

Ranking Member Tim Scott (R-S.C.)
Opening Statement
Full Committee Hearing
April 9, 2024 at 10:00 AM

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and the Secretary, thank you for being here with us this morning.

Today is an important opportunity to discuss American leadership, especially on the global stage.

I've often said that we, the United States, must leverage our international toolkit to stop bad actors, curb illicit activity, and protect American families.

Thankfully, agencies like the Treasury Department already have robust toolkits available, as well as in instances where additional direction is needed, I have not shied away from providing more resources and direction like those in my FEND Off Fentanyl legislation and my Revoke Iranian Funding Act, as well.

So I appreciate having you here with us this morning.

South Carolina is the proud home to many of our U.S. servicemembers, their families, and our veterans.

I'm proud of this fact and my important duty to serve their interests.

Which is why it was particularly profound and deeply troubling when three U.S. servicemembers were killed in January's Iranian-backed terror attack.

I will keep saying this, because it's true, every dollar this administration gives to Iran is another dollar that will be used against our sons and daughters and puts them in harm's way in the military.

Thankfully, the Treasury Department has the ability to stop the dollars moving around our global economy that bolsters the Iranian regime.

However, this White House has reduced those barriers through so-called electricity waivers with expanded currency access to euros, licenses, and further billion-dollar payouts.

Going even so far as to give a lifeline to Nicholas Maduro's corrupt regime in Venezuela, a known ally of Iran, China, Russia, and Cuba—an axis of terror—through broad oil and gas sanctions relief.

Of which we have seen no benefit to U.S. national security or to the Venezuelan people who suffer under Maduro.

This is beyond troubling.

Especially when our servicemembers are killed in terror attacks by Iranian proxies and our families here at home are struggling to put food on the table.

When we look here at home, there's not a single neighborhood, whether that's Charleston, South Carolina, or Cleveland, Ohio, that has escaped the death grip of fentanyl.

And I'm very proud of this committee's work to address this crisis, and for the support of all the members of this committee working together to stop this deadly drug.

Because what fentanyl, produced and trafficked by the Mexican cartels and supported through Chinese precursors, has done to our communities is a national security crisis.

I remain committed to seeing this legislation pass into law and to stopping the flow of illicit money and drugs across our border.

Every family in America deserves to be free from the scourge of this deadly drug.

I started with these two issues because I believe they should be top of mind for this administration and this committee.

And yet, just last week, Secretary Yellen was in China to discuss how cheap Chinese exports of green energy technology are harming electric vehicles and solar energy here in the United States.

This is a clear climate goal of this administration, but far from the top goal we should be pushing back China on.

A perspective that's frankly hard to stomach when Hamas is enabled by support from Iran to carry out horrific attacks against our ally Israel.

All while China continues to be the top purchaser of Iranian oil and top financier to international web of illicit financing used by the Mexican cartels to kill people using fentanyl.

This needs to stop. Saving lives cannot play second fiddle to progressive climate goals.

We need to see real efforts by China to stop these activities that undermine U.S. national security interests.

America must be a strong leader.

Fentanyl and terrorism are leading threats and should be treated as such.

American families deserve to know that their government is protecting them of these threats and punishing those who trouble us.

Thank you, and thank you for holding this hearing, and I look forward for the opportunity to question the witness.