

Excerpts of exchange between U.S. Rep. Chris Smith (NJ-04) and U.S. Ambassador Stephen D. Mull, Lead Coordinator for Iran Nuclear Implementation during a hearing of the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee Feb. 11, 2016

Rep. Chris Smith:

....Could you tell us exactly where has Iran's enriched uranium been shipped? Who watches it? Who guards it? And is there any potential or concern that it could be clandestinely returned to Iran, and of course – I've raised this with Secretary Kerry in the past – are there concerns that North Korea could be providing such material to Iran in a clandestine way.

Ambassador Stephen Mull:

In terms of other covert support, because there is full time IAEA monitoring of the entire Fuel cycle within Iran, it is impossible to introduce elements into that system without being detected by the system, the IAEA. That applies to whether North Korea supplies the material or any... anyone. The material that Iran shipped out, the 25,000 lbs. of nuclear, enriched nuclear material, Russia took that under its control. We obviously have many differences under many years with Russia, but one of the features of our relationship is pretty close cooperation on protection of nuclear material. We do not have concerns that that material... We do not have concerns that that material...

Rep. Smith: Do we have any on-sight accountability ourselves. Can we go and verify ourselves? Or...

Amb. Mull: We cannot

Rep. Smith: We cannot. Who does?

Amb. Mull: Well, uh... we... I mean Russia has tons of nuclear material. It has for many years. Russia is responsible for maintaining access to control.

Rep. Smith: What town is it actually being...Where is the repository for it?

Amb. Mull: I'm sorry?

Rep. Smith: Where has it been put?

Amb. Mull: I don't... It's not been fully ... according to our information, it has not yet been decided where exactly Russia will put this information.

Rep. Smith: If it's been shipped out it must have gone somewhere? It's not on...

Amb. Mull: It's still in the process of having been delivered in its entirety.

Rep. Smith: So it's not all shipped out yet?

Amb. Mull: It's all shipped out. It all left Iran on a ship.

Rep. Smith: But where did it go? I mean, it's got to be somewhere.

Amb. Mull: It's...it's...it's on a Russian ship, in Russian custody, under Russian control.

Rep. Smith: It's actually on a ship right now?

Amb. Mull: I believe if it has not arrived yet, it will very soon. And it will be kept within control of Russian facilities.

Rep. Smith: But then again, we're then trusting the Russians to say that they have it under their purview? They're watching it? I mean they're so close to Iran—they have double-dealed us and especially the Middle East- the Syrians. I don't know why we would trust them that it's...? Could you tell us where it's going- I mean that's important. And then I'll...

Amb. Mull: That's a Russian government responsibility to decide where it goes. Uh, the...We do not have concerns about Russian custody of this material. Uh, what's important in this deal is will it go back to Iran? And I can guarantee there are sufficient controls in place that if one piece of dust of that material goes back into Iran we're going to be aware of it.

Rep. Smith: But then again, can the IAEA go to that ship and verify that it's there and follow it as it goes to its final resting place? If there is such a thing.

Amb. Mull: Uh, IAEA has different monitoring arrangements with each country in the world.

Rep. Smith: I would not have confidence that...I mean it's not even in a place, not even in a city that you're saying. It's not even in any...it's not somewhere in Russia that we can say there it is. We don't 'even know where it is.

Amb. Mull: The IAEA verified the loading of all of this material onto the...

Rep. Smith: Loading. But loading and where it does end up is very important.

Amb. Mull: Again that is the Russian government's responsibility to decide where it goes

Rep. Smith: That is a flaw in my opinion...