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Remarks on the UN Security Council Presidential Statement on Iran

Ambassador John R. Bolton, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations

Remarks at a Security Council Stakeout

New York City

March 29, 2006

[UN Security Council Presidential Statement on Non-Proliferation and Iran](#) (3/29)

AMBASSADOR BOLTON: Okay, well, I'll be responding to your questions. But I think one thing that's very important is that the message we're sending is a message to the government of Iran that has been pursuing nuclear weapons a very clear message that we want a response from the government of Iran on. And the response we want is full compliance with the obligations it voluntarily undertook in the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the obligations it undertook in its safeguards agreement with the IAEA and the nearly dozen IAEA resolutions that have been adopted. So there's no ambiguity in what we're waiting for here – we're waiting for the Iranians to do what they themselves have said they were going to do and violated and the obligations that they undertook by being a member of the IAEA. Now what will the Iranians do in the next 30 days, I certainly don't know, but as I said to you earlier, we're prepared to be back here on the 31 st day given the Iranian record to date of consistently flouting the International Atomic Energy Agency attempting to obscure what they've done and to continue to pursue nuclear weapons. Now what happens at that point will be the subject of discussions in Berlin tomorrow when Secretary Rice meets with her counterparts, but they will be having a forward looking discussion. And obviously I don't want to speculate about it before Secretary of State and her counterparts have spoken, but that's what they're going to be discussing. We're finished with the Presidential Statement, now that step is over. Now we look to the future and see if Iran varies its conduct from that which it's been following for at least the past 18 years.

REPORTER: The Chinese are basically saying this is an emphatic support of the IAEA, you seem to be saying this is a warning to Iran that unless it complies with the statement, it will face further consequences. Do you think that opens the breach for Iran to interpret this difference to maneuver further down the road?

AMBASSADOR BOLTON: No, because I think we've said repeatedly from the outset that we want to strengthen the hand of the IAEA, but the Security Council has a separate, independent responsibility under the UN Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security. The actions of the Security Council are not dependent in any way on the actions of any other UN body. The Security Council can and should work with other UN bodies, but if the Iranians take steps as they have repeatedly over the last four years that show a continuing desire to get nuclear weapons that poses and has posed a threat to international peace and security that the Security Council has a responsibility to act on. I don't know what steps the Council will take, I've said before and I'll say it again – this is a test for the Security Council. The threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and international terrorism are the greatest threats to international peace and security we face in the world today. How the Council handles those threats, will be a determining factor in the role of the Council in the future.

REPORTER: Considering the amount of difficulty you had in reaching agreement here, what makes you think that tomorrow can go much further considering what their last meeting was like?

AMBASSADOR BOLTON: I'm confident that Secretary Rice will be very persuasive and I'm hoping they'll make a lot of progress. She's determined to do it. She's been very clear, as has the President, about the strength of the American feeling that it is unacceptable for Iran to have nuclear weapons. She'll be exploring with her colleagues, how that doesn't happen.

REPORTER: What's at stake for Iran if they don't comply in 30 days and you get a report from the IAEA, which is not satisfactory to you?

AMBASSADOR BOLTON: Well, the President has been unequivocal that it's unacceptable for Iran to have nuclear weapons, and there are a whole range of steps we can take. I'm sure that's what they'll be discussing, in part, in Berlin tomorrow within the Security Council or outside the Security Council.

REPORTER: For you, ambassador, compliance means –

AMBASSADOR BOLTON: I meant compliance.

REPORTER: Compliance with the Presidential Statement as is or compliance with the larger issues?

AMBASSADOR BOLTON: Compliance includes everything that we could think of that was applicable to Iran's conduct its violation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, its safeguards agreement with the IAEA, the previous nearly one dozen IAEA resolutions, resolving all of the unanswered questions that still remain from the 17 reports I believe it is by the IAEA Director General. So Iran has a lot of work to do.

REPORTER: Do IAEA boots have to be on the ground after 30 days as far as you're concerned?

AMBASSADOR BOLTON: One of the things that the February IAEA Board of Governors resolution says is that Iran has to ratify and implement the additional protocol which obviously gives the IAEA additional inspection authority inside Iran beyond what is provided for by the agency's safeguards agreement. So that is part of what Iran itself previously undertook and then reneged upon.

REPORTER: Ambassador, the ball, as it were, is in the Iranian court. Is it your understanding that IAEA will be the final arbiter in making a judgment as to whether Iran is in compliance?

AMBASSADOR BOLTON: The IAEA Director General will report to the IAEA Board of Governors and the Security Council and we will within our respective spheres of authority consider that report and decide what to do next.

REPORTER: Of the two issues as far as you can make out of Iraq and the Iranian nuclear issue related in any way to each other, do you think the Iranians could bring pressure to bear, given their admitted role in Iraq to serve their purposes with the nuclear issue?

AMBASSADOR BOLTON: Again, I don't know how to judge the future conduct of a regime lead by a man who denies the existence of the Holocaust, who suddenly seems to have found 6 million people gone missing didn't quite make it into his historical consciousness. So trying to predict the policies of that regime isn't anything that I think is worth a lot of time. I hope they can read and understand this Presidential Statement clearly in the government offices of Tehran , because that is where the message is intended to be understood. I hope the people of Iran get a chance to read this message too, so they can consider what dangers their government is putting them into. You know, Libya made the decision that they were safer, better off giving up the pursuit of nuclear weapons than continuing to pursue them. I think the people of Iran understand that logic. Now we'll see if their government understands it. Okay. See you all later.

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