

**A DANGEROUS STRATEGY: EXAMINING
THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION'S
FAILURES ON IRAN**

HEARING

BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY,
THE BORDER, AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT
AND ACCOUNTABILITY
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**A DANGEROUS STRATEGY: EXAMINING
THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION'S
FAILURES ON IRAN**

Wednesday, September 13, 2023

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY, THE BORDER
AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Washington, D.C.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 3:01 p.m., in room 2154, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Glenn Grothman, Chairman of the Subcommittee, presiding.

Present: Representatives Grothman, Foxx, Higgins, Biggs, Fallon, Garcia, Goldman, Moskowitz, Porter, and Frost.

Mr. GROTHMAN. This hearing of the Subcommittee on National Security, the Border, and Foreign Affairs will come to order. Welcome, everyone.

Without objection, the Chair may declare a recess at any time.

I recognize myself for the purpose of making an opening statement.

Good morning, and welcome to the Subcommittee on National Security, the Border, and Foreign Affairs Hearing: "A Dangerous Strategy: Examining the Biden Administration's Failures on Iran." Today, we are examining the Biden Administration's lack of transparency on Iran and the regime's nuclear program, American hostage negotiations, and the circumstances surrounding the dismissal of the Special Envoy on Iran, Robert Malley.

Signed under the Biden Administration, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or JCPOA was touted by the left as a fix-all to the Iranian nuclear dilemma. In reality, it did little to reign in the Iranian regime while rewarding it with literal pallets of cash. In May 2018, the last Administration withdrew the United States from the JCPOA due to Iran's continuing bolstering of its ballistic missile program and its funding of terrorist groups around the globe. Then-candidate Biden pledged that he would return the United States to the JCPOA but has since failed to uphold that pledge. Instead, the Administration has negotiated in secret and has failed to be transparent with Congress or the American people on negotiations with the Iranian regime. The lack of transparency is occurring despite the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act's expansive disclosure requirements.

In March 2023, the International Atomic Energy Agency detected enriched uranium particles at 83.7 percent, prompting great concern as weapons-grade uranium is enriched at 90 percent or higher. In addition to its nuclear program, Iran continues work to perfect the ballistic missile program. In May of this year, Iran unveiled its 4th generation liquid fuel ballistic missile, which can carry a 1,500-kilogram warhead around 1,200 miles. Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps, IRGC, continues to provide arms, training, and financial support to militias and terrorist organizations in Bahrain, Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, and Yemen. In 2020, the State Department estimated that the IRGC provides the terrorist organization Hezbollah \$700 million a year in assistance.

In 2019, the Trump Administration labeled the IRGC a terrorist organization. The IRGC is also known to have funded groups that have used car-side bombs and missile barrages against U.S. forces stationed in the region. Since President Biden took office, Iran or its proxies have attacked U.S. forces in the Middle East almost a hundred times.

Last month, the White House announced it was negotiating with Iran to permit the unfreezing of \$6 billion in sanctioned Iranian assets in exchange for the release of five detained Americans, and on Monday, as our Nation remembered the horror of September 11, the Administration issued a sanctions waiver, freeing up another \$6 billion for the world's largest state sponsor of terrorism. The White House assured the public that the \$6 billion could only be used for humanitarian purposes, but Iran has reiterated its position that the Iranian regime will decide how to spend the money.

I believe that it is imperative that we bring home every wrongfully detained American citizens abroad. It is also crucial we ensure that the increase in ransom payments made by the U.S. Government does not incentivize hostile nations and groups, like Iran, to continue to kidnap American citizens. It is also vital that we ensure that these large payoffs, in this case, \$1.5 billion, more than the cost of the USS Reagan aircraft carrier, are not used to fund the IRGC and the proxy terrorist organizations it supports.

Finally, the circumstances surrounding the dismissal of Robert Malley, the Biden Administration's first Special Envoy for Iran, are highly unusual. Malley's career has been marked by a long history of appeasement toward adversaries of the U.S in the Middle East. In 2008, while serving in the Obama Administration, Malley was forced to resign after he was found to have repeatedly met with the terrorist organization Hamas. In 2019, Malley also met with Iran's then foreign minister to undermine President Trump's maximum pressure campaign against Iran. Most recently, Malley was increasingly absent from official duties and repeatedly ignored congressional briefing requests. The White House subsequently defended Malley, stating that he was taking personal leave, but it has since come to light that the State Department revoked Malley's security clearance and placed him on unpaid leave in June.

The United States must counter the destruction and terror that Iran supports and funds around the world. We cannot rely on incompetent or compromised officials to achieve our goals. I look forward to hearing from each of our expert witnesses today on the re-

ality of the dangers we face from the Iranian regime and clear-headed solutions.

I will now recognize Ranking Member Garcia for the purpose of his opening statement.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you also to our witnesses. I just want to be clear: I think we can all agree that Iran is an oppressive and dangerous neighbor to everyone in the region. We all know that we are looking for peace in the region. I think everyone can agree in the Congress on that goal.

The Iranian regime threatens our allies, including, of course, the Democratic state of Israel, and destabilizes the region by funding terrorist groups, including Hezbollah, Palestinian terrorist groups in Gaza, and terrorists and militant groups in Iraq, Syria, Bahrain, and elsewhere throughout the Middle East. Now the regime is fueling Russia's illegal war with Ukraine, sending bullets and Iranian-made drones, which are targeting and killing innocent Ukrainians, and that is happening today. And the Iranian regime commits terrible crimes against their own people. They crack down on any dissent and sow fear among the population. They oppress, imprison, and kill women who are brave enough to stand up for their human rights, and fail to protect even young schoolgirls who are deliberately poisoned within the regime.

The Iranians deserve to be confronted and called out at every turn, and Members of both parties can agree that, above all, the Iranian regime cannot access a nuclear weapon. The best way to guarantee Iran cannot obtain a nuclear weapon is through international negotiations, careful diplomacy, and a negotiated solution. Not another Middle East war. We know this because history and precedent show that the only time we have been able to affect Iran's regime actions is with diplomacy.

Now, Donald Trump's reckless so-called maximum pressure strategy has failed and made us less safe today and less safe than ever. Rather than slowing Iran's march toward a nuclear bomb, Iran responded to Trump's decision to abandon President Obama's Iranian nuclear deal by getting closer to an actual nuclear weapon. Now, when President Biden took office, Iran's enriched uranium stockpile was more than 10 times higher than the limit set by the Iran deal. Under Trump, Iran has more highly enriched uranium, more enrichment sites, and had ended inspection protocols.

I want to also cite some prominent voices from the region that also testify that Trump has made us less safe. Now, I want to start with the former Israeli Defense Force chief of staff, General Gadi Eisenkot, who said "The fact that the U.S. withdrew in 2018, released Iran from all restrictions and inspections in the deal, even if there were holes, and brought Iran to the most advanced position today with regard to its nuclear program." Raz Zimmt, who is an Israeli military expert in Iran, stated in 2021, "Today, it is clear that maximum pressure did not yield its political objectives. It does not matter how much pressure you put on them, the Iranians see their nuclear program as an insurance for the regime."

Now, under President Trump, as Iran got closer to a nuclear weapon, our Nation crept far too close to dangerous conflict with this adversary. Now, in 2020, under President Trump, U.S. forces in Iraq were struck by more than a dozen ballistic missiles

launched by Iran, escalating threats to near war. I know some voices would like us to launch a destructive forever war with Iran, but our allies and partners should understand the American people are done sending our soldiers to fight and die in forever wars. We must be focused on our greatest security threats: Russia and China, and we cannot afford additional Middle East conflicts. The only logical alternative is smart diplomacy.

Now, President Biden has pursued this strategy, I think we believe appropriately. I believe negotiations have reduced tensions and reduce the risk of a serious escalation of conflict in the region, which is appropriate. Now, last month, the Wall Street Journal reported that Iran has “significantly slowed the pace at which it is accumulating near grade weapons, enriched uranium, and has diluted some of its stockpile.” Now, I am concerned that many voices in Congress are irresponsibly trying to block or prejudge diplomacy, regardless of its merits, to score political points.

Now, President Biden is securing the release of captured Americans, which should be a bipartisan priority for any administration. In exchange, South Korea is releasing Iranian funds, which can only be spent on humanitarian goods, food, and medicine for the Iranian people, under, of course, close supervision of the U.S. Treasury. These outcomes would not have occurred had the Biden Administration also not intervened. I would also like to note at the timing of this hearing, the Americans being released from Iran are not yet free. They are in a precarious situation, and I hope that this hearing does not undermine the efforts to secure the release of these Americans.

Now, diplomacy is hard, and it is true that the Iranian regime is doing horrific practices against all people, whether it is women, whether it is against the LGBTQ+ community, and we need to support President Biden in his efforts to contain Iran’s nuclear program. I urge both sides of this Committee to evaluate our diplomacy by following the facts and not trying to score political points. Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. GROTHMAN. I am pleased to introduce our witnesses today. First, Michael Makovsky is the president and CEO of the Jewish Institute for National Security of America, or JINSA, which is dedicated to advancing U.S. national security interest in the Middle East. He has worked extensively on U.S.-Israel defense ties, U.S. policy toward the Middle East, and how the United States can best address Iran’s nuclear and conventional threats to our interest. Second, we have Richard Goldberg, the senior advisor for the Foundation for Defense of Democracies. He served as the Director for Countering Iranian Weapons of Mass Destruction in the NSC and was the leading architect of the strongest sanctions the U.S. levied against the Iranian regime, while staffing the U.S. Senate.

Victoria Coates is the vice president of the Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Institute for National Security and Foreign Policy at the Heritage Foundation. She served as the NSC’s Deputy National Security Advisor for Middle Eastern and North African Affairs, where she led the strongest sanctions levied by the U.S. on Iran. And finally, Barbara Slavin is a distinguished fellow at the Stimson Center and Lecturer in International Affairs at George Washington University. She founded and directed the Future of

Iran Initiative at the Atlantic Council and led a bipartisan task force on Iran. Again, I want to thank you all for coming here to testify.

Pursuant to Committee Rule 9(g), the witnesses will please stand and raise their right hand. You look very nice.

Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony that you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

[A chorus of ayes.]

Mr. GROTHMAN. Let the record show the witnesses answered in the affirmative. Thank you. You may take a seat.

We appreciate you all being here today and look forward to your testimony. Let me remind the witnesses that we read your written statement, and it will appear in full in the record. Please try to limit your oral statement to 5 minutes. As a reminder, please press the button on the microphone in front of you, so that it is on and the Members can hear you. When you begin to speak, the light in front of you will turn green. After 4 minutes, the light will turn yellow, and when the red light comes on, your 5 minutes have expired, and we would ask you to please wrap up.

I now recognize Mr. Makovsky for his opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF MICHAEL MAKOVSKY
PRESIDENT AND CEO
JEWISH INSTITUTE FOR NATIONAL SECURITY OF AMERICA
(JINSA)**

Mr. MAKOVSKY. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, esteemed Members of this Committee, thank you very much for the opportunity to testify today on this important topic.

Mr. Chairman, I ask for unanimous consent to insert these three reports and briefs into the record.

Mr. GROTHMAN. So, ordered.

Mr. MAKOVSKY. OK. Great. Thank you. The hearing title refers to the Biden Administration strategy, so what indeed is its strategic game toward Iran? I cannot discern one. The Administration's National Security Strategy outlines a series of policies, "Enhancing the allied capabilities to deter and counter Iran's destabilizing activities, pursue diplomacy to ensure that Iran can never acquire a nuclear weapon, while prepared to use other means should diplomacy fail, respond when our people and interests are attacked, and always stand with the Iranian people." Yet, the Biden Administration has done none of these things, except endlessly pursue diplomacy at the exclusion of other tools.

The Administration's true aims, more tactical than strategic, are acquiescence and delay. It is acquiescence to the regime's existence and even enriches and strengthens it. It has laxly enforced sanctions so that Iranian oil export revenue in 2023 will be tripled 2020's level, it is estimated. It has issued waivers in recent months alone unfreezing billions of dollars in funds to Iran, including in the current awful hostage deal just announced. It rarely retaliates against attacks on Americans. JINSA has tracked almost 90 attacks by Iran and proxies against our soldiers in Iraq and Syria under President Biden, and the United States has retaliated only 4 times. The Israeli figures are almost the mirror opposite. In fact,

Iran has even retaliated against U.S. forces for Israeli actions because it fears Israel and not America. Think about what that says about the disintegration of American deterrence and credibility.

The Administration has not retaliated at all, to my knowledge, for Iran's active plots to abduct or kill American citizens on American soil. This is not about pivoting to Asia, but acquiescence and avoidance of confrontation, a terrible signal to our adversaries and allies around the globe. In 3 days, it will be the 1-year anniversary of Mahsa Amini's killing, but there has been no high-level U.S. official speech over the past year dedicated to supporting the Iranians demonstrating for the removal of the Tehran regime.

Most important, the Administration ultimately accepts a nuclear Iran, only hoping to postpone it, perhaps at least until after next November. It sought unsuccessfully to get Iran to re-enter the JCPOA, the Iran Nuclear Deal, which even President Obama conceded will permit a nuclear weapons capable Iran, and then pursued an even more Iran-friendly deal. Reportedly, there was a "understanding," apparently tied to the hostage deal by which Washington accepts Iranian enrichment to the level of 60 percent, a short step away from weapons grade. If true, at best, it will only slightly slow Iran's continued nuclear advance. I encourage the Committee to determine if this understanding "exists," which would violate the Iran Nuclear Review Act of 2015, or INARA. Consider, Iran's nuclear program has advanced so much under President Obama that in the 3-to 4-month timeframe Iran needed to produce a single bomb's worth in late 2020, it can now produce 9 to 10 bombs' worth.

America's strategic gain in Iran should be regime collapse, applying pressure on all fronts in order to help heighten the internal stress and hasten the Iranian people overthrowing it. This should include six elements: first, do no harm, nothing that strengthens Iranian regime, including sanctions relief for nuclear talks or for any reason; second, restore and enforce punishing economic sanctions; third, roll back Iran's regional footprint such as by interdicting weapon supplies to its proxies and retaliating against its attacks on us; fourth, support regime opponents in any way possible; fifth, ensure that Iran cannot achieve nuclear weapons capability; sixth, give Israel the weapons to counter Iran and prevent a nuclear Iran so we will not have to as much or more likely in case we will not at all. We could further deter Iran by concluding a mutual defense pact with Israel as JINSA first raised in 2018. Congress has important oversight role to play in ensuring that the executive branch develops and pursues such a strategy. Today's hearing is a critical first step in that process.

Thanks again very much for your time. I look forward to answering your questions.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Thank you. I now recognize Mr. Goldberg for his opening.

**STATEMENT OF RICHARD GOLDBERG
SENIOR ADVISOR
FOUNDATION FOR THE DEFENSE OF DEMOCRACIES**

Mr. GOLDBERG. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, Members of the Committee. I am honored to be here with you.

The Ranking Member mentioned the timing of this hearing, and I do want to mention a lot of things about timing of this hearing. While we are sitting here today, there are active plots underway to assassinate former United States officials, including some of our colleagues who served with us in the prior administration. While we are sitting here today, we are going to be celebrating, not celebrating, honoring, remembering, marking the 1-year anniversary of Mahsa Amini's murder by the morality police in Iran, the start of an uprising that continues in Iran until today. While we sit here today, the timing of this hearing, we are also monitoring the continued flow of weapons from Iran to Russia to use against the Ukrainian people. And while we sit here today, we just heard from the Mossad director in Israel, Barnea, who told the world over the last year, Israel has foiled 27 terror plots carried out by Iran targeting Jews and Israelis throughout the world, with more on the way, including potentially in North America.

While we sit here today having this hearing, the timing of this is also the nuclear expansion we are seeing in Iran. We have not, in fact, seen the slowing of Iran's nuclear program, the way that the Wall Street Journal headline had tried to characterize. If you look the same day at the Reuters report, you will see a more accurate headline, Mr. Ranking Member, and that is the expansion of Iran's nuclear stockpile at highly enriched uranium levels, including 60 percent and 20 percent, and low-enriched uranium at 5 percent, while Iran continues to build a secret new underground facility near Natanz that is supposed to be 100 meters underground and potentially impenetrable to military action. Cumulatively, what better time than today as in the news we learned about money flowing to this regime, the same regime that is carrying out all of these illicit activities under United States approval than right now. So, I salute you, Mr. Chairman, for having this hearing.

The history is important here. When President Biden took office, against all advice from many experts, he decided to erase maximum pressure. We have not been having a maximum pressure for 2 1/2 years against Iran. We have been having maximum deference against Iran for 2 1/2 years, chasing after the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism, trying to get back to a nuclear deal that was already expiring and already dangerous for the United States of America.

And despite Iran continuing to ratchet up its nuclear program, racing forward to the nuclear threshold first to 20-percent enriched uranium in January 2021, then to 60-percent enriched uranium later that year, the production of uranium metal, a key component of nuclear weapons, starting to downgrade their cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency, all of that happening under President Biden's maximum deference policy, not under President Trump's campaign of maximum pressure, but that is the history.

Let us deal with what is happening in front of us today. There are headlines right now. We are calling this because we believe we have a \$6 billion hostage ransom payment on our hands, \$6 billion being released for Iran to access coming out of South Korea in exchange for five Americans who have been wrongfully, unlawfully detained in Iran. There are also five Iranians that we are releasing

as part of this deal. It defies logic to believe that the United States is paying \$6 billion for five people. It would be a historic hostage ransom payment. It would mark a huge cost for all Americans who travel and live abroad, and you think you have problems in Iran coming forward after this payment?

If you are Evan Gershkovich sitting in a Russian prison today, the price on your head just went way up. If you are traveling to China or living in China with an Espionage Act that says that the Chinese can pick up an American now and accuse them of espionage, there is a price on your head, too.

No, Mr. Chairman, let me tell you what is happening. If you go through the record, starting in May of this year when a senior NSC official, Brett McGurk, traveled to Oman secretly without disclosing to the public and passed messages through the Sultan of Oman, who then carried them on a trip to Tehran and said to the supreme leader in Tehran the Americans want a deal, they are willing to pay a lot of money, release all your money from various accounts around the world, let your oil flow to historic record highs to China, and for all that, they just ask you not to cross that weapons-grade uranium threshold. You can keep going forward with all other parts of your program, toward the nuclear threshold. Just do not produce 90 percent. This is not a \$6 billion deal. Stop with the headlines on \$6 billion. This could be at least a \$50 billion deal or more.

We have already seen a waiver come up to Congress for \$10 billion to move from Iraq to Oman, \$6 billion now from South Korea to Qatar, \$7 billion that supposedly is going to get swapped for Iranian Special Drawing Rights of the IMF for fiat currency, and \$25 billion or more for oil profits now going to China, not enforced, all in violation of INARA, all in defiance of transparency to the American people.

I hope to answer all your questions here. Thank you for having us, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Thank you much. I now recognize Ms. Slavin for her opening statement. I am sorry, Ms. Coates. I am sorry.

**STATEMENT OF VICTORIA COATES
VICE PRESIDENT
KATHRYN AND SHELBY CULLOM DAVIS INSTITUTE FOR
NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICY
THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION**

Ms. COATES. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, thank you very much for this opportunity, and I compliment you for holding this hearing on the dangers posed to the American people by President Biden's misguided policy toward the Islamic Republic of Iran.

To my observation, the Biden Iran policy has been driven over the last 32 some months by their directive to reenter some new version of the Obama Iran Nuclear Deal or Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran. After a series of early concessions, such as removing Iran's Yemeni proxies, the Houthi, from the State Department's list of foreign terrorist organizations, Tehran agreed to reenter negotiations in 2021, only with the humiliating caveat that the regime would not speak directly with the Americans, but would

exchange messages through third parties, primarily the Russians, but also including the Europeans and notably the Chinese.

Undeterred neither by this insult, which meant placing the security of the United States at the tender mercies of Vladimir Putin's diplomats, nor by the result of removing the Houthi from the FTO list, which was a fresh wave of Iranian-sponsored terror on the Arabian Peninsula, President Biden has been determined to get another nuclear deal. Most recently, it was reported that whatever arrangement might be reached in Vienna will not even be committed to paper but will be some sort of unwritten agreement, which, like the JCPOA before it, will be implemented through the United Nations Security Council. It is of course, impossible for whatever this deal may turn out to be, to be binding on a future President absent an action by Congress to make it so. But my point today is to illustrate how the myopic pursuit of this Moby Dick of a deal has materially undermined Biden Administration policies toward too much more serious and, indeed, increasingly intertwined threats to the American people from Russia and China.

One of the many unfortunate secondary effects of the original nuclear deal was the lifting of the United Nations imposed ban on conventional arms exports from Iran in October 2020. Since then, the regime has focused on mass production of cheap offensive weapons for export, both to their proxies as well as to whoever will pay on the international market. This activity has expanded considerably since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, notably, but not exclusively, for drones.

Earlier this summer, the Wall Street Journal reported specific Russian vessels and routes being used to move these drones across the Crimean Sea. The public can literally read about it in the paper. Yet, the Administration has taken no action against these targets which would stop this flow of reinforcements to Putin that are only being used to kill Ukrainians and destroy the equipment President Biden demands American taxpayers supply to the war. And then there is the People's Republic of China. According to official Iranian sources, which do not include additional illicit flows of oil through Iraq, Iranian oil exports to China have mushroomed from 324,000 barrels a day in 2020, the last year of the Trump Administration, to some 1.1 million barrels a day in 2023. An almost fourfold increase in this activity is not bad luck or some product randomly squeaking through the net. It is a deliberate Biden policy of not enforcing the sanctions that are in place or rather a shadow lifting of the sanctions.

As usual, Biden Administration officials tried to insist that this is not so, as over the weekend they trumpeted to the press that they had seized almost a million barrels of Iranian oil headed to China. Pache Dr. Evil and a million barrels sounds like a lot, but, in fact, in the context of the numbers I just discussed, it is less than 1 day of the flow President Biden is routinely permitting. So, it may make for a good headline, but it seems hard to imagine the Supreme Leader or Chairman Xi even noticed.

In conclusion, from permitting Iranian drones to flow to Russia and Iranian oil to flow to China for the sake of getting into a new nuclear deal that will not even be written down, President Biden's Iran foreign policy is actually increasing the very real threats to

the United States from Russia and China, while making our old enemies in Tehran richer. Thank you very much for this opportunity to at least start asking questions about this approach, and hopefully, in the future, the Biden Administration will see fit to provide answers.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Thank you. Now we will go to Ms. Slavin.

**STATEMENT OF BARBARA SLAVIN
DISTINGUISHED FELLOW
STIMSON CENTER**

Ms. SLAVIN. It is Slavin, but thank you. Thank you, Chairman Grothman, Ranking Member Garcia, and other distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, for giving me this opportunity to discuss U.S. policy toward Iran.

When it comes to Iran, there are no perfect deals and no easy choices. However, the agreement that was reached to free five American citizens held unjustly in Iran has been painstakingly choreographed to the maximum advantage of the United States. Six billion dollars in Iranian oil revenues that had been frozen for many years in South Korea are being transferred via Switzerland to two Qatari banks. There, the money will be available for the carefully monitored purchase of humanitarian goods and services by Iran. Now, Iranian officials and government-owned media may say that they can spend this money any way they like, but that is a lie, and I am amused, frankly, to listen to opponents of the deal quote “Iranian sources” that they previously discounted, as somehow credible now.

This is not ransom. This is not appeasement. Indeed, one could argue that these funds were frozen illegally as a result of the Trump Administration’s violation of an internationally approved agreement, the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. This traded strict curbs on Iran’s nuclear program for an end to multilateral sanctions on its oil industry and other key sectors. Iran waited a year after Trump’s withdrawal in 2018 before it began to exceed the limits of the JCPOA. It has now gone very far.

According to the latest IAEA report, while Iran has slowed its accumulation of uranium enriched to 60 percent, it has more than 3,000 kilograms of enriched uranium, 10 times that allowed under the JCPOA, which limited Iran to 300 kilograms of low enriched uranium. Indeed, Iran now has 500 kilograms of 20 percent uranium and more than 120 kilograms of 60 percent uranium. None of this would exist if Trump had not violated American commitments and incentivized Iran through a maximum pressure strategy that has patently failed. His rejection of the JCPOA while it was being fully implemented by Iran also discredited supporters of the deal in Iran and led to their further marginalization in the Iranian political system.

You may not have liked Hassan Rouhani, but he was much more supportive of diplomacy with the West than the current Iranian President. Deprived of Western markets for its oil, Iran has now put all its eggs in a Chinese basket and strengthened its military alliance with Russia. That is hardly in U.S. national interest. At the same time, Iran has stepped up its domestic repression in the wake of the death of Mahsa Amini in police custody a year ago,

which sparked nationwide protests, and it has continued the awful practice of taking foreign hostages.

I am old enough to have lived through, indeed covered from afar as a journalist, the first hostage crisis with U.S. in 1979. Since Iran held 52 American diplomats hostage for 444 days, it has despicably resorted to this tactic from time to time. The regime has gone after Iranians who wanted to visit their families. They have gone after other dual nationals who have promoted better relations with the United States, and I am thinking here of Siamak Namazi, one of the Iranians who hopefully will be coming home soon.

The Biden Administration, indeed any administration, has a choice: negotiate for the release of detained Americans or let them rot in jail. It is the duty of the U.S. Government to free Americans unjustly held abroad, whether in Russia or China or Cuba or North Korea. For those who supported Trump's policy of maximum pressure to complain about this agreement is the height ofchutzpah. Their policy has failed, and more of the same is not going to yield better results.

It is unpleasant to negotiate with governments like Iran, but often there is no alternative. I am reminded of a favorite quotation of former Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage. "Diplomacy," he would say, "is the art of letting the other guy have our way." I am also thinking of a former Member of the House, former Governor and U.N. Ambassador, Bill Richardson, who passed away recently. As you know, he made a profession and art of freeing Americans held abroad. After he died, his partner, Mickey Bergman, said, "There was no person that Governor Richardson would not speak with if it held the promise of returning a person to freedom." When these five Americans finally land on U.S. soil, all Americans should cheer. There are no Republican or Democratic hostages. There are only Americans. I thank you for your attention, and I look forward to your questions.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Thank you. I will call upon myself to ask some questions. We will start out with Mr. Goldberg. In your opinion, what would a post-JCPOA deal look like, and what would you add or subtract from the original deal to prevent Iran from being able to obtain nuclear weapons?

Mr. GOLDBERG. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the question. The JCPOA, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, was fundamentally flawed for several reasons. No. 1, we ceded Iran an enrichment program. We had an international consensus that Iran should not have an enrichment program that has no right under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to enrich. Every country has a right to peaceful nuclear energy. You do not have a right to enrich. In fact, John Kerry reiterated that while he was negotiating the agreement.

And instead of insisting on that, what was enshrined in several U.N. Security Council resolutions that they halt all enrichment-related activities, in addition to reprocessing activities, we decided to say, OK, you can keep all of these illicit nuclear sites that we have now learned are completely intrinsically tied to their nuclear weapons program, thanks to the nuclear archive that was discovered in 2018 by the Mossad, which we have now seen throughout the world, which has led, by the way, the International Atomic Energy

Agency to new, undeclared nuclear sites in Iran that Iran today refuses to acknowledge, refuses to explain where the IAEA has even found traces of uranium. The idea that we would envision any sort of agreement with this regime that allows them to keep the capabilities to produce nuclear weapons in the future is fundamentally flawed. That is No. 1.

Even if you believed that Iran would somehow hold to an agreement, would not at some point unshackle itself from having these capabilities and raise to a nuclear threshold, the deal itself was baked to allow Iran legitimate pathways to nuclear weapons if they just followed the deal. That was what was so crazy about it, Iran would get a trillion dollars over a decade; attract foreign direct investment; get legitimized, despite still being the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism, building longer-range missiles, including intercontinental ballistic missiles, which they still aim to achieve according to our own Defense Department's reports on an annual basis. They are working on it today. They will continue to sponsor terrorism in the region, plot against the United States and others, still repress their people.

And if they follow the deal, all the things that you just heard Ms. Slavin talk about, that are happening that the Ranking Member is very alarmed by, that we are all alarmed by, they are all allowed under the deal. Because there are sunset provisions, expiration dates, that over a certain number of years, everything becomes legitimate, all the way to weapons-grade uranium production to any stockpile level. The only thing that they promised long term in the deal, we promise here the supreme leader, the people who murder Americans, the people who oppress their people, the people are helping Putin right now destroy Ukraine, we promise we will never build nuclear weapons. These sites are good sites. These are not the droids you are looking for, as we would say in Star Wars.

So, we have to go right back to the formula here, Mr. Chairman. The concept behind the maximum pressure campaign was to understand something that we have really learned, both from the nuclear archive, which showed that they lied to negotiators throughout negotiations with JCPOA and through the JCPOA, but also what has happened last fall with Mahsa Amini's murder and the uprising that is followed.

By the way, Mr. Chairman, we track protests in Iran on a weekly basis at FTD. They are still going on throughout the country. They have not stopped. We cannot approach this regime as one that you are going to negotiate as if you are in a western bar, trying to make a real estate deal. This is a brutal, radical theocracy that wants to destroy America and wipe Israel off the face of the earth. And so, a combination of military deterrence, economic pressure, and maximum support for the Iranian people has to be the basis for a long-term sustainable policy solution.

Mr. GROTHMAN. OK. Ms. Coates, what additional steps do you think should be taken by the U.S. and the international community to ensure Iran's cooperation with facility inspections?

Ms. COATES. I think, just to underline a point that Mr. Goldberg just made, the revelation of the Iranian nuclear archive in 2018 was a critical revelation of the internal failures of the original JCPOA, which was not negotiated in good faith. Clearly, if the re-

gime in Tehran had wanted a good-faith gesture toward the Americans, handing over that archive would have been a way to increase confidence in the deal tenfold. So, I think that the fact that they are not a believable, credible negotiating partner is the fundamental problem when you are dealing with a situation like their nuclear program.

So, you know, I would suggest that if one wanted to get to a comprehensive deal that would give the American people some confidence, that we were not just kicking the can down the road yet again with yet another rogue nuclear program, that we would insist on changes in their sponsorship of regional proxies, we would insist on restrictions on their missile programs, and concur completely that we would stand with the Iranian people against the regime that has oppressed them for so long.

Mr. GROTHMAN. OK. We will call on Mr. Garcia.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I want to start and then I have a couple of questions as well. To answer by clarifying something one of the witnesses said, I think it is important, as it relates to the Biden Administration and human rights, I think it is important to note that the U.S. under the Biden Administration has been incredibly strong on taking on Iran on the issue of human rights. And over the last year, the U.S. has responded to the important calls of the Iranian people that we have seen over and over again, and I want to list a couple.

The U.S. organized an unprecedented diplomatic campaign that led to the Iranian Government removal from the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women, created a U.N. commission to investigate the human rights abuses, help the growing number of human rights activists find safe haven in the United States, made it easier for Iranians to access the internet, sanctioned over 70 Iranian individuals and entities responsible for supporting the oppression of the regime and its people, and the list goes on and on. So, I just want to make sure that we are also very clear the Biden Administration have been heavily involved in human rights work in Iran.

Now, let us get back to the question. You know, under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, better known as the Iran Nuclear Deal, Iran agreed, of course, to give up its weapons-grade uranium and increased access to its nuclear inspections for the facilities under a time ranging from 10 to 15 years. Now, Ms. Slavin, can you explain why Iran agreeing to limits on its nuclear infrastructure would make for a less dangerous Iran?

Ms. SLAVIN. Thank you. Clearly, diplomacy is the only thing that has ever worked in terms of convincing the Iranians to curb their program. They had, by the way, no weapons-grade uranium at that time. They had only low-enriched uranium, but they made a pledge under this agreement that for 15 years they would not exceed the limit of 300 kilograms of uranium enriched to less than five percent. You cannot build a bomb with that amount of material. As I pointed out in my testimony, they now have 10 times that amount of enriched uranium and much of it at very, very high levels. So, to argue that the JCPOA would not have worked, I mean, I do not know how my colleagues up here can possibly state that, how they can have any idea what would have happened if Donald Trump had not withdrawn from this agreement at a time when, ac-

ording to the International Atomic Energy Agency, Iran was not only in full compliance, but was also allowing monitoring, extensive monitoring.

Mr. GARCIA. And when President Trump unilaterally pulled the United States out of the Iran Nuclear Deal, did Iran increase the amount of uranium it was enriching?

Ms. SLAVIN. It waited a year to see if the Europeans would be able to continue to trade with Iran. When it was clear that the Europeans would not be able to do that because of their fear of American sanctions, that is when Iran began to ramp up its enrichment of uranium.

Mr. GARCIA. And obviously, increasing enrichment of uranium is often bad for the U.S. foreign policy but also for global security. Do you want to expand on that?

Ms. SLAVIN. Absolutely. I mean, it is not only Iran that is now a threshold nuclear weapons state, although it has not weaponized, but there is a temptation on the part of others in the region. I am thinking particularly of Saudi Arabia, to obtain similar technology. This would set off a proliferation cycle in the Middle East that would be extremely dangerous to U.S. interests, to the interests of Israel, and others. So, it was very much in U.S. national interest to stay in the JCPOA, and it is unfortunate, very unfortunate, that we did not.

Mr. GARCIA. Ms. Slavin, you have obviously a distinguished career as a journalist covering national security and diplomatic issues. You have also traveled to Iran numerous times, so you have a unique insight into Iranian actions. Can you briefly discuss how Iranian internal political factions responded to the Trump Administration leaving the Iran Nuclear Deal?

Ms. SLAVIN. It was very unfortunate on that level as well. Iran does not have a democratic system, as we know, but it does have different political factions, and there were factions that supported diplomacy with the United States and with the West. They were totally discredited when Trump withdrew from that deal. We now have the most hardline, the most repressive regime Iran has had in 4 decades, a regime that has doubled down on ties with Russia and China, and that is not in U.S. national interest.

Mr. GARCIA. And so, this did impact our ability as the United States to seek diplomatic negotiations with Iran, correct?

Ms. SLAVIN. Very much so, and it is one of the reasons why Iran would not rejoin the JCPOA a year ago. They simply do not trust American promises anymore, and why should they?

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you. I just want to reiterate that the United States had a deal in place to curb Iran's nuclear program because denying Iran nuclear weapons is, of course, an important and critical American security objective. Any alternatives to a deal are not true alternatives if they do not curb Iran's nuclear program. I hope that we can hear from critics of the Iran deal some plausible alternative that do not bring the U.S. to the brink of war and surely risk leaving Americans to die in Iranian prisons. With that, I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Higgins?

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the panelists for being here today. I am going to be covering a lot of territory, moving fast.

Moving through international media sources to get our heads wrapped around this from the *Jerusalem Times*, this is about the JCPOA. That is the assessment, the overall assessment, this is really about the Biden's promises regarding the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the JCPOA, or Biden's interest in reviving the Iranian nuclear agreement, which they never abided by.

Jerusalem Times: prior to Biden, uranium enriched to just 20 percent; today, it has enriched uranium to 60 percent. That is just a jump from military grade. Prior to Biden, it had 300 kilograms of enriched uranium. Today, said to have 4,000 kilograms. From APEC's memo 2023, the International Atomic Energy Agency reported Iran enriched uranium to 83.7 percent at its Fordow facility, per the young lady's point, just shy of the 90-percent level thought necessary to build the bomb, higher than average uranium enrichment level of 80 percent of the nuclear bomb dropped on Hiroshima 1945.

From the joint chiefs of staff, from the time of an Iranian decision to build a bomb, Iran could produce fissile material for nuclear weapon in less than 2 weeks. From the CIA director, Russia and Iran have formed a full-fledged defense partnership. Since August 2022, Russian forces have used hundreds of Iranian suicide drones against Ukraine. Over the past 6 months, Iran has also sent more than 300,000 artillery shells and a million rounds of ammunition to Russia, now sending more ballistic missiles and rockets. China and Iran have also dramatically increased their partnership in recent years. China remains the world's largest importer of Iranian oil in violation of U.S. sanctions. Eighty Iranian drone and rocket attacks on Americans in Syria and Iraq since January 2021, killing two Americans and injuring dozens more.

Iran has been using earthquake relief flights to Syria to transport weapons and military equipment to its affiliated terror groups. In April and May, Iran seized two oil tankers in the Persian Gulf. That is the fifth and sixth commercial vessels that Iran has seized in the past 2 years. Since September 2022, Iran's morality police arrested and beat to death 22-year-old Masha Amini for improperly wearing her garments. Tens of thousands of Iranians led by braver Iranian women have been in the streets, protesting. They have executed over 500 people in 2022 to "spread fear among the protesters," and they have killed 500 more on the streets.

I go on. Let us just read from Al Jazeera, not really well known as a right-wing publication, are they? This guy, State Department spokesman, Stephen Miller, I do not know where they find guys like that. They breed them in laboratory experiments or something. This man said that the \$6 billion transfer will be under strict U.S. Treasury oversight. Well, what could possibly go wrong? Yesterday, Iranian President Raisi said in an interview on NBC News that Iran will spend a \$6 billion wherever it wants to. You shake your head? No, they have been defying the law since 1979. It is insane to think that you can do a deal with these people. That regime is horrific and aligned against all peaceful world interests, and when

the Biden Administration does business with them, you are compliant with that regime's agenda.

Mr. Goldberg, can you say in the last part of my time, regarding JCPOA, was Iran ever fully in compliance with JCPOA?

Mr. GOLDBERG. No. From day one, they were cheating. They did not disclose a secret nuclear archive, several undeclared to this day nuclear sites, nuclear material containers that are still missing in Iran. And to this day, the Director General of the IAEA, he just said this week in Vienna, still has no answers on what is going on inside Iran's nuclear program.

Mr. HIGGINS. Would you say your level of confidence that they will comply with any alleged agreement is rather low?

Mr. GOLDBERG. I would say that I am highly confident in their ability to cheat on anything they claim to agree to.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you. Good, sir. Thank you all for appearing today. Mr. Chairman, I yield.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Thank you. Mr. Frost?

Mr. FROST. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It seems to me like this Committee is very much caught up in finding ways to attack the decisions of the Biden-Harris Administration, that my Republican colleagues are now literally upset at the Administration for using diplomacy to help free Americans, who have been unjustly detained by foreign regimes, and let us look at the facts.

Americans were set free, no violence occurred, and the overall situations with Iran did not escalate. Not every interaction with our adversaries should start and end with aggression and more tension. Even former President Donald Trump did not try to escalate every situation. You know, when he was palling around with Kim Jong Un, Republicans did not call him out for it. The difference here is that Trump asked for nothing and got nothing. Meanwhile, President Biden has brought home six American citizens. I did not hear that outrage. We just heard from one of my colleagues when he stepped into North Korea and got nothing. If you have not picked it up, the point I am making here is that if Donald Trump had done this, Republicans on this Committee would be praising him. Instead, President Biden did, and so it is a full-on scandal, and we are having this hearing.

The Americans that we are talking about in this hearing, the ones that were brought home, include Emad Shargi, a father who raised his daughters in the United States, whose wife describes him as the kindest, gentlest partner, the most present father. It includes Siamak Namazi, an American businessman who was imprisoned along with his father; a father of former UNICEF official; and also Morad Tahbaz, a businessman, conservationist, and father. These Americans were falsely accused and convicted of collaborating with the U.S. Government, and I hope that we can get past all the politics of this and agree that bringing them home was the right thing to do.

Ms. Slavin, can you describe for us the so-called judicial process these political detainees have gone through?

Ms. SLAVIN. Well, first, Congressman, they are not quite home yet. They are still sitting in a hotel in Tehran. Hopefully, within a few days, they will indeed be home.

Mr. FROST. Yes.

Ms. SLAVIN. Look, the process by which they were convicted was a sham, and everyone knows it. Siamak Namazi is a personal friend of mine. His crime was trying to improve U.S.-Iran relations. For that he was sentenced to 10 years for espionage. It is ridiculous. I think it is a problem because we have a large Iranian diaspora, people who go home, they visit their relatives, and, unfortunately, they have to travel on Iranian passports, and so they are always liable to be picked up and used as pawns. Maximum pressure did not stop the taking of hostages. Nothing has stopped the taking of hostages. Iran has a lot of different motives for doing it. I wish there were a way to end this despicable practice, but, unfortunately, there does not seem to be.

Mr. FROST. What are conditions like in the prison where they were held?

Ms. SLAVIN. Evin Prison is a dreadful place. There have been a number of books written about it. Haleh Esfandiari, Jason Rezaian have written about their time there. Often people are held in solitary confinement. They are interrogated every day, sometimes tortured. Sometimes they are thrown in with ordinary criminals. It is a dreadful place, and we should not let an American spend one extra day there if we can do something about it.

Mr. FROST. And historically, what actions have been effective in returning Americans from political detention?

Ms. SALVIN. The only thing that has worked has been the unfreezing of Iranian assets or the release of Iranians arrested in the United States. I go back to the Reagan Administration. You know, in 1981, when our 52 American diplomats came home, it was after the Reagan Administration unfroze Iranian assets that had been frozen in the United States. Reagan also was involved with Iran-Contra, as you may remember, sending weapons to Iran to get Americans freed from Lebanon. So, this is a bipartisan policy and a bipartisan problem.

Mr. FROST. So, diplomacy negotiations?

Ms. SLAVIN. Diplomacy negotiations, unfreezing of assets, that is all that has ever worked.

Mr. FROST. Today we are discussing Iran policy in the midst of a prisoner release talks that are 2 years in the making. Some of us seek to politicize the situation against President Biden's policy, a policy that is currently concentrating on reuniting families and protecting Americans. Securing the release of American political prisoners and hostages should not be a partisan issue. We should all be united in this goal. Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Thank you. Ms. Foxx?

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I thank our witnesses for being here today.

Mr. Goldberg, from the newspapers and reporting available, the Biden Administration appears intent on making a new nuclear deal. Any deal with the Iranians, even if it is a bad deal for America and our allies, the Administration's current efforts to return to the JCPOA is a sweetheart deal for the Iranian regime compared to the much tougher deal the Trump Administration was working toward. Despite the much better deal for Iran, why do you think the Biden Administration had not been successful in getting the

Iranians to go back to the deal? What is your assessment of the Administration's negotiating team and position?

Mr. GOLDBERG. Thank you, Congresswoman, for the question. I think if we go back to the beginning of 2021, as the Iranian start testing the new administration to see what kind of metal Joe Biden had, they started escalating their nuclear program quite extensively, more than we had ever seen during the Trump Administration's maximum pressure campaign. And instead of pushing forward on maximum pressure, continuing military deterrence, responding as our military men and women were under attack in Iraq and Syria, we started relaxing sanctions. We started pulling back central resolutions in Vienna at the IAEA and Iran said, "great, we are going to start escalating more and more and more."

Hassan Rouhani, former President of Iran, was replaced, selected by the Supreme Leader with an even more hardline version, somebody who was going to drop the veneer, no more, you know, wolf in sheep's clothing, just a wolf in wolf's clothing, somebody who has so much blood on his hands, building a sanction cabinet of the who is who of Terror, Inc., to show the Americans, you want to give us money, you want to shower us, we are racing forward to the nuclear threshold. Come, we are going to have a whole new deal on our hands if you are not going to get serious with us. If you are not going to really push deterrence pressure against us, we are going to take the open door you have created, race for it on a nuclear program, reclaim the upper hand, and wait until you come begging to us. And unfortunately, that is what has happened to this Administration.

Now, you talk about a lot of the headlines. Ma'am, we are in a nuclear deal today. We are in a nuclear deal right now. They negotiated in secret since May. They have been issuing waivers tied to their nuclear program of Iran under false pretenses, now twice, once for Iraq, \$10 billion, now for South Korea, \$6 billion. They have been violating U.S. law by not enforcing our oil sanctions, tacitly allowing oil exports to skyrocket, potentially above 2 million barrels per day to China. All of that is covered by the Iran Nuclear Agreement and Review Act. That means that every single time they have issued a waiver as part of a secret nuclear negotiation, they are violating the law. They violated the law this Monday when they issued the waiver, not waiting to come before Congress. They violated the law in July. They have been violating the law all summer allowing sanctions relief to go from the oil exports to China.

At some point, we need to ask for documents. We need to say show us what you have been negotiating. Show us the communications you have had with banks. The Treasury Department will not tell Congress what banks are being used for these transfers. Right now, what bank in South Korea, what bank in Switzerland, what bank in Qatar is going to be using this? What are the Iraqi banks? What are the Omani banks involved? Which Irish and German banks were involved that we saw on the waiver on Monday?

We do not know account numbers. We talk about oversight. We do not have true oversight over this money. We are turning it over to the Qataris and the Omanis. We are going to approve every transaction. Are you going to get a copy, Mr. Chairman, of every

transaction that Iran has asked for, to see exactly what they are paying for?

Let us put aside the fact that \$6 billion is just a budget subsidy. Money is fungible. We are freeing up \$6 billion to persecute LGBT in Iran, to persecute the women of Iran, to carry out assassination plots against American citizens today on U.S. soil, to send weapons to Russia to use against Ukraine, while we ask for more money to defend Ukraine, all of that being done, underwritten by this secret deal. If they believed in the deal, Mr. Ranking Member, the way you articulated it, then let them send it to Congress for your review and a vote. That is the law.

Ms. FOXX. Quick followup. When the JCPOA was first brokered, we were told Iran's breakout time, the time they needed to produce enough radioactive material for nuclear weapon was about a year. What is Iran's current estimated breakout time?

Mr. GOLDBERG. We are near zero, ma'am. A long weekend, we can have enough fissile material for one nuclear weapon, nine nuclear weapons in 3 months. But the key to remember here, is that if we had stayed firm in the maximum pressure campaign up front instead of going to maximum deference, we would not have seen Iran race forward to this nuclear threshold that we find them in today. And so, yes, ma'am, we are in a very dire situation, unfortunately. For \$50 billion or more, we are not actually curtailing their nuclear program. We are not rolling it back. We are not getting rid of the enrichment. They are still enriching it 60 percent. The breakout timeline is still near zero, and we are now moving the goalposts to hoping that the intelligence community can detect weaponization. That is a big step for our national security.

Ms. FOXX. This is not just another bad decision, bad point of view on President Biden's part. You can add to the 50 years that he has been on the wrong side of every decision when it comes to foreign affairs, as Robert Gates said about him. This is maybe the worst that he has ever done. Thank you very much.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Thank you. Mr. Goldman?

Mr. GOLDMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am not sure what the worst he has ever done is because there is no new agreement. And I am not sure what agreement my colleague is referring to because there is none that this Administration has entered into. In fact, the Administration has ceased formal talks with Iran since, basically, the beginning of the Russian invasion of the Ukraine and Iran's assistance to Russia.

Mr. Goldberg, something you said just perked my ears a little, and I want to make sure I understand it. You said the IAEA right now has no idea what is going on with the Iranian nuclear program. Is that right?

Mr. GOLDBERG. In any of the weaponization applications of the program, the nuclear weapons side of the program, the IAEA has never to this day been able to verify the peaceful nature of the nuclear program. There were four undeclared sites that they discovered. They found nuclear material.

Mr. GOLDMAN. They discovered that during the JCPOA?

Mr. GOLDBERG. No, sir. They discovered that following the withdrawal from the JCPOA. The discovery of a secret nuclear archive kept hidden from negotiators of the JCPOA, kept hidden during the

JCPOA, that has led them now since late 2018, now almost a 5-year investigation into undeclared—

Mr. GOLDMAN. Right. So—

Mr. GOLDBERG [continuing]. Undeclared nuclear activities.

Mr. GOLDMAN. But you would agree, would you not, no matter what you think about the JCPOA, that the IAEA had a lot more access to what was going on in Iran during the agreement than subsequent to the agreement?

Mr. GOLDBERG. Iran allowed, as it had prior to the JCPOA—

Mr. GOLDMAN. It is a simple question. They had more access, did they not?

Mr. GOLDBERG. Iran was implementing, temporarily for their part, the Additional Protocol, which allowed for quicker snap inspections—

Mr. GOLDMAN. All right.

Mr. GOLDBERG [continuing]. Allowed for inspections at center field—

Mr. GOLDMAN. Right.

Mr. GOLDBERG. Manufacturing plants—

Mr. GOLDMAN. And by the way, I am not sitting here trying to defend the JCPOA.

Mr. GOLDBERG [continuing]. Which they are not getting, by the way—

Mr. GOLDMAN. I do think it is important to understand that we have much less access to what is going on inside Iran now. And as you pointed out, following the withdrawal from the JCPOA, Iran has dramatically increased its enrichment, including under the Trump Administration, and also under the Biden Administration. So, it is not as if there are no consequences to pulling out of the deal. There are problems with the deal. There are problems with the implementation. I am not sitting here defending the deal. But I do think you need to be a little bit careful about some of your allegations and assertions because, ultimately, as you know, many have said, it is either some sort of diplomacy or war. Because I agree with you, we cannot allow Iran to have a viable nuclear weapon.

Ms. Slavin, I want to just turn to you for a second and give you an opportunity. I see your head shaking on a couple of things, and I want to give you an opportunity just to respond to some of what has been said.

Ms. SLAVIN. Yes. On the question of monitoring, Iran was observing the Additional Protocol, there was monitoring by cameras 24/7. There were inspectors present.

Mr. GOLDMAN. Let me just ask. Is it your—

Ms. SLAVIN. This was under the JCPOA. All of that is—

Mr. GOLDMAN. I know. Is it your testimony here today—and this is a serious question—is it your understanding or your belief that Iran was abiding by all of the terms of the JCPOA? Because there is evidence to indicate to the contrary.

Ms. SLAVIN. I think what the references and what Mr. Goldberg is referring to is the fact that Iran never came clean about its nuclear activities before 2003. Iran had a nuclear weapons program. They never made nuclear weapons, but they were working on the

idea of making nuclear weapons prior to 2003 when their activities had been discovered.

Mr. GOLDMAN. I know, but during the JCPOA—

Ms. SLAVIN. And this material that was found in a warehouse by the Mossad and so on all refers to activities that took place before 2003, so we are mixing things up here.

Mr. GOLDMAN. But that was not disclosed—

Ms. SLAVIN. It was not disclosed.

Mr. GOLDMAN [continuing]. During the JCPOA?

Ms. SLAVIN. It was not disclosed.

Mr. GOLDMAN. OK. Well, that is important, no?

Ms. SLAVIN. The decision that was made was that it was more important to prevent Iran from advancing in the present time on its nuclear program than to make them admit that they lied about having done this research more than a decade earlier.

Mr. GOLDMAN. I understand what you are saying. I think this is not an easy issue, and I do not think we help ourselves by trying to turn this into a partisan issue. Iran is a dangerous regime. It is building a nuclear enrichment program. That is not permissible. It is exporting terrorism to, certainly around Israel, but elsewhere as well. It is not as simple as saying it is either maximum pressure or, you know, fall on our sword diplomacy. And I think we would all benefit from thinking hard about more bipartisan work on this rather than playing the blame game as to whether it was Biden or Trump or whomever. This is a critical issue that I hope we, as a Subcommittee, and certainly I will do on the Homeland Security Committee as well, can engage in, in a meaningful bipartisan collaborative way. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. GROTHMAN. OK. Mr. Fallon?

Mr. FALLON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just got the last 30, 40 seconds of Mr. Goldman. I have to say that is the first time I fully agree with everything you said. So—

Mr. GOLDMAN. You should try it more often.

Mr. FALLON. To be fair, when we opened this Committee hearing, I heard the Ranking Member talk about how he, you know, he agrees with the JCPOA and use some Israeli sources. So, I wanted to just, for the record, use some Israeli sources as well. I want to quote their Israelis, Energy Minister, Yuval Steinitz, who said, “We thought the maximum pressure policy with regard to Iran was very productive.” And then you go all the way to the top with Prime Minister Netanyahu, who called the agreement a “stunning historic mistake”—he is talking about what the Biden Administration is doing. “The most limited understandings of what are termed, many agreements do not, in our view, serve the goal and we are opposed to them as well.” Ms. Slavin, do you agree with me, and just for the sake of time, if you can just limit it to “yes” or “no” answers. Do you agree that the Iranian regime is an enemy of free speech?

Ms. SLAVIN. Yes.

Mr. FALLON. OK. Freedom of religion?

Ms. SLAVIN. Yes.

Mr. FALLON. Women’s rights?

Ms. SLAVIN. Yes.

Mr. FALLON. OK. And one of the, if not the largest, supporter of state-sponsored terrorism?

Ms. SLAVIN. It depends on how you define “terrorism.”

Mr. FALLON. You really cannot answer that as a “yes” or “no?”

Ms. SLAVIN. No, I cannot.

Mr. FALLON. Wow. OK. That is telling. And if you had to describe to somebody, is the Iranian regime either a functioning democracy or an authoritarian theocracy? What would you describe it as?

Ms. SLAVIN. The latter.

Mr. FALLON. Latter, OK. Good. And so, you are a supporter of the JCPOA?

Ms. SLAVIN. Yes.

Mr. FALLON. OK. Do you think that the Iranian ICBM Program is a threat to the United States, Western allies in the region?

Ms. SLAVIN. As far as I know, they do not yet have ICBMs.

Mr. FALLON. But they have a program to develop ICBMs?

Ms. SLAVIN. They have a very aggressive missile program.

Mr. FALLON. Yes.

Ms. SLAVIN. Yes.

Mr. FALLON. Do you think that is a threat to world peace, United States, our allies?

Ms. SLAVIN. Yes, I do.

Mr. FALLON. OK. And so, you do not think that they are a state sponsor of terrorism?

Ms. SLAVIN. No. Of course they are state sponsored.

Mr. FALLON. OK.

Ms. SLAVIN. It is just a question, are they the largest.

Mr. FALLON. OK.

Ms. SLAVIN. I mean, I would have to—

Mr. FALLON. Fair, fair, fair. So—

Ms. SLAVIN. You know, people think Russia is the largest—

Mr. FALLON. OK.

Ms. SLAVIN. [continuing] State sponsor of terrorism now. So, I would have to think—

Mr. FALLON. OK.

Ms. SLAVIN [continuing]. About that a little.

Mr. FALLON. But for time’s sake, does the JCPOA address the Iranian ICBM program at all?

Ms. SLAVIN. The JCPOA was a nuclear agreement.

Mr. FALLON. Right.

Ms. SLAVIN. It was never meant to deal with Iran support for terrorism or—

Mr. FALLON. OK.

Ms. SLAVIN [continuing]. Iran’s missile program or Iran’s impression of human rights.

Mr. FALLON. OK.

Ms. SLAVIN. The question I have for you, Congressman—

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Chairman, I am going to do reclaim my time. Mr. Chairman, I am reclaiming my time.

Ms. SLAVIN. May I just finish my comment?

Mr. FALLON. No.

Ms. SLAVIN. Do you want a country like Iran to have nuclear weapons?

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Chairman?

Ms. SLAVIN. That is my question.

Mr. FALLON. I want that time back, please. Thank you. Is the JCPOA, Ms. Slavin, a treaty?

Ms. SLAVIN. No.

Mr. FALLON. OK. It is an agreement?

Ms. SLAVIN. Yes.

Mr. FALLON. It is an agreement. The acronym is what?

Ms. SLAVIN. It is a plan which passed through Congress—

Mr. FALLON. A joint comprehensive plan of pass-through.

Ms. SLAVIN. Right, which was not blocked by Congress. Congress was not able to block it under INARA, which the law—

Mr. FALLON. So, the U.S. Senate did not ratify this because it is not a treaty?

Ms. SLAVIN. It is not a treaty.

Mr. FALLON. OK. Is it a signed agreement?

Ms. SLAVIN. It is a plan which was approved by U.N. Security Council Resolution. It had the force—

Mr. FALLON. And we are going to defer to the U.N. now?

Ms. SLAVIN [continuing]. Had the force of international law.

Mr. FALLON. Ma'am, did any American sign that plan of action? Is it a signed agreement? No, it is not, and so Security Council Resolution 2231, which prevents Iran from proliferating weapons, did Iran violate that security resolution? You opened the door with—

Ms. SLAVIN. After the Trump Administration violated it first.

Mr. FALLON. Oh, it is the Trump Administration's fault, OK, that Iran is now providing drones to Russia?

Ms. SLAVIN. You are mixing apples and oranges.

Mr. FALLON. You just said that. You are blaming Trump for everything. Was the Iranian regime evil before President Trump took office in January 2017?

Ms. SLAVIN. I am sorry. I do not think this is a productive line of questioning.

Mr. FALLON. OK. Uh-huh. I am not going to be a sycophant. I think the Iranian regime is very, very dangerous. Do you know who Hossein Mousavian is, Ms. Slavin?

Ms. SLAVIN. Hossein Mousavian?

Mr. FALLON. Mousavian, yes.

Ms. SLAVIN. Yes, I do.

Mr. FALLON. Is he a friend of yours?

Ms. SLAVIN. He is someone I know.

Mr. FALLON. OK. He is an acquaintance, friend. Did you know that he attended Soleimani's funeral?

Ms. SLAVIN. No, I am sorry. I did not.

Mr. FALLON. You did not know that? Yes. Do you know Soleimani is, of course?

Ms. SLAVIN. Yes.

Mr. FALLON. Somebody who murdered upwards of maybe 600 or more Americans, and your friend had attended his funeral. And, actually, your friend bragged about the attempted assassination of American officials. So, Ms. Coates, do you think it was an appropriate use of taxpayer resources to give, however the heck you say his name, Mousavian? I call it scumbag. He glorified Soleimani, and he brags about assassinating U.S. leaders? Do you think that was a good idea to give him a platform to speak at STRATCOM?

Ms. COATES. No, I think that was an egregious error to invite him. I have a lot of questions about why he should have a visa to be in the United States with a platform at Princeton University. And I think whoever made the decision to issue that invitation to STRATCOM has to explain to the American people and the American taxpayers who fund them how that was a judicious expenditure of our money, how it benefits our armed forces to invite somebody, like Mousavian, into our secret spaces, into our military installations.

Mr. FALLON. U.S. Strategic Command invited this guy. He has been in the country for 14 years. I do not know how he is here either. And to reclaim a little bit of my time, Mr. Chairman, that was stolen, Mr. Makovsky, given the seriousness of the investigation and suspension, why didn't the Biden Administration, in your view, fire Rob Malley or why didn't he resign? Are they intending to hire him back in the future?

Mr. MAKOVSKY. I do not know.

Mr. FALLON. Would you have fired him?

Mr. MAKOVSKY. I think it is important for the Committee to try to find out what the story is or why he is in his current position, but we do not know yet.

Mr. FALLON. I am also curious to know how—

Mr. MAKOVSKY. But I think it is interesting that we have learned more from the Iranians, by the way—

Mr. FALLON. Bingo.

Mr. MAKOVSKY [continuing]. That we have learned so far from American sources.

Mr. FALLON. The *Tehran Times* knew before the U.S. Congress?

Mr. MAKOVSKY. Yes.

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Chairman, thanks. I yield back.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Thank you. We have Ms. Porter now?

Ms. PORTER. Ms. Coates, the Republican Majority invited you here today as a witness. In your own words, what are the Republicans interested in learning from this hearing?

Ms. COATES. Well, thank you very much, Congresswoman, for that question and for the bipartisan participation in this. In this Committee hearing today, I do echo Mr. Goldman's comments about getting to a good bipartisan spot on Iran that is focused on the national security interests of the American people, which I think all of us take very seriously. I think the questions, as I understand them, from the Majority on this Committee is an exploration of what has been going on now for well over—

Ms. PORTER. So, what is the Administration's Iran policy?

Ms. COATES. What is the Iran policy, what has been negotiated in Vienna, what is being agreed to potentially as a new deal, and I certainly think questions about the status of the former Special Envoy, given how opaque the—

Ms. PORTER. OK.

Ms. COATES [continuing]. State Department has been about that, are valid on the part of the American people.

Ms. PORTER. OK. So, Ms. Coates, we want to evaluate the Biden Administration's policy toward Iran, and it has these different components that you just started into. We cannot evaluate the policy until we know what it is, and that seems like a big part of the frus-

tration and the issue here. So, we want to know what the President's policies are on Iran, and can you name some of the areas that we might want to know about? Like, I am interested in nuclear proliferation. How about you?

Ms. COATES. Nuclear proliferation is always a concern.

Ms. PORTER. OK. Anything else?

Ms. COATES. I think sponsorship of terrorism.

Ms. PORTER. OK. Terrorism. Anything else?

Ms. COATES. I would say repression of the Iranian people.

Ms. PORTER. OK.

Ms. COATES. Expansion of the missile program.

Ms. PORTER. Yes.

Ms. COATES. Potential weaponization of elements that they are using in space.

Ms. PORTER. You said the one before this was a missile program?

Ms. COATES. Export of conventional arms to Russia.

Ms. PORTER. Arms export.

Ms. COATES. Particularly Russia for Ukraine.

Ms. PORTER. OK. So, there is a lot of good stuff here. Where can the people find an official statement of the Administration's policy toward Iran that covers some of these topics?

Ms. COATES. Well, you can go to the State Department website.

Ms. PORTER. What will you learn?

Ms. COATES. You will learn that the State Department frequently says things that sound good to the American people, but they do not take actual actions. And I think you could go back to, for example, lifting the Foreign Terrorist Organization designation from the Houthi in Yemen. There is a statement about that on the website of the State Department.

Ms. PORTER. I am just reclaiming my time for a second. I know that President Obama had a statement of policy about Syria during his Administration. Do we have a similar statement of policy from President Biden about Iran?

Ms. COATES. Well, given that the statement of the Obama Administration, among other things, prohibited the use of chemical weapons.

Ms. PORTER. No, I am not asking whether you agree or disagree with that. Let me ask, Ms. Slavin. Do we have that kind of statement?

Ms. COATES. I mean, I agree that they have statements on the State Department website about Iran.

Ms. PORTER. OK. So, right now, though, there is no comprehensive document, overview document, of the Biden Administration's policy on Iran?

Ms. COATES. Not that answers my questions.

Ms. PORTER. OK. So, it would be easier to evaluate the policy if we knew what they were?

Ms. COATES. And if they would answer questions about it.

Ms. PORTER. OK. So, would it surprise you that Republican leadership blocked my bipartisan amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act that would have gotten us all, on both sides of the aisle, a report about all of the President's policy toward Iran. This is actually, so you can look for yourselves—this is exactly what my amendment would have done. “The President shall sub-

mit to Congress a report, which may contain a classified annex, outlining the policy of the United States with respect to human rights, nuclear proliferation, the ballistic missile program, and regional terrorism in Iran," all issues that you said were things you would like to know about. Why would Republicans block this?

Ms. COATES. Well, I applaud your confidence in reporting requirements as an effective way of policy oversight. I would say that I simply would not necessarily object to a report, but a report is not going to get us the answers that we need.

Ms. PORTER. Well, it is going to get us more than we have got right now, which is nothing.

Ms. COATES. But that is on the Administration, ma'am.

Ms. PORTER. Yes, but with all due respect, we do oversight of the Administration. This amendment orders the Administration to give us answers, including those with classified information, if necessary, on the very topics that you identified as important. So, I guess what my frustration here is, the Republicans have called this hearing, and I am in full support of wanting more information about the Iranian regime. I represent a huge Iranian-American population in my district, but they blocked an amendment that would have been a tool to begin to force the Administration to give us this information. I yield.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Thank you. Representative Biggs?

Mr. BIGGS. Thanks, Mr. Chairman, and I appreciate the witnesses being here. I was in another hearing, so I apologize for coming in. And I do not want to ask any duplicative questions except it would be fresh for me, so any answers you would give me will be fresh for me, so thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I first seek unanimous consent to submit the following into the record: September 12, 2023, NBC News article entitled, "Iranian President Says Tehran Will Spend the \$6 Billion Dollars Released in Prior Exchange Wherever We Need It."

Mr. GROTHMAN. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. BIGGS. Thank you. So, I am not going to make a lot of statements on this because I have prepared a statement, so I am just going to ask a few questions. Is there anybody on the panel that believes that the \$6 billion that we just gave plus five prisoners that we exchanged, do you believe that the \$6 billion is going to be used for humanitarian purposes? Ms. Slavin does.

Ms. SLAVIN. Yes.

Mr. BIGGS. OK. I have got a bridge for you.

Mr. MAKOVSKY. Congressman, may I add?

Mr. BIGGS. Yes.

Mr. MAKOVSKY. I share your skepticism on that, but I think also the issue is even if they do, money is fungible, so that would just free up other money that they could spend on other things, more nefarious purposes. So—

Mr. BIGGS. Yes, that was my followup question.

Mr. MAKOVSKY. I sensed that.

Mr. BIGGS. Yes. So, even if they spent it for humanitarian purposes, it could go for nefarious purposes back. In other words, they backfill it and move around. It is all fungible, but they themselves have said we are going to use it any way we want to. That is why I am incredulous that anybody would believe that it was all going

to go to humanitarian purposes. Anyway, what I want to know is, is this the first time we have paid Iran an exchange for hostages? Ms. Coates?

Ms. COATES. No. No. Obviously, there was the hostage deal with the infamous pallets of cash that preceded the original JCPOA.

Mr. BIGGS. And how much was that?

Mr. GOLDBERG. That ended up totaling \$1.7 billion for four Americans, so approximately \$425 million American back then under Biden's inflation plan. It is \$1.2 billion per American today, so inflation comes to every industry, Congressman.

Ms. SLAVIN. Excuse me, Congressman. This is Iran's oil revenues. The United States is not—

Mr. BIGGS. I do not have a question for you, Ms. Slavin.

Ms. SLAVIN. OK.

Mr. BIGGS. I think you had people here that could ask you these questions. My next question is, are there proxies for the Iranian regime that commit acts of terror in the Mideast or elsewhere?

Mr. GOLDBERG. Yes, sir. The National Iranian Oil Council, the Central Bank of Iran, the National Iranian Tanker Corporation, these are all organizations, institutions that are designated today under U.S. sanctions for terrorism finance of the Quds Force and other terrorist organizations that has not stopped. The bank accounts this money is coming out of, are designated for terrorism finance.

Mr. BIGGS. And that is known to our regime or the Biden regime, right? I mean, they know this, ostensibly.

Mr. GOLDBERG. They absolutely know that. They also know that that money that was sitting in Baghdad of \$10 billion being moved to Oman during the summer in July, with a waiver sent to Congress tied to a nuclear deal that has not been acknowledged, is also tied to terrorism. As well, the money that is being exchanged from the IMF-SDRs, totaling \$7 billion, and will all the money that they are getting back from China in various ways for exporting oil that is not being enforced in our sanctions in a \$50 billion deal, all tied to terrorism in some way.

Mr. BIGGS. And we are not enforcing the sanctions that ostensibly remain in place?

Mr. GOLDBERG. Correct, sir.

Ms. COATES. No, and, I mean, we have gone from roughly 324,000 barrels a day getting out of Iran to China to over 1.1 million.

Mr. BIGGS. So, also, Iran is the manufacturer and have stepped up their manufacturer of weaponry, non-nuclear weapons that they are distributing and selling. The countries that they are selling to, are they friends to U.S.? Ms. Coates?

Ms. COATES. No. I mean, one of them being Vladimir Putin's Russia. I would say these are countries that are pretty diametrically opposed to the United States. And I think one question we have to ask, Congressman, is why the Administration is being so permissive of these shipments of drones to Russia when their only use is to blow up the American aid that the President is asking the Congress for.

Mr. BIGGS. Some would say, looking at the situation, that sending \$6 billion over that is fungible, we are actually funding both sides of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. I yield back.

Mr. GROTHMAN. OK. I will call upon Mr. Garcia for a brief question.

Mr. GARCIA. I think both the Chairman and I are going to do a brief 1 minute of questioning. Is that correct?

Mr. GROTHMAN. Yes.

Mr. GARCIA. OK. I want to just provide an opportunity for Ms. Slavin to quickly clear something up. I want to address our colleague, who right now just asserted that somehow the Biden Administration is somehow funding terrorism, which is obviously not true. Ms. Slavin, the \$6 billion in funds that my colleague just referenced, are Iranian funds only to be used for non-sanctionable humanitarian goods? Is that correct?

Ms. SLAVIN. Yes.

Mr. GARCIA. Ms. Slavin, and prior to the Biden Administration's recent negotiations, these funds would have eventually been released to Iran, but without the U.S. Treasury having oversight of that. Is that not correct?

Ms. SLAVIN. Yes.

Mr. GARCIA. Ms. Slavin, these humanitarian exemptions, they existed also under President Trump, and, in fact, didn't the Trump Administration set this whole thing up?

Ms. SLAVIN. It did indeed.

Mr. GARCIA. So just to be clear, the Biden Administration is ensuring the United States Treasury now has a role overseeing the disbursement of these funds, a program, by the way, that was set up by President Donald Trump. So, I just hope that my colleague across the aisle, you know, understands that this is a complex issue. I appreciate you referencing all of them. I just wanted to clear that up. With that, I yield back.

Mr. GOLDBERG. Congressman, that is false, just so you know. I want the American—

Mr. GARCIA. Sir, I actually did not ask you any questions.

Mr. GOLDBERG. Absolutely. That is false, it is false.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you very much.

Mr. GROTHMAN. OK. Two quick things. Really quick, Mr. Goldberg, give me your quick statement on that last question.

Mr. GOLDBERG. No. I just want to say, Congressman, I do not know where you just got all that information, but you are the Oversight Committee. Conduct oversight, sir. How do you know what the money is going to be used for? The Treasury Department will not tell you a single name of a bank, a bank account number, how the oversight is being conducted, how the money is being moved. You are not going to get a list of transactions. You ever heard Halkbank? Do you know how the Iranians abuse humanitarian channels? You have zero oversight today. You have a press release from the White House. That is not oversight.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Thank you. Now, Mr. Makovsky, really quick, in your opinion, should Iran decide to build and successfully obtain nuclear weapon, what do you believe they will do with such a weapon, and how do you think it will change the dynamics in the Middle East?

Mr. MAKOVSKY. It will completely transform the region. It will lead to nuclear proliferation among all other countries in the region that will completely undermine U.S. position. It will threaten Israel's very existence. And I think our policy, what we should be focusing on right now, is doing everything we can to prevent that eventuality.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Garcia, do you have a closing statement?

Mr. GARCIA. Yes, sir. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank our witnesses for being here today. We know that the regime in Iran has acted as a malevolent force, wrongfully detaining American citizens, supporting proxies, harassing our troops, fueling Russia's illegal war with Ukraine, conducting repression of its own people and developing nuclear weapons, and both Republicans and Democrats all agree on this. I think it is really important to say very clearly. We do have, of course, one Majority witness that stated clearly that they think the violent regime change is the only way to deal with Iran, and, in fact, that we know that is not the case. Diplomacy can work in Iran. It has worked in the past. It can work again in the future.

I want to go back—the Obama Administration worked with a global coalition to create the JCPOA. Subsequently, Iran relinquished their entire stockpile of enriched uranium and accepted a comprehensive inspection regime, preventing the terrifying prospect of a nuclear armed Iran. Now, former President Trump decided to approach foreign policy, essentially with a sledgehammer. Despite the explicit protests of his own Secretary of Defense, former President Trump pulled the U.S. out of the Iran deal to replace it with his maximum pressure campaign, and Trump's campaign did not work. As we have discussed this hearing, his actions instead alienated American allies and empowered Iran on the global stage. During the rest of the Trump Administration, Iran started enriching uranium to weapons levels again, so much so that when President Biden entered office, he faced the Iran that said far closer to a nuclear weapon than any time under the JCPOA. So, whatever the Majority witnesses may say, those are actually the facts.

Now, most importantly, the Biden Administration has prioritized bringing Americans home. The repressive regime has a long history of taking hostages, dating back many decades. This practice has acted as a thorn in the side of every president since, and President Biden has risen to the occasion, negotiating safe return for five more Americans just this week. Now, the Biden Administration is bringing Americans home and also trying, of course, to create oversight for Iran's own funds. Now, both the U.S. Government and our allies will have oversight to make sure that the funds only go toward food, medicine, and medical devices. The Administration is using every tool possible to make this world more stable and bring Americans home safely.

As I said at the outset, diplomacy is hard work on the world stage. You are forced to engage leaders whose values and actions could be different, of course, than our very own. But the focus must be on American lives, which is precisely the priority of the Biden Administration. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Thank you. The Iranian regime continues to fund and supply terrorist organizations, fuel regional proxy wars,

kidnap American citizens for ransom, and enrich uranium with the intent to successfully develop a nuclear weapon. This hearing has highlighted the need for continued congressional oversight over the Biden Administration's policies toward Iran's hostile regime. The Subcommittee will also continue to monitor developments surrounding the mysterious removal of President Biden's Special Envoy to Iran, Robert Malley, and the revocation of his security clearance.

Thank you to all our Members who participated in today's hearing, and I would like to thank our witnesses for spending so much time with me, and I know this started later than you thought it would.

With that, and without objection, all Members will have 5 legislative days within which to submit materials and to submit additional written questions for the witnesses, which will be forwarded to the witnesses for their response.

If there is no further business, without objection, the joint Subcommittee hearing stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:31 p.m. the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

