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06 March 2006

**Iran Might Face Tangible Consequences if Nuclear Threat Persists**  
**Solutions will be more difficult if action is delayed, U.N. envoy Bolton says**

Washington -- If Iran's government continues seeking nuclear weapons, it will face "tangible and painful consequences," warned John Bolton, U.S. representative to the United Nations.

"Given the comprehensive nature of the threat, we must be prepared to rely on comprehensive solutions and use all tools at our disposal to stop the threat that the Iranian regime poses," Bolton told participants at a policy conference sponsored by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee March 5 in Washington.

Bolton said Iran's pattern of diplomatic "doublespeak" with European and Russian negotiators over its nuclear program reveals the regime's true intent to develop nuclear weapons (See [related article](#).)

He said it is critical for the matter to come before the U.N. Security Council to help mobilize international public opinion.

"Alternatively," the ambassador said, "if Iran follows the course of Libya and makes the strategic decision that the pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, the sponsorship of terror and the oppression of its people makes it less, not more secure, then relations with the outside world can improve dramatically."

Bolton's speech came a day before the International Atomic Energy Agency meets to forward its latest findings on Iran's nuclear activities to the U.N. Security Council (See [related article](#).)

In his speech, Bolton also discussed U.S. efforts to counter the Iranian regime's sponsorship of terrorists in the region and U.S. initiatives to support freedom and human rights in Iran as a means to counter Iran's repression of domestic political opposition.

"The longer we wait to confront the [nuclear] threat Iran poses, the harder and more intractable it will become to solve," he said.

For additional information on U.S. policy, see [Arms Control and Non-Proliferation](#).

Following is the transcript of the ambassador's remarks:

(begin transcript)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
SPEECH BY THE HONORABLE JOHN R. BOLTON  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
DELIVERED TO THE AIPAC POLICY CONFERENCE  
WASHINGTON D.C.  
MARCH 5, 2006

**THE GROWING THREAT OF THE IRANIAN REGIME****INTRODUCTION**

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests, I would like to thank you for inviting me here to address this year's Policy Conference. Your work to help to raise awareness and inform debates on issues vital to the national security of both the United States and Israel is a major and important contribution. No doubt some of the issues you will be tackling here over the next two days are amongst the most seemingly intractable, but that is all the more reason why they are the most appropriate, indeed crucial ones to discuss. The work you do to help to promote the peace and prosperity of Israel and to strengthen the ties that bind our nations helps to cement

our rock-solid alliance -- one that will never allow the state of Israel, as some have suggested, to be "wiped off the map".

I wish that I could stand before you here today and say that in the year 2006, we have not observed some very troubling developments. Sadly, it seems that we have traveled back in time in some ways: back to a time when a world leader trumpets the call of war and openly calls for the destruction of the state of Israel; back to a time when this same leader brazenly and with shocking ignorance questions the horrors that unfolded with the Holocaust.

While Mr. Ahmadi-nejad, president of the Islamic Republic of Iran, has clearly failed his lessons in history, indulge me a moment if you will to offer him up at least one lesson on current events: our commitment to Israel's security and the alliance between the United States and Israel are unshakeable. The work AIPAC has done to forge and strengthen those ties should serve as a powerful reminder to any leader now or in the future that, simply put, there will be no destruction of the state of Israel.

While there is no doubt that the question of Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons is first and foremost on people's minds, and rightly so, the problem runs deeper. As Secretary Rice recently noted in her testimony on Capitol Hill, "we have a comprehensive view of the threat that Iran poses." It is not just that the regime is seeking to develop nuclear weapons, but that it is also the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism and is working to destabilize the region to advance its ideological ambitions. It is not just the external threat that worries us, but the fact that Iranian government oppresses its own people, denying them basic liberties and human rights.

Given the comprehensive nature of the threat, we must be prepared to rely on comprehensive solutions and use all tools at our disposal to stop the threat that the Iranian regime poses. It was with this in mind that Secretary Rice noted that, "The United States will actively confront the aggressive policies of this Iranian regime. And at the same time, we are going to work to support the aspirations of the Iranian people for freedom in their own country."

#### IRAN'S PURSUIT OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

No doubt the primary threat that Israel and the United States face from the Iran regime is its clear and unrelenting drive to acquire nuclear weapons and the means to deliver those weapons. For years the international community has been hearing of the mounting and voluminous evidence -- confirmed by IAEA inspectors -- of Iran's deception and denial in violation of its treaty obligations with the IAEA and international community. Through intense diplomatic work, the IAEA Board of Governors has finally reported Iran's failure to allay concerns about the nature of its nuclear program to the United Nations Security Council, a step it would have been fully justified in taking several years ago, but that was postponed in the hope that Iran would choose cooperation over confrontation. Thus far, this hope has been in vain.

I find it deeply ironic that the United States is so often accused of aggressive unilateralism when we have been the ones pursuing multilateral efforts through the IAEA, including in conjunction with the EU3 and the Russians, and now the United Nations. Following the conclusion of the IAEA Board of Governors meeting that will begin tomorrow in Vienna, Director General ElBaradei will convey to the Security Council his latest report on Iran's nuclear activities. The longer we wait to confront the threat Iran poses, the harder and more intractable it will become to solve.

This is not to say that we do not support the ongoing diplomatic efforts by the British, French, and Germans -- or EU-3 as we call them -- and the Russians, but we must not ignore Tehran's refusal to address the concerns of the international community. For over two years, the EU-3 has engaged in active diplomacy with Tehran and presented one reasonable proposal after another. The mullahs in Iran accepted these agreements reached in Paris and then unilaterally broke the agreement by resuming uranium conversion work last fall. In the case of the ongoing negotiations with the Russians, we are observing double-speak on the part of the Iranian regime. With one voice, they are saying that they welcome the discussions with the Russian Federation and view it as a possible solution to the impasse. With another voice, though, they are flatly refusing to consider the core condition that Russia, the EU-3 and we would require -- namely that Iran give up access to the technology and materials that would enable them to have indigenous capability -- a nuclear fuel cycle -- to develop nuclear weapons.

The government of Tehran's trumpeting of its right to a civil peaceful nuclear program is a canard. The Russian proposal enables the Iranians to reap the benefits of civil nuclear power while addressing concerns that they are really pursuing nuclear weapons. The EU3 proposal even opened the possibility of technical cooperation on nuclear power. As the President has said, we do not oppose Iran enjoying the benefits of peaceful, safeguarded nuclear energy. It is clear, however, that Iran's pursuit of the nuclear fuel cycle is neither peaceful nor for nuclear energy. Frankly, Iran's track record justifies this fear. As the resolution passed by the IAEA Board of Governors notes, there have been "many failures and breaches of its obligations to comply with its NPT Safeguards Agreement." Put differently, with rights come responsibilities -- responsibilities that Iran has not come close to meeting.

It is unclear exactly how events will play out once the Security Council takes up the agenda item of Iran. As a number of officials, myself included, have noted earlier, there are a range of options available. Letting it languish, however, is not one of them. Failure by the Security Council to act on this matter would be a highly detrimental abrogation of the duties it is charged with under the UN Charter. Forgive my moment of facetiousness when dealing with a matter literally of life and death, but if the pursuit of nuclear weapons by a state with a leader who calls for another to be "wiped off the map" is not considered a threat to international peace and security, I daresay one must ask -- what is? The Security Council should take due note that failure to act in a timely manner and with a seriousness of purpose will do lasting damage to the credibility of the Council.

The Security Council will likely take a graduated approach to dealing with this issue, but it is critical that we use the Council to help mobilize international public opinion. Rest assured, though, we are not relying on the Security Council as the only tool in our toolbox to address this problem. In addition to our diplomatic efforts at the IAEA, the UN Security Council, and bilaterally, we are beefing up our defensive measures to cope with the Iranian nuclear threat. As Secretary Rice has stated, "In conjunction with our multilateral diplomacy, the United States will develop sensible measures, security measures, including looking further at our Proliferation Security Initiative and those who cooperate with us to try and deny to regimes like Iran, North Korea and others the materials for covert programs that threaten the international system."

This combined pressure, we hope, will persuade the Iranian regime to make the strategic decision to forego their pursuit of nuclear weapons. Unlike North Korea, the Iranian people have many ties to the world, whether economic, social, or cultural. We must use those ties to help to raise the pressure on the Iranian regime. The United States already imposes numerous bilateral sanctions on Iran, and while it is too soon to begin sanctions by the Security Council, it is noteworthy that many other governments around the world have begun to include the word "sanctions" in their discourse when discussing Iran. The Iran regime must be made aware that if it continues down the path of international isolation, there will be tangible and painful consequences.

Alternatively, if Iran follows the course of Libya and makes the strategic decision that the pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, the sponsorship of terror and the oppression of its people makes it less, not more secure, then relations with the outside world can improve dramatically. Thus, the question of how far the Security Council will go, and whether it eventually will have to consider the imposition of sanctions, or the extent to which we need to develop defensive measures against Iran, is really a question for Mr. Ahmadi-nejad and the Iranian regime to answer.

#### PROMOTING DEMOCRACY IN IRAN

Sadly, the signals coming from the new President -- note I did not say freely elected President -- are not encouraging; indeed, they are outright hostile. There is no doubt that the pursuit of nuclear weapons by Iran's regime has taken on greater salience given the behavior that these autocrats have displayed in other regards. Iran has long been a rogue state as the world's leading state sponsor and funder of terrorism. The "election" of Ahmadi-nejad has only deepened the Iran regime's isolation and heightened tensions in the region. I must admit that it is somewhat surreal to hear coming out the mouth of a world leader rhetoric that we thought had been relegated to the dustbin of history. It's not just conferences or sponsoring cartoon competitions calling into question the Holocaust, it is their overt and increasingly vocal support of terrorist organizations that is profoundly disturbing. To see the Iranian President go to Damascus and hold a summit meeting with leaders of Hezbollah and Hamas as well as the leaders of Syria can not but raise considerable concern about his intentions.

Let there be no misunderstanding, though: as President Bush and Secretary Rice made clear, since September 11th, the U.S. has been a nation at war, and we stand shoulder to shoulder with Israel and others in the region in this fight against terrorism. It is not just a question for the United States and Israel to consider, however. Obviously, the threat that Iran poses to Israel is palpably clear, but it is not just Israel that is threatened. Iran continues to actively support forces that would tear Lebanon apart. And we continue to observe an ongoing pattern on the part of the Iran regime to interfere with our efforts to support the democratic transition in Iraq. While Iran used to view the regime of Saddam Hussein as a threat to its security -- they now have a different, and frankly, far more dangerous foe -- democracy. Iran is not like North Korea where the populace has little access to outside information. The Iranian people are all too aware that the Iraqis were able to vote for candidates who did not have to pass litmus tests by a council of Mullahs.

For it is the people of Iran that our combined efforts must work together to bolster. As Secretary Rice noted, "the United States wishes to reach out to the Iranian people and support their desire to realize their own freedom and to secure their own democratic and human rights. The Iranian people should know that the United States fully supports their aspirations for a freer, better future."

The U.S. has an ongoing and active campaign to support the cause of freedom and human rights in Iran. I am pleased to note, too, that we are devoting more resources to this effort. The Administration has requested \$75 million in supplemental funding in 2006 to support democracy in Iran. This is up from the \$10 million we used last year to develop support networks for Iranian reformers, political dissidents and human rights activists. Secretary Rice also recently testified before Congress that she intends to notify it of a request to reprogram additional funding in this regard.

These funds would be targeted to a variety of projects to increase our support for the development of civil society in Iran. Examples include improving our radio broadcasting and satellite television broadcasts. We also intend to support Internet and other efforts to reach the Iranian public with \$5 million in funding for public diplomacy. We will also support the development of independent Farsi television and radio.

We are working to build other bridges as well. We are working with the Treasury Department to overcome U.S. regulatory restrictions to allow the U.S. Government to make grants to nongovernmental organizations for democracy promotion activities in Iran. We want to expand our educational exchanges with the young people of Iran who have never experienced democracy. At the highpoint at the end of 1970s, in 1979, 51,000 Iranians studied in the United States. That figure shrunk to only 2,231 in 2004. As Secretary Rice noted, "We must change this and we will and we are beginning a new effort to dramatically increase the number of Iranians who can come to study in America, the number of Iranian professionals who wish to visit. I've said on a number of occasions that I've read that it is forbidden in some quarters to play Beethoven and Mozart in Tehran; we hope that Iranians can play it in New York or in Los Angeles."

#### CONCLUSION

For several years, President Bush has made clear that the nexus between terrorism and weapons of mass destruction is the primary threat to international peace and security facing the world today. Unfortunately, the developments in Iran, particularly over the course of the past year, only reinforce this view. While September 11th was a wake-up call for many here in the United States, we know that Israel has been receiving those painful calls now for decades. Whether it was wars, suicide bombings, hijackings or kidnappings, the constant threat that the state of Israel has been under serves as a painful reminder that we must remain vigilant. I wish that I could stand before you today and suggest that the threat is lower today than it was before. I cannot do so in good conscience.

I know that over the next few days you have assembled an unprecedentedly qualified group of individuals to discuss the threat that Iran poses to Israel, the region, and indeed, international peace and security. I am deeply humbled and honored to have been invited to address you here today at your opening session and I look forward to hearing from you and the results of this conference.

I sometimes find it an odd question because to me the answer is so strikingly simple, but I have been asked before why I remain so strongly committed to the

protection, preservation and prosperity of Israel. My answer is straightforward: unlike Mr. Ahmadi-nejad, I know my history. Whether from school, or more poignantly and heart-breakingly, from the stories of survivors of the Holocaust, I know what can happen when we turn a blind eye to tyranny, whether it manifests itself as fascism or, in this case, as totalitarianism. Many of you here in this room are responsible for helping me, indeed all Americans, to understand this undeniable truth. But know that I will do what I can to continue to fight anti-Semitism in whatever form it takes, and wherever it happens, including at the United Nations. As it turns out, and as you well know, my current position lends itself well to such a fight. Your unrelenting and constant support, though, has been indispensable in our mutual fight for what we cherish most -- freedom and democracy. For that, I thank you.

(end transcript)

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