclear Weapon Free Iran Act, which is cosponsored by more than half of the Senate.” The GOP letter calls on Reid to allow a vote on the bill during the current Senate work period—in other words, before the chamber’s next recess. Senate GOP aides said that until they get a vote, GOP senators are planning to use a number of procedural tools at their disposal to keep this issue front and center for Democrats. Since the legislation is already on the Senate’s legislative calendar, any senator can bring up the bill for a vote at any time and force Democrats to publicly object. Senators can also try attaching the bill as an amendment to future bills under consideration. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell has been a harsh critic of Reid’s shelving of the bill, so he could demand a vote on it as a condition of moving any other legislation. If those amendments are blocked by Reid, Senators can then go to the floor and make speech after speech calling out Reid for ignoring a bill supported by 59 senators—and calling on fence-sitting Democrats to declare their position on the bill. “This letter is a final warning to Harry Reid that if Democrats want to block this bipartisan legislation, they will own the results of this foreign policy disaster,” one senior GOP senate aide said. The Republican senators believe, based on recent polls, that the majority of Americans support moving forward with the Iran sanctions bill now. They also believe that if Reid did allow a vote, the bill would garner more than the 59 votes of its co-sponsors and that Democrats vulnerable in 2014 races would support it, pushing the vote total past a veto-proof two-thirds supermajority.

#### Bill causes Israeli first strikes – that’s an all-out war

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As 2013 draws to close, the negotiations over the Iranian nuclear program have entered a delicate stage. But in 2014, the tensions will escalate dramatically as a bipartisan group of Senators brings a new Iran sanctions bill to the floor for a vote. As many others have warned, that promise of new measures against Tehran will almost certainly blow up the interim deal reached by the Obama administration and its UN/EU partners in Geneva. But Congress' highly unusual intervention into the President's domain of foreign policy doesn't just make the prospect of an American conflict with Iran more likely. As it turns out, the Nuclear Weapon Free Iran Act essentially empowers Israel to decide whether the United States will go to war against Tehran.¶ On their own, the tough new sanctions imposed automatically if a final deal isn't completed in six months pose a daunting enough challenge for President Obama and Secretary of State Kerry. But it is the legislation's commitment to support an Israeli preventive strike against Iranian nuclear facilities that almost ensures the U.S. and Iran will come to blows. As Section 2b, part 5 of the draft mandates:¶ If the Government of Israel is compelled to take military action in legitimate self-defense against Iran's nuclear weapon program, the United States Government should stand with Israel and provide, in accordance with the law of the United States and the constitutional responsibility of Congress to authorize the use of military force, diplomatic, military, and economic support to the Government of Israel in its defense of its territory, people, and existence.¶ Now, the legislation being pushed by Senators Mark Kirk (R-IL), Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and Robert Menendez (D-NJ) does not automatically give the President an authorization to use force should Israel attack the Iranians. (The draft language above explicitly states that the U.S. government must act "in accordance with the law of the United States and the constitutional responsibility of Congress to authorize the use of military force.") But there should be little doubt that an AUMF would be forthcoming from Congressmen on both sides of the aisle. As Lindsey Graham, who with Menendez co-sponsored a similar, non-binding "stand with Israel" resolution in March told a Christians United for Israel (CUFI) conference in July:¶ "If nothing changes in Iran, come September, October, I will present a resolution that will authorize the use of military force to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear bomb."¶ Graham would have plenty of company from the hardest of hard liners in his party. In August 2012, Romney national security adviser and pardoned Iran-Contra architect Elliott Abrams called for a war authorization in the pages of the Weekly Standard. And just two weeks ago, Norman Podhoretz used his Wall Street Journal op-ed to urge the Obama administration to "strike Iran now" to avoid "the nuclear war sure to come."¶ But at the end of the day, the lack of an explicit AUMF in the Nuclear Weapon Free Iran Act doesn't mean its supporters aren't giving Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu de facto carte blanche to hit Iranian nuclear facilities. The ensuing Iranian retaliation against to Israeli and American interests would almost certainly trigger the commitment of U.S. forces anyway.¶ Even if the Israelis alone launched a strike against Iran's atomic sites, Tehran will almost certainly hit back against U.S. targets in the Straits of Hormuz, in the region, possibly in Europe and even potentially in the American homeland. Israel would face certain retaliation from Hezbollah rockets launched from Lebanon and Hamas missiles raining down from Gaza.¶ That's why former Bush Defense Secretary Bob Gates and CIA head Michael Hayden raising the alarms about the "disastrous" impact of the supposedly surgical strikes against the Ayatollah's nuclear infrastructure. As the New York Times reported in March 2012, "A classified war simulation held this month to assess the repercussions of an Israeli attack on Iran forecasts that the strike would lead to a wider regional war, which could draw in the United States and leave hundreds of Americans dead, according to American officials." And that September, a bipartisan group of U.S. foreign policy leaders including Brent Scowcroft, retired Admiral William Fallon, former Republican Senator (now Obama Pentagon chief) Chuck Hagel, retired General Anthony Zinni and former Ambassador Thomas Pickering concluded that American attacks with the objective of "ensuring that Iran never acquires a nuclear bomb" would "need to conduct a significantly expanded air and sea war over a prolonged period of time, likely several years." (Accomplishing regime change, the authors noted, would mean an occupation of Iran requiring a "commitment of resources and personnel greater than what the U.S. has expended over the past 10 years in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars combined.") The anticipated blowback?¶ Serious costs to U.S. interests would also be felt over the longer term, we believe, with problematic consequences for global and regional stability, including economic stability. A dynamic of escalation, action, and counteraction could produce serious unintended consequences that would significantly increase all of these costs and lead, potentially, to all-out regional war.