

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 17, 2021

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
2201 C Street NW
U.S. Department of State
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken:

We write today to express our serious concern regarding the recent decision to delist three former Iranian government officials and two companies previously sanctioned for their involvement in Iran's petrochemical sector. As you know, the Islamic Republic of Iran is the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism. It also continues to hold American citizens hostage, expand its nuclear enrichment program, and export terrorism across the region.

It was our hope that you were sincere in your previous commitments to consult with Congress on issues related to Iran and we are disappointed by this announcement. We remind you that in your first congressional hearing before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs on March 10, 2021, you stated with regard to Iran, "We're determined to consult on the takeoff, not on the landing...Congress is the first stop, but also allies, partners, including allies and partners in the region, who have their own concerns and own interests at stake."¹ You assured Members that the United States would not offer concessions to Iran before it comes into full compliance. Furthermore, on April 6, 2021, State Department Spokesperson Ned Price stated, "If we get to a point by mutual agreement where it is appropriate for us to remove sanctions, we will do that in the context of Iran also resuming compliance with the deal."² Iran has certainly not resumed compliance. In fact, the regime has now increased its stockpile of enriched uranium to 60%.

Despite your previous commitments on the record, the Department of the Treasury, presumably in consultation with the Department of State, recently delisted several high-profile Iranian sanctions violators without consulting Members and notwithstanding Iran's continued malign activity. We, therefore, have several important and timely questions:

- First, why were committee Members not made aware in advance of these high-profile delistings of Iranian targets? Furthermore, why did you fail to inform either the House

¹ Blinken, Antony, "Secretary Blinken: The Biden Administration's Priorities for U.S. Foreign Policy" *House Committee on Foreign Affairs*, (March 2021) <https://foreignaffairs.house.gov/2021/3/secretary-blinken-the-biden-administration-s-priorities-for-u-s-foreign-policy>

² Price, Ned, "Department Press Briefing – April 6, 2021" *Department of State*, (April 2021) <https://www.state.gov/briefings/department-press-briefing-april-6-2021/>

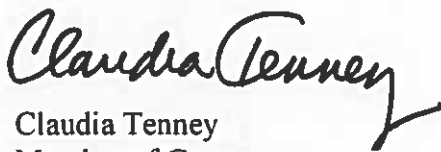
Foreign Affairs Committee or the Senate Foreign Relations Committee of this pending action when you testified before these committees on June 7 and June 8, respectively?

- Second, did you personally approve of and support removing these targets from the Treasury's list of specially designated nationals? If so, why?
- Third, given that Iran continues to support terrorism in the region, expand its nuclear program, and violate U.S. sanctions on exports of oil and petrochemicals, why have the Departments of State and the Treasury made the decision to prioritize the removal of Iranian sanctions violators over other competing priorities? Who instructed career civil servants in both Departments to pursue delisting these targets, and why?
- Finally, is the removal of these individuals and entities from the Treasury's list of specially designated nationals linked in any way to ongoing talks with the Iranian regime? We remind you of past statements from your Department that the United States would not ease or lift sanctions prior to Iranian compliance with a new deal.

History tells us very clearly that only a policy of strength and moral clarity toward the brutal regime in Iran will advance America's interests. A show of weakness and ambivalence invites greater instability and terror. We already have grave concerns about this Administration's willingness to chase these terrorist mullahs around the world begging them to reenter a flawed deal. Now we are even more concerned that you are walking back your commitment to hold firm on existing sanctions until a new deal is reached and Iran reverses its nuclear program.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this important issue. We look forward to receiving a detailed response that addresses the questions we have raised.

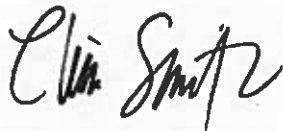
Sincerely,



Claudia Tenney
Member of Congress



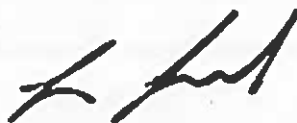
Joe Wilson
Member of Congress



Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress



Darrell Issa
Member of Congress



Lee Zeldin
Member of Congress



Brian Mast
Member of Congress



Tim Burchett
Member of Congress



W. Gregory Steube
Member of Congress



Nicole Malliotakis
Member of Congress



Ronny L. Jackson
Member of Congress



Maria Elvira Salazar
Member of Congress