

**HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON U.S.
POLICY TOWARDS THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC
OF IRAN**

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14, 2010

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:32 a.m. in room SR-253, Russell Senate Office Building, Senator Carl Levin (chairman) presiding.

Committee members present: Senators Levin, Lieberman, Reed, Akaka, Nelson, Udall, Hagan, Begich, Burris, Kaufman, McCain, Chambliss, Thune, Wicker, LeMieux, Brown, and Collins.

Committee staff members present: Richard D. DeBobes, staff director; and Leah C. Brewer, nominations and hearings clerk.

Majority staff members present: Madelyn R. Creedon, counsel; Jessica L. Kingston, research assistant; Michael J. Kuiken, professional staff member; William G.P. Monahan, counsel; and Russell L. Shaffer, counsel.

Minority staff members present: Joseph W. Bowab, Republican staff director; Christian D. Brose, professional staff member; and Daniel A. Lerner, professional staff member.

Staff assistants present: Paul J. Hubbard, Christine G. Lang, and Breon N. Wells.

Committee members' assistants present: James Tuite, assistant to Senator Byrd; Vance Serchuk, assistant to Senator Lieberman; Carolyn Chuhta, assistant to Senator Reed; Nick Ikeda, assistant to Senator Akaka; Greta Lundeberg, assistant to Senator Bill Nelson; Ann Premer, assistant to Senator Ben Nelson; Patrick Hayes, assistant to Senator Bayh; Gordon Peterson, assistant to Senator Webb; Tressa Guenov, assistant to Senator McCaskill; Jennifer Barrett, assistant to Senator Udall; Lindsay Kavanaugh, assistant to Senator Begich; Roosevelt Barfield, assistant to Senator Burris; Anthony Lazarski, assistant to Senator Inhofe; Sandra Luff, assistant to Senator Sessions; Clyde Taylor IV, assistant to Senator Chambliss; Jason Van Beek, assistant to Senator Thune; Brian Walsh, assistant to Senator LeMieux; Scott M. Clendaniel, assistant to Senator Brown; Kevin Kane, assistant to Senator Burr; and Ryan Kaldahl, assistant to Senator Collins.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR CARL LEVIN, CHAIRMAN

Chairman LEVIN. Good morning, everybody.

The committee today will hear testimony from Michèle Flournoy, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy; Bill Burns, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs; General James Cartwright, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and Lieutenant General Ronald Burgess, Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, on one of the most difficult and important security challenges of our time, the Islamic Republic of Iran. Instead of acting in a way to become a respected member of the community of nations Iran's leaders disregard international norms, abuse the rights of their own people, support terrorist groups and threaten regional and global stability. Iran's refusal to be open and transparent about its nuclear program jeopardizes the security of its neighbors and other countries in the Middle East.

There is a strong, bipartisan determination on this committee and in this Congress to do all that we can to stop Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. President Obama has focused considerable effort towards that goal because in his own words, the long-term consequences of a nuclear armed Iran are unacceptable and he said that he doesn't, "take any options off the table with respect to Iran." I support that view that if Iran pursues a weapon that all options including military options should be on the table. The possession of a nuclear weapon by Iran would be a threat to the region and the world security.

The Administration has sought, through a variety of means, to engage with the government of Iran to make clear the benefits available to them and its people if it complies with international norms. And it also makes clear the consequences if it seeks nuclear weapons. Through five United Nations Security Council resolutions and multiple U.S. laws and executive orders, the United States has sought to work both multilaterally and unilaterally to persuade Iran to abide by its obligations under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and its safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency, the IAEA.

We have sought and continue to seek the support of the international community including Russia, China and other countries that regularly trade with Iran. Concerted, coordinated international, diplomatic and economic efforts will hopefully make Iran understand in practical terms the consequences of its actions. One of the issues that we will discuss today is what additional diplomatic and economic efforts could be effective in persuading Iran to forgo its uranium enrichment program and meet all of its obligation to the IAEA and the international community.

Iran's external activities in the region are also deeply troubling. It continues to provide material support to violent elements in both Iraq and Afghanistan that are responsible for the loss of American servicemembers' lives and those of countless Afghans and Iraqis. Iran also provides financial assistance, munitions and other support to the terrorist organization Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas and other terrorist extremist elements in Gaza.

While neglecting its international obligations and playing a negative role in the region, Iran has also engaged in a deeply troubling pattern of behavior targeting its own citizens. In the wake of elections last June that were widely considered fraudulent, Iranians by

the hundreds of thousands poured into the streets in non-violent protest. The regime responded with brutality.

Internal security forces and government affiliated groups set upon protesters with guns and clubs. There was widespread abuse and torture of Iranians detained without legitimate charges. Prominent voices for reform have been silenced, often brutally.

Illegitimate show trials aimed at intimidation, not justice have resulted in harsh sentences including executions. The regime has cracked down on freedom of expression and interfered with the use of cellular, internet and other means of communication to block the free flow of information. This campaign of violence against its own people is further solidified an international consensus that Iranian leaders must not only fulfill their obligations to the global community but also respect the human and civil rights of their citizens.

The Committee will hear today from representatives of the Department of Defense, Department of State and the Intelligence community. There are several issues on which the Committee is eager to learn more.

An updated assessment on Iran's intentions and capabilities regarding nuclear weapons.

The status of ongoing diplomatic efforts aimed at securing tough, international sanctions against Iran.

Iran's support to extremist elements in the region.

Iran's campaign to stifle internal dissent and the free flow of information.

And U.S. military contingency planning regarding Iran.

A closed session will follow this morning's public hearing. We thank the witnesses for their service and for the valuable information that they're going to provide to the Committee as we consider these important issues. All of the witnesses' statements that have been submitted will be included in the record.

Senator McCain.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR JOHN McCAIN

Senator McCAIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank our distinguished witnesses for joining us here this morning and for their many years of service to our country.

As the Chairman has pointed out and we all know we meet here today to discuss U.S. policy toward Iran which at present is focused foremost on the imperative of preventing that government from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability. The reasons for this are very clear. However even as we focus on Iran's nuclear ambitions we must not lose sight of the Iranian regime's broader pattern of threatening behavior.

This is a government that trains, equips and funds extremist groups that are violently subverting many of Iran's neighbors. This is a government that is systematically violating the human rights of Iran's people. And this is a government that is already working aggressively to overturn the balance of power in the Middle East. And that among other reasons is precisely why Iran's rulers cannot be allowed to obtain nuclear weapons.

The question we are here to answer is, how do we stop one of the world's most dangerous regimes from acquiring the world's most dangerous weapons? I never thought a policy of engagement

with Iran's rulers would succeed. But I understand why the President pursued it.

Now after Iran's persistent intransigence, it is long past the time to put teeth into our policy. The Administration declared last year that Iran would face consequences by September. And then that deadline slipped to the end of the year. And now it's April. And Iran still has not faced any consequences for its actions. This delay has harmed U.S. credibility.

Clearly we and our partners will need to impose our own sanctions on Iran above and beyond what is ultimately authorized by a new UN Security Council resolution. And we should start immediately with the sanctions legislation that is now before Congress. The record of the past year is discouraging.

It's difficult to dispute that Iran is closer to possessing a nuclear weapons capability today than it was a year ago. And if we remain on our current course Iran will likely achieve a nuclear weapons capability. In short, over the past year the balance of power in the Middle East has been shifting in favor of our enemies. And we see the latest evidence of that today in reports that the Syrian government has transferred long range Scud missiles to Hezbollah. This is a dramatically dangerous and destabilizing action.

Nevertheless, we already hear some assert that we can live with a nuclear Iran. But this idea rests on a host of assumptions that are highly questionable.

To start, will the old rules of two-dimensional deterrence apply to a volatile region with multiple nuclear powers and possibly less rational actors?

How would Iran's possession of a nuclear weapons capability embolden its support for violent groups currently engaged in terrorism, assassination and subversion in the Middle East?

Would the United States assume greater burdens of extended deterrence to prevent a cascade of proliferation?

And could we assume these responsibilities as we further reduce our nuclear arsenal?

And perhaps most importantly, would a U.S. policy of containing or deterring a nuclear Iran really be credible if it is backed by the same government that would be tolerating what it had formally insisted was intolerable?

I hope our witnesses can help us to answer these critical questions today.

Ultimately we must remember one thing above all others. The question of whether the Iranian regime becomes a nuclear weapons power is less a question of capabilities than it is a test of wills, both Iran's and certainly ours. Iran is economically weak. It is militarily weak, as General Petraeus has observed. And following last year's election the Iranian regime is more politically compromised than ever. Indeed, and I said at the time, I believe that when the young woman, Neda, bled to death in the street last year it was the beginning of the end of the Iranian regime.

The United States for all of our challenges still enjoys extraordinary power and influence in the Middle East with strong and capable friends and allies. We have the capabilities to prevent or delay Iran from getting these weapons if we choose to. What actors in the region currently question is our judgment and our resolve

whether the United States is more determined to stop Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons than the Iranian regime is committed to acquiring these weapons.

We should have no illusions about the catastrophic consequences of Iran developing a nuclear weapons capability.

It would threaten the reliable supply of energy on which the global economy depends.

It would threaten the security of perhaps the very existence of close allies.

It would deal a potentially fatal blow to the nuclear nonproliferation regime and the rules based international order that the United States and our allies have spent more than 60 years building.

And worst of all, it would destroy the credibility of U.S. power for it would show that our government could not achieve a major, national security goal set forth by three Administrations of both parties.

After such a failure it's hard to imagine that friends and enemies alike would put much stock in America's pronouncements. So make no mistake, if Iran achieves a nuclear weapons capability it will not be because we couldn't stop it, but because we chose not to stop it. The stakes couldn't be higher. And I look forward to hearing and learning from our witnesses.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator McCain. Let's start with Secretary—

Senator MCCAIN. By the way, Mr. Chairman, I would ask to put in the record the various statements from time to time over the last year and a half or so. Time is running out. The deadline is near. Robert Gibbs, December 3rd, well we're going to have consequences if they don't turn around. December 20, 2009, the list goes on and on of the threats that we have that we have made through the Iranians. And so far no action.

George Schultz, my favorite Secretary of State in all the world once said, as his Marine drill instructor told him never point a gun at somebody unless you're ready to pull the trigger. We keep pointing the gun. We haven't pulled a single trigger yet. And it's about time that we did.

Chairman LEVIN. That will be made a part of the record.

[The prepared statement of Senator McCain follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]

Chairman LEVIN. Secretary Flournoy?

**STATEMENT OF HON. MICHÈLE A. FLOURNOY, UNDER
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR POLICY**

Ms. FLOURNOY. Chairman Levin, Senator McCain, other distinguished members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss our ongoing efforts related to Iran. The Obama Administration considers the challenges posed by Iran to be one of our top national security priorities. To address those challenges we have developed a strategy based on two central objectives.

First, we are working to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

Second, we are countering Iran's destabilizing activities and support for terrorism and extremists in the Middle East and around the world.

The focus of my testimony here today is to lay out for you the role of the Department of Defense in the strategy. The U.S. military is currently in a supporting role helping quietly to build the confidence of our Middle Eastern partners by enhancing regional security cooperation while supporting our broader diplomatic strategy. Our regional security cooperation efforts, not only reassure anxious states in the region, but also send a clear signal to Iran that its pursuit of nuclear weapons will lead to its own isolation and will ultimately make it less, not more secure.

Iran's nuclear and missile programs represent a significant threat to Israel. In the face of this threat we continue our effort to ensure Israel's qualitative military edge. And we are working closely with the Israelis to develop multi-layered ballistic missile defenses.

For a number of years we have worked with the countries of the Arabian Peninsula as well as other partners in the region to develop a common architecture that includes bi-lateral and multi-lateral security initiatives. These include a regional network of air and missile defenses, shared early warning systems, counter terrorism and counter piracy programs, programs to build partner capacity and efforts to harden and protect our partners' critical infrastructure. In fact we currently have substantial missile defense assets in a number of Gulf partner nations.

Our central command maintains a robust exercise schedule in the region and a sizable force presence which reaffirms our commitment to our partners. We also maintain a full schedule of bi-lateral and multi-lateral engagements going up to the highest levels. In the last two months alone, Secretary Gates and Chairman Mullen have both traveled to the region.

Strengthening the capacities of vulnerable states in the region is vital. It's a vital avenue for countering destabilizing Iranian activities. And we believe we are seeing some results.

In Iraq and Lebanon, for instance, our efforts to develop the capacity of security forces and improve governance has helped to weaken Iran's proxies. Iraqi security forces have increased their capabilities and have showed continued willingness to combat terrorist and militant organizations including Iranian backed groups. We also just witnessed a round of successful national elections despite Iranian attempts to interfere in the process during the lead up to the vote.

Nonsectarian, nationalist parties and coalitions won a significant share of the votes while the parties Iran most preferred performed less well. Iraqis appear to have once again rejected candidates whom they saw as too closely aligned with Iran and its regional agenda as we also saw during the 2009 provincial elections. Overall this suggests the growing sense of Iraqi nationalist identity that that's becoming significant, a significant counterweight to destabilizing Iranian interference.

In Lebanon we are working with our partners to strengthen national institutions and support efforts to extend government authority throughout the country, including into the south. Central to

this work is the development of Lebanese armed forces as a national non-sectarian force that can effectively counter terrorism, secure Lebanon's borders and implement all Lebanon related UN Security Council resolutions. Effectively implementing these resolutions requires ending Iranian support for Hezbollah and undermining Hezbollah's terrorist goals and militant presence in Southern Lebanon and beyond Lebanon's borders. Neither of these is attainable without strong Lebanese institutions, effective Lebanese armed forces and a sovereign, stable Lebanese state.

While we certainly have much further to go towards achieving these twin goals of preventing Iranian acquisition of nuclear weapons and countering Iran's destabilizing activities in support for extremists. We believe that we are making progress on both fronts. The Administration's diplomatic efforts have helped shore up the international consensus needed to effectively place pressure on Iran.

Meanwhile our efforts in DOD have helped to shore up the ability of our regional partners to defend themselves and to counter destabilizing activities from Iran. We have also reassured our partners that the U.S. is fully committed to their security. Your support on this Committee for these efforts has been critical over the past year. And we look forward to continuing to work with you as we move forward.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Flournoy follows:]

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Secretary Flournoy. Secretary Burns?

STATEMENT OF HON. WILLIAM J. BURNS, UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS

Ambassador BURNS. Thank you very much, Chairman Levin, Senator McCain and distinguished members of the Committee. Thank you very much for inviting me to appear before you today.

Iran's defiance of its international obligations poses as profound and complicated a challenge as any we face in the world today. Iran's leadership continues to expand its nuclear program. A nuclear armed Iran would severely threaten the security and stability of a part of the world crucial to our interests and to the health of the global economy. It would seriously undermine the credibility of the United Nations and other international institutions and seriously undercut the nuclear nonproliferation regime at precisely the moment we are seeking to strengthen it.

These risks are only reinforced by the wider actions of the Iranian leadership, particularly its long standing support for terrorist groups.

Its opposition to Middle East peace, its repugnant rhetoric about Israel, the Holocaust and so much else.

Its brutal repression of its own citizens.

And its efforts to choke off the free flow of information, a universal right of all Iranians.

Our policy aims to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons and to counter its other destabilizing actions. President Obama has also made clear including in his Nowruz message last month that we will stand up for those rights that should be universal to all

human beings and stand with those brave Iranians who seek only to express themselves freely and peacefully. We have pursued that policy through a combination of tough minded diplomacy, including both engagement and pressure and active security cooperation with our partners in the Gulf and elsewhere.

We have sought to sharpen the choices before the Iranian leadership.

We have sought to demonstrate what's possible if Iran meets its international obligations and adheres to the same responsibilities that apply to other nations.

And we've sought to intensify the costs of continued defiance and to show Iran that pursuit of a nuclear weapons program will make it less secure, not more secure.

Last year we embarked upon an unprecedented effort at engagement with Iran. We did so without illusions about whom we were dealing with where the scope of our differences over the past 30 years engagement has been both a test of Iranian intentions and an investment in partnership with the growing coalition of countries concerned about Iran's nuclear ambitions.

We sought to create early opportunities for Iran to build confidence in its intentions. In Geneva last October we supported, along with Russia and France, a creative proposal by the International Atomic Energy Agency to provide fuel for the production of medical isotopes at the Tehran research reactor that could have produced an opening for progress. Unfortunately Iranian leaders spurned that offer. What appeared to be a constructive beginning in Geneva was ultimately repudiated by Tehran.

Instead Iran pursued a clandestine enrichment facility near Qom.

Refused to continue discussions with the P5+1 about international concerns about its nuclear program.

Provocatively expanded its enrichment operations even further in violations of UN Security Council resolutions.

And drew new rebukes from the IAEA in the Director General's most recent report.

Iran's reckless intransigence has left us no choice but to employ a second tool of diplomacy, economic and political pressure. As the President emphasized in Prague last week we must insist that Iran face consequences because it has continually failed to meet its obligations. We cannot and we will not tolerate actions that undermine the NPT, risk an arms race in a vital region and threaten the credibility of the international community and our collective security.

Our efforts at engagement have made it much harder for Iran to deflect attention from the core of the problem which is its nuclear ambitions and its unwillingness to meet its international obligations. It has put us in a much stronger position to mobilize effective international pressure. Already we have seen evidence of mounting international concern.

We've seen increases in international cooperation to stop arms shipments and financial transactions that aid terrorists, threaten Israel and destabilize the region. We saw last November for the first time in four years the tough new IAEA Board of Governors resolution sharply criticizing Iran. We saw a strong UN General

Assembly Iran Human Rights Measure in December and a similarly strong European Council declaration later that same month.

Now we are moving urgently toward a new UN Security Council Sanctions Resolution. Our purpose is to send a unified message of international resolve with a range of concrete measures that will affect Iran's strategic calculus. A year ago neither Russia nor China would engage in such an effort and much of the rest of the international community was drifting on the Iran issue.

Today Russia, which was our partner in the Tehran Research Reactor Proposal, is also our partner in pursuing a new resolution. President Medvedev reaffirmed in Prague last week his support for smart targeted sanctions. President Obama had a constructive discussion two days ago on the margins of the Nuclear Security Summit with President Hu of China and the Chinese Ambassador to the United Nations has joined formal negotiations of a new resolution in New York.

We continue to work closely with Britain, France and Germany, our other partners in the P5+1. We seek the strongest possible resolution in the shortest possible time this spring. And we will seek to use this as a platform to expand upon the existing sanctions regime. Equally evident to Iranians are the informal expressions of international censure including the voluntary departure of long standing foreign investors and trade partners and the increasing isolation of a country that had only just begun to emerge from the self imposed autarky of the early post revolutionary era.

Neither our formal penalties nor the increasing ostracism Iran faces from the world will alter its agenda overnight. But we believe that the mounting weight of political and financial pressures on its leadership will have an impact on Tehran. Together with an increasing number of international partners we are absolutely determined to ensure that Iran adheres to the same responsibilities that apply to other nations. Too much is at stake to accept anything less.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Burns follows:]

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Secretary Burns.
General Cartwright.

**STATEMENT OF GEN. JAMES E. CARTWRIGHT, USMC, VICE
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF**

General CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Chairman, my concerns were included in Secretary Flournoy's comments. And so I will await your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Cartwright follows:]

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you so much, General.
General Burgess.

**STATEMENT OF LTG RONALD L. BURGESS, USA, DIRECTOR OF
THE DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY**

General BURGESS. Chairman Levin, Senator McCain and other members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify on Iranian military capabilities and intentions. I've submitted my prepared statement for the record. And I would like to briefly summarize the main points.

The Iranian leadership has four strategic objectives.

The first is regime survival.

The second is obtaining a pre-eminent, regional role.

Iran's third strategic objective is to have a leading role in the Islamic world and beyond.

Finally, Iran seeks to become a regional economic, scientific and technological power house.

Iran seeks to achieve these objectives with an aggressive strategy that counters western influence in the region. One principle tool employed by Iran is the active sponsorship of terrorist and paramilitary groups to serve as a strategic deterrent and intimidate and pressure other nations. This includes the delivery of lethal aid to select Iraqi Shia militants in Iraq and the Taliban in Afghanistan.

In contrast are Iran's aggressive foreign policy if conventional military posture is largely defensive. It is intended to protect the regime from external and internal threats. While the Defense Intelligence Agency currently assesses that Iran is unlikely to initiate a conflict intentionally or launch a pre-emptive attack, it does have the capability to restrict access to the Straits of Hormuz with its naval forces temporarily and threaten U.S. forces in the region and our regional allies with ballistic missiles.

Iran continues to invest heavily in advanced air defenses and the potential acquisition of Russian SA-20s is a major part of that effort. Coastal defense cruise missiles remain an important layer in Iran's strategy to defend the Persian Gulf and the Straits of Hormuz. Iran's unconventional military capabilities which include paramilitary forces trained to conduct asymmetric warfare would present a formidable force on Iranian territory. These forces would include commando and Special Forces units, smaller specially trained teams embedded within the conventional force units and selected militia and law enforcement personnel.

With regard to weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile delivery systems Iran is developing technological capabilities applicable to nuclear weapons. Uranium enrichment and heavy water nuclear water reactor activities continue in violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions. Iran has gone to great lengths to protect its nuclear infrastructure by locating facilities in buried, hardened facilities. It also seeks to protect them by acquiring sophisticated air defense systems.

Iran is continuing to develop ballistic missiles which could be adapted to carry nuclear weapons. Iran claims to have an extended range varying of the Shahab-3 and a 2000 kilometer medium range ballistic missile called the Ashura. Beyond the steady growth in its missile and rocket inventories Iran has boosted the lethality and effectiveness of existing systems by improving their accuracy and developing new sub-munition payloads.

In closing DIA concurs with General Petraeus' testimony before this committee last month that the Iranian regime is the primary state level threat to stability in the U.S. central command area of responsibility. The potential threats posed by Iran and involving trends inside that nation remain a high priority for the Defense Intelligence Agency collectors, analysts and counter intelligence professionals. Thank you, sir.

[The prepared statement of General Burgess follows:]

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, General Burgess. We're going to have a seven minute first round.

Secretary Flournoy, the President said that I've been very clear. I don't take any options off the table with respect to Iran. Now that means to me that military options remain on the table and my question is does the President's statement about options on the table include military options and in turn, do they include options of a maritime quarantine or blockade of Iran's oil exports or import of refined petroleum products?

Ms. FLOURNOY. Senator Levin, as the President said, all options are on the table. We see it as the Department of Defense's responsibility to plan for all contingencies and provide the President with a wide range of military options should they become necessary. But as both the Secretary Gates and Chairman Mullen have stated, military options are not preferable. And we continue to believe that the most effective approach at this point in time is a combination of diplomacy and pressure in terms of how best to change Iranian behavior.

But again, the President has stated that no options are off the table. In terms of specific options or contingencies I prefer to discuss those in a closed session.

Chairman LEVIN. Is it fair to say that the options that I described are included in the all options comment?

Ms. FLOURNOY. I would rather address that in a closed session, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. When you—but is your word all options? Is that your statement and your?

Ms. FLOURNOY. Yes, all options are on the table.

Chairman LEVIN. That's fine. Including military options?

Ms. FLOURNOY. Yes.

Chairman LEVIN. Secretary Burns, and I just want to say that I think that it's important that be the case. Secretary, I support very much what you said because I think it's critical that Iran understand the seriousness of our purpose and the unity behind a strong message to them.

General Cartwright, I was going to ask you about the contingency plans being prepared. I assume your answer will—let me ask. Is your answer the same as Secretary Flournoy on that question?

Pardon?

General CARTWRIGHT. It is, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. Alright. And I know that's not the preferable option. It never is. But it's also got to remain as an option.

Secretary Burns, can you tell us what additional specific sanctions are we seeking at the United Nations that are not already in United Nations resolutions?

Ambassador BURNS. Well Senator Levin, as I said I think we built increasing momentum toward a strong UN Security Council resolution. Intensive negotiations on the text of that resolution have just begun. Russia and China are taking active part in that effort.

We want to build on the existing sanctions. But look at ways in which we can increase pressure, particularly with regard to the fi-

nancial sources that Iran draws upon to finance its proliferation activities, its nuclear program. We want to look at ways in which we can, in particular, target the activities of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corp, the IRGC, which has been imminently involved in the nuclear program. It was an IRGC facility at which the Qom Clandestine Enrichment Facility has been constructed.

The IRGC has also expanded its economic role and controls a number of companies in Iran which also provide, I think, room for us to explore in a new Security Council resolution. So it's going to be a difficult process in New York. It always is in trying to work toward a tough Security Council resolution.

But we don't have a higher priority right now. And we're going to work to try to make those measures as strong as we possibly can. And achieve them in as quick a time as we can.

Chairman LEVIN. And we know that you're not able in this setting to describe the exact status of those discussions and negotiations. But in general, let me ask you whether the Administration would support the Senate passed legislation known as Dodd-Shelby which would make sanctionable efforts by foreign firms to supply refined gasoline to Iran or supply equipment to Iran that could be used by Iran to expand or to construct the oil refineries.

Ambassador BURNS. Senator, I'd say a couple of things.

First, I think our efforts toward a new UN Security Council Sanctions resolutions are one element in the strategy which I described before. We think that a Security Council resolution helps send a strong, unified message of international resolve which is important. We believe it will contain some significant measures to increase economic pressure.

We believe it can also provide a legal and political platform off of which the United States, the European Union, other countries, can consider further measures consistent with our own laws to amplify the impact of whatever gets done in New York. We want to work with the Congress with regard to the legislation that you mentioned. We share the sense of purpose, the goals as well as the sense of urgency that we know all of you feel about this issue. Our interest is in simply working with you to try to shape an approach which is going to have maximum impact and be as effective as possible.

And what that means, I think, is that we want to aim for an approach which is going to encourage other governments, foreign companies to cut their ties with Iran and is going to avoid penalizing countries and companies which are actually beginning to cooperate in that effort. So we look forward to working with you on that.

Chairman LEVIN. I hope you will be supportive of that bill that we passed including the specific provision that we think is an important part of it and would add great pressure if they're aware of the fact that that type of action is under consideration.

General Burgess, let me ask you. My understanding is that the United Nations is satisfied that the centrifuges at Natanz are being used at the moment to produce low enriched uranium which is enriched of five percent or less. And that these centrifuges are not yet being used to produce highly enriched uranium at a level needed

for nuclear weapons which is above 80 percent enrichment. Is that correct?

General BURGESS. Sir, the open source reporting would corroborate that, but any further discussion of that would be better in closed session.

Chairman LEVIN. Alright. Now if Iran decided to produce highly enriched uranium for nuclear weapons which is above 80 percent enrichment with the installed centrifuges that they have, how long would it take, approximately, to produce enough highly enriched uranium for one nuclear weapon?

General BURGESS. Sir, the general consensus, not knowing again the exact number of centrifuges that we actually have visibility into, is we're talking one year.

Chairman LEVIN. To produce that much highly enriched uranium.

General BURGESS. For one.

Chairman LEVIN. For one nuclear weapon, should they begin to do that.

General BURGESS. You characterized it correctly, Senator.

Chairman LEVIN. That's fine. And has finally, the intelligence community determined whether Iran has decided to produce highly enriched uranium?

General BURGESS. Sir, as we stated in the 2007 NIE that standing still stands that we do not have inside, that the regime has made the decision to move in that direction.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

Senator Collins, I guess you are next. The last shall be first.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Burgess, let me follow up on the question that the Chairman just asked you. It's my understanding that there is a new NIE that has been completed on the very question that has just been raised, but not yet released. Is that accurate?

General BURGESS. Ma'am, I think it is accurate to say that there is an NIE currently underway. And the decision on when it will be released and when it will be finished has not been determined yet.

Senator COLLINS. Do you expect that the findings in this NIE will be the same as the findings of the 2000, was it eight, nine? It blurs together, NIE that you just referenced?

General BURGESS. Ma'am, it would be better if we discussed that in closed session.

Senator COLLINS. Ok.

Secretary Burns, two weeks ago I met with the Director General of the IAEA, Mr. Amano, and I was first of all very impressed with the contrast in his reporting on Iran verses his predecessor. He is much more willing to give an accurate, straight forward assessment of the Iranian capabilities. He expressed frustration about the lack of compliance by Iran with the transparency measures that are known as the additional protocol that would allow for more intrusive inspections by the IAEA inspectors. And to date the Iranians have completely ignored the recommendations in the February report.

We all know that the Administration is working hard with the UN Security Council to try to produce an effective sanctions regime. Many of us, however, are concerned that the sanctions that

come out of the Security Council may well be inadequate to accomplish the goal of increased transparency and getting the Iranians to halt the work that they are doing. What could be done by our country if the Security Council does not follow through with tough and effective sanctions?

Ambassador BURNS. Thank you very much, Senator.

What we've been doing is to try to use every lever that we already have at our disposal to encourage foreign companies, foreign entities, to cut their ties with Iranian economy. And already, I think, we've seen a considerable amount of movement in that direction.

You've seen major energy companies like Total, like ENI, like Statoil, who have said they're not going to do any new investment in Iran.

You've seen a number of companies stop gasoline sales to Iran including Reliance, Spetoil, Lukoil, most recently.

You've seen some major international banks, Deutsche Bank, HSBC, pull out of business with Iran.

Just today I saw a story in the press that Daimler, the German car maker is pulling out of its business in Iran.

So we're continuing to work very hard to use the existing legislation, the existing U.S. law to encourage companies to move out of that kind of business. And that is having an impact, I think, on the Iranian economy and on its calculations. As I said before a Security Council resolution is one of a number of elements in our strategy. It does provide a platform for the European Union and its members as it has done in the past to consider other kinds of measures that it can take to implement in a very tough way whatever it is that the Security Council is able to agree to.

So I think to answer your question we have a number of other tools that we're using on which we can build.

Senator COLLINS. Madame Secretary, Secretary Gates on Sunday raised a very serious verification question publicly about the Iranian nuclear program. He said and I quote, "If their policy is to go to the threshold, but not assemble of a nuclear weapon how do you tell that they have not assembled? It becomes a serious verification question. And I don't actually know how you would verify that."

What assurances can you provide that we will know before it is too late that Iranian's nuclear program has gone from worrisome to the level that Vice President Biden has described as unacceptable. In other words if Iran has compiled all the components for a nuclear weapon but stops short of actually assembling them, how will we know when that point is reached? And what will be our response?

Ms. FLOURNOY. Senator Collins, I think that's actually, maybe, a question that's better for my Intelligence colleagues. I think that, you know, what Secretary Gates was making clear is there are many pieces to this puzzle. There are many different things that go into a nuclear weapons capability. And there are some that we have a very good sense of and we have fairly high confidence in.

But I think there's always a question of what you don't know. But I would say if we want to get into the particulars of that, I would suggest we have that as bringing in our Intelligence colleagues in a closed session.

Senator COLLINS. Secretary Burns, let me return to the issue of the Security Council resolution. How long will our country wait for the Security Council to act before moving onto other sanctions either unilaterally or with our allies?

Ambassador BURNS. Well, Ma'am, as the President has made clear what we seek is the strongest possible sanctions resolution in the shortest possible time this spring. We approach this with a real sense of urgency. We are building momentum, most recently with the decision by China to engage in a serious negotiation in New York over the text and the content of a new resolution.

I think a new Security Council Sanctions resolution is an important element of our strategy for intensifying pressure. And we're going to do everything possible to try to achieve that in, as the President has said, a matter of the coming weeks, this spring.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Collins.

Senator Lieberman.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Thanks to you and Senator McCain for convening this very important hearing. Thanks for this distinguished panel of witnesses. And what we're dealing here today with what, I believe, is the most significant security threat to our country in the world. And it has Armed Services implications obviously and so I think it's very appropriate that we're holding this hearing.

There was an important exchange, I think, between you, Mr. Chairman and the witnesses about having all options on the table. I was very interested in the press conference that President Obama held yesterday at the conclusion of the Nuclear Security Summit. He said, I presume in response to a question, maybe not, in regard about sanctions. 'sanctions are not a magic wand. What sanctions do accomplish is hopefully to change the calculus of a country like Iran so they see there are more cost and fewer benefits to pursuing a nuclear weapons program.'

And of course, I agree with that. And it's why I think it's so urgent that we go to the strongest possible sanctions. But I also agree with what the President said. It's in a sense it's a different language than we've used that sanctions are not a magic wand. They're not a guarantee that we will achieve the objective we want to achieve.

As the witnesses all know a succession of American administrations of both political parties have made clear over and over again. I would dare say every member of Congress of any political party has made clear over and over again, that it is unacceptable to us in terms of our security and our values that Iran obtain nuclear weapons. And that, I assume, is why we continue to say, Secretary Burns, Secretary Flournoy, that all options including the military remain on the table. That is to guarantee that the unacceptable which is that Iran obtain nuclear weapons, does not become reality. We have to keep all options including the military on the table.

Am I reading that correctly? Am I hearing it correctly, Secretary Flournoy?

Secretary FLOURNOY. Yes, Senator. The President has said both that a nuclear Iran is unacceptable and that all options are on the table. But we've also said that at this moment in time we believe

that there are other options that need to be pursued in their fullest. And that's what we're doing with regard to both engagement and pressure, sanctions as well as other measures.

Senator LIEBERMAN. And of course I agree with that. Although I have a same sense of urgency that Secretary Burns referred to about the sanctions, but I also feel that if the sanctions do not work then we have to be prepared to use military force to stop the unacceptable from happening which is that Iran become a nuclear power.

I want to pursue a line of questioning here about why it's so justified that the bipartisan consensus over a period of time in our country has been it is unacceptable for Iran to have nuclear weapons. In that regard I would really urge everyone here and everyone who can get their hands on it to read the prepared testimony of General Burgess for this hearing today. It is very powerful.

And General Burgess outlines the goals of the Iranian regime and makes clear that the IRGC and the Qods Force and I quote from his opening statement, "are not a rogue element," referring to the Qods force. It receives direction from the highest level of government. And its leaders report directly albeit informally to supreme leader Ali Khamenei.

General Burgess then goes on to describe a series of what he calls, "deadly terrorist attacks" over the last three decades that the IRGC and Qods Force have been involved in. Going back to the bombings at the U.S. Embassy and annex in Beirut and the killing of over 240 marines in the bombing of the barracks in Beirut in 1983 coming right forward to the support that the Qods Force and the IRGC have given to extremists and insurgence in Iraq that have been responsible for the killing of hundreds of Americans. It's very worrisome and compelling testimony.

General Burgess, is it fair to say, these are my words, but I ask you that there already is a lot of American blood on Iranian hands?

General BURGESS. Sir, that would be a fair statement.

Senator LIEBERMAN. So that when the Iranians, the leadership, the fanatical leadership, chants death to America, it's actually something they've already tragically made happen. And it's something that we have to take seriously.

General, the other statement that you made which I find very striking and I quote here, "DIA assesses that with sufficient foreign assistance Iran could develop and test an intercontinental ballistic missile capable of reaching the United States." Would you elaborate on that statement that's in your prepared testimony?

General BURGESS. Senator, what I would say in this setting and we can have further discussion in closed, is that the Iranians continue, as I said in my statement, to develop a capability in their missile system. And they are improving not only their range, but their accuracy. And they have certain capabilities. And if others decide to assist them they can leap frog that technology as they have given indication of some testing that is of concern to us.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Ok. I appreciate that. And in the closed session I want to take up with you what your particular concerns are about the kinds of foreign assistance Iran might receive to achieve the capability to launch a ballistic missile presumably at some point carrying nuclear weapons against the United States.

Secretary Burns, I think sometimes to appreciate the urgency of the matter it's important to look forward and ask what the world would look like if Iran achieved nuclear capacity. And I want to ask you just to speak briefly for a few moments. Is it fair to conclude that that would strengthen the hand of terrorist groups that are proxies for Iran, such as Hamas, Hezbollah and the extremists in Iraq, if Iran had nuclear weapons?

Ambassador BURNS. Yes, sir. That is fair to say. I think the consequences of a nuclear armed Iran truly would be catastrophic. I think you could easily stimulate a regional arms race which could have enormous dangers and carry enormous risks for stability in a part of the world that matters greatly to us and to some of our closest friends.

I think it would also do enormous damage, not only to the credibility of the United Nations and international institutions, but to the nuclear nonproliferation regime that exactly the moment as she saw in the Nuclear Security Summit.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Right.

Ambassador BURNS. Over the last couple of days when we're working hard to try to strengthen that regime. So I don't think anyone should underestimate what's at stake.

Senator LIEBERMAN. I appreciate your answer. I agree totally that particularly on the last point that all the steps that are occurring now, the START Treaty, the nuclear—the nonproliferation to terrorists that was a subject of the summit yesterday, all in my opinion will be decimated if Iran goes nuclear.

My time is up. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Lieberman.

Senator McCain.

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Cartwright, how long will it be until Iran could have a nuclear weapon capability?

General CARTWRIGHT. To go into detail of capability, in other words we talked earlier about a single weapon, just to give an example in an open forum. And we talked at one year the potential to have a weapon capability.

Senator MCCAIN. Just one year?

Secretary Burns, do you believe that Russia and China would agree to sanctions that included the cutoff of refined petroleum products into Iran?

Ambassador BURNS. I think that's going to be very difficult to achieve.

Senator MCCAIN. Do you believe that China will agree to sanctions at all through the United Nations Security Council?

Ambassador BURNS. Yes, sir. I do.

Senator MCCAIN. You do? You're on the record. You believe that China will agree to sanctions through the United Nations Security Council that would have any meaningful affect—that would have meaningful affect?

Ambassador BURNS. Yes, sir. I think that it's, as you asked is that possible? I do believe that's possible, yes.

Senator MCCAIN. Is it probable?

Ambassador BURNS. We'll have to see, sir. We're just beginning a serious negotiation in New York. As I mentioned before President

Obama and President Hu had a couple of days ago a constructive conversation about this.

I think we and the Chinese agree that we need to send a strong message to Iran. So yes, sir, I do think it's possible.

Senator MCCAIN. Probable.

Ambassador BURNS. Yes, sir, I think it is likely that we would be able to produce a Security Council resolution.

Senator MCCAIN. So when do we envision this taking place?

Ambassador BURNS. Sir?

Senator MCCAIN. Six months?

Ambassador BURNS. I hope very much in weeks. We're going to work very, very hard to try to achieve a new sanctions resolution that has meaning this spring in the shortest possible time.

Senator MCCAIN. Why doesn't the United States, with our allies, who have agreed that they would act with us. I'm talking about the French, British, Germans, act unilaterally at least to put some sanctions that could have some effect on the Iranian behavior rather than waiting for the United Nations Security Council which we have been waiting now for about a year and a half at least.

Ambassador BURNS. Well.

Senator MCCAIN. Let me put it this way. The sanctions so far that have been enacted by the Security Council have been in the view of most observers ineffective.

Ambassador BURNS. Sir, I'd just say two quick things.

First, our closest European allies expressed strong support for trying to achieve a new Security Council resolution as a part of our strategy.

Senator MCCAIN. Haven't they also agreed to join with us in imposing sanctions right away?

Ambassador BURNS. Sir, their very strong preference, I mean, they can speak for themselves on this, is to try to achieve a Security Council resolution as a part of our strategy. And as I mentioned before that can serve as a legal and political platform for European Union and some of our key European partners to take other steps as they have in the past.

And my second comment, sir, very quickly is that we're continuing to work very hard to use existing legislation, existing U.S. law to discourage companies from doing business with Iran. And we've had some success in doing that. Major oil companies like Statoil, like ENI, like Total, major banks, insurance companies including Allianz from Germany are pulling out of business in Iran. A number of major companies, as I mentioned before, have announced that they're not going to sell gasoline to Iran anymore, Reliance, Vitol, Lukoil most recently from Russia.

So we're going to continue to work that hard as well.

Senator MCCAIN. But none of these actions have had any perceptible affect on Iranian behavior.

Ambassador BURNS. I think the Iranians do notice when these things happen. I think they are concerned about it. And I think one way of judging that is the considerable effort that the Iranians are putting into, right now, to discouraging a new UN Security Council resolution and working hard with members of the Security Council against that.

Senator MCCAIN. Well, I'll be very interested to see if you are—prediction comes true that meaningful sanctions will be agreed to by the Russians and the Chinese. They've been playing rope-a-dope with us for now over a year. So I'll be very interested to see if your optimism comes true. I see no justification for it.

Ms. Flournoy, I noticed with interest that you talked about the importance of strengthening Lebanon and national security implementations, Security Council resolutions, assert government control throughout Lebanon's territory. Have you seen any progress there including implementing the United Nations Security Council resolution that calls for the disarmament of Hezbollah?

Ms. FLOURNOY. We have an extensive assistance program with the Lebanese armed forces.

Senator MCCAIN. I'm aware of the assistance program.

Ms. FLOURNOY. And I think—

Senator MCCAIN. And I'm asking if you have seen any progress in disarming Hezbollah?

Ms. FLOURNOY. I think we have seen an increase in their political will to do this. We have not yet seen them accomplish that goal. This is a work in progress and it's going to take some time.

Senator MCCAIN. Is it of some concern to you the reports today that Syria has given Scud missiles that are now in place in Southern Lebanon?

Ms. FLOURNOY. We are very concerned about those.

Senator MCCAIN. Is that a sign of progress?

Ms. FLOURNOY. Of course not, sir.

Senator MCCAIN. Of course not. So, but your statement, you would never know it from the statement you made. We're working with our partners to strengthen national institutions.

There has been no progress in disarming Hezbollah. There has been no progress in decreasing tensions there. And as everybody knows the Scud missile now in Southern Lebanon, it changes the equation rather significantly if Hezbollah is either decides to attack or decides to respond to some Israeli action.

Ms. FLOURNOY. Sir, if I could.

Senator MCCAIN. Yes.

Ms. FLOURNOY. We have seen the Lebanese armed forces able to exert control in areas that were previously dominated by Hezbollah. It is a work in progress.

Senator MCCAIN. I would be very interested.

Ms. FLOURNOY. Have we got there? No, we have not gotten to where we want to go yet.

Senator MCCAIN. I would be very interested in seeing of any significance, those areas that have been taken over by the Lebanese military. Obviously Hezbollah controls the areas of Southern Lebanon that they want to. They now have the veto power over any action that the Lebanese government might take. And both Hariri and Walid Jumblatt both said that they had to go to Damascus, both individuals whose father had been assassinated by Hafas Assad.

So your rosy scenario is not corroborated by the facts on the ground which is an indication of our weakening position throughout the region because of our failure to act. I guess my time is expired.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator McCain.

Senator REED.

Senator REED. Thank you very much.

General Cartwright, we will all acknowledge that a sanctions approach is not a magic wand. Is a military approach a magic wand?

General CARTWRIGHT. No, Senator, it's not. When you look at the military side of the equation we are working hard to support things like sanctions and other diplomatic activities in the region with the capabilities of strengthening the region's military, strengthening nation states to be able to defend themselves and in improving the capabilities in the area. But military activity alone is not likely to be decisive either.

Senator REED. Let's just take it a step further and if you want to Reserve comments at the closed session that's fine. The usual proposal for a military action is some type that a discreet strike to disrupt the nuclear facilities in Iran. I presume that would not be 100 percent effective in terms of knocking them out. It would probably delay them, but that if their persistent enough they could at some point succeed.

Is that a fair judgment from your position?

General CARTWRIGHT. That's a fair judgment.

Senator REED. So that the only absolutely dispositive way to end any potential would be to physically occupy their country and to disestablish their nuclear facilities. Is that a fair, logical conclusion?

General CARTWRIGHT. Absent some other unknown calculus that would go on, it's a fair conclusion.

Senator REED. After 7 years in Iraq and more years in Afghanistan are military forces prepared to conduct such an operation?

General CARTWRIGHT. I think our military forces with high confidence could undertake such an operation. But I think that there would be consequences to our readiness and to the challenges that we already face in this nation economically to pay for a war, et cetera.

Senator REED. And are consequences within Iraq and Afghanistan?

General CARTWRIGHT. With consequences in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Senator REED. How many forces do you think it would be necessary to conduct such an operation?

General CARTWRIGHT. I'd reserve that for a closed session, sir.

Senator REED. More than we have committed already into Afghanistan and Iraq?

General CARTWRIGHT. I'd prefer to Reserve that for closed session.

Senator REED. General Burgess, you said and I think Senator Lieberman's acknowledgement in your testimony is very accurate. It is very sobering and very appropriate. But I just want to on the issue that the revolutionary guards are not a rogue force.

Now I'll ask a question which may be a very dumb question. Is that good or bad? I mean, if there is a connection to a political organization does that limit their operations or does it in any way constrain their operations or is it something that empowers them more?

The other side of the equation would be, you know, there are countries where there are truly rogue forces that are controlled by no one. I think of Pakistan and are not controlled by the government, they're controlled by security agencies, like LAT etcetera, who pose potentially even more destabilizing. One of the real dangerous points about Mumbai was if the Pakistanis knew about it that's bad. If they didn't know about it it's much worse.

So can you comment upon that?

General BURGESS. Sir, I think what I would say in this setting is that as I laid out in the testimony the Qods force, the IRGC folks, that there is some control that is directed from on high. How much and within what bounds that is put on them is not something I'm prepared to go into detail on. So when we say not a rogue force they are not truly, totally independent operators. There is some cognizance on high.

Senator REED. But again, and a question I think from your answer is something that we will consider in closed session or with more of a debate and a conclusion. Is that an opportunity that we might exploit in terms that the political leadership or is that something that further empowers them but I think we defer to debate to later.

General BURGESS. Yes, sir.

Senator REED. Secretary Flournoy, you mentioned that it was a successful election in Iraq. The election was successful, very much so. I just returned there recently as so many of my colleagues did.

The Iranians spent a lot of effort trying to consolidate the Shias into a block that would effectively insist upon a Shia controlled government. And the election was, in many respects, a vindication of nationalism and secularism which was a significant, I think, achievement. Now we're into the formation of government.

I think the Iranians lost the election. They're trying to win the formation. All the parties have gone to Tehran to talk to the Iranian forces. And I think can you comment now about the process going forward in terms of the Iranian influence in the formation of the government and the longer term in Iraq?

Ms. FLOURNOY. The Iranians did seek to influence the election and they were not very successful. The parties they backed most strongly did not do all that well. And that was the same result we saw in the provincial elections last year.

I think the Iraqi people are pretty clear that they don't want a government that's made in Tehran. There were talks that began in Tehran since then. The parties have also traveled to Turkey, to Saudi Arabia, to other neighbors in the region.

I think the—those who are most likely to be in a position to actually form a government have asserted their commitment to inclusion of all the blocks represented and so forth. So I think Iran has had a history now over the past several years of overplaying its hand in Iraq. It tried to stop the SOFA and the SFA and it didn't succeed. It was funding militants in Basra. They were—a successful offensive was conducted against them. They tried to influence the last two elections and their candidates and parties have not done so well.

So yes they're trying to influence. Yes we have to watch their meddling very carefully. But I don't think they're going to be suc-

cessful because I think ultimately Iraqi nationalism will trump Iranian meddling.

Senator REED. Thank you, my time is expired.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Reed.

Senator Thune.

Senator THUNE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you all for being with us today and for your service to our country.

Secretary Flournoy and Secretary Burns, does it remain U.S. policy to prevent Iran from achieving a nuclear weapons capability?

Ms. FLOURNOY. Yes, sir.

Senator THUNE. And would you say that absent a credible military threat that Iran is less likely to come to the negotiating table and suspend its nuclear program?

Ms. FLOURNOY. I think the President has been very clear that all options are on the table. But right now we believe the best combination is diplomatic engagement and pressure.

Senator THUNE. I want to come back to the discussion you were having with Senator McCain regarding Security Council resolutions. And I think the President has said that he's not interested in waiting months for sanctions regime to be in place. I'm interested in seeing that regime in place in weeks.

With regard to the potential timing of that I guess the question I would have is how long will the U.S. seek a Security Council resolution on Iran before moving on to other sanctions?

Ambassador BURNS. Senator, you know the President has been very clear that we want to achieve the strongest possible sanctions resolution in the shortest possible time, this spring. We're working very hard toward that end. Formal negotiations on the new resolution have begun in New York now with the Russians and Chinese participating.

I can't give you an exact date. All I can tell you, sir, is we share the same sense of urgency about getting this done as quickly as we can and sending the strongest possible message to Iran.

Senator THUNE. If that doesn't come into place in the near future is the U.S. willing to act with partners outside the UN context to impose the type of crippling and biting sanctions that you've been talking about for the past year?

Ambassador BURNS. Well, Senator, I do believe it's possible to achieve that result in New York. And as I said, I think it's also possible then to use that as a platform for taking some of the other kinds of measures that the European Union, for example, has taken in the past. And I think that's the most effective approach for us to take right now.

Senator THUNE. There was a, Secretary Burns, a story in the March 7th, Sunday, New York Times that the Federal Government awards billions of dollars in contracts to companies that are doing business in Iran or were at the time of the contract. According to the article 49 companies that currently do business with the U.S. are doing business in Iran and show no signs of ceasing that activity. Many of these companies are subsidiaries of major U.S. corporations.

If the U.S. is to have any credibility as we seek international sanctions on Iran, shouldn't we start by barring subsidiaries of U.S. corporations from doing business with Iran?

Ambassador BURNS. Well, sir, we, you know, take very seriously the concerns that were raised in that article. I think it's worth noting that half of the companies that were mentioned in that New York Times article have already pulled out of business in Iran.

With regard to the question of subsidiaries, I mean, as you know, sir, American companies are already prohibited from doing business with Iran. If American companies seek to create subsidiaries simply for the purpose of evading U.S. law, Treasury Department, has legal basis to go after them and does. And with regard to foreign subsidiaries of U.S. companies, we've already seen in recent weeks some movement in the right direction both Halliburton and Caterpillar's foreign subsidiaries have pulled out of their business connections in Iran.

So we took it very seriously. We're continuing to push hard.

Senator THUNE. Well it seems like—but are we doing enough to target the banks that are doing business in Iran or that are sanctioning companies that are doing business with the IRGC? It just seems like you continually hear these stories and those reports. And you know, we talk about targeting their dependence upon imported gasoline and cutting off financing through the banks that are doing with it.

But it's—I'm hard pressed to see where we're taking the steps that are necessary and effective if we're serious about putting the pressure that you talk about on that regime.

Ambassador BURNS. Well, Senator, I think, you know, a number of companies and banks, foreign companies and banks, you know, if faced with the choice between doing business with the United States and doing business with Iran are making, what from our point of view, is the right choice. And the tally sheet as you look at the number of major banks. I mentioned Deutsche Bank and HSBC, the number of companies that have ceased gasoline sales to Iran, including Reliance, Vitol and Lukoil, the Russian company most recently, is increasing.

So I think our efforts are having an impact and we continue to work very hard at that.

Senator THUNE. Well, the clock is ticking.

Ms. Flournoy and General Cartwright, I wanted to get your views on another subject. And that's the ongoing development of the air/sea battle concept that is being proposed and specifically how it's going to affect our military strategy toward Iran. As you know the QDR directs the Navy and the Air Force to develop this new joint air/sea battle concept for defeating adversaries with sophisticated anti-access and area denial capabilities.

Could you provide your views on the development of this new air/sea battle concept and how does this concept fit into our overall strategy with regard to dealing with Iran?

General CARTWRIGHT. The concept as it's articulated in the QDR is to look at anti-access capabilities particularly those nations that are bordered by oceans, seas, etcetera. And what kind of capabilities in the 21st century we do believe the Department will need in order to penetrate those types of sophisticated counters.

As we look at Iran probably the areas of greatest relevance and I'll defer also to Ms. Flournoy, are those things that are associated with the straits and narrows. Areas that are difficult, that are

more easily defended with shorter range capabilities, less sophisticated capabilities because of the lack of strategic depth and our ability to either prevail directly in the face of those threats or to work around them. And a lot of what we're trying to understand is how do you find the synergies between those things that come from the sea and those things that are inherently either by long range or otherwise tactical air.

How do you find the synergy to work against those types of threats, detect them and then find a kill chain that would allow you to penetrate?

Senator THUNE. Can I just ask you to follow up? In your view how will long range strike capability fit into that, this new sort of air/sea battle concept?

General CARTWRIGHT. One of the key issues of long range strike or attributes of long range strike is that it can close generally with a target much quicker than a surface force. And so from the standpoint of wearing down the offenses or eliminating them before you actually have to close with them, it gives you that opportunity.

Senator THUNE. Ok. Anything to add, Ms. Flournoy? Ok. My time is up. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Thune.

Senator Hagan.

Senator HAGAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I too want to thank the witnesses for coming and giving us your testimony today. And I think it's important having the State Department, Defense and Military here discussing this issue.

We know that Iran's nuclear weapons program along with its military assistance to groups such as Hamas, Hezbollah and the insurgency in Iraq and Afghanistan, serves as a threat to our National security interest. And the nature of this challenge requires a whole of government approach that employs all aspects of national power. Has the Administration formulated plans that integrate the diplomatic, informational, military and economic instruments of national power into a comprehensive strategy that addresses the threat that Iran presents and Secretary Flournoy and Secretary Burns, if you all can comment on that?

Ambassador BURNS. Sure. Well yes, Ma'am. I think the short answer is yes. And we've described I think a number of the elements of that comprehensive strategy. It's an enormously difficult challenge. But I can't think of a higher priority for the United States than addressing that challenge energetically and forcefully.

And those elements include what we're trying to do diplomatically, both the effort at engagement, but also economic and political pressure because they complement one another. They're both parts of diplomacy. Also the efforts though that Under Secretary Flournoy has already described at continuing quietly to strengthen our security cooperation with our partners in the region, particularly in the Gulf. A range of other efforts that we make, you know, with partners around the world.

Ms. FLOURNOY. I would say that complementing our efforts for diplomatic engagement, economic pressure. What we see in the region is actually a number of countries who are/share a great concern and anxiety about Iran's behavior and their capabilities development and actually starting to cooperate much more closely with

us and with each other. We see this in terms of the essence of our defense cooperation, in terms of ballistic missile defense cooperation, in terms of the bilateral and multilateral conversations and information sharing and plans coordination that's going on.

So we actually see, you know, I would contest the idea that the balance of power is shifting to our enemies. We actually see Iran's behavior driving a lot of our friends closer to us and closer to each other in the Gulf region.

Senator HAGAN. Thank you. During the 2006 Lebanon war between Hezbollah and Israel as well as during the 2007–2008 Gaza conflicts between Hamas and Israel, both Hamas and Hezbollah demonstrated weapons arsenals that were larger than many other small nations. Many of the weapons and munitions employed by Hamas and Hezbollah can be directly linked to supplies provided by Iran.

Secretary Flournoy and General Cartwright, what steps, if any, is the Department taking to disrupt the proliferation of Iranian weapons and weapons technology to non-state actors throughout the region?

Ms. FLOURNOY. We have increased our intelligence focus on this. We've increased our intelligence sharing with others in the region. We have been bolstering their anti-smuggling capabilities at a number of partner states so that they can be more effective interdicting and stopping some of these flows. And we're also applying substantial pressure to those states that are facilitating this movement of goods.

I don't know if you want to add anything?

General CARTWRIGHT. I think all of those things are true. This is still a difficult problem. And I wouldn't want to lead you to believe that we've effectively cut the stream off.

We are working very hard with every capability that we have in addition to trying to improve the capabilities, particularly of the Nations that have these borders that are someone porous. But this is a difficult problem.

Senator HAGAN. Secretary Flournoy, when you mentioned intelligence focus and you're sharing that information with the other nations are they actually doing something and taking active steps with the intelligence?

Ms. FLOURNOY. We see a mixed record. And we could go into the details in closed session. Some are and some are not doing everything we would hope.

Senator HAGAN. Thank you. Despite the fact that many Iranian reformists are now in prison and there are many that believe that the green challenge of the most recent election has significantly narrowed the base of the regime to hard line purists that are backed by revolutionary security forces. I was wondering if Secretary Burns, do you believe that the green challenge has weakened Ahmadinejad's regime and how serious would you consider the unrest within Iran to be?

Ambassador BURNS. I think that the concerns you saw manifested on the streets of Tehran and other Iranian cities are very real. And I don't think they've gone away. I think they reflect a deep discontent. And I think we've seen, you know, fissures not

only between the regime and much of the population but also within the leadership itself.

And so it's very difficult to predict. But I think they're very real issues.

Senator HAGAN. Excuse me. Thank you. I was—we've been talking a lot about the sanctions. And to my knowledge no firms have been sanctioned under the Iran Sanctions Act since its enactment in 1996. And the ISA was then expanded during the 110th Congress and additional provisions that have been passed by the House and Senate I think are currently in conference.

Secretary Burns, what has the Administration determined during its investigation into investments of Iran for violations of Iran Sanctions Act and what steps does the Administration plan to take to ensure that the penalties are imposed for violations of this act?

Ambassador BURNS. Well first, Ma'am as I mentioned before we have tried to make very active use of that act and of existing U.S. law to discourage firms from doing business with Iran. And as I mentioned I think there have been some specific instances of that actually occurring. At the same time we go through scores of reports of new business deals, particularly in the energy sector being done with Iranians. We have, including a number that have been highlighted by members of Congress, are preliminary within this Administration, our preliminary review of that shows that a number of those cases raised by members of Congress are in fact, problematic.

We're trying to make sure that we get this right because it means sifting through a lot of different information some of which turns out to be unfounded, but some of it real. And we look forward to staying in very close touch with the Congress and we work through the results of that effort. And we'd also be glad to provide briefing in closed session about some of the results of the efforts so far.

Senator HAGAN. Ok. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much Senator Hagan.

Senator Brown.

Senator BROWN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you all for coming and participating. And Mr. Chairman, thank you for your leadership.

I know I'm new here, but one of the things that's always concerned me long before I got here was the fact that I don't believe that Iran takes us seriously when we come—when it comes to full disclosure with regard to their nuclear capabilities. And as you know unemployment is high. Their cash Reserves are dwindling, if not depleted. Their citizens are anxious for change.

And we had, I felt, an opportunity to help them at some point in recent memory to effectuate change. And it's always been my feeling that the answer is not in the UN, but it's in the EU. And really implementing draconian sanctions to effectuate change and it really comes down to the money.

Without money and without the refining products that they need to survive that they're not going to do anything. They're going to continue to string us and the world communities along and continue to develop their nuclear program. It doesn't take a brain surgeon to figure it out. And I'm concerned that the every day that we

delay is another day that they have to get closer to the capability to export terrorism around the region and the world.

And once again, I'm new here. I don't want to be disrespectful. But, you know, what is the administration's plan when it comes to either exerting pressure or trying to work with, you know, France and Russia and the other countries that have substantial financial assets in this region? Because without their assistance, quite frankly, and without, you know, pulling the plug on the finances I don't think we're going to be getting anywhere.

And I'd like either Secretary to respond to that.

Ambassador BURNS. Yes, sir. Well, first we share, absolutely, your sense of urgency. You're absolutely right about the consequences of a nuclear armed Iran.

What we're seeking to do is mobilize the strongest and widest possible international pressure. And a Security Council resolution is an important part of that because for many of our European allies, in particular, that provides an extremely valuable platform for them to consider measures, further measures that the European Union can take. And we're going to push as hard as we can, as I've said before, to achieve that range of measures as quick as we can, not only in the Security Council but also in terms of what we can do with others.

Senator BROWN. And once again, just got back from Afghanistan and Pakistan and obviously hear of the influence of Iran, obviously in Afghanistan. And as I'm aware and as you're aware there's two economic sanctions bills, one in the Senate, one in the House. I may be missing something but I know health care is important to the Administration. I know that now we're talking about financial regulation reform and we may be doing immigration reform. We're not focusing on jobs, number one, which is every other country that we just visited, Afghanistan and Pakistan are.

But I would think that this particular, these two bills that are in conference committee would be one of the top priorities of the Administration. I'd like to know what influence or what activity the Administration is putting on something that I think is a vital national security, not only to us, but to the rest of the world. I don't—maybe I'm not privy to the information. But what's being done trying to get these bills passed so we can get some real teeth and stop, you know, fooling around with Iran?

Ambassador BURNS. Well, Senator, we want to continue to work with the Congress to try to shape that legislation so it's going to have the most effective impact. And what I mean by that, sir, is to use whatever measures that the United States takes in a way that's going to encourage more countries, more companies, to move out of business with Iran and that's not going to penalize, you know, those countries that are actually with us and moving in the right direction. And that's what we what we want to work with you and your colleagues very much to try to achieve.

Senator BROWN. And one final question, Mr. Chairman. As you know I recently got back from Afghanistan and, you know, one of the major concerns of not only the Karzai government, but of our leaders there is, you know, the influence that Iran is having there. What are some of the lessons that you learned in Iraq in curtailing Iranian influence can we use in Afghanistan?

Either this is probably Secretary Flournoy, I would believe.

Ms. FLOURNOY. Again I think that Iran, when its efforts to influence have become widely known by the populations it's seeking to influence in places like Iraq or Afghanistan, those efforts have tended to be rejected. Again in Iraq the reaction has been fairly consistent and strong. I think in Afghanistan they are playing a double game where they are providing some support to try to influence the government while they're also trying to support and influence elements in the insurgency there.

I think that the more that meddling is exposed the more it is rejected by the population they're trying to win over. And I think that is a common lesson that will apply in both places.

Senator BROWN. And in conclusion, Mr. Chairman, and through the people here speaking in front of us. I would just encourage, like I said, I hate to keep saying I'm new here. But the people in my state and the people in this country and the people who are directly affected by what's happening in Iran are very, very concerned about what's happening there and the delay, the delay, the delay, the talking, the delay.

And at some point I'm hopeful that the Administration will make this, you know, one of its top priorities. And start focusing on the security of that region because a nuclear Iran and its ability to export terrorism throughout that region and the world should make people very, very concerned. And I would ask you to pass that message to the President, as I plan to do. So thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Brown.

Senator WICKER.

Senator WICKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There has been a general agreement with the statement of Secretary Gates that Iran will not have the capacity to build a nuclear weapon for at least another year. General Cartwright, I'll begin with you and then perhaps General Burgess might also participate in this line.

I think that the testimony today has been that therefore a year from now it is possible that Iran might have attained the capacity to build a nuclear weapon. Is that correct, General Cartwright?

General CARTWRIGHT. I think there are several caveats that are associated with that. When we discussed it earlier it was in the context of the ability to produce sufficient fissile material for a weapon. It didn't include the assembly, the testing, all the things that go into it. And we could get into that more in the closed sessions.

Senator WICKER. So well let me try a little more in a public forum. Is there anything you can tell us about their ability actually then, to assemble and actually have in their possession a nuclear weapon also to be able to deliver that nuclear weapon or would a test be necessary for them to have any confidence level that they actually had something there?

And then I think the ultimate question on the minds of not only our constituents, but of people around the world is when based on what the Secretary has said publicly, when might they have the capacity to harm another people?

General BURGESS. Sir, I think as we said in the earlier discussion, they have enough low enriched uranium now that if they further process and enrich that that in a year, if they continue to take

that, they would have enough material for one weapon. So I think anything further than that in this floor would be too much.

Senator WICKER. Ok, alright. Well we'll just wait for the closed session on that.

Secretary Burns, you mentioned this scenario in answer to Senator Lieberman's question of actually a nuclear armed Iran and the things we would have to worry about in that regard. And you mentioned a nuclear arms race, the harm done to the credibility of the United Nations, the devastating effect it would have on our efforts to prevent terrorist groups. Did I miss you saying that there would be the actual possibility of the weapon being detonated and actually harming someone in the neighborhood? Is there a reason why you did not mention that?

Ambassador BURNS. No, sir. I mean, I think there are many dangers connected with a nuclear armed Iran. And obviously one of those dangers is actually use of a weapon which would have catastrophic consequences.

Senator WICKER. Do you have any—are you able in an unclassified setting such as this, to say when you think that ultimate act might—when Iran might be capable of taking that ultimate act?

Ambassador BURNS. No, sir. I mean I think that's probably better left to closed session.

Senator WICKER. Ok. Well, let me ask you then we have had optimistic testimony today about a meaningful sanctions resolution this spring. It is now April 14th. And I'm told that Iran is not on the Security Council agenda for April. Is that correct? And do we take anything from that or is it a matter of simply changing the agenda on a moment's notice?

Ambassador BURNS. No, sir. I mean what started in New York is a very intensive negotiation amongst the five permanent members as well as Germany, the so called P5+1, about a new resolution. And that's very much on the agenda of all of those members right now.

We're going to work as hard and as fast as we can.

Senator WICKER. Would it mean anything if the matter were placed on the official agenda of the United Nations? Would it bring any pressure to bear?

Ambassador BURNS. Well, sir. I mean, I leave the tactics to my colleagues at our mission in New York. But it's a complicated challenge and it's been very difficult in the past because we're talking about, of course, not only the five permanent members, but also the ten elected members.

So we have a great deal of work to do. And I don't want to underestimate the challenge. All I can tell you is we have no higher priority right now than trying to achieve that.

Senator WICKER. Well when we're talking about spring, Mr. Chairman, we're talking about April or May. So this is a very optimistic scenario that you've painted.

I noticed today in the Los Angeles Times, China insisted on Tuesday that it has not shifted its approach on Iran's nuclear programs despite White House claims on Monday that Beijing had become more open to sanctions on Tehran. A spokeswoman for the Chinese Foreign Ministry, Jiang Yu, told reporters in Beijing that,

“China has always believed that sanctions and pressure cannot fundamentally resolve the issue.”

Would you care, Mr. Secretary, to respond to that? Is this something different from what you and administration officials heard in person from Chinese leaders during the meeting in Washington?

Ambassador BURNS. Well, sir, what I would say is first, the Chinese also made clear in that same statement their strong support for the dual track approach which is not only about engagement, but also about pressure.

Second, they have agreed, after months and months of resistance to engage directly in the negotiation of the text of the new resolution.

And third, I do believe that China is increasingly aware of many of the risks that you mentioned before to stability in a part of the world that matters greatly to China and to its own economic hopes and hopes for economic growth. And China also, I think, has a stake in the credibility and integrity of the UN and the non-proliferation regime.

Senator WICKER. So do you feel that China has in fact, shifted its approach as a result of the last two days?

Ambassador BURNS. I do. Simply because up until a few days ago the Chinese were not prepared to engage directly in negotiations over a new resolution, now they're participating actively in that.

Senator WICKER. And lastly if I might, Mr. Chairman. I see there's no one waiting behind me and there may be follow up questions.

Chairman LEVIN. Well, there is, but I think Senator Chambliss may.

Senator WICKER. If I could ask one question about taking things off the table because the Chairman began with this. Does this, to Secretary Flournoy, does this nuclear posture review take anything off the table with regard to our subject matter today?

Ms. FLOURNOY. No, it does not, sir.

Senator WICKER. And so the language on page Roman numeral eight about strengthening the long standing negative security assurance and when and where we would use nuclear weapons against non nuclear weapon states that are part of the NPT, those pertain to any country in this region that we're discussing today.

Ms. FLOURNOY. Well the negative security assurance is for which pledges that we will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against a given country applies to countries who are non nuclear, signatories to the NPT and are in full compliance with their NPT obligations. Those are the criteria. And in this case Iran does not fit those criteria at this point.

Senator WICKER. Thank you, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Wicker.

Senator Chambliss?

Senator CHAMBLISS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Flournoy, Gentlemen, I think it's pretty obvious that there's frustration with respect to this issue. And that frustration didn't just start with this Administration. This issue has been ongoing for some time.

And I certainly share the thoughts that Senator McCain expressed and Senator Brown obviously expressed also about the fact

that in the eyes of the American people we seem to be treading water on this issue while Iran is just sitting back and doing their thing and frankly almost sticking their finger in our eye. And it really is, as Senator McCain said in so many words, time to ratchet up the rhetoric. Quit ratcheting up the rhetoric and start ratcheting up the activity.

And if we don't we're going to look back and all of a sudden they're going to have a weapon. I'm not certain with all that I've learned over the years that we can do anything to stop that now. But I appreciate what you said, Secretary Burns, about the opportunity that may be there.

Several of us just got back from Vienna and meeting with Director General Amano and other folks at the IAEA. And frankly the previous leadership at the IAEA, in my opinion, was no leadership at all. It was extremely weak under Elbaradei.

But Director General Amano is really taking this issue on head first. And has seemed like accomplished more in a few weeks than Elbaradei accomplished in several years. So I'm hopeful that with his help that your optimism may bear fruit.

Let me direct this I guess maybe to Secretary Flournoy and General Cartwright and General Burgess. How concerned are you that Iran has now told us that they are enriching uranium to 20 percent?

Ms. FLOURNOY. I think any steps that Iran takes to go down the enrichment path are worrisome. And so we are concerned about that. Even though that is not a weapons grade level we don't want to see them making progress.

I think—and the fact is they have also been having some technical problems with their program as well.

Senator CHAMBLISS. Well, do you think they have the capacity to turn that uranium into fuel?

Ms. FLOURNOY. Into fuel for power reactors or for into weapons usable?

Senator CHAMBLISS. Into weapons.

Ms. FLOURNOY. I think that is certainly their aspiration. I think if they went down that path we would, at this point in time we would know about it.

Senator CHAMBLISS. The IAEA expressed concern to our group about military work and design. And certainly that may be somewhat explained by work on conventional weapons. But when you look at the combination of this added enrichment plus their obvious work on weapon systems.

General Burgess, maybe I'll direct this to you. Is there anything you can tell us about what may be going on with the combination of those two factors now in public?

General BURGESS. Sir, that would be better in closed hearing.

Senator CHAMBLISS. Ok. General Cartwright, could you comment on the capabilities of IRGC Naval forces, particularly as it relates to their ability to deny us access to the Strait of Hormuz in between the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman? Several CENTCOM commanders have in the past discussed Iran's military hardware acquisitions and the development tactics seem to indicate that they might be posturing themselves in a manner that would allow them to deny us access to that area.

General CARTWRIGHT. Senator, I think in general terms they are fortifying their capabilities to either reduce or deny access or constrict it. The difficulty here is one of tactics and objectives. If they close the straits off they're closing off their only supply lines also.

And so, you know, this would be a pretty significant activity in their calculus. But to have the physical capacity to attempt to do that they are moving in that direction. We believe that we would be able to maintain the straits. But it would be a question of time and impact and the implications from a global standpoint on the flow of energy, etcetera, would have ramifications probably beyond the military actions that would go on.

Senator CHAMBLISS. General Burgess, when General Petraeus was before the Committee about three or four weeks ago we discussed the, at least public dwindling of influence by the Iranians in Iraq. With the election dispute ongoing between Prime Minister Malaki and former Prime Minister Allawi. Have you determined that there may again be increased Iranian influence being undertaken with respect to the dispute that seems to be ongoing internally?

General BURGESS. Sir, we've seen no discernable change in the actions. The Iranian folks are still trying to play on the ground with the current situation. But it's the stuff that they're doing day to day.

It would be unfair for me to characterize that as we've seen a change with this latest, you know, election piece going on.

Senator CHAMBLISS. How about from a weapon standpoint?

General BURGESS. Sir, no discernable change from what we have seen in the past.

Senator CHAMBLISS. Any change in weapons going into Afghanistan that you've noticed out of Iran?

General BURGESS. Sir, the—No, sir. I would say what we have seen in the past has been the current tempo. Most recently we found a cache there around Herat that was found in 2009, some movement of some stuff in Iranian C4 and some other. I think the Chairman has talked about that up here before.

Of course what is unknown is when did it go into the country of Afghanistan? We don't know.

Senator CHAMBLISS. Well, ok. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Chambliss. We're going to move to Executive session, but I want to clarify something before we do that. And that has to do with the testimony you've given us that should Iran make a decision to do so that it could produce enough highly enriched uranium in a year for one weapon. You indicated that response to my question and other questions.

U.S. intelligence agencies according to Reuters yesterday believe that Iran won't be capable of producing nuclear weapons for at least a year. But it would probably be technically able to do so, if it chooses, within three to five years. Now folks, we've got to clarify this issue before we leave here today, if we can, in public.

In terms of the highly enriched uranium your answer is clear. It would take about a year should they decide to do that. To move to 80 percent or more enrichment it would take a year or more, about a year, to produce enough for one weapon. Ok, we're there.

Now, you indicated in terms of putting together a weapon, assembling a weapon, that's a different issue. But we need an open session to learn something about that since intelligence officials apparently are indicating that's something more than a year now. And I know a number of us tried to get this, but help us out. Otherwise your headline tomorrow is Iran can get a weapon in a year.

That's going to be what's reported unless you clarify that that's the uranium part of a weapon could be highly enriched in a year for one weapon. So take the other pieces. Tell us what you can, General Cartwright, in terms of number one, capability. I'm not sure how that's different from what they got now which is capability. But tell us what you can should they make a decision today to put together a weapon.

We know the uranium piece of it. Tell us about the other piece what you can in open session.

General CARTWRIGHT. I think the way I would approach that, Senator, is to say with the assumptions we made and talked about with the enriched and getting us out to a year that when we look at other examples of development that there is a trend that would say that it would take, having the uranium, it would take another two to three, potentially out to five years to move from the idea of having the material to a deliverable weapon that is usable.

Chairman LEVIN. No, I didn't say deliverable. I said—

General CARTWRIGHT. Then usable tactically. Something that can actually create a detonation, an explosion that would be considered a nuclear weapon. So—

Chairman LEVIN. Now should this happen simultaneously? Should the enrichment to 80 percent or more start tomorrow and should the decision to assemble a weapon happen tomorrow give us then your estimate of how long it would be before there would have a weapon.

General CARTWRIGHT. Again, I can't put that on a particular country. In other words I can't put that on Iran. What I can tell you is that experience says that it's going to take you three to five years.

Chairman LEVIN. Ok.

Senator MCCAIN. Mr. Chairman, I'd like to pursue that if I could. You're saying to this Committee that before the Iranians would have a deliverable nuclear weapon could be as long as five years?

General CARTWRIGHT. Senator, I can't tell you what problems they will encounter. I am telling you that historically going from having sufficient fissile material.

Senator MCCAIN. We're asking for your assessment as to when they will have a nuclear weapon that is deliverable because that is obviously a very critical point in this entire situation. If it's two, to three, to five years then that's one thing. If it's one year then that's another.

Also, we seem to uncover from time to time additional facilities that the Iranians either have or are constructing. So I guess this dramatic difference between one year and two, to three, to five years, every report I've seen is a year to 18 months. That's why I'm somewhat astonished to hear you say it could be two, to three, to five years.

Now I'm not—this doesn't clarify it to me.

Chairman LEVIN. Well we're going to stay here until we get a clear answer on this. We've got to. Yesterday the headline, Reuters, U.S. officials see Iran nuclear bomb probable in three to five years.

Well, we're going to go through it again. Leave the deliverable part off. That assumes a missile, I think.

General CARTWRIGHT. Right.

Chairman LEVIN. Leave that off. If the decision were made today, by Iran, to put together a nuclear weapon, we understand that one year on the highly enriched uranium. Again, we got it.

Now that doesn't put together. That's not the whole weapon. They got to put the weapon together, right?

Should they decide today to do that simultaneously, in parallel, work on the highly enriched uranium and they work on the assembly. Tell us what you can in intelligence community's assessment about how long would it take for them to assemble a weapon based on everything you know about how long would it take?

General CARTWRIGHT. Senator, again, you're asking me to know things I can't know, but three to five years is what I would tell you.

Chairman LEVIN. Is your best assessment?

General CARTWRIGHT. Sir.

Chairman LEVIN. Ok. Now in terms of the missile, that's totally separate issue. That's the deliverable part.

I assume when you say deliverable is that a different factor because they would have to marry a weapon to a missile. And they'd have to have a missile. And then it depends long range, medium range, short range.

Tell us what you can about the deliverable part assuming that there's a missile involved. Now they can deliver a weapon without a missile tactically, right? I mean, you can detonate a weapon without a missile. So the three to five is the weapon piece.

Now on the missile piece what can you tell us about that?

General CARTWRIGHT. Again, I would probably tell you again, not knowing exactly where they are in their capability that it would still take them another three years. That does not necessarily mean it would be sequential.

Chairman LEVIN. Ok. That could be done in parallel, theoretically too. Is that correct?

General CARTWRIGHT. Yes, sir.

Senator MCCAIN. Ok. Could I just ask again?

Chairman LEVIN. Sure.

Senator MCCAIN. They could develop a nuclear weapon. It's going to be three years or longer.

General CARTWRIGHT. A nuclear weapon for a country, historically, three to five years.

Senator MCCAIN. I'm not asking about a country historically. I'm asking about Iran.

General CARTWRIGHT. Again, I'd rather take that particular question to get to the exact assumptions into a closed session, Senator. And I can tell you that normally such that that is, that with the highly enriched uranium you're still dealing in three to five years to create a weapon.

Chairman LEVIN. Is that sequential or could that be done together?

General CARTWRIGHT. It could be done in parallel.

Chairman LEVIN. Which means the three to five could include the one year for the highly enriched uranium?

General CARTWRIGHT. Potentially.

Chairman LEVIN. Ok. Senator Lieberman?

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. The obvious to me, as I hear you, the best we can ask you to do is make predictions based on history. Obviously no one knows or can say with any certainty.

But I just want to come back to something Senator Reed referred to my reference quoting President Obama yesterday about sanctions aren't a magic wand. And went on to say the military action isn't a magic wand. And then raised the prospect and sort of took you down a road, a hypothetical, of the only way we can be certain that we could stop Iran from having a nuclear weapon is if we occupied Iran.

I want to say first from my point of view that all options are on the table. That's not anything I've heard anyone really, seriously talk about. I think what anyone is talking about is if it becomes necessary to use military force to stop the unacceptable which is an Iranian nuclear program is either covert action on the ground, limited and/or strikes from the air so that whatever might be necessary.

I just don't want to leave the impression because then Senator Reed asked you about what affect the ground invasion of Iraq or occupation of Iran would have on our activities in Iraq and Afghanistan. I don't think anybody is thinking of that. I certainly am not.

I wanted to say one final word about General Burgess' testimony, prepared testimony. One of the things he also does here is to lay out in very powerful form how weak the conventional military of Iran is. And that's very important for us to acknowledge.

So General Cartwright, just going back to what I just said, do you agree that the United States enjoys an overwhelming advantage of conventional warfare against Iran including particularly with regard to air and naval capability.

General CARTWRIGHT. I do.

Senator LIEBERMAN. And in the event, and I'm saying anybody is planning to do so. Is it within the military power of the U.S. to establish air and naval dominance over Iran?

General CARTWRIGHT. It is.

Senator LIEBERMAN. And in the event that we chose to do so is it within the military power of the U.S. to strike the Iranian nuclear program in a way that would seriously disrupt and delay it?

General CARTWRIGHT. I'd like to take that to closed session.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Ok, because that's what we're talking about here. In the end the one sure way for Iran to not go nuclear is for its people and government to decide not to go nuclear. And that's where I come back to what President Obama said yesterday about sanctions. That's where the whole aim of sanctions.

And I quote again, "what they're aimed at accomplishing is changing the calculus of a country like Iran so they see there are more cost and fewer benefits to pursuing a nuclear weapons program." And I might add for myself that I think there's a higher probability that that calculus will change if they think we're seri-

ous about all the options that are on the table including military. Do you agree with that?

General CARTWRIGHT. I do, Senator. And the reason that we believe that the sanctions and other measures, short of military activity, are important because they give us more time, more decision time, more opportunities to intervene in ways that are non kinetic.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Understood. I appreciate that. And I thank you very much.

Chairman LEVIN. Non kinetic for the layperson?

General CARTWRIGHT. Not requiring military attacks.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

Senator Chambliss.

Senator CHAMBLISS. I'll direct this to Secretary Burns, but anybody else feel free to respond. It looks to me like, Mr. Secretary, you've set your own time table and that is 12 months. That's the best guess according to General Cartwright that they could be weaponized.

And if that's the issue that we're going to prevent then we've got to have sanctions put in place in time to stop the weaponization of Iran within 12 months. Now that means in my mind pretty significant sanctions are going to have to be put in place to work within a short period of time. Is there a plan in place to work within a short period of time? Is there a plan in place with respect to those sanctions that we can talk about in this setting?

Ambassador BURNS. Well, Senator, first I'll defer to General Cartwright on this. But I don't think we're talking about weaponizing in 12 months. And the conversations suggest that a different kind of time frame for that.

That does not, however, second, diminish the sense of urgency we feel about putting in place the strongest possible sanctions regime. And that means using Security Council resolution. That also means looking at measures we can employ and have employed in the past.

It involves us continuing to push foreign companies to sever their ties with Iran in a variety of sectors. And we're going to keep pushing on all those fronts just as hard as we can and as fast as we can.

Senator CHAMBLISS. Excuse me, Secretary Flournoy, did you want to add something?

Ms. FLOURNOY. I just wanted to add with regard to the time that we have taken for engagement and to work the sanctions piece through the UN. There are steps that we can take unilaterally and we have taken unilaterally. But our judgment is that if we really want to impose pressure on Iran that actually affects their calculus the only way to be effective is to do that multilaterally to have the international community with us.

And I think the fact that we made a good faith engagement with Iran has actually brought more of the international community with us now that we are moving on the pressure track. And the fact that we're taking the time to try to get a UN Security Council resolution will provide the legal and political framework that will get us more effective measures by others like the EU down the road. So I think that the time it's frustrating for all of us, but I think we will be much more effective having taken the time to

bring the international community with us to apply coherent and cohesive pressure on Iran.

Senator CHAMBLISS. Let me go back to General Cartwright. I think Senator Levin is right. We need to walk away from here with clarity.

Now I understood you to say that in your opinion Iran could have a nuclear weapon within 12 months and within three to five years they'd have the capability of delivering that. Now are you saying something different from that?

General CARTWRIGHT. I am, sir. I'm saying three to five years is an historical estimate of how long it takes a nation with a low enriching capability to move both through the high enrichment protocols and then to the things that would put it together to make it a weapon, 3 to 5 years. One year was the discussion about how long it would take to produce highly enriched uranium.

Senator CHAMBLISS. Ok.

Chairman LEVIN. Since I think that's probably the clearest summary that we've had we probably ought to stop/quit while we're ahead. [A bit of laughter.]

I hope—this hearing has been very useful to us.

First of all we thank you all for coming in, particularly Secretary Burns. We know it's not always the case that we have a State Department representative here. In this case it was important. We very much appreciate it.

We hope we've not gone beyond what it is appropriate in our questions. And we know you wouldn't in your answers for you to address. But hopefully the unity of this Committee, and I think you've heard here how much strength and unity we feel and have about this issue, about stopping Iran from getting a nuclear weapon. That we hope that that unity that you heard here and the American people will hopefully hear from this Committee and this Congress will help you in your efforts to gain support internationally for what you're trying to do.

We hope that's one of the outcomes. We know that information is an important outcome for us and the American people. But it's also important that Iran hear a very strong, unified message about the Congress standing behind strong measures.

Hopefully that will help you in gaining those strong measures that can be used without military force. But that option has got to be there, we believe, I think most of us, maybe all of us, for you to succeed in your diplomatic efforts as well. It's serious and there's great unity of purpose.

We thank you all for your testimony. We'll see you right after we all run over and vote. There's a vote on. So we'll see you over in the visitor's center room in a classified session. And we'll stand adjourned in the open session.

[Whereupon, at 12:35 p.m., the committee adjourned.]