

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

December 23, 2020

President-elect Joseph R. Biden
Suite 38038
1401 Constitution Ave, N.W.
Washington, DC 20270

Dear President-elect Biden:

Congratulations on your election to become the next President of the United States, and we wish you success on behalf of our nation. We particularly welcome your commitment to the restoration of American leadership and diplomacy. With respect to Iran, we agree that diplomacy is the best path to halt and reverse Iran's nuclear program, decrease tensions in the region, and facilitate our nation's reincorporation into the international community. We are united in our support for swiftly taking the necessary diplomatic steps to restore constraints on Iran's nuclear program and return both Iran and the United States to compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) as a starting point for further negotiations.

The JCPOA, an agreement you helped champion, verifiably constrained Iran's nuclear program until after the United States' unilateral withdrawal. Since 2019, Iran has changed course by increasing its stockpile of low-enriched uranium and enriching uranium to a higher purity level, while also installing advanced centrifuges beyond the agreement's limits. As a result, Iran's breakout time of one year, as estimated under the JCPOA by the U.S. intelligence community, has decreased to a few months.

The Trump administration's "maximum pressure" campaign has left Iran with an unconstrained nuclear program, failed effectively to address Iran's other malign behavior, and greatly increased the likelihood of violent confrontation and conflict. This incoherent and provocative policy has increased regional tension and attacks against our troops and our partners and emboldened Iranian hardliners. As a result, the risk of potentially devastating miscalculation remains unnecessarily high. Re-engaging multilaterally on preventing the development of an Iranian nuclear weapon and re-opening channels of communication are essential to reversing these dangerous developments.

The Trump administration's unilateral withdrawal from the internationally negotiated and UN-endorsed JCPOA undermined global non-proliferation efforts, fractured U.S. relationships with key allies, diminished U.S. leadership and influence, and reduced U.S. leverage in addressing other national security issues with Iran. Iran's other destabilizing activities in the region, such as its support for terrorism, development of ballistic missiles, human rights violations against its own people, and holding of foreign political prisoners, including Americans, warrant strong and coordinated international diplomacy. The JCPOA does not prevent our ability to address these destabilizing activities. An unrestrained Iranian nuclear program would exacerbate these other threats posed by Iran and inspire a nuclear arms race in the Middle East.

We know preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon through diplomacy will be a top priority of your administration, and we strongly believe that the JCPOA provides a critical framework to achieve this goal effectively. We strongly endorse your call for Iran to return to strict compliance with the nuclear

deal, the United States to rejoin the agreement, and subsequent follow-on negotiations. We understand that returning to the agreement will require the selective lifting of some sanctions and rigorous implementation to verifiably ensure Iranian compliance.

Americans have seen first-hand how withdrawing from multilateral agreements and abandoning our allies jeopardizes our national security goals. As a result, it is critical to not be discouraged by efforts to preclude diplomacy. Reinstating our international agreements and engaging in sustained diplomacy are the best ways to achieve long-term non-proliferation and urgent national security objectives, including the prevention of Iran obtaining a nuclear weapon and the laying of a foundation for progress on other critical issues.

We look forward to working with you on these important matters.

Sincerely,

David E. Price
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

Gregory Meeks
Member of Congress

Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress

Abigail D. Spanberger
Member of Congress

Brad Sherman
Member of Congress

Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

Sean Casten
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Pete Aguilar
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Lisa Blunt Rochester
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Judy Chu
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Colin Allred
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Suzanne Bonamici
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David Cicilline
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Cindy Axne
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Julia Brownley
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Karen Bass
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Katherine M. Clark
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Lizzie Fletcher
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Ruben Gallego
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Bonnie Watson Coleman
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Peter Welch
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Jennifer Wexton
Member of Congress

John Yarmuth
Member of Congress