



BIPARTISAN POLICY CENTER

May 9, 2012

Chairman Howard "Buck" McKeon
House Committee on Armed Services
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC, 20515

Ranking Member Adam Smith
House Committee on Armed Services
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC, 20515

Dear Chairman McKeon and Ranking Member Smith,

The Bipartisan Policy Center's (BPC) Iran Task Force, which is co-chaired by Senator Charles Robb and General Charles Wald, strongly believes that a nuclear Iran represents the most pressing threat to the national security of the United States. Earlier this year, the task force authored a report that calls for a robust and comprehensive triple-track strategy towards Iran, involving the simultaneous pursuit of diplomacy, sanctions, and visible credible preparations for a military option of last resort. The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), currently being considered in your committee, contains provisions that we believe are essential for arresting Iran's nuclear progress.

We are deeply concerned that Iran is making rapid progress in its enrichment program while continuing to deny United Nations inspectors access to suspected weaponization sites and to make threatening statements to our allies and the international community. The most recent report from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), released in February, showed that Iran has made troubling progress towards nuclear capability. Specifically, Iran has overcome technical hurdles in order to double its uranium enrichment rate since 2009; is enriching uranium to even higher levels; testing new, more effective centrifuge models; has moved its enrichment work to a previously undisclosed, underground facility; and is continuing its weaponization program.

Like you, the BPC's Iran Task Force believes that boosting the credibility of a military option against Iran represents our best chance for a peaceful, diplomatic resolution of the standoff over Iran's nuclear program. Our report from earlier this year highlighted the necessity of taking significant, concrete steps in this area and we support the inclusion of the provisions recommended in our report designed to enhance the visibility and credibility of military readiness activity in the final NDAA that passes out of the Armed Services Committee.

We applaud your efforts to bring attention to the pressing matter of Iran's nuclear capabilities and the swift action you have taken on moving the National Defense Authorization Act in your committee. It is clear we must take action on Iran. We look forward to working with you in the coming weeks to advance legislation to help prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons through any means necessary.

Very Truly Yours,

Dr. Michael Makovsky
Director, Foreign Policy Project