



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

February 15, 2012

The Honorable Nirupama Rao
Ambassador of India to the United States
2107 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20008

Dear Ambassador Rao:

We write today to express our serious concern with the announcement that your government will send a large trade delegation to Iran within the next few weeks in order to explore economic opportunities. This announcement comes as the international coalition working to isolate the Iranian regime continues to stand firm in applying pressure through international sanctions aimed at Iran's energy and financial sectors. At a time when global businesses and financial institutions are pulling out of Iran and refusing to conduct business, we hope that your country will join this coalition instead of hindering its progress.

We are also deeply concerned to learn of reports that India has surpassed China as the top purchaser of Iranian crude oil. Financial institutions that continue to facilitate purchases of petroleum products from Iran could now face possible sanctions according to U.S. law. Our allies around the globe are now searching for non-Iranian sources to meet their energy needs. Given the strong U.S.-India partnership, we hope that your country will follow suit and decrease its reliance on Iranian crude oil.

Even as international sanctions begin to bite, the Iranian regime has shown no sign of abandoning its pursuit of nuclear weapons. According to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Iran has begun enriching uranium up to 20 percent at its underground facility at Qom, a site which remained undisclosed until 2009. Uranium enriched at this level signifies a critical step toward developing a nuclear weapon in that it represents 80 percent of the work needed. The latest IAEA report, issued at the end of last year, explicitly confirmed that Iran has engaged in "activities related to the development of a nuclear explosive device." The report also indicated for the first time military dimensions to the Iranian nuclear program, including testing designed to integrate nuclear weapons on specific missile warheads.

We know India shares our goal of ensuring that Iran does not get a nuclear capability and appreciate India's votes against Iran at the IAEA. We also appreciate that India has ended the sale of refined petroleum to Iran and has not moved forward with the India-Pakistan-Iran pipeline. But now is not the time to neither explore future trade opportunities with Iran nor increase business ties. We respectfully urge your government to reconsider its decision to send a trade delegation to Iran and ask that you stand firm with the international coalition working diligently to pressure the Iranian regime to abandon its dangerous pursuit of nuclear weapons.

Sincerely,



Steve Israel
Member of Congress



Richard Hanna
Member of Congress