

## **Berman Heads Foreign Affairs Panel**

By Associated Press  
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WASHINGTON -- Howard Berman, a 13-term Democrat from California, was formally chosen Tuesday as the next chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Berman, 66, has been acting head of the committee since former Chairman Tom Lantos, another California Democrat, died a month ago. The Democratic caucus on Tuesday elected Berman to chair the panel, and that vote was later affirmed by the full House.

Berman, in a statement, said the most immediate challenge was dissuading Iran from developing nuclear weapons and completing the job of denuclearizing North Korea.

He said he hoped to lay the groundwork for a major overhaul of the U.S. foreign aid program to make it more effective and would work to give Congress a more active role in steering foreign policy.

"I'll work very hard as chairman to repair the damage done to America's standing in the world over the past seven years by this administration," he said.

Berman, like Lantos, was a supporter of the Iraq invasion but has since been critical of Iraq War policy. A year ago he voted for a non-binding Democratic resolution disapproving the administration's plans to increase troop levels in Iraq.