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COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

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October 26, 2023

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

The Honorable Jake Sullivan
Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Secretary Blinken and National Security Advisor Sullivan:

I write to you regarding the Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian's ongoing visit to New York City. I am deeply disturbed that the Biden Administration would grant him a visa at this time.

As you know, the barbaric attacks on Israel by Hamas have resulted in the loss of more than 1,500 people. Dozens of Americans were murdered, while several were kidnapped and are being held hostage. Meanwhile, Iranian proxies around the region have attacked U.S. forces.

As I'm sure you would agree, it is unconscionable that the Biden Administration would grant Mr. Amir-Abdollahian a visa to visit the United States, where he will no doubt confer with supporters and advocate against our interests and those of Israel and our other Middle East partners. The American people need to know why he received a visa and whether he intends to leave the country before American hostages are released.

As you surely know, while it is customary to grant visas to foreign dignitaries for travel to the United Nations, you would undoubtedly agree, Iran's rampant support for terrorism must incur a penalty among the community of civilized nations. Crucially, there is precedent to deny Iran such privileges, given that in 2020, the United States blocked entry by then-Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif. Furthermore, U.S. law bars those who support terrorism from entering the United States. Mr. Amir-Abdollahian clearly falls into this category.

While Mr. Amir-Abdollahian should have been expelled once his presence came to your attention, I respectfully ask that you answer the following questions by November 3, 2023:

1. On what date was the visa for Mr. Amir-Abdollahian granted?
2. Which U.S. officials had final sign-off on the decision to grant the visa?

3. Were attacks against American forces in the Middle East or Hamas's crimes considered in the decision to grant Mr. Amir-Abdollahian a visa?
4. Did the United States provide assurances to Iran that Mr. Amir-Abdollahian would not be detained?
5. Will you commit to providing to the Congress all correspondence between U.S. officials and Iran regarding the visa?

After Hamas's October 7 attacks and subsequent attacks by other Iranian proxies, the Biden Administration must stop treating Iran with the deference it has shown since coming into office. A course correction is long overdue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Darrell E. Issa', written in a cursive style.

DARRELL E. ISSA
Member of Congress