

**Follow
@HouseForeign**

**Opening Statement of the Honorable Ed Royce (R-CA), Chairman
House Foreign Affairs Committee Hearing: Advancing United States' Interests at
the United Nations
June 16, 2015
(As Prepared for Delivery)**

This hearing will come to order. This morning we look at the role of the United States at the United Nations with Ambassador Samantha Power.

Ambassador Power has spent nearly two years as the U.S. Permanent Representative to the U.N. The Ambassador has approached her job with great energy and determination, perhaps best shown during last year's Ebola crisis in West Africa. In that case, the Administration and Congress worked together to contain Ebola and save lives. Ambassador, thank you for those efforts and for joining us today.

The Ambassador's testimony comes at an important time. If a final Iran nuclear agreement is reached, and the deadline is in two weeks, then the Security Council will be expected to remove international sanctions, while preserving the ability to react to Iranian cheating. And given all we know about the history of Iran's nuclear program, cheating should be expected.

The Committee wants to know how in a case of cheating a proposed sanctions "snap-back" process would work. We know for sure that Russia and China wouldn't make this easy. And I've never known *any* U.N. process described as taking place in a "snap." Last week's revelation by a panel of U.N. experts that there has not been a *single* report of Iran violating the U.N. arms embargo not only lacks any credibility – but calls into serious question the chances of the U.N. snapping back any sanctions.

The Committee is disturbed to watch the U.N.'s continuing anti-Israel bias, especially in the Human Rights Council. More disturbing is that the Obama Administration seems on the brink of discarding decades of bipartisan support of Israel against the U.N. onslaught. President Obama has raised the dramatic step of allowing the Security Council to impose conditions related to a "two-state solution" – rather than supporting negotiations between the parties themselves. Ambassador – as Ranking Member Engel and I wrote to you the other month, an imposed plan will not get us closer to peace.

Nearby, Syrians are being slaughtered before the world's eyes. Two years ago, the United Nations called the crisis in Syria the worst humanitarian disaster since the

Rwandan genocide. Yet, despite several U.N. resolutions, the Assad regime continues its indiscriminate barrel bombing and chemical weapons attacks.

Those responsible for these war crimes must be held accountable. Ambassador, you have said this, to your credit. *But when?* The Committee hears testimony tomorrow from some of the brave Syrians who have appeared in front of the Security Council to share their stories of responding to Assad's abhorrent attacks.

Elsewhere, religious minorities are under attack. Unable to claim citizenship in Burma or elsewhere, many have called the Rohingyas "the most persecuted minority in the world." Burma's persecution has led thousands to desperately flee in overloaded boats. Many are rightly bothered by the United Nations' poor track record protecting Rohingyas. This marginalized Muslim population deserves more from the U.N., and the Administration.

United Nations peacekeeping, despite *many* shortcomings, has managed to protect innocent civilians and minorities. In recent years, the missions in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali and South Sudan have saved lives. The Committee wants to continue working with the Ambassador to see that these missions are appropriately supported. That's easier if failing missions, some decades old, are closed, and the horrendous sexual abuses are tackled head-on.

U.N. reform shouldn't be limited to peacekeeping. This summer, when the U.N. scale of assessments is reviewed, I trust the U.S. delegation will be working to spread the burden and give major donors greater say in management decisions.

Ambassador Power, you will be wrestling with many critical issues in the coming months. To say you have a difficult and even hostile environment at the U.N. is an understatement. But you do not appear to be one to shy away from a challenge. I look forward to continuing to work with you on these pressing matters.

I will now turn to the Ranking Member for his opening remarks.