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Briefing by Under Secretary for Political Affairs R. Nicholas Burns and Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security Robert Joseph

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: (In Progress) among the Security Council members by the U.S. which is the president of the Council this month. As Secretary Rice indicated, we have agreed and the Perm-5 that while the issue is now clearly, as of today, in the Security Council, we will wait for 30 days before asking the Council to begin taking action against Iran and that will allow Iran -- there is time to reflect until the next IAEA Board of Governors meeting on March 6th.

Last two points I'd make are the following. I think that diplomacy is now in a new phase. There have been two years of negotiations, which clearly failed because Iran walked away from those negotiations in the early part of January. And now what you're seeing is a much more united international community seeking, in essence to roll back Iran's nuclear ambitions. And it's important that average Iranians know that this is not about nuclear energy, but it's about nuclear weapons. No one is trying to deny the country -- as President Bush said just a couple of days ago, no one is trying to deny them nuclear energy, but we are trying to deny them nuclear weapons.

A final point, today is a significant victory for those countries that want to deny Iran nuclear weapons capability. How did it come about? From an American perspective, we began supporting the European Union negotiating effort back on March 11th of 2005 and we very patiently supported that set of negotiations all the way through until just this week. But what we did in October and November, and what the President and Secretary Rice did on their trip to Asia in mid-November was to signal a new phase in diplomacy back then and that would be that we could -- we would certainly support ideas like the ideas put forward by the Russian Federation. We began to reach out to the Russian Federation. The President met with President Putin.

You remember in Asia during the trip, there was a long conversation about this issue. Secretary Rice took a trip to Moscow where the major issue in November was Iran's nuclear ambitions. We then had a series of meetings at the political director level with the Russians and Chinese in November and in January and then two of those and then the Perm-5 foreign ministers meeting in London. All of that was designed to increase the number of countries in the coalition seeking

to roll back Iran's nuclear ambition. So in essence, what we tried to do in October-November was to take an EU-3 supported by the U.S. equation with Iran and bring in other countries to help put pressure on Iran. You saw that India voted with us in September. India voted with us again today. Russia and China joined us on Monday at the London meeting the Secretary had.

And then very significantly, Brazil and Egypt, as well as many other countries joined today. So there's an increasingly large coalition of countries which all are frustrated by what Iran has been doing and all I think determined to send a clear message to the Iranians today. And so I think diplomacy has evolved significantly and we're in a stronger period now than we were certainly a year ago. Those are my points.

QUESTION: Is Bob going to brief here before we ask questions?

UNDER SECRETARY JOSEPH: Just -- if I could add a few more points to that. Clearly, the resolution does send a strong signal to Iran that it will not be able to continue its pursuit of nuclear weapons. It's a solid majority that spread the view that we need at this point to stand our efforts to get Iran to stop its enrichment-related activities, to re-suspend fully those activities, and to cooperate fully with the IAEA, answer all of the unanswered questions, and to address those issues of concern, including those issues related to possible weapon evasion which were made clear in the IAEA report earlier this week.

Second, I would say that the key issues that are treated in the resolution are treated in a way that is very clear. The operative paragraphs dealing with reporting Iran to the Security Council is very clear. The operative paragraph that deals with next steps, including reporting the results of the March board is also very clear.

QUESTION: Of the what?

UNDER SECRETARY JOSEPH: Of the next steps in terms of what the Director General will do in terms of the March board meeting. In other words, there is no requirement for further steps by the board in order for the Security Council to ask. You can see that in paragraph eight, operative paragraph eight. Third, I would also emphasize that this is not the end of diplomacy, but the next phase. That is something that the President and the Secretary have both emphasized; taking the Iranian case to the Security Council adds weight, it adds authority and it adds a new set of tools to bring pressure on Iran, get it to reverse course.

And finally, I would say that the vote today reaffirms the legitimacy of the IAEA process. I think that legitimacy was at stake by Iran's challenge and by taking this bold move. The IAEA has demonstrated that it is truly up to the task.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Okay.

QUESTION: Yes. This is Andrea Mitchell.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Hi, Andrea.

QUESTION: Hi. Can you tell us what -- especially because Iran has already reacted negatively, what hope do you really have that in the following 30 days, there will be any concessions from Iran and barring that, what besides a lengthy

Security Council debate in March will really have any weight with Iran?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Right. Well, first, I think -- I cannot say that we are filled with hope that Iran is going to now do the right thing and suspend its nuclear programs and return to negotiations. You will have seen that in the last seven to ten days as -- especially since Monday, when Secretary Rice was able to win P-5 endorsement of this course.

QUESTION: Excuse me for interrupting, but let's assume this is on the record, unless you say --

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Yeah, we're on the record. Yeah. So over the course of the last week or so, the Iranians were making all sorts of preposterous statements. If the IAEA reports to the Security Council we're going to walk away from the additional protocol, we're going to do this. There was a report this morning that the Iranians have denied that they've already decided to begin enrichment activities. These statements are very revealing. This is not a country that seems to feel that it has any obligations. It's a country that speaks only about its rights. So I don't know what the Iranians will do in the next 30 days. We would hope that they would stop their nuclear activities and return to negotiations. That's our hope.

But if they don't do that, it's very clear, Andrea, what's going to happen. A couple of things: The UN Security Council will begin discussing the issue. Now it's very important that there be a united international community. Had we been divided today, had Russia and China or Brazil and India not been with us, the Iranians could have hidden behind that. They could have said, this is a developed world against a developing world or this is the non-Muslim world versus the Muslim world. It's hard to say when you have Egypt voting with you, voting with the majority. And I think that the Iranians are going to face a fairly bright spotlight in the UN Security Council and at some point, they're going to have to calculate that they just simply can't go forward if the entire world is arrayed against them. So we're banking that that diplomatic noose is going to tighten a bit and we're going to ratchet up the pressure, step by step and then focus on diplomacy as a way to isolate and hopefully change their behavior.

QUESTION: Is there anything that prevents you from bringing it up in the Security Council this month?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Well, we've made -- Secretary Rice made an agreement, all the Perm-5 ministers made a basic agreement on Monday night. Here was the agreement. Until Monday night, Russia and China had not decided to vote for this resolution in Vienna. And as a result of the agreement Monday night, they all agreed that they would vote to put this into the Security Council to vote it to the Security Council, and that we would also give Iran 30 days until the next IAEA Board of Governors meeting on March 6th to reflect on those choices. And we said then that while the issue would be at the Council and the IAEA report will be circulated to the members of the Council, we would not have any action, so I don't expect there to be any formal meetings of the council that would have long discussions about Iran. I think we'll just keep the ball in Iran's court and see how it reacts.

QUESTION: Nick, the official who briefed the folks in London on Monday suggested that Russia and China would now sort of -- I think the implication was, take the lead in the diplomacy during this 30-day period and because they're, more or less a friend of Iran in this court. I wonder if you could expand on that, what your expectation is now, if you believe this to be true that Russia's got the ball, you know, that Russia and China will pick up the ball and what sort of – what more can you specifically tell us about how that will happen?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Yeah. Well, as you know, directly following that Monday evening marathon dinner in New -- in London, the Russians and Chinese sent two senior diplomats to Tehran and they spent 24 hours there this week and they had general discussions with the Iranians but they came back and at least reported to us that there had been -- there had not been any progress made, that the Iranians were sticking to their position that this was unfair, this international process -- that there should not be a report to the United Nations. And it's not our -- it's our view that the Iranians have shown little real interest in the Russian proposal that was first surfaced back in October. And so I do expect the Russians especially, and perhaps along with the Chinese, to continue talking to the Iranians. I don't exclude the possibility that the EU-3 might also do that, although I'm not aware of any specific meetings that they have.

But you know, the Iranians have had three months to respond to the Russian offer and they've not made a serious offer, and it's our very strong sense from talking to a variety of countries that there's -- these countries are frustrated that the Iranians just can't seem to say anything specific or commit themselves to any specific path. So barring some surprise from the Iranians over the next 30 days, if they don't do something by March 6th, then the action is going to be centered in the Security Council.

QUESTION: But Nick, do you really -- it's Elise Labott with CNN. Do you have an honest, reasonable expectation that once it gets to the Council that China and Russia are going to support the kind of measures that you feel you need to take to stop Iran from further developing? And if you could talk about the nuclear Middle East, nuclear-free Middle East caveat that was in the resolution and how that helps countries sign on to it. Thanks.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Well, first, there's a clear commitment in the Perm 5 that if there is no Iranian action, significant action of the type that we've spelled out in the statements we'll be issuing today, by March 6th the action is going to be centered in the Security Council. And the Iranians have never wanted this issue to go to the Security Council. That has been apparent from all of their statements and all of their actions. It seems that they do care what the international community says and thinks about it, and they've pulled out all the stops to deter us from going to the Council. So I think just getting there is a significant tactical victory for those of us trying to roll back Iran's nuclear ambitions.

Once we get to the Council, obviously I can't speak as to what other countries are going to do. But I do sense a significant degree of frustration among all the countries, the large countries we've been dealing with, about Iran's inability to commit to a rational way forward. And so I would expect that, you know, in the Council you'd begin with a general debate, but obviously you would want to engineer into the debate a series of graduated steps designed to increase the pressure on Iran. And I can only speak for the United States, obviously, in saying that's what we would intend, but I think we'll have a great deal of support once this debate begins there.

QUESTION: What kind of steps?

QUESTION: On the nuclear Middle East, could you just expand on, you know, what you believe that to mean? And, I mean, I know other countries are implying that that means Israel. Have you talked to the Israelis and, I mean, how did you feel that you could sign on to that?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: You know, I think it was a tempest in a teapot. What happens in these multilateral negotiations is that you had, in this case, 35 countries negotiating a text, you have lots and lots of amendments and word changes, and this issue regarding weapons of mass destruction -- that's what you're referring to

-- has come up a lot of times in a lot of different places around the world. And we normally always would agree to some variation of it and, you know, sometimes it take several hours for 35 countries to agree on words, which is what happened yesterday. But we got there and the important thing is there was agreement on the text.

Bob, you might want to say a word about that.

UNDER SECRETARY JOSEPH: Well, I would just point out that the language does refer to the global nonproliferation regime.

QUESTION: But it refers to the Middle East, though. It's clearly aimed at Israel. I mean, you can't ignore that.

UNDER SECRETARY JOSEPH: No.

QUESTION: And Iran's not a member of this global -- Iran's not a member of the NPT so they're not part of this "global regime," are they?

UNDER SECRETARY JOSEPH: You mean Israel.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Israel is not a member.

QUESTION: Israel's not a member. Iran is.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Iran is.

QUESTION: Well, no, but does that mean that Israel is not a member of the global regime so this doesn't mean Israel?

UNDER SECRETARY JOSEPH: No.

QUESTION: It's obvious that Israel is intended, so how can you say that it's just a tempest in a teapot, Nick?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Because this kind of language has been around for years and the U.S. has agreed to variations of this in many other documents before. So some of the press reports coming out of Vienna yesterday which assert this as some kind of a new issue, this is one of those old issues that raises its head any time you've got a multilateral document. But I would read it.

UNDER SECRETARY JOSEPH: Let me also add that we did include language in the report from the IAEA that went to the Security Council on Libya, language that dealt specifically with the Middle East. This is not something new. What I was saying is that this formulation does have a broader scope, it does say including in the Middle East, but it does have a broader scope. But you know, the language speaks for itself, I think.

QUESTION: Can you -- both of you talk about how this is going to strengthen the hand of the IAEA, but how can you say that when Iran is planning to, you know, stop snap inspections? Sorry -- Michele Keleman with NPR.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Thanks, Michelle.

Bob, you want to take that?

UNDER SECRETARY JOSEPH: Sure. I think that by taking this to the Security Council we do have added weight. The Security Council does bring a new dimension to this. It brings more authority to this within the international system. There are also additional options.

Now, what happens in the Security Council will in large part be determined by what Iran does. But what Iran has said that it's going to do now is, you know, end those voluntary measures, including the cooperation under the Additional Protocol. Well, that would be moving in exactly the wrong direction.

And the same with resuming enrichment activities, if it does do that. Iran does not have the right to enrich for the purposes of nuclear weapons.

QUESTION: Nick, this --

UNDER SECRETARY JOSEPH: If it does take that step, I think there will be consequences and I think Iran now understands that that's going to be the case.

QUESTION: And what are the consequences?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: We've talked about the --

QUESTION: Can I just ask, what do you mean by consequences? Do you mean the Security Council or something else?

UNDER SECRETARY JOSEPH: Well, in this context, that means the Security Council.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Yeah.

QUESTION: What are the --

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Can I just make a suggestion? If you read paragraphs two through six, it's really kind of instructive. You know, these diplomatic documents are generally couched in fairly polite terms, but if you read what we voted on, two through six, and this is 27 countries, it's pretty significant. What it implies is a strong suspicion and lack of confidence. It's a fairly hard-hitting document as these international agreements go.

QUESTION: Nick, can I clarify something? This is Ann Gearan with the AP.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Yeah.

QUESTION: You said after the report is circulated in February that a debate would begin after the March 6th meeting, barring no other circumstances; correct?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Yeah, I want to be -- this is actually -- this -- the P-5 foreign ministers agreed on Monday night as to how they would want to handle this in the event of a positive vote today, so here's the three steps. The vote -- after the vote today, Mohamed ElBaradei sends to the Security Council his report, the report and the text that was debated today. That goes to the president of the Security Council, which happens to be the United States. Ambassador Bolton is the president of the Security Council in New York. He will circulate that text that he sent to the other members of the Security Council, obviously for information, because all of them need to know about it because the issue is now in New York -- for the very first time, by the way. And that's what really significant about today's vote that you have this transfer, not solely away from the IAEA because the IAEA remains seized by it, but you have this transfer to the UN as well.

We agreed that once that issue had been taken to New York, we would withhold action at the Security Council until March 6th, and that was the agreement of Monday night. So you won't see Security Council meetings over the next 30 days on this issue. But we also agreed --

QUESTION: To include presidential statements?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: No, there will be no actions and no statements.

QUESTION: Okay.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: But there may be a statement issued saying that the issue has -- you know, the report has arrived and the Security Council has it and the issue is at New York. There may be a procedural statement like that but nothing normative.

And so after March 6th, after the next Board of Governors meeting, if it's the case that Iran has not met the conditions of today's vote, if it hasn't suspended its nuclear activities and returned to negotiations, then the issue is going to be alive in New York and it'll be taken up very quickly.

QUESTION: How does that happen?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: And I would expect a very serious debate in the Security Council.

QUESTION: What guarantees do you have that there will be action at the Security Council? Because as I understand it, I mean, just because it's been reported to the Security Council doesn't mean that they have to take action.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Well, any member of the Security Council can put the issue on the agenda and ask for a debate, and if there's no Iranian action before -- after -- between now and March 6th, a number of countries, including the U.S., would do that. So there's a guarantee in that case, in the event of Iranian non-action, that the issue is going to be before the Security Council and there will be a very vigorous debate. This is one of the leading international issues right now.

QUESTION: Since the Iranians have been defiant right up until the present moment, can you talk about the series of graduated steps you referred to earlier? What exactly -- you know, what would you propose?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: No, I think I'd rather not. I think we'll want to -- you know, we'll want to hold our fire and probably not articulate that publicly until we get to the Council debate. But I think it's generally understood that what you would want to do in New York is begin a debate, an international debate with Iran -- a spotlight on Iran, about what all of us presume to be Iran's attempts to develop a nuclear weapons capability behind the guise of a peaceful civil nuclear program -- that is certainly the position of the United States; and that you'd begin that debate and then you might build into it a graduated series of steps, but that would be after March 6th.

QUESTION: But haven't you just had that debate?

QUESTION: If Iran hasn't --

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Pardon?

QUESTION: Haven't you just had that debate?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Well, as Bob said before, the UN Security Council is the most authoritative session in the world that you can go to with an international problem at the leading world body, the United Nations. And it's been two years now where the Iran issue has been debated and discussed by the EU-3, by the Russians and Chinese, by a lot of countries, but never at the UN.

QUESTION: Nick --

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: And we've got to start that debate.

QUESTION: Nick, it's Charlie Wolfson --

QUESTION: Nick, John McCain was --

QUESTION: Can I ask you if -- what you're going to -- what the plan is, or would you be surprised if, the last week of February, Iran says, "Okay, we've thought about it and we're now willing to come back to negotiations," and what the U. S. would do. Is there agreement among the Perm-5? Have there --

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: It's a hypothetical question, Charlie, and you trained me very well 10 years ago never to answer those. It would really depend on -- you know, it would depend on what they've said and what they're -- but more importantly, what they're doing. Would they suspend their nuclear programs, et cetera. So --

QUESTION: If I could clarify, Charlie --

QUESTION: You're not willing to say that they have to do everything that's stated in the resolution today or it will be taken off?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Well, I think -- you know, it'd be very -- it wouldn't be smart of me to answer a hypothetical question because there are a thousand different permutations here, but the United States has a fairly high standard, you know, and Bob and I can -- both talked about this countless times.

Here's what we're saying, what the Europeans and a lot of other countries are saying. The Iranians need to suspend their nuclear programs. They need to come back to negotiations. They need to be in compliance with their IAEA obligations and they're in none of those places right now. They got a long way to go.

QUESTION: You know, the history of this whole situation, as you pointed out, is that -- you know, Iran walks up to the line and then offers some sort of compromise or -- you know, indicates that it might be willing to compromise and tries to peel off support. Do you have any assurances that if the current situation maintains and they don't actually, you know, abide with all these conditions, that you still have the same list of 27 countries voting with you for whatever you try to do in the Security Council, as you have today?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Well, the Security Council, of course, is configured differently. It has fewer countries in it, different set of countries in it. And so we're talking a little bit like apples and oranges, but there's a clear Perm-5 agreement and I would lead you back to the statement that was issued by Jack Straw in the early morning hours of Tuesday morning, where there are six points and points four and five are the crux of that deal. And that deal is that essentially, the issue goes to the Security Council, there's no action for 30 days, and there's certainly action on the Security Council thereafter if the Iranians don't meet their obligations by the 6th of March.

I can only speak for my government. I can't speak for all the other countries, but I sense a great deal of frustration internationally. You saw what the Iranians did, to answer your question directly, over the last two weeks. They threw a lot of chaff in the air, lots of public statements, visits by Larijani to Moscow and Beijing, visit by his deputy to Brussels last Monday to meet with the EU-3 designed to say we're interested in diplomacy, we're a reasonable country. That's what they were trying to say and everyone saw through it. Everyone saw through it that this was just smoke and they weren't willing to commit to what they had to, to avoid today's vote.

MR. MCCORMACK: Hold on, wait a minute. This is Sean McCormack. We've been on for about a half an hour. We have time for one final question.

QUESTION: We were waiting for 40 minutes before that, Sean.

MR. MCCORMACK: These guys have other things to do. I'm sorry. We have time for one last question.

QUESTION: (Inaudible) saying that we should (inaudible) and not rule out a military response in the Munich conference? You said that in response --

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: I'm sorry, I missed the first part of your question.

QUESTION: In Munich today, Rumsfeld said that we were pursuing diplomacy and McCain then followed and said we should not take any kind of military response off the table.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: I would just say that the President and Secretary of State have said many, many times they have -- you know, they have always said many, many times that we are pursuing a diplomatic course, but that we don't -- the President of the United States doesn't take any option off the table. The President has said that and the Secretary has said that nearly every time they talk about this. And that hasn't -- our policy remains the same. It's very clear that we're -- as Secretary Rice has been saying the last couple of weeks, we're very clear we're on a diplomatic course and the diplomacy doesn't end today, it just goes to a new place and a new phase.

QUESTION: Just to clarify --

QUESTION: If I can just clarify something here, paragraph number two says that the Director General will report that these steps are required of Iran by the board. And I assume it's all those steps listed in paragraph one, that this is what is required of Iran. So, as I understand it, the U.S. would seek to bring this up for debate before the Security Council after March 6, if Iran has not met these five conditions here: reestablish full (inaudible) and reconsider -- reconstruction and ratify promptly the additional protocol, blah, blah, blah. Is that correct?

Is that what we're saying here, that he reports to the Security Council now, these are the five things that Iran must do and that if they aren't completed on March 6th, then -- you know, it's up for debate at the Security Council? Is there a move for that?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Well, Bob and I can both, I think, take a swing at this. I'm glad you drew attention to paragraph one, because those are all important points and it's a tall order for the Iranians to meet, given their obfuscation over the last two years. You know, those -- obviously, those are the conditions that 27 countries voted for today, not just the United States. And as you know, the U.S. has held Iran to a very high standard and we're going to continue to hold it to a high standard.

QUESTION: But can you answer Glen's question more precisely and -- that was exactly the question I was going to ask. Is it the position of the U.S. that these conditions must be met in order to avert a debate in the Security Council?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: I would say that it's going to be our view that Iran's going to have to meet these conditions and it's going to have to show that it's taken a fundamentally different course. You know, we -- to just review the history here, we had a majority vote in September. We could have taken it to the Security Council in September. We chose to give the EU-3 diplomacy -- at the request of the EU-3 another shot and in November, we could have taken it to New York.

So, our view, the view of the U.S., is that it's time for this issue to go to the Security Council and that the issue is at the Security Council. And Iran would have to do -- it would have to roll back its present course of -- its present course for us to be content with leaving this issue just in one place. We think it's time to go to the Council and we're pleased that that step has been taken today, by the way.

QUESTION: And roll back means go through points one through five and have completed them all?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Those are very important points.

UNDER SECRETARY JOSEPH: They're important and they're longstanding. These are not new conditions. These are steps that the IAEA has -- that the board has repeatedly called for.

QUESTION: Is that a yes?

QUESTION: So, you still have to go through one through five?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: She's looking for a yes.

QUESTION: Yeah, we're looking for a yes or a no, but a clear answer.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: The U.S. has had a very hard-core view of Iran's nuclear ambitions and we've -- of course, we support these five issues and of course, we would expect Iran to undertake them. I just -- you know, also want to say that in addition to those, you're going to -- we're going to have to see a change of heart by Iran on its present course and we haven't seen any indication of that.

QUESTION: Iran's state television today said that they're going to begin enrichment.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: And then they issued a statement saying that the president had not taken that step.

QUESTION: I know, and then they came back and said it again.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Did they really? Yeah?

QUESTION: (Inaudible.)

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Well, this is just indicative of this very peculiar approach. Here's a country that has been -- had a real diplomatic shot fired across its bough today by -- you know, the leading countries of the world and yet, there is no sense that it feels it has any obligations to meet. It's all about what its own rights are.

UNDER SECRETARY JOSEPH: And when Iran removed the IAEA seals earlier in January, it clearly chose confrontation over negotiation and this is just yet another indication that it's moving toward enrichment.

QUESTION: Can I --

MR. MCCORMACK: Unfortunately, guys, I think that's just about it.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Can I say one more thing, Sean, just one more thing that might --

MR. MCCORMACK: Yes, absolutely.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: I think what Bob said is just really important and both of us might want to expand on it. The frustration that we have had -- and that's why I was -- you know, I think both of us kind of hesitated answering your very straightforward question about these five measures in para-1. We -- the U.S. has a very tough way of looking at this. The Iranians have been trying to move forward two steps, fall back one, move forward three, fall back two. You know, they try to cross -- countries draw pink lines and red lines, the countries negotiating with them. The Iranians cross it. Countries object. They fall back, they go forward again.

This is not a government that's given any indication that it's listening to the international community or that it intends to turn back. And so, our strategy since back in the summer has been to force this issue onto the Security Council and it's been achieved today. And that's why it's going to take an awful lot for the Iranians to convince us that this issue should not be debated in the Security Council after March 6th.

UNDER SECRETARY JOSEPH: (Inaudible.)

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Yeah, exactly.

QUESTION: Well, I understand that you don't want to sound like you're drawing the absolute parameters, because then they'll walk up to 99 percent of that and not do it, in your view, but -- I mean, I still think we need a yes or no answer as to whether those five things are the list. I mean, that's it, right?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Okay. Here is the way I put it. These five things are necessary, but we're also -- you know, there may be other things that we ask Iran to do -- the United States, to speak for our country, because we have a very realistic view of who the Iranians are, the government officials and what they're trying to do -- that these five are absolutely essential, of course.

QUESTION: Okay, the minimal then. They're the lowest --

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: What they have to do.

MR. MCCORMACK: All right, everybody.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: All right, thanks. Thanks a lot, guys.

QUESTION: Thank you.

QUESTION: And so all of this was on the record, right?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Yes.

QUESTION: Thank you.

2006/151

Released on February 6, 2006

BACK TO TOP

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