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Interview With Chris Burns of Bloomberg Television

R. Nicholas Burns, Under Secretary for Political Affairs

American Embassy
Berlin, Germany
May 9, 2007

QUESTION: Nick, in terms of Iran; what would be in a third UN Security Council resolution in June if Iran does not follow through and accept negotiations?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Well, first of all, we hope that Iran will accept negotiations. Because that is the preferred way forward and the United States fully supports negotiations with Iran. But Iran has to say "Yes." And they continue to say "No." If they say "No" -- say around by June 1 -- I think you will see a major drive towards a third Chapter VII Security Council resolution and that would mean intensification and a strengthening of the sanctions. We would hope. Further strengthening arms prohibitions -- the sale of arms to Iran prohibited. We would want to see all their people, the senior people, in the nuclear ballistic missile industry banned from travel overseas. And we want to see further financial restrictions. Right now the European countries have fairly liberal export credit policies towards Iran that actually stimulates trade with Iran by European companies -- and we do not want to see that continue. We think that Europe needs to speak more loudly and more firmly to show the Iranians that there is a price to be paid if they continue to develop a nuclear weapons capability.

QUESTION: Could there be a gradual shutting down of the enrichment process? Would that be acceptable? Is that a possible compromise?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: No, it's not. No. The demand that Germany, France, Britain, China, Russia, and the United States are making is the following: Iran will suspend in full its nuclear enrichment program as planned in Natanz and then it will come to the negotiating table. But we are not interested in partial suspension; we are not interested in limited enrichment or any of these gambits that have been tried by the Iranians in the past.

QUESTION: A question on Kosovo. How certain will there be a vote this month? And what are the chances of bringing the Russians around? Really, I mean it seems that they are still far away from agreeing. What happens if they abstain?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: I think there s a growing international consensus that the time has come that Kosovo should become independent. There is already majority support in the Security Council for this. We think that there is a much greater likelihood of peace and stability in Kosovo if we speak clearly and allow the people of Kosovo to take government into their own hands. Ninety-five percent of the people who live there are Kosovo-Albanians and they have been waiting for eight long years since the end of the war in June 1999 to know if there are going be independent or not. So, I think the momentum is with that. We want to have a respectful dialogue in the United Nations. We want the Russians to work with us. We have already adopted some of the Russian ideas into the draft resolution that the European countries and the U.S. are preparing. So, I am optimistic that we will see a lot of support for this. There will be big debates about it, for sure. But we hope that Russia in the end will decide to be with the main stream in the world and lead the way towards peace and security for the people of Kosovo.

QUESTION: But extension is the best you can expect from the Russians, right?

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: I cannot speak for the Russian government. And in our meetings with the Russian officials we have said: Look, we are open-minded, if you have ideas, you Russia, that would improve this resolution, we want to take them.

QUESTION: Thanks.

UNDER SECRETARY BURNS: Thanks.

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