

Rep. Steve Cohen:

- Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you, Mr. Davis, for your consideration.

To all of the folks here in the Iranian, I guess it's the caucus, and certainly the constituency, and the diaspora welcome to the United States Congress.

Mr. McClintock and I have been co-chairs of this caucus for some time. And it's been really enlightening and inspiring to see your continual and strong representation and advocacy on behalf of those who have not made it out of Iran, who are there under this repressive regime.

You have been courageous. You have been tenacious. And I admire you. And I am you. I am you because I'm a human being who yearns for freedom and loves the freedom we have in the United States and wants to see the freedom that you want to see in Iran.

I'm also you because in my DNA test I'm like 5% Persian. Thank you. I've got 25% of me all over there in that world, and Palestine, and Turkey, and Armenia, and Persia, but I'm proud of that.

So, I've seen your courageous work in standing up for the people who are-- I mean, they're you, but they're not you, and you're standing up for somebody else. And that's the most really admired thing you can do, the most admired group, standing up for somebody else and for them to have freedom.

This regime next to Russia is the most likely regime to cause war on a grand scale in this world. And that's something else we should not have. What Russia is doing to Ukraine is just atrocious. And Iran wants to do it and is doing it through proxies in the Middle East right now in Lebanon and in Syria and in Israel with their support for Hamas and Hezbollah.

We need to give Iran people the knowledge that we support them, and we do. It's bipartisan and it's strong and it's for democratic, non-nuclear, secular, democratic, nuclear-free Iran. That's what we want. That's what we'll continue to fight for. And that's what all countries should be. All countries should be secular. All countries should be free. All people should be free. Nukes should just be for energy, not for war, not for threats of war. That would destroy the entire civilization. You cannot win a nuclear war.

I have watched the protesters in Iran, they have been courageous, the young women, girls are what they are, have gone out there and many, some of them killed, Mahsa and others were killed, but they've been arrested, they've been rejected, shot at their eyes and taking their sight away.

They've gone in the face of great power. They've spoken truth to power, which is the greatest thing that an individual can do in the way of showing courage. It's been admirable. I've watched it from afar with admiration.

So, I pledge to you, even though I was late today, that I'll be with you forever, even if it's not quite on time. I hope that forever starts a little later in the day.

I yield back the balance of our time.