

Ranking Member Kathleen Rice Statement

Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence Hearing

State Sponsors of Terrorism: An Examination of Iran's Global Terrorism Network

Tuesday, April 17, 2018

Iran poses many threats to the security of the U.S. and to our interests, especially through funding and support for terrorist groups like Hezbollah and Hamas – groups that routinely attack and antagonize our allies in Israel.

In Syria, Iran supports a brutal dictator who has carried out unspeakable massacres against his own people. Together with Russia, Iran is partially responsible for the death of more than 400,000 Syrians – and the displacement of millions more.

I look forward to hearing what our expert witnesses think about the Trump Administration's approach to Iran – and particularly, whether you are concerned that the Administration is ceding too much influence in the Middle East to Iran.

I have long been skeptical about Iran. I did not support the nuclear agreement with Iran, for several different reasons. I didn't think they would follow the rules, and I thought they would lie and try to cheat and continue to sponsor terrorism and spread violence in the region.

That said, I signed a letter to President Trump in October arguing that we cannot and should not withdraw from the agreement without ironclad evidence of Iranian violations – because doing so would actually embolden Iran and leave the U.S. more and more isolated on the international stage.

I'm still skeptical of the nuclear deal – but my focus has been on fully enforcing it. And to be clear, I have not seen evidence that the nuclear agreement has tied our hands in addressing Iran's support for terrorism.

We can and should be doing more to hold Iran accountable for their support of terrorism, their ballistic missile program, their horrific violations of human rights, and all their efforts to spread violence and instability in the region. The nuclear deal doesn't prevent us from targeting those activities, and we should be doing so more aggressively.

Again, I thank the Chairman for holding this hearing and I think all of our witnesses for coming to offer your expertise. I believe that effectively confronting and countering the threat from Iran is one of the most significant national security challenges before us today. So I hope this will be an honest, comprehensive, and ongoing conversation.