

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 30, 2013

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President:

With the election of Hassan Rouhani, the Iranian people signaled their clear dissatisfaction with Iran's government and its policies. We hope such a surprising and convincing electoral outcome will persuade Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei to abandon Iran's nuclear weapons quest. But until we see a significant slowdown of Iran's nuclear activities, we believe our nation must toughen sanctions and reinforce the credibility of our option to use military force at the same time as we fully explore a diplomatic solution to our dispute with Iran.

We deeply sympathize with the plight of the Iranian people, who have suffered under the Khamenei regime. We note that President-elect Rouhani has pledged re-engagement with the P5+1 and promised to bring transparency to Iran's nuclear program. At the same time, Iran has used negotiations in the past to stall for time, and in any event, Khamenei is the ultimate decision-maker for Iran's nuclear program. Moreover, Iran today continues its large-scale installation of advanced centrifuges. This will soon put it in the position to be able to rapidly produce weapons-grade uranium, bringing Tehran to the brink of a nuclear weapons capability.

Accordingly, Mr. President, we urge you to bring a renewed sense of urgency to the process. We need to understand quickly whether Tehran is at last ready to negotiate seriously. Iran needs to understand that the time for diplomacy is nearing its end. We implore you to demand immediate serious moves on Iran's part. Iran should move quickly toward compliance with United Nations Security Council resolutions demanding it suspend enrichment. Iran must cease installing centrifuges, agree to the removal of 20 percent enriched uranium from Iran, and cease work on the heavy water reactor being built in Arak.

We believe there are four strategic elements necessary to achieve resolution of this issue: an explicit and continuing message that we will not allow Iran to acquire a nuclear weapons capability, a sincere demonstration of openness to negotiations, the maintenance and toughening of sanctions, and a convincing threat of the use of force that Iran will believe. We must be prepared to act, and Iran must see that we are prepared.

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Mr. President, we share your conviction that Iran must not be allowed to have a nuclear weapon. We want you to know that you will have our support in doing all you can to resolve on an urgent basis this most pressing challenge to international security.

Sincerely,

Robert Menendez
United States Senator

Lindsey Graham
United States Senator

Robert Casey
United States Senator

Roy Blunt
United States Senator

Tim Kaine
United States Senator

Kelly Ayotte
United States Senator