

'These are dangerous times': Iran Tops List of Threats, Sen. Deb Fischer Says in UNL Speech

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LINCOLN — “These are dangerous times,” Sen. Deb Fischer, R-Neb., warned Wednesday during a forum at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Fischer spoke about foreign policy and threats to the United States as part of the Thomas C. Sorensen Public Policy Seminar Series, hosted by the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center.

Tarik Abdel-Monem, a research specialist with the center, estimated that 200 people attended.

The focus of Fischer’s speech was Iran, which she called a threat that keeps her up at night.

“Without a doubt, I believe the greatest threat to our country is a nuclear-armed Iran,” she said.

She also listed Russia, China and Syria as threats, as well as the Islamic State.

Fischer, chairwoman of the Armed Services subcommittee on emerging threats and capabilities, questioned the parameters of the framework agreement that President Barack Obama’s negotiators have reached with Iran.

Specifically, she asked what access it would guarantee to Iran’s nuclear facilities and which ones.

Fischer also said that a nuclear-armed Iran could lead to a nuclear arms race in the Middle East.

Ultimately, she said, having a clear strategy is important in such issues.

“We have to know what the goal is with foreign policy. We have to know what the end game is,” she said. “There’s limited resources that the United States has. We need to target our policy, and be sure in our policy and be resolute in the policies that we have, and I think that’s the most important thing, to be able to not just have the administration set those policies but then have the American people understand them.”

Students had an opportunity to ask questions at the end of Fischer’s talk.

One asked why Fischer thought it was a good idea to sign the controversial letter sent to Iran by 47 Republican senators in March, in which they warned Congress could undo any deal Obama negotiated.

“I think it was a good idea. I’m glad I signed it. It clarified the position of the United States Senate,” Fischer responded.

Fischer also offered a piece of advice for students.

“They need to be aware of what’s going on in the world, what’s going on in their community, if they want to make a difference,” she said.

Abdel-Monem said the forum provided a great opportunity for students to interact with politicians, without a filter.

Erin Cooper, chairwoman of the government liaison committee for the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska, UNL’s student government, agreed.

“It’s an amazing opportunity to bridge the gap between Washington, D.C., and our own campus,” she said.