

October 23, 2014

United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear United States Senators and Members of the House of Representatives:

We are organizations representing millions of Americans advocating in support of diplomacy to secure an agreement which ensures that Iran never acquires a nuclear weapon. We write to express deep concern with inaccurate and counterproductive rhetoric from a handful of Members of Congress regarding possible outcomes of the current negotiations.

Particularly irresponsible are threats to oppose any comprehensive agreement limiting Iran's nuclear program that initially suspends US sanctions on Iran through lawful executive action. Congress' authorization of the President's power to suspend and reimpose US sanctions on Iran is clear and unmistakable in each piece of legislation it has passed on the subject. Use of these provisions by the President to implement the initial phase of an agreement that ensures Iran does not acquire a nuclear weapon would reflect an affirmation, not a subversion, of Congress' will.

Suspending select sanctions on Iran – in the manner authorized by Congress – in the early stages of implementing such an agreement would allow the administration to immediately snap these measures back into place in the event of non-compliance by Iran. We agree with the administration's view that, beyond the essential consultation role played by Congress throughout the present negotiations, it will ultimately fall to Congress to authorize any permanent sanctions relief under an agreement. This is the best arrangement for the United States to uphold its terms under an agreement while ensuring that permanent sanctions relief is conditioned on Iran's compliance with its own obligations.

Separately, we are disappointed to hear some Members of Congress also threaten to oppose any agreement that does not completely “eliminate” or “dismantle” Iran's uranium enrichment infrastructure. It is troubling that these members would fail to support a workable agreement which verifiably ensures that Iran would not be able to quickly amass material for nuclear weapons and would ensure that any such effort would be promptly detected and disrupted by the United States and the international community. A naïve insistence on complete Iranian capitulation on enrichment will likely lead to the fracturing of the international sanctions regime, an unrestricted and unmonitored Iranian nuclear program, and yet another war in the Middle East.

We look forward to remaining in touch on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Americans for Peace Now
Arms Control Association
Brave New Films
Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation
Center for International Policy
Church of the Brethren, Office of Public Witness
CODEPINK
Conference of Major Superiors of Men
Council for a Livable World
CREDO
Daily Kos
Evangelicals for Middle East Understanding
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Global Exchange
Historians Against the War
Institute for Policy Studies, New Internationalism Project
International Civil Society Action Network
J Street
Just Foreign Policy
MoveOn.org
National Iranian American Council
National Security Network
Peace Action
Peace Action West
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Progressive Democrats of America
Roots Action
Tikkun Magazine's Interfaith Network of Spiritual Progressives
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
United for Peace and Justice
United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society
USAction
U.S. Labor Against the War
Vet Voice Foundation
VoteVets
Win Without War
Women's Action for New Directions