

RELEASE IN
PART B5,B6

From: Sherman, Wendy R <ShermanWR@state.gov>
Sent: Thursday, May 24, 2012 1:21 PM
To: H
Cc: Burns, William J; Sullivan, Jacob J
Subject: Ashton Statement

Fyi, see below. Have call into Bill, Jake [redacted] to brief. Heading to airport to get to Amman if sandstorm abatement remains. Will then go over bridge to Tel Aviv tomorrow. Tough meeting but outcome ok.

B5

From: Hammer, Michael A
Sent: Thursday, May 24, 2012 01:13 PM
To: Burns, William J; 'Thomas_E_Donilon' [redacted] <Thomas_E_Donilon@state.gov>;
'Denis_R_McDonough' [redacted] <Denis_R_McDonough@state.gov>; 'Benjamin_J_Rhodes' [redacted]
<Benjamin_J_Rhodes@state.gov>; Sullivan, Jacob J; Sherman, Wendy R; 'puneet_talwar' [redacted]
<puneet_talwar@state.gov>; 'GSamore' [redacted] <GSamore@state.gov>; Einhorn, Robert J; NSC Deputy
Press Secretary
Cc: Lakhdir, Kamala S; Grantham, Chris W
Subject: Ashton Statement

B6

En route to airport, ashton statement

STATEMENT BY CATHERINE ASHTON, HIGH REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNION FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND SECURITY
POLICY AND VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE COMMISSION IN BAGHDAD ON 24th MAY 2012

First of all, I would like to thank the Iraqi government, and in particular Foreign Minister Zebari, for the excellent hospitality and organisation of these talks.

The E3+3 remain firm, clear and united in seeking a swift diplomatic resolution of the international community's concerns on the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme, based on the NPT, and the full implementation of UN Security Council and IAEA Board of Governors Resolutions. We expect Iran to take concrete and practical steps to urgently meet the concerns of the international community, to build confidence and to meet its international obligations.

We have met with our Iranian counterparts over the last two days in very intense and detailed discussions.

In line with our agreement in Istanbul, the E3+3 laid out clear proposals to address the Iranian nuclear issue and, in particular, all aspects of 20% enrichment.

We also put ideas on the table on reciprocal steps we would be prepared to take.

Iran declared its readiness to address the issue of 20 percent enrichment and came with its own five-point plan, including their assertion that we recognise their right to enrichment.

Having held in-depth discussions with our Iranian counterparts over two days - both in full plenary sessions and bilaterals - it is clear that we both want to make progress, and that there is some common ground. However, significant differences remain. Nonetheless, we do agree on the need for further discussion to expand that common ground.

We will go back to our respective capitals and consult. We will maintain intensive contacts with our Iranian counterparts to prepare a further meeting in Moscow with arrival on 17th June, with talks on 18th and 19th June .

As we have already agreed, the talks will be based on a step-by-step approach and reciprocity.

We remain determined to resolve this problem in the near term through negotiations, and will continue to make every effort to that end.

From: Hammer, Michael A
Sent: Wednesday, May 23, 2012 09:17 PM
To: Burns, William J; 'Thomas_E._Donilon' <Thomas_E._Donilon >; 'Denis_R._McDonough' <Denis_R._McDonough >; 'Benjamin_J._Rhodes' <Benjamin_J._Rhodes >; Sullivan, Jacob J; Sherman, Wendy R; 'puneet_talwar' <puneet_talwar >; 'GSamore' <GSamore >; Einhorn, Robert J; NSC Deputy Press Secretary
Cc: Lakhdir, Kamala S; Grantham, Chris W
Subject: TRANSCRIPT: 5/24 P5+ 1 Background Briefing, Baghdad

B6

Wendy did a terrific job, one line captures it all: "So let me stop there, and I'm happy to take questions. I probably won't give you answers you want. (Laughter.)"

And indeed, Wendy provided the answers we wanted that provided valuable context while deflecting trouble. We'll see how tomorrow goes. As usual our Euro brethren have been habitual leakers but the press coverage so far from today is solid.

For tomorrow, after the expected Ashton on-the-record press conference at the conclusion, whenever that comes (we'll get to you her prepared statement worked out among P5+1), we are planning to do a another backgrounder to frame the outcome. And, we will pass along the transcript.

Cheers, Mike

From: Oneill, Donna M (PACE) [mailto:OneillDM@state.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, May 23, 2012 08:42 PM
To: Hammer, Michael A; Hensman, Chris D (Baghdad)
Cc: PA RPT Group
Subject: TRANSCRIPT: 5/24 Background Briefing

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**BACKGROUND BRIEFING
BY A SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL**

May 24, 2012
Baghdad, Iraq

MODERATOR: So thank you very much again for taking the time. We know it's been a very long day. We're doing this on background as a Senior Administration Official. There are other senior administration officials that at some point might answer a question if it's pertinent, but with that, let me just turn it over to our Senior Administration Official. We'll do a brief summary of the day and then obviously take your questions.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Thank you all for coming and thank you all for coming to Baghdad – those of you who are not here to cover this important meeting. I think that when I talked with some of you the other night, I said that the threshold was whether, in fact, we engaged in detailed discussions about concrete steps – not that we would reach agreement on any of those issues, but we would, in fact, get engaged – the P-5+1, EU-3+3 – with Iran.

And indeed, we have gotten engaged. We have had detailed discussions. The day began, as I think you all know, with a three-hour plenary session which was very detailed, very concrete. We continued into the evening until just now in a series of informal meetings, bilateral that – Cathy Ashton had a bilateral at a lower level that the Chinese had, but also a number of informal discussions each of us had with either members of the Iranian delegation, Iraqis, others that were part of this process, all of which supplied information and understanding of what we were trying to do.

The upshot of tonight is we're meeting again tomorrow morning. So we are going into a second day. We have a plenary scheduled for 8:30 tomorrow morning, which is early for these negotiations. As many of you have been with us before, you know we usually don't start till 11:00 or 12:00 in the morning because that's a pattern that's comfortable for the Iranians, but we are starting at 8:30 tomorrow morning.

And we hope that we can engage in a follow-on process that we hope will go forward as a result of these detailed discussions. There have been some areas of common ground and there has been a fair amount of disagreement. But we all knew that if we actually got into the beginning of a negotiation, we were going to have a lot of gaps, thought we were going to have a lot of road bumps, we were going to have areas of disagreement. If we didn't, then this wouldn't be a problem; we wouldn't have any issues. If there weren't areas of disagreement, then you all wouldn't be covering this.

We have, in fact, put those areas of disagreement on the table. We have engaged in a lot of very useful back and forth. Some of that has been difficult. But again, any negotiation that's worth its salt is difficult, because you're getting down to issues that matter. Again, I want to emphasize we're at the beginning of this process. We are not in the middle of it and we are certainly not at the end of it. We are at the beginning of it. Istanbul was seeing whether we had an environment conducive for having a serious discussion. We assessed that we did, which led us to these Baghdad talks. Our hope was in Baghdad we would put concrete proposals on the table, both of us would – that has occurred; it would reveal where we had common ground, where we had areas of agreement, where we had areas of disagreement, and begin to shape a negotiation process that we understood was going to take more than our time in Baghdad.

So that's where we are tonight. It's been a long day with lots of discussion.

A couple of other points I want to make generally. The Iraqis have been terrific hosts. The facility is great. They have been great hosts in terms of being available but not interposing themselves in the middle of the negotiation. They do have relationships that are useful, and we appreciate any information they brought to us, but they haven't gotten in the middle. They've passed information and then sort of went back into their roles as Iraqi Government officials. They've been terrific hosts, and the facilities and the structure for the meeting have worked extremely well. So we are very grateful to Iraq for hosting this, even given the difficult logistics which you all are quite well aware of – those of you who came in to Baghdad for this.

And I also want to make mention of Ambassador Jeffrey, who is here, and all the people here at post, all of the people in Amman who worked amazingly to put together all of the logistics for us to come in, for you to come in – those of you who are not based here – and to make these talks happen. It's really been quite extraordinary to have this many people from this many countries all arrive here, and it worked like clockwork. Everything that was supposed to happen happened in the way it should have happened, so kudos to you, Ambassador, and kudos to your whole team.

So let me stop there, and I'm happy to take questions. I probably won't give you answers you want. (Laughter.)

QUESTION: Is the core of this that the Iranians pushed hard on you all to give ground on the sanctions, and you couldn't do that?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I wouldn't put it that way. What I would say is, as you all have read in the paper, the first arena of confidence-building measures is aspects of 20 percent enrichment. And we have ideas about what are appropriate reciprocal steps. They have ideas about what are appropriate reciprocal steps. There are other things they want to discuss. There are other things we want to discuss. And we've sort of laid all that out on the table, and now we're into trying to find the pathway forward.

MODERATOR: Go ahead.

QUESTION: Thanks. Is there a risk, do you think, that this process won't continue? I mean, there are indications from the Iraqis – perhaps just spin – that there isn't enough to go on to schedule further talks.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I believe there is plenty to go on. I think that we have to come to an agreement for the basis for those continued conversations. We're working to do that. I think it's important that the talks went as late as they did tonight. I think it's important that Iran was ready to schedule the meeting quite early tomorrow morning to really reflect on this.

MODERATOR: Okay. Go ahead, Steve.

QUESTION: You had suggested that you might lay out for us part of the reciprocal benefits for the Iranians that went along with the proposals. I presume, as in any negotiation (inaudible) make an offer and they don't like it, you have a backup offer in your mind about what else you can do to win the day. Could you go through --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I can't tonight, Steve. I might be able to do that later tomorrow, but I can't do that tonight because we just have too much still in play.

QUESTION: Okay. But can you give us an idea of – I mean, clearly they want (inaudible) more. They say they want more. I mean, Iranian media was quite explicit tonight about saying they thought the proposal was unbalanced. Have you all (inaudible) discussed what more might be?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I would've expected nothing but the Iranians to say that the package was unbalanced. I would've expected nothing more than the – I would've expected always the Iranians to say they wanted something other than what we put on the table. This is a negotiation. We each want to get the most and give the least. That's how negotiations begin, and we are just at the beginning.

QUESTION: I mean, presumably – just one last follow-up. I mean, usually when you offer a price for something and they say no, you have another price in mind. Is there agreement on this --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, we also have ideas that they've put on the table of what they think should be the reciprocal measures, and so we're now in a back and forth.

MODERATOR: Lauren (ph).

QUESTION: Thanks. You mentioned the 20 percent level. If 20 percent is not at all acceptable to the P-5, as I understand it's not to be, what level of enriched uranium (inaudible) might be acceptable? And why is it that sanctions are not being discussed by the world powers?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We have said that we believe that ultimately we would have to get to full compliance of the UN Security Council resolutions, which is actually a suspension of Iran's right to enrichment until they, in fact, fully comply with those Security Council resolutions. So we believe that they have to address all of their enrichment processes to be in compliance with those Security Council resolutions.

QUESTION: So that would be zero percent, correct?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: It is both of the 20 percent and the 3.5 percent, yes, ultimately. But this is a long path.

QUESTION: But how does that square with the NPT, then?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: There's a misunderstanding about the NPT, and I'd be glad to have some of my colleagues here who are more expert than I am, but Article IV of the NPT acknowledges the right of states to have a peaceful or civil nuclear program, but it is silent on enrichment. It neither gives states the right to enrich nor denies them the right to enrich. So you can have a peaceful civil nuclear program but not enrich, and plenty of countries do have civil nuclear programs but not – do not do enrichment of fuel in their country. So the issue of enrichment, in our view, is premature because we haven't even started down the road to the confidence-building measures that are under discussion.

QUESTION: And what about sanctions? This seems to be, as we've discussed, the one thing that the Iranians really wanted to see come out of these talks. And what they have told us is that they have not been put on the table by the P-5.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: It is not accurate to say that no sanctions measures have been put on the table. That's not accurate.

QUESTION: Can you describe what has been put on the table?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No. Not tonight.

QUESTION: Or what is accurate?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Hmm?

QUESTION: Or what is accurate?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: What is accurate is that we have tried to be responsive in a way that we think is appropriate to the measures that we're asking of them. They may not agree with that. I'm sure they do not. They, in fact, do not agree with that, and that's subject to a negotiation.

MODERATOR: Liz (ph).

QUESTION: There have a number of reports quoting today the Iranians as saying they wanted other international issues also to be discussed at these talks, and I wondered if any particular thing – what other international issues there are, and if they'd raised Syria and whether you would put Syria on the table at these talks.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We – over the years in these P-5+1 negotiations, we’ve said the central issue is their nuclear program, but there might be opportunities to discuss other issues as well. Those other issues are subject to agreement about what we get on the agenda. We think that the primary, the secondary, and the tertiary priority ought to be their nuclear program, and that is what we are focused on. So at this meeting today, other issues have not been under discussion.

QUESTION: Did they ask to put Syria on the agenda?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: They have asked to put several things on the agenda, and I’m not going to say anything further tonight. But there’s nothing that – there is nothing on the agenda for discussion at this meeting.

MODERATOR: Natalie (ph).

QUESTION: You mentioned that you were hoping to be able to engage in further discussions, meaning, I suppose, setting the date or deciding – announcing that there will be another meeting, not just tomorrow morning’s but another (inaudible) meeting. And you said that the main – at the top of the list in confidence-building measures is the 20 percent. Does that mean that if tomorrow you announce that there is another meeting, it will mean that you have obtained a gesture from the Iranians on the 20 percent? Is that a condition to set – to announce the next meeting?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: What we are looking for is: Are we agreed on an agenda for negotiations? And because we’ve agreed on agenda for negotiations, even though we may disagree about the shape of that agenda, that there is enough of a basis for experts or political directors to continue discussions, because we think there is traction and there is, in fact, the beginning of a negotiation. I believe we have the beginning of a negotiation, because we have gotten to very detailed, very complex discussions today. It’s been a very hard day. That’s actually a good sign, because if it was an easy day, it would mean we hadn’t really engaged. We have really engaged. But we still have not come to closure, which we hope to do in the plenary tomorrow morning, about what are the next appropriate steps. So I’ll have more to say tomorrow.

QUESTION: You didn’t really answer my question. I mean, is it possible that a next meeting could be announced without having a specific commitment from the Iranians that they will do something about the 20 percent, whatever the --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think we – to have another meeting, we have to have an agenda for that meeting.

MODERATOR: James (ph).

QUESTION: Have the Iranians engaged at all on the issue of exporting part of the existing stock of 20 percent today?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We have talked about all aspects of 20 percent.

QUESTION: And if you look at the various aspects – exporting the stock, freezing current program, making a commitment not to expand (inaudible), which of those three can you say is the area where they are more engaged?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I’m not going to go into those details.

QUESTION: And did you find today harder than you had expected?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, I did not find it harder than I expected. I expected today would be very hard if we actually engaged. If we didn’t engage, it was going to be easy, but it wasn’t going to go anywhere. So it has been a difficult day, but I take that as a good sign, not a bad one, because it means we have engaged with each other. We have actually discussed difficult issues.

MODERATOR: We'll go to Peter (ph) and then back over to Lauren (ph).

QUESTION: Is this an area now where July 1st and the unilateral EU oil sanctions are beginning to play a role? I mean, and are we going to see possibly a June meeting with an added level of pressure in that sense?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, I think the -- as I said the other night, for those of you who were there -- was that just last night? (Laughter.) My God.

QUESTION: It was this morning.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Was it this morning? (Laughter.) Oh, my God. Jeez, time flies when you're having so much fun.

I think that -- what was your question again? (Laughter.)

QUESTION: July 1st.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: July 1st. What I said is July 1st has always been a part of this negotiation, no question about it. July 1st and June 28th in terms of U.S. sanctions are clearly putting pressure on Iran. Everyone should remember we have a dual-track policy. That dual-track policy is both engagement and pressure simultaneously in hopes that we actually get on a path of engagement that produces a result, and then the pressure after there are results, that pressure can be adapted.

QUESTION: But is there also a danger of this being a double-edged sword? I mean, if those sanctions kick in, what happens to their motivation to make a deal?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, they aren't the last sanctions that could be put in place. As we've seen, the United States Senate has a few more ideas. So we aren't at the end of the road on sanctions. It's not as if -- it may feel that way, but we are not at the end of the road. No one enjoys sanctioning countries and the impact it has sometimes on the people in those countries, and quite frankly, on many of our partners around the world who have made significant reductions in oil at some risk to themselves and their own energy needs.

So this is -- this policy is a tough one because we have such grave concerns about the intentions of Iran and wanting to understand what the real basis of their nuclear program is.

MODERATOR: Okay. Laura (ph) then Scott (ph).

QUESTION: If Americans end up in another war in the Middle East because the P-5+1 wasn't willing to tell them what it had to do to avert EU (inaudible) sanctions, what are you going to tell people, that you all --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Laura --

QUESTION: -- that you all wanted to do a talk negotiation and --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Laura, we are not so cavalier.

QUESTION: Not so what?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We are not so cavalier.

QUESTION: I know, but --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: For heaven's sakes, if we --

QUESTION: I know, but you basically – you all have – and so forgive me, but I think the P-5+1 has been very coy with Iran about signaling --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I don't think --

QUESTION: -- about that these sanctions and --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, I don't think we've been coy.

QUESTION: And you've been fairly clear that there's nothing they can do --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: That's not true, Lauren (ph).

QUESTION: -- to stop it.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: That is not true. That is not true at all.

QUESTION: Well, what is it – okay, all right.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We have not --

QUESTION: (Inaudible) to stop it?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We have not been cavalier. We have been very straightforward. We have been very direct. The pathway is very clear what they need to do to be in compliance, to get good, to have the suspension lifted. There's no mystery here, and we have suggested confidence-building measures that would begin to give them immediate relief – not of all the things they want all at once, but in a step-by-step process with reciprocity, which is a set of principles that we have agreed with them on.

There is nobody in the P-5+1, including Cathy Ashton as the person who coordinates this effort, that does not understand the enormous pressure and the enormous stakes that are present for each one of us, for our countries, and for the world. And every single day in every way that we work on this, it is front of mind.

QUESTION: And when Cathy Ashton at the Istanbul meeting, at her press conference, started it by listing the three principles everyone agreed on with the NPT, there was a kind of wink, nod to Iran that eventually, there (inaudible) into compliance, their 3.5 enrichment program would be (inaudible).

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: There was --

QUESTION: You can say that, but I'm telling you that was a signal that was deliberately set for them there and (inaudible).

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I don't think she would agree with you on that. I don't think she would agree with you on that at all. And as I said --

QUESTION: But I mean the Iranians – it's not just Iranians listening to Americans. The Iranian – how can they understand when you all say (inaudible)?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Laura (ph), I don't agree with that at all. I think we've been crystal clear. And I think the Iranians know what they need to do, and they know what they need to do to get the relief that they want.

QUESTION: Can I follow up on that? Isn't that --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Sure.

QUESTION: -- kind of a my way or the highway kind of negotiating here? I mean --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No.

QUESTION: -- the point of these were to negotiate and to --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Of course.

QUESTION: -- entertain both sides --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Of course.

QUESTION: -- and if the Iranians --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Ah, but wait. There's a very important point here. We're not talking about two parties who have done bad and they need -- each need to get good. The international community hasn't done something wrong here. We haven't created a suspicious nuclear weapons program that the world doesn't know the answers to. Iran has. They are the party here who has acted in a way to bring about the most difficult, tough sanctions regime in a long time that is fully internationalized and being observed by virtually the entire world. So they are the party who has acted to create concerns in the international community.

And what we are trying to do is say to them, answer the concerns of the international community. If you can't answer the concerns, the international community is going to act because we want to preserve world stability and world peace. And if you will respond to the concerns of the international community, then we will respond accordingly. But we are not talking about two actors who are equivalents here. We are not two parties who have done wrong. There is one party here that has raised the concerns of the international community.

So you shouldn't write this about -- as if there's equivalency here; there is not.

MODERATOR: Zack (ph), you had a question?

QUESTION: Yeah. Do you think it's realistic at this stage, the fact that this program has been with us now for 10 years, the fact that the signals that we've seen from the Iranians and actually -- I mean, also the progress -- I mean the technical progress and also the expansion of the programs that they've had, that after all these years and the place of it right now, do you think it's realistic to expect, under practically any circumstances, that Iran will comply with those UN Security Council resolutions which require a cessation of all enrichment entirely? I mean, is that really (inaudible)?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: What we have asked Iran is to begin with confidence-building measures. We appreciate that trying to go to the end of the road at the beginning is hard, is very, very, difficult. And we also believe that if we try to negotiate the end of the road, we would spend months negotiating that road and they would march on with their nuclear program. So for two reasons, one because it's very difficult and we want to help them to get some initial relief earlier for taking concrete, confidence-building measures, and we also want to move the clock to the right so that there is time and space to negotiate a more comprehensive solution, that we are moving in the step-by-step process. It's good for them, it's good for us, it's good for the world.

QUESTION: If they've made it so clear that a redline for them is stopping enrichment entirely, and this has been a consistent line for a very, very long time -- we're not talking about the 20 percent which they've been discussing since September that could be on the table; there are a lot of other permutations -- but to actually stop altogether in terms of also providing a face-saving way for them too to be able to actually come to a final deal -- the one that you want, the one

that they want – is it not possible that there's a way that Iran would be able to continue enrichment at that level in some way without having to come to that conclusion?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I would say it's premature to have that discussion. It's having the discussion about the end of the road before you've taken the first step on the road, so it's premature in our view. The President has been very clear. He has accepted the right of Iran to have a peaceful nuclear program if they meet the concerns of the international community. He's been very forthright about that. He has been forthright about saying that diplomacy is the preferred way to proceed. But he's also been clear that it is – the time for that diplomacy is not indefinite. So we are trying to move as quickly as we can to help Iran to meet those concerns, to begin to get some relief, to take confidence-building steps, to move the clock to the right so that there is time to deal with this in a more comprehensive fashion.

QUESTION: And just – the last question is about the expectations that the Iranians had about the sanctions being a critical element, because what they see, or at least what they've told us, is that they are being asked to give up their primary cards while, on the other side, what they expect to be a simultaneous and a mutual – at least in terms of weight and value.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: That's what a negotiation is about.

MODERATOR: Andy, did you have – yeah.

QUESTION: A quick couple – quick little processing questions about today. Did either side bring up the IAEA or the proposed IAEA deal, and if so, in what context? And you didn't – apparently didn't have a bilateral. Was that --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No.

QUESTION: -- suggested by either side? And why not?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I'll do the bilateral first, which I said to many of you the other day. I don't expect to have a bilateral with the Iranian. The United States hasn't had a relationship with Iran for over 30 years. It is very complex for Iran domestically to meet with us. And in my view, the message – the endpoint is much more important than the modality. And would I have liked to meet with Iran? Sure, one on one, of course, or in my delegation, in their delegation, of course. It would be interesting, it would be fascinating, and I think it would be helpful, quite frankly. But I also appreciate why that's not likely to happen anytime soon.

And again, there are many ways to do this. I'm able in our plenary sessions to say whatever I need to say, and I spoke for quite a long time this morning, so I'm not concerned about the modality. I really want to get to the answers here that we're all looking for, however we can get there.

And your first question was?

QUESTION: The IAEA.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Yes, of course. The IAEA comes up in every discussion we have. But we are very clear that although we appreciate what the IAEA is doing, we hope that Amano and Iran come to an agreement that would be good for all of us. These are two separate processes, both important but are addressing somewhat different things, at least in the first instance.

And I would also say, as I said to you all this morning or last night, whenever we met last, if Amano gets an agreement, it's an agreement on modalities. It's not yet steps. It's an agreement on documents; it's agreement on having interviews with personnel; it's an agreement on having access to sites and a variety of other things. But it's an agreement on a process for cooperation. It isn't the actual cooperation yet. So there's still a long way to go on that.

QUESTION: I guess my question was: Did the Iranians bring out, as some had predicted, this supposed agreement as evidence of their willingness to cooperate on a broader set of issues?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: They always talk about how well they are cooperating with the IAEA.

MODERATOR: Steve, (inaudible) and then we're going to start wrapping up and that's it.

QUESTION: Just to follow up --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Remember I have an 8:30.

MODERATOR: We might still be here. (Laughter.)

QUESTION: Us, too.

QUESTION: Just to follow up very, very quickly, did the Amano trip and the Tuesday discussion complicate your (inaudible)?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I don't think so, Steve.

QUESTION: I mean, did Jalili use that as a basis of saying now there's sanctions because after all --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Actually, not really. They always talk about how well they are cooperating with the IAEA. It is a -- we've heard it many times now. So now they just have another day to point -- to talk about how well they're cooperating with the IAEA.

MODERATOR: Finally, we'll come to Jay (ph). And again, if somebody hasn't asked a question, we'll give them a chance, but otherwise we really want to try to wrap this up, in fairness to [Senior Administration Official] and in fairness to you.

QUESTION: You mentioned that time is a critical factor. I think Cathy Ashton said it was simply that time is of the essence.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Yes.

QUESTION: What is the timeframe that you have to really get into the substance? I mean, you agreed in Istanbul to have talks. You are agreeing to an agenda for the next round of talks. So there's going to be a next round of talks, and it's going to drag on, drag on, drag on? What is the time limit? Or when do you expect to see concrete concessions from the Iranians?

And the other question would be, when it comes to reciprocity, might it be that the P-5+1 is offering things to Iran that Iran is not really in need of or desiring?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, that's part of what happens in a negotiation. We think about what we think will matter to Iran, and then we find out what does and what doesn't. They tell us things and they find out what will work with us and what won't. I mean, that is what a negotiation's about. It's testing each other out, seeing where the parameters are, and trying to find a place where you can come to an agreement. And each side has its redlines and each side has the places it can't go or won't go, but you hope to find a place that gets you to a solution.

And remember, the solution here is to get answers about Iran's nuclear program and to make sure that it does not have military dimensions and that they aren't going to end up being a new nuclear power in the world, a military nuclear power. That's what we're trying to do here. And that is always front of mind. So it's not just the negotiation *qua* negotiation; it's for a purpose. It's to an objective. And so we are urgent about it because every day we don't figure this out is a day they keep going forward on their nuclear program. And there are all kinds of assessments about how long it

will take them to get there. As the President said, we think we still have some time for diplomacy, but it's not indefinite. And beyond saying that, I'm sure it will come as no surprise to you I'm not going to give you a timetable.

MODERATOR: Jay.

QUESTION: Just on the IAEA again, you said you see (inaudible) different tracks. But are you concerned at all if the P-5+1 process kind of stalls that this agreement that was kind of left hanging could fall apart? I mean, it seems like you're describing two tracks, but they're totally related.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, we understand that sometimes they have some impacts on each other. I get that. I think, though, that they have had discussions in the IAEA track. They seem to be making some progress. That's a good thing. I hope our process makes progress. That's a good thing. And the two together would make a substantial difference.

MODERATOR: Simon.

QUESTION: How soon do you want the next meeting to take place?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, I said when I met with those of you I did – yesterday or today or whenever it was – that one of the things that we would want to see out of this is that the pace of those talks would pick up; it wouldn't be every five weeks. It might be experts talks, it might be bilateral talks, it might be full P-5+1 talks, it might – again, there are a lot of different modalities that can be engaged here to make progress, but we would want to pick up the pace. And so we'll see whether we get to do that before this is over.

QUESTION: The question of Iran implementing the Additional Protocol (inaudible) NPT (inaudible), is that an issue for you or is that more on the IAEA track?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The Additional Protocol can be part of both of these tracks for different reasons.

QUESTION: And how important (inaudible) process?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: It is an important element to both of us, and beyond that, I can't see.

MODERATOR: Okay. Let's close it out with Natalie (ph) and --

QUESTION: Okay. Just – you said that sanction measures have been put on the table by the 5+1, so there's – there has been – there's (inaudible) in the confidence-building package, an element to do with sanctions, really --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Yes.

QUESTION: -- I would presume. Now this means you're ready to give the Iranian – you've indicated that you're ready to give the Iranians something which is very concrete.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Yes.

QUESTION: What have the Iranians indicated that they would be willing to give you that's very concrete?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well --

QUESTION: More precisely, because I guess you're – I anticipate you're not going to want to get into details, but have the Iranians in the talks today indicated at any moment that they would indeed be ready to put something on the table that would be concrete for you, like to give you something?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think that is it fair to say we would not have been talking all day, we would not be having talks at 8:30 tomorrow morning, if we did not have some concrete conversations from both sides.

MODERATOR: Good. And I think with that, we'd like to wrap it up. Again, just a reminder, this was on background as a Senior Administration Official. If there's press folks, you can just stay behind just for a moment so we can talk a little bit logistics. We don't anticipate tomorrow will be as long as today, but one never knows, right?

So thank you again, very much for your patience.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Thank you. Thank you all very much.

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