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Remarks After Meetings of EU3 and 3 Political Directors at the UK Mission to the UN

R. Nicholas Burns, Under Secretary for Political Affairs

New York City

March 20, 2006

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Let me just say a few words if I could. The United States very much prizes the unity that has been achieved over the last six months where Russia and China and the U.S. and the European countries have all acted together to pressure Iran and to try to convince Iran to give up its search for nuclear weapons capability. We had a good meeting today. It lasted four and half hours. There were actually two different meetings rolled into one effort. I would say we agreed on the following:

All of us agreed that we will oppose Iran trying to seek a nuclear weapons ability. All of us agreed on that.

All of us agreed that Iran is out of compliance with its international commitments.

All of us agreed that Iran is now traveling down a road towards enrichment and reprocessing which would be fundamentally detrimental to the interests of the world in nonproliferation and security.

And all of us agreed that we should stay united and stay together to send one message to the Iranians and to convince the Iranians to roll-back their nuclear programs, to suspend all their nuclear activities, and to return to full negotiations.

We made some progress in looking at the text of the presidential statement that is before the Security Council. It is clear from today's meetings that there have to be some more meetings here in New York. There is certainly going to be further contact among our capitals but we remain convinced that we will achieve a presidential statement. It may take a little bit of time but it's going to be worth the time because when we do achieve that statement it will be yet another clear, unified message by the international community that Iran has to heed the words of both the IAEA and the Security Council.

QUESTION (Talal/Al-Arabiya): ...you have to be unified in front of the Iranians to get this message across...



UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: right

QUESTION: ...and you don't seem to be so far.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Oh, I think we are unified. Unified because we all want to achieve a presidential statement that will advise the Iranians to suspend their nuclear programs, to return to negotiations, and to put themselves into compliance with the IAEA Board of Governors. We agreed on that today. We just need now to find the words as is so often the case in diplomacy to reflect that unity.

QUESTION (Benny/NYSun): ...compromise to get there, though...

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: There are always going to be compromises by all sides in any international negotiation and we are on the road towards an agreement, this may just take a couple more days.

QUESTION: Did you discuss military action against Iran?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: We are focused on diplomacy. We discussed obviously our common interest in a diplomatic solution.

QUESTION: [inaudible]

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: You know, the IAEA is always going to have a responsibility to inspect Iran and to bring it into compliance, but the issue has clearly moved also to the Security Council. It's in both places; it's not going to leave the Security Council.

QUESTION: Any more meetings?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS I think the Ambassadors, the Permanent Representatives, are meeting tomorrow at 3 o'clock.

QUESTION (Edi/AP): Are you hopeful there will be a Presidential Statement adopted either this week or possible next week?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Well, you know I think the elements of an agreement are there, the ones that I just mentioned: we all agree that the Iranians have gone too far, that they should not have a nuclear weapons capability, that they should stand down in their nuclear program, and so the elements are there but as is so often in diplomacy we now search for the words to reflect that...[inaudible]...which I think we should be able to do.

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