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## Countering The Iranian Nuclear Threat

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Remarks at the Annual Dinner of the Greater Washington Area Council for the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee  
Washington, DC  
February 1, 2006

#### Remarks as Prepared

Late last year, the British Museum sponsored a major exhibit entitled "The Forgotten Empire: The World of Ancient Persia." The exhibition underscored the greatness of the Persian nation founded over 2500 years ago. Greatness not just in military might, but in wealth, architecture and engineering, and also in art, culture and civilization.

One of the most striking items in the exhibit was the Cyrus Cylinder, a stone cylinder covered with cuneiform writing, which describes Cyrus the Great's conquest of Babylon and his edict that all religious sects be tolerated and all deported peoples freed. As many in this room know better than I, Cyrus' edict set in motion the process that led to the end of the Babylonian Captivity and to the return of the Jews to Israel.

The Persian Empire disappeared over 2000 years ago, but the civilization and pride of the Iranian people have remained. The Iranian nation has the potential for a future as great as its past. It has a tremendous resource in its young and dynamic population. It has a large and capable scientific and technical community. And, of course, it has immense oil and gas reserves, which should be more efficiently used for the benefit of the Iranian people. Tragically, Iran's leadership today fails to reflect and to foster the potential of the Iranian nation. Instead, it is backward-looking, defying the values that made Persia great. It strives to create a much different legacy — a legacy of intolerance and threat.

The current regime in Teheran is the world's most active state sponsor of terrorism, closely tied to the most notorious terrorist groups in the Middle East, actively encouraging those dedicated to the violent disruption of peace between Israel and the Palestinians. Iran provides weapons, funding and guidance to Hezbollah, and significant support to Hamas and the Palestine Islamic Jihad.

The regime in Teheran also deprives its people of fundamental human rights, and its abysmal record is worsening. It uses its control of the security forces, the judiciary, and other levers of power to thwart and suppress criticism and reform.

The regime seeks great power status — but in a form unrecognizable from Persia's past glories. It seeks hegemony in the region and in the Islamic world based on fanaticism. In doing so, it is working to foment discontent among Shi' a in Iraq, seeking to thwart the ability of the Iraqi people to enjoy the fruits of their liberation from Saddam Hussein. It is working to support the repressive leaders in Damascus who are stifling the aspirations of the people of Lebanon to determine their own destiny to establish a future of peace and prosperity.

And, as you all are aware, the Ahmadi-Nejad regime ranks first in its hatred of Israel. When the Iranian President makes a major speech calling for Israel "to be wiped from the face of the earth," he might be saying exactly what he means. Not only has he repeatedly defended this statement — and called for the United States to be treated in a similar fashion — but he has gone further — questioning the historical reality of the Holocaust.

And, of course, the regime in Teheran is actively pursuing a nuclear weapons capability. Let me be clear about this. For almost 20 years, Iran systematically violated its IAEA safeguards and NPT obligations by hiding its nuclear fuel cycle efforts and conducting a covert program aimed at nuclear weapons. Teheran has admitted some of those efforts -- but only after clandestine work had been publicly exposed, first by an Iranian opposition group, and subsequently through the investigations of the International Atomic Energy Agency. But these admissions fall far short of acknowledging the true purpose of its nuclear program. Iran continues to insist that the goal of the program is peaceful; and that every step it takes that brings it closer to a nuclear weapons capability is only done in furtherance of its legal right to develop civil nuclear energy.

In fact, Iran has pursued numerous routes to provide it with the ability to produce fissile material for weapons. We judge Iran is going down the plutonium route through construction of a heavy water research reactor and a heavy water plant. It has conducted experiments to separate and purify plutonium. Iran has even more aggressively pursued the enrichment route, demonstrating its commitment and determination to expend tremendous resources in defiance of the international community by building facilities to convert and enrich uranium.

All of these efforts have involved a dizzying array of cover stories and false statements over many years. And now Teheran has declared that it will actually resume feeding UF6 into what it says will be a few centrifuges. The cover story this time is that this is merely innocent "research and development" — one Iranian official reportedly said this was the type of research that is conducted at many universities. Not at my university or any other that I know.

The removal of IAEA seals three weeks ago, including at the large facility at Natanz — which Iran has said is intended to house tens of thousands of centrifuges to enrich uranium -- is the next logical and necessary step to proceed to enrichment on an industrial scale. Consistent with our assessment, the IAEA recently discovered documents that indicate that Iran received information on casting and machining hemispheres of enriched uranium. We know of no application for such hemispheres other than nuclear weapons.

Iran is also pursuing the delivery systems that would allow it to threaten nuclear strikes against its neighbors in the region and well beyond. It is producing and deploying increasing numbers of the Shahab-3, a 1300-km range ballistic missile, and has publicly acknowledged work on even longer-range systems. We believe it aspires to this capability so that it can hold hostage cities of our friends in the Middle East and Europe — and perhaps in the future even those in our own country. If Teheran can succeed in this effort, it may believe that it could undertake its expansionist designs with less concern that we would be willing to accept the risk of assisting our allies in the Gulf.

The President has made clear that a nuclear-armed Iran is unacceptable. Let me be explicit why we cannot accept a nuclear-armed Iran:

- A nuclear-armed Iran could embolden the leadership in Teheran to advance its aggressive ambitions in and outside of the region, both directly and through the terrorists it supports — ambitions that gravely threaten stability and the security of U.S. friends and allies.
- A nuclear-armed Iran would represent a direct threat to U.S. forces and allies in the region, the greater Middle East, Europe and Asia, and eventually to the United States itself. The likelihood of Iranian use of force, including possibly chemical and biological weapons, could increase if Teheran believed its nuclear capability protected it from retaliation. At a minimum, it could seek to use nuclear weapons as a powerful tool of intimidation and blackmail.
- A nuclear-armed Iran could provide the fuse for further proliferation, engendering a re-evaluation of security requirements across the region, and undermining the nuclear nonproliferation regime. " A nuclear-armed Iran would represent an existential threat to the state of Israel. Not content with his efforts to destroy the peace process, Ahmadi-Nejad may believe that nuclear weapons are the chosen instrument to achieve his stated goal of wiping Israel "off the map." Despite the resulting apocalyptic costs for Iran itself, the regime could miscalculate, or accept those costs in the cause of martyrdom.
- And finally, Iran is at the nexus of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism, pursuing nuclear, chemical and biological programs and actively supporting terrorist movements. If Iran has fissile material or nuclear weapons, the likelihood of their transfer to a third party would increase — by design or through diversion. Now I will turn to our approach for dealing with Iran's nuclear challenge.

From the earliest days after his inauguration, President Bush has given the highest priority to combating WMD and missile proliferation, and has adopted new measures to counter this challenge.

The Administration began by fashioning the first truly national, comprehensive strategy for preventing and protecting against the threat. Within this strategy, the Administration readily acknowledged that the starting point, and initial line of defense, is to prevent proliferation. However, we also knew that prevention would not always succeed. Therefore, we have placed new emphasis on protection from, and response to, the use of these weapons against us or our friends and allies. We are building the counterproliferation capabilities to deter, defend against, and defeat weapons of mass destruction in the hands of our enemies. And we are acquiring the ability to contain and reduce the potentially horrific effects if these weapons are used against us.

We must bring all elements of our strategy to bear in our targeted effort against the Iranian WMD and missile threat. I would like to highlight two areas in particular: the critical set of tools against proliferation that we call "defensive measures," and determined diplomacy to end Iran's nuclear weapons program and prevent further nuclear proliferation.

As with diplomacy, to be successful in our defensive measures, we must work with others who share our goals. Taking defensive measures to protect ourselves from WMD proliferation and WMD-armed adversaries requires a broad array of instruments, policies, and programs.

At one end of the spectrum are those measures that prevent Iran and other proliferators from gaining access to

sensitive technologies and materials that could represent a short cut to nuclear weapons. Nunn-Lugar and other nonproliferation programs are key in this effort, reinforcing other important measures such as effective export controls by all states. As an Administration, we have succeeded in expanding and accelerating these programs through not only U.S. funding, but also through the President's Global Partnership initiative which has added billions of dollars from others.

At the other end of the spectrum, one element of the solution set is missile defense, as well as improved counterforce and passive defense capabilities. In a number of these critical areas, we are working closely with our allies, such as with Japan and Israel, on missile defenses to protect both our forces and our populations. This capability adds not only another layer of defense to our strategic posture against the threat we face, but also another reason to persuade states like Iran not to acquire nuclear weapons in the first place.

Other defensive measures address the financial underpinnings of proliferation. UN Security Council Resolution 1540 — adopted at the President's urging — requires states to adopt and enforce effective controls on funds and services related to export and transshipment that would contribute to WMD programs. Consistent with Resolution 1540, G-8 Leaders have called for enhanced efforts to combat proliferation through cooperation to identify, track and freeze transactions and assets associated with proliferation activities.

President Bush augmented U.S. efforts in this field when he issued last June a new Executive Order, which authorizes the U.S. Government to freeze assets and block transactions of entities and persons, or their supporters, engaged in proliferation activities, and to prohibit U.S. persons from engaging in transactions with them. Currently 18 entities — 6 from Iran, as well as 11 from North Korea and one from Syria — have been designated under the Order, and we are actively considering designating additional ones.

Finally, one of the most important defensive measures undertaken by the Bush Administration is the Proliferation Security Initiative, which shows the close interaction among — and the creative use of — diplomatic, military, economic, law enforcement, and intelligence tools to combat proliferation. PSI countries have put all of these assets to work in a multinational, yet flexible, fashion. The participating countries are applying laws already on the books in innovative ways and cooperating as never before to interdict shipments, to disrupt proliferation networks, and to hold accountable the front companies that support them. PSI has now expanded to include support from more than 70 countries, and continues to grow. It is not a treaty-based approach, involving long, ponderous negotiations that yield results only slowly, if at all. Instead, it is an active -- and proactive -- partnership, to deter, disrupt and prevent proliferation of WMD and their means of delivery.

And PSI is working — including against Iran. PSI cooperation has stopped the transshipment of material and equipment bound for Iran's ballistic missile programs. PSI partners, working at times with others, have also prevented Iran from procuring goods to support its WMD programs, including its nuclear program. And, of course, it was PSI cooperation among the U.S., UK, and other European partners that began the demise of the A.Q. Khan network, an action that also contributed to the decision of the Libyan government to abandon its nuclear weapons and longer-range missile programs. Additional diplomatic initiatives address other elements of the problem. One clear lesson from the Iran case is that some states will cynically manipulate the provisions of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty to acquire the sensitive technologies to enable them to pursue nuclear weapons — the very capability the Treaty is intended to deny. To foreclose that proliferation avenue, President Bush has challenged the international community to correct the greatest weakness in the nuclear nonproliferation system: the ability of states like Iran to seek nuclear weapons under

the cover of peaceful energy programs.

To achieve this end, we are working with major supplier states, with the IAEA and with industry to provide assurances that states will have reliable access to nuclear fuel and that their best interest is not to invest in their own fuel-cycle capabilities. If we can succeed, this will be a major gain for proliferation security — and help prevent future Irans.

As we work with partners to close the loophole in the NPT that Iran has sought to exploit, we are also pursuing active diplomacy to prevent Iran from succeeding. Last September, following Iran's resumption of uranium conversion, the IAEA Board found Iran in formal noncompliance with its safeguards obligations — a finding which requires a report to the Security Council under the IAEA statute — and also found that Iran's nuclear activities raise questions concerning international peace and security that are within the competence of the UN Security Council. At the last IAEA Board meeting in November, we decided to support the request of the United Kingdom, France and Germany — the so-called EU-3 — to defer again, for a short period, the report to the Security Council of Iranian noncompliance. While we believed that we had a majority of the votes, we thought it best to seek an even broader international grouping to pressure Iran to return to the negotiations on the basis of the original terms. We also welcomed Russia's efforts to get Iran to return to negotiations.

In response, Iran rejected negotiation and instead chose confrontation, repeatedly and deliberately. Iran has now defied the international community by deciding to remove international seals and resume uranium enrichment activities. In so doing, it has shattered the basis for continued negotiations with the EU-3. Its empty calls for negotiations after it destroyed the framework for negotiations, and its on-again/off-again professions of possible interest in the Russian proposal for enrichment on Russian territory, are transparent efforts at stalling — continuing its practice of smoke and salami slicing that we have watched for three years.

The EU-3 have made very clear that Teheran's actions, unless reversed, have brought their negotiating process to a dead end. The clear majority of states know that the European effort, which had U.S. support, went the extra mile — and then some — to achieve an outcome of substantial benefit to Iran, but without including Iranian access to enrichment or reprocessing technologies. This phase of the process is now over. We still believe the issue can be resolved diplomatically. But to achieve this, we must stand together and press Iran to make the strategic decision to end its nuclear weapons program.

There is no reasonable peaceful explanation for the Iranian regime to resume uranium enrichment. The way ahead is shaped by Iran's long history of hiding sensitive nuclear activities from the IAEA in violation of its obligations, its refusal to cooperate fully with the IAEA's investigation, its rejection of diplomatic initiatives offered by the EU and Russia, and now its dangerous defiance of the entire international community.

The President and Secretary Rice have emphasized that the time is now for the IAEA Board to report Iran to the Security Council and that this step does not signal the end of diplomacy, but its next phase. The Iranian regime's resumption of enrichment activity left no choice but to call an emergency meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors to report Iran's noncompliance with its safeguards obligations to the UN Security Council.

The five permanent members of the Security Council as well as Germany agreed in London very early Tuesday morning that the IAEA Board should report Iran to the Security Council at its special session opening tomorrow. They also agreed that the Council will act on Iranian noncompliance after Director General ElBaradei's report to the March 6 meeting of

the IAEA Board.

The Security Council will not supplant the IAEA effort, but reinforce it — for example, by calling on Iran to cooperate with the Agency and to take steps the IAEA Board has identified to restore confidence, and by giving the IAEA new, needed authority to investigate all aspects of the Iranian nuclear effort. The Council should make clear to the Iranian regime that there will be consequences if it does not step away from its nuclear weapons ambitions. The United States will encourage the Security Council to achieve this end. We will continue to consult closely with the EU-3 and the EU, with Russia, China and many other members of the international community in the coming days and weeks, as this new diplomatic phase proceeds.

We have no illusion that reporting the Iran issue to the Security Council will produce a quick resolution of the threat that Iran presents, including its determined pursuit of nuclear weapons. When faced with a challenge like that which we face from Iran — a country that is able to bring to bear many of its own tools — diplomacy will never be easy, nor will its results be immediate. But there is no panacea; there is no easy option.

Because we are realistic, the United States and our partners are pursuing multiple avenues to prevent the emergence of a nuclear-armed Iran. Defensive measures are essential and should be expanded. The President has repeatedly emphasized that all options are on the table to deal with the threat from Iran, but that our strong preference is to do so through effective diplomacy. A peaceful diplomatic solution to this issue would spare the world from the threat posed by a nuclear-armed Iran and would benefit the Iranian people with the possibility of fuller integration with the international community.

Diplomacy remains essential and, despite the frustrations, is working. It has taken time — several years — to forge an international consensus on Iran. But this was necessary to convince others of the nature of the Iranian program and to provide a rationale for action. Few today doubt Iran is pursuing a nuclear weapons capability. A majority of the IAEA Board are now willing to vote to report Iran to the Security Council. And the Council offers the best next step for diplomacy to succeed.

Released on February 1, 2006



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