

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 16, 2016

The Honorable Jason Chaffetz
Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Chaffetz:

I write in response to your request for the testimony of the Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Advisor Benjamin Rhodes at a hearing of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform titled "White House Narratives on the Iran Deal." According to the invitation, the hearing "will examine the process by which the Administration negotiated the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) ... [and] how the White House communicated about the JCPOA."

Throughout the congressional review period established by the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA), and continuing through implementation of the JCPOA, Administration officials have engaged extensively with Congress. Over 30 times in the past year and a half, Administration officials have testified at open hearings and provided classified briefings to discuss the Iran deal and have provided in-depth information in both settings regarding the ways in which the JCPOA verifiably cuts off all of Iran's potential pathways to a nuclear weapon. Secretaries Kerry, Lew, and Moniz have provided classified briefings available to all House and Senate members on the JCPOA. In addition, the Administration has provided classified briefings open to all staff of the House and Senate with the necessary security clearances, in addition to numerous briefings hosted by individual committees. The President, Members of the Cabinet, and other officials have participated in hundreds of individual meetings and phone calls with members of the majority and minority in both chambers. The Administration is strongly committed to keeping Congress fully informed as implementation of the JCPOA continues, including a hearing in the Foreign Relations Committee last month and an upcoming hearing in the Banking Committee.

While the Administration will continue to consult closely with Congress on this important matter, testimony by one of the most senior advisers to the President raises significant constitutional concerns rooted in the separation of powers. Specifically, the appearance of a senior presidential adviser before Congress threatens the independence and autonomy of the President, as well as his ability to receive candid advice and counsel in the discharge of his constitutional duties. For these reasons, administrations of both parties have declined to make the President's closest advisers available to testify before Congress about their service to the President. Consistent with this practice, we will not make Mr. Rhodes available to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "W. Neil Eggleston". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "W".

W. Neil Eggleston
Counsel to the President

cc: The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings, Ranking Member