

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 13, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington DC 20500-0003

Dear President Biden:

We are pleased that your presidency has marked our country's return to the values-based foreign policy that has for decades served as the bedrock principle of America's approach to the world. It is crucial that America reassert its leadership and moral standing on the global stage as we pursue our national security interests.

While the damage of the last four years has left our country facing numerous challenges across the globe, there is no question that one of your early pressing national security priorities should be to return to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) to address the threat of Iran's nuclear program. As such, we are encouraged that indirect talks are underway in Vienna aimed at reviving the nuclear agreement.

President Trump's decision to withdraw from the JCPOA and pursue a "maximum pressure" strategy not only failed to yield results but has brought Iran closer to the capacity to develop nuclear weapons. As a result of this failed policy, according to the latest International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) report in February 2021, Iran had 4,390 kilograms of Low Enriched Uranium, more than 14 times what it had during full implementation of the JCPOA and enough for multiple nuclear weapons if enriched to weapons grade.

Other missteps of the Trump Administration include banning Iranians from traveling to the United States and refusing to provide adequate and timely humanitarian licensing to ensure unencumbered delivery of humanitarian assistance to Iran, including for medicines and medical supplies necessary to aid innocent Iranians ravaged by COVID-19. We welcome your decision to reverse the travel ban and would support actions in line with U.S. values that you promised during the campaign to ensure that U.S. sanctions do not prevent the Iranian people from receiving critical vaccines and other medicines in the midst of a global pandemic.

Most worrisome, the Trump Administration's numerous military incidents in the Middle East repeatedly and needlessly brought us to the brink of war. These missteps have made Iran a more dangerous and destabilizing force in the region, leaving our country and our allies visibly less safe than when President Obama left office.

We strongly support returning to the JCPOA and using a "compliance for compliance" approach as a starting point to reset U.S. relations with Iran. Should Iran be willing to return to compliance with the limitations set by the JCPOA, the United States should be willing to rejoin the deal and

provide the sanctions relief required under the agreement. This return would also mark your Administration's adherence to the congressional reporting requirements of the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act, ensuring that Congress is regularly informed of all aspects of Iranian compliance. This includes your certification every 90 days that Iran is "transparently, verifiably, and fully implementing" the agreement and that Iran has not taken any action to advance a nuclear weapons program. A "compliance for compliance" policy will also help restore U.S. diplomatic credibility and repair relations with our European allies, who have continued to support the deal in our absence.

Even so, we recognize that the threat posed by Iran extends well beyond its nuclear program. Iran's actions—including hostage taking and unlawful imprisonment of U.S. persons, military and financial support for destabilizing regional proxies, horrific human rights abuses, cyber attacks, and ballistic missile development—have exacerbated instability, conflict, and human suffering in the region and continue to threaten the United States and our friends and allies. These issues must be addressed with the same urgency as our efforts to contain Iran's nuclear ambitions.

To that end, we also call on your Administration to build on its initial mutual return with Iran to the JCPOA by promptly engaging in follow-on discussions on a regional diplomatic strategy to restrain Iran that involves not only the P5+1 but also Israel and the Gulf States. This should include efforts to engage on key issues of regional concern, including Iran's missile program and its support for surrogates and proxies, and we encourage you to extend the nuclear limitations in the JCPOA over time either through a new nuclear agreement or by an extension of the existing one. Finally, we request your assurance that you will prioritize the release of all Americans and U.S. Lawful Permanent Residents in any discussions with Iran.

We look forward to working with you to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon and to promote enhanced regional security in the Middle East, and we would welcome a detailed briefing on what a strict "compliance for compliance" policy looks like and what would be required of the U.S. as part of this policy. We are grateful for your leadership at this particularly difficult time in our history and pledge to work closely with you in the 117th Congress to protect the American people, reestablish the primacy of U.S. diplomacy, and secure our interests abroad.

Sincerely,



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Patrick Leahy
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



John Hickenlooper
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Ben Ray Luján
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator

/s/

Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

/s/

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



Raphael Warnock
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Debbie Stabenow". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator