

MEMMO

Sept. 6, 2006

Iran Defies Security Council, Proceeds with Enrichment

Iran continues to defy the international community, rejecting the U.N. Security Council's recent resolution ordering it to halt uranium enrichment. Meanwhile, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reported that Iran's nuclear program is progressing as Tehran curtails its cooperation with IAEA inspectors. Recent IAEA findings also raise concerns that Iran is working to advance a covert nuclear program. The Security Council must now move quickly to implement strong political and economic sanctions to discourage Tehran from developing nuclear weapons.

Iran has rejected the U.N.'s demand that it suspend its uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities.

- Iran has failed to comply with 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 as requested by the IAEA.
- The IAEA confirmed that Iran continues to enrich uranium to the highest acceptable level for a peaceful atomic energy program using a cascade of 164 centrifuges, or machines that enrich the uranium needed to produce fuel for nuclear reactors or bombs.
- 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."

Iran is continuing its nuclear activities and lessening its cooperation with the IAEA.

- The IAEA reported that Iran is installing a second cascade that, if successfully operated, will allow Tehran to move closer to mastering the enrichment process and acquiring the capability 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. Iran's Natanz nuclear facility has a capacity for more than 50,000 centrifuges.
- IAEA inspectors found new traces of HEU at a radioactive waste facility. This discovery, coupled with questions concerning possible research on advanced centrifuges and nuclear weapons design, suggest that Iran may have a covert nuclear program.

- The IAEA also reported that Tehran temporarily denied agency inspectors access to some of its nuclear sites and has yet to provide all inspectors with mandatory one-year multiple entry visas.
- Iran announced that it doubled the production of heavy water at its heavy water plant at Arak. Once the nearby reactor is complete, Iran can use the heavy water and natural uranium to produce fuel that can be turned into plutonium for use in nuclear weapons.

Iran's failure to positively respond to the international community's demands requires strong action by the U.N. Security Council.

- 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 U.N. Security Council must now follow through on its stated intention to impose appropriate economic and political sanctions on the Iranian regime.
- 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.

Basic Facts Summary

- Iran has rejected the U.N. Security Council's legally-binding demand that it suspend its nuclear activities.
- Iran is continuing its nuclear activities and lessening its cooperation with the IAEA.
- The U.N. Security Council must impose sanctions on Iran for failing to comply with its demands.