

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD
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UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE APRIL 14, 2010

Iran today presents a profound and complicated challenge. In defiance of its international obligations, Iran's leadership continues to expand and advance the most proliferation sensitive and provocative elements of its nuclear program. A nuclear armed Iran would threaten the security of our ally Israel, the Persian Gulf and the broader Middle East, the credibility of international institutions such as the United Nations, and the viability of the nuclear nonproliferation regime. The grave risks at stake with Iran's nuclear program are only amplified by its other deeply destabilizing policies and its treatment of its people. Iran ranks perennially as the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism, supporting Hizballah, Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Iraqi militants, and the Taliban. As the international community works to restart a meaningful dialogue between Israel and the Palestinians, Iranian leaders foment hatred against Israel. And at home, the government's brutal crackdown on peaceful protestors who went to the streets in the thousands to demand their universal rights has outraged the world.

For all these reasons, Iran represents a paramount priority for United States foreign policy. President Obama has been clear that Iran must not develop nuclear weapons. He has sought to strengthen our diplomatic options for dealing with the challenges posed by Iran, and offered Tehran a pathway toward resolving the concerns of the international community. From his earliest days in office, the President has made clear that the United States is prepared to deal with the Islamic Republic of Iran on the basis of mutual interest and mutual respect. As part of this

principled engagement, the United States has been a formal party to the P5+1 talks with Iran since April 2009. We have recognized Iran's right under the NPT to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. With our partners in the international community, we have demonstrated our willingness to negotiate a diplomatic resolution to the deep differences between us. We embarked upon this effort to engage with the Islamic Republic with no illusions about our prospective interlocutors or the scope of our 30-year estrangement.

Together with our allies and international partners, we sought to create opportunities for Iran to build confidence in its nuclear intentions. These opportunities included the discussions last October in Geneva of the IAEA proposal to provide fresh fuel for the Tehran Research Reactor. We offered Iran a follow-on opportunity to meet with the P5+1 to discuss these issues further. We also called on Iran to grant the IAEA full and immediate access to its formerly undeclared enrichment facility near the city of Qom. These were opportunities for Iran to demonstrate its good faith and address the concerns of the international community. But we cautioned Iran that engagement was not sustainable without a constructive response demonstrating Iran's serious willingness to address international concerns about its nuclear program.

Unfortunately, Iranian leaders spurned serious negotiations, and what appeared to be a constructive beginning in Geneva was ultimately repudiated by Tehran. Instead, Iran revealed a clandestine enrichment facility near Qom, provocatively continues its enrichment operations in violation of UNSC resolutions, and refused to meet again with the P5+1 to discuss its nuclear program. Iran balked at the key elements of the IAEA's TRR proposal. And while

Iran allowed IAEA inspections of the Qom facility, it did not provide all the access the IAEA requested, nor answers to the IAEA's questions concerning the nature of the facility and Iran's intent in constructing it. Iran also failed to address fundamental questions about evidence suggesting it had sought to develop a nuclear warhead. These failures drew new rebukes from the IAEA in the Director General's most recent report.

While our overtures did not generate sustained negotiations with Iran, they have demonstrated our sincerity in seeking a peaceful resolution. As a result of our patient pursuit of direct negotiations – and the recalcitrance of Iran's response – we now see a broader international consensus about the urgency of the Iranian threat and new frustration among even some of Iran's friends and trade partners. This newfound multilateral understanding strengthens our diplomatic hand as we have intensified the second track of our dual-track diplomacy toward Tehran – utilizing pressure to convince Tehran to change its course. As the President said in Prague just last week, we must insist that Iran face consequences because it has continually failed to meet its obligations. We cannot, and 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.

Already, the heightened concerns of the international community have manifested themselves in a variety of ways. They have generated increased cooperation on stopping arms shipments and financial transactions that aid terrorists, threaten Israel, and destabilize the region. This strengthened multilateral cooperation has also produced a series of new formal measures, including the critical November 2009 IAEA Board of Governors resolution, the UN General

Assembly Iran Human Rights measure in December, and the European Council declaration on Iran. In this regard, we are moving with a sense of urgency toward a new UN Security Council Resolution. At the START signing ceremony last week in Prague, Russian President Medvedev reaffirmed the need for smart sanctions. Formal negotiations among the P5+1 on a new resolution also began last week in New York. While the process of getting consensus around a new UNSCR is always challenging, we are working aggressively to adopt concrete measures that will serve as a platform to strengthen and expand upon existing sanctions and target the power centers most likely to have an impact on Iran's strategic calculus.

Concerns about Iran's destabilizing activities are not limited to the P5+1 and our European partners. Many governments in the region have legitimate fears about Iran's policies and the advancement of its nuclear program. Iran's neighbors are working to counter and diminish Iran's negative influence. These states support the responsible and transparent development of civilian nuclear energy, but have publicly declared their opposition to the pursuit of nuclear weapons and emphasized their grave concerns about Iran's nuclear intentions. We continue to work with these regional partners as they develop mechanisms to better manage the political, diplomatic, and security challenges Iran poses. In addition, we have launched intensive diplomatic outreach efforts to other key states to discuss the need for additional pressure to bring Iran back to the negotiating table.

Equally evident to Iranians are the informal expressions of international censure, including the voluntary departure of longstanding foreign investors and trade partners, and the growing 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 can persuade Tehran to reassess its approach to the world.

Pressure cannot be an end in itself. The threat and implementation of sanctions is intended to underscore to Iran's leaders the costs and benefits of the alternatives before them. President Obama made clear in his Nowruz message last month that we remain committed to meaningful engagement. Together with our international partners, we acknowledge Iran's right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, but we must and we will seek to ensure that Iran fulfills the same responsibilities that apply to other nations and which it took upon itself freely. For this reason, we will continue to press Iranian leaders to take concrete steps to reassure the world that its nuclear program is intended for peaceful purposes. Our resolve to uphold and strengthen the rules of the international system reflects our core commitment to our own vital security and to shaping a better future for the world, commitments that are shared by our allies and partners.

Our interests with respect to Iran extend well beyond the nuclear issue. As the President said last month in his Nowruz message, our responsibility is, and will remain, to stand up for those rights that are universal to all human beings. That includes the right to speak freely, to assemble without fear, and the right to the equal administration of justice. The Iranian government's use of unwarranted arrests, prolonged detentions, and violence against its citizens represent outrageous violations of the most fundamental duties of government. While this repression

has quashed large-scale protests in recent months, deep rifts remain evident between the government and much of its citizenry, and among the power brokers who have long supported the Islamic system. These cleavages wrought by the post-election turmoil will continue to shape the political future of the Islamic Republic in ways that we cannot fully anticipate, and the United States will continue to speak out on behalf of those who are seeking merely to exercise their universal rights.

The Iranian government has also pursued a policy to limit its citizens' access to information. In response, the United States continues to make available tools that create the space – on the Internet, in journalism, and in the arts – where free thought and expression can flourish. As part of that effort, the U.S. government is pursuing ways to promote freedom of expression on the Internet and through other connection technologies. We are working around the world to help individuals silenced by oppressive governments, and have made Internet freedom a priority at the United Nations as well, including it as a component in the first resolution we introduced after returning to the UN Human Rights Council.

In conclusion, let me note our deep and continuing concern for the safety and well being of all American citizens currently detained or missing in Iran. We urge the Iranian government to promptly release Shane Bauer, Sarah Shourd, and Josh Fattal, and all other unjustly detained American citizens so that they may return to their families. We also call upon Iran to use all of its facilities to determine the whereabouts and ensure the safe return of Robert Levinson.