

U.S. STRATEGY REGARDING IRAN

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BEFORE THE

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THURSDAY, MARCH 5, 2009

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:37 a.m., in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. John F. Kerry (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senators Kerry, Feingold, Menendez, Cardin, Casey, Webb, Shaheen, Kaufman, Lugar, and Wicker.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN F. KERRY, U.S. SENATOR FROM MASSACHUSETTS

The CHAIRMAN. The hearing will come to order. I apologize to folks for starting a little bit late. It's my fault. I was at the Finance Committee, where we're struggling with health care in preparation for the White House meeting this afternoon. So I apologize that we are delayed.

It is a really very, very special occasion. We're privileged and excited about the opportunity to have these two distinguished witnesses here today. Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski and General Brent Scowcroft are two of the most insightful strategic thinkers and distinguished public servants in our country. We've been very, very lucky, and Presidents of both parties have been very lucky to have their advice and counsel through many, many years.

I can think of no better way to cap off this week's series of hearings on Iran and its troubling nuclear program. If America is going to successfully overcome this extraordinarily difficult and pressing foreign policy challenge—I don't think anybody missed the Supreme Ayatollah's comments yesterday about Israel or about the Obama administration—we're clearly going to need the kind of wisdom, the kind of insight which today's witnesses have demonstrated throughout their careers.

On Tuesday we heard from four top experts on Iran's nuclear program about the difficulties the United States and our partners will face in dealing with this program. Ambassador Frank Wisner, Ambassador Richard Haass, Mark Fitzpatrick, and Karim Sadjadpour gave us some honest answers about the seriousness of the challenge, the realities that we have to confront when dealing with Iran, and the diplomatic efforts that will be required to avoid some day being left with the potential unacceptable choice between accepting a nuclear-armed Iran or attacking its facilities.

Yesterday the committee received a classified update from the Intelligence Community, and most members of the committee were

there to get the latest update on the status of Iran's nuclear missile programs, as well as the internal political dynamics, and the regional situation, to understand the playing field.

Today we've asked Dr. Brzezinski and General Scowcroft to help us look broadly at the security challenge that Iran poses, so that we can lay out a vision for the way forward. Both of these individuals know what it's like to walk into the Oval Office or to the Situation Room and stare at an almost overwhelming list of problems and have to figure out where the real priorities are and where the real opportunities for progress might be. They also understand as well as anyone in the country all of the risks tied to those choices. They know how to construct and implement a multifaceted approach to achieve an ultimate strategic goal.

If there ever was an urgent challenge that will require a multi-dimensional solution, surely it is this apparent race by Iran to develop a nuclear weapon capacity. We know this is a challenge that we're not going to deal with in isolation or hope we don't have to deal with in isolation. It's not just an American problem. It's not just an American perception that suggests that it is a problem. And it is best not just, and probably cannot be just, an American solution.

We know that, although Iran may have some distance to go before it can test or deploy a nuclear weapon, it is daily producing more reactor-grade uranium that can be further enriched to provide the guts of a nuclear weapon.

I have long said that, following consultation with our allies and partners, we have to engage directly with Iran, and I'm glad that this idea's day appears to be coming. But as I said on Tuesday, we've got to be honest with ourselves. We're not going to solve this problem just by talking directly to Iran. While Iran was just talking to the IAEA and the Europeans, it deftly sidestepped every supposed redline laid down by the international community. While Iran was just talking to the world, it moved to the threshold of becoming a nuclear-capable state.

Iran's leaders need to understand that the full weight of the international community will bear down on them if Iran continues to defy the United Nations Security Council and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

I would remind people, Iran is a signatory to the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty. Iran has obligations under that treaty. Iran also has rights under that treaty, and those rights have not always been appropriately put on the table. It is deemed by virtue of the secrecy of their actions and their unwillingness to answer questions that they are in violation of those rights, and that is essentially the quandary, the place of confrontation that we find ourselves in.

So we need to understand also and Iran needs to understand that the talks that we envision will not be a substitute for Iran's requirement to meet its international obligations.

At the same time as we engage, we have to understand that it is by far better to get other countries on board with our strategy. For diplomacy to succeed, we need the full backing of our allies in Europe, as well as Russia, China, and other countries that trade extensively with Iran. We must quickly engage with those countries and construct a robust and sustainable energy.

The President's recent announcement of a responsible redeployment plan for Iraq, which comes with bipartisan support and with the support and endorsement and input of our leading generals—General Petraeus, General Odierno, and others—can be an additional source of leverage in dealing with Iran because it repositions us. But we will only be negotiating from a position of renewed strength if we also reassure our allies in the region that they will not be cut adrift for the sake of making progress with Iran.

So in short, we need to act boldly, wisely, and quickly with our allies and partners to win agreement on the way forward and to engage Iran backed by real consequences for its continued non-compliance.

I want to emphasize, as I'm confident that both of our witnesses will and I'm sure that my colleague Senator Lugar will, we are not seeking a confrontation, nor do I believe that there's some overt effort that we're stuck on with respect to regime change or anything else. I think it is better for the world to see the possibilities of constructively moving on issues of mutual interest. On Tuesday we heard many of those issues of mutual interest, ranging from Afghanistan to Taliban to counternarcotics efforts and many other things.

So I am hopeful that a solution to this problem will lie within our reach through diplomatic processes, and I'm looking forward to today's discussion on our witnesses' guidance and recommendations on how we can achieve the best way forward.

Senator Lugar.

**STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD G. LUGAR,
U.S. SENATOR FROM INDIANA**

Senator LUGAR. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I join you in welcoming our distinguished guests. They are both very dear friends personally, as well as very good friends of this committee through their faithful testimony throughout the years. They've been generous with their time and counsel on foreign policy issues in the past and we look forward to their views today on Iran.

On Tuesday, as you pointed out, the committee heard testimony from four distinguished foreign policy experts, and they provided helpful analysis of the policy options available to the United States in responding to threats posed by Iran. The United States agenda with Iran involves numerous issues, including the nuclear program, support for terrorist organizations, its relevance to our efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, its threat to the security of Israel, its impact on stability in the Persian Gulf region, its status as an energy exporter, its relationship with Shiite communities in the Middle East, and prospects for long-term improvements in the United States-Iranian relationship.

Although all of these issues are interconnected, concerns about Iran's nuclear program have understandably dominated discourse, given the risks and the consequences of proliferation and the uncertain status of Iran's nuclear program. Potential leverage stemming from the economic stress on Iran caused by the drop of world oil prices and the fresh start provided by the Obama government also contribute to the sense that the time is ripe for a concerted multilateral effort to constrain Iran's nuclear program.

Our hearing on Tuesday provided an opportunity to examine such questions as whether the Iranian Government can be induced to limit its nuclear program, what set of multilateral sanctions and incentives might achieve this goal, and whether success would likely require recognition of a limited Iranian right to enrich. There was broad agreement that restraining Iran's nuclear ambitions would require greater cooperation with allies and partners, most of whom have commercial interests with Iran and independent views about the Teheran regime.

This leads to such questions as what compromises should we be willing to make in our approach to Iran to ensure a tightly unified coalition, and should the United States make explicit to the Chinese and to the Russians that cooperation on Iran is at the very top of our agenda with those nations.

Beyond Iran's nuclear program, the United States Government should also be preparing a strategy for engaging Iran on other issues, and such engagement should not undercut multilateral efforts on the nuclear question. Rather, it should seek to establish communications that can avoid miscalculation, open up the possibility of cooperation on points of agreement, and facilitate information flowing to the Iranian people.

Last year when Under Secretary of State Bill Burns joined representatives of the other P5+1 governments in a meeting with the Iranian nuclear negotiator, it signaled a shift in United States policy. But we still have not established a clear course of action on bilateral engagement, and some suggest the first step should be a low-level meeting between United States and Iranian officials that would set the parameters for future discussions. Others argue that a public, top-down approach that clarifies ambiguities and sets the context for subsequent discussions is preferable.

Both Dr. Brzezinski and General Scowcroft have deep experience in constructing these types of strategies. I am hopeful they will offer thoughts about how a potential United States-Iranian dialog could begin and how it should be structured.

Last, I would ask our witnesses to comment on the advisability and timing of opening a United States visa office or interest section in Iran. I support establishing a modest diplomatic presence in Iran. Such an outpost would facilitate more exchange and outreach with the Iranian people and improve our ability to interpret what is going on in that country.

I thank the Chairman again for this hearing and I look forward to today's testimony. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you so much, Senator Lugar. I appreciate enormously again sort of the jointness of the statements we made. I might add that I join you in that call for the interest section, which I had hoped we would have achieved last fall actually, before the change in administration. But I think it would be beneficial to move forward on that soon.

Gentlemen, thank you again for being here. Dr. Brzezinski, if you would lead off. We'd ask you both if you'd sort of give summaries of testimony so we can maximize the give and take with the committee. Dr. Brzezinski, if you'd lead off. Thank you.

**STATEMENT OF DR. ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI, CSIS COUNSELOR
AND TRUSTEE, CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTER-
NATIONAL STUDIES, WASHINGTON, DC**

Dr. BRZEZINSKI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senators. Thank you for having us here.

I had the opportunity to read the testimony given to you on Tuesday by Richard Haass, and I agree with its generalized approach. Therefore, I am going to focus much more narrowly in my own comments on the negotiating process with Iran that the President intends to undertake.

It seems to me that the negotiating process can be seen as guided by essentially alternative strategic objectives. At one extreme, the negotiating process can be designed deliberately to fail, but to do so in a manner that places the onus for the failure directly on the other party. That can be an objective of negotiations. At the other extreme, the negotiating process can be deliberately designed to seek a formula for an acceptable compromise that satisfies the basic interests of both parties.

To be specific, if the goal is to encourage, for example, the Iranians to be intransigent and in effect deliberately to strengthen the role of extremists, thereby justifying alternative courses of action than negotiations because the negotiations have failed, the United States should publicly, first of all, insist that Iran meet certain basic preconditions even prior to the negotiating process, in effect seeking Iran to make fundamental concessions prior to the negotiations.

Second, we should publicly threaten Iran with more sanctions if Iran is not compliant in the negotiating process.

Third, we should keep asserting publicly that force and the use of force remains an option that may be exercised against Iran.

We can also, fourth, keep saying publicly that it is one of our political objectives to achieve regime change in Iran.

Last but not least, we should continue publicly to label the Iranian Government as a terrorist entity, thereby inflaming the public mood in Iran, and impose time limits on the duration of the negotiations.

Such an approach would certainly achieve its obvious objective: to make certain that the negotiations are not productive and that Iran's intransigence is the cause of the failure.

The alternative approach, of course, should be rather different. It should seek to engage Iran in a process in which there emerges the possibility of some consensual arrangement. That of course means that we can and should consult privately with our allies regarding the consequences of the lack of progress, including the possibility subsequently of imposing more stringent sanctions. We can evaluate, to the extent that it is feasible, other options, perhaps of a more coercive character. But we also have to be very careful not to set restrictions on ourselves which dramatically limit our choice of action and impose on us a pattern of conduct which could lead us in the direction of an eventual collision.

Obviously, the achievement of a nuclear capability by Iran would be a disaster, and I'm quoting President Sarkozy, who said exactly that. But President Sarkozy also said that the military collision with Iran, the bombing of Iran, would be a disaster, and hence our

strategy has to be guided by the central strategic objective of avoiding both disasters.

That means that we have to approach the negotiating process with some degree of patience, prudence, and with a deliberate effort to shape the atmospherics of the engagement because atmospherics of the engagement are not only important to the negotiating process itself, but they affect Iranian public opinion, and that there is a latent Iranian public opinion, and we do know that a great many people in Iran are not in sympathy with the attitudes so perversely expressed by Ahmadinejad, more recently even by the Supreme Leader, either regarding us, the Holocaust, or Israel.

In that context, I think we should be prepared to exploit an opening which, probably unintentionally, the Iranians are giving us. I have in mind a striking contrast between the North Korean approach to the negotiations and the Iranian approach to this issue. The North Koreans have said publicly: "We want nuclear weapons, we are seeking nuclear weapons." Indeed, at one point or another: "We have achieved nuclear weapons." The Iranians are saying to us: "We do not want nuclear weapons; we do not seek nuclear weapons; our religion forbids us to have nuclear weapons."

I don't say that this is necessarily a credible statement, but it is a statement which can be picked up in the sense that our response to the Iranians can indicate: "We are prepared to explore the veracity of these assertions; we have grounds for being suspicious; we need to be reassured. But if you're serious about these statements, then by all means let us examine means that will make us and the international community certain that you are not seeking nuclear weapons, that in fact you don't want them, and that, as you claim, your religion forbids them."

That seems to me to be a goal that the negotiations should be designed to pursue; and therefore, we should be very careful to avoid any approach which in advance impedes the process of negotiations, inflames the context in which they'll be pursued, and makes it easier for people like Ahmadinejad to goad the United States and to undercut public support for the negotiating process in the United States and in the international community.

What I have now said does collide with some of the advice or some of the considerations that are currently being discussed in the United States. It seems to me that we run the risk of wanting to have our cake and eating it too; of engaging in polemics and diatribes with the Iranians while at the same time engaging seemingly in a negotiating process. The first is not conducive to the second.

I am not naive enough to think that the negotiating process would be productive quickly. I am not certain that it will be productive in the long run. But I know that if we prejudice its chances in the short run, we will not have the opportunity to push the process over the longer run. That means that we should avoid time limits on the negotiations because they create a sense of urgency and pressure which is inimical to serious exploration of the issues. We should consult very quietly with our allies about what alternative means of pressure we may choose at some point to apply. But we should start the negotiating process on the basis of a serious

determination to explore the degree to which there are openings for accommodation.

There are ambiguities in the Iranian posture. There are some indications, according to various reports, that the Iranians are not moving at full speed to acquire nuclear weapons. They may be seeking the capability to be a proto-nuclear country, but not to cross the threshold of actual weaponization or a level that would make weaponization possible in the near future.

We should also be very careful also not to become susceptible to advice from interested parties regarding how we ought to proceed. There is a fascinating article in yesterday's Haaretz on the advice that Secretary of State Clinton was given in Jerusalem yesterday on how we ought to proceed with the negotiating process. I would suggest that members of the committee become acquainted with that advice. I have some reservations regarding parts of it because it seems to me that if we follow it closely we will be sucked into a process in which escalation of tensions and mutual accusations will poison the effort at negotiations even at the very start.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Dr. Brzezinski, for a very, very interesting and helpful approach and I look forward to following up with questions.

General Scowcroft.

**STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL BRENT SCOWCROFT,
USAF [RET.], PRESIDENT, THE SCOWCROFT GROUP, WASH-
INGTON, DC**

General SCOWCROFT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senator Lugar, members of the committee. It's a real privilege to come before you today to talk about such an important issue.

Iran is an important state in the Middle East, with a proud history stretching back for centuries. Unfortunately, both Americans and Iranians tend to look at each other through the prism of the last 30 years. Before that time, under the Shah, Iran was our bastion of regional stability. When we replaced the British as the outside power in the region, we counted on the Shah to preserve stability in the region. After he was forced into exile and with the seizure of our Embassy, we and the Iranians developed an intense, visceral dislike of each other.

It seems to me that now we need to get past our emotions in order to deal effectively with the problem. Obviously, a first step needs to be a willingness to talk to Iranian officials. Given our mutual histories and antipathies, each side will want to make sure it's found the right interlocutor. This is not a straightforward task in the Iranian context.

Furthermore, I believe now is a time of opportunity and one where we ought to try to encourage the tendencies in Iranian to liberalize. Voting patterns of the Iranian people indicate they want a more open regime. At the end of the day the Iranian regime is not what is revolutionary in Iran. The revolution in Iran is the people's desire for more openness. The conservatives, the mullahs, want to hold things back.

Ahmadinejad is not the senior-most official we sometimes make him out to be. But when our policies and actions encourage an appeal to Iranian nationalism, at which Ahmadinejad is a master, we

play into his hands. We help him use anti-Americanism to bring the country together. Put differently, the conservatives in Iran have actually been helped by our policies. We need to stop talking about regime change as the objective of U.S. policy and instead to engage in discussions with the right Iranian interlocutors to give flower to the more liberal tendencies in Iran, which in turn may put pressure on the extremists to evolve.

From a U.S. perspective, I think there are two issues at the heart of a dialog and they are interrelated. The first is Iran and its role in the region, and the second is Iran and nuclear weapons. The fact is that Iran lives in a turbulent region, where it perceives itself to be threatened. It's a Shia state in a generally Sunni region. It's a Persian state in a generally Arab region. We need to be willing to engage Iran in strategic discussions and make clear we understand that Iran has legitimate security interests and concerns that will persuade Iran that it can be secure without the need to acquire nuclear weapons and that its continued pursuit of its current nuclear program will make it less rather than more secure.

America likewise needs to convince Iran that we understand it's an important state in the region. For example, Iran is bound to be involved in what happens in Iraq and Afghanistan because Iraq borders it on the west and Afghanistan on the east. If Washington and Teheran can work together to help these countries achieve stability, it would be productive for the entire region.

I've heard both Israeli and Arab officials express concern that the U.S. might cut a deal with Iran at the expense of the Arab community. I sincerely believe this is an unwarranted concern. America's principal interest is lasting stability in the Middle East and the gulf region. This can only result from an understanding that deals satisfactorily with the concerns of all the states in the region and one that's endorsed by all the states in the region. Nevertheless, we need to recognize that these concerns on the part of Iran's neighbors are real and deeply felt and that any engagement with Iran needs to be both preceded and accompanied by close consultations with all of the neighbors.

On the nuclear issue, we need to reiterate that, while the international community supports Iran having peaceful nuclear power, civilian nuclear power program under proper safeguards, a unilateral nuclear program that provides even a latent nuclear weapons capability is destabilizing for the region.

I do not doubt that the Iranian desire to master the enrichment process is partly motivated by dangers Teheran sees in the region. But we need to convince Iran that it would in fact be worse off were it to succeed in developing a nuclear weapons capability. This is, I think, of utmost importance because we stand on the cusp of a great flowering of proliferation if Iran develops such a capability.

However, I would approach the Iranian nuclear issue through a strategic approach, rather than as a precondition to a broader dialog, which has been the case in the past. At the end of the day, the dialog would convey two fundamental messages to Teheran. First, we're aware that you live in a dangerous region and we are prepared to discuss a regional security framework that addresses your legitimate security concerns. As a corollary, we recognize that Iran is an important and influential power in the region, and we

want to work with you on issues of mutual interest. Second, in pursuing your enrichment program you're proceeding on a course that destabilizes the whole region and will make you, Iran, less rather than more secure.

I believe we can and indeed should work through both bilateral and multilateral channels in parallel. Our willingness to engage directly with Iran is a form of leverage, a way to both mobilize more from our partners and to disarm Iran's arguments that we're only out to change the regime in Teheran. That is, we can reach out to Iran on a bilateral basis and also show that the U.S. is fully engaged in the multilateral P5+1, that is the Permanent 5 of the Security Council plus Germany, process.

It would be important to secure—to share responsibility with the P5+1 and to engage fully with China and Russia. Just as we need to have close and continuing consultations with Iran's neighbors to assure them we will not make a deal at their expense, we should engage with the P5+1 to ensure they see our bilateral engagement with Teheran as reinforcing rather than undermining the multilateral mechanism.

Thus far, that multilateral process has not worked, in part I believe because there has not been solidarity among the P5+1. I don't think any of them want Iran to continue with their enrichment program, but they have not been willing thus far to put their bilateral interests at risk. I believe we need to create incentives for the other members of the P5+1 to share more equitably the burdens and risks of increasing the pressure on Iran if it continues on its present course. To this end, for example, we should take our wider relations with the P5+1, and particularly those of Russia, into account. For example, it seems eminently sensible to me to adjust our missile defense plans in Eastern Europe if Russia actively helps deal with the threat that Iran acquires nuclear weapons technology. But we should also persuade our P5+1 partners to increase pressure on Iran in a meaningful manner should talks with Iran fail to reach a satisfactory conclusion, and engaging and reaching out for those talks will help encourage that result.

An essential goal of our strategy should be to present Iran with a solid international front. While the NPT does not prevent Iran from enriching uranium or reprocessing spent fuel as long as it abides by the IAEA rules, enriching and reprocessing are not really acceptable things to do for Iran or anyone else in the region, or even broader. I think that a U.N. or other international mechanism that guarantees the provision of enriched uranium fuel to powerplants is a vastly preferable way to go.

This is not just a problem we have with Iran, although Iran is the poster child for it. It's a nuclear problem. If Iran continues to enrich uranium, I suspect that Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey at a minimum will feel compelled to have the same capability as they move toward development of their civilian nuclear power programs. And soon we will have a flood of enrichment programs, putting many countries within a few steps of producing weapons-grade uranium and with it a latent weapons capability. That would not be a better world for anyone.

So Iran could well be a tipping point on the proliferation issue. Anything that allows Iran to enrich uranium is a deadly peril to the goal of containing proliferation capabilities in the world.

I think we should say to the Iranians: We, the nuclear weapons states, encourage peaceful nuclear power. We want to support nuclear power. To do that, we're prepared to support a mechanism which would provide enriched uranium for nuclear powerplants at a price below any cost which a particular nation can produce it nationally, and take responsibility for removing the spent fuel after it's burned. We will give an international organization such as IAEA control of the process so that the United States cannot if we don't like your policies cut off supplies.

This would be applicable to all countries of the region, not just Iran. And that's why I say we need to address the Iranian nuclear program, not as an isolated problem, but in the context of achieving an international regime that encourages nuclear power, but without the threat of enrichment or reprocessing.

In conclusion, I think the situation, as my colleague said, requires sophisticated diplomacy, looking at all the elements of a very complicated problem. We need to make clear not only what we need from the Iranians, but also what we're prepared to do to address their legitimate concerns. We have some substantial cards to play in a bilateral dialogue with Iran: recognition of Iran's important role in the region and support for a peaceful nuclear program, which might include nuclear fuel at costs otherwise not possible.

Direct talks with Iran will not be easy. They will not be easy to organize. It's difficult to know who to talk to. But we need to go the last mile with Iran, making clear we're not trying to freeze them out of their rightful role in the region. We must be realistic about prospects of success and we must have some patience. If the talks succeed, we will have fundamentally advanced the peace and security of the region. If it turns out that Iran is simply too intransigent, then we will at least have strengthened our hand in leading an international effort to restrain Iran by having shown our willingness to go the last mile.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, General. Thank you both again for very, very important testimony.

We are going to proceed with a 7-minute round because of the number of Senators here, and we want to make sure everybody gets a chance to ask questions.

First of all, Dr. Brzezinski, you twice in your testimony said: "Don't set limits on ourselves"; and a second time you said: "Avoid time limits." Is there not, by virtue of Iran's own activities and Israel's perception of those activities, as well as our own intelligence community's interpretations of those activities, isn't there an automatic timetable thrust on us as a consequence, unless there is some indication by Iran of a willingness to change that timetable?

Dr. BRZEZINSKI. When I say that there should be no timetable, I'm not suggesting that we should engage in indefinite, endless negotiations. What I am saying is that openly imposing time limits in advance creates a degree of pressure which is not conducive to a serious negotiating process.

Throughout the entire negotiating process, however long it lasts, whether it's months or several years, we will be in a position always to ask ourselves, are we being strung out? Is the other side doing things outside of the negotiating table that jeopardize the whole negotiating process and justifies its abortion? We always retain that right. But I'm saying don't set time limits in advance.

That is the advice, for example, that Secretary Clinton was given yesterday: A time limit must be set for the talks. Well, if there is a time limit set for the talks, can we keep it secret? What is its impact if it's announced in advance? I think it is damaging to the negotiating process.

We can also do things outside of the negotiating process which help to create a greater degree of security and confidence, not only on our own part or of our immediate allies engaged in this venture, but also in the region. For example, I am of the view that as we go into the negotiating process we should at some point make it clear that we are prepared to extend the nuclear umbrella to all of our friends in the Middle East because for different reasons there are misgivings both in Israel and in the Arab countries, whether it be the Emirates or even Egypt and Saudi Arabia, about what the Iranians are doing. A U.S. nuclear umbrella would reemphasize the importance of deterrence.

I think we have to some extent lost sight of the relevance of our very extensive experience with nuclear deterrence. It has worked. It worked with the Stalinist regime which was ominous, tyrannical, and murderous. It worked with the Chinese, whose leader at one time talked about a nuclear war not being so serious because it will kill only 300 million people. The Indians and the Pakistanis have managed to deter each other, knock on wood, so far.

In brief, the experience with deterrence gives us some grounds for not being under tremendous time limits. And in any case, we know that deterrence is predictable if it works. Military action sets in motion unforeseeable circumstances, which in the present context of the Middle East, the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan and Pakistan would be absolutely devastating to the American national interest.

The CHAIRMAN. Let me ask you both. Time sort of runs so rapidly on these things, but I want to follow up, I want to follow up on that because the equation of perception of deterrence for Israel, given the nature of the region and the challenges that are being thrown at them is somewhat different, I think, than the nature of the deterrence that we went through for those years of the cold war. And we could probably have a good discussion about that, but before we do I put it on the table.

I want to ask both of you. The Iranians are listening to this. A lot of members of the Arab community are listening to this. The world is listening to this. You are two very experienced, thoughtful folks who people respect around the world with respect to this kind of an issue. So as we begin this hearing and lay this out, I do think it's really important to put into context.

We have a bad record with the Iranians: 1953 and the CIA involvement in the overthrow; their perceptions of what we did in Iraq; the Congress's public embrace of a regime change resolution and concept. If you're sitting in Iran and you see the history of

that, you're going to make some judgments. The United States pulled out of the ABM Treaty. The United States has refused to ratify the CTB Treaty. You can run—it's important in these processes always to think about how the other person sees you, and you know that better than anybody else.

So would both of you please lay out why this—from their perception as they think about our intentions and the seriousness of our purpose here, why is this more, when we say they shouldn't have a nuclear weapon, why is that more than just us saying something vis-a-vis Israel? Why is that more than the United States holding onto its Perm-5 status with the other four members of it plus those who have already sort of broken out?

What is it that is so critical here that brings the Russians, the other countries in the region, the Europeans, and the United States to say, with justification, it might bring us to a point of confrontation, that Iran should not have a nuclear weapon? Would you both sort of articulate that as clearly as you can?

General SCOWCROFT. Yes, I will. I think it is because, as I indicated in my remarks, we're on the cusp of an explosion of proliferation, and Iran is now the poster child. If Iran is allowed to go forward, in self-defense or for a variety of reasons we could have half a dozen countries in the region and 20 or 30 more around the world doing the same thing just in case.

That is not a better world, and it seems to me that is what gives urgency to what we're trying to do here. So I think we need to do what we can to reassure Iran that we recognize their problems and we're prepared to help them deal with the problems, that we do our best to solidify the P5+1 process, so that Iran is facing a monolith saying "Don't do this." And then if that is not successful, then we're in a better position to mobilize the P5 with the kind of sanctions that can really punish Iran short of a conflict.

So I think all of these have to play together.

The CHAIRMAN. Building into that, as you answer, Dr. Brzezinski, you very wisely left out sort of how people perceive those threats. And what you say, if those threats become too public and if there's too much concentration of people, does it become a matter of nationalistic expression of right, if you will, if not pride, that they say: The hell with all of you; we're going to do this because you are ganging up on us, in a sense. Is there a counter-impact? Dr. Brzezinski?

Dr. BRZEZINSKI. I think there's a lot of evidence for that. Even the Nobel Prize winner for literature—

The CHAIRMAN. Could you pull the mike a little closer.

Dr. BRZEZINSKI. There's a lot of evidence for what you said. Even a winner of the international Nobel Prize for Literature, the Iranian lady, who is a critic of the Government, has stated publicly: "We all support the nuclear program. This is a matter of principle, of pride, for many Iranians of national well-being." So we have to be careful about that, because if we are awkward in our approach, if we're one-sided, if we seem to be seeking negotiations in order to impose, we'll simply unify the Iranians and make it easier for them to do what they're doing. So that's point No. 1.

Point No. 2: I do think that taking the position publicly that the United States guarantees the security of every potentially threat-

ened country in the Middle East with its own nuclear deterrent, would have a lot of credibility and it would reduce this threat that concerns many Israelis, that they're existentially threatened.

Actually, I don't think they are existentially threatened because I don't see Iran the moment it gets its first nuclear weapon using it in a suicidal act, because the retaliation would be totally destructive. In fact, we were under a much greater existential threat when Brent was sitting in the White House, when I was sitting in the White House, and we were involved in helping the President coordinate the nuclear response in the event of an attack. We could have been devastated in 6 hours and still faced the option of whether to respond or to be finished up completely because of the size and the followup potential of the Soviet nuclear arsenal. We lived in that reality for years without claiming that we have to disarm the Soviet Union somehow in order to continue. So I think deterrence can help a lot.

We also, it seems to me, ought to be more active internationally in promoting nuclear disarmament, because part of the charge against us in many parts of the world is that we're seeking to preserve a monopoly for ourselves, maybe for two or three more countries.

So I think these are the kind of things we can do to mitigate some of the problems that we face.

The CHAIRMAN. Could you just finish the part of the question about the articulation of why it is so imperative that Iran not have this weapon, and the justification for our unified actions to achieve that?

Dr. BRZEZINSKI. Well, actually, on that point, curiously enough, what the Iranians say publicly is consistent with our position. They say they don't want nuclear weapons. We have reason to suspect—

The CHAIRMAN. But they don't answer the questions put to them by the IAEA—

Dr. BRZEZINSKI. That's right. So we have reason to suspect—

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. About what they do in secret.

Dr. BRZEZINSKI. We have reason to suspect that this is a mendacious assertion. But as long as they claim that this is truly their fundamental position, we are in a position to say to them: "In that case, let's negotiate an arrangement that makes it absolutely credible to the world at large that in fact you are not seeking nuclear weapons and you will not have them."

The CHAIRMAN. And you do agree with General Scowcroft on the rationale for why they should not have it?

Dr. BRZEZINSKI. Yes. The potential for nuclear dissemination I think is the real threat, not that they will use their first bomb to start a war in which they will perish.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Lugar.

Senator LUGAR. Dr. Brzezinski, earlier in your testimony you mentioned a point that one of our witnesses on Tuesday also mentioned, and that is that the Supreme Ruler is the major factor, major leader in Iran, as opposed to Ahmadinejad. I want to pursue that for just a moment, to ask you and General Scowcroft. In your judgment, does the Supreme Ruler really want to have a relationship with us, that is the United States, or, more broadly, with the

West? Or does the Supreme Ruler believe that his security, regime, and authority is based upon not having such a relationship?

What is your judgment about his preference or his security in this situation?

Dr. BRZEZINSKI. I have somewhat mixed feelings. I think the essence of the regime makes it inclined to be wary of a closer relationship with us because to them we are the Great Satan, and that in a sense justifies their own role in Iran.

But one also can note at times some shades of disagreement between the Supreme Leader and Ahmadinejad. I think many Iranians think that Ahmadinejad is a bit of a nut and that he's damaging Iranian standing in the world, that his verbal exercises suggest a high degree of dementia, and this does not fill a country with genuine historical pride in itself with much respect.

So there are these differences. I think our task is to avoid becoming engaged directly in their political contests while creating an external international context which favors the evolution of the Iranian public in a more and more moderate direction. We do have plenty of evidence that, particularly in the large urban centers, among the younger people, among the intellectuals, there is a sense that the extremist agenda is counterproductive to Iran's wellbeing as well as to its international standing.

Senator LUGAR. But even if public opinion in Iran is in favor of negotiating with the United States, does it make any difference? In other words, if this is a theocratic regime of the Supreme Leader, leaving aside whatever Ahmadinejad's situation is, my basic question is, should our negotiating posture be one of focusing on the Supreme Ruler? Is he inclined to want to negotiate, or is his position one in which he sees security by not doing so?

Dr. BRZEZINSKI. We have no choice, because there is a Supreme Leader and he is in charge. If we negotiate with the Iranians, we are presumably negotiating ultimately with him. But our objective ought to be in the process to create the conditions in which it becomes evident to the top people in the Iranian elite that it is in their own domestic political interest to move in a somewhat more moderate direction.

Let's not forget, while we have, rightly so, a very negative assessment of the Iranian theocracy, it is a theocracy wedded to a political process that's considerably more democratic than Russia's. The elections in Iran are much more of a real contest and they're much more open, and there is a much greater degree of competition between the key alternatives in Iran than there is in Russia.

Senator LUGAR. General Scowcroft, do you have a comment on this subject?

General SCOWCROFT. Well, I agree in general with what Zbigniew said. I don't think we know about the Supreme Leader, but it seems to me, first, he has no reason to feel kindly toward the United States. Second, he probably has as his minimum achievement preserving the regime in Iran. Now, there are others in Iran who are more revolutionary than the Supreme Leader. The IRG, at least some elements, are prepared to sacrifice Iran in the larger jihadist movement.

But we need to find out, and I think we need to pose those issues to him in a way he will make the reasonable decision. One of the

interesting things that we're going to see, though, is, I agree with Zbigniew we should not appear to interfere in any way in the election process, but now we're going to have Ahmadinejad running, we're going to have Khatemi running, and apparently Larijani. That's a fascinating political lineup, and one in which, if they're all allowed to run, the Iranian people will really get to say whether they like the Ahmadinejad nationalistic, xenophobic approach, or whether they like Khatemi's more open, embracing posture.

So I think we have a lot to work with here, but we have to be careful that we encourage the good side and don't push Iran back into their fortress mentality.

Senator LUGAR. The reason I ask is, just being the devil's advocate for a moment, the election may be very interesting and quite competitive and we are extremely interested in its outcome. But I want to return to the point that despite all of the debate and interest, if down deep the Supreme Ruler feels that the regime needs to retain, if not hostility to us and to the West, at least no particular accommodation, and that a nuclear program is a part of that situation what are the real prospects for an agreement. I am focusing on this because we've had a lot of testimony that public opinion is important, that we ought to have transparency as we formulate our policy, transparency as we formulate relations with the Europeans, and I think there's logic to that, so that the Iranian people see all of this, or anybody who is in Iran. But when it finally comes down to it, even if they do see all of it, what authority do they have or what ability to change the mind of the Supreme Ruler or those who are closest to him in a theocracy that has a set pattern?

Dr. BRZEZINSKI. The Supreme Leader, as well as the entire Iranian leadership, has to also consider the overall condition of the economy, the question of social stability, the wellbeing of the people. There is, after all, some reciprocal relationship between the rulers and the people, even in an autocracy, in which there is a sense of kind of commonweal, common destiny.

This is a country with genuine traditions of statecraft and historical and cultural pride. It is also a country in which the social indicators suggest that it is a country moving toward an increasingly higher level of modernity, certainly comparable in many respects to Turkey in the level of literacy, access to universities, particularly of women, amount of women in law, medicine, and so forth, there is even a woman who is a vice president of the country. Most Americans probably don't know that.

This is a country in which increasingly large numbers of people go on vacations, particularly to Turkey, less so to Europe, but towards the West. In other words, this is a country in which some of the social dynamics, not very visible under this super-overlay of theocratic fanaticism, are actually evolving. And even the Supreme Leader, to the extent that he wishes to remain a leader, has to take these considerations into account.

If we can subtly encourage that process by avoiding a posture which is easy for him and his associates to translate to the public as being dedicated to unlimited hostility toward Iran, I think we help the interests that we're anxious to promote, and we help perhaps even in the long run to revive at some point in the future the

traditional amity, even at one point alliance, between Israel and Iran.

Israel and Iran were in a close relationship under Golda Meir, including the beginnings of the nuclear relationship. Iran received help from Israel during the Iran-Iraq War under Prime Minister Begin. Prime Minister Rabin once said that Israel and Iran are natural allies, I assume because of the principle that the neighbor of my neighbor is my friend, and it's a perfectly sensible and well-tried principle.

So I am simply saying we should not lock ourselves into a posture in which we view the current enmity with Iran as something indefinitely enduring, and that we do have some subtle means to try to alter that, with some receptivity in Iran that we can nurture as well.

Senator LUGAR. My time is up, but it would be interesting to pursue how the Supreme Leader looks at the regional balance of power, terrorism, economic picture, and Iran's history. In other words, there might be some reasons why the Supreme Leader could come under some circumstances to a different view toward us.

Dr. BRZEZINSKI. Right. And let's not be deceived by the word "Supreme." He is the leader, but supremacy in every system has some limits. In their system it has more limits, let's say, than in some others.

Senator LUGAR. Thank you very much.

The chairman has asked me to recognize Senator Feingold.

Senator FEINGOLD. I thank the chair, and I want to thank Chairman Kerry for his leadership in making sure we have a particular emphasis on Iran this week. I think it has been very useful.

I particularly want to thank these distinguished witnesses, not only for their superb careers, but in particular for the quality and the clarity of the testimony today. It's just so helpful and interesting to listen to. Thank you very much.

As you both know, Iran poses a threat for a number of reasons, including its nuclear ambitions, its missile capabilities, and its support for terrorist groups. How would you rank these in terms of how direct the threat is to the United States and its interests and its allies and in terms of the urgency and seriousness of the threat? And also, how should we factor in the missile threat to Europe into our threat analysis?

General SCOWCROFT. Well, I'm not sure I can rank them because I think they're all serious problems. The nuclear threat I think is probably the most serious in terms of the world impact if they get away with it. But I think it is also the one where we are likely to get the greatest amount of support in dealing with it if we go about it the right way. For example, a missile deployment, defensive missile deployment in Eastern Europe. The previous President said at least a couple of times, we cannot allow Iran to develop nuclear weapons, and yet we're building a missile deployment for when they do. Now, if you're the Russians what do you take from that?

It seems to me that the way to go is go to the Russians and say, look, neither of us want nuclear weapons to be developed; let's work together. Then we don't need this, and we're prepared to delay long enough so that we can see whether or not it's necessary,

and if it's necessary for us it's necessary for you. It's a different approach.

With the Chinese it's a little different. The Chinese get a lot of oil and Iran is a good customer. But what happens if there's a turmoil in the Middle East, a conflict in the Middle East? What happens to their oil supply?

So everybody has important interests, if we can draw them together. I think Iran as a power in the region, it's very important for us, but probably less apocalyptic in the sense that they can help us or hurt us in our dealings with Iraq and with Afghanistan. We had some incipient cooperation with them in the early days of our operations in Afghanistan, which fell apart.

So I think we have to deal on all fronts equally, and I would not prioritize.

Senator FEINGOLD. Doctor, do you want to comment on that?

Dr. BRZEZINSKI. Let me just add this, and perhaps this may be a little controversial. We're talking about a relationship and you mentioned the issue of threat. There is an American-Iranian relationship and if you look at the relationship you have to ask yourself in what way, to what degree, they're affecting us adversely, but you also have to ask yourself: How does it look to the Iranians? Who threatens whom more? Are we more threatened by the Iranians or are the Iranians more threatened by us?

For example, who talks about the use of force a lot? And who has infinitely more force? So it's a little more complicated than, "are they a big threat to us?" Yes, some of the things they do affect our interests adversely, but some of the things we do probably are a source of very major concern to them.

There's a further consideration involved here. We have become extremely casual in the use of the word "terrorism." We don't like somebody, well, of course he's a terrorist. That's a slippery slope and it doesn't help to really deal with the complexities of the issues. It also eventually reduces the word "terrorism" to political convenience. Note, for example, our negotiations with North Korea, a terrorist state; but if they agree to what we say to them on plutonium, we'll take you off the list as a terrorist state. What's one got to do with the other?

Senator FEINGOLD. I think your point is well taken on that. I would add that Iran is a very disturbing country, but any country that watches another country invade the country to its west and the country to its east is going to get a little nervous and edgy, which of course is exactly what we've done. So that people have to understand the mutual perceptions between our two countries, the history is a very disturbing one ever since Mossadeq was taken out, and that this is something that we have to look at from both points of view.

At a Foreign Relations Committee hearing earlier this week, one of the witnesses, Karim Sadjadpour from the Carnegie Endowment argued that building confidence with Iran is critical to a productive dialog, a process that he said "will be easier if our efforts initially concentrate on areas of shared interest, such as Afghanistan and Iraq, rather than those of little or no common interest, such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the nuclear issue."

Do you agree with this approach? If you start a dialog on points of common concern, how do you then direct it toward other national security concerns like the nuclear program or support for terrorist organizations, or whatever term you want to use, doctor?

Dr. BRZEZINSKI. In my view, they need not be sequential. They could be parallel. I recently commented publicly on President Obama's timetable for withdrawal from Iraq. My point was that for that to be effective and to minimize the potentially destabilizing consequences of our departure we ought to launch simultaneously with the withdrawal process an effort to engage all of Iraq's neighbors in regional security negotiations, because every one of Iraq's neighbors will be affected adversely if Iraq becomes destabilized. That includes Iran and Syria. So I favor security talks which include the Iranians regarding Iraq. Similarly, I think we had a rather constructive relationship briefly with the Iranians late in 2001 and in 2002 regarding the Taliban issue in Afghanistan. I think that could be resumed as well. And at the same time I do favor the initiation of talks directly with the Iranians involving us particularly, not just through our European friends, regarding the nuclear program. I think that should be initiated before too long. I've already tried to articulate the context and the manner in which this should be done.

But I'm also of the view—and I think this question was raised either by Senator Kerry or Senator Lugar and we didn't respond—that we not delay these talks, unless the Iranians want to delay them, past the Iranian selections. I would rather start them at a low level, a low key fashion, before the elections, so that Ahmadinejad cannot claim in the course of the elections that the Americans are waiting to negotiate with Iran after he is defeated, which would then perhaps help him. So let's start the process now, which would, of course, under the mandate of the Supreme Leader in any case.

So I hope that's responsive to what you asked.

Senator FEINGOLD. General, did you want to make a quick comment on the strategy for negotiations that the doctor responded to?

General SCOWCROFT. Well, I would just say that we ought to start them in as comprehensive a fashion as we can. We don't know. We're not used to talking to the Iranians and that will take some time. Even finding out who to talk to usefully will be a major challenge. So I would not say this is more important, let's focus on this. I would start and push on all fronts, and we'll see what's productive and what isn't productive as we go along. This will take exquisite diplomacy.

Senator FEINGOLD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Feingold. I appreciate it.

Senator Menendez.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you both for your service and your testimony. I want to ask you, is there doubt in either of your minds that Iran is seeking to acquire a nuclear weapons capability?

Dr. BRZEZINSKI. I would put it this way. If I had to make a categorical judgment, I would say that they are probably at this stage aiming at having a capability somewhat similar to that of Japan,

which is an NPT signatory, which is not in violation of the treaty, but which has reached a threshold in which it is what I call a proto-nuclear power, that is to say one that could rapidly move towards effective nuclear weapons capability if there is a political decision to that effect, but will not cross that threshold in the near future.

Senator MENENDEZ. General.

General SCOWCROFT. I would not dissent from what Zbigniew just said. I think we make a mistake or have recently in claiming that they seek a nuclear weapon, because it seems to me the problem is there whether they want a nuclear weapon or whether they simply want to control their civilian power and have their own enrichment capability. I think that is almost as big a threat because, as I say, I am more concerned about the spread of nuclear capability in terms especially of uranium enrichment than Iran itself having a weapon. I think that is a much bigger threat, the general threat.

When we say—when we say, well, you want a nuclear weapon, and they say, no, we don't, then a lot of the world who's suspicious of us anyway says, well, what's our point? I think we have to go after the broader question, not the narrow question.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, I raise the question—

Dr. BRZEZINSKI. Could I just add one sentence?

Senator MENENDEZ. Surely.

Dr. BRZEZINSKI. This is exactly what we should not be saying, and I quote: "They have declared they want to have a nuclear weapon to destroy people." A statement by the President of the United States in March 21 of last year. It's absolutely false. They have never declared that.

General SCOWCROFT. That hurts us.

Dr. BRZEZINSKI. That hurts us.

Senator MENENDEZ. I asked the question because—

The CHAIRMAN. For people who don't keep track of the dates, that's the other President. [Laughter.]

Dr. BRZEZINSKI. March 21, 2008.

Senator MENENDEZ. I asked the question because if Iran's nuclear program is for peaceful purposes only, then one must ask themselves why they've refused to cooperate with the IAEA, why do they continue to act in defiance of multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions. It clearly raises the concern that if you have peaceful purposes at the end of the day you'd act differently in order to assure the world that you have peaceful purposes at the end of the day.

General SCOWCROFT. Well, they have answers to those questions. Their argument why they need their own enrichment program is that they've tried to cooperate and the Germans were going to build the first plant, they backed off. We were going to supply enriched uranium to them; we backed off. Unless they have control of it, they are subject to the whims of the great powers. That's their argument.

They simply don't answer the question, why don't they let the IAEA have free run. They simply don't answer it.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, let me ask you this. If the goal of engagement is to dissuade Iran from continuing its enrichment work

and acquiring a weapon or a breakout capability, do you believe that it can work in the necessarily short time frame that we have, based upon some of the reports that we've seen about where their capabilities are at this point?

General SCOWCROFT. Yes, I think it can. I don't know if it will. I don't know if it'll work at all. But it seems to me that it is worth a try, because in the process of trying, if the United States is really sincere, we're likely to get on board people who suspect now, who say we're sitting off in the corner throwing rocks at them, asking for sanctions, but not trying to solve the problem. If we can convince everybody else that Iran is implacable and only the use of coercive force, sanctions or whatever will work, then we're in a much better position than we're in right now, because we're the bad cop and so everybody else just goes about doing their own business.

Dr. BRZEZINSKI. I agree with that.

Senator MENENDEZ. But the time is ticking on us as well.

General SCOWCROFT. Yes.

Senator MENENDEZ. We have an enormous challenge here. It's not that we have an open-ended opportunity.

Let me ask you one last question. Just yesterday Iran's president called Israel a "cancerous tumor," and it called upon Muslims to join in what he calls "resistance" against Israel. Earlier this week, President Abbas said, "We are sending a message to the Iranians and others to stop interfering in our affairs."

I just wonder, how do you characterize Iran's behavior within the region? And looking at that behavior, how would acquiring nuclear capability embolden Iran as a power within the region?

Dr. BRZEZINSKI. Well, obviously if Iran had a nuclear weapons capability it would probably be emboldened, and this is why we do not desire that outcome and we are prepared to work against it. The question is how are we going to be effective in working against it. In my view we should not rule out the negotiating process, especially given the repeated commitments by the Iranians to the effect that they don't want nuclear weapons, but they do want a nuclear program.

I think we ought to try to see whether it is possible to find a formula whereby these seemingly incompatible objectives are somehow squared. We shouldn't overdramatize the immediate international effects of having a bomb. I agree with Brent that the most important effect will be the impetus towards proliferation in the region, but it's not going to be some sort of a suicidal nuclear war. That is really an extreme, fundamentally irrational assumption for which there is no proof, and simply anxiety and uncertainty cannot be the basis for serious action.

This is, whether we like it or not, a serious country of 70 million people, with a tradition of responsible statecraft by and large. It is a country that is profoundly aware of the fact it's totally vulnerable to an attack by us, or even eventually by the Israelis; if push came to shove and they had to use their nuclear weapons against Iran they could greatly damage that country. There's no evidence that Iran as a country, with its traditions, its self-interest, its pride, is bent on committing suicide.

We never felt that about the Chinese. We never felt that about the Russians. The Pakistanis and the Indians have managed to

control their mutual anxieties. I don't see any evidence that the Iranians, the moment they have a bomb, which I think we can postpone or avoid, are going to plunge head-long into suicidal adventurism.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Menendez.

Let me just say that, through the wonders of Blackberries, I can tell you that Secretary Clinton, who is now in Brussels, has announced that the Obama administration is going to be convening a meeting on Afghanistan on the 31st of this month. And Robert Wood, the spokesperson for the State Department, has publicly stated that that meeting will include Foreign Minister and/or equivalent from Iran, because obviously that's important to Afghanistan.

So I think a process is already under way and I think that's a wise—first of all, it's wise to meet on Afghanistan. Second, it's wise to be inclusive.

Senator Casey.

Senator CASEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for the sustained focus this week on Iran and the challenge that it presents.

We want to welcome—

The CHAIRMAN. Let me just also announce—I apologize, Senator—there's a vote that I think has been scheduled now for 12:10. So we'll try to push through here and I think we should be able to wrap up by that time, because I know both of these folks have another engagement.

Thank you, Senator Casey.

Senator CASEY. General, thank you. Doctor, thank you. As I told you in the anteroom, I purchased your book, with my own funds.

General SCOWCROFT. But you also said you haven't read it. [Laughter.]

Senator CASEY. And I haven't read it. I was about to admit that. But I'll tell you, when you have that book in your office on a coffee table and you get visitors, it impresses them. I want you to know that. [Laughter.]

Senator CASEY. So now I get—

General SCOWCROFT. We're happy to be of service.

Senator CASEY. The next time you appear you'll have to quiz me and see if I actually got to it. But I'll do my best.

But it's instructive for us on this committee to have a book like that and have resources like that in your testimony today, and I know this isn't the only testimony you're providing today. But we're grateful for your service to the country and for your continuing work on these difficult issues.

I wanted to try to get to maybe three issues rather quickly, but the first one probably taking the majority of the time. That's on sanctions. We read about as citizens and as Senators stories and analyses about how sanctions are working or not working in the context of Iran. I guess I'd ask you generally, based upon your knowledge of this particular challenge, but also more broadly your experience in foreign affairs in similar circumstances, to evaluate the efficacy or effectiveness of the sanctions to date, mostly of course in the Bush Administration; and then also what your rec-

ommendations would be or how would you construct sanctions going forward with regard to Iran, in the context of obviously the Security Council, but also what our government does and says in the context of what sanctions can work.

We know that the financial sanctions and that isolation becomes part of this, but also refining capacity. That's always put on the table as probably a lot more serious step to take. Please give us your evaluation of where we are on sanctions and where we should be headed?

General SCOWCROFT. Well, Senator, I think we're not very far on sanctions, but I think it's partly due to reluctance of many of the major countries of the world to hurt what is a good commerce, and also to the attitude of the United States because, as we both said, we have not been participating in the dialog with Iran. First of all, we said before we'll talk to Iran they have to suspend enrichment, so they have to give away their biggest card before they sit down at the table. And that's been the general attitude. So there's been a great reluctance to agree to sanctions that are anything more than showing symbolic solidarity.

Sanctions generally are a very imperfect instrument. In this case, sanctions would require—I think they could be very effective, but they will require sincere acceptance by the major powers. As you say, oil refining; Iran has to import a lot of its refined product. That's a tremendous weapon for sanctions, but it takes agreement and it takes—people get hurt by it, and the reaction could be that Iran cuts off exports of crude, which hurts everybody, including Iran.

So it's a complicated issue. But I think potentially, if the P5+1 could get to the point there's nothing left, then I think sanctions could be really effective.

Senator CASEY. Doctor.

Dr. BRZEZINSKI. I basically agree. I think they work at the margins, but they don't work on fundamental issues. Look at ILSA. It really hasn't achieved its objectives in a strategic sense. In the present economic crisis, I think there could be also complications with our friends if we are arbitrary about them.

As Brent just said, just think what it would do to the European quest for energy security diversification if we could get Iranian oil and gas to be really exported at full capacity, particularly to Europe. So in fact let's be careful not to throw the baby out with the bathwater.

Senator CASEY. I wanted to ask you about the question of how we talk and the strategy that's employed to make sure that any kind of effort to have a new approach to talking, whether it's bilateral or multilateral. If you were designing the next 6 months, so to speak, of our policy, how would you design it and what would the structure be for how to construct a process to make sure that talking and engagement leads to results that you can identify, you can almost quantify? We know this administration has a different point of view than the prior administration about engaging Iran, how would you, if you were designing it construct it?

Dr. BRZEZINSKI. Well, I would certainly avoid the things I talked about early on in my testimony. I think we have to approach these

talks as a serious, potentially a very important undertaking. And we ought to do it in a fashion which respects the interlocutor.

I would start with the Iranians simply by trying to first of all draw up some sort of a mutually agreed agenda regarding an analysis of the record in the nuclear area—in what respects the Iranians have been compliant with NPT and with IAEA; what are the accusations against noncompliance; what are the areas in which suspicions and concerns can be narrowed—pointing then to some perhaps mutual advantages in accommodation, beginning to spell out the benefits to Iran of an accommodation in which we have assurances that they're not doing what they say they're not doing and in which their compliance with standards gives them tangible benefits.

The joint memo of the ministers of the Five of last June I think outlined a potential agenda, and I think this could be then examined in much more detail. That process probably would take us into the summer. By then there will have been elections in Iran. We'll see what the political situation is and then we can again reassess and see how we go from there.

We will not get much assistance from the Chinese or the Russians unless we are prepared to be patient. The Chinese are extraordinarily vulnerable to a crisis in the Persian Gulf, extraordinarily vulnerable. This is where their position is somewhat different from the Russians. The Russians, who may have reservations about Iran going nuclear, would be financially massive beneficiaries of an American-Iranian crisis.

Senator CASEY. I know I'm out of time by a minute, so we can move on.

The CHAIRMAN. It's an important and it's an important answer. Senator KAUFMAN.

Senator KAUFMAN. Mr. Chairman, I also want to thank you for holding these hearings and holding them together like this. It really makes them very, very helpful to me. I think Dave Ignatius got it right. He wrote a column earlier in February saying that you two are the A Team for Iran. I totally, absolutely, I agree with him.

Dr. BRZEZINSKI. I'm sure he was doing us a favor.

Senator KAUFMAN. Well, I think he absolutely nailed it, to tell you the truth.

General SCOWCROFT. He's trying to get rid of us. [Laughter.]

Senator KAUFMAN. I think not.

You know, what he said in the article, and just listening to you here today, that there's a real agreement between the two of you that this new engagement policy's a good one. But there was a little disagreement, he said—and I couldn't see any clarification to that—whether we should do this in public or in private. Could the two of you just talk about carrying on—the excellent question that Senator Casey asked: Is it best to do it in public or in private?

General SCOWCROFT. I think that depends heavily on the Iranians. And we do differ somewhat, I believe, on that. I would be inclined to start off in private, for this reason: That negotiations with the Americans is a very controversial issue inside Iran, and we don't know whether people in the end are afraid to stick their necks out to be seen negotiating with the Americans.

I had some experience with that in the first, the Bush Senior administration, where we got very close to negotiations and they backed out at the last minute. So I would let it depend, but I would make the first overtures with the Iranians quiet ones. First of all, we've got to figure out, get a serious interlocutor on their side, and that's not easy. Who do you talk to? The government? That's who foreigners should talk to. But the government doesn't hold the power.

So there are all kinds of problems here, but I would be inclined to start quietly.

Dr. BRZEZINSKI. We may have narrowed our disagreement by what you just said. First overtures, of course they have to be done quietly. How else can we do it? We're not going to do it on television or radio. So yes, preliminary discussions quietly.

But once the negotiating process starts, I would favor conducting it openly, not necessarily with open sessions, but sessions that are publicly known, maybe even some press briefings afterwards if there is agreement about press briefings. My reason is this: If you do it secretly, first of all there'll be a lot of suspicions by outsiders as to what's going on. Second, you place yourself at the mercy of the party that is prepared to leak and to distort. And given the negotiating record of the Iranians, with whom, sadly, I have to say, I had to negotiate, I don't have that much confidence that the process would be protected and that the secrecy wouldn't be exploited at some moment to create something awkward for us.

Senator KAUFMAN. General, you talked about how other nations, once Iran developed a nuclear capability, other nations in the region—I think you said Syria and the Saudis, Syria and Turkey, would be interested in going ahead. I know yesterday I've got a quote here where President Abbas said that the Palestinians—he criticized Iran for their interference. Clearly he wasn't happy with the Palestinians. The Saudi Foreign Minister warned other Arab and foreign leaders in Cairo on the Iranian challenge, the need for a joint position among Arab States on Iran's nuclear program.

It seems to me there's a—and I know this is too simplistic, but it seems to me there's a lot of people in the region who are very much interested in Iran not getting a nuclear capability. Can the two of us give us kind of ideas of, is this something we can work on to try to help forestall Iran's nuclear capability?

General SCOWCROFT. Well, I think there is, there's a lot of fear. As a matter of fact, there's a lot of fear of Iran in the region. It seems to me one of the ways we can take advantage of that is to point out to Iran the consequences of their going ahead will not be to improve their security, but will be to make them less secure because of the reaction that will be produced in the rest of the region.

Senator KAUFMAN. Dr. Brzezinski, you talked about keeping the military option on the table—

Dr. BRZEZINSKI. Off the table.

Senator KAUFMAN. Off the table. And said that we could use it under some circumstances?

Dr. BRZEZINSKI. These would have to be extreme circumstances, because we know what it takes to maintain deterrence and we can reinforce it, and I've tried to suggest today how we could reinforce it by giving guarantees to Egypt, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and so

forth—the full American umbrella. We cannot predict the consequences of a military action with Iran, except that we can anticipate that they'll be very difficult for us in Iraq, in Afghanistan, in the Persian Gulf, more generally financially and economically, and perhaps in terms of renewed global isolation.

So I think as a serious proposition the use of force ought to be reserved in most cases either to anticipate and prevent at the last moment someone else's use of force or in response to an attack. But I think preventive warfare is not a good bargain in the nuclear age, nor is it a good bargain for the United States when we're already running the risk of being bogged down for the next 10 years, maybe 20 years, in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Senator KAUFMAN. Could you just talk about—and you talked about a number of things. What do you think the impact would be in Pakistan if we used the military, or someone used the military option against Iran?

Dr. BRZEZINSKI. What would be the impact where?

Senator KAUFMAN. On Pakistan, their government.

Dr. BRZEZINSKI. I think it would be very mixed, but probably in an overall sense it would intensify anti-Americanism, because it will be interpreted as another case of the United States going to war against an Islamic country. And there are a number of Shiites of some significance in Pakistan. I think more generally it will be part of this feeling, which is already pervasive, that we have locked ourselves into a kind of anti-Islamic posture which is in their view very one-sided, and which is I think becoming more pervasive, sad to say, in Pakistan in general, and is thereby transforming the Afghan problem for us into an Afghan-Pakistani problem, making it increasingly difficult to resolve.

I just think that if we got into a military conflict with Iran—and I have no hesitation in saying this publicly—it would absolutely devastate the historical legacy of the Obama presidency and damage the United States, which is even more important.

Senator KAUFMAN. I'm out of time, but General.

General SCOWCROFT. I broadly agree with that. The use of force sometimes looks like an easy option: cut through all the nonsense, get to the core of it. But force brings its own momentum. It changes the nature of the game, and I think in this case it would change it strongly against the United States and its interests in the region.

Dr. BRZEZINSKI. And it's unpredictable.

General SCOWCROFT. Hmm?

Dr. BRZEZINSKI. And it's unpredictable.

General SCOWCROFT. It's always—that's what I say. It changes the whole nature of the game, as we found out in Iraq.

Senator KAUFMAN. Thank you, and thank you both for your great service to this country.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you so much, Senator Kaufman, for a terrific line from both you and Senator Casey. Good questions. I think you covered the bases that we left open.

We for once have serendipitous timing with the United States Senate here, because we're actually starting the vote just as we're concluding the questions. So that's pretty good.

Yesterday I had the privilege of speaking at Brookings Institute on the Middle East and laid out some thoughts about Iran. I think—and not just Iran, but the entire peace process. I really am grateful, as Senator Lugar is, for your testimony here today, which dovetails into that. I am convinced we've got to be smart, restrained, thoughtful, skilled in our diplomacy, so that we have an opportunity to really pursue every avenue with the greatest potential for success. It would be silly to shut those down ourselves.

I thought Dr. Brzezinski's opening comments about how you can certainly structure a negotiation to be unsuccessful, I think it was a very polite way of looking backwards without necessarily saying he was looking backward. But the reality is that I am convinced, as I think our witnesses are today and Senator Lugar, that there are much better prospects than the current climate would seem to tell us.

There's a reason, obviously, for all the negative sides of the choices we face, to hold out hope that we can take advantage of those. So I hope the leaders of Iran are listening carefully, that nobody has come here today seeking the down side of this relationship, but rather hopefully diplomacy in the next months can produce a productive transition that can be effective not just for Iranian-American relations, but for the entire region, and indeed set an example hopefully for some transition that could take place on a global basis.

The interconnectedness of these issues is really critical for all of us to see, and as we look at the increased tensions and volatility of Afghanistan and Pakistan, Yemen, Sudan, Somalia—and you can run the list—we have to understand how these steps are really going to be related to how people perceive us and what we can achieve in those other places.

So we thank you for contributing to this dialogue this morning. I would not disagree with the notion that somehow the two of you ought to be very much engaged in this effort with respect to Iran, and I will do my part to—and hopefully it won't be against your will—to see that we can get your expertise to work.

Senator Lugar, do you want to say anything?

Senator LUGAR. I just join you in thanking our witnesses.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you so much.

We stand adjourned. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 12:16 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]