

August 2, 2006

U.N. Security Council Demands Iran End Nuclear Activities

The U.N. Security Council this week overwhelmingly voted in favor of a legally binding resolution requiring Iran to end its nuclear activities, marking the first time that the world body has made its demands of Tehran mandatory. Iran now has until the end of August to meet the international community's demands or face sanctions. Should Tehran fail to comply with the resolution, the U.N. Security Council must follow through with its stated intent by implementing strong economic and political sanctions in order to halt the regime's pursuit of nuclear weapons.

The Security Council resolution requires Iran to meet the international community's previous demands that it cease its nuclear activities or face further consequences.

- The legally binding resolution, which passed 14 to 1, gives Iran until Aug. 31 to verifiably suspend its uranium enrichment and reprocessing-related activities and implement full transparency measures as requested by the IAEA.
- The resolution makes clear that if Tehran fails to meet the Security Council's deadline, the world body's intention is to implement economic and political sanctions as mandated under Article 41 of Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter.
- The Security Council passed the binding resolution in response to Iran's failure to meet a July 12 deadline to reply to a proposal that it suspend uranium enrichment-related activities in exchange for negotiations over an incentives package.
- U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. John Bolton described the resolution as a necessary step, stating: "Iran has consistently and brazenly defied the international community by continuing its pursuit of nuclear weapons, and the continued intransigence and defiance of the Iranian leadership demands a strong response from this council."

Iran's continuing nuclear activities and sponsorship of terrorism pose growing threats to the United States and its allies.

- If Iran is allowed to continue its uranium enrichment activities unfettered, it is expected to master the last technical hurdles in uranium enrichment within six to nine months.
- The IAEA confirmed that Iran has succeeded in enriching uranium to low levels using a pilot "cascade" of 164 centrifuges, or tall machines that rotate at supersonic speeds to enrich the uranium needed to produce fuel for nuclear reactors or bombs.
- The IAEA has reported that Iran is constructing additional cascades that will allow Tehran to create a much larger one capable of producing 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.

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- Iran has failed to adequately address IAEA concerns over various aspects of its nuclear program that appear to have a military dimension to them. These unanswered questions raise concerns that Iran—which has continually lied about its nuclear program for the last two decades—has a parallel clandestine nuclear weapons program.
- 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 embolden, supporting more belligerent actions by Hizballah and other terrorist organizations.

Sanctions must be immediately imposed if Iran fails to end its nuclear activities by the Aug. 31 U.N. Security Council deadline.

- If Tehran refuses to halt all uranium enrichment activities and commit to full transparency of its nuclear program as it is now legally required to do, the U.N. Security Council must follow through on its stated intention to impose appropriate economic and political sanctions on the Iranian regime.
- Security Council sanctions could initially target the Iranian leadership, including banning diplomatic travel, barring weapons sales, prohibiting nuclear technology transfers and denying access to credit from international banks.
- 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 recent announcement that the United States will impose sanctions under the Iran-Syria Nonproliferation Act on two Indian firms for selling missile parts to Iran is an example of how implementing existing legislation can also help curb Tehran’s nuclear activities.

Basic Facts Summary

- The Security Council’s resolution marks the first time the U.N. has passed a legally binding resolution requiring Iran to meet the international community’s previous demands that it cease its nuclear activities or face possible sanctions.
- Iran’s continuing nuclear activities and sponsorship of terrorism pose growing threats to the United States and its allies.
- Sanctions must be immediately imposed if Iran fails to end its nuclear activities by the Aug. 31 U.N. Security Council deadline.