Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 20, 2015

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As the deadline for a comprehensive nuclear agreement with Iran nears, we write to you to underscore the grave and urgent issues that have arisen in these negotiations. While we hope the Administration is able to achieve a lasting and meaningful agreement, we understand that there are several difficult issues that remain unresolved.

No issue will be harder to resolve with the Iranian regime than the status of its uranium enrichment program. This is the key technology Iran would need to develop a nuclear bomb – technology that Iran has been permitted to continue to research and develop under the interim arrangement. Many of us wrote to you a year ago, calling for dismantlement of significant portions of Iran's nuclear infrastructure, "such that Iran will not be able to develop, build, or acquire a nuclear weapon." A final comprehensive nuclear agreement must constrain Iran's nuclear infrastructure so that Iran has no pathway to a bomb, and that agreement must be long-lasting.

International inspectors report that Iran has still not revealed its past bomb work, despite its international obligations to do so. Of the 12 sets of questions that the International Atomic Energy Agency has been seeking, Tehran has answered just part of one. Just last week, the IAEA reported that it is still concerned about signs of Iran's military related activities, including designing a nuclear payload for a missile. Indeed, inspectors had amassed "over a thousand pages" which showed "research, development and testing activities" on technologies needed to develop a nuclear weapon. Last fall, over 350 Members of the House wrote to the Secretary of State expressing deep concerns about this lack of cooperation. The potential military dimensions of Iran's nuclear program should be treated as a fundamental test of Tehran's intention to uphold the final comprehensive agreement. Unless we have a full understanding of Iran's past program it will be impossible for the international community to judge Iran's future breakout time with certainty.

Iran's record of clandestine activity and intransigence prevents any trust in Iran. Indeed, a top State Department negotiator has told Congress that, "deception is part of [Iran's] DNA." Even during the period of negotiations, Iran has illicitly procured nuclear technology, which your Administration quickly sanctioned. Additionally, because of the strict inspections regime under the Joint Plan of Action, Tehran was caught testing a more advanced centrifuge that would have helped produce bomb material more quickly. Given Iran's decades of deception, negotiators must obtain maximum commitments to transparency by Iran. Any inspection and verification

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regime must allow for short notice access to suspect locations, and verifiable constraints on Iran's nuclear program must last for decades.

Finally, while the negotiations with Iran have focused exclusively on Iran's nuclear program, it is critical that we also consider Iran's destabilizing role in the region. Iran is boosting Assad in Syria, supporting sectarian elements in Iraq that undercut hopes for a unified and stable country, and providing assistance to Hezbollah, which continues to threaten Israel. And last month, an Iranian-backed militia displaced the government in Yemen, a key counterterrorism partner. Iran's Supreme Leader has also called for an expansion of his country's ballistic missile program, yet another dimension of the potential threat posed by Iran. Iran's role in fomenting instability in the region—not to mention Iran's horrendous repression at home—demonstrates the risks of negotiating with a partner we cannot trust.

The United States has had a longstanding interest in preventing Iran from achieving a nuclear weapons capability. Over the last twenty years, Congress has passed numerous pieces of legislation imposing sanctions on Iran to prevent that outcome, ultimately forcing Iran into negotiations. Should an agreement with Iran be reached, permanent sanctions relief from congressionally-mandated sanctions would require new legislation. In reviewing such an agreement, Congress must be convinced that its terms foreclose any pathway to a bomb, and only then will Congress be able to consider permanent sanctions relief.

Resolving the nuclear crisis with Iran remains of grave importance to our nation's security. As the Administration continues to negotiate with Iran, we are prepared to evaluate any agreement to determine its long-term impact on the United States and our allies. We remain hopeful that a diplomatic solution preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon may yet be reached, and we want to work with you to assure such a result.

Sincerely,

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