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## Briefing on Iran, the Situation in the Middle East, and Other Matters

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

Remarks to the media following a Security Council Stakeout

New York City

August 22, 2006

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**Ambassador Bolton:** Okay. Let me just say one word on the subject of Iran's response, which apparently has been delivered to ambassadors in Tehran. Obviously, this is a significant moment. The Iranians have had approximately two and a half months to consider the very, very generous offer that the five permanent members of the Security Council and Germany have made to them. So in their response today, which I take it, after months of rhetoric, should constitute the definitive Iranian answer, we will see whether they are now prepared to abide by their obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and convince the world that their intentions are as they say they are -- peaceful. We will obviously study the Iranian response carefully, but we are also prepared if it does not meet the terms set by the Perm 5 foreign ministers to proceed here in the Security Council, as the ministers have agreed, with economic sanctions. If, on the other hand, the Iranians have chosen the path of cooperation, as we've said repeatedly, then a different relationship with the United States and the rest of the world is now possible.

**Reporter:** Ambassador, will you consider today's response by Iran to the incentives offer from the group of ambassadors you mentioned also the response to the Security Council demands or will you wait until the 31st of August to proceed with whatever responses you will have to their response?

**Ambassador Bolton:** I think this is a case where I'd have to say it depends on what the Iranians say. Certainly, the rhetoric, particularly in the past few days, has indicated they're not prepared to suspend their uranium enrichment activities. But we have consistently said for two and a half months that we would not rise to the rhetoric; we would wait for the definitive response. The president emphasized that again yesterday, and as we understand it, this should be the definitive response, and we'll move on the basis of our reading of it.

**Reporter:** Ambassador, would you please reiterate what the expectation is of Iran to satisfy the requirements of -- that the United States and the Security Council have outlined?

**Ambassador Bolton:** We've made it clear in Security Council Resolution 1696 that Iran has a choice. They can either take up the very generous offer that the five permanent members and Germany have extended to them, and if they do, there's a possibility of a different relationship with the United States and others. But if they don't, we've also made it clear that their unwillingness to give up their pursuit of nuclear weapons will result in our efforts in the Security Council to obtain economic sanctions against them. So the choice for two and a half months now has been with Iran, and if in fact, as we expect, this is the definitive response today, we'll know which path they've chosen.

**Reporter:** Mr. Ambassador, French sources have said that a second resolution on Lebanon on the UNIFIL mandate is out of the question. Will that -- the lack of consensus in the council -- will it affect the U.S. position?

**Ambassador Bolton:** Well, let's be clear what we're talking about. We have said for quite some time that the issue of Hezbollah's disarming would not be taken up in the first resolution. Now, how exactly we address that in another resolution is still the subject of consultations. As I said yesterday, there was no issue of timing there, but there's never been any doubt -- there's been any doubt that full implementation of 1559 is going to require the elimination of all armed militias inside Lebanon and the restoration of a full democratic process there.

**Reporter:** And when do you foresee this (inaudible)?

**Ambassador Bolton:** As I said, we don't have a particular timing in mind. We're going to watch the unfolding of Resolution 1701 and make a judgment as appropriate.

**Reporter:** Given the difficulties in reaching a consensus on previous Iran resolutions in the Council here and given that this is going probably be a very serious resolution if Iran gives a negative response, how quickly do you think you can get moving on this?

**Ambassador Bolton:** Well, you're trying to get me to make a timing prediction again --

**Reporter:** (Inaudible) are you imagining within the next month or do you imagine --

**Ambassador Bolton:** I think we will be prepared to move to submit elements of a resolution to the Council very quickly. But it really is a test for the Council, and we'll see how it responds. Let me just take one more here, if there are any. Otherwise --

**Reporter:** A question on the UNIFIL force. Do you know anything more today about the progress the United Nations is making in getting countries, particularly European countries, to sign up?

**Ambassador Bolton:** My understanding is that the Europeans will be meeting in Brussels tomorrow, although I'm told just before coming over here perhaps that meeting may be postponed for a few days, so I'm hesitant to say anything definitive. I think we will know more later in the day. Perhaps we can talk about it then. And we'll be addressing some of these questions, obviously, in the meeting of the Security Council we're about to have, okay? Thanks very much.

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