



Special Briefing
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Briefing With U.S. Special Envoy for Nuclear Nonproliferation Robert G. Joseph and Russian Federation Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Kislyak on Cooperation in Nuclear Energy and Nuclear Nonproliferation

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(11:07 a.m. EST)

MR. GALLEGOS: Good morning. I appreciate your coming. Today we have Special Envoy for Nuclear Nonproliferation Robert Joseph and Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Kislyak, and they will be discussing cooperation in nuclear energy and nuclear nonproliferation. I realize that both presidents spoke yesterday on other issues. We'll be referring you to those or you can talk to me a little bit later. But I appreciate your all coming. Here you go.

MR. JOSEPH: Good morning. I'd like to make several very brief opening points and then ask my colleague, Deputy Foreign Minister Kislyak, for any introductory comments he might have.

First, let me say that the declaration by the two presidents reflects a shared vision of the future in which nuclear power plays a central role not just in expanding nuclear energy in the industrialized world but in the industrializing countries as well, and not just in countries like India and China but a wide range potentially of other countries.

This is about meeting the world's energy requirements and it's about development. It's about assisting nations to enjoy the benefits of nuclear power. It's about shaping the future of the nuclear enterprise in a way that meets not just our energy requirements but also our environmental goals. And most important, we want to do this in a way that reduces the risk of proliferation by discouraging the spread of the most sensitive technologies: enrichment and reprocessing.

The declaration establishes a new format, a new baseline for action for working together with other countries to build this future. We want to have widespread participation, including both other suppliers as well as many potential beneficiaries. More than a dozen countries in Asia, in Africa, in the Middle East and elsewhere, have expressed interest in acquiring nuclear reactors. Now is the time to help shape their decisions in a way that advances our common interest. That is why this initiative is intended to support the anticipated near or mid term expansion of nuclear energy worldwide, and at the same time, as I mentioned, strengthen efforts to stop the spread of sensitive fuel cycle technologies that could lead to nuclear weapons.

This joint initiative is very broad in scope. It builds on some of the ongoing international initiatives in this area, including the U.S. initiative for the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership, the Russian initiative to develop international nuclear fuel centers, and joint efforts that we have been undertaking in Vienna to establish a fuel supply mechanism through the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The initiative also envisions working with others to put in place new elements such as facilitating the supply of modern appropriate reactors to new countries, infrastructure and financing support, and assisting in the management of spent fuel. The goal is to chart a comprehensive way forward by fashioning an attractive offer, as the declaration says, an attractive offer for countries to acquire power reactors without the need to pursue indigenous enrichment and reprocessing.

The initiative also foresees a very important role for the IAEA. The two presidents support expanded resources for the agency to meet its safeguards responsibilities as nuclear power grows worldwide. Further, the IAEA could assist countries to help develop the infrastructure necessary for safe and secure operation of nuclear power facilities.

And finally, I would emphasize that this is not about the rights of countries under the NPT. This is not about changing or taking away rights. This is about encouraging sovereign states to make sovereign choices based on their own interests, financial as well as nonproliferation interests. It's about providing an alternative path to energy development that becomes a win for energy security, a win for environmental security and a win for nonproliferation.

And with that, let me ask my colleague, Sergei, to comment.

DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER KISLYAK: Thank you, Bob. First of all, I'd like to concur with everything that Bob had to say because we worked together on the paper and I fully share what he said because that's the basic thrust of the declaration that we put up together and that is being available already for a couple hours to the press.

I'd like to add a couple of thoughts about the -- putting this declaration into the context. A year ago in St. Petersburg, there was a summit of G-8 where we were focusing on energy security. And if you might recall, one of the conclusions that we came up with -- all of us in G-8 -- that the further expansion of nuclear energy is inevitable and it's something that needs to be encouraged in a safe, reliable and predictable way because we all need to address the energy requirements of the future, thinking about them today. That includes also not only providing new technology, but also providing for safe and reliable environment that takes care of nonproliferation concerns as well.

So the idea behind this declaration of the two presidents was to give a good answer to those who criticize the Nonproliferation Treaty, the nonproliferation regime, for something allegedly being discriminatory in terms of access to technologies, to energy sources. And Russia and the United States have decided to put their heads together and to take actions together in order to promote a new format that would create predictable, reliable framework for cooperation.

There are a lot of things that were discussed in different formats, like Russian proposal to establish a multilateral center to enrich uranium. And we are not only talking about the idea; we are doing it. We are creating the center together with our Kazakhstan friends. United States has launched GNEP initiative that those two elements are very much mutually complementary. There are other ideas that are being discussed and are being explored. One of them is INPRO program that our president has proposed and it was launched in the IAEA to build a concept of new, safe nuclear energy approaches to technologies.

So there are many elements that were developing on their own. What this format does is to bring them together in systematic and a way that would be looking into the future. And what Russia and the United States want to do here is to put their acts together in order to promote a format that would benefit us all. And I fully agree with what Bob had to say, that this proposal, if fully implemented, is a win-win situation for both our two countries, for developing countries, and for countries that have already embarked on significant progress in nuclear energy.

It's about cooperation. It's not about denying rights but rather, providing good, economically viable, technologically reliable alternative to the development of nuclear energy through multilateral and bilateral cooperation. So what we will try to do, together with other interested countries, relying on the expertise of multilateral organizations, first of all of the IAEA and with their support, is to create a framework that would give us all the opportunity of solving the energy problems with the use of nuclear energy on cooperative and reliable basis.

I would like to add one additional point to this, is that when our presidents discussed the issue of addressing the current problems on nonproliferation, they also were mindful of the need to continue what Russia and the United States have been doing so far in terms of lowering the levels of the nuclear potentials. We do have an agreement, START, that is currently operational and will expire by the end of 2009. And what was agreed between the United States and Russia to embark on a significant series of discussions upon the instructions from the presidents to find a formula for continuing this process and as early as possible.

So the statement of the Minister of the Foreign Affairs of Russia and Secretary of State in the United States was issued today on this score as well. Thank you.

MR. JOSEPH: Carol.

QUESTION: Speaking about the statement by Minister Lavrov and Secretary Rice, it doesn't reflect any number, any target number, in terms of reductions and it doesn't say anything about the disagreements that have been going on between the United States and Russia over whether there should be a formal treaty, whether it should reflect specific numbers. Have you made any progress in that sphere and are you looking at any specific target numbers?

MR. JOSEPH: Please, go ahead.

FOREIGN MINISTER KISLYAK: Yes. Well, I think it would be too early to announce any numbers because we haven't agreed on them. What we have agreed on, that the process of reductions need to continue, that we will be working together in order to explore what positive can be used from the current agreement into the future. It doesn't mean that we necessarily need to continue the treaty as it stands today, because a lot of things that are provided for in the treaty has been already completed.

So we need to look now at the treaty, look to -- into the possibilities that we will have about the treaty, and it's something that we are embarking on and discussing seriously from now on. And we expect that there will be progress, at least in basic understandings, within months to come.

MR. JOSEPH: And I would just add that Secretary Rice and Minister Lavrov did reiterate the position of both of our governments to continue reduction to the lowest level possible, consistent with our national security requirements and international alliance commitments. They also emphasized the importance of confidence building and transparency and continuing the dialogue. I think the statement pretty much is self-explanatory and points to the next steps in that regard.

QUESTION: The new framework that's being worked out, how does it differ from the IAEA itself in terms of guidelines for countries, in terms of peaceful nuclear energy use?

MR. JOSEPH: We'll alternate.

I think what is new about the declaration of the two presidents and the initiative that is launched by the two presidents is that the United States and Russia will work together to put together a number of elements that are already in play, and we've mentioned several of those, including efforts to enhance reliability of access to nuclear fuel, the GNEP initiative, the Russian fuel center initiative. We would put those together with other elements in a very attractive offer, an attractive offer that does include several new things, including, as I mentioned, the possibility of financing and facilitating support for the development of infrastructure, which is broadly defined in the vision.

And so by doing that, we can best help to shape this future in a way that does provide not only for meeting the goals that we have for energy, the urgency and the demands that we have for meeting worldwide energy, but we do it in a way that helps guard against what many are very concerned about, and that is a cascade of future proliferation. And I think that's what's new. That's what is new in this initiative. It's both substantive and process, I think.

And it shows again, I think, the ability of the United States and Russia to work together when our interests intersect. Sergei and I, for example, worked together to put in place an initiative that the two presidents announced last July on nuclear terrorism. This is the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, which has moved from 13 original countries at our meeting in Rabat a year ago in October, to over 50 countries having endorsed this very aggressive, very ambitious initiative to deal with concrete actions, to put in place concrete measures to prevent access to sensitive materials by terrorists, to detect and interdict materials that terrorists may acquire, and to work together, to the degree that we can, to respond to a terrorist attack with nuclear or radiological weapons; for example, coming to each other's assistance in the event that a dirty bomb is used. I think that is an example and that has been a model for our work on nuclear energy.

FOREIGN MINISTER KISLYAK: I cannot agree more with what Bob said. When we agree on the goals, we can find ways of working together effectively. And the example that I brought about the development of the initiative to combat nuclear terrorism is a good example of how things can be shaped by initiative of two countries supported by others. We went from two of us proposing the idea in the Petersburg summit. Our two presidents have advanced this. Then it was supported by G-8, then it became 13, now it's 53 and there are at least a couple of dozens of countries that are exploring how to associate themselves with these efforts. We are very much satisfied that the idea is getting more and more understanding among the countries, and more and more following, and more and more of practical contribution. So it's not about creating new legal instruments, about creating new bureaucracy. It's about working together to address specific challenges that we face together.

So these philosophy that is put behind this proposal is in a way the same. We want to address a format of multilateral cooperation that would bring into the format all of the best that does exist now in different formats that provides for optimization of national and multilateral efforts in developing nuclear energy. And you should be reminded there are many countries that are looking now at the nuclear energy in the future, but many of them don't have infrastructure at home to support that kind of energy. They do not have a basic knowledge as to how to regulate it, what to do with the waste, how to get fuel supply lines on reliable basis.

So what we will try to put together is what Bob called attractive offer that will try to be a format whereby countries interested in developing nuclear energy for their economic and development purposes would know that if they join that kind of format of cooperation they will be reliably supplied with what is needed for legitimate nuclear energy development, and it will be done in a way that will be relying on the expertise and the wealth of technological knowledge that has been applied already in our two countries and many others.

So the idea is that we are now proposing in this declaration that we will work with others. The declaration speaks of us working with others to develop this format.

So you asked how different it is from the IAEA. It's not the IAEA. It's an effort. It's not an organization. It's not a bureaucracy. But it will rely heavily on the assistance and expertise of the IAEA. It will rely heavily on the standards that have been developed in the IAEA and are being developed in the future. It will heavily rely upon the verification system of the agency. That is pretty unique and the only one that we have in the world in order to ensure that whatever is developed through cooperation is developed for peaceful purposes.

So we expect that this initiative will be developing hand-in-hand with the capabilities that the agency developing itself. Thank you.

MR. JOSEPH: Yes.

QUESTION: Can I go back to the Lavrov-Rice statement? There are some reports that what you're looking at is a formula that would involve exchange of data but not

necessarily inspections, that -- which leads to some concern about the security of Russia's nuclear devices. Is that the kind of formula you're looking at, first of all?

And secondly, given the fact that START goes through 2009 and we'll have a new administration in 2009, is this something that's designed to be a stopgap to alleviate concerns that there'll be nothing there? I mean, isn't there a chance that anything you negotiate may be over -- rewritten, renegotiated in 2009? I mean, how -- is this really what you think will be a long-term, lasting solution?

MR. JOSEPH: Well, START does come to an end in December 2009. The Treaty of Moscow continues with the reductions through 2012 to what will be the lowest level of deployed strategic warheads in decades. What we have tried to do and what we would continue to do is develop ideas, develop measures that will provide for the confidence and the transparency that the START measures provided at the time, during the time of that treaty.

We are involved in that dialogue. Now, as we haven't come to agreement on what will replace START, but we are in the process of talking about that. We both want transparency. We both want confidence-building measures. We have talked about measures that would involve data exchanges and site visits. We have, I think, you know, a way to go in terms of our discussion, but we are actively working now that. I should say that I'm no longer working that, but the United States and Russia are working together constructively on that.

FOREIGN MINISTER KISLYAK: I will give you my Russian perspective, and I wouldn't say that we, the Russians, are looking only for confidence-building measures and data exchange. It's something that certainly is part and parcel of any big arrangement for nuclear reductions, but we think that we need to focus mainly on the basics as to what we want to see continuing. Is it a stopgap or is it a continuing process of nuclear reductions? For us, it's a continuing process.

And we need to think what will come up after the treaty does expire, because we do not want this very important process to get lost or just to be discontinued. So the idea is that we will look into the treaty and the other ideas that are being fermented around the treaty and try to sort out what positive elements of this treaty should continue after it expires, and then we will build on that. That is the Russian concept.

As to whether -- like I said, transparency would be enough for you to be reassured about the safety of nuclear facilities in Russia, I'm pretty comfortable about security of our facilities. The issue is how we can ensure that, first, there is a predictability in strategic relations between Russia and the United States, that we continue to rely on our security on lowest possible levels of nuclear capabilities, and certainly some measures to make sure that arrangements of this sort are being implemented needs to be developed.

So as you might have noticed, there is a little bit -- I wouldn't call it difference, but nuances in our approaches. And it's normal, because we're in the process of developing a joint concept. Had we had one now, we would have announced this instead of announcing that we are going to have negotiations that need to be continued -- finished with a result in the near future. What is important today is the determination of both sides to work on this solution, and I hope it will be found. Thank you.

MR. JOSEPH: Please.

QUESTION: I would like to ask the Deputy Foreign Minister a slightly off-topic question on Iran, if I may.

FOREIGN MINISTER KISLYAK: We are working now on a different subject. I can --

QUESTION: It's very slightly off-topic.

FOREIGN MINISTER KISLYAK: Hmm?

QUESTION: It's very slightly off-topic --

FOREIGN MINISTER KISLYAK: Slight?

QUESTION: -- on nuclear cooperation between Russia and Iran.

FOREIGN MINISTER KISLYAK: Yes.

QUESTION: The Iranian official speaking earlier today in Dubna at some kind of conference claimed that Bushehr power plant will be finished, basically, in two months and they expect the Russians to deliver fuel anytime now, as he put it. What I wanted to know, sir, is whether the differences between Russia and Iran, financial differences that previously took place are over and what, basically, your take on his comments?

FOREIGN MINISTER KISLYAK: Well, usually, I do not comment on comments that I haven't read myself, but I'll give you a general answer to this. First of all, Bushehr is going to be continued. It's going to be built. It's fully compliant with all the requirements of the IAEA. It's fully under the safeguards agreements.

And I would say that the arrangement around Bushehr is an example of what Iran would be well advised to choose as a method and way of developing its nuclear energy, whereby it gets a reactor based on cooperation with other countries. It's getting fuel. It -- the fuel will be taken back after the exposure. So it's a win-win situation for everybody, for Iranian economically because it's the most reliable way to get the modern technology. Secondly, they don't have to solve the problem of disposal of the residuals. And from the point of view of nonproliferation, it's one of the best schemes one can envisage. So Bushehr as a concept is something that we are going to guarantee and we are going to work to the completion of the treaty -- of the project, provided, of course, that all the verification requirements are in place in Iran.

Concerning the timing, I am not the one who conducts negotiations on the payments and things like that. We have entities that are working on the basis of contracts and market economy rules. What I know about the timing is that it will be, I think, too -- what the English word will be -- it's ambitious to say that it will be completed within two months. It's not doable physically because the state of development requires, I think, a number of additional months to complete it. And certainly, they need to sort out all these technical and economic questions that need to be resolved. So the issue of sending fuel to Iran is not something that we'll have to resolve tomorrow. Thank you.

MR. JOSEPH: We'll just go in order here.

QUESTION: Right. What do you expect -- a question to both of you. What do you expect the response of the Iranian and North Korean governments to this new international mechanism to be? And also just a clarification. The agreement mentions storage and management of spent fuel. Does it envisage storage on Russian territory according with the law that's been passed about four or five years ago? Thank you.

FOREIGN MINISTER KISLYAK: What kind of agreement you are talking about?

QUESTION: Well, I'm talking about the joint statement by the two presidents.

FOREIGN MINISTER KISLYAK: Cooperation. It's not yet an agreement.

QUESTION: Right. A joint statement.

FOREIGN MINISTER KISLYAK: Well, it doesn't speak all about Russia -- only Russia per se. We have a law that provides for an opportunity for us to take back fuel of Russian origin, which we do. We do it for Ukraine, we do it for some European countries where we have constructed reactors, and it's normal. We can even take fuel and reprocess to send back the residuals under the Russian law. So that's a Russian situation, particular situation.

But here, what we are talking about is a concept that is rather multilateral. We need to work together in order to develop an answer to the question as to what you are going to do with the spent fuel, how you manage this in a safe, reliable manner, both in terms of environmental protection, security and nonproliferation. And it's something that we need to work on together. GNEP, by the way, is a program that is also addressing that kind of stuff for the future, and we are going to work in GNEP with the American colleagues on all these issues among others.

QUESTION: Iran and North Korea response?

FOREIGN MINISTER KISLYAK: Oh, that one. Oh, I think that certainly if Iran and North Korea choose to develop their nuclear energy on the basis of cooperation we are offering, that would be the best achievement one can hope for. In a way, partially we did offer to the Iranian colleagues one of the options that is included in the declaration by our two presidents, and that is the participation in the multilateral fuel cycle, fuel enrichment facility that we are developing in Russia. And this offer still stands.

MR. JOSEPH: I would just add that the declaration makes very clear the importance of nonproliferation; and cooperation, of course, would be with countries with good nonproliferation credentials. Neither North Korea nor Iran have good nonproliferation credentials. Iran, of course, is in violation of its safeguards obligations and there are many questions that are still outstanding with regard to the IAEA's investigation of the Iranian nuclear program. North Korea, of course, has agreed in the statement in September of 2005 to abandon or eliminate all of its nuclear programs, so I think it's premature by a long distance to start thinking about specific cooperation with Iran and North Korea.

What's laid out here in the declaration and the vision of the two presidents is a framework for cooperation on nuclear energy. And what we are trying to preclude is facilitating the access of sensitive technologies to countries who might be interested in nuclear power for other than energy reasons.

DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER KISLYAK: I would add -- pardon me.

MR. JOSEPH: Please.

DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER KISLYAK: Two words. On Iran and North Korea, I think that they joining this initiative is not a question of tomorrow because they haven't shown the interest in international cooperation so far. But we still hope that both issues can be resolved through negotiations and confidence building with the help of the International Atomic Energy Agency. And if these two countries develop a way of transparency and going through the agreements with the rest of the international community, working through the international organizations, and they achieve a confidence in the program that the other countries have, they will be as eligible as anybody else. Certainly, there is a long way to go before that.

MR. GALLEGOS: We have time for two more questions.

MR. JOSEPH: One here, and then maybe one in the back.

QUESTION: Thank you. Mr. Secretary, do you have any -- any negotiation underhand with the Iranian Government regarding to build another nuclear energy facility such as Bushehr? And if you do, what will be built? There is a contradiction between these joint actions and building another facility in Iran.

FOREIGN MINISTER KISLYAK: First of all, I don't know how building any facility will be in contradiction with this declaration, but I'm not aware of any specific negotiations, as you call, on any additional reactor today. And we certainly would like to see first of all that the Iranian issue in the IAEA has been successfully resolved before we are comfortable that kind of cooperation can continue.

MR. JOSEPH: Sir.

QUESTION: In 1945, the United States dropped an atomic bomb on civilian centers over Nagasaki and Hiroshima, consequently killing over 200,000 people. In hindsight, I think we can all agree that that was a very irresponsible use of the technology at the time. So my question is what gives the United States the right to sit at the head of the table and dictate to other countries how the type of technology should be regulated today?

MR. JOSEPH: I guess that's probably for me. (Laughter.)

Well, I fundamentally disagree with the premise of the question. And in fact, I think that most historians would agree that the use of an atomic bomb brought to a close a war that would have cost millions of more lives, not just hundreds of thousands of allied lives but literally millions of Japanese lives. And the United States has taken the lead in nonproliferation working with others, most recently with Russia in a number of initiatives, to deal with the threats that we face from nuclear proliferation with regard to countries in the near term like Iran and North Korea, with threats of today such as the threats from nuclear terrorism, which perhaps are the preeminent threat that we face as a nation, and trying -- working with others to shape the future so that we don't have a cascade of proliferation.

The type of world that was envisioned by President Kennedy back in the 1960s in which we have 20 or 30 nuclear powers, that is something that we need to preclude, we need to avoid. At the same time, we need to move forward responsibly with others to ensure that we can meet our energy requirements, we can see industrializing countries develop, and we can do this in a responsible manner. And that's the chart -- that's the path that we have chartered and that's the path that I think our two presidents want to take, not just our two countries, but lead in the international community.

Thank you.

QUESTION: The United States has been stockpiling weapons, nuclear weapons, for over 50 years --

FOREIGN MINISTER KISLYAK: I would like to add a couple of thoughts to what Bob had to say. Certainly, among the historians there are more than one view as to the wisdom of the use of nuclear weapon in the end of the World War II. And it's not that (inaudible) assessment that we share. And there are some other differences that we have, but what is important that first of all neither United States nor Russia consider themselves as sitting in the Presidium and regulating the use of nuclear energy for the future. What we've tried to offer is a honest and constructive cooperation with the others in order to build together a format that is cooperative and that promotes development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in a reliable and predictable fashion.

I would like to add to this that this area of discussions and cooperations have become recently very, very productive new area of cooperation between Russia and the United States. And if you look carefully into the declaration by the two presidents, they took note of the fact that a bilateral agreement on nuclear cooperation, bilateral cooperation between Russia and the United States, has been initialed. And it's going to be a new format for our own bilateral cooperation that would allow us too to work together better in the international formats.

Thank you.

MR. JOSEPH: Thank you.

 [BACK TO TOP](#)

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