



U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE

KEYWORD SEARCH

[Subject Index](#)+ BOOKMARK    ...[Home](#)[Issues & Press](#)[Travel & Business](#)[Countries](#)[Youth & Education](#)[Careers](#)[About State](#)You are in: [Under Secretary for Political Affairs](#) > [From the Under Secretary](#) > [Remarks](#) > [2007 Under Secretary for Political Affairs Remarks](#)

UN Security Council Resolution on Iran

Nicholas Burns, Under Secretary for Political Affairs

Conference Call Briefing With Members of the Press

Washington, DC

March 24, 2007

3:45 p.m. EST

[Conference Call Operator introductory instructions deleted.]

MR. CASEY: Okay. Good afternoon, everybody. Thanks for joining us here. I wanted to, as we discussed with most of you on Friday, have an opportunity to let Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Nick Burns talk to you a bit about the vote in the Security Council on the Iran resolution. Obviously, this is another important step forward in this process.

Nick, let me just turn it over to you and let you make some opening comments, and then we can go to people's questions.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Okay. Thanks, Tom. This is Nick Burns, so I'm on the record and I just thought I'd say a few words about what this represents and then we'll be happy to go to questions.

This is a continuation of a two-year diplomatic effort to try to convince the Iranians to negotiate, sit at the negotiating table, concerning the nuclear weapons issue. The United States joined the EU-3 effort in March 2005. We've been very much involved with the EU-3 and then subsequently China and Russia since then.

We're obviously very pleased by the strength of this resolution. It's a significant international rebuke to Iran and it's a significant tightening of international pressure on Iran. It's the second Chapter 7 resolution in the last three months and this one is substantially stronger than the first. And we do believe it's going to leave Iran even more isolated than it has been. Iran, as you know, is now one of 11 countries under Chapter 7 UN sanctions of 192 countries in the United Nations General Assembly.

The resolution is significant in the following respects. It builds on Resolution 1737, which was the first Chapter 7

resolution passed on December 23, 2006, and it opens up four new areas of sanctions. And these were all areas that were suggested by the United States at a meeting of the P-5 political directors in London at the end of February, and all of those four suggestions that the U.S. made at that meeting for new sanctions have been upheld in this resolution.

The first is on arms. The resolution forbids Iran from providing arms to anyone anywhere. It prohibits the sale or the delivery or the transfer of arms to any nation or any organization. That's significant because Iran has been a major arms supplier to Hezbollah as well as to Hamas and has used those arms supplies to, in our view, stoke terrorism in the region. So we are particularly pleased about this and it was one of the major U.S. objectives in these four weeks of negotiations.

It also calls on all nations to exercise vigilance and restraint in the export of arms to Iran. And what that does is it opens up the possibility of further strengthening of the sanctions of exports to Iran in future Security Council resolutions.

The second area that is new is the focus on the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps Command. It focuses on seven key members -- the sanctions of the IRGC -- and three IRGC-affiliated companies; they will have their assets frozen internationally. In addition to that, it builds on 1737 by imposing sanctions on ten individuals and eight organizations involving Iran's nuclear and missile program. That's in addition to the individuals and organizations -- I think it was twelve and ten -- in 1737.

The third area, new area of sanctions, is against Bank Sepah. Bank Sepah is Iran's fourth largest bank. It was sanctioned by the U.S. Treasury Department and all of its ability to function in dollars and to undertake transactions in dollars were shut off by the Treasury Department, and now we have a UN Security Council sanction against Bank Sepah. That's important because Bank Sepah has been the conduit for money from the Iranian Government to subsidize and transfer money through to the support the ballistic missile and WMD industries in Iran itself.

And the fourth new area of sanctions is in export credits. This is -- it's not a strong sanction, but it does open up the way -- it calls on nations and international financial institutions to essentially exercise vigilance in not providing financial assistance to the Government of Iran. There's an exception for humanitarian and development purposes, but any other transaction it calls on states not to undertake those transactions. It opens up the door for further action on the issue of export credits to Iran. And we've already seen Italy, France, Germany and Japan significantly reduce their export credits to Iran just over the last four to five months, so we're particularly pleased about that.

So there are four new sanctions. In addition, the travel ban and asset freeze sanctions of resolution 1737 will be continued. Just a couple of more thoughts: This resolution specifically asks the Director General of the IAEA Mohamed ElBaradei to report back to the Security Council on whether or not Iran is complying with this resolution in 60 days. So, that would be 60 days from now, the latter part of May. If Iran does not comply within 60 days and this trigger mechanism would ask the Council to adopt further sanctions, and that would open the way for a third Security Council resolution if, as necessary, in the month of May.

So we believe that this second Chapter 7 resolution is a significant blow to the Iranian Government and in particular we think on the financial end with Bank Sepah and in the arms provisions.

A final thought. What's the way forward? The six foreign ministers, the P-5 and German foreign ministers, including Secretary Rice, are going to issue a statement in the next 20 minutes or so. It's a common statement that we negotiated

a couple of weeks ago and you'll see it; Tom can give you a copy of it and our mission at the UN also will have a copy of it. It will be read out by Ambassador Jones Perry of the UK in the Council session.

This statement essentially goes back to the June 1st offer of 2006, the offer to negotiate, and it says to the Iranians we had to sanction you because you're not in compliance with either the IAEA or the UN Security Council on nuclear activities, but we do want to reaffirm today our offer to negotiate with you. And we want Iran to consider that offer again, and it states very clearly that our objective here would be a peaceful, negotiated solution to the Iran nuclear problem and it reaffirms the offer for us to sit down and negotiate if Iran would meet the one condition that the P-5 countries and Germany have put down; that is, the suspension for the life of the negotiations for it, so a temporary suspension of its enrichment activities programs at Natanz.

In addition to that statement, it would be our sense that Javier Solana and some of the other European foreign ministers would be in touch, but especially Solana, with the Iranian Government in the days and weeks ahead to see if they might reconsider their obstinate refusal to negotiate. And so what you have then is a three-state action: you have the Security Council resolution being passed today; secondly -- first; secondly, you have the statement of the foreign ministers that will be issued in a just a few minutes time; third, you -- we would anticipate some international discussions and negotiations over the next couple of weeks, not formal negotiations but discussions between Solana and some of the other P-5 ministers to encourage Dr. Ali Larijani and some of the other Iranian officials to reconsider their refusal to negotiate. And we hope very much that Iran will reconsider and will come to the negotiating table. And as you know, Secretary Rice has said many times in the last few months that should Iran accept the offer, she personally would be at those negotiations, at least to begin with, at the ministerial level.

I'm going to be going to Brussels on Monday and Tuesday for talks on Kosovo and Afghanistan, but I'll certainly also talk to Javier Solana, to the NATO Secretary General, to the Belgian Foreign Minister -- Belgium is a member of the Security Council -- to see if we can help stimulate some of these discussions with the Iranians in the weeks ahead. The United States will not be involved in these direct discussions with Iran in the weeks ahead, but we certainly are encouraging them.

That's what I had to say. I'm happy to take any questions you have.

OPERATOR: Thank you. We'll now begin the question-and-answer session. If you would like to ask a question, please press *1. You'll be prompted to record your name. And to withdraw your request, it is *2. It'll be just one moment for that first question, sir.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Thanks.

OPERATOR: Our first question will come from Thom Shanker. Please state your affiliation.

QUESTION: I'm with the *New York Times*.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Hi, Thom.

QUESTION: Hi, Mr. Secretary. Thanks for your time today. When the resolution was passed in December, it was hailed

as being very stringent and would be effective. The one just passed today, you've just characterized it as also even more stringent. I know these are very serious, but what does the Security Council and all of the other concerned powers have to do to tell Iran this time you really mean it?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Well, as you remember when I briefed, when we all briefed on the 1737 in December, we frankly felt it was a good step forward. We weren't entirely convinced that it was strong enough to send the message we thought it should send. We were -- I think we underestimated the strength of that resolution, more the political strength in it, because it clearly knocked the Iranians off stride. It led to that extraordinary series of debates inside Iran which were very much public in January and February where the Supreme Leader's newspaper was criticizing Ahmadi-Nejad for his stewardship of the nuclear effort. And it clearly bothered the Iranians very much that you had the prospect of a financial strangulation of the Iranian economy by a series of UN Chapter 7 sanctions resolutions. But it was also just I think the humiliation and embarrassment that they are one of 11 countries of 192 under sanctions.

So frankly, looking back on it, we probably underestimated the -- we certainly did -- the significance of that first one. Now, this second one is, without any question, stronger. And frankly, when I went to London four weeks ago and put down a piece of paper in the P-5 that detailed the arms sanctions, the IRGC, Bank Sepah and export credits, we didn't know if we'd be able to get all four of those sanctions. We managed it, not just in the P-5, and that took two and a half weeks, but also now very significantly the largest Muslim country in the world, Indonesia, is with -- is voting for these sanctions. Qatar and South Africa. I don't know what the final voting is, but our sense is it's going to be a 15-0 vote. If it's not 15-0, it'll be very close to it.

So Iran now has to figure -- it has to calculate its isolation, Thom. You've got the largest Muslim country. You have India, Brazil and Egypt now implementing the 1737 sanctions. The only friends they appear to have right now who will actually speak up for them are Syria and Belarus and also Venezuela and Cuba. But everybody -- and that's quite a gang of four, a motley crew. Everybody else is part of this international effort that is slowly strangulating its ability to seek investment and to export. And so, Thom, I think this is a significant step forward. It's substantially stronger, this resolution, than the first one.

Do you have a follow-up, Thom?

QUESTION: No, that was fine. Thank you.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Okay.

OPERATOR: Our next question will come from John Heilpin -- Heilprin. Please state your affiliation.

QUESTION: With the Associated Press.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Hi.

QUESTION: Yeah, hi. I'm wondering what you think the chances are that Iran is going to comply before the 60-day deadline. And if not, how far do you think the UN Security Council would be willing to go?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: I think there's no question, John, after the negotiations of the last four weeks in the P-5 and then with the 15 countries of the Council that international patience with Iran is wearing thin. You saw that in Russia's very public rebuke to Iran last week when they said that they would delay the delivery of fuel to the Bushehr reactor, that they were delaying construction, that Iran was behind in its payments. That was a significant signal from the Russian Government, in our judgment, that the Russians themselves are frustrated that the Iranians haven't reacted to any of the offers that have been made. There were a series of -- you know, this is a two-year effort, and in the last year you've had Russia, China, the U.S., Germany, France and Britain offer a series of IAEA resolutions, UN Security Council resolutions, well before the two Chapter 7 resolutions. There's been no significant reaction from the Government of Iran. So you're seeing the expression of frustration.

Now, directly to your question, there is no question that this is not a monolithic political environment inside Tehran these days. It's a tumultuous political environment. It's a divided policy community inside the government. We believe there is a faction inside that government that wishes to accept this offer to negotiate and get to the negotiating table. We also know very well there's a faction -- and the guy who's in the Security Council today, Foreign Minister Motaki, is undoubtedly a member of that faction -- which does not want to negotiate.

So our view is -- and this is the view of a lot of other countries involved with this -- that if you can build the pressure on Iran through these resolutions, then you're going to have a better chance of driving up the cost to the Iranian Government of its inaction, and those that wish to negotiate and keep a sense of integration with the rest of the world might have a stronger hand. There's no question that if Iran doesn't comply in 60 days with this resolution there'll be a third Security Council resolution at the end of May and in June. And it's going to be a tougher resolution because the deal we have on the Perm 5 is that these are a series of incremental steps upward, a gradual tightening of the pressure. We agreed on that a year ago. And so the third resolution would, by definition, have to be stronger.

I think those countries that have a relationship with Iran -- South Africa, Indonesia, Qatar, China, Russia -- are going to be leaning on Iran to meet the Security Council halfway and to try to meet the conditions so that there can be a negotiation.

OPERATOR: Our next question will come from Nina Donaghy.

QUESTION: That's right.

MR. CASEY: Hold up, Nina. Tom. Just hold on one second before you go. Nick, I just wanted to let you know that we do now have a final vote confirmation of 15-0.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Yeah, and if I could just say, this is highly significant. As of a week ago, South Africa had put down a series of killer amendments -- last Sunday, I should say -- that would have ripped apart the P-5 resolution. Each of those killer amendments were defeated during the week. And I think South Africa itself -- there were several efforts by the Iranian Government to approach the South Africans this week, including yesterday, to say that they would be willing to sit down and try to meet the conditions that the P-5 had laid down, and so there was a meeting yesterday. Ambassador Zarif, the Iranian Ambassador to the UN, sat down with some of the Perm 5 ambassadors, and I think with the South African Ambassador. Our Ambassador was not among them. And it turned out the Iranians -- this was just a smokescreen. The Iranians had nothing to offer. They were nowhere close to meeting the conditions of the P-5.

And so I think when that happened, when the South Africans saw -- and we appreciate this on the part of the South Africans -- that the Iranians had intimated that they would meet the conditions and then pulled way back, I think that took the wind out of the sails of those who felt that the sanctions should be weaker or delayed, and that led to this 15-0 vote. But if Iran has Qatar, a Gulf Arab state; and Indonesia, a Muslim state; and South Africa, a leading member of the nonaligned movement, voting for these sanctions, Iran's in trouble internationally.

QUESTION: Can I ask my question?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Yes, please. Sorry to interrupt you.

MR. CASEY: Please.

QUESTION: Okay, two questions. First of all, you mentioned Iranian arms sales to Hamas or supplying to Hamas. Can you elaborate on that a bit? And also, I'd like your reaction to President Ahmadi-Nejad not coming to the UN.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Sure. Well, on the first question, we see Iran as a problem not just in the nuclear sphere but also as a purveyor of arms to the major Middle East terrorist groups and also a purveyor of money to them. And so this particular sanction prohibits all exports or transfers or deliveries from Iran to anyone or any organization. So it will now be a Chapter 7 UN imperative that Iran does not have the right to transfer arms to Hezbollah or to Hamas or to Syria, to any state or any terrorist organization. This is highly significant because Iran has used this arms supply relationship in the attempt that Iran is clearly involved in with Hezbollah to unseat the Siniora government, which has been unsuccessful thankfully in Lebanon, and clearly arming Hamas as a weapon against Fatah as well as against Israel. And so we frankly feel this is probably the most significant of the new sanctions and it's highly encouraging that everyone has agreed to it on a 15-0 basis.

On your second question, we got a -- we were told by the Iranian mission to the UN about eight days ago that Ahmadi-Nejad wanted to come to the UN Security Council and speak at the session when the sanctions resolution was voted. And the Iranians gave us a -- I think a couple of different lists, but they added up to about 75 or 80 people. We took immediate steps to issue those visas. In fact, we reviewed all the visa forms of the largest group that was given to us last Sunday and Monday and were ready to issue them; we were just waiting to get a sense of when this vote would be. They gave us a second group of visa applications, I guess it was about Tuesday or Wednesday, and then we didn't hear from them. I mean, they didn't make any effort to tell us when they were coming or why they were going to come or whether they'd come, and so we just took the initiative ourselves and contacted them and said, look, these visas are all ready, they've been ready for four or five days, which they knew. And of course, you saw this specious statement yesterday that there wasn't time for Ahmadi-Nejad to come, but of course there was time for Motaki, who was one of the visa people whose issuance we did at the same time as Ahmadi-Nejad, and the Deputy Foreign Minister. So I don't know why Ahmadi-Nejad didn't come. My speculation is it would have been a humiliation for him. Here you have a 15-0 vote, you have Muslim and Arab countries voting against him, the President of the Council is one of the leading members of the nonaligned movement. He wouldn't have a friend in the room and his country would have been repudiated while he sat at the table. And my conjecture is that that humiliation was too much for Ahmadi-Nejad and that's why he didn't show up.

QUESTION: Thank you.

OPERATOR: Our next question will come from Andrea Mitchell. Please state your affiliation.

QUESTION: NBC News.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Hi, Andrea.

QUESTION: Hi. Do you see any connection at all between the sanctions, the pending sanctions in the UN, and Iran's behavior in Iraq today with the grabbing of the 15 sailors?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: I'm not aware of any connection whatsoever. Whatsoever. And I'm just looking at the Iranian public statements, the few that have been made. They have not made the connection themselves.

QUESTION: And you don't think that this is an indication of them striking out or trying to offset one humiliation by doing something more aggressive?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: You know, Andrea, it's hard to get into the heads of the Iranians. They're so difficult sometimes to understand. But clearly, what they did in taking those British sailors was an act of -- was an illegal act internationally. But we're not aware of any connection between them. I think the Iranians are obviously feeling isolated in the world because they have, of course, they have been rebuked now twice.

In addition -- and a little bit apart from your question but I should have said this before, Andrea, and to the others -- in addition to what has been happening inside the Council, you also have to look at what's been happening outside the Council since that December resolution was passed. Japan made a decision very public in January to announce a significant reduction (inaudible) programs to Iran. The three major EU countries, the continental countries, announced they're reducing their export credits. You then saw the American financial designation, the sanctions against Bank Sepah. You had the stationing of our two carrier battle groups in the Gulf that we announced in January, and of course the pushback against the Iranians in Iraq by the American military by those Iranian paramilitary units who have been providing the IED technology to Shia militants.

So if you put all those actions together outside the Council and combine them with what's been happening inside the Council, there's been a tremendous upgrade in the international pressure against Iran. They're clearly feeling that pressure.

QUESTION: Thank you.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Thanks, Andrea.

OPERATOR: Our next question will come from Thom Shanker. Please state your affiliation.

QUESTION: Yes, with the *New York Times*.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Hey, Thom.

QUESTION: I wanted to follow up. You referenced the amendments that had come up this past weekend. One of the proposals from some of the nonpermanent members was to declare support for the Middle East as a nuclear-free zone. I was just curious whether the U.S. Government opposed that and, if so, was it because it was seen as kind of a shadow way to punish Israel, who of course is a non-declared but very much suspected nuclear power?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Well, you'll see in the resolution, Thom, there is some language to that effect, but the language is quite mild. We three times before, to my knowledge, have agreed to such language in international resolutions: once before in the IAEA in recent years; and twice in the early 1990s in the UN Security Council itself. So this isn't a new -- it's not a new step. It's not something that we were -- you know, is going to amount to any significant point of departure. And it is -- it was a way to try to meet some of the Arab countries half way.

We worked on it -- we agreed on it yesterday after we significantly weakened some of the earlier language that had been proposed, and so what we agreed to was very much in line with those three other instances since the early '90s where the United States has agreed to this kind of language.

QUESTION: Thank you very much.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Yeah.

OPERATOR: Again, if you would like to ask a question, please press *1. We have a question from Colum Lynch. Please state your affiliation.

QUESTION: *The Washington Post*. I came in a bit late, so forgive me if this has already been asked. But essentially, you know, you were talking a bit about the arms export ban being one of the most important elements of the new resolution, and it's the one area where you're talking about, you know, groups that are being targeted, like the Quds Force and other members of the Revolutionary Guard Corps that at least with the Quds Force, groups that aren't directly involved in the nuclear program. And so I was hoping you can give me a sense of, you know, are you now sort of -- is the effort moving from a very narrow focus on the nuclear program and trying to restrain the nuclear program, broadening out to sort of more of a containment strategy and an effort to start hitting at other aspects of Iran's, you know, sort of activities and behaviors -- behavior in the region. And why, in your view, did other governments on the Council, particularly the Qataris, go along with this?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Yeah, Colum, we said back on June 1st when the P-5 issued its initial offer to negotiate, we said that we would do -- we would obviously focus on their nuclear activities but we'd also take any other measures that were necessary to put the kind of pressure on them that would be required to get them to negotiate. And so that does allow us to go outside a very strict, narrow band of activities to other activities of the Iranian Government, and that's why we felt that the arms ban was so important. Because, you know, we see the Iranians not just trying to become a nuclear weapons power, we see them trying to become the most dominant military state in the region and they've been using their arms supply relationship with Hezbollah and Hamas, with the PFL-PGC, with Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the four of those groups, to really negative ends and negative results. So (inaudible) are engaged in a policy (inaudible) United States to block and contain Iranian power in the Middle East.

I also should say -- I forgot to say this --

QUESTION: I'm sorry, I got cut off when you started that last sentence about block and contain. Can you repeat it? Sorry.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Well, it's certainly the American view that we ought to -- that we're trying by all of our actions inside the Council and outside the Council to block and contain and limit Iranian power in the Middle East. And so the -- in blocking their ability and now making illegal their ability to export arms to anybody, that's a significant step forward. And frankly, I remember when we put this down in the P-5, a lot of people felt we were not going to get this, and when it went to the full Council a lot of people predicted you'll never get this. We got it.

And you asked why. Well, it's because countries are getting frustrated with the Iranians. And I meant to say one thing that I should have said before. We have worked very, very well with the Russians over the last four weeks. We actually went to the Russians first before anyone else with our ideas for this resolution. Condi -- Secretary Rice -- had a discussion with Sergey Lavrov and then she sent me to London to meet with the Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Kislyak and we actually gave them all these elements first, even before our European partners. And we talked through with the Russians what a resolution should look like, and they were a very, very good partner throughout. In fact, I would say we had -- of all the countries that we dealt with, probably the (inaudible) -- we probably had the easiest and best relationship with Russia over the last four weeks. We just had a common view of what this resolution should entail.

And I think the Iranians need to understand that the Iranians thought they could kind of take Russia or try to divide Russia and China from the U.S. and Europeans. That strategy has clearly failed.

QUESTION: By the way, one other thing. I don't know the ground rules of this discussion. Is this on the record or is it background?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: I'm on the record.

QUESTION: On the record, okay.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Yeah, yeah.

OPERATOR: Again, if you would like to ask a question, please press *1. At this time, I'm showing no questions.

MR. CASEY: Okay. Well, in which case, Nick, I guess you've answered them all.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Thanks a lot. Okay.

MR. CASEY: Thanks, everybody. Thank you, Nick. Appreciate you taking the time to do this.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Thanks very much. A pleasure. Thanks a lot.

MR. CASEY: Thanks, everyone.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Bye.

2007/229

Released on March 24, 2007



[Updates](#) | [Frequent Questions](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Email this Page](#) | [Subject Index](#) | [Search](#)

The Office of Electronic Information, Bureau of Public Affairs, manages this site as a portal for information from the U.S. State Department. External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained therein.

[About state.gov](#) | [Privacy Notice](#) | [FOIA](#) | [Copyright Information](#) | [Other U.S. Government Information](#)