

Tough-talking Hillary Clinton says she persuaded India to back Iran sanctions

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Washington: Outlining how as America's top diplomat she persuaded energy-hungry countries like India to back sanctions against Iran, Hillary Clinton says she would be willing to use force to keep Tehran from getting the bomb.

"Here's my message to Iran's leaders: The United States will not allow you to acquire a nuclear weapon," the Democratic presidential front-runner said Wednesday at the Brookings Institution, a Washington think tank.

If elected as president "I will not hesitate to use military force if Iran attempts to obtain a nuclear weapon," she said striking a tough tone she defined as "distrust and verify."

Turning to her role in crafting the deal, which is fiercely opposed by the Republicans and a few Democrats as well, Clinton said: "One by one, we persuaded energy-hungry consumers of Iranian oil, like India and South Korea, to cut back."

"Soon, Iran's tankers sat rusting in port. Its economy was collapsing. These new measures were effective because we made them global," said the 67-year-old former secretary of state who had dashed to Delhi to persuade India to cut down its oil purchases from Iran.

"American sanctions provided the foundation, but Iran didn't really feel the heat until we turned this into an international campaign so biting that Iran had no choice but to negotiate. They could no longer play off one country against another; they had no place to hide," she said.

Clinton reiterated that she supported the deal because it is a critical part "of a larger strategy toward Iran."

"My approach will be distrust and verify," Clinton said. "We should anticipate that Iran will test the next president."

"That won't work if I am in the White House," Clinton added.

"Is (the deal) perfect? Of course not. No agreement like this ever is,"

Clinton said. "But is it a strong agreement? Yes, it is."

With four more senators backing the Iran deal Tuesday, Obama has 42 votes in the 100-member Senate, enough to prevent the Senate from passing a resolution of disapproval against the Iran nuclear deal and sparing him the use of a veto to save it.

Clinton's speech came on the same day as Republican candidates Donald Trump and Ted Cruz, along with former vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin, headlined a rally before the US Congress to express their opposition to the deal.

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