



**Statement of Lead Republican Michael McCaul (R-TX)  
House Committee on Foreign Affairs**

*"The Trump Administration's Foreign Policy: A Mid-term Assessment"*  
February 27, 2019

Remarks as Prepared

Over the last two years the President's administration has implemented a forward leaning foreign policy agenda.

Right now, the President is in Vietnam to meet with North Korean leader, Kim Jong Un.

North Korea has not launched a missile or tested a nuclear device since the end of 2017. They have freed American hostages and returned the remains of missing soldiers. These are all positive developments.

However, previous Administrations have negotiated with North Korea unsuccessfully. The regime in Pyongyang has a record of making empty promises in return for sanctions relief.

I strongly urge this Administration to continue the maximum pressure campaign until we have the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. I remain hopeful, but also realistic.

There are few threats as dangerous as a nuclear weapon in the hands of a rogue regime.

That is why I strongly supported the decision to withdraw from the disastrous Iran deal. This was an extremely flawed agreement that provided over 100 billion dollars to the world's leading sponsor of terror.



The inspections were not aggressive enough and the sunset clauses provided legitimacy for a future nuclear program.

The last Administration wanted a deal too badly and we are less safe today because of that.

This Administration has also made crushing Islamist terrorism a top priority. As the former Chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security, I've seen the rise and fall of the so-called Caliphate.

ISIS is on the run, but still a very real threat.

Therefore, I urge the Administration not to withdraw our forces from Syria and Afghanistan until ISIS and al-Qaeda are completely destroyed.

Any strategy for the Middle East must also include maintaining strong ties with Israel. I look forward to moving important legislation with the Chairman to do just that.

There are many dynamic threats in the world today and we are increasingly under threat from China and Russia.

The Chinese government steals our intellectual property, threatens Taiwan, and preys upon under-developed nations through their Belt and Road Initiative.

China is an adversary and I am glad that the current Administration is confronting Beijing over its trade practices and military adventurism.



Under Vladimir Putin, Russia has invaded Georgia and Ukraine, and attacked the democratic systems of other countries including our own. I fully supported the sanctions placed on Russia for meddling in the 2016 election.

A great deterrent to Russian aggression is a strong NATO.

Thanks to pressure from the President, more of our allies are beginning to increase their defense spending.

This is bad news for Vladimir Putin and a great policy achievement for the West.

Finally, I applaud the Administration's decision to withdraw from the INF Treaty due to lack of Russian compliance.

In our own hemisphere, the current situation in Venezuela is deeply disturbing. The socialist policies of Nicolas Maduro have turned the country into a failed mafia state. With little food and medicine, millions of people have fled the country.

Maduro's armed thugs are now doing everything they can to stop the delivery of humanitarian aid.

They have blocked bridges and roads. They've shot innocent civilians and set aid packages on fire.

Yet, even as Venezuela burns, there are still people in America and around the world who defend and promote socialism.



To see the dire suffering that comes from socialism, look no further than the chaos in Caracas or any history book.

I commend the President for supporting the people of Venezuela in their quest to take their country back from Maduro and his cronies. I believe our Congress needs to directly recognize interim President Juan Guaido and support his calls for free and fair elections.

We are committed to the personal safety of Guaido and his family and I am sure all of us here share my sentiments.

Madame Secretary, it is a great honor to welcome you this morning.

You've been a tireless diplomat for many years and your personal story is inspiring to all of us. I look forward to hearing your testimony.

I've always said that partisanship must end at the water's edge. These hearings give us a chance to put partisan politics aside and offer solutions to complex issues.

I'm hopeful that today's discussion will allow us to share our thoughts and opinions in a respectful manner.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back the balance of my time.

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