



BIPARTISAN POLICY CENTER

May 17, 2012

Representative Ileana Ros-Lehiten  
Chairman  
House Committee on Foreign Affairs  
2170 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC, 20515

Representative Howard Berman  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Foreign Affairs  
B360 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC, 20515

Dear Chairman Ros-Lehiten and Ranking Member Berman,

The Bipartisan Policy Center's (BPC) Iran Task Force, which is co-chaired by Senator Charles Robb and General Charles Wald (ret.), strongly believes that a nuclear Iran represents the most pressing threat to the national security of the United States. The sanctions legislation passed out of the House Foreign Affairs Committee in late 2011 is an important step towards arresting Iran's nuclear progress, but because time is quickly running out we believe such sanctions will be more effective if paired with a regular independent assessment of Iran's nuclear progress and the impact sanctions are having on it. Ongoing conversations on this issue, such as the hearing you are hosting on May 17, are a crucial component of ensuring effective sanctions.

Earlier this year, the BPC Iran 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 report also found that unfortunately there is too little reliable, comprehensive, public information from an independent source about the status of Iran's nuclear program either to guide policymakers' decision on new sanctions and other measures or to inform public debate. In a follow-up white paper dealing specifically with assessing the effectiveness of sanctions on Iran, our task force calls on Congress to appoint an independent study group supported and staffed by existing policy institutions to report quarterly on the progress of Iran's nuclear program and the impact sanctions are having on it.

While strict sanctions are a necessary and important step towards arresting Iran's nuclear program, our task force believes they will be most effective if accompanied by a requirement for regular assessments of their impact on Iran's nuclear progress by an independent review panel.

We applaud your efforts to bring attention to the strategy, implementation and enforcement of sanctions and encourage you to strongly consider the appointment of an independent review panel to assist in this important task. I look forward to working with you in the coming weeks as we work on our common goal of preventing Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons capability through any means necessary.

Very Truly Yours,

Dr. Michael Makovsky  
Director, Foreign Policy Project  
Bipartisan Policy Center