

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 19, 2010

Dear Colleague:

We hope you will join us in signing the attached letter to President Obama urging him to reaffirm longstanding American policy to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability and to impose tough sanctions to deal with the grave threat from Iran's steadily-advancing nuclear program.

Were Iran to acquire a nuclear weapons capability, the dangers posed to our national security and that of our allies would be severe and, in part, irreversible. It would lead to the spread of such weapons throughout the Middle East and beyond, jeopardizing the global non-proliferation regime. It would greatly increase the likelihood of such weapons or technology falling into terrorist hands. It would expand Iranian influence throughout the region and drastically undermine the prospects for peace between Israel and its neighbors. Iranian surrogates, operating under an Iranian nuclear umbrella, would be emboldened. And it would represent a potential threat to our ally, Israel.

Administrations under presidents of both parties have made it US policy to deny Iran such a capability, including the current Administration. But, as Iran advances toward weapons capability, the international community has yet to take appropriate action. At the United Nations Security Council, China - the country most reluctant to impose timely sanctions - is, so far, setting the pace of inaction.

We therefore write to the President to ask him to boldly and clearly reaffirm that the US will do all in its power to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons capability. Given the urgency brought on by the advanced state of Iran's program, we ask the President to join with those allies who are prepared for action to immediately impose tough, crippling sanctions on Iran. And we write to the President to assure him that such action on his part would receive strong bipartisan backing from the Congress.

If you would like to join us, please have your staff contact John Jones in Senator Schumer's Washington, DC office at john_jones@schumer.senate.gov or Matt Rimkunas in Senator Lindsey Graham's office at matt_rimkunas@lgraham.senate.gov.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer



Lindsey Graham

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 19, 2010

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

Dear Mr. President:

We write you out of our concern that Iran is growing ever closer to achieving nuclear weapons capability, a fact demanding immediate action. We want to assure you of strong bipartisan support for the tough and decisive measures that we hope you will undertake to address this grave problem.

Iran's nuclear weapons program represents a severe threat to American national interests. Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons could lead to the proliferation of nuclear weapons throughout the Middle East and beyond, unsettling the global non-proliferation regime and ending any hopes for a nuclear-weapons free world. Additionally, it would greatly increase the likelihood of such weapons falling into the hands of terrorists. Iran could increase its attempts at destabilizing its neighbors, encourage terrorism against the United States and Israel, and the risk of both conventional and nuclear war in the Middle East would rise considerably. It would undercut prospects for peace between Israel and its neighbors, with emboldened Iranian surrogates enjoying the strategic backing of an Iranian nuclear umbrella. And it would pose a potential threat to our closest ally, the State of Israel.

Iran is making steady progress in its nuclear program. Iran now has stored enough low enriched uranium to serve as the core for two nuclear weapons. They will soon be able to install more advanced and efficient centrifuges. Iran has recently announced that it will begin to enrich uranium to twenty percent fissile. Its weaponization program now appears to be at an advanced stage. Iran has defied several UN Security Council resolutions directing it to suspend enrichment and has rejected its opportunity to fully explain its nuclear activities to the International Atomic Energy Agency. Credible evidence suggests that if Iran's nuclear program continues to progress at its current rate, the Iranian government could certainly have a nuclear weapons capability well before your current term in office expires.

Preventing Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons remains a diplomatic imperative. But time is not on the side of those who seek to prevent a nuclear Iran. We cannot allow those who would oppose or delay sanctions to govern either the timing or content of our efforts. As you said last July, we cannot wait until we "wake up one day and find ourselves in a much worse situation and unable to act."

Accordingly, we urge you today to reaffirm that the U.S. can and will prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability. Now is the time to put into practice your June 2008 pledge that you would do “everything in my power to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.” One way to begin would be to reverse the practice under which the US government has awarded at least \$107 billion in federal contracts over the past decade to companies investing in, or doing business in, Iran. We also urge you to join with those allies who are prepared for action to immediately impose crippling sanctions on Iran. Only such action on our part – combined with the open door you have promised of negotiations with Iran – offers the prospect of persuading Tehran to turn away from its dangerous course.

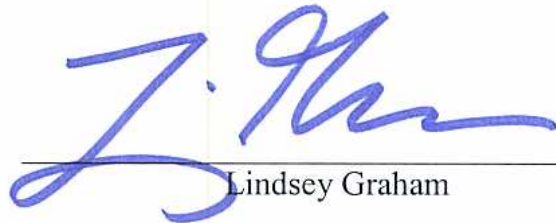
Mr. President, we will soon complete our work on Iranian sanctions legislation that has received the backing of overwhelming majorities in both Chambers of Congress. We believe that America, together with allies who share our approach, can force Iran’s regime to face the tough choice between international isolation and possible reconciliation. We can do this by imposing punishing measures on the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, sanctioning Iran’s banking system, and dramatically impacting Iran’s ability to import refined petroleum.

We urge you to move quickly to implement your existing authority on Iran and the legislation we send you, and to galvanize the international community to take immediate, substantive steps. Now is the time for action focused on preventing a nuclear Iran. We look forward to working with you on this important task.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer



Lindsey Graham