

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4324

August 3, 2016

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

Dear Secretary Kerry:

I am greatly concerned over the recent press accounts of the United States' secretly airlifting \$400 million in euros and Swiss francs to Iran on the day that four Americans that were being detained in Iran gained their freedom. Though we rejoice that our long-detained citizens are free, the timing and secrecy of this airlift gives the strong appearance of a ransom payment directly connected to their release. Such an action only emboldens others to detain innocent Americans, particularly in Iran where this cash transfer occurred and two Iranian-Americans are currently being held by the Revolutionary Guard.

Even if this secret cash transfer wasn't directly linked to the release of the four Americans, it is being portrayed in the Iranian press as a ransom payment---thus advertising to those who would do us harm that they can cash in on detaining Americans. I would have hoped that the Administration could have seen the appearance of great impropriety in having a secret airlift of cash to Iran at the same time that our citizens were being released. As reported by the *Wall Street Journal* on August 3, 2016:

“But US officials also acknowledge that Iranian negotiators on the prisoner exchange said they wanted the cash to show they had gained something tangible....Iranian press reports have quoted senior Iranian defense officials describing the cash as a ransom payment.”

The great lengths to which the Administration went to accomplish this secret airlift of cash greatly worry my constituents about the continuing doctrine of appeasing Iran at almost any cost. It has been reported that the payment was made in euros and Swiss francs to avoid using dollars which would be in violation of US law. Proactively acquiring euros and Swiss francs from their central banks and using an unmarked airplane to make the delivery all seem to have been done in an effort to accommodate Iran.

With the very serious concerns we now face as a result of this secret airlift of cash to Iran, I would appreciate your prompt response to the following questions:

1. Given the public nature of the \$1.7 billion payment to Iran, why did the Administration decide to make the first payment of this settlement with Iran via an unmarked secret plane arriving in Iran at the same time as the release of the American detainees?
2. Was the Administration concerned that this would appear in Iran, and in other areas hostile to Americans, as a ransom payment? Given the published story in the *Wall Street Journal*, it seemed that our officials knew in advance how this would be portrayed in Iran.
3. Was the United States under any legal requirement to make the transfer to Iran on that day and in the manner of an unmarked plane?
4. I am greatly concerned that the \$400 million delivered in January, along with the additional \$1.3 billion in payments to Iran, will be used to support terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah or used to prop up the Assad regime in Syria. Can you certify that none of the funds transferred to Iran will be used directly or indirectly to support terrorism against our interests or the interests of our closest ally in the region, Israel?
5. Why did the Administration feel compelled to agree to the \$1.7 billion settlement with Iran at this time? Iran was already getting an extraordinarily favorable nuclear deal and the United States also freed seven Iranian citizens and withdrew extradition requests for fourteen others. Giving Iran a pallet of cash in addition to the nuclear deal and the release of their citizens only seems to embolden Iran to make more demands in the future.

I look forward to receiving your prompt reply to this letter. Should you have any questions regarding this correspondence, please feel free to contact me, or my Deputy Chief of Staff, Scott Cunningham, at scott.cunningham@mail.house.gov or 202.225.6605.

Sincerely,



Kenny Marchant
Member of Congress