

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 24, 2013

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to you given recent press reports about the exchange of letters you have had with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani.

We are skeptical that Mr. Rouhani's election will bring much change to Iranian policies. As you know, Iran continues to support its key ally Bashar al-Assad, by some estimates sending thousands of Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps and Hezbollah fighters to prop up the Assad government and aid its horrific killing of thousands of Syrians, including through the use of chemical weapons.

Also, despite the hopes that many have had that Mr. Rouhani would dramatically improve Iran's abysmal human rights situation, Iranians still are being denied their fundamental freedoms of assembly, the press, and conscience. For example, this week marks the one year anniversary of the imprisonment of Iranian-American pastor Saeed Abedini who is serving an eight year prison term for practicing his faith.

Iran also continues to make steady progress toward a nuclear weapon. Based on the latest report of the International Atomic Energy Agency, it appears that Iran could reach the so-called "critical capability" to produce enough weapons-grade uranium for a nuclear explosive device without being detected by mid-2014, if not earlier. Despite sanctions and international pressure and the arrival of Mr. Rouhani, Iran has not changed course and is close to obtaining this capability that will likely result in a cascade of nuclear proliferation in one of the world's most volatile regions.

On September 15th, you said that a credible threat of force was important to a resolution of the Iranian nuclear issue. We are writing to make clear that although those of us on this letter were unable to support your request for congressional authorization to use military force in Syria because of our concerns about the underlying strategy, we all agree that Iran should not perceive any weakness as a result of our differences over Syria policy. Tehran must understand that while there may be disagreements in the United States about how best to bring about the fall of Assad, that we are united in our determination to prevent an Iranian nuclear weapon.

We are thus troubled by reports that you might be considering offering a new proposal that would leave the door open to a nuclear Iran, perhaps allowing Iran to preserve part of its nuclear weapons program.

We understand that Iran has a right under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to peaceful civilian nuclear energy. We do not believe, however, that this means that Iran should have access to the entire nuclear fuel cycle. As a country that has repeatedly and blatantly violated its international obligations in this area and because of the proliferation risk posed by even a limited enrichment program and possession of sensitive reprocessing technologies, we will not be able to support any deal with Iran, including through sanctions relief, that compromises on this issue. Iran's track record of obfuscation and delay is clear and so is the risk to Israel as well as other U.S. allies and interests in the region. Given this record and the risks, Iran must not be allowed to retain any enrichment or reprocessing capabilities.

This is a key moment in the Middle East as many of Iran's neighbors are struggling with how to respond to the desires of their people for freedom and an end to decades of authoritarian rule. We stand ready to work with you to send a bipartisan message to the Iranian regime that its continued desire for a nuclear weapons capability as well as its continued support for terrorism, its repression of its people, and its increasingly overt involvement in a civil war that has now killed more than one hundred thousand Syrians are all unacceptable.

Now is the time to increase pressure on Iran and to stand with the Iranian people, not pursue diplomatic half-measures that will allow their rulers to continue to delay and obfuscate and avoid real reforms. We look forward to working with you on this vital issue to U.S. national security.



Marco Rubio

Sincerely,



James Risch



Pat Roberts



David Vitter



John Cornyn



Roy Blunt



John Hoeven



John Boozman



Ted Cruz



Dan Coats



John Barrasso