

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 19, 2013

The Honorable John Kerry
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry,

We appreciate your continued efforts, in concert with our friends and allies, to negotiate with the Iranian regime. We also commend the efforts of your negotiating team to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapons capability. Our negotiators have benefited from the effects of tough economic sanctions in bringing Iran to the table. Without the Administration, Congress, and our allies working together, we would not have arrived at this crucial point.

Indeed, we support the concept of an interim agreement with Iran that would roll back its nuclear program as a first step to seeking a final settlement that prevents Iran from ever developing a nuclear weapons capability. At the same time, we are concerned that the interim agreement would require us to make significant concessions before we see Iran demonstrably commit to moving away from developing a nuclear weapons capability.

It is our understanding that the interim agreement now under consideration would not require Iran to even meet the terms of prior United Nations Security Council resolutions which require Iran to suspend its reprocessing, heavy water-related and enrichment-related activities and halt ongoing construction of any uranium-enrichment, reprocessing, or heavy water-related facilities. For example, we understand that the P5+1 is prepared to permit Iran to continue enriching uranium at 3.5 percent albeit for civilian use, to cap but not reduce its number of centrifuges, and to continue work around or near the Arak heavy water nuclear reactor. While the interim agreement may suggest that Iran could be willing temporarily to slow its pursuit of a nuclear weapons capability, it could also allow Iran to continue making some progress toward that end under the cover of negotiations. This does not give us confidence that Iran is prepared to abandon unambiguously its nuclear weapons pursuit altogether, as it must.

Furthermore, it is our understanding that in return for certain Iranian actions, the P5+1 would allow Iran to gain access to considerable amounts of capital that have been frozen by our international sanctions. Some have estimated the value of this capital for Iran as much as \$10 billion. We regard this as a major concession on our part that would not be justified by the concessions the Iranian regime would be required to make in return. If we are reducing sanctions, Iran should be reducing its nuclear capabilities.

As you know, it is not just the sanctions themselves but the threat that they would continue to tighten that has brought the Iranians to the negotiating table. Easing sanctions now without real, tangible actions by Iran to roll back its nuclear program would not only diminish this threat of future pressure, it could make it more difficult to maintain the current sanctions regime at a time when many international actors are already eager to lessen their implementation of sanctions. We feel strongly that any easing of sanctions along the lines that the P5+1 is reportedly considering should require Iran to roll back its nuclear program more significantly than now envisioned.

It is our belief that any interim agreement with the Iranians should bring us closer to our ultimate goal which is Iran without a nuclear weapons capability. We must ensure that the steps we take in the coming weeks and months move us towards a resolution that ultimately brings Iran in compliance with all relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions, seeks to prevent Tehran from possessing any enrichment or reprocessing capability, and resolves any and all fears that Iran will develop a nuclear weapons capability.

The upcoming round of negotiations could hardly be more important and we must be ever mindful of with whom we are negotiating. Iran has been the largest state sponsor of terrorism for over thirty years; its leaders routinely call for the destruction of Israel; and it arms and finances terrorist groups around the globe. We urge you and your negotiating team to fight for an interim agreement that demands as much or more of Iran as it does of the United States and our allies. We hope in the next few weeks we and our partners will redouble our efforts to gain greater proportionality and to finalize an agreement that demonstrates that Iran is moving away from the nuclear weapons path.

Sincerely,



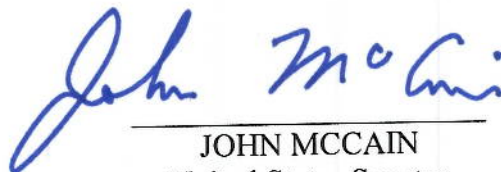
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