

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
4TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

CONSTITUENT SERVICE CENTERS:

MONMOUTH
112 Village Center Drive
Freehold, NJ 07728-2510
(732) 780-3035

OCEAN
405 Route 539
Plumsted, NJ 08514-2303
(609) 286-2571; (732) 350-2300

MERCER
4573 South Broad Street
Hamilton, NJ 08620-2215
(609) 585-7878

2373 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-3004
(202) 225-3765

<http://chrissmith.house.gov>



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

SENIOR MEMBER, FOREIGN AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN, AFRICA, GLOBAL HEALTH,
GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS, AND
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE

WESTERN HEMISPHERE
SUBCOMMITTEE

CO-CHAIRMAN, COMMISSION ON SECURITY
AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

CO-CHAIRMAN, CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE
COMMISSION ON CHINA

DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

An Agreement with Iran Must Bar Its Path to Nuclear Weapons

*Floor of House of Representatives
U.S. Rep. Chris Smith (NJ-04)
Excerpts of remarks
June 25, 2015 floor speech*

Mr. Speaker, the deadline is bearing down on us for the President's nuclear agreement with Iran – so at this moment Congress must send the administration a strong message: in order to be acceptable, any agreement must bar every Iranian path to nuclear weapons.

This means the deal must last for decades – there has been a lot of reporting on stopgap deals that would try to restrict Iran in the short term, while giving it a blank check after ten years. Such an arrangement would be absurd. Given Iran's long-standing nefarious quest for nuclear weapons and its government's genocidal anti-Semitism, I and the vast majority of my colleagues in Congress would never accept it.

Iran will also have to dismantle its current nuclear infrastructure and turn over nearly all of its stockpile of uranium. Iran prefers to merely “disconnect” its 19,000 centrifuges. That is totally unacceptable – coming from the Iranian government, with its murderous threats to annihilate the state of Israel and its obsessive hatred of Jews worldwide. It's estimated that the centrifuges could be reconnected in mere months – and so they must be dismantled, and the core should be removed from the Arak heavy-water reactor.

It also means the that there can be no lifting or reduction of sanctions until the International Atomic Energy Agency certifies that Iran has complied with its commitments under the agreement. And IAEA inspectors must be granted access to any and all suspected sites. This access must be unimpeded – meaning IAEA must be able to conduct inspections at military sites as well. The rule must be full access “anytime, anywhere.”

Iran must also fully account for its past efforts to develop nuclear weapons. Unless it does so, there will be no way to establish a baseline from which to measure its current capacities and potential future violations, and responsibly gauge a “breakout time.”

Mr. Speaker, these are minimum criteria. In order to get Congressional approval, any deal the President presents to Congress will have to meet them. The Nuclear Agreement Review Act gives Congress the authority to review any agreement with Iran and to pass a joint resolution barring any statutory sanctions relief. The administration and the Iranian government need to know that the vast majority of my colleagues will be as firm as I am in insisting on them. I am certainly prepared to vote against any agreement that does not meet these criteria.

Mr. Speaker, the administration has shown itself far too weak in its dealings with Iran. For example, last week Secretary Kerry said that the U.S. is “not fixated” on Iran’s explaining its past behavior – a significant backtracking on his earlier insistence on this crucial point.

In fact, throughout June we have been reading disturbing reports of administration weakness in the negotiations – on a whole range of issues, from demanding access to potential nuclear sites, to signaling a willingness to repeal non-nuclear-related sanctions. Just yesterday, five of the President’s top former Iran advisors wrote an open letter warning that the agreement “may fall short of meeting the administration’s own standard of a ‘good’ agreement.” The letter outlined concerns about concessions at the same time that Ayatollah Ali Khamenie appeared to back away from other preliminary understandings.

There are many other signs of the administration’s weakness in its dealings with Iran. Fundamentally, it refuses to speak truths that are obvious to everyone – that the Iranian government has made itself the enemy of the U.S., and the genocidal enemy of Israel, and that our goal must always be to prevent it from acquiring or manufacturing nuclear weapons, now and long into the future. A nuclear Iran would be a grave threat to our country, and an existential threat to Israel, our closest ally. That is intolerable. The administration seems to no longer recall that Iran is the leading sponsor of Hezbollah and Hamas.

Mr. Speaker, the case of Pastor Abedini is another sad sign of administration weakness toward Iran. Saeed Abedini is an American citizen. He was in Iran in 2012, visiting family and building an orphanage, when he was taken prisoner. Twelve years before, he had converted to Christianity and later was involved in the home church movement in Iran. Knowing about his conversion and earlier engagement with home churches, Iranian authorities approved his 2012 trip, approved his orphanage-building, and then imprisoned him. He has been in prison ever since then, and has suffered immensely, from beatings that have caused internal bleeding, death threats, solitary confinement, and more. His wife Naghmeh, who is also an American and has been a heroic champion for her husband, and their two young children, have also suffered. I and many other Members of Congress have been advocating on his behalf.

The administration is not doing enough to secure his release. The Administration does little more than raise his case, and those of the other American prisoners, on the sidelines of the nuclear negotiations because it sees the prisoners as sideline issues. This is an American citizen -

unjustly imprisoned for now over 1,000 days – and tortured – in Iran. And the administration has a few marginal conversations with Iranian officials and considers that good enough. It is deeply disturbing.

Mr. Speaker, it is also a very alarming sign of what we might expect the administration to present us with when we return to session in early July. That is why it is Congress's responsibility to be prepared to maintain a much firmer line on the outcome of these negotiations – when we review the agreement – than the administration seems to be taking.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to add to the record a summary of the human rights violations documented in the State Department's most recent human rights report on Iran. Again and again we have seen what seems to be almost a law of international relations: massive human rights violators behave deceitfully and aggressively, and the more massive the violations, the greater the deceit and aggression.

Excerpt from "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, Iran, 2013."

"The most egregious human rights problems were the government's manipulation of the electoral process, which severely limited citizens' right to change their government peacefully through free and fair elections; restrictions on civil liberties, including the freedoms of assembly, speech, and press; and disregard for the physical integrity of persons whom it arbitrarily and unlawfully detained, tortured, or killed.

Other reported human rights problems included: disappearances; cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment, including judicially sanctioned amputation and flogging; politically motivated violence and repression, such as beatings and rape; harsh and life-threatening conditions in detention and prison facilities, with instances of deaths in custody; arbitrary arrest and lengthy pretrial detention, sometimes incommunicado; continued impunity of security forces; denial of fair public trials, sometimes resulting in executions without due process; the lack of an independent judiciary; political prisoners and detainees; ineffective implementation of civil judicial procedures and remedies; arbitrary interference with privacy, family, home, and correspondence; severe restrictions on freedoms of speech (including via the internet) and press; harassment of journalists; censorship and media content restrictions; severe restrictions on academic freedom; severe restrictions on the freedoms of assembly, association, and religion ..."