

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 24, 2012

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We write to affirm our strong support for the new sanctions put in place when Congress passed and you signed into law the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012 (NDAA). Since the passage of that legislation, we have seen a spate of increasingly hostile actions and statements coming from Iran. From the December Iranian naval exercises in the Sea of Oman, to threats to prevent the passage of international oil shipments through the Strait of Hormuz, to an Iranian court's recent sentencing to death of American Amir Hekmati, to the Iranian military chief's warning that U.S. naval vessels will not be allowed to re-enter the Persian Gulf, it is clear that leaders in Iran are feeling the bite of these crippling new sanctions.

However, at this time of unprecedented national unity and international cooperation in taking every possible step to prevent Iran from acquiring the ability to make and use nuclear weapons, your statement at the signing of the NDAA that, with respect to the sanctions regime in the new law, you "will treat the provisions as non-binding," creates a damaging level of confusion and ambiguity about America's position on this critical issue.

As you know, the sanctions language was written with bipartisan cooperation in the Senate and both houses of Congress have supported the creation of this new sanctions regime with the hope that it will cut off the Iranian financial and petroleum sectors that have long been used to advance Iran's nuclear ambitions. Most importantly, the sanctions target the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) and the foreign entities it does business with in order to financially and politically isolate the regime over their relentless pursuit of nuclear weapons capabilities.

Upon signing the bill, you indicated that the sanctions program language was advisory only. It is not. As a co-equal branch of government, Congress has acted with overwhelming bipartisanship to put in place this tool to combat Iran's continued march towards nuclear weapons capability. We respectfully urge you to clarify that your intent is to fully and forcefully implement these provisions. We hope we can continue to work with your Administration to shut off the spigot of financial support that has allowed Iran to continue to thwart international engagement thus far.

Mr. President, we all agree that a nuclear Iran poses a grave threat to the security and stability of the region and the world. Furthermore, clear and compelling evidence shows that Iran's state-sponsored financial institutions have allowed them to fund and facilitate nuclear weapons research, development, and testing. The new sanctions are an important step in curtailing these activities.

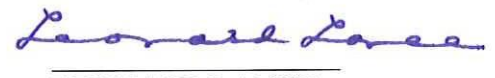
At this critical time of engagement when the world must convince Iran to abandon its disastrous nuclear ambitions, there needs to be surety that America and our allies will use every possible measure to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran. We respectfully request your Administration brief us at the earliest opportunity on how specifically you plan to implement the new sanctions and in particular, how your signing statement and potential reservations will impact the effectiveness of this effort.

We look forward to working together to ensure the safety and security of the U.S., the region, and the world.


Very truly yours,


PETER ROSKAM
Member of Congress

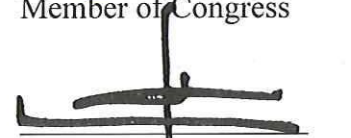

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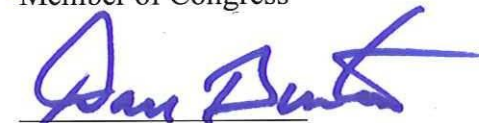

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