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Opening Statement of the Honorable Ed Royce (R-CA), Chairman
House Foreign Affairs Committee Hearing: Implications of a
Nuclear Agreement with Iran (Part II)
July 14, 2015
(As Prepared for Delivery)

Today the Committee continues to examine the Obama Administration's nuclear diplomacy with Iran.

The Administration has just announced a hugely consequential agreement. In testimony before this Committee, Secretary Kerry told us these negotiations would be used to dismantle Iran's nuclear program. That was the goal. Instead, this agreement allows Iran to retain a vast enrichment capacity, continue its research and development, and gain an industrialized nuclear program once key provisions of this agreement begin to expire in as little as ten years. The President told us that Iran does not "need to have an underground, fortified facility like Fordow in order to have a peaceful nuclear program." Yet this military complex will stay open.

While Obama Administration officials first told us that Iran's missile program would have "to be addressed" as part of a final agreement -- they failed to mention that "addressing" the program means taking restrictions *off – in just eight years*. As Secretary of Defense Carter testified just last week, "The reason that we want to stop Iran from having an I.C.B.M. program is that the 'I' in I.C.B.M. stands for 'intercontinental,' which means having the capability of flying from Iran to the United States." And as we know, countries build I.C.B.M.s for one reason—to deliver nuclear weapons.

At that same hearing, our top military official gave his best military advise: "Under *no* circumstances should we relieve the pressure on Iran" when it comes to the arms embargo – but that comes off in just five years.

On the critical issues of inspections, just a few months ago, Secretary of

Energy Moniz said that “We expect to have anywhere, anytime access.” But “anywhere, anytime” has weakened to something called “managed access.” “Managed access” more accurately should be called “manipulated access” as any process with Russia, China and Iran at the table will be treated that way. The inspection regime will be manipulated by those with something to hide.

We might feel better if the United States was able to *permanently* constrain Iran’s worrying nuclear program. But the key restriction – the ability to enrich at high-levels – begins to *expire* in as little as 10 years. Just 10 years. Most Americans will take three times longer to pay-off their mortgage.

Once these restrictions *expire*, Iran could enrich on an industrial scale—claiming the desire to sell enriched uranium on the international market, as France does. Iran could also enrich uranium to levels near weapons grade—claiming the desire to power a nuclear navy, as Brazil is doing. *All* these activities are permissible under the NPT – and *all* would be endorsed by this agreement. Indeed, as President Obama said of his own agreement, in year “13, 14, 15,” Iran’s “breakout times would have shrunk almost down to zero.”

As a result, the U.S. and its allies will be left with no effective measures to prevent Iran from initiating an accelerated nuclear program to produce the materials needed for a nuclear weapon. And Iran surely would be able to speed toward a nuclear weapon faster than an international sanctions regime could be reestablished. One nonproliferation expert told the Committee last week that this sunset clause is “a disaster.”

The essence of this agreement is *permanent* concessions in exchange for *temporary* benefits, and that’s only if Iran doesn’t cheat, like it has in the past and as North Korea did. As one witness described to the Committee last week, the deal “is in many ways a bet...The bet that the Administration is taking is that in 10 or 15 years we will have a kinder, gentler Iran.”

Just a few days ago Iranian President Rouhani joined a crowd chanting “Death to America,” carrying “Death to Zionism” posters, while at the same

time telling reports that the “future is bright” when it comes to the nuclear negotiations. So President Obama has decided to place all his chips on the fact that the “Death to America” chants will soon disappear. This Committee has to ask itself whether we are willing to roll the dice too?