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**Subject:** Under Secretary Sherman's Briefing for the Diplomatic Corps on ISIL and Iran

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RELEASE IN PART B6

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**Subject:** Under Secretary Sherman's Briefing for the Diplomatic Corps on ISIL and Iran

1. (SBU) Summary: Under Secretary for Political Affairs Wendy Sherman briefed the diplomatic corps September 12 on priorities ahead of the 69th UN General Assembly. The Under Secretary explained our approach to two primary issues: efforts to degrade and destroy ISIL, and the efforts of the E3+3 (also referred to as the P5+1) to ensure that Iran does not acquire a nuclear weapon. The Under Secretary emphasized the importance of international cooperation and unity in the fight against ISIL. On Iran, she encouraged countries to urge Iran to seize the opportunity to resolve the international community's concerns about its nuclear program and to convey to Iran that it will not get sanctions relief unless it reduces its uranium enrichment capacity. Please see paragraphs 4 and 10 for ways that posts can support these efforts. End Summary.

**REVIEW AUTHORITY:** Sharon Ahmad, Senior Reviewer

ISIL

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2. (SBU) The Under Secretary explained our approach to degrading and destroying ISIL and emphasized the need for international unity (Ref A), which will be a major focus of the upcoming UN General Assembly. Many of the ambassadors present at the briefing asked about how their governments

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could assist our efforts against ISIL. They also tied the fight against ISIL to their own efforts to address terrorist organizations in their own regions such as Boko Haram and Al Qa'eda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) or narco-traffickers in Latin America and the Caribbean, and sought greater cooperation with the United States.

3. (SBU) The Under Secretary emphasized that counter-terrorism requires a worldwide effort as terrorism could affect all of us. Many of the threats are regional in nature, and require a coordinated approach amongst governments. She urged all states to think about what they could do to help counter ISIL. Each state has different capabilities, but there is much that all can do to improve security, share information, cut off financing, curb recruitment, furnish humanitarian aid to victims, and expose the lies that ISIL and other terrorists spread to attract support for their evil cause. She also urged countries to be watchful as foreign fighters who have joined ISIL return home and noted the President's plan to chair a Security Council session on foreign fighters.

4. (SBU) Posts are encouraged to provide to country desks and the Coalition Support Working Group ideas on how their host country governments can contribute to efforts against ISIL as outlined in reftel.

#### IRAN NUCLEAR NEGOTIATIONS

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5. (SBU) As we approach the UN General Assembly, we have stepped up our outreach to other countries on Iran's nuclear program. The Under Secretary noted that we are urging countries to convey messages urging Iran to seize this opportunity and to understand that it must reduce its current uranium enrichment activities if it wants to reach a deal and obtain sanctions relief.

6. (SBU) Enrichment remains one of the core issues on which the E3+3 and Iran are furthest apart. Iran would like the world to think that it should be able to maintain its current enrichment activities. Iran must understand that the status quo is not acceptable. As we approach the UN General Assembly, we are emphasizing that this negotiation offers Iran's leaders an opportunity to demonstrate with verifiable actions that its nuclear program is exclusively peaceful. Iran must understand that we will agree to suspend and then lift sanctions only if Iran is willing to reduce its enrichment activities and take verifiable steps to demonstrate convincingly that its nuclear program is and will remain wholly peaceful.

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7. (SBU) We are also emphasizing that the E3+3 and the EU has remained united in its approach to Iran throughout the negotiations, in spite of our differences on other issues. The E3+3 has demonstrated creativity and flexibility in the negotiations, while also being fair and fully respectful of Iran's civilian nuclear needs and scientific knowhow. We have also offered Iran the promise of comprehensive nuclear-related sanctions relief, with all the benefits to Iran's challenged economy that would result. Iran needs to demonstrate similar creativity and flexibility.

8. (SBU) A successful outcome to this negotiation would make a major contribution to Middle East security. If Iran were to acquire a nuclear weapon, it would be able to threaten others in the region, possibly spark a new and extremely dangerous arms race, and further exacerbate sectarian tensions. A peaceful resolution of the issue is greatly preferred because it would provide more assurance of long-term success and carry with it fewer unpredictable consequences and risks.

9. (SBU) We are also asking other countries to raise the issue of U.S. citizens missing and detained in Iran. Robert Levinson went missing in Iran more than seven years ago. Amir Hekmati has been in jail there for more than three years, wrongly accused of being a spy. Saeed Abedini has spent more than two years in prison simply for following his religious beliefs. And most recently, Iran detained Washington Post reporter Jason Rezaian.

10. (SBU) Please alert the Office of Iranian Affairs if you learn that host country officials may meet with Iranian officials at the UN General Assembly. Please email the Iran Office at [redacted] or [redacted]  
[redacted]

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11. (U) Minimize Considered

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