Tom Cotton

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Tom Cotton

• Thomas Bryant Cotton (born May 13, 1977) is an American attorney, military veteran and politician serving as the junior United States senator for Arkansas since January 3, 2015.

• Cotton served in the United States House of Representatives from 2013 to 2015.

Thomas Bryant Cotton (born May 13, 1977) is an American attorney, military veteran and politician serving as the junior United States senator for Arkansas since January 3, 2015. He is a member of the Republican Party.

In 2005, he enlisted in the U.S. Army, where he rose to the rank of captain. Cotton's military background includes service in Afghanistan and deployment to Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom; he is a Bronze Star recipient.

Cotton served in the United States House of Representatives from 2013 to 2015. He was first elected to the U.S. Senate at age 37 in 2014, defeating two-term Democratic incumbent Mark Pryor.

Early life, education, and military career, 1977–2013

Formative years and education

• Cotton's father, Thomas Leonard "Len" Cotton, was a district supervisor in the Arkansas Health Department, and his mother, Avis (née Bryant) Cotton, was a schoolteacher who later became principal of their district's middle school.

• Tom Cotton was born on May 13, 1977 in Dardanelle, Arkansas.

• Cotton graduated in Harvard Law with a J.D.

Tom Cotton was born on May 13, 1977 in Dardanelle, Arkansas. Cotton's father, Thomas Leonard "Len" Cotton, was a district supervisor in the Arkansas Health Department, and his mother, Avis (née Bryant) Cotton, was a schoolteacher who later became principal of their district's middle school. Cotton's family had lived in rural Arkansas for seven generations, and he grew up on his family's cattle farm. He attended Dardanelle High School where he played on the local and regional basketball teams; standing 6 ft 5 in (1.96 m) tall, he was usually required to play center.

While in high school, Cotton developed an intense desire to attend Harvard University, and worked intently on his studies toward that goal. He was accepted to Harvard after graduating from high school in 1995, and majored in government. At Harvard, Cotton was a member of the editorial board of The Harvard Crimson, often dissenting from the liberal majority. In articles, Cotton addressed what he saw as "sacred cows" such as affirmative action. He graduated with an A.B. magna cum laude in 1998 after only three years of study, having written his senior thesis on The Federalist Papers.

After graduating from Harvard, Cotton was accepted into a master's degree program at Claremont Graduate University. He left in 1999, saying that he found academic life "too sedentary", and instead enrolled at Harvard Law School. Cotton graduated in Harvard Law with a J.D. degree in 2002.

After finishing law school in 2002, he served for a year as a clerk for Judge Jerry Edwin Smith at the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. He then entered the practice of law, working at Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher for a few months to pay off his student loans, and later at the law firm of Charles J. Cooper & Kirk from 2003 to 2004.

Military service

• In July 2010, Cotton transferred to the U.S. Army Reserve.

• In October 2008, Cotton was deployed to eastern Afghanistan.

• In May 2006, Cotton was deployed to Baghdad as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom as a platoon leader with the 101st Airborne Division.

• Cotton declined offers to serve in the Army J.A.G.

• On January 11, 2005, Cotton enlisted in the U.S. Army.

• In December 2006, Cotton was promoted to first lieutenant.

On January 11, 2005, Cotton enlisted in the U.S. Army. Cotton declined offers to serve in the Army J.A.G. Corps and instead volunteered for the infantry. Cotton had resolved to serve as an Army infantryman in his third year of law school while watching live news coverage of the September 11 attacks, and had begun a regimen of physical exercise and studying military history. In March 2005, he entered Officer Candidate School, and in June 2005 was commissioned a second lieutenant of infantry.

In May 2006, Cotton was deployed to Baghdad as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom as a platoon leader with the 101st Airborne Division. In Iraq, he led a 41-man air assault infantry platoon in the 506th Infantry Regiment, and planned and performed daily combat patrols. In December 2006, Cotton was promoted to first lieutenant. He was assigned as a platoon leader for the 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard) at Fort Myer, Virginia. In October 2008, Cotton was deployed to eastern Afghanistan. He was assigned within the Train Advise Assist Command – East at its Gamberi forward operating base (FOB) in Laghman Province as the Operations Officer of a Provincial Reconstruction Team, where he planned daily counter-insurgency and reconstruction operations. His 11-month deployment ended on July 20, 2009 and he returned from Afghanistan. He then returned to farming his family ranch.

In July 2010, Cotton transferred to the U.S. Army Reserve. His military record shows his final discharge from the Army Reserve was in May 2013; he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal and earned a Ranger Tab, Combat Infantryman Badge, Parachutist Badge, Air Assault Badge, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, and Iraq Campaign Medal.

Call for the imprisonment of New York Times journalists

• In the letter, Cotton called for the journalists responsible for the newspaper article to be imprisoned for espionage.

In June 2006, while stationed in Iraq, Cotton gained international public attention after he wrote an open letter to the editor of The New York Times, accusing three journalists of violating "espionage laws" by publishing an article detailing a Bush administration secret program monitoring terrorists' finances. The New York Times did not publish the letter, but it was published on Power Line, a conservative blog that had been copied on the email. In the letter, Cotton called for the journalists responsible for the newspaper article to be imprisoned for espionage. He asserted that the newspaper had "gravely endangered the lives of my soldiers and all other soldiers and innocent Iraqis here." The article was widely circulated online and reprinted in full in several newspapers.

House and Senate elections and career, 2013–present

• Cotton declined, believing he would be rushing a political candidacy.

• Shortly after Cotton's Afghanistan deployment ended, his former boss at the Claremont Institute introduced Cotton to Chris Chocola, a former congressman and the president of Club for Growth, an influential Republican political action committee.

• An attempt was made to draft Cotton for the 2010 United States Senate election in Arkansas to run against incumbent Democratic U.S. senator Blanche Lincoln.

Shortly after Cotton's Afghanistan deployment ended, his former boss at the Claremont Institute introduced Cotton to Chris Chocola, a former congressman and the president of Club for Growth, an influential Republican political action committee. An attempt was made to draft Cotton for the 2010 United States Senate election in Arkansas to run against incumbent Democratic U.S. senator Blanche Lincoln. Cotton declined, believing he would be rushing a political candidacy. Following his active duty service, Cotton served in the Army Reserve and did sporadic consulting work for McKinsey & Company, before deciding to run for the Arkansas 4th following retirement of Democratic incumbent Mike Ross.

U.S. Congressman

• Cotton was also endorsed by Senator John McCain.

• Cotton was the second Republican since Reconstruction Era of the United States to represent the 4th district.

• The Club for Growth endorsed Cotton.

• Of the $2.2 million Cotton raised for that campaign, Club for Growth donors were responsible for $315,000 and were Cotton's largest supporters.

In September 2011, Cotton faced criticism for an article that he wrote in The Harvard Crimson in 1998, in which he questioned the value of the Internet as a teaching tool in the classroom, referring to the internet as having "too many temptations" to be useful in schools and libraries. Cotton later stated that the internet had matured since he wrote the article in 1998.

Beth Anne Rankin, the 2010 Republican nominee, and John David Cowart, who carried the backing of the Louisiana businessman and philanthropist Edgar Cason, were the only other Republican candidates in the race after candidate Marcus Richmond dropped out in February 2012. In the primary on May 22, 2012, Cotton won the Republican nomination, with 57.6% of the vote; in second place was Beth Ann Rankin who received 37.1% of the vote.

The Club for Growth endorsed Cotton. Of the $2.2 million Cotton raised for that campaign, Club for Growth donors were responsible for $315,000 and were Cotton's largest supporters. Cotton was also endorsed by Senator John McCain. Cotton was supported by both the Tea Party movement and the Republican establishment.

In the general election on November 6, Cotton defeated state senator Gene Jeffress, 59.5% to 36.7%. Cotton was the second Republican since Reconstruction Era of the United States to represent the 4th district. The first, Jay Dickey, held it from 1993 to 2001 — during the presidency of Bill Clinton, whose residence was in the district at the time. On January 3, 2013, Cotton was sworn into the U.S. House of Representatives by Speaker John Boehner.

As a freshman, Cotton was considered a rising star in the Republican Party. Politico named him "most likely to succeed." He quickly became a vocal opponent of the Obama administration's foreign and domestic policies. He voted for An Act to eliminate the 2013 statutory pay adjustment for Federal employees, which prevented a 0.5% pay increase for all federal workers from taking effect in February 2013. Cotton voted against the 2013 Farm Bill over concerns about waste and fraud in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program voting later that month to strip funding from food stamps. He also voted against the revised measure, the Agricultural Act of 2014, which expanded crop insurance and a price floor for rice farmers.

Cotton accused Obama of holding up a "false choice" between his framework deal on Iran's nuclear program and war. Cotton also seemed to underestimate what military action against Iran would entail, stating: "the president is trying to make you think it would be 150,000 heavy mechanized troops on the ground in the Middle East again as we saw in Iraq. That's simply not the case." Drawing a comparison to President Bill Clinton's actions in 1998 during the Bombing of Iraq (1998), he elaborated: "Several days' air and naval bombing against Iraq's weapons of mass destruction facilities for exactly the same kind of behavior. For interfering with weapons inspectors and for disobeying Security Council resolutions." On July 21, 2015, Cotton and Mike Pompeo claimed to have uncovered the existence of secret side agreements between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on procedures for inspection and verification of Iran's nuclear activities under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action nuclear deal. Obama administration officials acknowledged the existence of agreements between Iran and the IAEA governing the inspection of sensitive military sites, but denied the characterization that they were "secret side deals", calling them standard practice in crafting arms-control pacts and arguing the administration had provided information about them to Congress.

Committee assignments

• United States House Committee on Financial Services

United States House Financial Services Subcommittee on Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit

United States House Financial Services Subcommittee on Monetary Policy and Trade

• United States House Committee on Foreign Affairs

United States House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa

United States House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade

United States House Committee on Financial Services

United States House Financial Services Subcommittee on Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit

United States House Financial Services Subcommittee on Monetary Policy and Trade

United States House Committee on Foreign Affairs

United States House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa

United States House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade

U.S. Secretary of Defense Ash Carter and Senators Joni Ernst, Daniel Sullivan, John McCain, Tom Cotton, Lindsey Graham, and Cory Gardner attending the 2016 International Institute for Strategic Studies Asia Security Summit in Singapore

U.S. Senate (2015–present)

• Cotton was sworn into office on January 6, 2015.

• On August 6, 2013, Cotton officially announced he would challenge Democratic incumbent Mark Pryor for his seat in the United States Senate.

• Cotton defeated Pryor in the general election, 56.5% to 39.5%.

• The race was called for Cotton just half an hour after the polls closed.

On August 6, 2013, Cotton officially announced he would challenge Democratic incumbent Mark Pryor for his seat in the United States Senate. Stuart Rothenberg of Roll Call called Pryor the most vulnerable Senator seeking re-election. Cotton was endorsed by the conservative Club for Growth PAC, Senator Marco Rubio, the National Federation of Independent Business, and former presidential candidate Mitt Romney, who campaigned for Cotton. Cotton defeated Pryor in the general election, 56.5% to 39.5%. The race was called for Cotton just half an hour after the polls closed. Cotton was sworn into office on January 6, 2015.

Cassandra Butts nomination

• Butts told New York Times columnist Frank Bruni that she had gone to see Cotton about his objections to her nomination, and said Cotton had told her that because he knew that the president and Butts were friends, it was a way to "inflict special pain on the president", Bruni said.

• Cotton's spokeswoman did not dispute Butts' characterization.

In February 2015, Obama renominated Cassandra Butts, a former White House lawyer, to be the United States ambassador to the Bahamas. However, Butts's nomination was blocked by several Republican senators. First, Senator Ted Cruz placed a blanket hold on all U.S. State Department nominees. Cotton specifically blocked the nominations of Butts and ambassador nominees to Sweden and Norway after the Secret Service had leaked private information about a fellow member of Congress, although that issue was unrelated to those nominees. Cotton eventually released his holds on the nominees to Sweden and Norway, but kept his hold on Butts' nomination.

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Tom Cotton (left) with president Donald Trump and Republican senator David Perdue (right).

Senator Cotton visits Air Defenders at Osan Air Base during his three-country tour to Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan

Potential role in the Trump Administration

• Cotton frequently met with Trump's staff during the transition period, and, according to Steve Bannon, Cotton suggested John F. Kelly for the role of secretary of homeland security.

• United States Senate Committee on Armed Services

United States Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Airland (Chair)

United States Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities

United States Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Personnel

• Cotton was mentioned as a possible candidate for secretary of defense in the Trump administration.

Cotton was mentioned as a possible candidate for secretary of defense in the Trump administration. However, retired general James Mattis was chosen instead. Cotton frequently met with Trump's staff during the transition period, and, according to Steve Bannon, Cotton suggested John F. Kelly for the role of secretary of homeland security.

In November 2017, the New York Times reported that Cotton was a potential choice to succeed CIA director Mike Pompeo, who could be elevated to US secretary of state after President Trump 'soured' with the then incumbent, Rex Tillerson.

In December of 2018, Politico reported that Cotton is a potential choice to replace Jim Mattis as US secretary of defense after Mattis announced his resignation for January 1, 2019.

Committee assignments

United States Senate Committee on Armed Services

United States Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Airland (Chair)

United States Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities

United States Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Personnel

United States Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

United States Senate Banking Subcommittee on Economic Policy (Chair)

United States Senate Banking Subcommittee on Housing, Transportation, and Community Development

United States Senate Banking Subcommittee on National Security and International Trade and Finance

United States Senate Special Committee on Aging

United States Senate Select Committee on Intelligence

Joint Economic Committee

Political positions

Domestic policy

Tom Cotton and Brett Kavanaugh in August 2018

Criminal justice reform

• In 2016, Cotton said that the United States had an "under-incarceration problem", as opposed to a problem with over-incarceration.

• This follows the release of a Justice Department analysis that was conducted at Cotton's request.

• Cotton did not support it.

• Cotton said that reduced sentencing for felons would destabilize the United States, arguing that "I saw this in Baghdad.

In 2016, Cotton said that the United States had an "under-incarceration problem", as opposed to a problem with over-incarceration. Cotton said that reduced sentencing for felons would destabilize the United States, arguing that "I saw this in Baghdad. We’ve seen it again in Afghanistan."

In November 2018, while arguing against a bipartisan criminal justice reform bill that he strongly opposed, Cotton falsely said that there had been no hearings on the bill. PolitiFact noted that Cotton "ignored years of congressional debate and hearings on the general topics of the bill, as well as the consideration and bipartisan passage of largely similar bills at the House committee level, by the full House, and by the Senate Judiciary Committee." Arguing against the bill in question, the FIRST STEP Act, Cotton has expressed his opinion that "convicts of certain sex-related crimes could accrue credits making them eligible for supervised release or “pre-release” to a halfway house". This follows the release of a Justice Department analysis that was conducted at Cotton's request. A spokesperson for Mike Lee rebutted that "just because a federal offense is not on the specific list of ineligible offenses doesn’t mean inmates who committed [a] non-specified offense will earn early release". The bill passed 87-12 on December 18, 2018. Cotton did not support it.

Gun laws

• In response to the 2017 Las Vegas shooting, Cotton stated that he did not believe any new gun control legislation would have prevented the mass shooting from taking place.

• The NRA's Chris W. Cox stated that "Tom Cotton will always stand up for the values and freedoms of Arkansas gun owners and sportsmen."

• Cotton has an A rating from the National Rifle Association (NRA), which endorsed him during the 2014 election.

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Healthcare

• Cotton was part of the group of 13 Republican Senators that drafted the Senate version of the American Health Care Act of 2017 (AHCA) behind closed doors.

• In April 2014, Cotton was one of 38 Republican lawmakers that signed an amicus curiae in support of Senator Ron Johnson's legal challenge against the United States Office of Personnel Management's ACA ruling.

Cotton opposes the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare), saying in 2012 that "the first step is to repeal that law, which is offensive to a free society and a free people". In April 2014, Cotton was one of 38 Republican lawmakers that signed an amicus curiae in support of Senator Ron Johnson's legal challenge against the United States Office of Personnel Management's ACA ruling.

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Activists had been urging the senator via phone calls and letters to support positions regarding issues such as health care and immigration. The senator's office sent letters asking some of them to cease-and-desist from such contacts, or else the office would contact the US Capitol Police.

Immigration

• Cotton, a supporter of President Donald Trump on the issue of immigration, was at a meeting in which Cotton disputes an alleged attribution that described Haiti and African nations as "shithole countries".

• Cotton opposes amnesty or a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants.

• Cotton and Senator David Perdue (R-GA) said in a joint statement that "we do not recall the President saying these comments specifically".

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In July 2013, after the Senate's bi-partisan Gang of Eight passed the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013, an immigration reform proposal, House Republicans held a closed door meeting to decide whether to bring the bill to a vote. Budget Committee chairman Paul Ryan spoke at one podium arguing for the bill's passage. Cotton spoke at another podium arguing against the bill, even exchanging terse comments with Speaker Boehner. Cotton noted that a tougher stance on immigration had done little to diminish Mitt Romney's electoral support among Hispanics in 2012 compared to John McCain's in 2008. The House decided to not consider the bill.

Cotton supported President Trump's 2017 Executive Order 13769 that prohibited immigration from seven predominantly Muslim countries.

On February 7, 2017, in the presence of President Trump, Cotton and Senator David Perdue (R-GA), jointly proposed a new immigration bill called the RAISE Act which would limit the family route or chain migration. The bill would set a limit on the number of refugees offered residency at 50,000 a year and would remove the Diversity Immigrant Visa. Senators Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and John McCain (R-AZ) both expressed opposition to the bill.

After the violent incidents surrounding the 2017 Unite the Right rally, Cotton issued a statement condemning white supremacism.[better source needed]

Cotton, a supporter of President Donald Trump on the issue of immigration, was at a meeting in which Cotton disputes an alleged attribution that described Haiti and African nations as "shithole countries". Cotton's statements were predicated on his assertion that his colleagues, Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC), lied in their statements that the President had in fact disparaged those nations and peoples in the January 11 meeting, and that the President's language had been salacious, including derogatory curse words that persons on all sides of the incident had described as "vulgar". Cotton and Senator David Perdue (R-GA) said in a joint statement that "we do not recall the President saying these comments specifically". The Washington Post reported that Cotton and Perdue told the White House they heard "shithouse" rather than "shithole". Sen. Cotton reiterated on CBS's "Face The Nation" interview "I certainly didn’t hear what Sen. Durbin has said repeatedly. Sen. Durbin has a history of misrepresenting what happens in White House meetings, though, so perhaps we shouldn’t be surprised by that,” Cotton added, “And I was sitting no farther away from Donald Trump than Dick Durbin was, and I know what Dick Durbin has said about the president's repeated statements is incorrect”.

In December 2018, Cotton placed a senatorial hold on H.R.7164 - A Bill to add Ireland to the E-3 Non-immigrant Visa Program. The bill did not create new non-immigrant visas, but rather allowed Irish college graduates to apply for any surplus E-3 visas in Specialty Occupations, that had gone unused by Australians within their annual cap of 10,500. The bi-partisan bill which had passed the House of Representatives on November 28th, 2018 and had also received the backing of the Trump Administration, particularly then Chief of Staff John Kelly and Director of the Office of Management and Budget (and then incoming chief of staff) Mick Mulvaney. Despite the backing of a broad collation within congress, H.R.7164 did not reach the Senate floor for consideration under unanimous consent as a consequence of Sen. Cotton's hold. Press reports indicate that Sen. Cotton refused to engage with Irish leaders during the process by not taking phone calls from Irish deputy prime minister Simon Coveney and sending his chief of staff in his place to a scheduled meeting at the Embassy of Ireland, Washington, D.C. Sen. Cotton has not to date offered an explanation of his hold on the legislation.

In February 2019, Cotton was one of sixteen senators to vote against legislation preventing a partial government shutdown and containing 1.375 billion for barriers along the U.S.-Mexico border that included 55 miles of fencing.

Minimum wage

• Cotton was criticized for failing to take a public position on the issue until public opinion was overwhelmingly in favor.

• After not taking a position on minimum wage during his campaign, in September 2014, Cotton said he would vote, as a citizen, in favor of the Arkansas Minimum Wage Initiative, a November 2014 referendum to raise Arkansas's minimum wage from $6.25 an hour to $8.50 an hour by 2017.

After not taking a position on minimum wage during his campaign, in September 2014, Cotton said he would vote, as a citizen, in favor of the Arkansas Minimum Wage Initiative, a November 2014 referendum to raise Arkansas's minimum wage from $6.25 an hour to $8.50 an hour by 2017. Cotton was criticized for failing to take a public position on the issue until public opinion was overwhelmingly in favor.

Social issues

• In 2013, Cotton voted against reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act.

• In September 2013, Cotton was one of 103 co-sponsors of the Marriage and Religious Freedom Act.

• Cotton has stated "I oppose the destruction of human embryos to conduct stem-cell research and all forms of human cloning."

• Cotton has stated that "I believe Roe v. Wade and Planned Parenthood v. Casey were wrongly decided."

In June 2013, Cotton voted in favor of the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, a bill to ban abortions occurring 20 or more weeks after fertilization. Cotton has stated that "I believe Roe v. Wade and Planned Parenthood v. Casey were wrongly decided." He was one of 183 co-sponsors of the version of the Title X Abortion Provider Prohibition Act introduced in 2013.

Cotton has stated "I oppose the destruction of human embryos to conduct stem-cell research and all forms of human cloning." In 2012, Cotton said, "Strong families also depend on strong marriages, and I support the traditional understanding of marriage as the union of one man and one woman. I also support the Defense of Marriage Act." In 2013, Cotton voted against reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act.

In September 2013, Cotton was one of 103 co-sponsors of the Marriage and Religious Freedom Act. In October 2015, Cotton was one of 24 co-sponsors of the Thin Blue Line Act, a federal bill that would impose the death penalty in the case of the killing of police officers.

Infrastructure

• In February 2019, Cotton was one of eleven senators to sign a letter to Energy Secretary Rick Perry and Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen urging them "to work with all federal, state and local regulators, as well as the hundreds of independent power producers and electricity distributors nation-wide to ensure our systems are protected" and affirming that they were "ready and willing to provide any assistance you need to secure our critical electricity infrastructure."

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Student loans

• In August 2013, Cotton voted against the Bipartisan Student Loan Certainty Act of 2013, which lowered interest rates on student loans.

• Cotton had received federally-subsidized student loans when he was a student but said he didn't want the government in the student loan business, noting that he and his family worked for years to afford his college education.

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Foreign policy

• In December 2018, after President Trump announced the withdrawal of American troops in Syria, Cotton was one of six senators to sign a letter expressing concern for the move and their belief "that such action at this time is a premature and costly mistake that not only threatens the safety and security of the United States, but also emboldens ISIS, Bashar al Assad, Iran, and Russia."

• In January 2019, Cotton was one of eleven Republican senators to vote to advance legislation intended to block President Trump's intent to lift sanctions against three Russian companies.

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In September 2016, Cotton was one of thirty-four senators to sign a letter to United States secretary of state John Kerry advocating for the United States using "all available tools to dissuade Russia from continuing its airstrikes in Syria" from an Iranian airbase near Hamadan "that are clearly not in our interest" and stating that there should be clear enforcement by the US of the airstrikes violating "a legally binding Security Council Resolution" on Iran.

In August 2018, Cotton and 16 other lawmakers urged the Trump administration to impose sanctions under the Global Magnitsky Act against Chinese officials who are responsible for human rights violations in western China's Xinjiang region targeting the Uyghur ethnic minority. They wrote in a bipartisan letter: "The detention of as many as a million or more Uyghurs and other predominantly Muslim ethnic minorities in "political reeducation” centers or camps requires a tough, targeted, and global response."

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Iran

• After Cotton's amendment came under harsh criticism regarding its constitutionality, he withdrew it.

• In 2013, Cotton introduced legislative language to prohibit trade with relatives of individuals subject to U.S. sanctions against Iran.

• In May 2019, Cotton said that in the event of a war with Iran, the United States could easily win in "two strikes.

In 2013, Cotton introduced legislative language to prohibit trade with relatives of individuals subject to U.S. sanctions against Iran. According to Cotton, this would include "a spouse and any relative to the third degree," such as, "parents, children, aunts, uncles, nephews, nieces, grandparents, great grandparents, grandkids, great grandkids." After Cotton's amendment came under harsh criticism regarding its constitutionality, he withdrew it.

In March 2015, Cotton wrote and sent a letter to the leadership of the Islamic Republic of Iran, signed by 47 of the Senate's 54 Republicans, attempting to cast doubt on the Obama administration's authority to engage in nuclear-proliferation negotiations with Iran. The open letter was released in English as well as a poorly-translated Farsi version, which "read like a middle schooler wrote it", according to Foreign Policy. Within hours, commentators [clarification needed] suggested that the letter prepared by Cotton constituted a violation of the Logan Act. Questions also were raised as to whether it reflected a flawed interpretation of the Treaty Clause of the United States Constitution.

President Barack Obama mocked the letter, referring to it as an "unusual coalition" with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as well as an interference with the then-ongoing negotiations of a comprehensive agreement on the Iranian nuclear program. In addition, Obama said, "I'm embarrassed for them. For them to address a letter to the Ayatollah – the Supreme Leader of Iran, who they claim is our mortal enemy – and their basic argument to them is: don't deal with our President, 'cause you can't trust him to follow through on an agreement ... That's close to unprecedented."

Iran's foreign minister, Javad Zarif, responded to the letter by saying "[the senators'] letter in fact undermines the credibility of thousands of such mere executive agreements that have been or will be entered into by the US with various other governments". Zarif pointed out that the nuclear deal is not supposed to be an Iran–US deal, but an international one, saying that "change of administration does not in any way relieve the next administration from international obligations undertaken by its predecessor in a possible agreement about Iran's peaceful nuclear program." He continued, "I wish to enlighten the authors that if the next administration revokes any agreement with the stroke of a pen, as they boast, it will have simply committed a blatant violation of international law."

Cotton defended the letter amid criticism that it undermined the president's efforts, "It's so important we communicated this message straight to Iran... No regrets at all... they already control Tehran, increasingly they control Damascus and Beirut and Baghdad and now Sana'a as well." He continued to defend his action in an interview with MSNBC by saying, "There are nothing but hardliners in Iran. They've been killing Americans for 35 years. They kill hundreds of troops in Iraq. Now they control five capitals in the Middle East. There are nothing but hardliners in Tehran and if they do all those things without a nuclear weapon, imagine what they'll do with a nuclear weapon."

Cotton received extensive financial support from pro-Israel groups due to his opposition to the Iran nuclear deal and for his hawkish stance toward Iran. Several pro-Israel Republican billionaires who contributed millions of dollars to William Kristol's Emergency Committee for Israel spent $960,000 to support Cotton.

In May 2019, Cotton said that in the event of a war with Iran, the United States could easily win in "two strikes. The first strike and the last strike." He said there would be a "furious response" by the United States if there was any provocation from Iran.

Personal life

• Cotton has said that Walter Russell Mead, Robert D. Kaplan, Henry Kissinger, Daniel Silva, C.J.

• Cotton is a member of the United Methodist Church.

• Cotton married attorney Anna Peckham in 2014.

Cotton married attorney Anna Peckham in 2014. The couple have two children. Their first child, a boy, was born on April 27, 2015.

Cotton is a member of the United Methodist Church.

Cotton has said that Walter Russell Mead, Robert D. Kaplan, Henry Kissinger, Daniel Silva, C.J. Vonn, and Jason Matthews are among his favorite authors.

Electoral history

See also

• List of people from Arkansas

• List of United States Senators from Arkansas

• List of United States Representatives from Arkansas

List of people from Arkansas

List of United States Representatives from Arkansas

List of United States Senators from Arkansas

References

External links

• Tom Cotton at Curlie

Official website

Tom Cotton at Curlie

Biography at the Biographical Directory of the United States Congress

Profile at Vote Smart

Financial information (federal office) at the Federal Election Commission

Legislation sponsored at the Library of Congress

Appearances on C-SPAN