**Who Didn't Walk Out on Iranian President Ahmadinejad's U.N. Speech and Why?**

May 04, 2010

Fox News

Original Source:

*http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,592103,00.html*

*This is a rush transcript from "On the Record," May 3, 2010. This copy may not be in its final form and may be updated.*

GRETA VAN SUSTEREN, FOX NEWS HOST: So who just sat there? Who decided to listen to the Iranian president rant at the United Nations? President Ahmadinejad spoke about Iran's nuclear program at the U.N. today. And by our count, at least nine nations walked out in protest. The United States, France, Britain, Germany, New Zealand, Ireland, Finland, the Netherlands and the Czech Republic all hitting the road during the speech. But who stayed and why?

Former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations John Bolton joins us live. Good evening, Ambassador. Everyone's talking about who's leaving. Who stayed?

JOHN BOLTON, FORMER U.S. AMBASSADOR TO THE U.N.: Well, there are 192 members of the United Nations...

VAN SUSTEREN: I won't make you (INAUDIBLE)

BOLTON: ... so it was pretty much everybody else. And I think that shows what moral equivalence really is, that somebody like Ahmadinejad can come to the United Nations, a denier of the Holocaust, a man leading a government violating multiple Security Council resolutions, and he not only gets a respectful but a warm greeting from, basically, the states party to the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. That -- that's not something that -- that doesn't tell you something about Ahmadinejad, that tells you something about the way the U.N. works.

VAN SUSTEREN: When you think of the small percentage of people who walked out, which, essentially, the balance sort of, I think, endorsed him, and the whole point is -- of this whole meeting was to talk about the -- about the treaty and whether it should be revised or amended, and it seems they -- they were quite willing to embrace him.

BOLTON: Yes. That -- that is because in the U.N. system, everybody is equal. It's, in fact, called sovereign equality. And because moral equivalence says you don't want to single anybody out, with a few exceptions -- the United States and Israel. So this is how the system works. This is why Iran was just elected to the Commission on the Status for Women, a truly unbelievable outcome in the real world, but perfectly normal, business as usual in the U.N. system.

VAN SUSTEREN: President Ahmadinejad is the only head of state who's at this meeting, this NPT meeting?

BOLTON: Right, very -- and very unusual, I might say. I think it shows he wanted to make a special effort to divert attention from Iran, and to do that by focusing on Israel's nuclear capability and on the alleged sins of the United States.

Now, you know, most of us in the United States, when we hear Ahmadinejad speak, we think this guy isn't converting anybody. But I would say, on balance, that speech was more temperate than one usually expects from him, and I think he did pick up some support today.

VAN SUSTEREN: Well, the interesting thing is that while China and Russia stayed inside -- they sat there -- is that someplace else in the building, presumably, there's some negotiating going on about whether or not to impose some sanctions on Iran. And I'm trying to think sort of what kind of signal that sends if they're willing to sit there.

BOLTON: Well, Iran knows exactly what the text or the current draft of that sanctions resolution is because the Russians and Chinese are telling them on any given day. And I thought part of what was interesting in reading Ahmadinejad today was how confident he looked. He knows these sanctions have already been watered down considerably. He knows the final outcome will not be much of a constraint on Iran. He was feeling pretty good today, I think.

VAN SUSTEREN: Why did he come? I mean, if he's already got -- if in his view, he already has China and Russia, why did he come?

BOLTON: Well, I think he wanted to build up support among the other countries. I think he could say, Look, I'm demonstrating how important this is to me. I don't doubt there was some domestic Iranian politics involved. And it's not a bad stage to go on, in front of that iconic podium there at the U.N. General Assembly. So all in all, I think Ahmadinejad saw it as a plus for him, as well as for his policy.

VAN SUSTEREN: Now, obviously, I know you're part of the other administration. I'm not trying to give you a gimme, but -- so step out and just be a sort of professor for me. What is our current strategy with Iran?

BOLTON: We don't have a strategy on Iran. It was very...

VAN SUSTEREN: Well, if I asked the president today, what (INAUDIBLE) if the president were here now, what would he say our strategy is?

BOLTON: He'd say, We're building a consensus to isolate Iran. Well, that's very interesting. Iran has already been isolated on four separate Security Council resolutions, three sets of sanctions.

VAN SUSTEREN: They haven't worked.

BOLTON: They couldn't care less about being isolated. Consider which country is more isolated and more economically deprive, North Korea or Iran. Who has nuclear weapons already? North Korea. This hasn't worked on North Korea. It has not worked on Iran. It's not going to work. You can have all the international solidarity you want, but Iran is close to the finish line, after 20 years of effort, of getting a nuclear weapon. That's why I think the Obama administration's real policy is to accept Iran with nuclear weapons and hope it can be contained and deterred.

VAN SUSTEREN: You know, Secretary of State Clinton had rather strong words. I mean, she -- I mean, she seems almost more hawkish, but I -- you know, in this. I don't know if her hands are tied or if she -- or if she really doesn't -- or if she thinks sanctions will work.

BOLTON: But if I may say, the hawkish rhetoric is cover for inaction. Nobody should draw any comfort from tough words because the words don't affect Ahmadinejad. The only thing that would affect him is constraining Iran's nuclear weapons program, and words don't do a thing on that score.

VAN SUSTEREN: Well, I guess I would have been more optimistic that we might be headed a little bit in the right direction if I had seen -- I guess it's unrealistic to expect Russia and China to walk out, but without Russia and China on board, you know, the whole concept is almost absurd.

BOLTON: No, and Iran understands that. That's why Secretary Clinton said today, You know, we've had trouble getting these sanctions. We need automatic penalties when the nonproliferation treaty is violated.

VAN SUSTEREN: But if there -- but if someone's cheating and leaking, it doesn't matter.

BOLTON: Automatic by whom? There's nothing in the entire world history of multilateral organizations that's automatic. So when she says something like that that's designed to show she tough, that's not statesmanship, that's political rhetoric!

VAN SUSTEREN: I wouldn't want under my watch that Iran becomes a nuclear weapons state.

BOLTON: Well, it's going to happen, and it's going to happen fairly soon.

VAN SUSTEREN: (INAUDIBLE) under my watch (INAUDIBLE) president. I said under my watch. Anyway, Ambassador, thank you, sir.

BOLTON: Thank you.