



G-8 Senior Group Meeting

John R. Bolton, Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security

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UNDER SECRETARY BOLTON: Thank you very much. Thank you all for coming. Today here in Geneva we had a meeting of the G-8 Senior Group that deals with questions of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). This was a group that was created during the U.S. Presidency of the G-8 and the preparations for the Sea Island Summit that was held in June hosted by President Bush. The work that we engaged in here today was principally follow-up from the Sea Island Summit, addressing questions involving President Bush's proposals to close loopholes in the nuclear nonproliferation framework, discussing issues like how to restrict the transfer of sensitive nuclear technology; uranium enrichment and plutonium reprocessing; what to do about restricting transfers to states that have not brought into force the IAEA additional protocol; questions of strengthening IAEA governance, such as prohibiting states that are under investigation from participating in IAEA decision-making concerning them.

We also discussed the formal expansion of the G-8's Global Partnership against the spread of weapons and materials of mass destruction. The global partnership was established at the Kananaskis Summit two years ago to deal with the destruction or rendering safe of weapons of mass destruction materials and missiles in the former Soviet Union. Today we had presentations by nine former republics of the Soviet Union, in many of which the United States already has programs but which the G-8 is considering for formal membership in the Global Partnership. Since Kananaskis, we've added 13 new donor countries, and I expect that by the end of the year we will add some number -- two, three, four -- additional recipient countries in addition to the Russian Federation.

We also discussed today regional questions, regional nonproliferation issues, including Iran and North Korea and others. I thought that was a very productive meeting. I had a chance to have bilateral consultations with a number of other countries, particularly on the subject of Iran, and the upcoming IAEA Board of Governors meeting. The objective that the United States has been pursuing has been to insure that Iran does not acquire a nuclear weapons capability, and that is an objective shared by all of the G-8 countries as reflected in the G-8 leaders' statement issued at Sea Island. So there is no disagreement on our broad objective, no disagreement.

What we have tried to do here today, and yesterday in particular, was to close the tactical gap that has existed between the United States and what we called the EU-3: Britain, France, and Germany. I think that I can say that we made progress in that regard here in Geneva. We have not completely closed the tactical gap, but I think discussions will continue over the weekend and then into next week and we will see what we are able to do.

The overall objective of insuring that Iran does not acquire nuclear weapons capabilities is not at issue. All of us are agreed on that. So we are pleased that we have made the progress we did in closing the tactical gap and we look forward, hopefully, to making some more.

For my own part I am off to Israel tomorrow for further consultations and then back to Washington. So, why don't I stop there and I will be happy to answer any questions any of you may have.

QUESTION: Since you are going to Israel tomorrow, Sir, have you discussed Israel in that meeting. If yes, tell us what did you discuss. If no tell us why you did not discuss it.

UNDER SECRETARY BOLTON: Yes we did discuss Israel in the context of states that are not party to the Nonproliferation Treaty. I raised it. That's basically the substance of the discussion.

QUESTION: If you could just say where these discussions are going to continue over the weekend, whether it is here or it is in Vienna? Could you give any more details on exactly how this gap has been narrowed, what specifically...

UNDER SECRETARY BOLTON: I think the discussions will be in cyber space and over the telephone in a variety of different locations. I don't really want to get into the specifics because the questions of closing the tactical gap I think are best addressed in private consultations, but that is clearly our objective. I think the EU-3 and others share that objective. We have a ways to go, I don't want to overstate this, I don't want to create any misimpressions. We are not finished yet but I do think that we have made some progress the past couple of days.

QUESTION: Couple of questions: First and foremost, what exactly is the U.S. stand on FMCT [Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty] in regard to verification, because part of the problem is that if you do not have internationally credible and nondiscriminatory verification mechanisms, what exactly is the U.S. strategy in terms of containing the proliferation. Are you just emphasizing on the counter-proliferation as against nonproliferation which is being thought about? I have a follow up question, depending upon your answer.

UNDER SECRETARY BOLTON: I am tempted to say you should speak with Ambassador Sanders who is here on a permanent basis and could address that question at length. You should talk to her if you have not, also she will be in Vienna next week, but I will say that we have engaged in an extremely thorough and extensive review within the United States government on the question of whether the FMCT was verifiable and concluded that we didn't think we had sufficient confidence in verification that that should be part of the treaty, but we have said and expressed here in the CD [Conference on Disarmament] that we continue to search for a workable FMCT and that's the position we have taken. So that is my answer, and does that mean there is a second?

QUESTION: Yes.

UNDER SECRETARY BOLTON: I'm not surprised.

QUESTION: The second question is straight and simple. Those who are members of the IAEA and those who are in the NPT. Now you have two categories. You have the P-5 who do not have to go through verification, and then you are saying that there has to be verification for those who are

outside the P-5. So, would there be credibility in what you are doing in regard to Iran as forcing a country subject to verification, while the big five are not ready to accept internationally credible verification mechanisms.

UNDER SECRETARY BOLTON: Well, I don't agree with the premise of your question since the five permanent members who are under the explicit terms of the nonproliferation treaty, legitimate nuclear weapon states, legitimate nuclear weapon states, recognized as such by every state party to the treaty, have undertaken, and the United States is one of them, to accept the additional protocol and to accept the circumstances in verification in regard to non-military programs. The non-nuclear weapon states, all the other parties to the NPT, if they are in compliance with the treaty, by definition do not have any military programs. So, the verification mechanisms are not fundamentally different on those aspects.

QUESTION: You said you did not want to go into too many details about the outstanding gap, but could you just say what is the outstanding issue, please?

UNDER SECRETARY BOLTON: I think that the position of the United States for quite sometime during the last five meetings of the Boards of Governors of the IAEA, five meetings, and now going into the sixth meeting, has been that the clandestine Iranian nuclear weapons program poses a threat to international peace and security, and that threat crosses the jurisdiction of the Security Council which should take the matter up.

The EU-3 and others have been pursuing a different route. I think the Iranians in the past six or so weeks have demonstrated that they do not intend to carry through with the premise of the EU-3 deal. The EU-3 are still working that issue. That has been the tactical difference between us. How we handle the Iranian program with respect to the Security Council. Our view, and I think it is the view of the EU-3 as well, is that if we can close the tactical gap we can increase the likelihood that we can achieve our overall objective which is to preclude the Iranians from achieving nuclear weapon status. That is really what we want to focus on and that is what we have been discussing here the past couple of days.

QUESTION: Is it going to be possible to have the Board of Governors' vote next week that Iran is in violation of the NPT? Is that still reasonable?

UNDER SECRETARY BOLTON: Well, the dynamic in the Board has demonstrated in the past five meetings a very strongly negative attitude on Iran's nuclear weapons program, finding repeated instances of lack of Iranian cooperation, of obstructing IAEA inspectors, not disclosing important aspects, changing their story from month to month, and I think that there are clearly extensive questions about the Iranian program that remain unanswered. As I say, it has been our consistent view throughout this process that we should have the Iranian program referred to the Security Council. But the IAEA Board is a political process, we will see what happens next week.

There is a difference, I think between our stating what our position is and what has been achievable in the IAEA Board. That is one reason among many why we are working as hard as we are and that the EU-3 are working as hard as they are to close the tactical gap and why we are pleased with the progress we have made here the past couple days.

QUESTION: I'd like to ask you if the Board does not come out with some kind of an agreement that the United States agrees with, if Iran still refuses to have inspections, would you push for sanctions at the Security Council, and what form are these sanctions likely to take?

UNDER SECRETARY BOLTON: Let me just say that the issue of what the Security Council does or might do when the question of the Iranian nuclear weapons program comes before it is one that we have considered very carefully, and consulted with a number of governments about. It is not the case that bringing Iran to the Security Council automatically results in the imposition of sanctions. If it were in fact that easy, we would in very different circumstances. What we are saying is that Iran program, amounting as it does to a threat to international peace and security, is of sufficient gravity that we want to put the Iranian program at center stage, in the world spot light, in the forum of the Security Council, the principal political body of the United Nations, the body of the United Nations charged with dealing with threat to international peace and security. We think, just politically, the international dynamic would change dramatically if Iran were in center stage in New York.

The question of what happens after that is largely in Iran's hands. If they were to truly give up the pursuit of nuclear weapons, there is a way to deal with that, and I think we demonstrated that in the case of Libya, but the first step is to get this into the Security Council where the Iranians are going to have to explain to the whole world what exactly it is they are up to.

QUESTION: I wonder whether the revelations by South Korea earlier this week were discussed in your meetings here in Geneva, and what is the U.S. position?

UNDER SECRETARY BOLTON: The question about South Korea was discussed and our view is that there is still much we don't know about the question in South Korea. The South Koreans informed us just a few weeks ago, that was our first knowledge of it. The IAEA has been engaged in discussions and examinations within South Korea, that process continues. I think I can give you in part a procedural answer to the question; our understanding is that next week at the IAEA there will be a brief, probably verbal, report on what the IAEA has learned about at least the South Korean experiment in uranium enrichment, which was the first disclosure a week or so ago. And it is the general expectation, it was certainly I think the view of the G-8, that the IAEA should continue its investigation and give a formal written report to the Board of Governors, perhaps by the November meeting. We are not setting an arbitrary deadline; if it takes longer we are prepared for that, but it would not be unreasonable to ask for a written report that lays out the facts and circumstances in more detail than we currently know by the November Board meeting, which takes place at the end of the month.

Because we are still interested ourselves, within the United States, in knowing all of the facts, we don't have a formal position on it, but one thing I can assure you, we will not allow a double standard in terms of how we treat violations of safeguards agreements; and there are a variety of steps we might take. I think the South Koreans have shown cooperation, they've brought this issue forward to the IAEA and have been cooperating with the IAEA. But despite the chatter in some quarters, I want to be very clear that the United States will proceed to its decision on how to treat this matter considering the facts that the IAEA brings to us, but with no double standard at all.

QUESTION: I also want to ask about North Korea. You mentioned that you discussed the issue of North Korea. Could you elaborate on what you discussed and whether there were achievements on any of the points?

UNDER SECRETARY BOLTON: Basically we exchanged views on the status of the six-party talks, updating each other since our last meeting of our Senior Group, which was in early July. The subject of what comes next in the six-party talks -- whether there will be another round by the end of September as the parties agreed at the third round of six-party talks - is in discussion now. My colleague Jim Kelly is in Tokyo. He will be going on to Beijing, I believe over the weekend. And I expect that any news on that subject will come from Jim Kelly's trip. What we were doing here was exchanging views among the G-8 on the subject, as we customarily try to do.

QUESTION: Those countries who disagree with bringing the Iranian issue to the Security Council say that it will only make the program go further underground and less accessible. What is your opinion on that? And are there any channels of communications open between Washington and Tehran

on this?

UNDER SECRETARY BOLTON: Well, we have communications with Iran on a number of issues -- Afghanistan, events in Iraq -- not through me personally but through other mechanisms, and those are entirely appropriate, as we have had communication in the case of humanitarian disasters and so on. The issue of what Iran's reaction would be to having their nuclear weapons program placed on the agenda of the Security Council I think is something that of course we are interested in, but if the reaction were as you suggest, I think that would be strongly corroborative of the weapons-oriented nature of the program and contrary to their public assertions that it is simply for civil nuclear power. If they have nothing to hide, it is very easy to demonstrate. That has not been the pattern of behavior they've followed.

QUESTION: About the experiments by South Korea: What kind of impact do you see these experiments having on the resumption of the six-party talks and the nuclearization of the peninsula?

UNDER SECRETARY BOLTON: Well, I know there is a lot of speculation about that, and many, many governments in the G-8 in our discussions today indicated that they had told the South Koreans that it was very unfortunate that this had been uncovered and that the timing couldn't be helpful. But I think part of the reaction has been against the mistaken backdrop that somehow the United States and others would try to excuse what we have learned about events in South Korea. And as I say, while our information is not complete, and while we believe that the South Koreans have been forthcoming and cooperative, the United States is not going to apply a double standard in connection with this issue. We need to learn more about it and when we do, as we say, potentially by the November IAEA Board meeting, we'll consider appropriate action. Our concern for some time with respect to the six-party talks has been that the North Koreans have gone into a stall, to use a basketball metaphor, to avoid having another round before the American elections. We have told them we think that is a mistake. We are prepared, I think the other parties to the six-party talks are prepared, to have the next round in Beijing before the end of September as we had all agreed. And a senior Chinese Communist Party official is in Pyongyang over the weekend to make that point to the North Koreans, and I think, as I mentioned, Jim Kelly will hopefully get a read-out from the Chinese side the first part of next week. If the analysis is correct that the North Koreans are stalling, I am not sure that the development in South Korea necessarily has an impact. It is something the North Korean propaganda mills can grind on about. We are going to treat it seriously, in due course, with procedural regularity, through the IAEA, and we'll decide what to do about it, not for propaganda purposes, but in the regular order at the IAEA.

QUESTION: Two questions. First, don't you think there is a double standard when you deal with Iran and you deal with Israel, first of all?

UNDER SECRETARY BOLTON: No

QUESTION: And because tomorrow is September 11, do you still believe that there are weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and is there any link between that and the terrorist attacks?

UNDER SECRETARY BOLTON: Any terrorist attacks in particular?

QUESTION: The September 11 attacks.

UNDER SECRETARY BOLTON: Well, I think our government position on that has been expressed many times and I am not going to get into that. I can tell you we didn't discuss that at the G-8 meeting today. In terms of what actual weapons might or might not be in Iraq, the work of the Iraq survey group continues inside Iraq. They continue to investigate reports of weapons being taken out of Iraq in the weeks before and during the actual conflict itself and I think the most prudent course here is to await the final report of the Iraq survey group and then we will see what they are able to uncover.

QUESTION: Two questions, first you said you had bilateral talks with some G-8 members. I am just wondering which countries?

UNDER SECRETARY BOLTON: All of them.

QUESTION: Second, if the United States doesn't get support, you said you still have a ways to go with this move to put Iran in front of the Security Council. What do you see U.S. action would be?

UNDER SECRETARY BOLTON: Well, I try to take it one BOG meeting at a time - Board of Governors, we call it the BOG. I take it one BOG meeting at a time. This is our sixth BOG meeting. We think the proper outcome is to go to the Security Council. We are going to keep our persuasive arguments running and we will see what happens. When we come to the end of this BOG, then we'll evaluate and decide where to go from there.

QUESTION: I wonder what the U.S. position was on whether or not the head of the IAEA has a third term, because I believe he has expressed his interest in staying on.

UNDER SECRETARY BOLTON: We don't particularly have a reaction at this point. When we have a reaction, I'm sure we'll tell you what the reaction is.

QUESTION: On your trip to Israel, Prime Minister Sharon gave a rather strong interview to the Jerusalem Post this week which recalled the 1981 attack, at least in the minds of commentators, on Iraq. Is this going to be involved in the possible Israeli reaction to Iranian developments, is that going to be part of your talks in Israel?

UNDER SECRETARY BOLTON: Well, I don't know what Prime Minister Sharon said. I think the focus of the talks is going to be on the upcoming IAEA board meeting and I'll just leave it at that.

QUESTION: Sir, could you explain to me why it isn't a double standard, Iran and Israel? I can't get the real logic.

UNDER SECRETARY BOLTON: Sure. Iran provides support for terrorists. It has been on the United States' list of state sponsors of terrorism for any number of years. It is conducting a nuclear weapons development program in violation of its obligations under the Nonproliferation Treaty, and it is conducting a very extensive program to increase the range and accuracy of its ballistic missiles, and has demonstrated, we think, that it is a threat to international peace and security. And I think the case of Iran is very different from the case of Israel. It is discrimination when you treat two like things in a dissimilar fashion. And it is also discrimination when you treat two unlike things in the same fashion.

QUESTION: Can we come back to the disarmament initiatives which are now completely jettisoned at Geneva? Namely, what does the U.S. think about the Russian and Chinese proposal on PAROS, where does it stand? Does the opposition continue as it is, or is there a change?

UNDER SECRETARY BOLTON: We are not prepared to negotiate on the so-called arms race in outer space. We just don't see that as a worthwhile enterprise.

QUESTION: Did you discuss with Russia the fact that I believe it is helping Iran build a nuclear plant? Did you discuss this issue? Did you discuss your dismay, or has Russia allayed your dismay about this?

UNDER SECRETARY BOLTON: Well, we have had many discussions about the Bushehr nuclear power plant over the years, and in particular we have urged Russia not to ship the fresh fuel for the Bushehr power plant until all of the questions about Iran's nuclear weapons program have been resolved. And in fact, for over two years now, that nuclear fuel has remained in Russia and not gone to Iran. And I think it is some indication of the seriousness with which the Russians treat the Iranian nuclear program. You may have seen President Putin's statement at Sochi a week or so ago when he said they do not accept that Iran should become a member of the nuclear club. I think that is another reflection of the depth of the feeling and the strength of the shared objective that we all have that Iran should not achieve a nuclear weapons capability. Why don't I take one or two more [questions].

QUESTION: It is a little off this, but terrorist attacks are growing, horrible ones, in Russia. Did you also discuss the leaky nuclear facilities which exist in any of the former Republics and in Russia itself in terms of strengthening those facilities so that in fact nuclear fuel doesn't...

UNDER SECRETARY BOLTON: Well, that's in effect what the Global Partnership is, a continuation of the Nunn-Lugar and other American and other programs that over the past ten or twelve years have expended billions of dollars in an effort to safeguard Russian nuclear weapons, dismantle ballistic missile facilities, and destroy chemical weapons and the like. I think if you ask the Russians they would say that the risk of a loose nuke in Russia is far greater to them than it is to anyone else. And I think the recent tragedy at Beslan is a good example of the risk that they fully understand: that if terrorist groups are capable of carrying out that kind of operation, how much more horrible it would be if such a terrorist group got a nuclear weapon. I don't think we are aware of any situation where Russia has lost command and control over a warhead. Now, I want to say that it is a problem not just in Russia, but worldwide -- that radiological sources of less than weapons-grade radioactive material have not been protected in pre-September 11 days the way they should be now. We have major initiatives that President Bush has launched. That'll be carried through in part the week after next in Vienna: the Global Threat Reduction Initiative that the U.S. and Russia are cosponsoring, this is something that on a worldwide basis we need to pay more attention to because of the danger that these radiological sources could be exploited to give terrorists the capability of creating what we call an RDD, a radiological dispersion device. So this issue is one that we need to be concerned about on a worldwide basis.

QUESTION: Who is in the nuclear club now?

UNDER SECRETARY BOLTON: We consider that there are five legitimate nuclear weapons states: France, the United Kingdom, China, Russia and the United States, as indicated in the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

QUESTION: And the others?

UNDER SECRETARY BOLTON: I think they are the ones that you know about. Okay, any other questions? Thank you very much, have a nice weekend.

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