

Subcommittee on Oversight and Management Efficiency

Hearing on: “*Threat to the Homeland: Iran’s Extending Influence in the Western Hemisphere*”

2:00 p.m., Tuesday, July 9, 2013

REP. BETO O’ROURKE OPENING STATEMENT

For over forty years, mistrust between the governments of the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran has existed.

The international community has joined the United States in imposing several rounds of increasingly stricter sanctions against Iran to deter its support for international terrorism, human rights violations, and continued development of its nuclear weapons program.

Fortunately, these sanctions have resulted in significant oil revenue losses, an inability to participate in the international banking system, a sharp drop in the value of Iran’s currency, and inflation that is over 50%.

By many accounts, these sanction efforts have seriously weakened Iran and impacted its ability to pose a threat to the Western Hemisphere.

In accordance with Chairman Duncan’s *Countering Iran in the Western Hemisphere Act*, which was signed into law in the 112th Congress, the State Department recently released a report on the threat posed to the United States by Iran’s presence and activity in the Western Hemisphere.

According to the State Department report, Iran’s influence in Latin America is waning.

Moreover, the report found that international pressure has significantly weakened the Iranian regime and that most of Iran’s diplomatic promises to Latin American countries have gone unfulfilled.

I would like to applaud the State Department on this important report and its compliance with the Act.

The report was issued on time and included an unclassified annex.

While there are those that are disappointed with its findings, there is no reason to believe that the State Department was not diligent in its efforts and the findings in its report are consistent with many experts and testimony that has been received by Congress.

I look forward to hearing from today’s witnesses on this timely and important topic.

I only wish that the State Department could have been here as well to discuss its findings in detail and its methodology for reaching its conclusions. This hearing, however, was limited to non-governmental witnesses.