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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-0529**

HENRY A. WAXMAN  
29TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

July 23, 2003

The Honorable Colin L. Powell  
Secretary of State  
Department of State  
2201 C Street Northwest  
Washington, D.C. 20520-0229

Dear Secretary Powell:

I am writing to express grave concern about reports that Voice of America satellite broadcasts to Iran are being jammed from Cuba.

These broadcasts offer a vital alternative to government-controlled newscasts and have become extremely popular in Iran. I understand that the jamming has also disrupted other U.S. based Farsi language programs being transmitted to Iran, including the National Iranian Television (NITV) channel, Pars TV, and Azadi Television, which are produced and put on air from Los Angeles.


Independent media and the open exchange of ideas is the foundation of a free and democratic society. Cuban interference with these international satellite communications is illegal and threatens to seriously undermine the success of U.S. public diplomacy efforts in the Persian Gulf. It could also derail the recently unveiled "News & Views" program, which has suffered from jamming since the first day it was launched by VOA earlier this month.

It is even more alarming that media reports suggest that the Cuban government is facilitating the interference to curry favor with the Iranian regime. Iran is a state sponsor of terrorism in active pursuit of nuclear weapons. The well-known connection between the Iranian government and terrorist attacks in Argentina and elsewhere demonstrates the danger of Iran's insidious activities in the Western Hemisphere.

While I am aware that the Broadcasting Board of Governors has condemned these actions, it is imperative that the State Department lodge a formal complaint with the Cuban government, enforce international agreements pertaining to satellite transmission, and exert the full force of U.S. diplomacy to resolve this serious problem.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

  
HENRY A. WAXMAN  
Member of Congress