

Washington, D.C. (August 29, 2012) – Rep. Jan Schakowsky released the following statement in response to recently reported statements by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad :

“I strongly condemn recent statements by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad denying Israel’s right to exist. The Iranian President’s efforts to escalate tensions in the Middle East with hateful rhetoric are wholly unacceptable and dangerous.

In recent weeks, President Ahmadinejad has increased calls for the destruction of Israel. During state-organized protests on August 17th, he called for a ‘new Middle East’ with ‘no trace’ of ‘the Zionists.’ Ahmadinejad also reportedly stated ‘Anyone who loves freedom and justice must strive for the annihilation of the Zionist regime in order to pave the way for world justice and freedom.’ In the same speech, he referred to Israel as a ‘cancerous tumor’ that the nations of the region would soon ‘finish off.’ President Ahmadinejad also reportedly stated ‘The very existence of the Zionist regime is an insult to humankind and an affront to all world nations.’

The Iranian regime poses a grave threat to the countries of the region, the United States, and the international community. This latest series of offensive and militaristic statements aimed at Israel are reprehensible. The Iranian regime’s continued refusal to accept Israel’s right to exist, coupled with the government’s support of terrorism and pursuit of nuclear weapons, is extremely dangerous, not just to Israel, but to the stability of the entire region and the world.

According to media reports, the newest International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) report, due out this week, will confirm that Iran is in violation of its international agreements and has, in fact,

speeded up efforts to enrich uranium by installing hundreds of new centrifuges.

President Ahmadinejad's continued saber-rattling underscores the need to prevent his regime from developing nuclear weapons. We need to continue to increase diplomatic and economic pressure against the Tehran regime to convince them to abandon pursuit of nuclear weapons.

In July, Congress passed legislation, which I strongly supported, to continue to tighten sanctions against Iran, clamping down on any entities that conduct commercial activities in Iran's oil and gas sector, and increasing sanctions against Iran's financial sector and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. Also in July, President Obama signed an executive order taking several steps to prevent circumvention of sanctions.

We need to continue to increase pressure. Recent anti-Semitic and anti-American comments by the Iranian regime illustrate the clear danger. These hateful and incendiary comments must stop if we are going to find a peaceful resolution to this conflict."

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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