Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 15, 2010

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing you out of our concern that Iran is growing ever closer to nuclear weapons capability, a fact demanding immediate action on the part of the United States. We want to assure you of strong bipartisan support for the tough and decisive measures that we hope you will undertake to address this grave problem.

Iran's nuclear weapons program represents a severe threat to American national interests. Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons could lead to the proliferation of these weapons throughout the Middle East and beyond, destabilizing the global non-proliferation regime and greatly increasing the likelihood of such weapons falling into the hands of terrorists. It would also dramatically expand Iranian influence and threaten our allies in the region. It would undercut prospects for peace between Israel and her neighbors, with emboldened Iranian surrogates enjoying the strategic backing of an Iranian nuclear umbrella. And it would pose an existential threat to the State of Israel.

Iran is making steady progress in its nuclear program. It now has stored enough low enriched uranium to serve as the core for two nuclear weapons. It will soon be able to install much more advanced and efficient centrifuges. Iran has recently begun to enrich uranium to twenty percent fissile. Its weaponization program now appears to be at an advanced stage.

Mr. President, you have stated this issue is a priority for your administration. You have attempted to engage the Iranian regime for over a year. You have gone to the United Nations Security Council in an effort to impose tough new sanctions on Iran. But time is not on our side. We cannot allow those who would oppose or delay sanctions to govern either the timing or content of our efforts. As you said last July, we cannot wait until we "wake up one day and find ourselves in a much worse situation and unable to act."

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Accordingly, we urge you today to reaffirm boldly and unambiguously that the US can and will prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability. We call on you to fulfill your June 2008 pledge that you would do "everything in my power to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon." Certainly, one way to begin would be to reverse the practice under which the US government has awarded at least $107 billion over the past decade in federal contracts to companies investing in or doing business in Iran. We urge you to join with those allies who are prepared for action to immediately impose crippling sanctions on Iran. Only such action on our part offers the prospect of persuading Tehran to turn away from its dangerous course.

Mr. President, we will soon complete our work on the Iranian sanctions legislation that has received the backing of overwhelming majorities in both Houses of Congress. We believe that America together with allies who share our approach can force Iran's regime to face the tough choice between international isolation – if it continues its nuclear quest – and possible reconciliation. We can do this by imposing punishing measures on the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, rocking Iran's banking system, and dramatically impacting Iran's ability to import or refine petroleum.

We urge you to move rapidly to implement your existing authority on Iran and the legislation we send you, and to galvanize the international community for immediate, devastating steps. The hour is late. Now is the time for action.

Sincerely,

Jesse L. Jackson, Jr.
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Mike Pence
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

Eric Cantor
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