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JCPOA: Iran Missile Defense and Nonproliferation

Statement before the

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Good Morning, Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Cooper, and members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony today regarding the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and implications for Iran's missile defense and nonproliferation.

Iran continues to be a threat to regional stability as its regime's national interests often diverge with U.S. and our regional allies' security priorities in the dynamic and turbulent region. Understanding Tehran's support to terrorists and subnational armed groups as well as its military capabilities and regional ambitions are a priority for DIA's analysts and collectors. For years to come, we expect Iran to be a difficult target. Our challenge will be to decipher the progress the regime and security apparatus has accomplished during this period of unrest in the region. For Iran, its national security strategy remains to ensure the regime's survival, expand its regional influence, and enhance Tehran's military deterrence and superiority.

The JCPOA increases the international community's insight into Iran's nuclear capabilities and activities. It extends the time Iran would need to produce weapon grade uranium for a nuclear weapon from as little as 2-3 months to about one year. Further, the nuclear deal will freeze Iran's ability to produce and reprocess weapons-grade plutonium for at least 15 years. The JCPOA gives the IAEA some additional tools to investigate Iranian breaches of the prohibitions on weapons-grade enrichment and development of support technologies. Without a source of weapon grade uranium or plutonium, Iran cannot produce a nuclear weapon.

The international community also is positioned to detect changes to Iran's declared nuclear facilities that could enable Tehran to shorten the time needed to produce fissile material. IAEA monitoring of uranium mills and centrifuge production - as well as Iran's implementation of the Additional Protocol- also would make it harder for Iran to divert these materials to support a covert program without being detected. The JCPOA also prohibits specific R&D activities that would contribute to the development of a nuclear weapon and provides tools for the IAEA to investigate any possible breaches of these prohibitions.

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Iran's ballistic missile capability will continue to threaten U.S. strategic interests in the Middle East. Iran's overall defense strategy relies on a substantial inventory of theater ballistic missiles capable of striking targets throughout the region. Iran will continue to develop more sophisticated missiles and is improving the range and accuracy of its current missile systems irrespective of JCPOA implementation. Iran publicly stated that it intends to launch a space launch-vehicle as early as this year. This vehicle would be capable of intercontinental ballistic missile ranges, if configured as an ICBM.

Post-JCPOA economic growth could provide Tehran more money for ballistic missile development, but engineering and infrastructure challenges will remain. U.N. restrictions on ballistic missile-related sales and purchases will remain in place for eight years following Adoption Day or until the IAEA reaches its Broader Conclusion, whichever is sooner. After UN restrictions end, international and domestic tools such as the Missile Technology Control Regime, the Proliferation Security Initiative, and U.S. export controls will still apply, and the U.S. will retain its ability to impose missile-related sanctions under non-nuclear sanctions authorities, including under Executive Orders 12938 and 13382. In addition, secondary sanctions will continue to attach to foreign financial institutions and other persons that engage in transactions with Iranian missile proliferators sanctioned by the Department of the Treasury.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for this opportunity to discuss these important topics. I look forward to the subcommittee's questions and a more detailed discussion in the closed session.