

U.S. Senators Press for Hard Line if Russia-Iran Deal Goes Through

By [The Moscow Times](#)

April 08, 2014

The  **Moscow Times**

Senator Mark Kirk attend the Senate Armed Services Committee confirmation hearing on Capitol Hill in Washington.

Two U.S. senators who led a push for more sanctions on Iran during negotiations over its nuclear program have called on President Barack Obama to impose more restrictions if Tehran pursues an energy barter agreement with Russia.

Earlier reports said Tehran and Moscow had made progress toward an oil-for-goods deal that sources said could be worth \$20 billion and enable Iran to boost vital energy exports in defiance of Western sanctions.

Senators Robert Menendez and Mark Kirk wrote to Obama on Monday and said that if Iran moved forward with the plan, Washington should respond by reinstating sanctions eased under a preliminary nuclear agreement, rigorously enforce reductions in global purchases

of Iranian crude and punish any violations to the fullest extent of the law.

"We urge you to put Iran on notice that United States is prepared to re-instate these sanctions should Iran attempt to evade our sanctions and violate the terms of the JPA (preliminary agreement)," wrote Menendez, a New Jersey Democrat, and Kirk, an Illinois Republican.

The two senators were the lead sponsors of a bill introduced late last year to impose new sanctions on Iran if international negotiations on curbing its nuclear ambitions falter. Obama's administration lobbied hard against the bill, saying that it would endanger the delicate talks.

The measure stalled in the Senate and has never been brought the floor for a vote, but Menendez, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, has said he is prepared to push for it again when the time is right.

A new round of senior-level negotiations between Iran and the United States, Britain, France, Germany, China and Russia will be held Vienna on Tuesday and Wednesday. It will be third round of talks this year in the Austrian capital on a long-term deal with Iran.

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