



One Hundred Eighteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

March 29, 2023

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

Dear Secretary Blinken:

We write to urge you to impose mandatory sanctions pursuant to Section 231 of the Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) (P.L. 115-44) in response to the Government of Iran's significant defense transactions with the Russian Federation.

Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine has pushed the Russian and Iranian regimes closer together. Building upon years of coordination in Syria, we are now witnessing the disturbing emergence of "a full-fledged defense partnership" between Russia and Iran, resulting in concerning advances in Iran's military capabilities. Faced with this emerging threat, our partners and allies—especially those that perceive Iran as a threat to their national security—must help ensure Ukraine receives the critical weapons systems it needs to secure a decisive victory.

Since Russia's war began, Tehran has emerged as one of the Kremlin's most important sources of arms and materiel. Iran has provided Russia with hundreds of lethal drones for use in Ukraine, including against civilian infrastructure, as well as bullets, rockets, and mortar shells. The two are constructing a joint drone production facility inside Russia, and there are reports Iran may supply Russian forces with short range ballistic missiles if the U.N. missile embargo against Iran expires in October.

In exchange, Russia is offering Iran an unprecedented level of military and technical support on everything from missiles and electronics to air defense. Iran now claims it is on track to receive Russia's most advanced fighter jet, the Su-35, by the end of 2023, which would improve the Iranian Air Force's capabilities relative to its neighbors.

The Kremlin has long denied Iranian requests for Su-35s over concerns it would negatively impact Russia's relations with Israel and Arab Gulf states. Russia advancing the Su-35 transfer now alarmingly suggests Russia has made a strategic decision that Iran will be its uncontested military-technical partner of choice in the region.

The United States must leverage all relevant policy tools, including export controls and sanctions authorities, to discourage and hamper the destabilizing relationship between these two dangerous malign actors. The acquisition of Su-35s from persons operating for or on behalf of Russia's defense or intelligence sector meets the "significant transaction" standard pursuant to Section 231 of CAATSA and therefore subjects the recipient to sanctions. The Administration must therefore impose mandatory sanctions pursuant to CAATSA on Iran for this transaction, consistent with U.S. law and prior action against China's Equipment Development Department (EDD) for its acquisition of Su-35s.

The growing threat posed by Russia and Iran's partnership requires an urgent response. In addition to sanctions and export controls, we urge you to engage in robust diplomacy with allies and partners to ensure they understand the significance and the threat of this unholy alliance.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

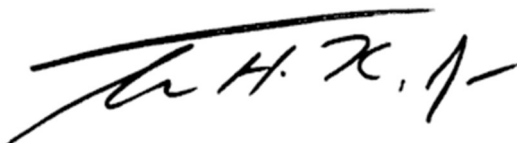
Sincerely,



MICHAEL T. McCAUL
Chairman



JOE WILSON
Chairman
Subcommittee on the Middle East, North
Africa, and Central Asia



THOMAS H. KEAN, JR.
Chairman
Subcommittee on Europe