

House Foreign Affairs Committee Hearing

December 1, 2010

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (minute 11:24)

Thank you very much Mr. Chairman, and I'd like to start by recognizing some of my constituents who are in the audience. They are Iranian Americans who are staunchly opposed to the Iranian regime whom have shed light on Iran's nuclear program through the unveiling of information on different Iranian nuclear facilities. many have relatives in Camp Ashraf and I raised with Assistant Secretary of State, Feltmann a few weeks ago, the need for the administration to ensure that the Iraqi government lives up to its human rights commitment and protects the residents of Camp Ashraf. Welcome.

Brad Sherman's remarks (minute 22:50):

Thank you for holding these hearings, Mr. Chairman. I believe Ssada and its implementation is the most important work for us to do this month. I think that we need to see even more enforcement of existing law and the adoption of new statutes. I hope that later this month or early next year we consider the Stop Iran Nuclear Program Act which would strengthen the sanctions still further.

In addition I should note that our colleague, Congressman Filner of California has a bill with over 106 cosponsors to take the PMOI off the terrorism list and I hope respect for our 106 + colleagues that have cosponsored that bill would lead to serious consideration of the bill and hearings on it. So we have much legislating to do just as our friends at the administration that must do as well.

Major oil companies from the west from most part won't invest

Ted Poe (minute 36:15)

Thank you Mr. Chairman. I want to thank all of the Iranian Americans that are here in the audience today concerned about a mutual concern we all have and that is Camp Ashraf and the delisting of the MEK as a foreign terrorist organization. I know the State Department and the foreign affairs committee are supposed to work very close together. And my question, Secretary

Burns, is why has the State Department refused to brief the subcommittee chaired by Mr. Sherman on the de-listing of the MEK.

Well sir we are in the midst of a review that was ordered by the court last summer as I understand in which ...

Ted Poe: I guess my question is this: Will the State Department brief this sub-committee and the subcommittee on information it has on the MEK and why the State Department relentlessly believes it still should be on the FTO list?

Burns: First thing, my understanding...No just answer that, my question

Yesterday afternoon we provided an intelligence briefing, as I understand. Second, I would be glad to take back your question and see if an addition to the briefing that was provided yesterday afternoon is more than what we can provide at this stage. The only

Sherman: Will the Gentleman yield? I will point out that the State Department has refused to brief to a classified briefing at the request of our subcommittee for over a month, but did arrange for the classified briefing from the CIA which couldn't address many of the questions, but did address some.

Poe: that's exactly my point. That briefing yesterday which I attended was not by the State Department, it was by the CIA. And those two agencies are not the same. I'm just curious why the State Department, it appears to me, is so obstinate, even after going to court and the court ruling against the State Department ordering them to provide information about the MEK in this lawsuit, information that is required to be delivered in January which is next month, the way I figure it, and why secretary Clinton in 2009 said that she would review the whole designation of the MEK in the next two years, that has not been done, the 2 years is up in January, I want to know what information the state department has, that is so relentless on your part that they should remain on this list. Do you know that information?

Burns: We are reviewing, in response to what the court said and what Secretary Clinton said, one step in that review is to allow the MEK to have the opportunity to review the unclassified material which led to former secretary Rice's decision in January 2009. We provided that to the MEK,

we await their input, and then we will complete the review as we promised. And if there are other questions beyond the briefing that was conducted yesterday afternoon as I said sir, I would be glad to take that back and see if we could provide further answers in the mean time.

Poe: The situation in Camp Ashraf appears to me to be getting worse not better, people are very concerned about their relatives that live there. What are some hard line new procedures that we are taking as U.S. to ensure the safety of those people in Camp Ashraf?

Burns: As assistant secretary Feltman said as he testified before you we take very seriously the concerns about inadequate availability of medical treatment, and other kinds of activity at camp Ashraf, there were two individuals in particular who had been raised in that hearing and we made sure afterwards that they did have access to the cancer treatment that they needed. We along with the UN mission in Iraq meet regularly with the Iraqi government to hold them to their obligation to ensure that the basic human and individual rights of the residents of Ashraf are protected, and we will continue to do that.

Poe: In other words our position is, we're encouraging the Iraqis to do the right thing- I mean is there hard line evidence that we are really encouraging in a way, I guess a diplomatic way, that they protect the safety of the people at camp Ashraf, other than talking about it.

Burns: We and the UN mission will continue to insist that the Iraqi government meet its obligation to ensure the human rights of the residents of Ashraf, that's to say that they are subject to forcible repatriation to a place that might persecute them, that's to say that they have access to the medical treatment that they need, and we will continue to push that hard.

Poe: Lastly my own opinion is that the greatest hope Iran and the world is a peaceful change in regime in Iran. It is not to go to some type of military conflict and hopefully the good folks in Iran will change their own rogue unauthorized illegitimate government, in my opinion. What are we doing to encourage that, if anything?

Well sir, as I said in my opening statement, the president and secretary take very seriously the importance of supporting universal human rights of Iranians, we do that in several ways, first by applying sasadda(??SP) ,

designating individual senior iranian government officials who are guilty of human rights violations to hold them accountable human rights violators
second-

Poe: May I have that answer in writing, my question was what are we doing to promote the opposition in Iran, not human rights-and I'd like to have that in writing.

Rohrabacher (2:00)

I'd like to associate myself with the concerns of Congressman Poe in terms of the citizens of Camp Ashraf. I think that it's disconcerting that we have to play games with the government of Iraq after we have invested such a massive amount of treasure and blood. We need to hear from Iraq, the government of Iraq, a solid commitment that they will not betray the people of Camp Ashraf to the mullah dictatorship. That would be a terrible sign to anyone opposing the mullah dictatorship in Iran; we would lose leverage, etc. So, if you can pass that on, we would appreciate that.