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Opening Statement of the Honorable Ed Royce (R-CA), Chairman  
House Foreign Affairs Committee Hearing:  
Iran Nuclear Agreement: The Administration's Case  
July 28, 2015

(As prepared for delivery)

This hearing will come to order. Today we continue our review of the nuclear agreement the Obama Administration reached with Iran. This is a critical hearing on one of the most sweeping diplomatic initiatives in years – some say decades – demanding the Committee's thorough review.

The global threat from Iran has been a focus of this Committee for as long as I can remember. Last Congress, we passed comprehensive sanctions legislation by a vote of 400-20. It would have given Iran's Supreme Leader a choice between its nuclear program or economic collapse. But the Administration was successful in blocking that legislation.

So instead of us considering a verifiable, enforceable, and accountable agreement, we are being asked to consider an agreement that gives Iran *permanent* sanctions relief for *temporary* nuclear restrictions. Should Iran be given this special deal?

In September, Committee Members will face the important decision of approving or disapproving this agreement. We will have that vote only because of the *Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act*, passed in May, which the Administration didn't want. To be frank, the Administration's preference has been to *sideline* America's representatives. So I was not entirely surprised when the Administration went against bipartisan calls and gave Russia and China and others at the U.N. Security Council a vote on this agreement before the American public. That's backwards – and wrong.

We've heard serious concerns from experts about the substance of this agreement:

- First, Iran is *not* required to dismantle key bomb making technology. Does that make the world safer? Second, it *is* permitted a vast enrichment capacity, reversing decades of bipartisan nonproliferation policy. Does that make the region more stable? And third, Iran *is* allowed to continue its research and development to gain an *industrial scale* nuclear program once this agreement begins to expire in as little as ten years. *Ten years*. That's a flash in time, and then Iranian obligations start unwinding. Does this make the world more secure?
- We appreciate President Obama's effort to secure the most intrusive inspections in history – but it came up short. Instead, there is "*managed access*," with Iran, Russia, and China having a say in where international inspectors can and can't go. The deal's 24-day process is a far cry from "anywhere, anytime" – and this provision *expires* too. While the Administration has professed absolute knowledge about Iran's program, it is a fact that we have been surprised by most every major nuclear development in Iran's history. And Iran has cheated on every agreement they've signed. So I ask, Mr. Secretary, has Iran earned the right to be trusted?

- This deal guts the sanctions web that is putting intense pressure on Iran. Virtually all economic, financial, and energy sanctions disappear. And where does all that money go? To the largest terror network on earth. Gone are the sanctions on Iran's nuclear program, but also on the "bad banks" that have supported Iran's terrorism and ballistic missile development. And to our dismay, Iran won a late concession to remove international restrictions on its ballistic missile program and conventional arms, imperiling the security of the region, and *our* homeland.

If this agreement goes through, Iran gets a cash bonanza, a boost to its international standing, and a lighted path toward nuclear weapons. With sweeping sanctions relief, we have lessened our ability to challenge Iran's conduct across the board. As Iran grows stronger, we will be weaker to respond.

Yes, the U.S. would roil the diplomatic waters if Congress rejects this deal. But the U.S. still wields the most powerful economic sanctions in the world – sanctions Iran desperately needs relief from – sanctions that would continue to deter countries and companies from investing in Iran. I understand the effort the Administration has put into this agreement. But these are about as high stakes as it gets. So the Committee must ask if we made the most of our pretty strong hand. Or, are we willing to bet, as the Administration has, that this is the beginning of a changed Iran?

These are complex issues, and I look forward to what should be an extremely informative hearing. I now turn to the Ranking Member.