Obama position on Corker/Franks language, attributable to a Senior Administration Official on background:

- We are absolutely opposed to this amendment, and any similar amendments that are intended to limit the President’s authority and ability to negotiate with foreign countries. Such amendments would set a precedent that would severely compromise Presidents of both parties from conducting American foreign policy. We cannot have 535 negotiators for every negotiation with a foreign country.

- These actions would also undermine the negotiations and our goal of a peaceful resolution to this issue. Our negotiators need flexibility to achieve a comprehensive package that best achieves our goal. That cannot be done by going down a checklist of predetermined language to lock in end state positions or publicly expressed negotiating positions. It must be done by looking at how the various elements fit together into an overall package that fully meets our concerns.

- We also know from experience that the Iranians will take a tit-for-tat approach, with Iran’s hardliners and Majlis seeking to lock the Iranian negotiators into maximalist positions that are unacceptable to us. This could lead to a deadlock, as both sides would not have the authority or flexibility to negotiate, making a diplomatic resolution far more difficult. Equally as harmful, it will divide the United States and our P5+1 partners by signaling that the U.S. negotiators are not empowered to make decisions and sowing doubt about U.S. intentions.

- There is clearly a role for Congress in our Iran policy. Building the sanctions regime was a major diplomatic achievement in which Congress played a critical role. It is too early to determine what a sanctions relief package would look like, since comprehensive negotiations are ongoing. But, ultimately, comprehensive sanctions relief would clearly require a mix of executive and legislative action.

- Congress should now work to enable further success by giving the President and our international partners the space needed to pursue negotiations.