Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 4, 2026

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio:

We write to you regarding an urgent matter. The United States is currently engaged in a war against Iran, a conflict with nuclear dimensions that the administration has not adequately addressed with Congress or the American public. Multiple nuclear-armed states are directly involved in or immediately adjacent to this conflict.

The United States, ourselves a nuclear power, is conducting offensive military operations in Iran. The United Kingdom, a nuclear-armed NATO ally, has had bases in Cyprus targeted by Iranian strikes. Russia and China, both nuclear-weapons states, are aligned with Iran and may be providing material assistance to that country during this conflict. Pakistan, which possesses nuclear weapons, signed a mutual defense agreement with Saudi Arabia in September 2025, a country that has itself come under Iranian missile and drone attack. The United States acknowledges the nuclear weapons capabilities of all of these countries, friend or foe, in addition to the nuclear armed states like France, India, and North Korea.

In addition to these countries is Israel, a nation that is fighting alongside the United States, and which, according to publicly available information, may possess nuclear weapons and whose nuclear facilities at Dimona have been targeted by Iranian missiles. The United States and Israel launched this war against Iran together on February 28, 2026. American and Israeli aircraft have conducted joint operations over Iran. The Administration had stated that decisions about when to end the conflict would be made jointly with Israel. We are, in the fullest sense, fighting this war side by side with a country whose potential nuclear weapons program the United States government officially refuses to acknowledge.

The risks of miscalculation, escalation, and nuclear use in this environment are not theoretical. American service members continue to be deployed throughout the region. Congress has a constitutional responsibility to be fully informed about the nuclear balance in the Middle East, the risk of escalation by any party to this conflict, and the administration's planning and contingencies for such scenarios. We do not believe we have received that information.

A policy of official ambiguity about the nuclear capabilities of one party to this conflict makes coherent nonproliferation policy in the Middle East impossible, for Iran, for Saudi Arabia, and for every other state in the region making decisions based on their perceptions of the capabilities of their neighbors.

The public record strongly and consistently supports the conclusion that Israel possesses nuclear weapons. In 1986, Mordechai Vanunu, a technician at the Negev Nuclear Research Center in Dimona, provided the Sunday Times of London with detailed technical evidence of Israel's nuclear weapons program, including photographs of weapon components. His account has never been credibly refuted.

A 1974 Special National Intelligence Estimate, a formal consensus assessment of the entire U.S. intelligence community, including the Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research, concluded that 'Israel already has produced nuclear weapons.' The document was classified Top Secret for nearly 32 years before being declassified and released in 2008.

Senior U.S. officials and experts have acknowledged this reality on the record before Congress. During his Senate Armed Services Committee confirmation hearing on December 5, 2006, Secretary of Defense-designate Robert Gates, while explaining Iran's motivations for pursuing nuclear weapons capability, stated: “They are surrounded by powers with nuclear weapons – Pakistan to their east, the Russians to the north, the Israelis to the west and us in the Persian Gulf.”This testimony, given under oath before the United States Senate, constitutes a direct acknowledgment by a senior incoming cabinet official, who had already served as Director of Central Intelligence at the Central Intelligence Agency, of Israel's nuclear weapons status.

Ahead of the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which blocked an Iranian pathway to nuclear weapons until the United States left the agreement, multiple experts stressed that Iran could be influenced by Israel’s nuclear status. In June 2015, Anthony Cordesman of the Center for Strategic and International Studies testified before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa that Iran's motivations included the fact that “they look around and they see a very well developed Israeli nuclear missile force.”[1] That same summer, former Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Eric Edelman testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee[2] that the JCPOA's failure would force Israel “to manage an intrinsically unstable virtual nuclear balance with Iran.” These statements were made in open, public hearings before the Congress of the United States.

1. U.S. Congress, House Committee On Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa, Iran’s Enduring Ballistic Missile Threat, 114th Cong., 1st sess., June 10, 2015, https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-114hhrg94941/pdf/CHRG-114hhrg94941.pdf
2. U.S. Congress, Senate Armed Services Committee, Impacts of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on the United States Interests and the Military Balance in the Middle East, 114th Cong., 1st sess. July 29, August 4, and August 5, 2015, https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-114shrg21483/pdf/CHRG-114shrg21483.pdf

Israeli government officials have, on multiple occasions, themselves broken the policy of deliberate ambiguity that Israel officially maintains. On December 11, 2006, then-Prime Minister Ehud Olmert stated in a televised interview with German broadcaster Sat.1 that Iran was “aspiring to have nuclear weapons, as America, France, Israel, Russia” – listing Israel directly alongside nuclear-weapons states. In October 2023, Likud Knesset Member Tally Gotliv posted publicly that Israel should deploy its Jericho missilE – a ballistic missile system that may be nuclear capable – stating: “Jericho Missile! Jericho Missile! Strategic alert. Before considering the introduction of forces. Doomsday weapon! This is my opinion.” In November 2023, Heritage Minister Amichai Eliyahu stated in a radio interview that dropping a nuclear bomb on Gaza was "one of the possibilities" and that using such a weapon was "one way" to address the conflict.

Given the nuclear dimensions of the ongoing Iran War and an Israeli nuclear weapons capability that has been well substantiated by publicly available information, including congressional testimony, we request that you directly answer the following questions:

1. What nuclear weapons capability does Israel have?
2. Please provide information on any nuclear weapons systems that Israel fields, including warheads and launchers.
3. Regarding fissile material production capability:
   - Does Israel currently possess enrichment capabilities, and at what level?
   - Does the Negev Nuclear Research Center at Dimona produce fissile material? If so, please provide information on the amounts assessed to be produced and their use.
   - Does the Negev Nuclear Research Center at Dimona produce plutonium? If so, please provide information on the amounts assessed to be produced and their use.
4. Has Israel communicated to U.S. officials any nuclear doctrine, red lines, or thresholds for nuclear use in the context of the current conflict with Iran?
5. Has the administration received any assurances from Israel that nuclear weapons will not be used?
6. Have there been any indications of Israel planning to use or deploy nuclear weapons during the recent Iran conflict or during other conflicts?
7. What is the United States government’s assessment of the risks of radioactive harm to U.S. citizens and personnel in the region that could result from any further strikes on the Negev Nuclear Research Center or any other nuclear sites in Israel?
8. Has the administration assessed what circumstances, including further Iranian strikes on Dimona or potential Israeli military setbacks, could lead Israel to consider nuclear use? What contingency planning has the administration conducted for such a scenario?

During the March 25, 2026 hearing, in response to a question by Rep. Castro

regarding what Israel's nuclear capabilities may be, Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and Nonproliferation Thomas DiNanno responded that he could not answer such a question.

9. What are the specific restrictions on Undersecretary DiNanno answering such a question?
10. What is the Department's guidance to its employees on the discussion of any Israeli nuclear weapons capability?
11. Please provide any documentation or information regarding the administration's policy on discussing any potential Israeli nuclear weapons capability, including who has issued any such policies, what such restrictions cover, and who is bound by those restrictions.

Iran's nuclear program and decisions by countries like Saudi Arabia to sign a civil nuclear cooperation agreement with the United States while retaining the ability to enrich uranium, clearly keep options open to pursue a nuclear weapons capability. These decisions are not made in a vacuum. Iran and Saudi Arabia are both developing policies based on the perceived capabilities of each country, responding to each other and global events. Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman confirmed as much when he said in 2023 that if Iran were to successfully develop a nuclear weapon, "we will have to get one." Effective nonproliferation policy in the region requires the United States to be transparent about the capabilities of all actors in the region so we can tailor policy proposals to the region.

We respectfully request that the administration review any policy that restricts U.S. government officials from discussing or acknowledging a potential Israeli nuclear weapons capability, including the restriction that appears to have prevented Undersecretary DiNanno from responding to a direct question on this matter before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and rescind those policies so United States officials can publicly discuss the full extent of the nuclear nonproliferation situation in the Middle East.

The United States openly acknowledges the nuclear weapons programs of the United Kingdom, France, India, Pakistan, Russia, China, and North Korea. We ask that Israel be held to the same standard as any other foreign country, and that the United States government speaks candidly about its potential nuclear weapons capabilities, whatever they may be.

When required, the United States Congress has passed exemptions to nonproliferation laws, as in the case of India, where Congress passed the Hyde Act, or through presidential waivers in the case of Pakistan. If any such disclosure of any Israeli nuclear weapons capability would implicate U.S. laws concerning nonproliferation, we are ready to work with you to address those concerns through legislative action.

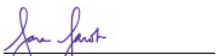
We cannot develop coherent nonproliferation policy for the Middle East, including with respect to Iran's civil nuclear program and Saudi Arabia's civil nuclear ambitions, while maintaining a policy of official silence about the nuclear weapons capabilities of one party central to the ongoing conflict in which the United States is a direct participant.

We ask that you hold Israel to the same standard of transparency that the United States expects from any other country that may be pursuing or retaining nuclear weapons capability.

Please provide a full response to the questions in this letter by May 18, 2026.

Sincerely,

Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress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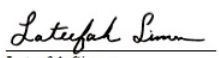
Member of Congress

Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress


Lateefah Simon
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Greg Casar
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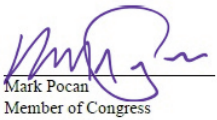
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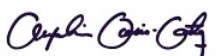
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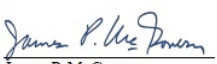
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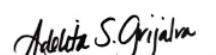
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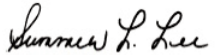
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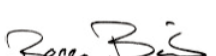
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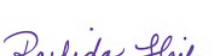
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John Garamendi
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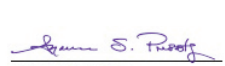
Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress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Bonnie Watson Coleman
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