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GRANGER OPENING STATEMENT: BUDGET HEARING - UNITED NATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs will come to order.

Ambassador Power, thank you for being here to testify. We have many important policy and budget issues to discuss with you today.

First, I would like to address the recent announcement of a framework agreement on Iran's nuclear program. With each passing day, conflicting reports emerge about the parameters of this deal. I have serious concerns about promises that may have been made to lift sanctions on Iran and I hope you can address this issue today. The International Atomic Energy Agency has a critical role to play in implementing any agreement. Yet we all know Iran's record of cooperating with the I.A.E.A. is not good. I hope you can help the committee understand why we should have confidence that Iran will live up to its commitments this time and allow the I.A.E.A. the access required.

I am also deeply disappointed by the hostile actions taken by the Palestinian Authority to join international bodies over the last year. Their steps at the International Criminal Court have put U.S assistance to the Palestinians in jeopardy. I am also very concerned about recent statements from Administration officials that suggest the United States is re-evaluating its approach to the peace process and reports that the U.S. may support a U.N. Security Council resolution laying out conditions and establishing deadlines. The Administration must send a clear message to the Palestinians that the only path to statehood is through a negotiated settlement with Israel.

Concerns also remain about the U.N. Human Rights Council. I fear that the Council's upcoming report on last year's hostilities in Gaza will unfairly criticize Israel's right to defend itself. There are Members of Congress who question why we should support the Council at all, and I welcome your comments on this issue.

Regarding budget issues, the request includes a significant increase for accounts that fund the United Nations and other international organizations – approximately 25% higher than last year. Like many increases in the President's request, this one is difficult for me to justify. The United States is by far the largest contributor to the U.N. and more work needs to be done to ensure that the U.N. has its budget under control. For example, U.N. peacekeeping costs have skyrocketed. The Administration should work with the U.N. to phase out peacekeeping missions when possible and lower the rate the United States pays for them.

Madam Ambassador, you have committed to reform the U.N. and as you know, our appropriations bill contains strong transparency and accountability requirements. Some progress has been made, but many international organizations continue to fall short. After all of these years, there is simply no excuse for this.

I look forward to your thoughts on all of these important issues. In closing, I want to thank you and the American delegations in New York and around the world for the work you do to advance U.S. interests.

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