AN OPEN LETTER

To the American People and the Members of the House and Senate

The Case for a Deal With Iran — and Why Your Government Has Buried It

Members of Congress, fellow citizens,

You are about to hear, again, that Iran is your enemy. Before you vote on sanctions, resolutions, or war, you deserve the record your government has kept from you — not opinion, but documented history, much of it declassified by Washington itself. Read it, then decide who owes whom a deal.

I. The History You Were Never Taught

America's Iran story does not begin in 1979 with the embassy. It begins in 1953, when the CIA and MI6 overthrew Iran's democratically elected prime minister, Mohammad Mossadegh, because he nationalized his country's own oil. The CIA admitted this itself — in documents it declassified in 2013, on its own letterhead. The coup installed the Shah as a dictator and built SAVAK, his feared secret police, trained with CIA and Mossad help. For twenty-six years, Iranians lived under a torture state you sponsored. When they finally overthrew it, your government told you the story started that day.

Every grievance you have been taught about Iran — the hostage crisis, the "Death to America" chants — is real. And every one of them grew from soil you helped poison. That is not an apology for Iranian abuses. It is the context without which no policy you pass will ever work.

II. The Nuclear Double Standard

You are told Iran's nuclear program proves malignant intent. The record:

- In 1967, the United States gave Iran's Shah a research reactor **and several kilograms of weapons-grade, 93%-enriched uranium fuel**.
- In the 1970s, the Ford administration — with Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld in it — formally endorsed Iran acquiring the **full nuclear fuel cycle, including enrichment and reprocessing**. Henry Kissinger approved selling enrichment technology to Tehran.
- In 1974, the Shah's Iran lent France $1 billion for a 10% stake in the Eurodif enrichment consortium, and paid a further $180 million for future fuel deliveries. After the revolution, the uranium never came. Iran spent seventeen years in courts recovering the money — repaid in 1991, with interest — but the fuel it had purchased in full was never delivered. Iranian officials point to Eurodif to this day as the reason they can never again depend on foreign suppliers. France took the payment; Iran took the lesson. Now Washington sanctions Iran for having learned it.

The same enrichment your government offered to sell the Shah became an “existential threat” the moment Iran was governed by Iranians rather than a client. The standard was never the technology. The standard was always obedience.

And understand this: Iran came to the table in 2013 not because of your bombs, but because of sanctions — then complied with the deal it signed. The IAEA repeatedly certified Iranian compliance with the JCPOA. Your government’s own inspectors said Iran was honoring the agreement. In 2018, the United States tore it up anyway.

And one more thing you were never told: **even under the deal, Iran never got what it was promised.** The JCPOA lifted only nuclear-related sanctions — suspended, phased, and revocable — while human-rights designations, the “terrorism” listings, and the entire US primary embargo stayed untouched. Worst of all, the big banks read the fine print, saw how easily Iran-linked names could be re-listed, and refused to return. Iran dismantled most of its enrichment infrastructure and received, by most estimates, a small fraction of the promised economic relief.

Tehran’s hardliners ran the 2017 argument into power: *you give the concessions now, they deliver the relief never*. Washington proved them right two years later. If you want to know why Iran’s negotiators are so stubborn now — it is because the one experiment in trusting America ended with America eating the concessions and withholding the payment. Again.

Nor was the junior branch of the system innocent in its junior way. When Washington tore up the deal in 2018, Europe passed a “blocking statute” ordering its firms to disobey, and built INSTEX to trade around the dollar — then enforced neither. The channel died of cowardice, not law. And in 2025 the E3 triggered the snapback themselves, reimposing pre-JCPOA sanctions on September 29 — punishing Iran for a deal America had already killed. Tehran learned the lesson twice from two different capitals: the senior power breaks its word outright, and the junior power promises a shield, then hands over the sword when told. Even Ottawa — with no direct quarrel with Iran, no embassy stake, no navy in the Gulf — severed relations and fell into line. Every Western door led to the same wall, and Iran watched all of them close from the same direction.

And in June 2026, the lesson compressed into a single month. The Islamabad Memorandum — a war-ending agreement signed by the president of the United States — promised, in its published text, a $300 billion reconstruction plan, the release of Iran’s frozen assets to beneficiaries of its central bank’s choosing, Treasury waivers for its oil exports covering banking, insurance, and shipping, and the removal of the American naval blockade within thirty days. The blockade was formally back in twenty-six days — inside the deadline Washington had written for its own removal. The clause guaranteeing Lebanon’s territorial integrity was explained away by the Secretary of State six days after signature — “a careful reading,” he said, shows an end of hostilities “in the entire region… that’s not possible” — and carved into a separate framework on day nine. On day twenty-one, the president declared the whole document “over.” **The JCPOA at least required an election to die. This one did not outlive the month of its own signature.**

III. Iran’s Pain — Some of It Yours

During the Iran–Iraq war, when Iraq’s Saddam Hussein — then America’s tilt-partner — used chemical weapons against Iranian troops, declassified material confirms the US provided battlefield intelligence knowing it could be used in those chemical attacks. Tens of thousands of Iranians died or were permanently maimed by gas. In 1988, the USS Vincennes shot down a civilian Iran Air flight in Iranian airspace, killing 290 people including 66 children. The crew received medals, and the United States has never formally apologized.

Since then, four decades of sanctions have strangled ordinary Iranians — medicines shortages, grounded airliners, a crushed currency — while, by Brown University’s own accounting, failing to slow the nuclear program they were meant to stop. Enrichment that stood at permitted levels under the deal climbed after America broke it.
The sanctions built the very escalation they were sold to prevent.

And then came the newest layer: American and Israeli bombs on Iranian soil — beginning with the US–Israeli strikes of February 28, 2026 — and assassinations of Iran's military and scientific leadership — from Soleimani killed by American drone at Baghdad airport, to nuclear scientists killed in the streets of Tehran, to the direct strikes on Iran of recent years. You may celebrate these as victories. Understand what they are in Tehran: proof that the only language Washington respects is force. Every bomb deepens the conviction that the nuclear hedge is the one guarantee of survival.

And there are two names you must say out loud, because the first day of this war was written on children. On February 28, 2026 — the opening morning of the US–Israeli campaign — the airstrikes began at 9:45. By 10:00, teachers at the Shajareh Tayyebeh girls' school in Minab were calling parents to come collect their daughters from Saturday classes. Less than an hour later, the school was struck. Over 150 people were killed — some 123 of them children under thirteen, the vast majority of them girls — and the UN's Independent Fact-Finding Mission counted more than 168 dead, finding "reasonable grounds to believe" the United States **committed the war crime of launching an indiscriminate attack**. Human Rights Watch called for it to be investigated as a likely war crime, noting the school was physically separated from the nearby military compound and had its own entrance.

That same first day, US Precision Strike Missiles bursting mid-air over a sports hall in Lamerd killed at least twenty-one civilians, among them a teenage girls' volleyball team at practice and a two-year-old girl.

Then came the cover-up phase: the military's own investigators reportedly found the school strike was driven by flawed intelligence, outdated imagery, and over-reliance on artificial intelligence — and the report was delayed, past the midterms, while the official line settled into "all feasible precautions were taken" and seventy-plus members of Congress had to write the Secretary of Defense just to ask. The country that publishes lists of foreign terrorist organizations killed a girls' school and a volleyball team on day one, let an algorithm share the blame, and sat on the report through an election.

Those paragraphs will be read aloud in Tehran for a century. What gets written in the next paragraph is up to you.

And state the post-February equation plainly, because every proliferation analyst on earth has already written it: **in 2026, the United States and Israel bombed the country that had *not* built a nuclear weapon — while continuing to arm, fund, and shield the one that has, undeclared and uninspected, as it struck Iran.**
Every state watching drew the obvious conclusion, and none faster than Tehran. You did not deter the bomb; you wrote its sales pitch. Whatever Iran's nuclear future now holds, the February strikes will stand in history as its most effective recruiting argument — and it will be a Washington product.

IV. Iran's Help — Also Buried

When America was attacked on September 11, Iran helped you. Tehran shared intelligence on al-Qaeda and the Taliban, assisted the Northern Alliance, and supported the Bonn process that formed Afghanistan's post-war government. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage described Iran's cooperation as useful to American efforts. Iran's reward, months later, was placement in the "Axis of Evil."

Then came Iraq: fabricated weapons-of-mass-destruction claims, a war of choice that killed hundreds of thousands of civilians. Iran's generals, including the man your government later assassinated by drone, Qassem Soleimani, fought ISIS on the ground — while Washington classified his organization as terrorist and armed the other side of the same wars. Ask the history books, ask your own commanders who quietly coordinated with Shia militias against the caliphate: on the ground, against the worst terrorist army of the century, Iran and America had a common enemy, and Iran bled for it.

V. The Accounting You Cannot Escape

Brown University's Costs of War project — an American university, publishing on American wars — counts roughly **432,000 civilians killed directly** by post-9/11 American operations, and 4.5 to 4.7 million total dead including indirect deaths, across Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen, and Pakistan. Three of those five countries had nothing to do with the attack that started it. The fifteen hijackers were nearly all from Saudi Arabia — a country that has never faced one of your sanctions.

No official of these wars has been indicted. When the International Criminal Court investigated alleged American conduct in Afghanistan, the United States sanctioned the ICC's prosecutor. Meanwhile, the government carrying that death toll continues to publish the "state sponsors of terrorism" list. No country on that list — Iran included, across its entire history — comes close to matching it. Citizens, ask your representatives plainly: **by what authority does the largest killer classify others?** The designation lists track power, not conduct. You have been paying for that inversion for decades, in blood and in treasure.

Rank the world's militaries by civilian deaths over the past forty years and the honest list begins with the United States, continues with Israel — whose Gaza campaign alone, in under three years, likely exceeded the direct civilian toll of any prior Israeli operation, several times over — and would place Assad's Syria, Russia, and Sudan's warring armies in the tier above any contention. Somewhere around tenth sits the IRGC — brutal, yes, and directly implicated in Syria's slaughter and in arming wars that killed civilians across the region — but nowhere near the top of the column it is accused of topping.

The kicker is the punchline of this entire letter: **of every military on that grim ledger, the only one formally designated a Foreign Terrorist Organization by the United States is the IRGC — the one around tenth place.** The entity that writes the list ranks first on the body count. The list was never a map of terror. It is a map of who lacks the power to retaliate against the list-maker.

VI. The Palestinian Test — Where the Vocabulary Collapses

You are told Iran is a terror sponsor because it arms Palestinian factions. Consider what the rest of the world has concluded, and who your own friends have become.

When South Africa — the nation that buried apartheid — took Israel to the International Court of Justice under the Genocide Convention in December 2023, it was backed publicly by Turkey, Jordan, Brazil, Colombia, Malaysia, and others. The court issued provisional measures. Then the recognition wave came: Ireland, Norway, and Spain in May 2024; Slovenia, Armenia, and Mexico followed. And in September 2025 the dam broke inside your own alliance: **the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Portugal, France, Belgium, and Malta recognized the State of Palestine — the first G7 states ever to do so, breaking explicitly with the United States.**
Today 156 of the UN's 193 members recognize Palestine.
The US vetoed its full UN membership anyway.

Sit with the asymmetry the world now sees plainly. Qatar transferred billions to keep Gaza functioning — with American and Israeli consent — and is called a mediator. Iran transfers arms to Palestinian factions and is called a sponsor of terror. Israel drops American bombs on the trapped population of Gaza, and the United States calls this "self-defense" while vetoing ceasefire resolutions and continuing the weapons shipments. One rule-set author, three different verdicts, assigned by relationship rather than conduct.

And the record does not pause while you read. On October 10, 2025, the Gaza ceasefire took effect — and by its first anniversary the United Nations counted more than 1,400 Palestinians killed under it, over a thousand verified by name and age, 268 of them children. Human Rights Watch states that Israel's acts of genocide "have persisted throughout the ceasefire." And the signature has been stress-tested in Lebanon as well: the first clause of the Islamabad Memorandum guaranteed "the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Lebanon" — a promise explained away within a week, carved out of a separate framework on day nine, and

dead with the memorandum itself on day twenty-one. Israel, exempt from that signature by non-signature, still occupies around one-fifth of Lebanon — its American-made weapons destroying civilian homes there, as members of Congress warned the Secretary of State in writing, invoking the Geneva Convention's protections for civilian property. Ceasefire is now a word that means whatever the arsenal permits — and this is the signature Iran is being asked to trust.

This is not a letter about Israel-Palestine. It is a letter about *credibility*. Washington demands that Iran trust its signatures, honor its lists, and accept its moral classifications — while the entire Western alliance, minus Washington, has concluded that those classifications no longer describe reality. When your own closest allies — London, Ottawa, Canberra, Paris — walk away from your vocabulary in the same twelve months, the problem is not the world's perception. The problem is the vocabulary. And a country whose vocabulary has lost its closest friends cannot expect a country it has sanctioned for forty years to sign anything on faith.

VII. The Pivot You Built — Moscow, Beijing, and the Price of Refusal

You will be told Iran is now in Russia's pocket: supplying drone technology and missiles used against Ukraine, deepening intelligence ties, aligning with Beijing. Note who arranged this marriage. For every year that Washington treated Iran as an untouchable, sanctioned pariah, Tehran had exactly one class of partners left — the states outside your system. Iran's eastward turn was not ideology. It was your embargo leaving one door open, and Tehran walking through it.

The Vendor Ledger — PURL and the Arithmetic of Withdrawal. Now watch what your government did with Ukraine's defense, because it is the same pattern wearing a different uniform — reneging in slow motion, not with a signature on paper. When Washington stopped paying for Ukraine aid directly, it invented a workaround: the **Prioritized Ukraine Requirements List** — PURL — a mechanism agreed at the White House on **14 July 2025 by President Trump and Secretary-General Mark Rutte personally**, with the first package delivered under Dutch financing on 4 August 2025.

The arrangement, plainly: Ukraine nominates its operational priorities, and approval rests with America's own Supreme Allied Commander Europe — General Alexus Grynkewich, whose sign-off gates what gets funded; NATO partners then pool the cash in packages of roughly $500 million each, and the US ships from its own stockpiles through NATO's NSATU command. **Europe pays, America sells, Ukraine gets the guns — and one American general holds the veto over every item on the list.** The vendor is not the donor — POLITICO reported the arrangement without blushing: under the new administration, new military aid from Washington has dried up, "but the White House is willing to sell arms paid for by other allies."

On PURL's books sit 75 percent of Ukraine's Patriot interceptors and 90 percent of the missiles for its other air-defense systems — and by the program's first anniversary, Ukrainian tallies credited this single American-controlled channel with 95 percent of Ukraine's Patriot missiles — which makes the ledger worth reading. Its first year raised roughly $4.3 billion, missing Secretary-General Rutte's $5 billion target by some $700 million against his stated need of $1 billion a month, with only eleven of thirty-two allies contributing anything at all — a shortfall so chronic that alliance diplomats speak of members "punching below their weight" and NATO's own staff have pressed to convert the scheme into a multi-year common fund. Because as constructed, PURL has no standing budget line, no multi-year commitment, and no binding formula: every package requires fresh political fundraising, and the pipeline lives or dies month to month. The twelve-month accounting makes the scale plain: by the July 2026 anniversary, the allies had mobilized some $6.7 billion across more than ten packages — a genuine European scramble, and still roughly half the monthly rate at which Washington, in its donor years, delivered on its own. And the public defense of these starving pipelines leaned, at its lowest moment, on a single service member's anecdote — a story that dissolved under examination, leaving the excuse resting on one person and the arithmetic resting on none.

Add the record of your own appropriations: $400 million a year for 2026 and 2027, forced back in by lawmakers after the White House zeroed Ukraine out entirely, frozen in the Pentagon until April 2026, containing no Patriot missiles at all, and arriving — on new-production timelines — in October 2029. Token

amounts, delayed release, the one capability that matters excluded and priced at the counter: **withdrawal dressed as compliance.**

And in March 2026 the Washington Post reported the Pentagon was weighing the diversion of Ukraine-bound weapons themselves — interceptor missiles paid for by European allies under PURL — to the Middle East, because the war on Iran was burning through the same munitions: over nine thousand targets struck by US Central Command since February 28, and the interceptor stock draining with them. Asked about it, the president waved it off: "We do this all the time… Sometimes we take from one place for another. We are helping Ukraine" — while Ukraine's own ambassador to NATO publicly warned of air-defense shortfalls from the Middle East war. The war your government launched on Iran was literally positioned to consume the air defense your other allies had paid for to protect Ukraine.

And then — as energy prices rocketed from that same war — the Trump administration **waived sanctions on Russia itself** so Moscow could sell diesel to world markets. Assemble the full geometry your policies produced: America's sanctions drove Iran into arming Russia; those weapons help kill the Ukrainians your allies are paying to defend; Washington converted itself from donor to vendor in the same war — collecting cash while shedding responsibility — then let its Iran campaign eat the antidote, and finally exempted Russia the moment its diesel became convenient. The government that sanctioned Iran for arming Russia pardoned Russia itself, in the same fiscal year, with the same signature authority. The regime punishes the powerless and shelters the useful, and everyone beneath the transaction — Ukrainian civilians above all — absorbs the results.

And examine who is holding the pen, because this is where the arrangement stops resembling foreign policy altogether. The administration's chief negotiators — Jared Kushner and Steve Witkoff — are the architects of its Ukraine and Iran diplomacy, and their conflicts of interest are not allegations anymore; they are matters of active federal litigation and open congressional investigation. While negotiating an end to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the two were simultaneously working with the Kremlin to sell some $20 billion in international assets of the Russian oil company Lukoil to an investor group that includes their own business partners — reported by the Washington Post, denied by no one in the documents. Witkoff, the president's chief envoy to the very Gulf states and to Pakistan — the broker of the Iran end-war talks — holds family financial interests in World Liberty Financial, an entity whose affiliate signed a memorandum of understanding with Pakistan's government in January 2026 while Witkoff was conducting official negotiations with that same government; his son is the firm's CEO.

Kushner runs Affinity Partners, a fund financed overwhelmingly by Saudi and Gulf money, while shuttling between Putin, Zelensky, and the Gulf on the nation's behalf without salary, title, disclosure, or confirmation — a set of arrangements so constitutionally irregular that Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington sued on October 14, 2026 to strip him of the role, and the House Oversight Committee opened an investigation within the month. A sitting senator has described the operation on the record, bluntly: the White House keeps its Gulf diplomacy "because it's a grift."

And watch the channel itself, because it has become improvisation without a state. The same envoys conduct Iran diplomacy by rotation: Kushner and Witkoff reported "disappointed" after a three-hour session with Iran's delegation in Islamabad; the Vice President then dispatched his own personal letter to a senior Iranian security official proposing direct talks; and between these American rounds sits Vladimir Putin, who received Witkoff in St. Petersburg and offered Moscow's services as mediator between Washington and Tehran — boasting of his country's "special, trusting relations" with Iran — while his foreign minister shuttled to Tehran the day before. Read that roster slowly.

The wars of the United States are being mediated by the country the United States sanctions and then waives, negotiated by men with equity in the parties, and answered from Tehran by a supreme leadership that has drawn its own conclusions: Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei — who has not appeared in public since the February strikes — published a letter after your midterm elections declaring that anyone who imagines "concessions to America" will dissolve its hostility toward the Iranian nation "is gravely mistaken," while Iranian officials told the Associated Press that American voters had rejected the war. The window this letter describes is not theoretical, and it is not open-ended: a hardline leadership consolidating in Tehran, a transactional improvisation governing in Washington, and a Russian mediator inserting himself in between. Every month that passes without a durable, ratified, conflict-free agreement, the parties who profit from the deadlock grow stronger, and the parties who want peace grow quieter.

Ask what all this means for the letter's subject, and the answer is not subtle: **the men sent to negotiate peace with Iran, Russia, and Ukraine stand to profit from the parties they negotiate with.**

Iran's negotiators — or Russia's — would have to be fools to sign anything crafted by counterparts who hold equity in the other side of the table. And American citizens should ask a harder question: when the deals these men broker carve up oil assets and Gulf investments alongside the ceasefire terms, whose war is ending, and to whose account does the settlement flow? This is not diplomacy with a conflict of interest. It is private equity conducted at public expense, wearing the seal of the United States as collateral. Every prior section of this letter argued that Iran cannot trust American signatures. This one explains, in the plainest possible terms, why no one else should either — and why the guarantor of any real deal must be ratified, disclosed, and conflict-free, or it is worth exactly the paper and the personal stakes behind it.

And understand this plainly: **Iran will not fold.** A nation that survived the Iraq war's gas, forty years of siege, and bombs on its capital does not capitulate to pressure; it adapts to it. Every strategy premised on "they'll blink eventually" has been tested for four decades and has failed for four decades. The only thing that has ever moved Iran's actual position is demonstrated good faith — as in the JCPOA years, when verified engagement delivered verified restraint. Iran will bend to amends, not to ultimatums. Those who say otherwise are not describing Iran; they are describing a fantasy Iran that exists only in Washington think-tank fundraising decks.

Now consider Ukraine specifically — because the honest version is uncomfortable for everyone. Iran and Ukraine are not natural enemies: no territorial dispute, no historical grievance, no religious fault line — only cooperative relations before the war. Iran built its Shahed drones long before Russia invaded Ukraine; in late 2022 it began shipping them to Russia, then graduated to selling the technology outright — Russia now mass-produces the design itself, as its licensed "Geran" series, at plants like Alabuga. The choice to arm Russia was made in Tehran with eyes open — eyes open, that is, on a marketplace Washington itself had built: a sanctioned seller cut off from every Western option, meeting a buyer isolated by the very same sanctions architect. The circumstances were American-made; the choice was Iran's, and it is a real stain — as is Iran's shootdown of Ukraine International Airlines Flight PS752, which killed all 176 aboard, and which Tehran initially covered up. Washington's pressure did not pull the trigger in either case.

But note who constructed the marketplace: Washington's sanctions stripped the seller of every Western alternative, and Moscow's isolation created the buyer's demand — one emptied the shelf, the other was the only customer standing there. And the remedy is the mirror of the cause: you will not embargo a design into oblivion once it is licensed abroad, and you will not shame a sanctioned pariah out of the arms trade.

You outbid it.

A normalized Iran with Western trade, Western customers, and a stake in the global economy has every material reason to stop arming Russia — the same reason pre-1979 Iran never armed Moscow, and the same reason post-deal Iran signed contracts with Boeing and Airbus rather than Sukhoi. Every additional year of "maximum pressure" cannot un-license what Moscow already builds in Tatarstan — the factories already stand — but it guarantees that the next sale follows the first. Only a deal gives Tehran a reason to make sure it doesn't. If Ukraine matters to you, the fastest way to dry up that supply line runs directly through a deal with Tehran.

VIII. Why a Deal — An Honest One — Serves You

Set morality aside if you must. Follow self-interest:

1. **Sanctions have failed at their stated goal for forty years.** Iran's nuclear program is further along than when the pressure began. Every escalatory cycle produced more centrifuges, more enrichment. A policy that fails for forty years is not a policy. It is a subsidy to hardliners in both capitals.
2. **The JCPOA model worked — until you broke it.** Verified, inspected, certified. Even your own intelligence agencies conceded it was working. The lesson of 2018 taught Iran that no American signature survives an election. Any new deal must therefore be treaty-grade, ratified by this Senate, binding future administrations — **the very durability Iran has always asked for and Washington has always refused**.

3. **Iran's core demands are mostly your own breached promises.** Unfreezing Iranian money seized without trial. Ending secondary sanctions that currently punish your own European and Asian allies — yes, members of Congress, you are sanctioning Germany and Japan to get at Tehran. Restoring a deal America abandoned while in compliance. Calling these "concessions" is a strange name for repairing your own violations.

4. **Guarantees against attack are not weakness.** Iran asks for an assurance America will not bomb it. Sit with the fact that this is a live request. Libya disarmed in 2003; Gaddafi was lynched eight years later. Every deterrent Iran builds is a product of American conduct — and you can unwind that product by making agreements, and keeping them, at a fraction of the cost of another war.

5. **Iran is a stabilizable regional power, not a revolutionary vortex.** It hasn't invaded a neighbor in centuries. It is a large, educated, young society that retains deep cultural goodwill toward the American people — the crowds that mourned after 9/11 were in Tehran's streets, spontaneously, by candlelight. Regimes change. Nations remember. If you want the Iranian people to someday have a freer government, try not starving them while you wait.

6. **The barrels argument — now a live weapon aimed at your pump prices.** Reintegrating Iran restores roughly one to one-and-a-half million barrels per day of legitimate exports to world markets — and with investment, far more over time. That is downward pressure on the global oil price, which your constituents feel at the pump. Today, those barrels sell at a steep discount to exactly one buyer — China — through shadow tankers and middlemen — brokered, insured, and often re-flagged through Gulf and Western trading hubs — who pocket the sanctions premium. And note the enforcement pattern: the largest violator, China, buys openly and unbothered, while the Western banks caught facilitating evasion paid fines, kept profits, and jailed no one. Sanctions that fine their violators a percentage are not prohibitions. They are licenses. A deal with Iran routes that money through legitimate channels instead — a consumer-side tax cut funded by Tehran.
   But understand what February proved, because your constituents already paid for it: **the Strait of Hormuz — a fifth of the world's oil — was choked from the first day of the war.** AIS-tracked traffic collapsed from an average of almost sixty commercial vessels a day in 2025 to a handful of crossings — at the worst point, six vessels on a Thursday, thirty-nine over an entire week (Bloomberg). Only an improvised, US-escorted system of dark transponders and offshore ship-to-ship transfers restored partial flows — and even the interim June deal reopened the strait to roughly a quarter of prewar traffic (Wall Street Journal). That was June. The memorandum that produced the reopening is dead, killed by its own signatory within twenty-one days of signature — and the naval blockade its published text pledged to remove within thirty is active as of this writing, past its two-hundredth day: standing proof that Iran's leverage is real, priced in barrels. The true flow is unknowable: AIS counts only ships declaring themselves, while satellites show dozens of hulls sitting dark in the strait — when ships must hide to move, the chokehold is working. Iran demonstrated in full view what Washington spent decades pretending was unthinkable: it can close the artery of the world economy on its own signature — a deterrent it can use repeatedly, credibly, and with a legal argument under Article 51 of the UN Charter that your own lawyers privately concede is arguable. That is why the strait is, frankly, a more usable deterrent than a bomb: it imposes pain on the aggressor's economy rather than on a city, it is verifiable, reversible, and it cannot be undone by a preemptive raid the way a reactor can. Every member reading this will vote on war powers and sanctions knowing Tehran's hand rests on that valve — it closed it once, it can close it again, and it has publicly offered a two-day reopening as part of a settlement. You can negotiate with the hand on the valve, or you can pretend the valve isn't there and watch the price at your district's pumps testify at your next town hall.

IX. What the Deal Looks Like

Honesty requires stating what both sides must surrender:

America must give: sequenced, verifiable sanctions relief tied to restored nuclear limits — **terminated, not suspended, for Iran has learned precisely what Washington's "revocable" waivers are worth**; release of frozen Iranian assets; **full removal of the IRGC terror designation — not a waiver, not a carve-out, but de-listing**, because Iran has had forty years of fine print and trusts none of it (even the US officials who imposed the designation knew a national army is not a terror cell); a non-

aggression framework, executive now, treaty-grade as ratification allows; closure of old IAEA case files contingent on verified answers about historic sites.

And — harder, but necessary — **visible amends**: a formal, presidential acknowledgment of the 1953 coup — not the mumbled half-sentences of the past. Secretary Albright conceded a "significant role" in 2000; President Obama mentioned "a role" in Cairo in 2009; and the CIA's own confirmation came only in 2013, extracted by FOIA lawsuits, buried in a declassified PDF on a Friday — while the operational files remain sealed seventy years on. Acknowledgment let slip through litigation is not acknowledgment; it is evidence discovered. A deal requires the state to say it plainly, declassify the record completely, and pair the words with accountability gestures for the broken JCPOA. Iran's negotiators cannot sell restraint to their own hardliners if the deal is framed as America winning. Deals require a face-saving entry for both capitals; America, as the stronger party claiming the moral high ground, can afford to offer that gesture first.

And if Europe and Canada wish to stand as guarantors of a durable deal, they must co-sign with their own sanctions authorities — because Tehran's archive contains their broken blocking statute too. Nor is any of this unprecedented generosity: release of frozen assets, waivers covering banking, insurance, and shipping, and the end of the naval blockade within thirty days are all terms Washington itself wrote into the Islamabad Memorandum last June, under the president's own signature. **The asks in this letter are not aspirations. They are a restatement of Washington's own signed offer.**

Iran must give: re-adherence to enrichment caps and intrusive inspections, including a political decision that weapons acquisition forecloses — in plain view, certified by IAEA. Iran must accept that its hedge — its deliberate ambiguity — is the one thing a deal must end. Distancing from its eastward partnerships will follow the lifting of sanctions, not precede it; you cannot demand that Iran abandon its only remaining partners before new ones are on offer.

Both must accept: a standing dispute-resolution mechanism with automatic consequences for breach, so that no future American president and no future Iranian faction can walk away cheaply. The JCPOA's fatal flaw was not its terms — which worked — but the fact that breaking them cost America nothing. Price the breach, or expect the breach.

X. The Ask

Members of Congress: every vote for a new sanctions package is a vote to continue a forty-year failure that punishes Iranian civilians, enriches black-market intermediaries, drives Iran deeper into Russia's and China's arms — supplying your actual adversaries — and hands Tehran's hardest liners their best recruiting poster. Every vote against ratifying anything durable tells Iran — and every ally watching — that America's word expires with its administrations.

And this new Congress carries duties that cannot wait. First: more than seventy of you have already pressed the Defense Secretary over the Minab school strike, and the department's investigation was reportedly delayed past the midterms. Release it now — unclassified and unredacted, as Amnesty International USA and the UN mission have demanded. Let the families of those 123 children and of that volleyball team hear a sentence containing the word "accountability" before another appropriations cycle buys more Precision Strike Missiles.

Second: the oversight file already waiting on your desks — the CREW litigation over the envoy channel, the Oversight Committee's inquiry into Affinity Partners, the reported Lukoil transaction, the World Liberty memorandum with Pakistan — investigate it with subpoenas, not letters, and refer whatever the evidence supports to the Justice Department you now confirm. A country whose peace negotiators hold equity stakes in the parties they negotiate with cannot credibly demand that anyone — Iran, Russia, Europe, or its own citizens — trust its signatures. If you cannot do that much, no Iranian negotiator will believe you can do anything at all.

Third, and your caucus has already rehearsed the temptation. On November 10, in the lame-duck House, the impeachment articles against the Secretary of War were buried by seven votes, with eleven Democratic

members absent — some of them, Axios reported, returning from a reception held by a PAC whose affiliate has served as a "pass-through" for AIPAC's flagship super PAC. One of the eleven, Representative Haley Stevens, is the largest single investment that network has ever made in a candidate: AIPAC and its affiliates spent some $30 million promoting her and attacking her primary opponent — "their largest investment ever in a single race," in the Associated Press's words. Michigan's voters declined the purchase. Stevens then endorsed the Republican nominee against her own party's — and ten days later was absent when the war's author faced impeachment. You take the gavel in January: revive the articles on day one, and let no fundraiser compete with the roll call.

And note the direction of travel: the candidate buried under twenty million dollars of attack ads is now the senator-elect from Michigan. The voters are several steps ahead of their donors — the question is whether the Congress they elected follows them or the ledger.

Citizens: you have funded the only "state sponsor of terror" ledger with a four-million-plus count. You did not vote for those wars in most cases; you inherited them, paid for them, and were lied to about them. The opportunity in front of the United States is rare in history: an adversary that has already helped you once when you were attacked, whose population does not hate you as a people, whose interests align with yours in a stable Middle East, and whose central request — *keep your word* — costs nothing but pride.

Deal with Iran. Not because Iran is innocent — no state is, and Iran's domestic repression and regional conduct belong on their own ledger, to be judged on their own terms. Deal with Iran because the record shows the alternative is a century of burying consequence: 4.5 million dead on the ledger of a state that also owns the list declaring everyone else the terrorists. Start acting like a country capable of reading its own history honestly — and then signing its name to something worth keeping.

Respectfully submitted,

A citizen of the world, with the record