

Both Parties Agree: Obama Should Have Brought His Iran Deal Before Congress, Not the UN

It's a rare moment that will unite Democrats and Republicans. The Beltway denizens who lead each party usually coalesce around the lowest common denominator: pork projects, post office naming ceremonies, and empty symbolic votes. But for once they agree on something substantive: Whatever you think of the deal President Obama struck with Iran, he should have brought it before Congress before he sought the approval of the United Nations. The Iran deal, technically known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, is strongly opposed by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Many leaders of both parties are concerned its terms give Iranian mullahs room to covertly develop ICBM nuclear weapons by exceeding the limits and avoiding U.S. inspections. Others expressed outrage that the terms negotiated by Secretary of State John Kerry on behalf of the Obama administration left behind American hostages, including Pastor Saeed Abedini, who remains imprisoned for his Christian faith. The pastor's wife, Nagmeh Abedini, asked Congress to oppose the deal. "It's very difficult for my children" to be deprived of their father because of the fundamentalist *Shi'ite* regime's anti-Christian persecution. "And it's heartbreaking for me to see them growing up without their dad." Rather than face American scrutiny, Obama took his deal to the UN Security Council, which ratified the nuclear bargain in a 15-0 vote. "I look at that as (an affront) to the American people," Sen. Bob Corker of Tennessee, who chairs the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, told *Roll Call*.

He and the committee's ranking Democrat, Ben Cardin, sent a

letter to President Obama on July 16 that read:

The Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act, a bill which 98 Senators and 400 Representatives supported and you signed, established a 60-day period for Congress to consider the nuclear agreement. We are deeply concerned that your administration plans to enable the United Nations Security Council to vote on the agreement before the United States Congress can do the same. Doing so would be contrary to your statement that "it's important for the American people and Congress to get a full opportunity to review this national security policies are stronger and more effective when they are subject to the scrutiny and transparency that democracy demands. We urge you to postpone the vote at the United Nations until after Congress considers this agreement.

They have the people on their side. While split on the deal – 42 percent oppose, and 39 percent favor – nearly two-thirds of Americans (65 percent) say Obama must get Congressional authorization first. Less than one-quarter (22 percent) believe the agreement will make the Middle East safer – while 42 believe it will continue the region's slide into an arms race and greater instability.