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**Opening Statement of the Honorable Ed Royce (R-CA), Chairman
House Foreign Affairs Committee
Subcommittee Hearing: Iran's Enduring Ballistic Missile Threat
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(As Prepared for Delivery)

In many ways, Iran's missile program has been a case study in how the Obama Administration has handled its nuclear negotiations with Iran – by backing off key demands. When negotiations kicked-off, the White House was insistent that the Iranians “*have to deal with matters related to their ballistic missile program.*” After all, U.N. Security Council Resolutions prohibit Iran's work on ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons.

But quickly, Iran's Supreme Leader Khamenei declared this “a stupid, idiotic expectation” and called it the “main duty of all military officials” to “mass produce” ICBMs. Soon, State Department negotiator Wendy Sherman was telling this Committee that U.N. missile sanctions are “not about ballistic missiles per se,” but about *nuclear-armed* missiles.

The problem is that ballistic missiles are the most reliable way to deliver nuclear warheads. Indeed, as we will hear this morning, ballistic missiles are not a “separate and secondary” issue – but “part and parcel” of Iran's nuclear weapons infrastructure. That's why Congress has targeted Iran's missile program with sanctions right alongside its nuclear program.

One witness calls the development of a long-range missile program a litmus test for a country's nuclear intentions – asserting that, “no country that has *not* aspired to possess nuclear weapons has ever opted to sustain” a lengthy and expensive missile program. Iran is pressing ahead with both. Remember that when Libya and South Africa renounced nuclear weapons, they also gave up the missile programs that went along with them. That's a long way from the “mass produce” attitude of the Ayatollah.

Recently, this Committee heard about the negotiating gains the Obama Administration will need to make over the next few weeks to get an agreement that has a chance of being meaningfully verified. Given the relative ease in detecting missile programs, missile restrictions *could* be a key source of verification in any sort agreement with Iran. As one witness recalls, Reagan's “trust but verify” didn't rely on tracking nuclear fuel stockpiles or centrifuges – but instead on counting Soviet delivery systems.

And how close is Iran to achieving a nuclear warhead? Iran continues to stonewall the IAEA on key questions – including missile warhead design – that its inspectors began pressing for *over three and a half years* ago. We just don't know.

Unfortunately, in the run-up to the June 30th deadline, the Obama Administration has shown no interest in working to stop Iran's ICBM program – instead boldly claiming that its agreement will

cut off every path to a nuclear weapon. But as one witness asks, “if the agreement effectively blocks Iran’s path to nuclear weapons, why would Tehran continue to work on a costly weapons system that could never be effectively armed?”

And with the vast sanctions relief that is coming Tehran’s way, there will be *billions* more for Iran to invest in and improve its ICBM program – an increasing threat to U.S. forces and partners in the region, and eventually to our allies in Europe and here at home.