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Opening Statement of the Honorable **Ed Royce (R-CA), Chairman**  
House Foreign Affairs Committee Hearing:  
Implications of a Nuclear Agreement with Iran (Part IV)  
September 9, 2015

(As prepared for delivery)

This hearing will come to order. This morning, the Committee continues to examine the Obama Administration's nuclear agreement with Iran. To help further assess this deal, we are joined by several retired general officers who served our country with distinction, and a noted thinker on the region.

The Committee has held some 30 hearings and briefings since these negotiations began. I appreciate the commitment all Members have made to analyze this complex issue, as the House gets set for its vote this week. And I would like to recognize Ranking Member Engel for his partnership as we have approached the issue in a bipartisan way.

Unfortunately, in my view, it's quite clear that this agreement makes Iran *stronger*.

- The billions provided in immediate sanctions relief is just a down payment, as Iran is guaranteed a reconnection to the global economy; the strangle on its banks and businesses is lifted.
- Politically, it solidifies the Supreme Leader's grip on power – that's why he did the deal – to keep the "revolution" intact.
- Militarily, in a few short years – if they wait that long - Iran is free to build up its tanks, fighter jets and intercontinental ballistic missiles. It's proxies in the region can continue to wreak havoc and back terrorism. Indeed, Iran's elite 'Quds Force' has transferred funds to Hamas to rebuild a network of tunnels from Gaza to attack Israel and replenish the terrorist group's medium-range missile arsenal.

- And then Iran is a few steps away from a nuclear weapons program on an *industrial scale*.

As Iran grows stronger across the board, the United States will be weaker to respond.

- By removing economic sanctions, the President is withdrawing one of our most successful, peaceful tools for confronting the Iranian regime.
- As international investment pours into Iran, there will be tremendous political pressure to *not* upset the apple cart – to keep the agreement going at all costs, no matter what Iranian cheating might be found. Indeed, Administration pressure on the IAEA got us a deal with the Iranians being able to self-inspect a key military site, setting a dangerous precedent for the future. And even if we wanted to hit back against Iran’s cheating, “snapping back” sanctions is wishful thinking.

As a group of nearly 200 retired generals and admirals recently concluded:

“this agreement will enable Iran to become far more dangerous, render the Mideast still more unstable and introduce new threats to American interests as well as our allies. In our professional opinion, far from being an alternative to war, the [agreement] makes it likely that the war the Iranian regime has waged against us since 1979 will continue, with far higher risks to our national security interests.”

Are the temporary restraints on Iran’s nuclear program under this agreement worth that cost?

President Obama is clearly betting that it is – that Iran will change enough over a short 10-15 years to be trusted with what by then will be internationally endorsed bomb-making technology on an industrial scale.

But as we will hear today, that’s a bet against history. As one witness recently wrote, Iran’s enduring hostility toward us isn’t “an accident of historical inertia.” But a choice by Iran – a “choice based upon a worldview that was founded in large measure on a fiery, theological anti-Americanism, an officially sanctioned and officially disseminated view of Americanism as satanism.”

I now turn to the Ranking Member for any opening comments he may have.