

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 28, 2016

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to urge you to redouble efforts to reduce global nuclear weapons threats and proliferation risks during your remaining time in office. We believe there are several important opportunities such as building additional proliferation barriers worldwide, keeping nuclear materials out of the hands of terrorists and engaging nuclear-armed states in the nuclear weapons threat reduction enterprise.

We would like to commend your nonproliferation efforts that have substantially aided international security. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) between the P5+1 and Iran has increased regional and global stability while providing a potential framework for future agreements. We believe the final Nuclear Security Summit to be held in Washington later this month provides an opportunity to highlight and discuss important initiatives to further nonproliferation and disarmament objectives.

First, we believe that the JCPOA contains several innovative provisions that could be applied for a longer period of time in Iran if pursued on a regional and global basis. Several of these measures could help address concerns about potential nuclear capabilities in the post-year-15 period of the agreement when many of the restrictions on uranium-enrichment capacity expire.

We urge your Administration to increase the resources and capacity of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and to lay the groundwork for pursuing additional strategies to reinforce proliferation barriers. The IAEA has developed a successful safeguards system to ensure that civil uranium, plutonium and associated plants are used for peaceful purposes globally. We believe your Administration should seek to expand application of the IAEA Additional Protocol by calling on governments to seek universal adoption of and adherence to IAEA Additional Protocols.

Another vital initiative should be to advocate for region-wide ban on the production of highly enriched uranium and plutonium. In the JCPOA, Iran agreed not to enrich uranium beyond 3.67 percent U-235 for a period of at least 15 years. Iran has indicated a willingness to extend that restriction beyond 15 years, if other countries in the region abide by a similar restriction.

The United States should use its economic and political leverage to discourage any additional nations from acquiring uranium enrichment materials or technology and to ensure that those that might seek such technologies agree to only produce low-enriched uranium commensurate with their “practical needs.” A similar region-wide and international ban on plutonium reprocessing and norm in support of shipping out spent fuel should also be encouraged.

It should also be an objective of U.S. policy to develop a region-wide moratorium on research, development, and flight-testing of medium-range and long-range ballistic missiles or cruise missiles, particularly those capable of lifting weapons of mass destruction payloads.

We appreciate the renewed focus from Secretaries Kerry and Moniz on the national security value of the 1996 Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the success of the stockpile stewardship program. We stand ready to engage on the treaty—which remains an essential part of a comprehensive U.S. nonproliferation strategy—and would support other efforts to reinforce the global prohibition against nuclear test explosions, particularly in the Middle East.

Second, we urge your continued support for keeping vulnerable nuclear materials out of the hands of terrorists and rogue nations and to craft a strategy to sustain progress on nuclear security in the aftermath of the final Nuclear Security Summit. In particular, eliminating illicit nuclear technology and material transfers must remain a top priority.

A large part of nuclear materials security depends on the renewed cooperation of the United States and Russia, which has been significantly reduced in recent years. In the past, Russia and the United States have successfully implemented security upgrades at Russian facilities, consolidated and eliminated dangerous nuclear material, and installed measures to detect illicit trafficking of nuclear material. Though significant progress has been achieved much remains to be done and both countries must work together to find a suitable path forward.

Many other nuclear materials security challenges exist around the globe. These include ensuring the security of fissile, radiological, and other nuclear materials, eliminating excess nuclear stockpiles, converting or shutting down weapons-grade uranium fueled reactors, replacing high intensity radiological materials to safer substitutes, ensuring that new comer nuclear power nations are provided with all necessary security assistance, and collecting and disseminating best nuclear security practices around the globe. It is in the collective interest of the P5+1 to work as a cohesive unit to secure materials and support these other critical missions.

Third, we encourage you to reiterate that the United States has one-third more deployed strategic nuclear weapons than required to deter threats to the United States and its allies, and propose, in tandem with Russia, further, parallel steps to reduce each side’s deployed strategic arsenals to 1,000 warheads and 500 delivery vehicles by 2021.

This would provide important momentum to renew nuclear arms talks ahead of the expiration of New START. We urge you to call on the other nuclear-armed states to freeze the overall size of their stockpiles as the United States and Russia continue to work to reduce their nuclear arsenals.

Again, we appreciate your leadership on the JCPOA. The agreement with Iran is an historic achievement that presents a possibility to encourage more countries to take steps to deter nuclear proliferation. We urge you to consider the objectives outlined above as you host the Nuclear Security Summit.

We are ready to work with you to pursue an ambitious nuclear threat reduction agenda in your final year in office.

Sincerely,



Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator



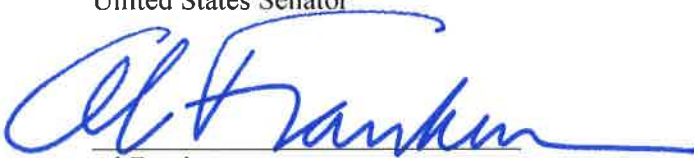
Patty Murray  
United States Senator



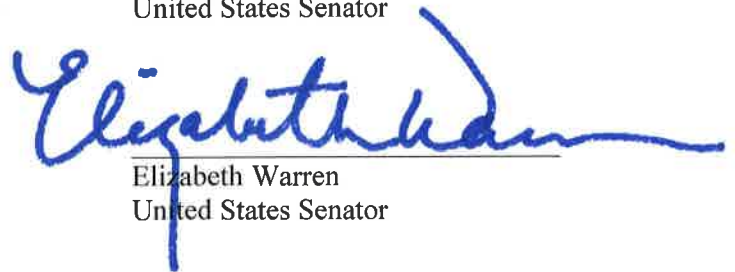
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