

RELEASE IN PART
B1,1.4(D),B6

From: Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>
Sent: Sunday, January 1, 2012 7:27 AM
To: H
Subject: Fw: Letter to the Secretary
Attachments: Letter to President Obama 11 12 11.pdf; Letter to Donilon on TRR (2).pdf

Classified by DAS, A/GIS, DoS on 01/29/2016 ~ Class: CONFIDENTIAL ~ Reason: 1.4(D) ~ Declassify on: 01/01/2027

B6

From: Pickering, Thomas R [mailto:]
Sent: Saturday, December 31, 2011 06:06 PM
To: Mills, Cheryl D
Subject: Letter to the Secretary

Cheryl:

This letter follows up two conversations with the Secretary and has been sometime in the making. I would be grateful as always for your assistance in getting it to her.

Sincerely and all good wishes for the New Year.

Tom Pickering

Dear Madam Secretary:

Following up our brief talk on Monday the 19th and our previous exchange at the Crisis Group dinner on Iran, I send you these few ideas on how the Administration might take advantage of recent developments to further US interests.

I am attaching for your background two letters that relate to two aspects of our relations with Iran – (1) how we might benefit from following up on the Iranian offer to discuss a cessation of enrichment to 20% in connection with providing fuel elements for the Tehran Research Reactor and (2) how we might work toward better communications to avoid conflict by accident or miscalculation.

Iran has raised again the option of ceasing enrichment of uranium to the level of 20% for use in the Tehran Research Reactor (TRR) to produce medical isotopes. It seems clear that while Iran can produce material at 20% enrichment, it cannot now and perhaps for some time manufacture the fuel elements which the reactor requires to continue operation. The cessation of enrichment to 20% would be in return for a quantity of fuel elements. The arrangement holds out possibilities for two areas of expansion – (1) getting Iran to contribute its already produced 20% materials to the project and also (2) to agree not to exceed 5% levels of enrichment, the next level below 20% for which they have a putative civil use. Even if Iran were not willing to contribute its currently held quantity of 20% enriched material, I would encourage exploring the offer with the idea of seeking an agreement because the cap on enrichment at 5% is a solid step on the way to our objective of a cessation and can be described as such, and the offer opens the possibility of further meetings on the nuclear question now reinforced by the Iranian announcement of December 31st.

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[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted] The announcement on the 31st of December by Said Jalili, the nuclear negotiator, is a further indication of interest. [Redacted]

[Redacted]

Taking advantage of this propitious moment to work with Iran to move the relationship in a more positive direction would be valuable and a step back from the path to conflict. Yet such a step now would more likely be successful and even more valuable if it were set in the context of a broader US strategy toward Iran. In order to move toward engagement with Iran, Iran's Supreme Leader will have to be led to understand two central facts: (1) that working with the United States is possible on a fair and equitable basis and (2) that US policy toward Iran is not based on "regime change" -- that there is a genuine intention of the US to work with Iran toward a new relationship. It will take time and a number of actions by the US to persuade the Supreme Leader. This will not be easy, but is the only apparent way to achieve our objectives with Iran over the long run. War, as you and I understand, is simply not a viable option. And if sanctions are to serve their purpose, then we must help to open the door which we want Iranians to walk through.

As we did last year, the small group with which you met stands ready to speak with you further about these opportunities and our thoughts on how best to pursue them on the basis of long and continuing contact with Iranians who are and have been close to the situation in their country and understand the approach of the leadership as well as the various factions contending for influence in the country.

From my experience, I know something of what you have to contend with generally and more specifically regarding Iran, as well as the cost of missed opportunities and failed ones. Please count on our help and support as you address these difficult issues and challenges.

I hope that the apparently revived interest in Iran in meeting with the P5+1 will lead to a contact and an effort to determine seriousness.

With all good wishes for the New Year,

Respectfully,

Thomas R. Pickering.