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Opening Statement of the Honorable **Ed Royce (R-CA), Chairman**
House Foreign Affairs Committee Hearing:
Iran Nuclear Deal Oversight: Implementation and its Consequences

February 11, 2016

(As prepared for delivery)

This hearing will come to order. This morning the Committee continues its extensive oversight of the Obama Administration's nuclear agreement with Iran, and its consequences for the national security of the United States and our allies, which many of us believe is dire.

January 16th – so called “Implementation Day” – marked an historic turning point in the Middle East. In a snap, Iran's record was cleared, and its pariah status dropped -- reconnecting Iran to the international trade and financial system. Now, with access to \$100 billion in unfrozen assets and sanctions wiped away, Iran has instantly become the dominate country in the region. Tehran achieved this all without having to end its aggression against its neighbors or swear-off its support for terrorism.

The Iranian economy was hemorrhaging before the deal. Now Iranian leaders are predicting swift growth. They're probably right, as European countries, seeing the sanctions dam broken, sprint into the Iranian market to cut billions in deals – making a mockery of the Administration's claim that sanctions could “snapback” if Iran cheats. You tell me if these companies are going to turn back when Iran stiffes international inspectors.

The Revolutionary Guards – already Iran's “most powerful economic actor” in the words of the Treasury Department – will only grow more powerful with international investment. Just hours after the agreement's implementation, the regime disqualified 2,967 of roughly 3,000 moderate candidates from running in parliamentary elections later this month. And after the Administration finally responded to Iran's missile tests with minor sanctions, Iran's “moderate” president ordered the military to accelerate its intercontinental ballistic missile program. That's aimed here -- at the United States -- and designed to carry a nuclear warhead.

Worse, the administration continues to go out of its way to appease the Iranian regime, and even thanked Iran after it recently seized 10 U.S. sailors in a highly provocative act. It appears the Administration is determined to protect this deal at all costs. Just look at how the Obama administration backed away from a new bipartisan U.S. law ending visa waiver travel for those who have visited Iran. After an outcry from Tehran, the Administration has now decided to basically ignore the law – and Iran's ongoing sponsorship of terrorism – by stretching a narrow national security waiver far beyond reason. President Obama signed this bill into law, but has essentially allowed Iran's Supreme Leader to veto it.

And in an unusual move, the State Department settled a decades-old financial settlement the day after ‘implementation day,’ sending Tehran a check for \$1.7 billion. As you know Mr. Ambassador,

the Committee eagerly awaits answers from the State Department to the many questions surrounding that surprise payment. The Administration had countless opportunities to seek Committee input on this matter in advance – but purposefully did not, I must conclude.

Iran has never complied with any of its past nuclear-related agreements. We're watching this to see if this time will be different. But even if Iran meets all the Administration's expectations, in a few short years the accord will leave it the dominate power in the Middle East, and only steps away from the capability to produce nuclear weapons on an industrial scale. All the while, Iran's leaders chant "Death to America." Many of us are struggling to see how this tilt toward Iran makes us safer.

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