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February 25, 2021

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

Dear Secretary Blinken,

I write to you today because of concerning news that the Department of State is refusing to share details or a readout of a phone conversation between the U.S. Special Envoy for Iran, Robert Malley, and the Chinese Vice Foreign Minister, Ma Zhaoxu, regarding Iran's nuclear program and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Firstly, I find it troubling that the Biden Department of State is reaching out to foreign governments regarding the JCPOA while you yourself have said that the Department of State won't make diplomatic overtures to the Iranians until they fall back into compliance within the original parameters of the deal. Secondly, as far as foreign governments go, I am sure you know that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is one of the most duplicitous governments in the world. I believe that the CCP is untrustworthy and one of the last entities we should be consulting regarding Iran's nuclear capabilities.

Special Envoy Malley's actions give me great concern over transparency at the Department of State, and I have questions about the full extent of his activities. I would appreciate answers to the following questions.

1. What did Special Envoy Malley discuss with Vice Foreign Minister Zhaoxu with regards to Iran?
2. Have there been additional conversations between Special Envoy Malley and other foreign diplomats that have not been disclosed to the public?
3. When can Members of Congress expect to hear from Special Envoy Malley about his diplomatic efforts? Will the Department of State consult Congress before taking foreign policy action?

Candidly, I did not agree with the JCPOA then, and I do not think it is in the United States' and our regional allies' best interests to reenter the agreement today. Iran has been our preeminent state foe in the Middle East for decades, and I do not believe that sanctions relief makes sense when the regime uses extremist groups like Hezbollah, Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Kataib Hezbollah, and the Houthis to export their terror from the Levant to Iraq and Yemen respectively.

Thank you for your service to the American people and I urge you to make transparency a priority for the Department of State. I look forward to working with you in the 117th Congress.

Respectfully,



Tim Burchett
Member of Congress