



February 19, 2004

The Honorable Colin Powell  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary,

We write with great concern about U.S. policy toward Iran.

The humanitarian tragedy felt by the Iranian people as a result of the earthquake at Bam rightly triggered sympathy around the world, and prompted a generous response among all nations. We were proud of the swift American response to the tragedy, including the deployment of disaster response personnel and donations of relief supplies. We applaud the Administration's decision to ease restrictions on humanitarian donations to Iran during this difficult period, and we express our sympathy with the Iranian people over the recent train explosion.

Nevertheless, we are concerned that those who seek to improve relations between the United States and Iran have mistakenly viewed this as a moment of opportunity to press for closer ties with the Islamic Republic. We would like to state our strong opposition to any increased level of engagement with the government of Iran, unless it makes several fundamental changes.

First, Iran must show a sincere commitment to becoming a true democracy, where all candidates may run for office, and all people can express ideas freely without fear of repression. Iran must cease all support for terrorism – whether their victims be Americans, Israelis, or others. Iran must make demonstrable progress in human rights, release all political prisoners, and end discrimination against women and against religious and ethnic minorities. Iran must completely dismantle its nuclear weapons program in a fashion that is verifiable and looks more like Libya in 2004 and less like than North Korea in 1994.

Until Iran makes these basic changes, we would oppose any opening by the United States. Our biggest concern is the message such overtures would send – and is already sending – to the overwhelming segment of the Iranian population who truly desire democracy and look to the U.S. as the world's champion of freedom. Particularly at a time when the regime in Tehran is so discrediting itself

through obvious electoral charades, a U.S. signal of support for any member of that regime is at best a mistake and at worst a blow to the cause of freedom in Iran.

Until Iran changes its course, we would propose a U.S. policy toward Iran that:

- Pursues publicly all links between the government of Iran and the Al Qaeda plotters of September 11<sup>th</sup> and all other terrorists;
- Encourages, rather than discourages, talks between U.S. officials and Iranian dissidents;
- Supports private broadcasting by Iranian-Americans to their native country;
- Reinstates sanctions against Iran after a reasonable time for earthquake relief efforts;
- Opposes vigorously all efforts by Iran to interfere in the politics of Iraq or Afghanistan;
- Pushes for a real and verifiable dismantling of Iran's nuclear programs;
- Seeks to work with the international community to ensure the safety of those brave Iranians willing to voice their opposition to the regime, including students, intelligentsia and anti-fundamentalist clerics; and
- States clearly the U.S. position that Iran is not a democracy and that the U.S. supports those elements in Iran who favor freedom.

Iran has not changed. On a list that is shrinking, Iran remains the most active state sponsor of terrorism. At a time when Iran needed humanitarian aid, it rejected Israeli offers of assistance and a delegation of Americans. In a world where our enemies seek to destroy us, Iran continues to deceive the world with its nuclear intentions.

Let us not compound the tragedy of the Bam earthquake with policy missteps that further condemn the people of Iran and threaten to place America on the wrong side of history.

Sincerely,

**Norm Coleman**  
United States Senator

**Sam Brownback**  
United States Senator

**Jon Kyl**  
United States Senator

**John Cornyn**  
United States Senator