

From: H <hdr22@clintonemail.com> on behalf of H
Sent: Tuesday, January 27, 2009 5:02 AM
To: Jake Sullivan
Cc: jim.steinberg [redacted] burnswj@state.gov; Mills, Cheryl D
Subject: Re: Ambassador Rice's comments on Iran

RELEASE IN PART
B5, B6

B6

Pls advise as to how we should handle. [redacted]
[redacted] Also ask Jeff Feltman for his advice.

B5

From: Jake Sullivan
Date: Mon, 26 Jan 2009 23:00:35 -0500
To: hr15@att.blackberry.net<hr15@a tt.blackberry.net>
Subject: Ambassador Rice's comments on Iran

In case you haven't seen, below is the AP readout of Susan Rice's comments on Iran earlier today, in which she stated that the U.S. would engage in "direct diplomacy" with Iran. Here is the key excerpt and the entire article follows:

Rice said the U.S. remains "deeply concerned about the threat that Iran's nuclear program poses to the region, indeed to the United States and the entire international community."

"We look forward to engaging in vigorous diplomacy that includes direct diplomacy with Iran, as well as continued collaboration and partnership" with the other four permanent members of the Security Council — Britain, China, France and Russia — plus Germany, Rice said.

"And we will look at what is necessary and appropriate with respect to maintaining pressure toward that goal of ending Iran's nuclear program," she said.

US envoy predicts 'direct diplomacy' with Iran

By JOHN HEILPRIN – 8 hours ago

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — President Barack Obama's administration will engage in "direct diplomacy" with Iran, the newly installed U.S. ambassador to the United Nations said Monday.

Not since before the 1979 Iranian revolution are U.S. officials believed to have conducted wide-ranging direct diplomacy with Iranian officials. But U.S. Ambassador Susan Rice warned that Iran must meet U.N. Security Council demands to suspend uranium enrichment before any talks on its nuclear program.

"The dialogue and diplomacy must go hand in hand with a very firm message from the United States and the international community that Iran needs to meet its obligations as defined by the Security Council. And its continuing refusal to do so will only cause pressure to increase," she told reporters during a brief question-and-answer session.

Her comments, reflecting Obama's signals for improved relations with America's foes after eight years under President George W. Bush, came shortly after meeting with Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on her first day in her new job.

Iran still considers the U.S. the "Great Satan," but a day after Obama was sworn in, said it was "ready for new approaches by the United States." Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki said his country would study the idea of allowing the U.S. to open a diplomatic office in Tehran, the first since 1979.

Rice said the U.S. remains "deeply concerned about the threat that Iran's nuclear program poses to the region, indeed to the United States and the entire international community."

"We look forward to engaging in vigorous diplomacy that includes direct diplomacy with Iran, as well as continued collaboration and partnership" with the other four permanent members of the Security Council — Britain, China, France and Russia — plus Germany, Rice said.

"And we will look at what is necessary and appropriate with respect to maintaining pressure toward that goal of ending Iran's nuclear program," she said.

In recent years, Iranian and American officials have negotiated in the same room on talks about Afghanistan that involved other countries' diplomats. They also talked face to face in Baghdad but the agenda was limited to Iraqi security.

But the differences between Washington and Tehran run deep. They include U.S. suspicions about Iran's nuclear program, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's threats to annihilate Israel, and Tehran's support for Hamas.

Rice met with Ban in the morning to present her credentials. She said they spent 45 minutes discussing climate change, poverty reduction, U.N. peacekeeping, nonproliferation, Sudan and the Middle East.

She told reporters that "putting the United States at the center of international efforts to support poverty reduction, development, fighting disease and achieving the (U.N.) Millennium Development Goals, which President Obama has said repeatedly, will now be America's goals as well."

Rice said the U.S. will address the Gaza conflict on Tuesday in the Security Council, seeking ways "to support efforts to ensure that that cease-fire is lasting, and in that context for border crossings to open and be available for humanitarian as well as day-to-day economic development imperatives."

Rice, who was a key Africa adviser to the Clinton administration during the 1994 Rwandan genocide, also said the Obama administration remains "very deeply concerned about the ongoing genocide in Darfur."

"The priority at this point has to be effective protection for civilians," she said, adding that she had discussed ways to fully deploy the U.N. peacekeeping mission in Darfur "so that there is the capacity on the ground to begin to effect that civilian protection."

In Washington, Obama's top spokesman said that Rice was merely restating the president's policy on Iran.

Asked about Rice's comments to reporters at U.N. headquarters in New York, Robert Gibbs, the White House press secretary, that what Rice did "was simply to restate the message" that the administration is "going to use all elements of our national power" to address concerns about Iran's nuclear program.

NATO's secretary-general, Japp de Hoop Scheffer, also said Monday that NATO must engage with Iran to secure regional support for the escalating war in neighboring Afghanistan.

The surprise call from the head of the Western alliance comes as the new U.S. administration prepares to send 30,000 more troops into Afghanistan, where Taliban militants are regrouping and violence is on the rise. They will reinforce the 62,000-strong NATO and U.S. force already operating there.

"We need a discussion that brings in all the relevant players: Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, China, Russia — and yes, Iran. We need a pragmatic approach to solve this very real challenge," de Hoop Scheffer said in a speech to the Security and Defense Agenda, a Brussels-based think tank.

Until now, the United States has sought to isolate the clerical regime in Iran from meddling in Afghanistan, although the Shiite nation has a long history of opposing Taliban rule there. De Hoop Scheffer said what's required is a broader approach that includes all of Afghanistan's neighbors, but he was "not sure at this stage" how to constructively bring Iran into Afghanistan diplomacy.