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Panel Discussion )  
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UNITED AGAINST NUCLEAR IRAN )  
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1:30 p.m.  
Monday, October 20, 2008  
United Nations  
New York, New York

B E F O R E :

MARK D. WALLACE, Moderator  
GARY SAMORE  
HENRY SOKOLSKI

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MODERATOR WALLACE: Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Mark Wallace. I'm the president of United Against Nuclear Iran.

The subject today, this is a panel discussion regarding Iran's nuclear program called "The Enrichment Question." I have with me today two of our advisory board members, who will constitute the Panel. I will do my best to moderate a good discussion, and we'll hopefully have a few questions and a little give-and-take at the end of the discussion.

We will be transcribing the discussion, and posting it on our Website; so, just understand that if you are speaking up, that you will be posted for the Internet to see. So, be advised as to that.

Gary, to my right, Gary Samore, is Vice President and Director of Studies at the Maurice R. Greenberg Chair of the Council on Foreign Relations. He worked

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for the National Security Council from  
1995 to 2001. He began his career there  
as the director for non-proliferation and  
export controls, and then became the  
special assistant to the president and  
senior director for non-proliferation and  
export controls.

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Henry Sokolski, to my left, was the,  
is the executive director of the  
Non-Proliferation Policy Education  
Center. He's a member on the  
Congressional Commission on the  
Prevention of Weapons of Mass  
Destruction, Proliferation and Terrorism.  
From 1989 to 1993 he was the deputy for  
non-proliferation policy in the Office of  
the Secretary of Defense.

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I thought we would dive right in,  
given our short amount of time, and then  
take some questions.

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On September 27th the Security  
Council passed its fifth resolution  
calling on Iran to suspend its uranium  
enrichment-related activities.

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Iran's response was that the program is peaceful, was not a threat to international peace and security, and that Iran was determined to exercise its inalienable rights for peaceful use of nuclear technology.

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The first question to hopefully get our robust dialogue going is: Why isn't that Iran's pursuit of enrichment peaceful?

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Gary, to you first.

MR. SAMORE: Thanks, Mark. And thanks to all of you for coming to this meeting.

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I think there are three key facts that indicate that the intent of the Iranian enrichment program is not purely peaceful, as they say in public.

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First of all, it's important to keep in mind that they kept the enrichment program secret for almost 15 years. The program started in the mid-1980s, and it wasn't until the Iranians were compelled to acknowledge the program, after it was

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publicly revealed in 2002, that they actually allowed the IAEA to begin to investigate and safeguard the program.

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So that, you know, since it's a violation of their obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, that creates a strong suspicion that the intent of the program was, at least in part, military.

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But secondly, and I think even more convincing, if you look at the last two IAEA reports, they have some pretty detailed description of internal documents from Iran, which were provided to the IAEA by the U.S. and a number of other countries, which describe a very well-organized and comprehensive nuclear weapons research and development program, at least before 2003. The documents appear to end there.

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But now the Iranians say that these documents are fraudulent. I actually was in a meeting where the Iranian ambassador to the IAEA, Ali Soltaneih, gave very

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detailed briefing to explain why these documents were fabricated.

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But the more he described the documents in detail, the more clear it became that these are actually quite convincing documents, showing a very well-organized nuclear weapons program, at least before 2003.

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And finally, just in terms of my own discussions with Iranian officials, very often they will argue, in private, that given the rough neighborhood they meet in, where they're surrounded by countries that have nuclear weapons, including India, Pakistan, Russia, Israel, the United States, and so forth, they argue that they have to have the option, they have to have available the capability, should it become necessary, to produce fissile material for nuclear weapons; and, therefore, the enrichment program will provide them with that break-out option.

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But they say don't worry, we won't

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actually build nuclear weapons, because

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we know that would not be in Iran's

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interest. That would, you know, upset

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the neighbors and make us the target of

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international hostility.

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So, I think if you roll together

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those three factors, it becomes pretty

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convincing that even though enrichment

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has peaceful uses, the program is more

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than just a peaceful program, and I think

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this is an issue on which there's pretty

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strong international consensus.

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It's very rare to find a government

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official in, you know, not just the U.S.

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or not just western powers, but Russia

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and China, and many others, who think

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that the program is actually intended for

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purely peaceful purposes.

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MODERATOR WALLACE: Henry.

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MR. SOKOLSKI: I guess there are

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four things that come to mind.

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My first experience with the Iranian

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program came roughly in 1990, when I was

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working at the Pentagon. At that time I

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remember writing a memo to my boss

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saying, I know we're focused on Iraq, but

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take a look at what's going on here in

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Iran.

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At that time, we were getting

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intelligence, which has now become

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public, that the Iranians were trying to

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get heavy water reactors and enrichment

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technology any which way they could, and

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they were doing it covertly -- they were

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not doing it above board -- with India.

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So we went to the Indians, and the

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Indians stopped. The Argentinians, we

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went to the Argentineans, they stopped.

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The Russians -- we'll get back to that --

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they sort of stopped. The Chinese,

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again, sort of stopped.

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But it was like Whack-A-Mole. I

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don't know if you've been to the

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amusement parks. There's this wonderful

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game where a little mole comes up and you

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have to hit it with a hammer. They kept

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pushing various transactions that were

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troubling, covert, not by the rules, not

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open, not declared, for the very

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technologies most useful for making a

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bomb.

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The second observation is, you know,

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nuclear power is a hard sell. Even in

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The States you have to get guaranteed

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federal loans to make the new plants get

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built. But I have to say, in the case of

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Iran, not only nuclear power, but

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definitely nuclear fuel making gives bad

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economics a bad name. It just doesn't

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add up financially.

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There was a pretty good analysis of

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this done at the Idaho National

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Laboratories, Pacific Northwest -- which

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I can make available if anyone is

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interested -- spelling this out.

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But it basically works as follows.

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Building an enrichment plant in Iran

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would be like you and I wanting to build

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an oil cracking plant because we wanted

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to have a secure supply of gasoline for

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our single car.

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It's kind of like developing a

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slaughterhouse to make a sandwich. It's

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just -- economically, it doesn't make

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sense.

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More important, they do not have the

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ability, once they enrich this product

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and turn it into metal, to make it into

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fuel rods. So, the idea that this is

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somehow related to the reactor is like a

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half thought. That's point 2.

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I think point 3 is: It's very hard

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to explain their rocket program, which is

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not simply to put satellites into space.

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A lot of it, they claim, is a military

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program.

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Unless there's a munition on there

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that makes up for the inaccuracy of these

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weapons, which is just ancient, and

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they're putting quite an emphasis on

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developing longer range weapons and more

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of them.

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Again, the missing link is what

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would go on the top of it, which goes to

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the IAEA reports which Gary raised, where

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the concern is that that's exactly what

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they're working on.

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Finally, if you take a look at what's in the unclassified literature about who's visiting their peaceful program, it's very recent.

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In the case of Iran, you have people who know how to make hemispheres properly ignite, and this is written up in The New York Times in the last, I think it was October 10th there was a story about this.

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If you take a look at the non-proliferation assessment, which is required by law, you know, it's public, there is an illusion in trying to sell a nuclear cooperative agreement with Russia, that, well, there is a proliferation problem with regard to activities that are unrelated to Bushehr, but we have assurances from the Russians that this might stop. Since that deal didn't go forward, and since the invasion of Georgia, we have to worry that they're still going forward.

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To make a long story short, I think

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this is not just another way to boil

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water. This is at least a dual use

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program.

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MODERATOR WALLACE: Thank you.

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What's wrong -- let's confront, if

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we could, the enrichment question head

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on.

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What's wrong with a little bit of

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enrichment?

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Henry,

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MR. SOKOLSKI: I'm going to stay

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away from sexual analogies.

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MODERATOR WALLACE: That's good

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advice that I did not preface the

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discussion with. I will make a mental

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note to do that in future panel

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discussions or our efforts.

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MR. SOKOLSKI: My wife tells me to

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stay away from that, as well.

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MODERATOR WALLACE: She's a smart

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lady.

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MR. SOKOLSKI: She is. She's

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actually a career diplomat, unlike me.

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But I think the problem which we can thank Iran for putting on display is that it turns out that what you are looking for in an inspection, such that it could be called a safeguard -- you've heard of International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards -- it has a real narrow definition. It isn't just an inspection. It turns out it has to be an inspection that will alert you to a possible military diversion early enough so that you can intervene before it turns into a bomb.

Now, with certain processes that take, you know, ten years before you can make a bomb, that's possible, and even for other processes that, you know, maybe it takes three or four, or maybe 12 months.

But in the case of enrichment you have a very severe problem, and that is that you are going to be able to make a bomb's worth within the interval that they normally come and visit. They

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normally come and visit once every month or two months.

It turns out that if you take a look, I can make these things available to anyone who wants them.

MODERATOR WALLACE: We will post them on the Website.

MR. SOKOLSKI: There is a wonderful study by the Chairman of the Safeguards Advisory Group, John Carlson, who is an Australian on enrichment, and he points out that for even a limited enrichment program, it's conceivable that you would be able to make a bomb's worth within the interval of the visits.

There's another study that bipartisan commission on policy did, at my guidance and request, by a man who works at the Rand Corporation, Gregory Jones, and he points out that with the 3,000 centrifuges they have in Natanz, they could make a bomb's worth roughly in about four weeks, using lightly enriched uranium as a feed.

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This is besides the problem, which is the next problem, that within an enrichment program that's declared, even if it's under international or multinational control, which is the latest great idea, you have to be able to be sure that they aren't making nuclear fuel covertly somewhere else.

Now, here we have a pretty good track record that's not anything but negative with regard to the IAEA and even the United States being able to discover covert nuclear fuel making.

Remember those visitors I was complaining about before? If you have a large enrichment program, you're going to have visitors not just to Bushehr, but to Natanz, and they're going to be people that you have to watch and know, and you're going to have to watch and know what's coming in and out of that plant.

Long story short, it stresses out a system that already is having difficulty keeping track of fuel rods at Bushehr,

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much less dust and gas that could get

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clogged up in pipes and everything else.

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To give you some idea, normally the

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amount of material that goes unaccounted

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for, even in a declared site, that is

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inspected by the IAEA, can be equal to

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many bombs' worth per year.

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So, you are going to, you're hoping

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you're going to be able to find covert

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facilities when, you know, there's a

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track record of them failing to do so, in

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places like Syria, Iran, Iraq -- I can go

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on, but I'll stop.

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You're betting on the comp that

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you'll be able to make sure that you know

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who's visiting and not passing on

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technology to that covert site, and that

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you can catch them if they use the

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declared site in plenty of time such that

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you can prevent them from taking whatever

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they made and turning it into a bomb.

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You're loading up the uncertainty

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budget, in short, and that's the reason

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why there was such a consensus that it

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was critical to suspend the enrichment activity, because it just was beyond our ability to cope with.

It's a long answer, but it is a complicated analogy.

MODERATOR WALLACE: Thank you.

Gary.

MR. SAMORE: Well, I think Henry has done a good job of describing the two avenues Iran could take to make nuclear weapons if it has an enrichment program, either to break out, that is to say, to use a safeguarded enrichment facility to produce highly enriched uranium, or to snake out by building a covert facility. And in either of those scenarios, if they have a limited capacity, it gives them options that they wouldn't have otherwise.

For the first option, the break-out from a safeguarded facility, you could imagine extra inspection technologies, or continuous presence of inspectors which would create more timely warning. But

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that still wouldn't prevent Iran from making a decision to nationalize the facility, or to kick out the inspectors, in which case, no one would be exactly sure what they were doing inside of that facility.

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In any event, if they have a overt safeguarded facility, it creates a lot of options for making covert facilities. In order to support a safeguarded plant you would need lots of facilities to train people, to produce components, and all of that is much harder to keep track of.

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It's much easier to, for the IAEA, or for intelligence agencies, to verify that nothing is going on than to make a distinction between either licit or illicit activities.

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So, I think Henry's covered those technical arguments very well.

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But let me make just one more political point. I mean, in theory you can imagine a situation where Iran had a very limited research and development

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program, and we decided that we would live with that risk, as opposed to having an unrestrained, a much larger program under IAEA safeguards, but I've seen no indication that Iran is interested in such a limited capacity.

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Their proposal for an international and multilateral enrichment consortium is one that envisions a large industrial scale facility in Iran, which is the kind of facility that would give them options, either to break out or to snake out.

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There is no -- as far as I can tell the, you know, the Iranians are not, at this point, interested in any kind of an arrangement that would keep them from having a nuclear weapons option, and they certainly feel like they're in a strong enough position, right now, to proceed with relatively low risks.

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MODERATOR WALLACE: The Iranian regime has said that it has an inalienable right to a peaceful nuclear energy program.

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Is that consistent with their statements that they should be allowed to enrich? Can you speak to that.

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MR. SAMORE: Sure. Yes, I don't think, you can't come to a definitive legal view on these issues because the NPT is written in such a general way that it doesn't provide, I think, a compelling or decisive legal case either way.

There's nothing in the treaty that prohibits the areas of peaceful nuclear energy that are available to a country that is compliant with the treaty. And that includes fuel cycle activity like enrichment, as well as reprocessing.

But I think there's a strong argument to be made, and it's the basis for all of the Security Council's resolutions, that Iran is not compliant with the NPT. The IAEA hasn't been able to resolve all of the questions that resulted in Iran being referred to the Security Council in the first place, and on that basis, the Security Council has,

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five times now, called for Iran to suspend its enrichment and reprocessing activities until, quote unquote, confidence has been restored in the intent of their program.

I think whatever theoretical right a country can claim in the specific case of Iran, I think there's a good legal argument that they've relinquished that right because of the history of both cheating on the treaty and because of doubts about the intent of their program.

MODERATOR WALLACE: Henry.

MR. SOKOLSKI: Yes. And more.

I mean, think I went to the trouble of reading ten years of negotiating history, that was graduate school, but it's interesting. When you read how they negotiated the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, when they came to this topic of inalienable rights and fuel making, there was an attempt, repeatedly, by a number of countries, to make it a duty for the countries that knew how to make nuclear

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fuel to share that technology.

    An interesting thing happened. They put it to a vote many times. Every time it was struck down.

    There were discussions by the Swedish that well, surely, we can't have a treaty that brings countries to the brink of making bombs and call it a non-proliferation treaty, there will have to be rules of some sort to make sure that, you know, we don't end up overturning our purpose with regard to fuel making. And everyone nodded, and they never got back to the topic.

    Finally, when the Americans testified on what the meaning of this was, they were very careful to say that it protects our rights to make nuclear fuel, but with regard to other countries, well, it would depend, because they weren't weapon states, and there was an issue, if you were a non-weapon state, and it would depend on a lot of things. They didn't get into it. We're now into

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it.

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It helps that Iran is not compliant.

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I think there are two other things to keep in mind. I mean, it makes it easier if they're not compliant, you can say, well, for the moment, the recognition of your fulsome rights is somehow in the penalty box.

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But I think there are two other more general points.

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If the rules to prevent making bombs are read in a way that it mandates that we must tolerate or even encourage countries to get within a whisker of an arsenal, that's a weird way to interpret the rules.

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If there's some other way to interpret the rules that preserves the non-proliferation to mention the NPT, generally, under the conventions that have to do with treaties, the Vienna Convention talks about interpretation, that's the way you interpret this.

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And finally, I think, you must

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understand that the bigger problem that the Iranian challenge presents is to ask the question, for everyone in the neighborhood and beyond, whether or not the way they proceeded is a model for others to follow.

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I always like to point out that Iran getting close to the bomb is bad, but setting a model for others to follow is worse.

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It is of some moment that we get this right, not just for Iran. I have said that.

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So, that would be my answer.

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MODERATOR WALLACE: For viewers that might not be following the issues as closely as everyone in this room, and even in this building, what's the difference, what's an Iranian nuclear program that's peaceful look like, versus an Iranian nuclear program that has potential military use? Like, what are the differences? What would be the hallmarks?

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I will put the question to you,

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Henry.

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MR. SOKOLSKI: I'm reminded of the

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question that was once asked of President

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Kennedy, about the launching of Senator

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Glen into orbit. I actually met Senator

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again yesterday at the Pentagon.

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And they asked, well, what's the

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difference between the rocket that put

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him into orbit and the one we use to land

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a warhead on to Moscow.

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And his one word answer was:

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Attitude.

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And that's a pun, you know. Where

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you point it.

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I think, roughly, that's the same

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answer. And the reason why is, there is

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a lot made in the diplomatic set about

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all of the technical distinctions

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between, you know, production reactors

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that are dedicated to making weapons and

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reactors that are dedicated to making

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power by boiling water.

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I always say that if you want to get

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a good technical discussion, it's best to

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go to people that bend heavy metal, not

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people who work in other fields.

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The difficulty, in a nutshell, is

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this. The reactors question, Bushehr,

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although it makes weapons usable material

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per kilowatt hour that it produces of

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electricity than a production reactor, it

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makes so many kilowatt hours more than a

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production reactor -- arguably, you know,

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100 times more, or even -- one gigawatt

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is a thousand megawatts. Well, you know,

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a lot of these production reactors, like

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the one in Korea, are only, roughly, I

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still want to get the electrical

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rating -- what is it? Five megawatts.

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So, you do the math, five -- that is like

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200 times.

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So, size overcomes its inefficiency,

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if you will. And so, in the case of the

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reactor, you can get 300, 330 kilograms

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of near weapons usable, near weapons

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grade material in the first 15 or 18

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months of operation at Bushehr.

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But then they have another reactor that they're building, Iraq, which is a heavy water reactor, which is ideal for production -- smaller, for weapons purposes -- that would look almost identical to the weapons production machine, because it is.

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But with regard to enrichment, there would be some slight differences. You would probably connect the pipes very differently if you were making lightly enriched uranium, than heavy, than highly enriched uranium, but that can be overcome.

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And in this Rand study it shows how, if you run what you produce at the end of the enrichment plant to the front, and keep running it through, you can get your bomb's worth that way, even if you haven't optimized the piping.

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Other than that, there really isn't a heck of a lot of difference. It's not for nothing that the key nuclear power programs in the world -- Russia, France,

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Great Britain, and the U.S. -- were

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developed out of their weapons program,

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or were made coeval with it.

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And so, the atom, unfortunately, is

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both peaceful and military. Something

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which pains our own utility industries

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from time to time, because it happens to

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be the truth.

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That's the reason, after all, that

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we created the International Atomic

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Energy Agency, which is to supposed to

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inspect in such a way to prevent

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diversions that could produce bombs

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without sufficient warning. And all of

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these facilities have to be safeguardable

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or they can't be considered to be

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peaceful.

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MR. SAMORE: Okay. Well, let me

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answer that question by describing the

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current offer that's on the table to Iran

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from the EU-3 plus 3, which is the U.K.,

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France, Germany, U.S., Russia and China.

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And the intent of this proposal is

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to satisfy, to try to satisfy Iran's

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interest in developing nuclear power for

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energy production, while denying or

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minimizing the threat that they'll be

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able to use nuclear technology for

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military purposes.

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So, the EU-3 plus 3 have basically

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said we will help you, Iran, develop your

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nuclear power industry; we will make sure

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that you have access to the latest and

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most advanced models of nuclear power

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reactors and light water research

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reactors; we'll give you a legally

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binding guarantee that you'll have fuel

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for those reactors. In return, we're

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asking for a ten-year moratorium on your

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enrichment program and your heavy water

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research reactor program.

19

Now, on paper, if Iran was genuinely

20

interested in developing nuclear energy,

21

that would be a very attractive offer,

22

because up to now Iran's access to

23

peaceful nuclear technology has been very

24

limited. Only the Russians have been

25

willing to provide them with nuclear

1

2

power, and for Iran, if they had access

3

to a much broader range of vendors, if

4

they had guarantees of fuel supply, it

5

would be much more attractive than, as

6

Henry has explained, than trying to

7

produce their own fuel, which is very

8

inefficient and which is probably

9

technically beyond their capabilities.

10

But since the purpose of Iran's

11

program is not nuclear power, since the

12

purpose is a weapons option, they've

13

rejected this offer.

14

MODERATOR WALLACE: Henry, do you

15

want to comment on the state of play with

16

the EU-3 plus 3, your thoughts on that,

17

as well.

18

MR. SOKOLSKI: I'm not sure I'm an

19

expert on 3 plus 3. Maybe Gary can say

20

something about that, also.

21

MODERATOR WALLACE: Could you do a

22

little baseline discussion about that,

23

because our audience is obviously broader

24

than just here in the building.

25

MR. SAMORE: Well, I think that,

1

2

basically, there's been a diplomatic

3

stalemate since January of 2006, when

4

Iran decided to walk away from its

5

earlier negotiations with the EU-3, the

6

U.K., France, and Germany, and the

7

condition that the Europeans set for that

8

negotiation is that Iran suspend its

9

enrichment program. Those negotiations

10

took place for almost three years, but

11

frankly, did not get close to resolving

12

the question of whether or not Iran would

13

be able to have a large scale enrichment

14

facility.

15

In January 2006 the Iranians decided

16

to resume their enrichment activity and

17

the matter was referred to the Security

18

Council and the U.S. and the other big

19

powers have tried, since then, to

20

pressure Iran through sanctions, both

21

formal and informal, through the Security

22

Council, and outside the Security

23

Council, to re-suspend its enrichment

24

program as a condition for beginning

25

international negotiations, and at the

1

2

same time the EU-3 plus 3 have put on the

3

table this offer, to help Iran's civil

4

nuclear program if Iran agrees to a

5

ten-year moratorium on its fuel cycle

6

activities. And Iran has basically

7

rejected both of those conditions.

8

They have refused to accept

9

suspension as a condition for resuming

10

international negotiations, and they made

11

it clear that they're not willing to stop

12

their enrichment program in exchange for

13

getting access to peaceful nuclear

14

technology.

15

And I don't see any immediate

16

prospect that that stalemate is likely to

17

be broken, certainly not for the rest of

18

this year.

19

I think the next U.S.

20

administration, whoever wins, is likely

21

to launch some new initiative to at least

22

get negotiations started to see whether

23

or not there is some formula that, you

24

know, that Iran would agree to delay, or

25

limit, or give up its enrichment program.

1  
2 I'm skeptical that that is likely to be  
3 successful, but it certainly makes sense  
4 to give it another try, especially  
5 because Iran is still probably a couple  
6 years away from being able to produce  
7 large quantities of highly enriched  
8 uranium and, therefore, from having a  
9 credible nuclear weapons option.

10 MODERATOR WALLACE: Ron also says  
11 that the Security Council actions over  
12 the last several resolutions are  
13 improper, that are extralegal -- that  
14 Iran's actions are not a threat to  
15 international peace and security.

16 Can we have a brief discussion on  
17 the legal regime generally governing this  
18 discussion.

19 Gary, do you want to dive in.

20 MR. SAMORE: Let me start. But I  
21 think this is another area where  
22 there's -- nothing is clearly codified.  
23 I mean, the charter of the IAEA requires  
24 the Board of Governors, which, of course,  
25 is made up of countries, to report to the

1

2

Security Council when there's been a

3

violation or non-compliance with a

4

country's safeguards obligation, and

5

they've done that in the case of Iran.

6

And the Security Council in the

7

international system that we have is

8

responsible for making decisions about

9

what constitutes threats to international

10

peace and security and what kinds of

11

recourse should be taken.

12

And, as I said, the Security Council

13

made that decision in five resolutions,

14

to call on Iran to suspend its enrichment

15

program and to impose some limited

16

sanctions, targeted against individuals

17

and companies that are directly involved

18

in Iran's nuclear and missile program.

19

Now, when Iran challenges -- I mean,

20

I was at a meeting recently with

21

President Ahmadinejad, and when Iran

22

challenges these Security Council

23

resolutions, they basically challenge the

24

fabric of the international system and

25

say that the Security Council should not

1

2

have that authority, is not

3

representative of a much broader range of

4

nations.

5

You can take that position, but to

6

the extent that we have an international

7

legal system, it's the job and the

8

mandate of the Security Council to make

9

those kinds of judgments.

10

MR. SOKOLSKI: I would just a

11

little, but not much, and that is that

12

this is a moment where the U.N. Security

13

Council is actually in the saddle. It

14

doesn't get a chance to do this all the

15

time. I think Iran's argument is, if we

16

can get it back into the IAEA, we're home

17

free, because the IAEA doesn't sanction

18

so much. Number 1.

19

And number 2, they know that the

20

burden of proof, generally in these

21

organizations, is on the body making the

22

accusation rather than on the suspected

23

party.

24

There are a number of proposals to

25

try to change this as a result of the

1

2

experience with Iran, some

3

country-neutral rules about default

4

sanctions that would be more or less

5

automatic, if a country could not be

6

found in full compliance with their IA

7

safeguards obligations. And that the

8

burden of proof would fall on them to

9

disprove the suspicion.

10

That is not where we are now, but

11

having gotten over the hurdle, such as

12

the U.N. Security Council received the

13

report, finally did take action, one of

14

the, one of the wasting assets or

15

potential casualties of any process of

16

negotiating with the Iranians is being,

17

if you will, too generous, is you do not

18

want to undercut the authority of the

19

U.N. Security Council, when it's finally

20

agreed to take a position, by saying, oh

21

well, we don't care, we'll cut some other

22

kind of deal.

23

So, any new administration that

24

wants to work with the allies of the

25

United States to cut some kind of deal

1

2

with Iran has to be careful that it

3

doesn't drive over the authority of the

4

U.N. Security Council. That would be a

5

setback, I think.

6

MODERATOR WALLACE: Gary, your

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thoughts on undercutting the Security

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Council.

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MR. SAMORE: Well, you know, I think

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that is right, the Bush administration

11

has been successful, at least on paper,

12

in getting consensus among the P-5 to set

13

conditions for beginning international

14

negotiations, formal negotiations. And I

15

think it's important to try to preserve

16

that consensus.

17

At the same time the resolutions

18

don't prohibit direct talks between the

19

U.S. and Iran any more than they prohibit

20

direct talks between Iran and any other

21

countries that are in the P-5.

22

So, I don't think the active,

23

starting direct talks with Iran

24

necessarily undercuts the Security

25

Council demand for a suspension as a

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2

condition for beginning full-scale

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nuclear negotiations.

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And, of course, since the Security

5

Council set the rules, they can also

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change the rules, and there have been

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discussions under Dr. Salan (ph) to try

8

to come up with a compromise that would

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make it possible for negotiations to

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start without an immediate full

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suspension, and I think Salan has been

12

pretty creative and offered some pretty

13

clever compromises, but again, Teheran

14

has rejected them all.

15

MODERATOR WALLACE: What advice --

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and we'll avoid politics -- whatever the

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incoming administration is, what advice

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would you have for them on the enrichment

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question?

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Henry, we'll start with you.

21

MR. SOKOLSKI: I think the most

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important point is not to panic. There

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has been this kind of concern with Iran.

24

I've been on so many different groups and

25

commissions, and the, almost the first

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2

thing that has to be said by somebody in

3

the group is, well, this is unacceptable,

4

you know, whatever it is. And this,

5

then, drives them into either what I call

6

the two extremes of groveling or bombing.

7

We don't look at the hump, we look at the

8

tails, and we grab the tails of what's

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probable, and say well that, we've got to

10

do one or the other. I don't think it is

11

that.

12

My hunch is that the Iranians have

13

not clearly made a decision yet when or

14

if they're going to acquire a bomb. I

15

think they like this option a lot,

16

though, and they want to develop that,

17

for sure.

18

I think it's very important that we

19

not do anything that undermines the rules

20

that sets an example that suggest maybe

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what Iran did is worth following when we

22

try to put pressure on Iran to back down,

23

and that we need to think of the bigger

24

equity of, so the other shall see, I

25

think the French use that kind of

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phraseology, we need to keep our eye on that ball, as well. I don't think we've done quite as good of a job on that yet, as we need to.

4

5

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MODERATOR WALLACE: Gary.

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MR. SAMORE: Well, I think Henry's absolutely right. We shouldn't panic. Iran's enrichment program is still at a fairly early stage of development.

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10

11

They've demonstrated, since January of 2006, that they're able to work out most of the problems and operate the machines at relatively high levels of efficiency, but they still have a very small number of machines, about 4,000 that are operating, and these are quite outdated machines that really date back to the 1960s. So, they're not like modern centrifuges.

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I think the next administration will still have some time, perhaps a couple of years, to try to put together a more effective diplomatic strategy before we face the difficult choice of either

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acquiescing or attacking.

Now, in terms of that diplomatic strategy, I think the Bush administration did a good job, as I said earlier, of getting international consensus on a package of incentives and disincentives. Unfortunately, it hasn't been enough to change the mind of Iranian leaders from proceeding with their enrichment program.

So, the challenge for the next administration is going to be to try to come up with both bigger carrots and bigger sticks. Let me just say something, briefly, about both of those.

On the bigger carrots part it seems to me one card the U.S. hasn't played yet is to offer to improve bilateral relations with Iran in terms of political normalization and lifting economic sanctions.

But if Iran agrees to accept a long-term moratorium on its enrichment program -- in other words, that's the kind of carrot we used in the case of

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2

North Korea, the Bush administration has

3

argued it doesn't want to use those

4

cards because there are other important

5

issues we have with Iran, including its

6

support for terrorism and opposition to

7

the peace process and -- it's -- some of

8

what it's doing in Afghanistan and Iraq.

9

And I think that's a legitimate argument.

10

But if you really think the nuclear

11

issue is a transcendent issue, it seems

12

to me, you should use all the carrots

13

that you have available, all the cards

14

you have available, and see if that might

15

make a difference.

16

On the bigger stick part, I think

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that's much more challenging, because it

18

seems pretty clear, to me, that the

19

Russians and the Chinese have decided

20

that when they weigh their national

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interests, their interest in preventing

22

Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapons

23

capability comes below their interest in

24

maintaining a good bilateral relationship

25

with Teheran; and so, I think the amount

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2

of pressure you can get out of the

3

Security Council is going to be limited.

4

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But it seems to me that if you could  
make a more attractive offer to Iran, and

6

if the Iranians were to turn that down,

7

you would at least be in a stronger

8

position to argue with Moscow and Beijing

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that the only way to really solve this

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problem is to increase pressure on the

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Iranians. And, in the meantime, outside

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the Security Council, I think some of the

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very creative financial sanctions that

14

the U.S. and the western European

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countries have put in place, have at

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least had some impact, and the fall in

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oil prices, combined with Ahmadinejad's

18

mismanagement of the Iranian economy,

19

may, in that period of time, in that year

20

or two or three, it may begin to have

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enough of an impact so the Iranians are

22

prepared to consider some compromises.

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MODERATOR WALLACE: Henry, more

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carrots?

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MR. SOKOLSKI: Well, undoubtedly

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people will do this. And okay, they'll do it. But I guess the point I'm trying to raise is:

First, let's do a little thought exercise. What if we're wrong about when they're going to get whatever it is we're worried about. It could happen. It may not be two years. It could be shorter. Should that throw you off your game? I think not.

It seems to me that what I am pleading for is yet another option, which I would, I guess, some kind of long-term program for waiting them out, if you will, which will involve, undoubtedly, some military pressures, but probably not bombing, and it will involve diplomatic efforts, but probably not acquiescing, and we need to be able to do this, even if we can't get everyone on the U.N. Security Council to agree with us.

Now, the United States had operated in that kind of environment for most of the Cold War. It think it needs to ask

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the question whether it cares about the future of the world and the spread of nuclear weapons so much that it wants to think about competitions like the ones that engaged in the Cold War.

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Again, I would strongly recommend that someone be tasked to think that one through. I don't think they've done it yet, and they need to.

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MODERATOR WALLACE: Well, what is the role, then, if -- there are five Security Council resolutions to date on the subject. What is the ongoing role of the Security Council, or other international organizations in this discussion.

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Gary, do you have --

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MR. SAMORE: Sure. Well, I think the Iranians are very sensitive to the threat that the Security Council will impose significant political and economic sanctions. I think they're uncomfortable being isolated, being branded as a country that's acting against the,

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2

against the demands of the Security  
Council.

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And I think, for example, their  
great sensitivity to being recently  
defeated by Japan for a two-year seat on  
the Security Council is further evidence  
of that.

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So, I do think that the Security  
Council has an important role to play.  
The question, I think, is how to get  
negotiations started, how to table a  
reasonable proposal, and if Iran rejects  
that reasonable proposal, whether or not  
the Security Council is, then, prepared  
to take steps to increase the pressure.

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My guess is that we're not likely to  
see much more out of the Security Council  
until the next U.S. administration,  
working with the other big powers  
actually figures out a way to get  
negotiations started and to put a package  
on the table which Iran will, you know --  
I mean, I think the Iranian approach  
would be neither to say Yes or No, but to

1  
2 drag out the negotiations while they  
3 continue to spin their centrifuge  
4 machines, and the challenge for the  
5 negotiators will be when to finally say  
6 when enough is enough and, you know,  
7 enough time has been exhausted trying to  
8 come to an agreement and that it's become  
9 clear that no compromise is possible.

10 But the Iranians are very skillful  
11 and capable of figuring out ways to drag  
12 things out for a long time.

13 MODERATOR WALLACE: Henry.

14 MR. SOKOLSKI: I remember being at a  
15 Track 2 meeting. I think Gary actually  
16 organized it when he was running IISS in  
17 Geneva, and having an opportunity to sit  
18 next to the Iranian ambassador to the  
19 IAEA at the time, and he later went on  
20 Iranian radio and explained that if Iran  
21 looks as though it's being ganged up  
22 politically, Iran wins.

23 If it looks as though Iran has made  
24 a technical error and is legally in the  
25 wrong, Iran loses.

1

2

I think he got it right. And I think, technically and legally, they're in the wrong.

3

4

5

I hope we don't negotiate with ourselves out of the argument that we now have, and the advantage that there is in having certain rules, and keeping people who sign up to them to adhere to them.

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MODERATOR WALLACE: With that, I'd

10

like to maybe throw it open to a few

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questions, because I know that people

12

have time, and we'll have a little bit of

13

interactive discussion, if you would.

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If you have a question, please state

15

your name, any organizational affiliation

16

that you may have. Always remember to be

17

civil with one another here.

18

Questions.

19

MR. McCAUGHAN: Thank you.

20

My name is Daniel McCaughan. I'm an

21

American lawyer. Thank you, Panel, for

22

being here.

23

If I can just ask kind of a

24

comprehensive question and throw it to

25

1

2

all three members, especially Mr.

3

Wallace, with your experience in the

4

field.

5

Neville Chamberlain negotiated, from

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1937 to 1939, and we all know that, and

7

he came back declaring peace for our

8

times with a treaty in hand, and he was

9

answered with the blitzkrieg.

10

As has been stated on the record

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here, the Iranians are skillful in

12

delaying things in many artful ways.

13

The published reports and some of

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the disclosed, non-confidential

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information at this time, even with U.S.

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intelligence, indicates that Iran could

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be, within a year, able to take those

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4,000 centrifuges and create fissionable

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material.

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Last summer, the Shehab-3 program

21

proved that they have the delivery

22

capability. So, we're not talking North

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Korea, where missiles are, you know,

24

self-exploding and falling into the sea,

25

we're talking about he's got the delivery

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mechanism, it's not a spot-welded Scud B bought from Baghdad, it's a legitimate capability. So, if they've got that kind of, all the pieces of the puzzle to put together, and U.S. intelligence says it could happen within a year, what, outside of an obvious direct military action, could be done, within a year, to answer the question and resolve the problem?

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MODERATOR WALLACE: Henry.

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MR. SOKOLSKI: Well, I think the presumption in laying out all that evidence is, as soon as they get it, they're going to use it. And if that's the case, Katey bar the door -- I mean, you've got a problem, and you're not going to have a solution.

19

I think that may be wrong.

20

21

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25

You've got to hope so. I think we need to make sure that any possible advantage that they might get in having what I would describe as a nuclear rocket diplomatic shadow equivalent to the range of their missiles, be deprived of, that

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2

has to do with alliance relationships, it

3

has to do with a number of things, both

4

military and non-military, in dealing

5

with the GCC states -- Saudi Arabia,

6

Israel, Jordan, Egypt, and the rest.

7

It's art, and it's not science.

8

But it has to be an effort fortified

9

with probably, as I've recommended, and I

10

think our government, along with other

11

governments, have seen, a presence in the

12

region of a lot of naval combatants from

13

a lot of different countries making it

14

very clear: No, we're not leaving, even

15

if you do get nuclear capability, we're

16

coming back, we're going to enforce

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international laws, laws of the sea, even

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things that you worked with us to

19

enforce, we're going to be here.

20

I think, in addition, it's very

21

important, and I haven't seen anywhere

22

near the effort that there should be, to

23

connect a few pipes so that oil flows out

24

of that region in an emergency, not

25

through the Strait, but through other

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2

locations. It's not very costly. It

3

should be something that's paid attention

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to.

5

But, in general, I think we also

6

have to make it very, very clear in our

7

public diplomacy that Iran's behavior is

8

not acceptable behavior that should be

9

seen as the way to get ahead. Remember:

10

There were other countries that even got

11

nuclear weapons that we had to deal with,

12

who declared the test. We're nowhere

13

near that yet. But your apprehension

14

about how close we could be is totally

15

warranted.

16

MODERATOR WALLACE: Gary.

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MR. SAMORE: Well, I think the

18

current Iranian leadership has a very

19

deep-seated interest in acquiring nuclear

20

weapons capability, which goes back to

21

the mid-1980s. So, I doubt that we're

22

going to fundamentally, you know, change

23

what they see as their important national

24

interest in acquiring a nuclear weapons

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capability. Both to reflect their

1

2

interests in dominating the region and

3

also what they see as legitimate

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defensive needs.

5

But I also think that Iran's

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leadership has shown that, under the

7

right circumstances, they can be very

8

cautious, and they're sensitive to

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external pressure. I mean, as I

10

mentioned earlier, they suspended key

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parts of their enrichment program from

12

mid-2003 to January 2006, mainly because

13

they felt they were in a very weak

14

position vis-a-vis the U.S. after the

15

U.S. invasion of Iraq, and because they

16

feared being referred to the Security

17

Council.

18

So, we've bought some time, and very

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often in the proliferation business the

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best you can do is try to buy time and

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hope that there will be, you know, an

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eventual change of government or a, you

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know, change of the composition of the

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leadership that perhaps makes a different

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calculation about the desirability of

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acquiring a nuclear weapons option.

I think the next U.S. administration, working with the other big powers in the Security Council, will have a shot at trying to create circumstances that may persuade the Iranians to at least accept a delay or limit on their program.

Now, of course, any agreement you reach with Iran, like any arms control agreement, is subject to the other country either reneging or cheating on it, and you just have to assume that that's the normal state of life in international politics.

But, you know, there is, I think, at least a chance to slow down or delay the program, you know, over the next year or two, and if that fails, then I think Henry sketched out for you the kind of containment and deterrent measures that the U.S. and its allies in the region will have to take, assuming that there's no military attack. You know, we do know

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2           how to live with nuclear armed enemies; I  
3           mean, that's something that we've, you  
4           know, have a very well-developed, you  
5           know, theory and policy on how to do  
6           that. It's not desirable; we hope we can  
7           avoid it, but it is something that we're  
8           very familiar with.

9                       MR. SOKOLSKI: Actually there is one  
10           other thing that would make sense to do  
11           immediately. Um, this is going to sound  
12           pretty weak, but it's still helpful.

13                      I think you have to have some  
14           country-neutral rules about what will  
15           automatically happen to any nation if it  
16           withdraws from a treaty, when it's in  
17           violation of it, when it tests a nuclear  
18           device, on down the line.

19                      You want to try to stack the public  
20           diplomacy deck against bad behavior, and  
21           you want to do it in a way that doesn't  
22           isolate and just pick on Iran, but sets a  
23           standard for everybody. This is the kind  
24           of place where you do that.

25                      So, if somebody is working here, I

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would focus on that with a laser beam.

MODERATOR WALLACE: Yes.

MR. SAMORE: I want to add to what Henry said.

In 2010 there's an NPT review conference, which is the logical setting to try to get agreement on these, as Henry described, country-neutral rules which would apply to any country, not just Iran.

I'm not very optimistic that you'll get agreement, because the Iranians, of course, recognize that those so-called country-neutral rules are aimed against them, and since the NPT conferences require consensus, they and their friends are in a strong position to block.

But, nonetheless, I think it's a valid exercise to go through, and, you know, a lot of what we're talking about here are looking for avenues of pressure and avenues of inducement, and this is one, as Henry has described, that we shouldn't overlook. Even at the end of

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2

the day, if you don't produce a new set

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of rules, you know, for the

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non-proliferation regime, it's worth

5

trying.

6

MR. SOKOLSKI: Yes. But I would

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agree that the NPT review conference

8

would be probably the most improbable

9

place to produce consensus, but perhaps

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the U.N. Security Council might not be.

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MODERATOR WALLACE: I think we can

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also learn from what's happening, it's

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been happening the last several months.

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We've had a jolt to the

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international financial system by the

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rise of oil prices, we've had the jolt

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from the decline. We've certainly been

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jolted.

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We've seen what happened of what

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happens when we have an international

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financial crisis, when you have limited

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access to credit, liquidity, and the

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like, and the effects that it can have on

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the economies of various countries.

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We've seen that Iran is very, very

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susceptible, in my opinion, to economic

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pressure. Its own economy is in

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difficult straits, and businesses there

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have been revolting. There have been

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some strikes, and the like.

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So, I do think that it's certainly

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not a time to step back and not think

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about economic pressure; if anything, the

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lessons of the last several months that

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we've seen, I think, are very, very

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compelling case that we should be even

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more aggressive in trying to rally

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thoughtful and aggressive, frankly,

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economic sanction regime, not to punish

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the Iranian people, they're wonderful

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people, but to make them understand that

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we're serious about this. That this is a

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very important issue.

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Bill, good seeing you, first of all.

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MR. LUERS: Thank you all. Bill

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Luers, UNAUSA. I have, I guess, three

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comments.

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First, I don't think anyone would

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disagree with the proposition that nobody

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wants a nuclear weapons Iran, and I think

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nuclear Iran you already have. You don't

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have, you want to avoid a nuclear weapons

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Iran. It is how you do it.

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Now, the first point I'd like to

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make is that, I think that the United

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States and the Europeans have been behind

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the curve from the beginning in trying to

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head off their move toward enrichment.

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And I still am persuaded that in the

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summer of 2006, before they started their

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enrichment, we could have made a deal to

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keep them at 160 centrifuges.

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There was a deal on the table that

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was possible. Even though Ahmadinejad

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came into office, I still think had we

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done what we could have done with regard

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to other programs they were doing, I

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think we could have made a deal and

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stopped them.

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And it wasn't until May of 2006 when

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we first acknowledged that they even had

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a right to any nuclear program, of any

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type. And it was the Secretary Rice who

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said it, because we never wanted them, up to that point, to have any right to any type of knowledge of nuclear, and we said that.

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So, once they started their enrichment we kept getting behind, and there were deals along the way that could have been made, we never made them. And these weren't deals that meant giving in, it meant deals in ways to stop their enrichment program.

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The more we issue sanctions, the more they enrich. Every time there's a new, a new sanctions passed by the U.N. Security Council, they add 1,000 more centrifuges. So, this pattern isn't working. And I guess my argument would be that nothing I've seen, even though they're hurting badly and they'll probably even hurt worse, that's going to change the policies of the Iranian regime. That's the first point.

24

25

The second point is, I do think that one has to say that Iran's role in Iraq

1

2

and Afghanistan are critical to U.S.

3

interests. That -- I think there's an

4

argument that says that Iran and the

5

United States have many common goals,

6

both in Afghanistan and Iraq.

7

If the next administration in the

8

U.S. government is going to be talking

9

about withdrawing troops, pulling down

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troops, which I think is very likely, how

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they're going to do that without some

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deal with Iran, I don't know. And that's

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where I think that the Iraqi issue sort

14

of blends into the question of how do you

15

talk to Iran about Iraq and Afghanistan

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and not deal with this nuclear question.

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And I guess that brings me to the

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third point. I didn't hear from any of

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you what you would tell the next

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president. I mean, I guess the best

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thing I've heard from Gary is that you

22

would establish bilateral relations at

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some level and begin that process.

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That's probably not enough. You

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have to have something -- what are you

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going to say when you sit down, if you do

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sit down with the Iranians, you decide

4

that you're going to not have

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preconditions, presumably, or they won't

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talk.

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And the first thing you say to them

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is: When are you going to stop your

9

enrichment, then you've lost your

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opportunity to talk about a whole range

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of issues that are of great importance to

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the United States.

13

So, it seems to me that, at some

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level, you have to have a proposal to

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them. You know, Gary, our proposal is

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there be some sort of discussion about

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consortium, which we know would be an

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entry point. Whether you ever get there,

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whether you'd ever achieve anything, I

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don't know. But you have to have

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something on the table which says, this

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is what the United States and the other

23

members, current members of the Security

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Council, and Germany, think is a

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reasonable way to discuss the future.

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We've got to preempt -- I mean,  
sitting around waiting, I think, Henry,  
is not going to work.

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If you just wait and think well,  
something will work out, we have to be in  
the driver's seat on this. And I don't  
think the driver's seat means many more  
sanctions and see if they will react  
negatively, or bombing it.

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11

And I realize you've both stayed  
away from that, but that's the policy.

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So, those are my comments.

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MR. SOKOLSKI: I think, let me take  
that on.

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MODERATOR WALLACE: I think both of  
you should take that on.

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MR. SOKOLSKI: Okay. By the way, as  
someone who has five cars, I'm very  
familiar with the driver's seat.

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MODERATOR WALLACE: You have a  
problem with dependence on foreign oil.

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22

MR. SOKOLSKI: I can honestly say,  
since they're very old cars, and I work  
at home, I bicycle more than I drive,

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literally 4,000 miles on bike, probably

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less with the cars. So, I'm not too

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worried about that.

5

You don't want to drive into a brick

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wall. Be careful. You can't be

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advocating that, on the one hand, we may

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very well be in a situation where it's

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too late to stop Iran's drive, to at

10

least get a bombs option, which, by the

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way, I think you may very well be right.

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I don't know. I mean, I think it's quite

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late in the game. I was arguing, many

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years ago, that they had already kind of

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gotten to a point where denial of

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technology was not going to work, and

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once you get to that point, their desire

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to complete, the effort to at least have

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the option is fairly irresistible.

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But if that's the case, then it is

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important, very important not to stop

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them in such a way that endorses its

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drive, and that's the balance of the

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problem.

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Let me make a suggestion, just to

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change the subject, so maybe we can see

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something in agreement, because if we

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keep talking about the nuclear thing, you

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and I will probably disagree; right?

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How about the following, and this

7

was sketched --

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MR. LUERS: You haven't even

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answered my question.

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MR. SOKOLSKI: Well, I am right now.

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MR LUERS: Well, I hate to disagree

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with you.

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MR. SOKOLSKI: If you hold on,

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there's not even a point having a

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disagreement.

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MODERATOR WALLACE: Bill, I have the

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gavel.

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MR. SOKOLSKI: If you hold on, I was

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going to give you something to work on.

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The Iranians claim that they're very

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concerned about international security

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guarantees. They say this. They say

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this a lot.

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Well, okay. Um, how about

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international security guarantees of free

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passage for everyone, including

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protection against military actions

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through the Strait of Hormuz?

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Well, we have some experience with

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that in the case of Turkey and the

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Dardanelles, Montreaux, Lusante.

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That's going to mean someone's going

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to have to surface their submarines when

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they go through. That might be the

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United States.

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It might mean they have to

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demilitarize some islands and some

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coastal areas. I have no problem with

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that.

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That's a win-win.

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Also, incidents at sea.

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By the way, this is detailed in

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great length in studies that my center

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has done. No one has quite picked them

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up.

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I don't think trying to give away

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the store in the nuclear area is a good

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place to begin. It's kind of like

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dealing with certain countries that love

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nuclear power, and you've been denying

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them that, and you start giving them

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that.

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MR. LUERS: I didn't say give away

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the store at all.

7

MR. SOKOLSKI: I know. But that's

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my view of some of the things that are

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being offered. It gives too much.

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So, I'm not against the First

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Amendment. I like people to talk with

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one another. I don't even have a problem

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with negotiations. I think you have to

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pick your topic. And dealing in the

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nuclear area as your number 1 topic,

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maybe, as some of the comments you made,

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may not be the smartest thing to do.

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It may be you want to work and kind

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of check to see whether they're credible

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on the things they claim they want.

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Because I suspect if you got into this

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incidents at sea, and making sure that

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there was a free passage of the Straits,

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you wouldn't make much progress, and that

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would suggest that a lot of other things

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they're not serious about, but if they are, they could change things.

MR. SAMORE: Well, first of all I completely agree that the Bush administration missed a number of opportunities, and the biggest one was in 2003 when Iran was desperate to begin a negotiation, and when we might have been in a position to get a reasonably good deal.

Unfortunately, because we were feeling some, you know, hubris after Iraq, we decided we didn't negotiate with evil, and that gave an opportunity for the Europeans to step in.

I also agree that sanctions alone are not going to compel Iran. That's why I think you have to have a, you know, comprehensive approach that includes both incentives and sanctions. But I do think that the threat of sanctions is an important element, you know, in any diplomacy.

I also agree with you that we have

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to broaden the agenda, and if I was

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advising the next president, I would say,

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when you start direct and unconditional

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bilateral talks with Iran, it shouldn't

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just be about the nuclear issue; that's

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probably the most difficult one to

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resolve. It should be about everything

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across the board and see whether, out of

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that general discussion, you can get

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agreement on terms and conditions for

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beginning nuclear negotiations -- not

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just with the U.S. I would preserve the

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3 plus 3 formula. It can be cumbersome,

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of course, to have these kinds of

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multilateral negotiations, but I think

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it's worth continuing to enlist the

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involvement and support of the other

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countries; this shouldn't be just a U.S.

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issue.

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And finally, you know, on the

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consortium idea, that's Iran's proposal,

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and any nuclear negotiation is going to

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allow any country to present their idea

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for what a solution is. We can't tell

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the Iranians they can't present their

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proposal for a consortium. But so far

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I've heard no details whatsoever from

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Iran. I mean, they've made this very

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general propose. It's their idea. It's

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up to them to tell us exactly what they

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mean by an international consortium, and

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give us a chance to judge, you know,

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whether or not we think there are some

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attractive elements in that offer.

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To me, it doesn't make sense for us

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to put forward a proposal that actually

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is not very desirable from our

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standpoint, when it's, you know, when

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it's really Iran's proposal.

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So, I think the consortium idea

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would get aired in a negotiation, but,

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you know, I'm with Henry on this. I

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wouldn't start with a position that, you

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know, basically accepts the premise of

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Iran's negotiation. I would start with

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our position, which is a long-term

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moratorium. Whether a compromise emerges

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from that, I don't know, but it seems to

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me, just for pure negotiating tactics,

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you want to start with your desirable

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outcome and work toward a compromise,

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rather than start with the other guy's

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outcome.

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MR. LUERS: The position we have

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now, today, is that we won't talk to them

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until they agree to our proposition that

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they stop enrichment. That's our

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position.

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MR. SAMORE: Our position is that

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they suspend enrichment during the

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negotiations, just like the Europeans.

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AN AUDIENCE MEMBER: They won't do

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that. So, all I'm saying -- I agree with

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you on the consortium: You don't want to

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sell out telling them we'll do it, you

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have to have some way to get to the table

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that says we're not having preconditions,

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and we're prepared to talk to you. You

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give your proposal, we'll give ours,

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because there will be no preconditions.

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MR. SAMORE: Right. But I don't

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think we should prejudice the conditions

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for formal nuclear negotiations.

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I mean, Salan has been working on all kinds of compromise formulas. Maybe you'd get a freeze, as opposed to suspension, meaning that during the negotiations there will be no more sanctions imposed and Iran wouldn't install any more centrifuges.

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So, rather than just throw the condition out the window, you know, I would rather give this, you know, bilateral process a chance to work and see whether something may come out of it.

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But at the end of the day, you may be right. At the end of day we may have no choice but to talk without any conditions at all, in which case both sides would be free to ratchet up the pressure. The Iranians would be free to continue to install centrifuges, while we talk, and the P-5 would be free to pass additional Security Council resolutions, while we talk.

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MR. SOKOLSKI: By the way, one of

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the things that tactically has to be

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figured out, as well, a big debate

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between the two candidates -- well,

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would the president go immediately and

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talk to the other president? Would there

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be preparations? Would there be

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conditions?

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I think the kinds of things that

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I've raised and Gary has raised have to

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be thought through. Figuring out what

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level you go at, what you're talking

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about before you charge out the doors,

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because if you go high enough and

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unprepared, you can knock over a lot of

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carts.

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MR. LUERS: That was not in my

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presentation.

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MR. SOKOLSKI: No. No. I know

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that. But I'm just saying. That's just

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a general point.

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MODERATOR WALLACE: Let's get

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another question, right here.

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MR. AFRASIABI: My name is Kaveh

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Afrasiabi.

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I've authored a couple of books on Iran's nuclear issues, and I've also written on the legal aspect of these for Carnegie Endowment, which I, you can look it up.

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The question, and a quick comment. And this is primarily directed to Mr. Samore.

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What if you're wrong about this assumption of Iran building nuclear weapons, since you were equally wrong about Iraq when you penned this report in 2002 stating, categorically, that Iraq is proliferating weapons of mass destruction?

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Now, as for the comment, there have been a couple of important points about Iran's enrichment which, unfortunately, were not addressed.

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With respect to Iran's secrecy and what was said about Iran's violation of its obligations, you know very well that for whatever that Iran was referred to the Security Council, it was not the

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issue of Iran's secrecy with respect to the Natanz facility, since Iran had this subsidiary agreement between Iran and the IAEA, had 180 days prior to the introduction of nuclear material, to disclose that to the IAEA, which is plenty of time, as a result of which the IAEA did not cite that as a point of violation in its report of the governing board to the Security Council.

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I think that is a very important consideration.

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Number 2, is that -- of course there is a whole background to why Iran was rather subtle about it, even the pressures on Iran denying it peaceful technology, and all of the, you know, obligated contracts with Simmons, and so forth, which we won't get into right now.

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Now, it's very important to point out, however, that in August 2007 Iran and the IAEA reached an agreement, worked hard to address all of the six outstanding issues, which included the

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contamination of equipment by high level,  
highly enriched uranium, and so forth.

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And these were the principal reasons for  
referring Iran to the Security Council in  
the first praise, and the concluding

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paragraph of that work plan states very

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clearly that once the IAEA is satisfied

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about these outstanding issues, then --

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and that's the key word that's in that

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agreement -- then Iran's nuclear program

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will be treated normal. This is in the

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concluding paragraph of the 2007

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agreement.

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Now, if you read the IAEA report of

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the February, 2008, May 6th, 2008, it

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states very clearly that all those six

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outstanding questions are resolved.

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The book is closed on that. And

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they're resolved in Iran's favor, without

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an exception.

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Now, that raises the question: Why

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should Iran still be under the pressure

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of sanctions, when, according to the

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IAEA's own report, Iran's enrichment is

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limited up to 4 percent.

It's not highly enriched, contrary to the false claims of some experts like David Kaye in The Washington Post, and so forth. Iran's enrichment is limited to up to 4 percent. And the IAEA has cameras, surveillance cameras in all of the main halls of the Natanz facility.

So, contrary to what we heard a few minutes ago about, you know, the intervals between the IAEA inspectors, the IAEA has cameras there. They can inspect who comes in, who goes out. And I've talked to the IAEA officials, who tell me as long as those cameras are there, as long as we have rigorous inspections, any kind of diversion would be detected.

You find one IAEA official who disputes that contention. You will not, and you know very well that you will not. As long as the IAEA has surveillance cameras there, as long as there's unannounced inspections, just as they

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have had since March of 2007, nine of

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them, there will be no possibility for

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Iran to commit military diversion without

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being detected. And this goes on and on.

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I don't want to take too much time.

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However, this is the point. There

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is no legal justification for sanctions,

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as long as Iran is maintaining its right

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to produce nuclear fuels for its

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reactors, present and future; as long as

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the IAEA inspection regime is in place;

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as long as Iran promises to keep a low

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ceiling on enrichment; as long as there

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is no evidence of any diversion, let

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alone a smoking gun; and because of those

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Iran has insisted -- and we do respect

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you, Dr. Samore.

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I was at the same meeting with

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President Ahmadinejad as you were, as was

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Ambassador Loeb, and there's no legal

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justification for the sanctions.

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And I've argued that very -- you

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know, in detail in my piece with, for

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Carnegie Endowment, and I think that that

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is the key issue: Intention is subjective, is projection of attributes to people.

We have to, you know, put the emphasis on the objective facts, on the objective reality of the IAEA inspection regime in place, and Iran's rigorous nuclear transparency, and all its corrective steps that have resolved the outstanding issues, as a result of which there's no foundation for continuing sanctions. There's no foundation for coercive diplomacy, and my advice to the Security Council, to the future U.S. president, is that: Stop coercive diplomacy. Respect Iran's rights, and push Iran to readopt additional protocol to minimize any concerns, to neutralize any concerns about military diversion, and so forth, and to make sure that Iran's enrichment is limited to low ceiling, and for purely peaceful purposes.

Thank you.

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MR. SAMORE: Well, let me address the central issue of the legal basis or justification for sanctions.

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You're right that some of the key countries on the Security Council, like Russia and China, argue that once the IAEA has declared that they have resolved all questions about Iran's past violations of its safeguards activities, then there's no longer any legal basis for imposing sanctions, and Iran is free, like any NPT party, to pursue whatever civil nuclear technology it wishes.

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Now, That view is not shared by the U.S. and the western powers, but certainly that's the position of Russia and China.

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You're also correct that most of the outstanding issues have been resolved, the issues that were identified in the work plan.

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But if you look at the last two IAEA reports, there's very detailed information about nuclear weapons

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activities, and the IAEA reported it in

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its most recent report in mid-September,

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that Iran has refused to provide the

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agency with other information to explain

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what these activities, nor has Iran

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allowed access to the individuals, the

8

scientists in Iran who were part of that

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program.

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So, you know, until Iran makes a

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decision to cooperate with the agency to

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explain why it was carrying out this

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research to develop a nuclear warhead for

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the Shehab-3 missile, and carrying out

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other tests and experiments, I think the

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IAEA process is pretty much at a

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dead-end.

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The IAEA can say that they've

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accounted for all the fissile material in

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Iran, as best as they can, they've done

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historical investigations, and they've

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now been able to account for all the,

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you know, undeclared work that took

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place, that took place in violation of

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the Iran safeguards agreement.

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But as long as there is this

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outstanding question of the nuclear

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weapons activity, there is no way for the

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IAEA to close the book, and it's that

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basis on which the Security Council

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believes that it still has the authority

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to impose sanctions against Iran and to

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call on Iran to suspend its enrichment

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program until confidence is restored.

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MODERATOR WALLACE: Gary.

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Henry.

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MR. SOKOLSKI: You seem like a guy

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who likes facts.

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It's not quite correct what you said

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about the cameras. Yes, they're on.

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Yes, you can probably find and

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detect a diversion, but you wouldn't know

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until you came and visited the site

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physically. They don't feed back to

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Vienna. There was an attempt to get that

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capability installed. Iran said, no, go

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away, we won't let you do it.

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Let me read to you an internal

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document studied by the IAEA. There's a

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book that my center put out that was  
funded by the Carnegie Corporation in New  
York about the endowment, called Falling  
Behind. It was a two-year international  
study of what the IAEA could and couldn't  
do.

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One of the documents that was handed  
me, when I read the sentence, it's kind  
of interesting, says, "found that over  
the past six years there have been at  
least 12 occasions when facility lights  
were turned off for a period greater than  
30 hours."

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This does not get into the  
discussion of when physical obstacles  
were placed in front of the cameras.  
That's a separate point that I want to  
add to this.

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What that means is that yes, you can  
go with film all you want, but unless you  
have a connection between that camera and  
Vienna, and you don't, you have to  
physically go there to see what's on the  
tape, and when you do, occasionally, you

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find the lights are off.

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Or a crane is in front of the  
camera.

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Or you don't have access to what you  
thought you wanted to see.

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Now, that can probably be fixed in  
the case of Iran if they changed their  
mind about allowing the authority for new  
real-time surveillance, but so far  
they've not been willing to say Yes.

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And I think, in addition, it is very  
-- to think you can physically see  
something, you can know what's going  
through that plant.

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The inventory that they give you,  
you have to take on faith. They give you  
the wrong figure, you get a starting  
point that gets you in the wrong end  
point.

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Finally, with regard to the  
additional protocol -- I can, you know,  
give you a copy of this -- as the Rand  
analysis -- I shouldn't say Rand  
analysis -- as the analyst at Rand -- it

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2           wasn't Rand; he works at Rand -- points  
3           out, I think correctly, the additional  
4           protocol becomes pretty useless with  
5           regard to large enrichment facilities,  
6           because you don't have the authority to  
7           do anything except by consent, both  
8           parties, with regard to these  
9           inspections.

10                   And the duration of time necessary  
11           for them to make a bomb's worth goes down  
12           as the number of centrifuges goes up.  
13           So, right now it's around 31 days.  
14           That's right at the edge, assuming they  
15           go every month. They have gone not every  
16           month -- mostly every month, but  
17           sometimes it's once every two months.

18                   So, I think you're overrating what  
19           the IAEA can do, and I think it doesn't  
20           help them get better to say that, in a  
21           sense. And so, you want to be a little  
22           more careful.

23                   Bulk handling facilities, fuel  
24           making facilities are notoriously beyond  
25           the capability of timely detection, and

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if you take a look at the numerical requirements for timely detection, which are incredibly generous in the case of the IAEA, they not only can't meet them, they don't even argue that they do meet them.

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They're quite explicit in saying that the conversion time to make a bomb, once you are making glue, is shorter than the visitation goals they have with regard to inspection.

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So, I mean, if you'd like, I can share this with you.

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So, the IAEA is doing the best it can on a small budget. If it had more money, it could do a better job. But the idea that, you know, you don't have to worry, the IAEA is on the beat, I think, is not right. And I think they'd be the first to admit that, if not in public, certainly in private, as they have with me, and they've more or less handed over the goods and the documents. They've been written up.

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When that report was released,

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Reuters and the economists went to them

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and said well, have you seen this, and

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they said yes, we've read it very

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carefully, and they said, you know, what

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do you make of it, and they said, no

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comment.

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The highest praise I've ever

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received from an international

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organization. It's because it was

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correct. And I used their documents.

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MODERATOR WALLACE: Do we have time

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for one more question? One more

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question, and we'll wrap it up.

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Sorry, go ahead.

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MS. JOHNSTON: My name is Jill

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Johnston, and I'm a life minister with

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Harvest Church.

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I have a question whether or not

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you're familiar with a Website,

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WWW.debka.com, where it's stating that

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there's a large-scale Iranian air force

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exercise that simulates an attack on

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Israel that started taking place as of

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Thursday, October 16th, in Northern Iraq,

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and Techtrend media claims that the

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exercise is to test air forces' ability

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to fly to Israel and back without

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refueling, and that Iranians say that

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they're practicing their state-of-the-art

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equipment in flight, meaning to attempt

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to jam the U.S. and Israel's electronic

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and radar systems.

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According to Iranian media, that the

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entire range of Iran's fighter fleet will

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take part using U.S.-made F-4s, F-5s,

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F-7s, F-14s, and according to their news

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media, that this is already taking place.

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So, I was wondering if our news

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media, since we're not seeing a lot of

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that, is airing these tests.

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They've tied the large-scale drill,

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three weeks prior to the U.S.

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presidential election on November 4th, in

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response to a rift in the West on Israel,

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and that they view this as a window

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before U.S. elections and the swearing in

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of the new president in January, for an

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attack on Iran's nuclear installations

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from Israel, and that Iranians aim to

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show that they have first and second

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strike capability, not just with

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ballistic missiles, but also aerial

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attack.

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MODERATOR WALLACE: Let me throw

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this out to Gary.

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MR. SAMORE: Well, I'm not familiar

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with that particular Website. I think

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it's pretty well-known from public

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reporting that Israel has certainly

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practiced, you know, exercises to

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simulate attacks on Iran's nuclear

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program.

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MS. JOHNSTON: This is Iran.

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MR. SAMORE: No. I understand.

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What I'm saying is that I think Iran is

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aware of that; and so, it's perfectly

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logical that they would be practicing

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exercises of their own, either to defend

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themselves against an Israeli attack or

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to, you know, carry out a counter-attack.

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So, it's plausible, because that's what

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countries normally do in terms of their  
military planning.

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But I can't comment on the  
specifics. I'd be a little surprised if  
Iran's aircraft have the legs to reach  
Israel and get back. They certainly have  
missiles that could hit Israel, although  
I don't -- although they're so  
inaccurate, as Henry mentioned, that I  
don't think they could hit a particular  
target.

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But, you know, there is a theory in  
the Middle East that a window for Israel  
to attack is after the U.S. election, you  
know, and before the inauguration. I  
think it's pretty unlikely, but I think  
it would be prudent for the Iranians to  
assume that that's a possibility, and to  
take preparations to deal with it.

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MS. JOHNSTON: Okay. Well, they're  
saying that Israel has about three to six  
months to hit Iran's nuclear enrichment  
sites, and that the Russian military  
experts calculate that the window for an

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Israeli attack on Iran's nuclear

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facilities will shrink to the three to

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six months. And if Moscow goes, Iran and

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Syria have sophisticated guidance systems

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for guarding these sites against air,

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missile and cruise missile attack.

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MR. SAMORE: Yes. I'm familiar with

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that theory.

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My sense is that the Israelis are

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more comfortable with the timeline, and

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that their -- I mean, especially given

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the political turmoil in Israel right

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now; we don't even have a government.

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I think it's more likely the

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Israelis will wait and see what success

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the next U.S. administration has with the

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diplomatic initiative, and only then

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decide whether to use military force.

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MODERATOR WALLACE: Henry, I'm

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sorry, but we're almost over. I want to

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give Henry just the last word in

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answering this question, and thank you

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for your indulgence going over here.

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MR. SOKOLSKI: Welcome to the brave

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new world. Okay.

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The specifics are less important than the generics of what you described.

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The bad news is, you're going to have to lean forward in your chair every night when you look at the Web to catch these things.

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If there is any good news at all, it's that nobody gets a free ride. If they, the Iranians think that once they get these weapons, they're free to do anything they want, they've already figured out that's not the case. This exercise demonstrates that. They have to worry about being hit themselves. If they try to hit someone else, it's not optimal. That's one of the reasons why we don't want Iran to get nuclear weapons.

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That's pretty much the point of this entire meeting.

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MS. JOHNSTON: It's been prophesied in the Bible, in the book of Revelation, that there's going to be a nuclear

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holocaust.

MR. SOKOLSKI: Let's hope The End of  
Days are further away than that.

MODERATOR WALLACE: On that note,  
we're going to wrap up this meeting.

Thank you very much, everyone, for  
all of your help and interest.

(Time noted: 2:55 p.m.)

