

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 15, 2009

President-Elect Barack Obama
The Office of the President-Elect
Washington, DC 20270

Dear President-Elect Obama:

I write to you with great concern over the Agreement for Nuclear Cooperation between the United States and the United Arab Emirates, which is scheduled to be signed today by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

As you may know, the Bush Administration has apparently decided not to submit this Agreement to Congress before leaving office. As a result, you will have the opportunity to decide whether or not cooperating with the United Arab Emirates on the construction of nuclear reactors is in the national interest of the United States. With the Middle East already reeling under the strain of nuclear technology development in Iran, the clear record of United Arab Emirates as a major dual-use technology transshipment hub, and your commitment to dramatically expand US research, development, and investment in a renewable energy revolution, I urge you to not submit this Agreement for Nuclear Cooperation to the Congress.

The sudden rush by many countries in the Middle East to declare an intention to develop nuclear energy programs is extremely worrisome. Within the past few years, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Jordan, and Egypt have all stated an intention to pursue nuclear energy programs, and several of these countries are currently engaged in negotiations with nuclear supplier states. With Iran racing ahead on its nuclear development program, a further infusion of nuclear technologies into the region could be dangerously destabilizing. In the Middle East, a nuclear energy race could easily become a nuclear arms race.

In addition, we know that Iran and other countries have used the United Arab Emirates as a transshipment point in successful schemes to escape the restrictions of export control regimes for dual-use goods. With an indisputable record as a country whose weak export controls have enabled the proliferation of the world's most dangerous weapons, the United Arab Emirates has failed a crucial test of responsible nuclear stewardship. As such, I believe that implementation of a formal Agreement for Nuclear Cooperation with the United Arab Emirates would be unwise.

As you know, the Bush Administration has gone to great lengths to promote the use of nuclear energy around the world, including by negotiating bilateral Agreements for Nuclear Cooperation with a number of countries. It is time for a new direction in U.S. nuclear trade policy that properly assesses the critical national security issues at stake and recognizes the great potential for international cooperation on renewable energy.

I respectfully request that you do not submit the Agreement for Nuclear Cooperation with the United Arab Emirates to the Congress for approval. I wish you the greatest success in your presidency and look forward to working with you on these crucial issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Edward J. Markey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "M" and "K".

Edward J. Markey