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Urging Passage of H.R. 850, Nuclear Iran Prevention Act of 2013

*Excerpts of Remarks by Chairman Chris Smith
Floor of House of Representatives
2172 Rayburn HOB
July 31, 2013*

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 850, the Nuclear Iran Prevention Act of 2013, of which I am pleased to be an original co-sponsor.

Mr. Speaker, the Iranian government is estimated to be a little more than a year away from becoming a nuclear weapon state – an unprecedented and absolutely unacceptable threat. We need this legislation to strengthen existing economic sanctions, closing loopholes and countering Iran’s efforts to evade sanctions, and create effective new sanctions – the new sanctions should drastically reduce Iranian oil exports, and the Iranian government’s income.

Mr. Speaker, I particularly want to commend the legislation for targeting officials who have violated human rights. Here the legislation specifically includes government censors. The Iranian government is one of the worst human rights abusers in the world. According to the Country Reports on Human Rights for 2012:

“reported human rights problems included: disappearances; cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment, including judicially sanctioned amputation and flogging; politically motivated violence and repression, such as beatings and rape; harsh and life-threatening conditions in detention and prison facilities, with instances of deaths in custody.”

Verified reports of these abuses are truly blood-curdling, Mr. Speaker. We have repeatedly seen the correspondence between the way a government treats its own people and the way it behaves internationally. It seems to be almost a law of international relations: massive human rights violators behave deceitfully and aggressively, and the more massive the violations, the greater the deceit and aggression.

With Iran, that aggression is already manifest. The verbal violence of the Iranian government is so horrifying that it alone constitutes “direct and public incitement to commit genocide,” in violation of Article 3 of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide.

Though President Ahmadinejad will be gone in a few days, the Supreme Leader Khamenei speaks of Israel as a “cancerous tumor,” “annihilation and destruction of the Jewish state,” “level down Tel Aviv and Haifa.” Such disgusting language is not at all exceptional within the Iranian government. And President-elect Rohani, the past master of using negotiations as a cover for moving Iran’s nuclear program forward, who is now being presented as a ‘moderate,’ last year referred to Israel as “the great Zionist Satan.”

Mr. Speaker, among aggressive human rights violators, the Iranian government is one of the worst of the worst. That’s why we need this bill – it dramatically ramps up sanctions, not only to pressure Iran to negotiate on its nuclear program, but also to weaken its ability to start the genocidal war it has been threatening for years.

I want to thank my colleagues Chairman Royce and Ranking Member Engel and other members for their hard work in crafting this excellent bipartisan legislation.

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