

**Question for the Record Submitted to
Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken
By Senator Marco Rubio (#3)
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
September 29, 2016**

Question:

Several administration officials have justified these payments to Iran coinciding with release of hostages by claiming that there were three separate negotiations happening at the same time (JCPOA implementation, release of U.S. hostages, and resolution of the Iranian claim), which naturally converged on January 17.

- a. If there were three separate tracks, can you confirm that three separate U.S. officials negotiated these issues in the run-up to January 17, 2016?
- b. Did three separate U.S. officials sign documentation on JCPOA implementation including the treatment of Bank Sepah under the JCPOA, release of the U.S. hostages, and resolution of the Iranian claim?
- c. If not, what U.S. official signed the bilateral documents between Iran and the United States resolving these three tracks?
- d. What is the name of the Iranian official who signed the documents committing to Iran's effort? What is his affiliation? What group does he work for?
- e. Was the transfer of the cash timed in any way to coincide with the release of the hostages?
- f. Given all of these facts: how was this not a ransom payment?

Blinken's answer:

As the President and the Secretary have made clear, the United States transferred funds to Iran to effectuate the settlement of a long-standing claim at the U.S.-Iran Claims Tribunal at The Hague. The timing of the Hague settlement was a consequence of the United States taking advantage of the opening of diplomatic opportunities with Iran on several fronts simultaneously, including the opportunity to minimize litigation risk with respect to Iran's contract claims arising under the U.S.-Iran Foreign Military Sales ("FMS") Program. Implementation Day of the Joint

Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the release of several American citizens unjustly imprisoned in Iran, and the settlement of the Hague claim were all made possible by this intensified diplomatic engagement, but all were resolved on their own merits.

Regarding the allegations that this settlement constituted ransom to free American citizens who were released from prison in Iran on January 17, the Administration has repeatedly made it clear since January, and President Obama recently reiterated, that this settlement did not constitute ransom and that the United States has not and will not pay ransom. Upon Iran's release of several unjustly detained Americans, the United States provided relief to certain Iranian citizens charged with primarily sanctions-related crimes, several of whom are dual U.S.-Iranian nationals, as a one-time reciprocal humanitarian gesture.