

United States Senate

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COMMITTEES
APPROPRIATIONS
ARMED SERVICES
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

April 19, 2022

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

Dear Secretary Blinken:

I remain very concerned about your ongoing negotiations with Iran regarding a return to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and request a detailed briefing on the status of those talks. While I support President Biden's commitment to reengaging the Government of Iran in diplomacy, we should not reward Iran with sanctions relief before they demonstrate verifiable efforts towards curbing their malign influence holistically; including their nuclear ambitions, terrorism financing, and dual-use weapons development.

I am particularly worried about reports that you might be considering removing the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) from the State Department's Foreign Terrorist Organization list in the hopes that trade relations can be reestablished with Iran to assist with our energy crisis. Let me be clear, the IRGC is a terrorist organization. We must not be shortsighted in the use of sanctions relief to mitigate our present energy challenges. Sanctions are our primary leverage to facilitate agreements on halting malign Iranian actions and should not be used to achieve non-strategic objectives. Instead, we should continue to invest in an all-of-the-above domestic energy policy to bolster our national security and our ability to help our allies and partners abroad. Congress has the opportunity to pass additional bipartisan energy legislation to further expand our ability to deliver the energy our allies and partners need. We cannot and should not look to Iran to solve our energy problems.

For decades, the Iranian leadership has chosen to direct its government's efforts and willpower toward destabilizing the Middle East and Africa through terrorism financing, which has resulted in thousands of deaths, including the deaths of U.S. servicemembers. Likewise, the development of dual-use technologies like ballistic missiles that could be used as a delivery system for nuclear warheads remains an ongoing concern. If these activities are allowed to continue, Iran could become a nuclear weapons power leading to a nuclear arms race in the region. Each of these examples demonstrates an alarming lack of sincerity on Iran's part and highlights the importance of thoroughly analyzing the various threats Iran can and will present to regional and international stability both today and after the expiration of the JCPOA. I agree we must halt the progress of Iran's nuclear weapons program. However, we must continue to negotiate a halt to Iran's use of state-sponsored terrorism, advancement of its missile program, and the continued proliferation of dual-use technologies.

Just as I did in 2015, I respectfully request this detailed briefing to reach as informed a decision as possible. I hope that Congress will be given the due process it deserves in weighing in on such an immense foreign policy decision. I was disappointed in the outcome of the negotiations in 2015, and I will do everything in my power to ensure we do not repeat the mistakes of the past.

Warmest regards,



Joe Manchin III
U.S. Senator