

MEMMO

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U.N. Sanctions Against Iran Must Be Enforced

The U.N. Security Council late last month unanimously imposed sanctions for the first time on Iran for its failure to suspend its uranium enrichment activities. The international community now must vigorously ensure their enforcement and be prepared to push for further economic and diplomatic sanctions if Iran continues to defy international law. With the Iranian regime already vowing to defy the Security Council and accelerate its nuclear pursuit, the United States and its allies must lead the international community's effort to persuade Iran that its nuclear program must be stopped.

The U.N. Security Council took the critical step of sanctioning Iran for its refusal to suspend its most sensitive nuclear activities.

- Security Council Resolution 1737 represents the first time the world body has imposed mandatory sanctions on Iran under Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter, thereby declaring that Iran's nuclear program represents a threat to international peace and security.
- The resolution bans trade that could contribute to Iran's enrichment and reprocessing activities, as well as trade that helps Iran develop a nuclear weapons delivery system or build its heavy-water reactor – a plant that, once operational, could produce significant amounts of plutonium for nuclear weapons.
- The resolution also freezes the assets of Iranians linked to the nuclear or ballistic missile programs, calls for strict monitoring of the foreign travel of these individuals and prevents Iranian students from receiving training abroad that could contribute to the nuclear program.
- The resolution represents a significantly weaker version of an original draft that called for more expansive sanctions. Russia prolonged the negotiations, objecting to calls for a total ban on travel by Iranians involved in sensitive nuclear activities and for tighter restrictions on Moscow's civil nuclear cooperation with Iran.
- In response to the resolution's passage, Iran's parliament already has passed a bill obliging the government to "revise" its relations with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the United Nations' nuclear watchdog, and to "accelerate Iran's nuclear activities" by enriching uranium, a key step toward developing nuclear weapons.

Iran escalated its nuclear and military activities during the four months it took the Security Council to agree on sanctions.

- The IAEA reported in November that Iran is injecting uranium gas into a second 164-centrifuge cascade, bringing Tehran closer to having the capability to produce highly enriched uranium (HEU) for use in nuclear bombs.

- The IAEA also reported that it discovered traces of plutonium at the same nuclear waste site where inspectors previously discovered traces of HEU, raising concerns that Iran is pursuing clandestine nuclear activities at undeclared sites.
- Despite Iran's continued defiance, Russia has now finalized an agreement to begin supplying fuel this March for a nuclear power plant Moscow is building near the Iranian city of Bushehr. Once operational, Iran could potentially divert plutonium from the reactor for nuclear weapons.
- Iran test fired its Shihab-3 ballistic missile during a series of provocative military maneuvers in November. The missile can reach Israel and is currently being augmented to potentially carry a nuclear warhead capable of striking Europe and the United States.
- Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad declared Iran's intention to enrich uranium on an industrial scale, proclaiming simultaneously in one speech that Iran is a "nuclear power" and making a "divine promise" that Britain, Israel and the United States will vanish.

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- International pressure is already having an effect inside Iran, where those opposed to Ahmadinejad and to the hard-line elements of the regime did well in the most recent local elections. Students also recently held protests against the government's policies.
- The international community must seriously implement the sanctions authorized by the Security Council in order to further demonstrate to the Iranian people that their government's policies are not working in their best interest.
- The United States and its allies should broaden the financial and travel restrictions outlined in the U.N. resolution to further isolate the Iranian regime economically and diplomatically.
- If Tehran continues to reject the global community's demand that it suspend its enrichment and reprocessing activities, the United States and its allies in the Security Council must push for further action—either through the U.N. or outside of that institution—to end all nuclear cooperation with Iran and expand the scope of economic sanctions.

Basic Facts Summary

- The U.N. Security Council took the critical step of sanctioning Iran for its refusal to suspend its most sensitive nuclear activities.
- Iran escalated its nuclear and military activities during the four months it took the Security Council to agree on sanctions.
- The international community must now implement both the U.N. sanctions and other effective measures to isolate the Iranian regime.