

May 2009 - Reminder - Iran is a Threat to Israel, World

REMINDER - IRAN IS A THREAT TO ISRAEL, WORLD

By Congressman Jerry Moran

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The real and dangerous threat Iran poses to national and international security must not go unnoticed amid the myriad of economic issues currently challenging America. The world was given a reminder of the seriousness of the Iranian threat during an April United Nations anti-racism conference. On the opening day of the summit, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad used the forum to attack Israel, belittle the Jewish people and question the Holocaust.

Those that dismiss the Iranian leader's remarks as only rhetoric, risk becoming complacent to the threat a nuclear-armed Iran would pose to Israel, the United States and the security of the world.

Ahmadinejad's aggressive and intolerable words are not just rhetoric. His words reflect the policies of a government whose support of terrorist groups Hezbollah and Hamas have enabled these organizations to carry out attacks on Israel and kill innocent civilians. His words must be taken all the more seriously in view of Iran's continued violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions and the enrichment of uranium.

In February of this year, the International Atomic Energy Agency reported Iran has enough low enriched uranium that if further processed could produce a nuclear bomb. Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons is an existential threat to the people of Israel and is a danger to the rest of the world. Congress cannot afford to wait. The situation becomes more urgent

each day. Action must be taken.

Congress can begin by approving two pieces of legislation. H.R. 1327, the Iran Sanctions Enabling Act gives states and local governments the authority to divest their assets from any company that invests \$20 million or more in Iran's energy sector. By allowing states and local governments to withdraw their investments in companies doing business in Iran, we can increase pressure on the Iranian regime to change course.

In addition to allowing state and local governments to divest from firms doing business in Iran, Congress should sanction any company engaged in activities that contribute to Iran's ability to import refined petroleum by approving H.R. 1985, the Iran Diplomatic Enhancement Act. Although Iran has a wealth of oil, it lacks the ability to turn much of that oil into fuel. As a result, it imports about 40 percent of its gasoline. The threat of such serious sanctions may lead Iran to negotiate in good faith and forgo its pursuit of nuclear weapons.

Israel is America's closest ally in a most important region of the world. The Obama Administration must back its policies of engagement with tougher sanctions and guard against Iranian diversions and delays. Our country must respond to the serious threat Iran poses to the peace and security of the world and approve the Iran Sanctions Enabling Act and the Iran Diplomatic Enhancement Act.

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