



**The Secretary of Energy**  
Washington, DC 20585

September 8, 2015

Dear Rabbi and Congregation President,

During this especially significant time of the year for the Jewish community, with many gatherings that reflect on issues of great importance, I expect that you will be focused along with many Americans on the upcoming Congressional vote on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and its implications for the State of Israel.

As you may know, I joined the U.S. delegation to the negotiations in February, when the President asked me to serve as the lead U.S. negotiator for the nuclear dimensions of an agreement that would verifiably prevent Iran from having nuclear weapons.

Since returning from Vienna, I have sought to explain the nuclear dimensions of the JCPOA to many audiences, including leaders of Jewish communities in Washington and around the country. My conversations confirm that, as with other communities, the American Jewish community does not share a consensus about the JCPOA but its members want accurate information to inform their discussions. Therefore, in the spirit of contributing to constructive dialogue, I am writing and providing background materials to lay out how this agreement increases the security of the United States, Israel and the world.

A key to the agreement is that the JCPOA commits Iran to never develop or acquire a nuclear weapon, in turn providing a basis for an overwhelming response should it ever attempt to do so. The unity of purpose by the signatories of this agreement with Iran — China, Russia, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, the European Union and the United States — is unprecedented. Furthermore, the agreement is unique in having Iran also commit to never developing weaponization technologies and it takes none of our options off the table in the event we have to prevent the emergence of a nuclear-armed Iran.

Of course, this is not enough. This agreement places severe restrictions on Iran's nuclear program for fifteen years and strengthens verification of both declared and undeclared activities in perpetuity. The nuclear program restrictions effectively prevent Iran from producing enough weapons-grade material to build a nuclear weapon. It expands the current two- to three-month breakout time over the fifteen-year period, including to at least a year for the first decade — enough time for a strong allied preventive response.

The verification measures are unparalleled. Iran commits to the Additional Protocol with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which provides the basis for access to suspicious sites, but adds to it a unique requirement for access within a fixed time. It also provides the IAEA for the first time with surveillance of the uranium supply chain, and does so for 25 years. This will be a great help to intelligence agencies that will be



watching for any sign of covert activity. Iran's odds of getting caught if it cheats on the agreement are raised very substantially, providing a strong deterrent to such behavior.

The JCPOA is grounded in science, and we got the science right. I have devoted my career to nuclear physics, spending 40 years on the faculty at MIT and working on nuclear proliferation issues for almost that long, and this is the most innovative and stringent negotiated nonproliferation framework that I have ever seen. Our leading nuclear experts at the Department of Energy's national laboratories and nuclear sites backed up the U.S. negotiating team throughout, and they will be deeply involved in the implementation phase. Indeed, the decades of nuclear security experience and ingenuity of this dedicated workforce forms the foundation upon which our confidence in the effectiveness of the agreement will rest well into the future.

For all of these reasons, this deal makes the United States safer, and it makes Israel safer. In his recent webcast to the Jewish community, President Obama emphasized the commitment he made when he ran for President to make Israel safer. Israel has no greater friend than the United States, and no President has done more to advance Israel's security than President Obama.

I firmly believe that the science and the facts support the benefits of this agreement — not only because it mitigates Israel's existential risk of a nuclear-armed Iran, but also because it will be backed up by the strongest nuclear nonproliferation inspections and monitoring regime ever negotiated. This deal is not about trust. This deal is grounded in a substantially scaled-back Iranian nuclear program and the ability to verify.

I have included materials to help inform the discussions in your community.

With best wishes to you, your family and your community for a healthy and happy New Year,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ernest J. Moniz', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ernest J. Moniz

Enclosures