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## Remarks to the Washington Institute on Near East Studies

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As Prepared

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#### Talking Points:

- Successive U.S. administrations have recognized that Iran's regime poses a profound threat to U.S. interests in the Middle East and more broadly across the globe. Over the past six months, however, since the August 2005 inauguration of President Mahmoud Ahmadi-Nejad, this threat has intensified as Iran's approach to the world has become even more radical.
- The international community has so far been united in opposing this threat. This is not time for business as usual with the Iranian regime. It is time for a stiff solution although we have not yet given up hope on diplomacy.
- I would like to discuss with you today the initiatives the United States is taking – in close cooperation with the international community -- to deflect the harmful policies of the Iranian regime: (1) its pursuit of nuclear weapons, (2) its sponsorship of terrorism, (3) its aggressive and intimidating policies in the Middle East, and (4) its oppression of the Iranian people.

#### Iran Nuclear Proliferation

- There is no real doubt internationally about Iran's pursuit of a nuclear weapons capability. For 18 years, Iranian leaders pursued a clandestine enrichment program that they hid from the world, as the International Atomic Energy Agency has repeatedly confirmed. There is simply no basis for anyone to believe that Iran's nuclear program is solely intended for peaceful purposes.
- In fact, not one of the countries I've spoken to over the past 14 months has expressed any doubt about Iran's intentions to build a nuclear weapon.
- The international community stands united in opposing Iran's desire to acquire nuclear weapons. We also stand united in support of Iran's stated ambition to use peaceful nuclear energy – as long as – and this is important – it complies with its safeguarding and nonproliferation obligations.

## History of Negotiations:

- . In March 2005, Secretary Rice announced our support for the EU-3's negotiations with Iran to halt Tehran's nuclear ambitions. This was a significant departure from our previous stance which kept the United States apart from the talks.
- . The EU-3 offered a proposal that would grant Iran far-reaching economic incentives, including access to and assistance with peaceful nuclear reactors. The United States offered its own incentives – we agreed to consider licensing the sale of spare parts for Iran's aging civilian airliners and dropping our prior objections to Iran's bid to join the World Trade Organization.
- . After Iran unilaterally broke off talks with the EU-3 in the autumn of 2005, we worked for months and succeeded in creating a broad international coalition to isolate Iran. In October 2005, Secretary Rice traveled to Moscow to convince Russia of the importance of cohesion on this issue. I personally made eleven trips to Europe in 2005 to consult with our European allies and Russia on Iran. In November, President Bush spoke in support of a Russian proposal through which Russia would supply the fuel for Iran's peaceful nuclear reactors, as long as no enrichment activity takes place on Iranian soil. Iran rejected the proposal out of hand – again belying its own claims that it only seeks peaceful nuclear capabilities.
- . In response to Iran's confrontational approach, in late January 2006 Secretary Rice successfully persuaded all five permanent Members of the UN Security Council to vote together at the IAEA to report Iran to the UN Security Council. On February 4, the Permanent Five, along with a massive global coalition comprised of countries as diverse as India, Sri Lanka, Brazil, Egypt, and Yemen, spoke with one voice: these countries, all represented in the IAEA Board of Governors, adopted a resolution to report Iran's activities to the UN Security Council.
- . Iran clearly miscalculated the strength and depth of international concern and now finds itself isolated. President Bush and Secretary Rice's determined and measured diplomacy is responsible for the significant diplomatic achievement of assembling and leading this broad-based, diverse, and powerful coalition.
- . We have started a new phase of diplomacy -- action by the UN Security Council. On March 29, the Security Council unanimously adopted a Presidential Statement calling on Iran to immediately suspend enrichment activities within 30 days and fully cooperate with the February 4 IAEA resolution. Instead of complying, President Ahmadinejad provoked the international community further with his announcement that Iran is "presently conducting research" on P-2 centrifuges. Any current work by Iran on P2 centrifuges would be a further rejection of the UN Security Council's and IAEA Board of Governors' calls on Iran to suspend such activity. It could also suggest efforts by Iran to mask past undeclared P2 research that the IAEA has been trying to investigate. .
- . With actions such as these, Iran continues to miscalculate the intelligence and resolve of the international community. On April 28, IAEA Director General ElBaradei submitted his report to the Security Council and the IAE Board of Governors that confirmed Iran's failure to comply with the March 29 UN Security Council Presidential Statement's and IAEA Board's required steps.
- . Due to Iran's continued defiance, the Security Council is now studying a Chapter VII resolution -- drafted by the UK, France, and Germany -- that would require Iran to suspend uranium enrichment and fully cooperate with the IAEA. Secretary Rice met with her P-5 counterparts in New York this week to support this effort and discuss the long term strategy to peacefully address the threats posed by the Iranian regime.
- . If after all these steps are taken Iran had not acceded to the wishes of the international community, then of course we would have to look at possible sanctions, which a number of countries in Europe and elsewhere are already beginning to explore. Any sanctions we would consider will be specifically targeted to hurt the regime, not the great majority of innocent Iranians.
- . The Iranians cannot afford the kind of isolation that the international community could actually bring about if it chooses to. Iran is very dependent on its integration into the international economy, both for its ability to get products or its ability to sell products.

- **Going forward, we will do everything we can to maintain the widest possible international consensus on the steps Iran must take, and continue to keep Iran isolated on this issue.** Iran must realize that its only option to make a strategic decision and end its pursuit of nuclear weapons.
- While we make it clear that no option is off the table, President Bush and Secretary Rice strongly support a peaceful, negotiated settlement of the Iranian nuclear problem.

Our message to Tehran remains: recommit to the Paris Agreement, return to full suspension of all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities, and negotiate in good faith the eventual cessation and dismantling of all sensitive nuclear fuel cycle activities. The spotlight must remain on the Iranian government and on the requirement that they adhere to their international commitments.

### **Iran Sponsor of Terrorism and Regional Ambitions**

- A second critical U.S. and international concern is that Iran remains the leading state sponsor of terrorism in the world and has sought to play a destabilizing role in Iraq and elsewhere.
- Iran provides money, weapons, and training to HAMAS, Hizbullah, and Palestinian rejectionist groups. These are some of the world's most deadly terrorist organizations, responsible for the killing of thousands of innocents, including Americans. Hizbullah has been responsible for more American deaths than any other terrorist organization apart from al-Qaida.
- In October 2005, Iranian officials traveled to Damascus to meet with leaders of Hizbullah, and HAMAS, and several other Palestinian rejectionist groups. As late as December 2005, members of Lebanese Hizbullah received explosives training in Iran arranged by the Iranian government's intelligence services. In January 2006, Ahmadi-Nejad again visited Syria and met with the leaders of Hizbullah, Islamic Jihad, HAMAS, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP-GC pro-Syrian faction). Ahmadi-Nejad pledged Iran's support to militant Palestinian factions.
- Iran has also provided assistance, including weapons, training and explosives, to anti-Coalition Shi'a forces in Iraq.
- We have sanctioned Iran as a State Sponsor of Terrorism, and called for the regime to abide by the requirements of U. N. Security Council Resolution 1373 to deny safe haven to those who plan, support, or commit terrorist acts and to affirmatively take steps to prevent terrorist acts by providing early warning to other states by exchange of information.
- We also continue to urge other governments – including the Arab states of the Middle East – to press Iran on its support for and sponsorship of terrorism, and on its generally threatening behavior towards its neighbors.

### **State of Iranian Democracy and Human Rights**

- As we work to end the threat posed by Iran's nuclear ambitions and sponsorship of terror, we are standing with the Iranian people in their aspirations for freedom.
- We see two Irans: the "official Iran" with an appalling human rights record, led by individuals who have been explicitly implicated in the murders of their own people, of the dissidents who dared to challenge the regime. But we see another Iran, the Iran of a great people – almost 70 million of them – of faith and creativity. of almost 70 million strong. This is the Iran of the poets and scholars, that has produced a sophisticated society that should be the envy of the region and one day certainly will be.
- Unfortunately, the hard-liners in Iran have mounted an all-out defense of their hold on the regime and its people, culminating in last June's election of Mahmoud Ahmadi-Nejad as its president. The election itself was deeply flawed:

Ø A small group of clerics culled more than 1,000 aspiring candidates, eliminating all the women, to a handful whose

loyalty to the regime seemed assured.

Ø Hard-liners undertook a concerted, last-minute campaign through their networks of influence in the mosques, the military, and the Revolutionary Guards mobilize support for Ahmadi-Nejad.

Ø The polling was reportedly rife with manipulation and fraud.

From this inherently flawed process came the improbable ascent of Ahmadi-Nejad.

- Some Iranian citizens may have voted for Ahmadi-Nejad with the sincere hope that he represented change from the corrupt, old guard of the regime. If so, they have been sorely disappointed. His repeated denial of the Holocaust and his threats to "wipe Israel off the map" have earned the outrage of the international community, and have deeply shamed a country that – until its revolution 27 years ago – had a unique history of tolerance and a large Jewish community.
- In an effort to assert his authority, Iran's president has purged qualified officials at all levels of Iranian government – including in Iran's overseas diplomatic corps -- and placed his inexperienced but loyal hardliners throughout the system.
- He issued edicts banning Western music and demanding that Iranian television broadcast fewer programs about women's issues. He has put forward a budget that would make Iran more dependent than ever on oil revenues, and make its economy even less competitive in attracting domestic or foreign investment.
- The regime's poor human rights record worsened throughout 2005, and Iran continued to commit serious abuses of human rights. Summary executions, disappearances, extremist vigilantism, widespread use of torture, solitary confinement, and other degrading treatment remained problems. Juvenile offenders were executed, and sentences of stoning continue to be handed down. Protesters have been arrested and tortured. Journalists and bloggers continue to be arrested and mistreated for daring to publish their opinions.
- In February the Iranian regime answered the pleas of Tehran bus drivers for better working conditions by sending paid thugs to beat them. Journalist and political activist Akbar Ganji spent nearly six years in prison for his reporting on the murders of Iranian dissidents and his advocacy of a secular Iranian republic.
- In the face of these oppressive internal conditions, the people of Iran regularly give the world reason for great hope about the country's future. Courageous activists, lawyers and dissidents such as Ahmad Batebi, Hoda Saber, Taqi Rahmani and Reza Aljani and so many others –challenged the regime's repressive policies and suffered dire consequences for their efforts to advance democracy.
- In spite of its regime, Iran produces thoughtful and serious men of faith like Ayatollah Hussein Ali Montazeri, one of the authors of Iran's constitution, Hojjatoleslam Mohsen Kadivar, Hassan Yousefi Eshkevari, and many others in the seminaries and pulpits of Iran, who want to see a humane and enlightened country. We may not agree with everything they say but we deeply respect their efforts to promote a more tolerant and vibrant synthesis of faith and democracy.
- Iranians know that their government may punish them for voicing their views on the Internet or in the newspapers, and yet journalists continue to write provocative pieces, and thousands of other Iranians post their thoughts to web-blogs every day. Iranians have found ways to cope with a system that strives to deprive them of their basic rights and culture – and we are confident that they will also find ways to change that system.

### **What the US is doing:**

- This reality of the two Irans – a repressive, mismanaged regime and a sophisticated citizenry - confronts us every day, and this reality is central to our Iran policy. While we oppose the regime's aggressive and irresponsible actions, the

United States – in cooperation with the international community – is seeking to help Iranians to bring about **peaceful** democratic change.

- Congress has been very helpful in this regard. For FY 2006 Congress authorized \$10 million to support the cause of freedom and human rights in Iran. This year, Secretary Rice requested an additional \$75 million to amplify our effort to reach out to the Iranian people in the following ways:

Ø We will expand our outreach to young Iranians who have never experienced democracy by sponsoring new Iranian students to study in the United States. This initiative - which would be a one-year, graduate level program in a wide range of fields, with an emphasis on the social sciences, health and environmental sciences and humanities – would be an effort to re-establish the formerly robust contacts between our people that have eroded since the revolution. There is no guarantee that the Iranian regime, which recently rejected our offer of assistance to earthquake victims, would permit such an ambitious and exciting program but we owe it to the Iranian people and the very real friendship we want to have with them, to make this sincere offer.

Ø We also plan to augment professional, cultural, sports and youth exchanges designed to build bridges between our two nations as ping-pong diplomacy did with China in the 1970s.

Ø While we look forward to the day when Iran's behavior will permit us to have normal diplomatic relations;, however, we will not let this obstacle prevent us from reaching out to the Iranian people. We currently reach out to Iranians through our Persian website -- over 60 percent of visitors come from inside Iran -- and plan to develop further cutting edge initiatives -- what we call eDiplomacy -- to promote active connections between Iranians and Americans. Loosely based on the model of the virtual consulate for Davao, Philippines, the Iran Virtual Gateway sites -- in effect virtual American Interest Sections for Iranian cities -- will be a vibrant tools for the State Department to convey America's respect for Iran's people, history and culture. Content on our Iran Virtual Gateway sites could include scheduled online chats with officials, academics, popular artists, actors and musicians, information on educational opportunities, accurate information about events inside Iran, and online consular services to ease the process for Iranian visa applicants.

Ø Additionally, we plan to greatly expand our television broadcasting in Farsi into Iran to penetrate Iran's government dominated media in the short to medium term. We will seek to develop civic education campaigns that increase understanding of the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy.

- Finally, the Department has created several new Iran-related positions in Washington in a new Office of Iranian Affairs within the Bureau for Near East and North African Affairs (NEA) as well as in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. We will also add several Iran-related positions abroad, both to support a new Regional Presence Office focused on Iran at the US Consulate in Dubai, and to enhance our coverage of significant Iranian diaspora centers in Europe and elsewhere.

## Conclusion

- There are Iranian actions that we reject and condemn. But there is much that is good and noble there. This year we mark the one hundredth anniversary of the 1906 Constitutional Revolution in Iran. During that noble and sincere revolt to establish a measure of democracy in Iran, a young American teacher from Nebraska, a graduate of Princeton named Howard Baskerville, fought and died along with Iranian students trying to break the royalist siege of Tabriz. One day I hope to visit the grave of Baskerville in Tabriz.

- With the help of our international allies, we can all realize our vision of a free Iran that allows its people to express themselves and reach their full potential; an Iran that is a stabilizing influence in the Middle East, instead of a sponsor of terrorists and nuclear proliferators; and an Iran that is prosperous and at peace with the world.

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