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## On-the-Record Briefing on Iran

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

Briefing Following the P5+1 Foreign Ministers Meeting

London, United Kingdom

October 6, 2006

**UNDER SECRETARY BURNS:** We had a very successful meeting of ministers. It was the seventh time that they have met since February of this year when they first met in London on the issue of Iran. They concluded that --

**QUESTION:** January or February?

**UNDER SECRETARY BURNS:** February 1st. Or January 31st. Sorry.

**QUESTION:** January.

**UNDER SECRETARY BURNS:** Actually, the meeting ended on February 1st. (Laughter.)

They concluded that Iran is not now prepared to negotiate with us based on the offer we made in Vienna on June 1. It's been four months and one week since we made that offer. Javier Solana has had numerous conversations with Ali Larijani. The Russian national security advisor had conversations this week with Larijani and the Iranian leadership in Tehran. And it was agreed based on both of those reports that the Iranians are not willing to suspend their enrichment-related programs at Natanz and therefore we have no alternative but to proceed along the second path that we talked about.

So consequently, we'll begin next week to debate a sanctions regime at the United Nations. I would expect that to unfold in two ways. First, the political directors of these countries are going to meet once again, probably by videoconference on Tuesday or Wednesday, to continue the discussion that we had today. We met for about three and a half hours today.

**QUESTION:** That was prior to the foreign ministers?

**UNDER SECRETARY BURNS:** It was prior to the ministers meeting, yeah. The decision has been made we'll go

for sanctions. The question is what will the extent of the sanctions be, what will the nature of those sanctions be. Following that meeting, our permanent representatives, probably the next day, will begin meeting in New York to continue that debate and to have -- to start to draw up the Security Council resolution.

As Margaret Beckett said when she spoke to the press today, the offer that we made is going to remain on the table. But Iran has to realize that it's missing a major opportunity both to negotiate with the United States for the first time in 27 years, but more importantly to negotiate with these six countries, the perm five countries and Germany, based on the offer we made. And we have to turn -- in the view of the United States, we have to turn to sanctions to raise the cost to the Iranians of their irresponsible attitude. That's been expressed over the last several months.

So it was a very long day and I'll just structure it for you. I think the political directors met for about four hours and then the ministers joined us. And as you know because of the problem with the aircraft, Secretary Rice could only join the latter part of that meeting. Foreign Minister Li was also not here; he was represented by one of his senior officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Nevertheless, this outcome was not in doubt because the report by Solana and the others was that the Iranians just aren't even close to coming to an agreement to suspend their enrichment programs.

And so we said back on June 1st there were two paths. We have offered that positive path for four -- over four months. We've extended the deadline twice to accommodate them. Solana had very these very comprehensive discussions. But there's no question now we have to proceed with sanctions.

And that's a good way to begin.

**QUESTION:** Could you just remind us of the two deadlines? One was August the 30th --

**QUESTION:** 31st.

**UNDER SECRETARY BURNS:** Initially we offered this package -- if you go back, Secretary Rice gave her speech on May 31st where she announced that the United States is willing to negotiate, and that was breaking with decades of U. S. policy. The next day, she came to Vienna and we agreed on the package of positive and negative disincentives. The positive package was a very generous package of economic and technological and scientific incentives, programs that we'd work with the Iranians should they agree to negotiate. The negative part of the package was a list of sanctions that we would draw from if we ever had to go to the Security Council, so we looked at that list today.

We said at that meeting on June 1st we wanted to hear back from the Iranians by the end of the month, end of June. In the intervening time period, we decided that we would give the Iranians some time to listen to what Javier Solana had to say, and he met with them a few times. We then -- the ministers then got together in Paris on July 12th and they decided at that meeting that they would negotiate a Security Council resolution where they'd codify this offer. That resolution -- 1696 -- was passed on July 31st. It gave the Iranians -- and this fundamental construct, negotiate or sanctions, was embedded in that Security Council resolution. It gave until August 31st.

When August 31st came around, the Iranians had just started for the first time to have serious discussions with Javier Solana. So we decided, okay, we'll give them some more time, perhaps till the end of September. And then we met at the Waldorf=Astoria two weeks and three days ago and we said, okay, we'll wait till the end of the UNGA. So they

had numerous opportunities to engage Solana, to engage the Russian leadership. A number of the other European countries had discussions.

But we're not any closer to the Iranians agreeing to suspend their enrichment programs now than we were a couple of months ago, so there's just no question what we have to do now. And you've looked at the statement. The statement is clear. We've got to go down this path.

**QUESTION:** Well, can I clarify something? I thought I understood you to say next week unfolds in a couple of ways and you got through the videoconference part. What happens after that?

**UNDER SECRETARY BURNS:** Oh, I'm sorry. I thought I mentioned it. So --

**QUESTION:** Who participates in the videoconference?

**UNDER SECRETARY BURNS:** Okay, let me take you back. Two weeks ago last Tuesday evening, Secretary Rice hosted a dinner for all of these ministers at the Waldorf=Astoria, and at that dinner we took account of what had happened and it was clear that the Iranians were not moving at that point to enter into negotiations. But Larijani and Solana still felt that they had more to talk about and Larijani indicated he wanted additional meetings, so we all agreed that we'd give more time, until this week. Okay?

Three days later, again in New York, two weeks ago today, the political directors got together at the Waldorf and we began to discuss the sanctions list. We've had, I think, two or three phone calls since then, including three days ago, and we met again today before the ministers.

There's been considerable discussion about the sanctions regime and I think we've certainly isolated the type of regime that is probably going to end up materializing, but we haven't agreed on the specific sanctions yet. So as a result of tonight's discussion -- the big discussion tonight was, okay, do we draw these talks to an end and do we go to sanctions? And the answer was yes and you saw that in Beckett's statement.

And now --

**QUESTION:** I'm sorry, can we say though the decision was made today to proceed with sanctions?

**UNDER SECRETARY BURNS:** Yeah, I'll just read you Beckett's -- Beckett went out and read this. Foreign Secretary Beckett --

**QUESTION:** Can we get copies of it? We don't have copies of it.

**QUESTION:** (Inaudible.)

**UNDER SECRETARY BURNS:** I had no idea.

**QUESTION:** I thought the key phrase though was "agreed to consult on sanctions," which is --

**UNDER SECRETARY BURNS:** Yeah.

**QUESTION:** But is different from "agreed to impose sanctions."

**UNDER SECRETARY BURNS:** No, it's not. And I'll tell you why. If you look at this, we say: "We're deeply disappointed that he has -- " Solana " -- has had to report that Iran is not -- " I'm reading now from it " -- that Iran is not prepared to suspend its enrichment-related and reprocessing activities, as required by the IAEA Board who made it mandatory and UN Security Council Resolution 1696.

"Accordingly, we will now consult on measures under Article 41 of Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, as envisaged in that resolution." Go back to the resolution. The resolution says if they don't suspend, we will adopt these measures.

**QUESTION:** I thought the resolution said "it is our intention."

**UNDER SECRETARY BURNS:** No, "we will then adopt." "We will then adopt," is the formulation in 1696. Very specific. And so what we've got is an agreement we've got to go to the Security Council. Yeah, I've got scribbles all over it, but we'll get this for you.

**QUESTION:** (Inaudible.)

**UNDER SECRETARY BURNS:** Can you just, you know, go to the UK website and download. I'm sure it's there right now.

**QUESTION:** Some of us couldn't get on the web because of the hotel that we had --

**MR. MCCORMACK:** We've got someone there making you copies.

**UNDER SECRETARY BURNS:** Yeah.

**QUESTION:** How was the determination made that there was agreement on this? Was there actually a vote? Was there a hand-raising? Was there --

**UNDER SECRETARY BURNS:** Well, you know, you're only talking about six foreign ministers around the table with Javier Solana. And Solana reported and various other people reported on their view of what was going on. At the end, Secretary Beckett summed up and said, "I think it's clear what we've got to do."

Now, what's not agreed is what the specific sanctions will be. What we did on June 1st is we developed a menu of sanctions. It's two pages long. And we said when we go to a sanctions resolution we will take certain sanctions -- we will agree on certain sanctions off this list. That is what we are now doing and we do not yet have agreement on that. I want to be very clear about that. So the reason for discussions next week among the political directors and then the UN permanent representatives, our ambassadors to the UN subsequently, will be to agree. And that may take some time.

I don't know. It's hard to put a time frame on it, but we're working hard on it.

**QUESTION:** Can you just --

**QUESTION:** So no resolution next week, probably? No resolution that --

**UNDER SECRETARY BURNS:** I don't want to put a time -- I don't want to predict.

**QUESTION:** Just to be crystal clear, you would say that a political decision was taken today to impose sanctions to be defined later?

**UNDER SECRETARY BURNS:** Yes, because I'll tell you why. And if you look at the language here, because it's spelled out in UN Resolution 1696 and this is all based on that. "We will then adopt measures under Article 41, Chapter 7."

**QUESTION:** But my recollection -- and correct me if I'm wrong -- but the word "intent" or "intention" was at the beginning of that sentence and it also said underlines or underscores that additional decisions may be necessary.

**UNDER SECRETARY BURNS:** Do you have it? I remember there were two clauses. "Should Iran not suspend its enrichment programs, we will then adopt measures." "Measures" is a word for sanctions. It's the UN word for sanctions under Article 41, Chapter 7. So that's what's been at stake.

And we said the same thing two weeks earlier in Paris on July 12. We can get you that statement. So this construct has held together.

**QUESTION:** Isn't it possible this whole thing could get hung up though on the question of what sanctions to impose and when?

**UNDER SECRETARY BURNS:** Oh, I think there's going to be a spirited debate about what kind of sanctions should be finally agreed. But no, I don't believe it's going to be held up forever and I do think we're going to have a sanctions resolution.

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