

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 1, 2024

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20522

Dear Secretary Blinken,

As the next International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors (BOG) meeting approaches, we write to express our concern regarding the Islamic Republic of Iran's escalating nuclear enrichment activities. In recent months, the Iranian regime has utilized its proxy network to disrupt global commerce and threaten our armed forces, while simultaneously increasing its stockpile of enriched uranium. The United States must demonstrate leadership at the IAEA and encourage the international community to uphold its non-proliferation standards. The stakes could not be higher.

Iran's destabilizing behavior is nothing new. Since 1979, the regime has jeopardized long-term security and stability in the Middle East through its support for terrorism and insurgency. However, these efforts have intensified since its proxy Hamas attacked Israel on October 7, 2023. In the past three months, Tehran's so-called 'Axis of Resistance' has launched over 160 attacks against U.S. personnel in Iraq and Syria, as well as international shipping vessels in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden.

If we think Iran's behavior is destabilizing today, it would be far worse if the regime was armed with a nuclear weapon. Recent reports indicate that Iran's nuclear enrichment activities accelerated at the end of last year. According to a December 2023 report from the IAEA, Iran tripled its monthly production of uranium enriched to 60% purity in November, compared to rates observed in June. Rafael Grossi, the IAEA Director General, warned at the time that Iran could develop three nuclear warheads if it continued processing its existing stockpile past 60% purity.¹ While a new report released this week suggests that Iran may have diluted a small portion of its 60% enriched uranium with lower-grade material, its 20% feedstock has increased dramatically and the regime continues to bar IAEA inspectors from fully monitoring its nuclear activities.²

We are deeply disappointed that the administration has not pushed for the adoption of a censure resolution at recent BOG meetings. As the March meeting approaches, the United States must move beyond rhetoric³ and take action to penalize the Iranian regime for its repeated violations of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and its obligations under the IAEA Safeguards Agreement. Given Iran's aggressive behavior since October, and its accelerated enrichment of nuclear material, a censure resolution must be the floor, not the ceiling, for United States action at the IAEA.

¹ <https://www.reuters.com/world/iaea-chief-says-irans-nuclear-enrichment-activity-remains-high-2024-02-19/>

² https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/02/26/iran-iaea-nuclear-quarterly-report/74278922-d4da-11ee-82ad-c2391b06a8f5_story.html

³ <https://www.state.gov/joint-statement-on-the-latest-iranian-nuclear-steps-reported-by-the-iaea/>

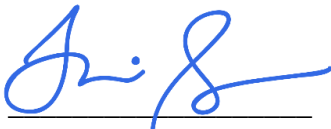
We also encourage the U.S. delegation at the IAEA to push for Iran's nuclear program to be formally referred to the United Nations Security Council for review. There is no better way to uphold global non-proliferation norms than to maintain a clear and consistent standard of institutional treatment toward Iran's nuclear advances. Special treatment must not be accorded in the mistaken belief that it could help de-escalate Iran's behavior. As we've seen in recent months, appeasement is often rewarded with further escalation.

With this in mind, we ask that you provide answers to the following questions by March 11, 2024:

- 1) Did the United States push for a censure resolution and referral to the United Nations Security Council at the IAEA's March 2024 Board of Governors meeting?
- 2) If the answer to question #1 is negative, please provide an explanation for the decision not to pursue such a resolution, along with documents and communications regarding the decision-making process not to pursue the resolution, including instructions provided to the U.S. delegation at the IAEA.
- 3) If the answer to question #1 is negative, please provide your plan to deter future countries violating the NPT in light of the perception of the lack of international action against rogue nuclear programs.
- 4) If the answer to question #1 is negative, please disclose whether the decision was taken in conjunction with any Iranian commitment or communication regarding its nuclear program, regardless of the form or formality of the commitment or communication.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. We look forward to your timely response to our requests.

Sincerely,



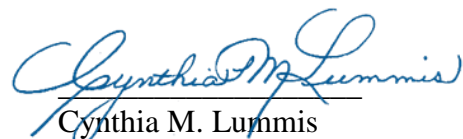
Tim Scott
United States Senator



Marco Rubio
United States Senator



Tom Cotton
United States Senator



Cynthia M. Lummis
United States Senator



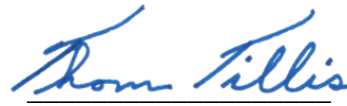
Rick Scott
United States Senator



Bill Hagerty
United States Senator



Pete Ricketts
United States Senator



Thom Tillis
United States Senator



Mike Braun
United States Senator



James Lankford
United States Senator