

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 20, 2014

The Reverend Jacques Andre DeGraff
and Ms. Elizabeth Velez
New York, New York

Dear Reverend DeGraff and Ms. Velez:

Thank you for writing. I have heard from many Americans about our diplomatic discussions with Iran, and I am glad you took the time to share your thoughts.

Since I took office, I have made clear my determination to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. My strong preference is to resolve this issue peacefully—which is why we have extended the hand of diplomacy. Yet for many years, Iran has been unwilling to meet its obligations to the international community. So my Administration worked with Congress, the United Nations Security Council, and countries around the world to impose unprecedented sanctions on the Iranian government.

These sanctions have had a substantial impact on the Iranian economy. Coupled with the election of a new Iranian president last year, they helped create an opening for diplomacy.

In November 2013, we reached an arrangement with Iran that halted the progress of its nuclear program—and rolled it back in key respects—for the first time in a decade. With this first step, there are now limitations in place that cut off Iran's most likely paths to a nuclear weapon in the near term. Ongoing inspections are helping the world verify, every day, that Iran is not building one. And with our allies and partners, we are engaged in negotiations on a long-term, comprehensive solution to peacefully prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

These negotiations will be difficult. They may not succeed. But for the sake of our national security, we must give diplomacy a chance. If Iran's leaders do not seize this opportunity, then I will be the first to call for more sanctions, and stand ready to exercise all options to make sure Iran does not obtain a nuclear weapon. But if Iran's leaders do seize this chance, then Iran could take an important step to rejoin the community of nations, and we will have resolved one of the leading security challenges of our time without the risks of war.

Thank you, again, for writing. To stay up to date on America's negotiations with Iran, visit www.WhiteHouse.gov/Issues/Foreign-Policy/Iran-Negotiations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be Barack Obama's signature, written in a cursive style.