

STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER WILLIAM KEATING (D-MA)

**Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence
and the Subcommittee on Oversight Investigations and Management Joint Hearing on:**

“Iranian Terror Operations on American Soil”

**October 26, 2011 at 10:00 AM
311 Cannon House Office Building**

I am pleased that the combined forces of both our Subcommittees have joined together to gain greater insight into the Iranian threat.

For over thirty years, the relationship between Iran and the United States has been tenuous, to say the least. Since 1995 the United States has had an embargo on trade with Iran. This may seem like a long time, but Iran's sponsorship of terrorist activities against the U.S. and other countries spans the past thirty years.

And, as I watch our young men and women return from the battlefield in Iraq and Afghanistan bearing both the physical and psychological wounds of war, what angers me the most are the allegations of extensive collaboration between Iran and some of our most threatening enemies - the Taliban, Afghan warlords and al-Qaeda.

For this very reason, our foreign policy with Iran should not be a partisan issue.

Iran's actions are wrong and as we focus on their nuclear ambitions, which are incredibly concerning, we cannot turn a blind eye to the Revolutionary Guard's own ambitions to stretch its tentacles even further across the Middle East and perhaps, into the Western Hemisphere, as well.

There is no doubt that following the failed Iranian elections in June 2009, the Iranian regime has had its legitimacy wounded and its paranoia increased.

They have called on Islamic extremists in the region to increase their violent posture and yet again, have advocated for the annihilation of the Jewish state.

And, as if this is not enough to worry Israel, who is our true democratic ally and trusted friend, Iran's nuclear ambitions are moving swiftly towards a nuclear reality as the world waits and watches.

Europe, Israel and the United States must undoubtedly prepare for a more dangerous Iranian regime in the near-term.

Yet, nothing endangers peace more than a refusal to face and accept facts. So an examination of a way forward with Iran makes sense.

Whether Iran's known and speculated alliances with terrorist organizations pose an actual threat to the United States homeland is a question that many have tried to answer.

What we do know, is that Members of the elite Quds Force of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps were involved in a plot to assassinate Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to the United States.

We should ensure that the decision on how to proceed is grounded in the best interest of the United States.

According to the complaint filed by the Department of Justice, an Iranian American working on behalf of an Iran-based member of Iran's Quds Force attempted to hire a member of a Mexican drug cartel to assassinate the Saudi ambassador to the United States.

The cartel member, however, turned out to be an informant for the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency, who tipped off U.S. officials and helped them build the case against perpetrators who were subsequently arrested on September 29 in New York.

Therefore, the focus rightly belongs on the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps – an organization that the Department of the Treasury sanctioned as a terrorist organization – and whether the Government of Iran or the entire IRGC had knowledge of this scheme.

As I alluded to earlier, evidence exists that the IRGC is playing an active role to undermine Iraq, by funneling funds and arms to Shiite militias, engaging directly in military activity and gathering intelligence.

Furthermore, the United States and the European Union both agree that the Quds Force are providing equipment and support to help the Syrian regime suppress revolts in Syria. This information alone is cause for concern.

Although I believe President Obama's dual track of engagement and policy has had a profound effect on Iran's capabilities, we must begin to weigh other measures and be prepared to counter the evolving threat of Iran.

I look forward to hearing some of the ideas coming from our witnesses. I thank our witnesses for being here today and look forward to hearing their views on how we should counter this threat and exactly how far along the threat lies within our own borders.