

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 4, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C St., NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio,

We write to express our growing concern over recent reports that two Iranian cargo ships are set to deliver 1,000 tons of a critical ingredient for missile propellant – sodium perchlorate – from Communist China to Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). This amount of sodium perchlorate would enable the IRGC to produce hundreds of midrange missiles and bolster its efforts to sow discord, promote terrorism, and even directly attack our ally, Israel, once again.

According to the *Financial Times*, the first Iranian vessel, the Golbon, departed from Communist China on January 21 and the second, the Jairan, is expected to leave in early February.¹ Both of these vessels are linked to the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Line (IRISL), which is sanctioned by the U.S.

The last 15 months have clearly shown that Tehran’s missile program poses a direct threat to the United States, Israel and other allies and partners in the Middle East and Europe. Since October 7, 2023, the Houthis in Yemen have launched hundreds of missiles at Israel and at commercial cargo vessels and U.S. Navy warships in and around the Red Sea.² Hezbollah has fired over 8,000 missiles at Israel.³ Most concerning, on April 13, Iran directly attacked Israel for the very first time firing over 120 ballistic missiles.⁴ On October 1, Iran was even more belligerent, firing 180 ballistic missiles at Israel in the largest ballistic missile attack in history.⁵

Today, however, Iran is weakened and vulnerable. Its missile inventories are depleted from its aforementioned attacks against Israel, its shipment of ballistic missiles to Russia, and Israeli Defense Force airstrikes that have degraded its missile production facilities. As a result, Tehran has turned to the partner that it has relied on for supplying solid-propellant for its missiles for decades—Communist China.⁶

Communist China, Iran, Russia, and North Korea continue to increase their coordination as part of a growing axis of authoritarians. Not only is Communist China propping up Iran’s missile program, it also recently gave Tehran the go-ahead to begin drawing down and selling millions

¹ <https://www.ft.com/content/f0bc9fcc-11b3-4615-bd24-163f8938f2a5>

² <https://www.timesofisrael.com/sirens-wail-in-parts-of-west-bank-as-idf-intercepts-missile-fired-from-yemen/> ;
<https://www.stripes.com/branches/navy/2025-01-16/houthis-navy-red-sea-missiles-drones-16500246.html>

³ <https://thehill.com/policy/defense/4893654-hezbollah-has-fired-more-than-8000-rockets-toward-israel-since-october-7-ambassador/>

⁴ <https://www.csis.org/analysis/iran-israel-air-conflict-one-week>

⁵ <https://www.ajc.org/news/what-to-know-about-irans-ballistic-missile-attacks-and-israels-efforts-to-defend-itself>

⁶ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/china-is-helping-supply-chemicals-for-irans-ballistic-missile-program-ab272ad7>

of barrels of Iranian oil that have been stored in onshore facilities in Chinese ports for years. Alarming, the revenue from these oil sales has already been earmarked for the IRGC.⁷

Reimposing maximum pressure on the Iranian regime requires imposing costs on Communist China. We encourage the administration to identify and sanction any entities involved in transferring missile propellants to Iran, including any Chinese companies sourcing the propellants and any Chinese ports that allow sanctioned Iranian ships to dock. Additionally, if the press reports referenced above are accurate, we urge you to work with our global partners to intercept and stop the shipments currently underway. Finally, the administration should pressure Beijing to reverse its decision to green light Iran's drawdown of stored oil or face severe consequences.

We appreciate your prompt attention to this matter. We stand ready to work with the administration to thwart Iran's missile program and protect our allies.

Sincerely,



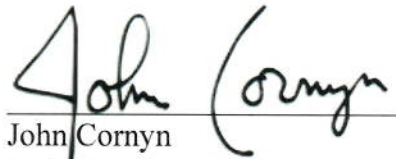
Pete Ricketts
United States Senator



James E. Risch
Chairman
Senate Foreign Relations Committee



Steve Daines
United States Senator



John Cornyn
United States Senator



John Curtis
United States Senator



Bill Hagerty
United States Senator



Rick Scott
United States Senator



Ted Cruz
United States Senator

⁷ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/iran-races-to-sell-oil-stored-in-china-b72e64ac>