

MEMMO

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Iran Rejects U.N. Security Council's Demand to Halt Uranium Enrichment

Iran has rejected the demand of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1696 requiring it to halt its enrichment of uranium. In responding to a potential package of negotiations and rewards offered by the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council and Germany, Iran called for further negotiations while rejecting the suspension of its enrichment activities—the very precondition for such talks. The Security Council must now move quickly to implement strong political and economic sanctions to prevent Tehran from developing nuclear weapons.

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- Iran has dismissed the legally binding U.N. Security Council resolution—passed July 31—that it verifiably suspend its uranium enrichment and reprocessing-related activities and implement full transparency measures requested by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).
- The U.N. Security Council's resolution makes clear that Iran must suspend its nuclear work as a precondition to any multilateral discussions. Tehran's announcement—regardless of how it is couched by Iranian diplomats—constitutes a rejection of the international offer.
- Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and other top officials said Iran will not suspend its uranium enrichment. Khamenei said: "Iran has made its own decision, and in the nuclear case, God willing, with patience and power, will continue its path."
- This week, IAEA officials said Iran had refused a request by inspectors to view its underground nuclear facilities in Natanz, which reportedly houses some of the regime's uranium-enrichment efforts.
- Tehran also announced that its heavy-water plant at Arak will soon be operational despite requests from the IAEA Board of Governors that it reconsider plans to work on the reactor.

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- The U.N. Security Council must now follow through on its stated intention to impose appropriate economic and political sanctions on the Iranian regime, which has rejected the legally binding requirement to halt all uranium enrichment activities.
- Security Council sanctions could range from targeting the Iranian leadership by banning diplomatic travel, prohibiting nuclear technology transfers and denying access to credit, to more serious economic sanctions, including banning foreign investment in Iran.

- The Bush administration should use all the tools at its disposal to augment the pressure being placed on Iran by the Security Council to make clear that the United States will not allow Iran to acquire a nuclear weapons capability.
- The United States' recent imposition of sanctions under the Iran-Syria Nonproliferation Act on seven foreign companies for selling sensitive technologies to Iran is an example of how implementing existing legislation can also help curb Tehran's nuclear activities.

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- If Iran is allowed to continue its uranium enrichment activities unfettered, it is only a matter of months until Iran masters any remaining technical hurdles in the uranium enrichment process.
- The IAEA confirmed that Iran has succeeded in enriching uranium to low levels using a pilot "cascade" of 164 centrifuges, or cylindrical tubes that rotate at supersonic speeds to enrich the uranium needed to produce fuel for nuclear reactors or bombs.
- Iran is reportedly operating additional cascades that, without an enforced suspension of its nuclear activities, will allow Tehran to master the enrichment process, providing the regime with the know-how to produce highly enriched uranium (HEU) for nuclear weapons.
- Successful operation of an industrial-scale cascade of 1,500 centrifuges would allow Iran to produce enough HEU for a nuclear weapon in one year. The Natanz facility has a capacity for more than 50,000 centrifuges.
- Iran's support for Hizballah's unprovoked attack on Israel last month only serves to heighten fears that a nuclear-armed Iran would become more emboldened, supporting more belligerent actions by Hizballah and other terrorist organizations.

Basic Facts Summary

- Iran has rejected the U.N.'s demand that it suspend its nuclear activities.
- Sanctions must be imposed if Iran fails to end its nuclear activities by the Aug. 31 U.N. Security Council deadline.
- Iran's continuing nuclear activities and sponsorship of terrorism pose growing threats to the United States and its allies.