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OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR RICHARD C. SHELBY
Minimizing Potential Threats from Iran: Administration Perspectives on Economic Sanctions and Other US Policy Options
October 6, 2009

"Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

"Recent developments in Iran underscore the importance of this morning's hearing.

"Last month, we learned that Iran has a secret uranium enrichment facility. Last week, the Iranians announced that they had reached a last minute deal to send their supplies of low-enriched uranium to France and Russia for further enrichment.

"Just yesterday, news reports revealed that senior staff at the International Atomic Energy Agency or IAEA have concluded that Iran has acquired 'sufficient information to be able to design and produce a workable' nuclear weapon.

"Although Iran denies that it is trying to develop nuclear weapons, they have taken no credible steps to prove otherwise.

"Iran's troubling conduct is not limited to its pursuit of nuclear weapons.

"Iran has the dubious distinction of being 'the most active state sponsor of terrorism' for ten years running according to our State Department.

"Because of its extensive financing of terrorism around the globe, the Treasury Department has referred to it as the 'Central Banker' of international terrorism. There should be no doubt that Iran remains a serious and growing threat to the entire Middle East region, our European allies, and the interests of the United States.

"The issue is not whether we must take action to check Iran's hostile ambitions, but rather, how to maximize the effectiveness of the actions we take.

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"Unfortunately, there is a long history of failed policies designed to reign in Iran. As Secretary Gates noted last October: 'Every administration since 1979 has reached out to the Iranians in one way or another and all have failed.'

"I hope this hearing will provide greater insight into the most effective way forward.

"Thank you Mr. Chairman."