

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074
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<https://oversight.house.gov>

October 11, 2023

The Honorable Antony J. Blinken
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken:

The Committee on Oversight and Accountability is investigating the Biden Administration's efforts to conceal details about its ongoing secret nuclear negotiations with the Islamic Republic of Iran from Congress, ignoring statutory obligations for congressional oversight. The Administration's lack of transparency is even more troubling in light of press reports¹ about Iran's direct role in this weekend's horrific attack on Israel by Hamas and additional revelations that former Special Envoy for Iran (SEI), Robert Malley, and members of his negotiating team may have had compromising ties to the Iranian regime. We request documents, information, and a briefing to assist the Committee's investigation of these matters.

The United States made recent concessions to Iran, potentially in violation of the Iranian Nuclear Review Act (INARA). These concessions occurred as Mr. Malley—the Administration's top negotiator with Iran—is under investigation for the alleged mishandling of classified material.² Mr. Malley already had a history of appeasing United States' adversaries, including meeting with the terrorist group Hamas.³ The ongoing investigation into Mr. Malley's security violations are so serious that he was suspended from his position without pay. Further, the investigation was initially hidden from Congress, the American people, and even his fellow State Department officials.⁴

¹ Summer Said, Benoit Faucon, and Stephen Kalin, *Iran Helped Plot Attack on Israel Over Several Weeks*, The Wall Street Journal (October 8, 2023).

² Kylie Atwood, *Biden's Iran envoy placed on leave after security clearance suspended amid investigation into possible mishandling of classified material*, CNN (June 29, 2023).

³ Michael Crowley, *The man Obama asked to defeat the Islamic State*, POLITICO (Jan. 18, 2016).

⁴ *Id.*

According to recent media reports, a former member of Mr. Malley's Iran negotiating team, Ariane Tabatabai, was in close contact with the Iranian regime for years.⁵ Ms. Tabatabai participated in the regime-backed Iran Experts Initiative (IEI), which was launched by senior Iranian Foreign Ministry officials in the spring of 2014. The alleged purpose of the initiative was to cultivate a network of European and U.S. researchers that could be used to bolster Iran's image on global security matters, especially its nuclear program.⁶ Its members reportedly worked very closely with the Iranian regime toward this end.⁷ Incredibly, despite her previous contact with Iranian regime officials through this unofficial regime-backed network, including consulting with them regarding her potential travel, Ms. Tabatabai is now a high-level staffer within the Department of Defense where she continues to hold a security clearance.

To assist the Committee in conducting necessary oversight of the Administration's use of officials with apparent sympathetic ties to the Iranian regime to negotiate with Iran, please provide the following documents and information no later than October 25, 2023:

1. All documents and communications indicating whether Mr. Malley's relationships with Iranian regime officials and senior members of Iran's proxy groups were disclosed or identified as a concern for granting, renewing, and/or maintaining his security clearance or position as the Special Envoy;
2. All documents and communications between the Bureau of Diplomatic Security and any other government entity involved in adjudicating access to classified information mentioning or discussing Robert Malley and his access to classified information;
3. All calendars, public and private, for then-SEI Malley and Acting SEI Abram Paley;
4. A full roster of all U.S. Government employees who attended any meeting related to negotiations with the Iranian regime directly or with third parties covering the topics of American hostages held by the Iranian regime as well as any other de-escalatory measures;
5. A full roster and organizational chart of all individuals employed or providing assistance to the office of the Special Envoy for Iran;
6. All documents and communications, from January 20, 2021 to the present, that mention INARA or compliance with any provision of that law;

⁵ Bozorgmehr Sharafedin, *Inside Tehran's Soft War: How Iran Gained Influence in U.S. Policy Centers*, VOLANT MEDIA UK LIMITED (last visited Sep. 27, 2023), available at <https://content.iranintl.com/en/investigates/inside-tehran-softwar/#section-Home-aR4vJwjcnC>.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*

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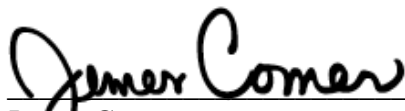
7. All documents and communications that mention or discuss U.S. citizens or permanent residents detained or imprisoned by Iran, including but not limited to Siamak Namazi, Morad Tahbaz, Emad Shargi, Shahab Dalili, and Afshin Sheikholeslami Vatani;
8. A copy of all forms and documents linked to Ariane Tabatabai's security clearance while at the Department of State, including a copy of her Standard Form 86.
9. All documents and communications directed to, or coming from, Ms. Ariane Tabatabai while she served in the Department of State.

Additionally, please provide a staff-level briefing on this matter as soon as possible, but no later than October 18, 2023.

To schedule the briefing, arrange for delivery of responsive documents or as any related follow-up questions, please contact the Committee on Oversight and Accountability Majority staff at (202) 225-5074. Attached are instructions for producing the documents and information to the Committee.

The Committee on Oversight and Accountability is the principal oversight committee of the U.S. House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate "any matter" at "any time" under House Rule X. Thank you in advance for your cooperation with this inquiry.

Sincerely,



James Comer
Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Accountability



Glenn Grothman
Chairman
Subcommittee on National Security,
the Border, and Foreign Affairs

cc: The Honorable Jamie Raskin, Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Accountability

The Honorable Robert Garcia, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on National Security, the Border, and Foreign Affairs