United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 14, 2012

Baroness Catherine Ashton
High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Vice President of the European Commission
European Union

Dear Baroness Ashton:

Terrorism continues to pose a grave threat to the United States, the European Union (EU), and our allies; recent events only sharpen our concern over the terrorist threat from Iran and its proxies. Iran remains the world's most active state sponsor through direct acts of terror and extensive support for terrorist and militant groups across the Middle East and beyond. As the largest recipient of Iranian assistance, Hezbollah has conducted terrible acts of terrorism on Western targets in recent decades. Given the unrelenting and lethal activities of Hezbollah, we urge the EU to designate Hezbollah as a terrorist organization.

Primarily through Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps, Hezbollah has been the largest beneficiary of Iran's support for terrorist activities, and in the past year, there has been a sharp spike in terrorist attacks planned by Iran and Hezbollah throughout the world. As Iran's isolation grows due to increasing sanctions and the hopefully imminent fall of the Assad regime in Syria, we fear further escalation of terrorist activities by Iran and Hezbollah against Western interests to include Europe.

Hezbollah has conducted terrorist attacks since its inception in the early 1980s, including on Western targets. The United States listed Hezbollah as a Specially Designated Terrorist in 1995, and as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in 1997. Hezbollah has increasingly focused on its political role in Lebanon, but it has not ceased its terrorist activities, nor will it.

Foreign Minister of Cyprus (which holds the rotating EU presidency) Erato Kozakou-Marcoullis recently said, "There is no consensus for putting Hezbollah on the list of terrorist organizations." She said the EU would consider listing Hezbollah if there was tangible evidence of its terrorist actions, and differentiated between Hezbollah's political and militant wings. However, the United States does not differentiate between Hezbollah's political and militant wings, nor should Europe. The EU should recognize Hezbollah for what it is – a terrorist organization – and stand with the United States against Hezbollah in all its forms.

There is substantial evidence of Hezbollah's terrorist activities, from 1983 through today. Attacks by Hezbollah's predecessors on the U.S. Embassy and Marine barracks in 1983 killed

258 Americans and 46 others. The U.S. State Department's Country Report on Terrorism named Hezbollah as the likely perpetrator of the 2011 attacks on UN Interim Force in Lebanon peacekeepers that injured six Italian soldiers, three French soldiers, and six French civilians.

We believe the evidence and dangers posed by Hezbollah and Iran to all European citizens are serious enough to designate Hezbollah a terrorist organization. A terrorist designation from the EU would not only subject Hezbollah to further sanctions, but would also send a message to Hezbollah that Europe and the United States will not tolerate its dangerous and violent tactics.

The recent attack in Bulgaria serves as another tragic reminder of the enormous challenge we face in combating terrorism. We extend our deepest sympathies to the families of the victims, including the Bulgarian bus driver and five Israeli tourists. As this incident is investigated, the United States and the EU must demonstrate our common commitment to opposing terrorism wherever it emerges.

The United States and the EU have stood united in our efforts to counter Iran's nuclear ambitions, and we recognize and thank you for your tireless work in developing sanctions and furthering the P5+1 process. We hope to strengthen our cooperation in fighting Iranian terror and see the EU's designation of Hezbollah as an important step. We appreciate your consideration of this vital matter.

Sincerely,

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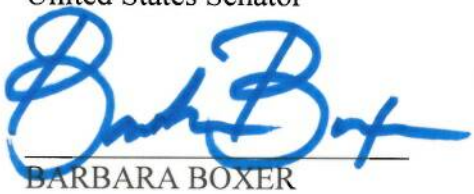

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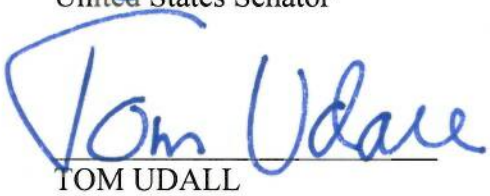

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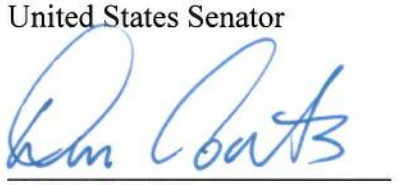

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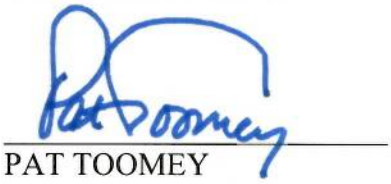

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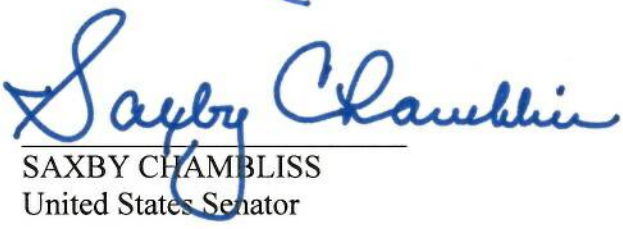

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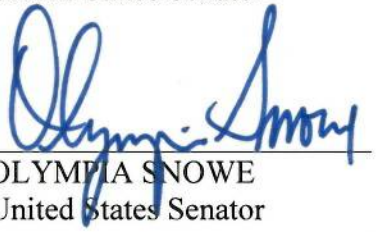

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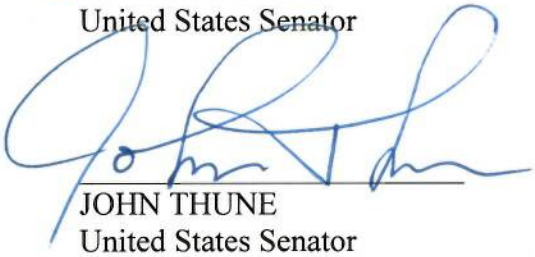

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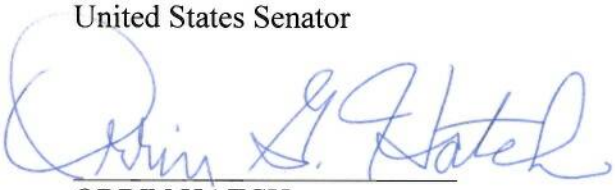

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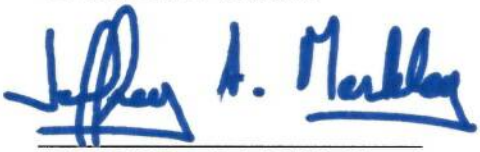

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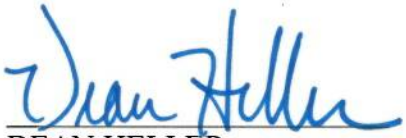

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