



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1403

January 11, 2022

President Joe Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear President Biden,

I would like to draw your attention to Iran's harassment and intimidation campaigns centered around the second anniversary of the killing of Qassem Soleimani, the former Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Qods Force commander whom President Trump took off the battlefield in January 2020.

On January 3rd Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi called for revenge on former president Trump and former Secretary of State Pompeo.¹ On January 8th the government of Iran announced sanctions against 51 former and current US officials,² as the IRGC threatened on social media to kill former President Trump.³ Shockingly, platforms like Twitter even allow such an egregious threat to be posted and remain in place for the world to see. Moreover, Soleimani's successor, the current Qods Force commander Esmail Qaani invited Americans to perpetrate acts of domestic terrorism and kill those who Iran alleged was involved in the killing of Soleimani. This must be condemned and countered.⁴

On January 9th National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan issued a statement responding to Iran's renewed threats. This is a welcome statement, but I fear that US deterrence has eroded under your administration. Iran feels more comfortable making these threats and potentially acting on them as well, because the US appears less willing to enforce sanctions, less committed to supporting our regional allies, and less interested in maintaining a military deterrence to prevent a nuclear Iran and other forms of Iranian aggression.

Since its inception, Iran's theocratic regime has attempted numerous operations on US soil targeting American and foreign nationals. In 1980, an Iranian operative killed a Shah-era diplomat in Maryland. In 2011, the FBI foiled an attempt by the IRGC to assassinate the Saudi Ambassador

¹ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/iran-vows-revenge-soleimani-killing-if-trump-not-put-trial-2022-01-03/>

² <https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2022/01/09/2640908/more-us-officials-commanders-blacklisted-by-iran-for-involvement-in-gen-soleimani-assassination>

³ https://twitter.com/Sepah_FA/status/1480266339092729857

⁴ <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/defense-national-security/white-house-worried-iran-is-plotting-assassination-attempts-against-trump-administration-officials>

at a DC restaurant. Most recently in July last year, the FBI thwarted a plan by Iranian intelligence agents to kidnap an Iranian American journalist, who is a fierce critic of the regime.

In the past year, Iran's authoritarian leaders have tried to take advantage of our domestic debates and disagreements as they look for ways to exact revenge against the United States for handicapping the regime's terrorist apparatus.

The Iranian regime's flagrant call for revenge amid the Vienna talks for restoring the nuclear deal amply demonstrates that the regime is not negotiating with the United States in good faith. I am deeply concerned about the fact that while the Iranians are threatening to kill our former and current officials, your diplomats remain in the negotiations instead of withdrawing. I am afraid that your National Security Advisor's tough rhetoric unbacked by action would not discourage, but rather only invite further aggression from the Iranian regime, not only in the Middle East, but also against Americans on US soil.

I would like a written response to the following questions:

- 1) What measure has your administration taken to protect our citizens, especially those who served in the previous administration and worked on Iran, from the Iranian regime's malign intent?
- 2) What measure has your administration taken or will take to deter the Iranian regime from further provocation?
- 3) What is your administration's redline for ending the futile negotiations with Iran and reapplying pressure and reestablishing a comprehensive military deterrence strategy?

Please reach out to my National Security Advisor Wang Xiyue at xiyue.wang@mail.house.gov with a written response no later than February 1, 2022. I thank you very much for your attention and I am looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Respectfully,



JIM BANKS
Member of Congress