

MEMMO

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Tougher Sanctions Needed to Deter Iran's Rapidly Advancing Nuclear Program

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has reportedly concluded that Iran has overcome technical difficulties and is now producing enriched uranium at a level needed to fuel nuclear reactors. If true, this development would represent a major advance by Iran toward the production of weapons-grade uranium. To persuade the Iranian regime to abandon its pursuit of nuclear weapons, the U.N. Security Council will need to adopt meaningful sanctions to thwart the growing threat of a nuclear-armed Iran.

The IAEA reportedly indicates that Iran has made great strides in producing enriched uranium.

- Iran has overcome technical difficulties and is now producing enriched uranium using more than 1,300 centrifuges at its main enrichment site in Natanz, according to IAEA sources cited by *The New York Times*. Centrifuges are machines that rotate at supersonic speeds to enrich the uranium needed to produce fuel for nuclear reactors or bombs.
- If Iran does not face further technical difficulties, it could have 3,000 centrifuges operating by June, which would potentially give the regime the capability to produce at least one nuclear weapon within a year. By year's end, Iran could have 8,000 centrifuges running.
- While Iran has only enriched uranium to the level needed to fuel nuclear reactors, once the low-enriched uranium is fed back into the centrifuges it would only take four to five months to produce the highly enriched uranium required for nuclear weapons.
- The head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization declared on April 10 that Tehran plans to install more than 50,000 centrifuges at its Natanz nuclear facility. If Iran achieves such a capability, it would ultimately be able to produce highly enriched uranium sufficient to produce dozens of nuclear weapons per year.

The international community should adopt more robust sanctions now to further isolate and press the Iranian regime to change course.

- Security Council Resolutions 1737 and 1747 imposed mandatory sanctions on Iran under Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter, thereby declaring that Iran's atomic program represents a threat to international peace and security.
- The Security Council should quickly adopt a third resolution containing meaningful sanctions, including a mandatory ban on arms sales and export credits to Iran, a ban on foreign investment in Iran and a ban on the export to Iran of refined petroleum.
- G-8 leaders meeting in Germany this June should also adopt increased sanctions on Iran, as should the European Union, one of Iran's largest trading partners.

Congressional enactment of comprehensive legislation would also increase economic and political pressure on Tehran.

- The Iran Counter-Proliferation Act, introduced in both houses of Congress, seeks to close loopholes in existing sanctions law, strengthen U.S. tools to cut off funds to Iran's nuclear program and prohibit U.S. nuclear cooperation with those aiding Iran's atomic efforts.
- To change Iran's course, the United States and the international community must exhaust every economic, diplomatic and political tool to further isolate the regime and increase the economic pressure to persuade the government to end its nuclear program.
- Passage of this legislation will make a definitive statement that our country is doing everything possible—through non-military means—to end activities by those countries and entities that are enabling Iran to pursue nuclear weapons.

Current sanctions on Iran are starting to have an impact on Iran's economy and political debate.

- The prices of basic foods such as beef, poultry, fruits and bread have increased by 25 percent and housing costs have risen 30 percent in recent months, resulting in rising public discontent and anti-government protests.
- Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has allowed criticism of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's nuclear and economic policies not only in reformist newspapers, but also in his own state-run media.
- Iran is projected to spend more money on subsidies for food, housing and gas—in an effort to quell discontent over the economy—than what it makes in oil and gas revenue.
- International oil firms are reconsidering investments in Iran because of the two U.N. Security Resolutions and warnings by the United States that they could be hit with U.S. sanctions if they invest in Iran's petroleum and natural gas sector.

Basic Facts Summary

- The IAEA warns that Iran has made great strides in producing enriched uranium.
- The international community should adopt meaningful sanctions now to further press and isolate the Iranian regime.
- Congressional enactment of comprehensive legislation would also increase economic and political pressure on Tehran.
- Current sanctions on Iran are starting to have an impact on Iran's economy and political debate.