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## Press Conference With the Russian Press

### R. Nicholas Burns, Under Secretary for Political Affairs

U.S. Embassy Moscow

Moscow, Russia

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**UNDER SECRETARY BURNS:** Good Evening. I apologize for keeping you waiting.

I'm here to talk about three aspects of what we've been doing here in Moscow over the last two days. The first issue is the issue of Iran and the P-5 conversations that we had here in Moscow yesterday and the G-8 discussions today. The second issue is the G-8 meeting that we had today of the Political Directors to prepare for the Foreign Ministers and Summit meeting to be held here in Russia – I'll have a few words to say about that. And the last issue is the issue of the democratic movement here in Russia and the NGO community; I had a chance to meet with representatives of both.

And I'm happy to see *Kommersant* here. I saw an interesting photograph of me and an interesting article today, that maybe we can talk about. Interesting in the euphemistic sense.

On Iran: we had productive meetings. Despite what you are reading in some of your newspapers and some of ours, there is actually quite a lot of agreement on what needs to be done in Iran. All the countries at the table – that includes Russia and China, my own country and the Europeans – all of us are very dissatisfied with what Iran's been doing on enrichment. All of us believe that the Iranian decision last week on enrichment contradicts both the IAEA statement of February 4<sup>th</sup> and the United Nations Security Council Presidential Statement. All of us agree that Iran should not acquire nuclear weapons. And all of us talked about how we should now take additional steps to isolate and pressure the Iranian government. And I think that all of us agree that Iran is isolating itself by its own actions. We agree on one other thing: all of us agree that Iran should have the opportunity – the Iranian people – to have civil nuclear power in their own country. But none of us want to see Iran have the fuel cycle – access to the fuel cycle – on Iranian territory.

And I said on behalf of the U.S. several times during the meetings that the U.S. continues to support President Putin's proposal for an offshore fuel supply arrangement to Iran. This proposal made by Russia last October, whereby Russia or some other country or group of countries would perform all of the sensitive enrichment reprocessing

activities outside of Iran, with nuclear fuel shipped into Iran so that Iran could have nuclear power plants. And we supported it then, and we continue to support that Russian proposal.

That's what we agree on. What we need to do now is to try to agree on a common tactical approach at the United Nations Security Council. The next event, as Minister Lavrov said today when he spoke publicly, is for Mohammed ElBaradai to issue a report on April 28<sup>th</sup>. In our view, given what Iran did last week, ElBaradai will have to conclude that Iran is not in compliance with either the IAEA or the UN Security Council documents. So we, the U.S., will support in early May further actions by the Security Council to pressure Iran. And this could take several forms. It could be Chapter VII resolution, which would be compulsory for Iran to agree to. It could amount to sanctions proposals – many countries are now looking at the idea of sanctions on Iran. But a lot of countries around the table made the proposal, including China, that the Security Council has to find a way to take effective action, and has to be united. Because the credibility of the Security Council is at stake. We think of it this way: Iran has crossed the lines drawn by both the IAEA and the Security Council. So, therefore, there has to be a response from the Security Council that is effective. And I'm talking about a diplomatic response. And there are many options. And what we need to do in both the P-5 and the G-8, is we need to work over the next two or three weeks to agree on a specific option. And we had a full discussion of those options last night, but not yet an agreement on it – on any one option – which I didn't expect we would reach last night; it's going to take some time. It's a difficult issue and an important issue. But we think it's time for all of us to use our influence with Iran and our leverage with Iran.

We think, the U.S. thinks, that influence can be best expressed through the Security Council. But it may be that there are things that countries can do individually. Let me give you some examples. We would hope that all countries would stop the flow of dual-use technology to Iran that could be used in Iran's nuclear industry. All countries. This is an American view. Second example: we don't think that any country should assist Iran in its nuclear industry right now, and that includes Bushehr. Third example: no country should sell arms to Iran. So you see, there are things that the European countries can do, the West European countries, there are things that Russia can do individually to increase the pressure on Iran to convince it to suspend its nuclear programs.

Final point on this issue. We – a number of countries raised the problem of Iranian support for terrorism, specifically for Hezbollah and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and for terrorist groups inside of Iraq – including my own country, we raised this, too. Now, today in the G-8 meeting, we had a full discussion of Iran with Japan and Canada and Italy included in this discussion. And we also talked about a number of the issues that should be on the agenda for the G-8 process on the foreign policy side, because our Foreign Ministers will be meeting here in Moscow on June 29<sup>th</sup>. And I think we all agree that Iran should be part of the agenda, with the situation in Iraq, the problems between Israel and the Palestinian authority, Afghanistan, problems in Africa like Sudan, in Uganda. And then a number of countries today suggested that Belarus be part of the agenda. And the opportunity for peace in Nagorno-Karabakh. And our hope for progress in both Georgia and the problems with South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and also our progress in Moldova. So, a long list of issues.

My final point, and then we go to your questions. I just met here in the Embassy with a group of Russian leaders of the some of the Russian civil society – the NGO community. And also had a chance to meet with one of the political party leaders. And I expressed our strong hope for the maintenance and sustenance of democracy here in Russia and for the ability of civil society to succeed.

So that's my report. I'm happy to take your questions.

**QUESTION:** Do you remember the point number VII in the UN Charter, which in fact means a military strike, but can you say that the United States is ready for a military strike against Iran, and (inaudible).

**UNDER SECRETARY BURNS:** Chapter VII in the United Nations does not lead inevitably to the use of military force. Chapter VII actually has been used hundreds of times in the history of the UN going back to 1947, in almost every case not leading to the use of force, but of the Security Council saying to another country, "You must comply with the resolution of the Security Council." I don't know how the word translates, but it has a compulsory impact. And what that means, in this case, if you look at the Presidential Statement of two and half weeks ago, Russia, the United States, China, we're asking Iran to suspend its nuclear programs and return to negotiations. So, the idea, *if* a Chapter VII is to be considered, there are many options, would be to say to Iran, "you must comply with this." It doesn't necessarily mean military force; in fact this is a diplomatic initiative that we're putting forward. President Bush, I just want to – one more word to answer your question – President Bush said yesterday – he was asked publicly yesterday about this – he said, "We have all the options on the table as usual, but..." – "*but...*" – "...we are focused on a diplomatic solution." That is why I came to Moscow: to work with Russia and China and the European countries on a diplomatic solution. That's what we're focused on here. And we have not given up on diplomacy. We think a diplomatic solution is possible, and we favor such a solution. And for one year now – thirteen months – we have been supporting first the European 3, and then the Russian proposal. And I said to (Russian) Deputy Foreign Minister Kislyak and the rest of the diplomats, I said we still support the Russian proposal. It is the best proposal that has been put on the table to give Iran a way to have civil nuclear power but not nuclear weapons. I hope the Russian press will report that we do support this Russian proposal, and wish Iran would support the Russian proposal.

**QUESTION:** (in Russian through interpreter) Is there any contradiction that you say that you support the Russian initiative, and you support the Iranian people's right to use the nuclear energy (for peaceful) purposes, and on the other hand you are saying that everybody else should stop/cease cooperation with Iran in nuclear area, Bushehr included?

**UNDER SECRETARY BURNS:** I think it's logical; it's not a contradiction in the following sense: any successful diplomatic proposal has to be a combination of carrots and sticks. So the carrot is, if Iran plays by the rules, and if it adheres to what the IAEA and the Security Council want, there is a possibility for Iran. But as long as Iran continues to violate what the IAEA and the UN Security Council want, it shouldn't receive the benefits yet, until it promises and indeed exhibits an ability to comply with the IAEA and UNSC. So, our view is that there has to be some pressure – diplomatic pressure – put on Iran. It has to be denied some of the benefits of relations with other countries until it commits to abide by the rules of the international community. It's outside the rules right now. Everyone agreed in the meeting; everyone agrees, that they announced last week, "We have gone to full enrichment, 164 centrifuges," Ahmadinejad said, "3,000 centrifuges by the autumn." He's working – *he said* – he's working on P-2 centrifuges. But Iran has said to the IAEA for two years now, "We're not working on the P-2 centrifuge." And then last week *Ahmadinejad said they are*. So where is the truth here? This combination of carrots and sticks – action, and yet offering a reasonable proposal – is part of a diplomatic effort.

One more point. We're not asking Russia to be the only country that stops normal activities; we're asking all the other countries to stop normal activities. And to name some examples, why should we help Iran develop its nuclear industry by exporting dual-use goods? This is not in our interest. And many countries are doing it. So, we're not singling out Russia. There are many countries that need to take these steps.

**QUESTION:** You said that there was quite a lot of agreement on Iran and to me it sounds a bit confusing because it's an open secret that there was a lot of disagreement as well. So if you manage somehow to narrow down the differences during this particular meeting, and do you expect any major consensus in the approach to (inaudible) the last, the remaining week before the crucial UN meeting?

**UNDER SECRETARY BURNS:** Listen, I respect the role of the press, but I know that in all countries – not just here, and my country, too – sometimes the press is looking for, "So where are these countries disagreeing?" Yes, it's true, we had some disagreements. We have some tactical disagreements that are important: how best to take effective action at the UN. That's a difficult issue; we still need to come to an agreement that we don't have yet. But, I want to start with what we agree on, because it's impressive what we agree on. I won't go over it again, but the long list, especially since last week – I think the result of Ahmadinejad's statements and actions last week are leading to greater unity among us. Because all of us reacted very negatively to what they did last week. So I think that maybe the Iranians are isolating themselves further because of what they've done, and maybe bringing us together a little bit around a common agenda. But you're right, we don't agree on everything; but we're going to try. And we're going to come back and meet in early May – the Political Directors are going to meet in early May, the same group – to see if we can have a common tactical plan for New York, for the Security Council. I think you have to report both sides of this story to be balanced and to be fair.

Was there one more, quick question?

**QUESTION:** You just mentioned that you met the NGOs, the Russian NGOs. The question, have any of them voiced their concern for the controversial NGO law that has currently been introduced in Russia?

**UNDER SECRETARY BURNS:** Yes, they did. Yes, I listened with great attention, and they told me about their views on this law, which they believe – many of them believe – will be difficult to implement.

Thank you.

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