

Thorny clauses: history's lessons why New Delhi needn't worry

couldn't have ignored the Tiananmen Square issue.

Some of the non-binding conditions added then were that China would:

- Respect human rights
- Give humane treatment to political prisoners
- Protect Tibet's cultural heritage
- Allow free radio broadcast
- Adhere to Missile Technology Control Regime

All this was buttressed by a Senate resolution that stated that the US government will ensure high-level diplomatic exchanges to see to the implementation of these goals.

However, much of this was never adhered to by China but that did not adversely impact its privileged trade status.

Besides this, the US Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act talks about such recommendatory provisions to strengthen US non-proliferation objectives.

Also, there is section 201 of the same Act that talks about US working towards a global safeguards agreement. These, sources said, are desirables which are attempts made by US Congress to tie the US administration to a position.

Even in the specific provisions to assist Pakistan in 2003 and also last year, Washington laid out a string of conditions on bringing Islamabad on track to democracy.

Despite all efforts, Pakistan continues to dodge international pressure on the issue but that has not affected a favourable policy from the US.

Q. N-deal faces its first test on Capitol Hill

place. What India would want is that the mandatory or operative portion of the Bill seeking a waiver is not amended.

While the list of issues mentioned in the non-binding portion of the Bill may be annoying, it is important to note that this is crucial to help gain bipartisan and majority support.

Unless there is such support, the House of Representatives may not take it up immediately despite a mark-up.

There are only 15 working days for the US Congress in July and with the large body of the legislative work at hand, sources said, the Speaker may decide not to take up a Bill that does not enjoy wide support in the HIRC itself. The reason being

that the discussions on the bill could take up enormous time of the entire house.

For India, time taken is important because it would like all the legislative formalities to be over by August first week. Thereafter, the US Congress will get into election mode given that the polls are in November.

It may be noted that China waited for well over a decade despite being recognised as a Nuclear Weapons State in the NPT.

New Delhi has often repeated the importance of not losing the momentum and for this reason, it would have to concede on non-binding provisions that are not directly linked to the actual implementation of the Bill.

N-DEAL | House International Relations Committee set to debate and vote, Bill has non-binding clause on Iran

N-deal faces its first test on Capitol Hill

LALIT K. JHA

WASHINGTON, JUNE 27

THE US House International Relations Committee is slated to vote tonight on the crucial civil nuclear cooperation bill that makes an exception for India as a non-signatory to the NPT. The bill also states that India should help further NPT goals and prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, but these elements are not binding on New Delhi.

The bill, which is sponsored by Henry Hyde and Tom Lantos, has a section called the statement of policy that calls for "full participation" of India in American efforts to "dissuade and isolate and, if necessary, sanction and contain Iran's efforts to acquire a nuclear weapon capability."

On compliance with NPT, the bill

clearly brings out US policy objectives that India should support. It states "sustaining the NPT and strengthening its implementation, particularly its verification and compliance and its role as the keystone of 'United States Foreign Policy'".

While the mention of these elements in the Bill is bound to create adverse political reaction in India, those involved in the negotiations point out that these are recommendations in nature and are not to be interpreted as deal breakers.

Besides this, there are a string of other criteria laid out in this section to judge India's compliance to non-proliferation goals. However, these are not linked with the opera-

tive portion of the bill that seeks a permanent waiver from the US Atomic Energy Act to enable full civilian nuclear cooperation with India.

The waiver is a separate section that has mandatory conditions which are spelled out in the understanding reached between both countries on July 18 last year like the framing of a "credible separation plan" by India as well as its commitment to support US efforts towards a Fissile Materials Cut-off Treaty.

The bill will be moved on Tuesday in the HIRC where further amendments can be introduced based on the discussions that take

* CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Thorny clauses slipped in but history shows why New Delhi needn't worry

PRANAB DHAL SAMANTA

NEW DELHI, JUNE 27

THE India-specific bill for cooperation in civilian nuclear energy that is to come up for approval in the US Congress House International Relations Committee tomorrow may contain some non-binding conditions, like support for US policies on Iran, but the fact remains that this is not first time such conditions have been inserted for India.

In 1993, during the Clinton regime, some changes were incorporated in the Indo-US Foreign

Relations Act to accommodate the Foreign Operations Export Financing legislation.

Some of the non-binding conditions included were:
■ India should regionally negotiate a solution to nuclear proliferation in south Asia, with accession to the Non-Proliferation Treaty being the goal.

■ A conference must be held to facilitate a nuclear weapons free zone in South Asia.

None of this happened, but that has not affected the Indo-US trade relationship. In fact, on the second condition, US, Russia,

Pakistan and China had agreed to convene a conference that would have discussed the possibility of a NWZ in South Asia.

However, it was India that refused to attend and this issue has not progressed much since then.

Sources point out that adding recommendatory conditions to bills is a usual practice in the US Congress and India is no exception.

In 1994-95, when the US amended its Foreign Relations Act with China to grant in the Most Favoured Nation Status, it

* CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

DAY AFTER BUSH NO TO TALKS

N Korea warns of air clash

AP & AFP

**'No missile
moves'**

SEOUL, June 22: North Korea warned today of the danger of an aerial military clash in response to alleged US spy planes a day after US President George W Bush refused direct talks with North Korea saying "this is not the way to do business in the world" at the EU summit in Vienna. This comes amid tensions over the communist nation's possible missile launch.

"The North Koreans have made agreements with us in the past and we expect them to keep their agreements, for example on test launches," Mr Bush said.

"The series of illegal infiltrations and spying by reconnaissance planes of US aggression forces is creating a danger of military clash in the skies" over the area, the North Korean Central News Agency said in a report. The complaint was the latest in a series of North Korean warnings about the US flights, some of which allegedly have occurred off the country's north-east coast near the North's missile test facility.

On Saturday, the North's air force warned of a harsh response to US espionage.

North Korea routinely accuses the US of conducting spy flights, issuing a tally of such flights at the

SEOUL, June 22: North Korea has made no substantial moves for several days towards firing a missile, a senior South Korean official said today, easing widespread jitters over a feared imminent launch. As China joined the international community in voicing concern over a possible launch, the official said there was no clear progress towards one. "There have been no additional substantial moves towards a missile launch during the last several days," said the official engaged in handling dialogue with North Korea. ■ AFP

end of every month. The US military doesn't comment, although it acknowledges monitoring North Korean military activity.

Recent accusations have drawn attention because they come amid fears that North Korea is accelerating preparations to test a long-range Taepodong-2 missile that can reach as far as the USA.

The launch site is located in Musudan-ri on the North's north-east coast.

The North's missile programme has been a major security concern in the region, on top of its pursuit of nuclear bombs.

THE STATESMAN

Bush prods Iran, N Korea

At the US-EU summit, Prez asks countries to give up on their ideas

ASSOCIATED Press
Vienna (Austria), June 21

PRESIDENT BUSH and European leaders urged Iran and North Korea on Wednesday to give up nuclear and military ambitions respectively, which threaten their neighbours and destabilise the world.

Bush accused Iran of dragging its feet on a Western incentive package aimed at getting Tehran to suspend uranium enrichment activity. He added that North Korea faces further isolation from the international community if it test-fires a long-range missile, believed to be capable of reaching the US soil.

"It should make people nervous when non-transparent regimes, who have announced that they have nuclear warheads, fire missiles," Bush said. "This is not the way you conduct business in the world."

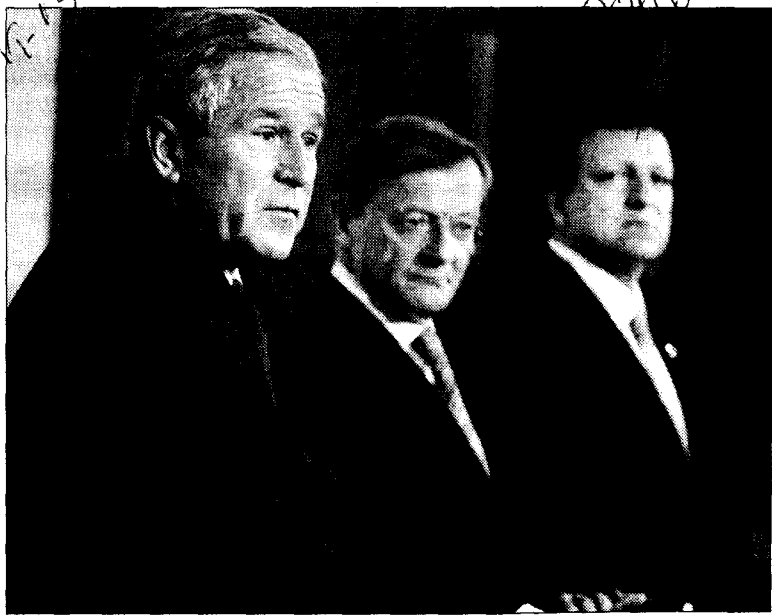
Bush, Austrian Chancellor Wolfgang Schuessel and European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso, appeared together at a news conference during the annual US-European Union summit here.

Iranian President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said earlier on Wednesday that his country will respond by mid-August to the proposals presented to Tehran in early June by EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana.

Schuessel said Iran has reached a crossroads. He said the European community welcomes US involvement, particularly the recent historic signal that the US is ready to join negotiations if Iran suspends enrichment activities.

"I think now is the right moment for Iran to take this offer to grant and to negotiate," Schuessel said. His advice to Iran: "This is the carrot. Take it."

If Iran accepts the offer, it has to suspend its uranium enrichment—a process that can produce material for nuclear generators or bombs. Bush said the mid-August timetable "seems like an awfully long time to



George W. Bush, Austrian Chancellor Wolfgang Schuessel (centre), and European Commission president Jose Manuel Barroso in Vienna on Wednesday.

wait for an answer. "It shouldn't take the Iranians that long to analyse what's a reasonable deal," he added. He added: "We'll come to the table when they verifiably suspend. Period."

There were a host of other issues on the US-EU agenda.

On terrorism, Bush thanked the Europeans for their support in Afghanistan and Iraq, while acknowledging past disputes about the US-led invasion of Iraq. "I fully understand we've had our differences on Iraq and I can understand the differences but what's past is past and what's ahead is a hopeful democracy in the Middle East," he said.

Across the 25-nation bloc, mounting discontent over the US detention centre at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, the continuing campaign in Iraq and the purported existence of secret CIA terror prisons in Eastern Europe have threatened to eclipse the talks.

Cold-blooded killers at Gitmo, says Bush

PRESIDENT BUSH on Wednesday acknowledged European concerns about the 460 detainees the United States is holding at Guantanamo Bay, but said some are "cold-blooded" killers that need to be brought to justice. "I understand their concerns," Bush said at a US-European Union summit being held here. "I'd like to end Guantanamo. I'd like it to be over with."

Bush said that 200 detainees had been sent home, and that of the 460 remaining, most are from Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Afghanistan.

"There are some who need to be tried in US courts," Bush said. "They're cold-blooded killers. They will murder somebody if they are let out on the street."

AP, Vienna (Austria)

AHMADINEJAD ■ Says it's a "step forward", but official response not finalised

Iran positive on N-package

AGENCIES
SHANGHAI, JUNE 16

IRANIAN President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said a set of incentives and penalties aimed at persuading Tehran to curtail its nuclear programmes was a positive step but left open how he would officially respond.

Ahmadinejad, apparently moderating his language on the issue, said the offer from the permanent members of the UN Security Council, along with Germany, was a "step forward" and he had asked his officials to seriously consider it.

But he deflected questions about when Iran would respond and what its counter-offers may be. "My colleagues are carefully considering the package of proposals offered by the six countries to the Islamic Republic of Iran and in due time they will give the response," he told a news conference in Shanghai through a translator.

China, which relies heavily on Iranian oil imports, has supported the international offer to Tehran, but also resisted possible UN sanctions against Iran that the US has floated. On Friday, Chinese President Hu Jin-



Iran's President Ahmadinejad with Chinese President Hu before their bilateral meeting at the Xijiao State Guest House in Shanghai. AP

tao urged Ahmadinejad to "positively respond" to the package, Xinhua news agency reported. But Hu also said: "China understands Iran's concerns on its right to peacefully use nuclear power."

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi said, "We are convinced that

talks are very important but certainly talks must be unconditional," he said. "We see a lot of positive things there, but there are some things that we don't understand and that raise questions," he added.

Neither Ahmadinejad or Araghchi said what problems Iran saw with the incentives.

Iran has sent mixed signals on how it would respond ever since the incentives were offered last month. Iran denies accusations by the US and others that it is seeking to develop nuclear weapons, saying its programme would only generate energy.

Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei took a hard-line approach on Thursday. He was quoted on state television as saying, "The Islamic Republic of Iran will not succumb to these pressures."

During a news conference at the end of a visit to China's commercial hub of Shanghai, Ahmadinejad sought to court China and deny that Iran harbours any nuclear weapon ambitions or dangerous enmities. "Basically, we are not seeking to develop nuclear weapons," said a relaxed Ahmadinejad, who bantered with reporters.

Ahmadinejad also said Iran was not afraid of an Israeli attack, and repeated assertions that the Nazi Holocaust remained unproven. Ahmadinejad said, "An event that has influenced so many diplomatic and political equations of the world needs to be investigated and researched by impartial and independent groups," he added.

INDIAN EXPRESS

19 MAY 2006

Fissile treaty bomb ticks on nuclear deal



Senator Hillary Clinton at a reception hosted by hotelier Sant Singh Chatwal in New York to gather support for the Indo-US nuclear deal. (PTI)

K.P. NAVAR

Washington, May 18: India may have to stop producing weapons grade uranium and plutonium for military purposes sooner than expected and cap its nuclear arms programme as the price for agreeing to a nuclear deal with America.

This highly controversial possibility emerged today with the Bush administration unexpectedly submitting to the UN Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva a draft treaty to ban the production of fissile material, including uranium and plutonium for military purposes.

The American move has the potential to sound the death-knell for the Indo-US nuclear deal agreed between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President George W. Bush.

Stephen Rademaker, acting US assistant secretary of state for international security and non-proliferation, said after submitting the Bush administration's draft Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty

(FMCT) to the CD that "our draft treaty has a straightforward scope: it bans, after entry into force, the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices".

India is committed under a joint statement issued after the Prime Minister's visit to the White House in July last year to "working with the US for the conclusion of a multilateral FMCT".

India will, therefore, have to stop producing fissile material the moment the CD approves the treaty and it subsequently goes into effect, capping New Delhi's nuclear weapons programme.

Pakistan, on the other hand, can continue to produce or acquire fissile material from other sources and continue to make newer and more sophisticated nuclear bombs because it has made no commitment to Washington to stop producing such material.

Islamabad may also stay out of the proposed FMCT. India cannot do so because the nuclear deal with the US and any subsequent approval

of the agreement by the multinational Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) — which controls the global nuclear trade — will be off if New Delhi shies away from signing the proposed treaty.

talked about at the United Nations and other non-proliferation fora for decades, but this is the first time that a CD member has submitted such a formal draft treaty for approval.

er's draft is the nuclear deal with India.

US congressional sources acknowledged in background conversations today that Washington's move to hurriedly table an FMCT draft at this stage was a major concession to American non-proliferationists and an effort to placate members of the American Senate and the House of Representatives to see the nuclear deal past the Congress.

The problem, however, is that India cannot agree to an FMCT without seriously compromising its nuclear weapons programme.

New Delhi can only hope that the draft will get tied up in negotiating knots in Geneva and may take years to be approved.

But, meanwhile, it will fuel suspicion in New Delhi that non-proliferationists within the Bush administration have conspired with their counterparts outside the US government to cap India's fissile material production and any expansion of its nuclear weapons programme.

No Party shall, after the entry into force of the Treaty for that Party, produce fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, or use any fissile material produced thereafter in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices

Article 1 of US draft Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty

By tabling a draft FMCT in Geneva, the Bush administration hopes to diminish opposition in the US Congress to a bill, whose passage is essential for implementing the Indo-US nuclear deal.

An FMCT has been

What is more significant, it is for the first time in more than 15 years that the US has submitted any disarmament proposal to the international community.

What this means is that a primary target of Rademaker

PLATFORM | Gennady Yevstafyev

Balancing act

HW 6
1915
W

The world community should continue to explore ways of toughening control over Iran's nuclear programme. It should be more responsible towards issues of war and peace than the hawks in Washington

IT IS important to keep in mind several facts when analysing the debate on the Iranian nuclear file in the UN Security Council on May 9. To start with, on April 28, the IAEA presented a new report on the Iranian nuclear programme. The main news so far is that the Iranians are successfully carrying out a pilot uranium-enrichment project. By so doing, they are displaying total disregard for the wishes of the world community. Tehran has irritated even those who were eager to help it avoid the confrontation. But these were merely 'wishes'. Under the NPT, Iran has the right to enrich uranium for peaceful purposes, while readiness to implement voluntary CBMs is not a legal commitment, and their duration cannot be indefinite.

As usual, the IAEA report displayed the unparalleled skills of UN bureaucrats to quote enough arguments to substantiate any position. But the conclusion is obvious: there is no definite evidence of Iran's military nuclear programme and, hence, no reason to submit a resolution on sanctions to the UNSC. As before, its five permanent members are not unanimous on settling the situation. In his report, IAEA Director-General Mohammed El Baradei used a politically correct term, 'suspension of all enrichment'. This is what the EU3 suggested in its initial compromise proposal, which left room for manoeuvre in the talks. But once Condoleezza Rice came into play, this potential carrot disappeared from the EU3 proposal, and was replaced with the term 'cessation'. In effect, this has frustrated EU3 mediation.

Moreover, it seems that neither the US nor Iran were too unhappy about this failure. Many analysts believe that for all the statements of US high-rankers, Washington was not interested in the success of the Moscow proposal to set up for Iran a joint uranium-enrichment centre on Russian territory. Iran's contradictory and dubious attitude to this proposal shows it has its own plans on settling the situation around its nuclear programme.

It is abundantly clear that many of the decision-makers in Iran are convinced that US help is indispensable for a comprehensive solution, also involving bilateral relations. Apparently, the US-Indian nuclear deal has convinced them that it is possible to strike a deal with Bush without go-betweens. This is exactly what Washington wants to achieve tacitly. It doesn't want to allow other countries, even Nato allies (not to mention the reviving Russia) to take part in solving any geopolitical problems, particularly when it comes to a former strategic ally and key player on the oil market. This explains the deadlock of the problem.

We see two real scenarios of settling the problem. In principle, they are both peaceful, although it is not possible to rule out the use of force. But this would be a third scenario — a disaster for the Iranians and Gulf and Mideastern Arabs, which would bring disgrace upon its initiators. Under the first scenario, the UNSC could issue a resolution, a warning to Iran. It should not contain any threat of force envisaged by Chapter 7

of the UN Charter. The US and other Western countries have set forth a Chapter 7 draft resolution on implementing large-scale economic sanctions, which the US has been carrying out without much success for several decades now. But the draft has been compiled in such a way that it is easy to amend it in general. The authors knew beforehand that after Iraq they were not going to receive international permission for the use of force or far-reaching sanctions.

But a modified Security Council resolution, if adopted, will be another step to the settlement of the Iranian nuclear problem. The IAEA should remain the main instrument for exploring the goals of the Iranian nuclear programme. Resumption by Tehran of a temporary moratorium on uranium enrichment and implementation of the additional protocol requirements would be a litmus test of Iran's attitude to the opinion of the world community. But the protocol is not a cure-all and the world community should explore ways for toughening control over dubious nuclear programmes on an agreed-upon basis. Of course, the impatient Pentagon guys and the US 'hawk' in the UNSC, John Bolton, would be displeased, but the world community should have a more responsible attitude to war and peace than the extremists in Washington.

Paradoxical as it may seem, but now that the US has almost regained its chief designer position in construing a compromise, we can expect more action in the behind-the-scenes bilateral conspiracy. It won't be difficult to give up the markedly belligerent rhetoric of today, especially considering that the US paved the way to the construction of joint enrichment plants in the Shah's Iran. The now declassified directive of the US National Security Council No. 292 of April 22, 1975, signed by Henry Kissinger, starts with the decision to allow the use of American materials for production of fuel in Iranian reactors and its transfer to third countries with which the US was bound by agreements.

American political scientist Robert E. Hunter has succinctly defined the key problem by saying that going to war with Iran was the worst option. He said that the US should offer Iran security guarantees. A few days ago, Zbigniew Brzezinski, the patriarch of American 'hawks', also criticised the confrontationist line. There are other signals pointing to a gradual change in the atmosphere of debates on the nuclear programme.

We should be ready for most unexpected turns in the US-Iranian standoff. It is important for us to find effective ways of upholding our political and economic interests in Iran and ensuring the security of our citizens. For now, the best option for us would be to find the golden mean, and disassociate ourselves in calculated proportions from both confronting parties.

*The writer is Senior Advisor at the Centre for Policy Studies in Russia
RIA Novosti*



VOTE FOR PEACE:
Ahmadinejad

19 MAY 2006

Arms control in a unipolar world

#10-12
8/15

Siddharth Varadarajan

The new U.S. push on a fissile material cut-off treaty is an attempt to sidestep more urgent issues such as weaponisation of space and the development of 'usable' nuclear weapons.

AFTER UNSIGNING the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, sabotaging the verification protocol of the Biological Weapons Convention, and taking the arms race into Outer Space, the United States has finally settled on a multilateral arms control measure it can support — a treaty to curtail the production of fissile material necessary for the manufacture of nuclear weapons. True to form, however, the latest U.S. approach is aimed more at increasing its already overwhelming relative military dominance by restricting the behaviour of others, rather than actually tackling the very real dangers posed to the world by nuclear weapons and their means of delivery.

On May 18, a senior State Department official, Stephen G. Rademaker, presented to the Conference on Disarmament (CD) — the Geneva-based

hang of bomb-grade material currently in the possession of nuclear weapon states. Secondly, in line with the Bush administration's aversion to non-discriminatory international verification rules, the draft FMCT contains no provisions for monitoring compliance.

Even without these two omissions, the American FMCT initiative is problematic on a number of counts. First and foremost is the attempt to push the control over fissile material production as the most pressing arms control measure to the exclusion of all the other urgent questions the CD needs to take up.

Since everyone in the world except the five nuclear weapon states (U.S., Russia, China, Britain, and France) and the four non-parties to the NPT (India, Pakistan, Israel, and North Korea) are legally barred from producing fissile material, the proposed FMCT applies essentially to these nine countries alone. Of the big five, all except China are already observing a moratorium. China, too, is believed to have ended the active accumulation of fissile material but nobody can really be sure. In any case, it should be obvious that the purpose of the FMCT is to make sure China as well as India, Pakistan, North Korea, and Israel end fissile material production. Put another way, the American interest in an FMCT is to ensure that the Chinese arsenal remains relatively small (compared to the U.S. one) and that the Indian and Pakistani nuclear weapons programmes remain bounded by the amount of fissile material accumulated to date. In themselves, these are unobjectionable goals. But when they are combined with a drive to develop an ambitious missile defence programme, militarise space, produce new kinds of "usable" nuclear weapons, and increase manifold the lethality and flexibility of U.S. conven-

tional arms, it becomes clear that what Washington is looking for is not disarmament or even arms control but "full spectrum dominance."

Under the Shannon mandate, the CD is tasked with adopting a "non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable" FMCT that bans the production of fissile material for weapons or explosive purposes. But for the past few years, the Conference has been deadlocked by the refusal of the U.S. and its allies to allow the CD to also take up three urgent but contentious issues that form an integral part of its mandate. These are general nuclear disarmament, the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS), and negative security assurances, that is, multilateral, legally binding assurances that non-nuclear weapons states will never be subject to nuclear attack.

Of these four tasks, each of which is important, it is evident that PAROS is the most pressing. The U.S. missile defence programme has direct implications for the weaponisation of space and recent budgetary appropriations indicate the U.S. military is pressing ahead with research aimed at developing an offensive capability in outer space such as the Starfire antissatellite system. Every year since 1968, the U.N. General Assembly has passed a PAROS resolution calling on countries to use space for peaceful purposes and oppose its weaponisation. After abstaining for years, the U.S. in 2005 voted against the resolution for the first time. A study by the Center for Defense Information and the Stimson Center in March 2006 found one billion dollars had been set aside for military space matters in the financial year 2007. According to Victoria Samson of the CDI, "These systems, while ostensibly for other matters, could provide

a dual-use space weapons capability. And a few of them — the Space Test Bed for starters — are flat-out space weapons programs."

China and Russia, which are the primary targets for the U.S. drive to militarise space, have rightly sought to tie progress on an FMCT with progress towards a treaty banning an arms race in outer space. This has been unacceptable to the U.S. Phased disarmament and security assurances to non-nuclear weapon states is also not part of Washington's scheme of things. After years of deadlock, a way forward emerged in the form of the "five ambassadors' proposal" to have the CD establish four *ad hoc* committees for each of the separate disarmament or arms control goals. But even this proposal was unacceptable to the U.S. Now it has signalled its intention to press for an 'FMCT or nothing' and threatened the CD with irrelevance if its warning is not heeded.

Even on its merits, however, the U.S. FMCT draft is so weak as to render inoperative the international desire for a treaty controlling fissile material. Both the FMCT and the CTBT spring directly from the treaty obligation of nuclear weapon states to disarm. The purpose of the CTBT is "quality capping" and the FMCT is "quantity capping." In reality, however, the CTBT, by allowing sub-critical tests, hydrodynamic tests, and computer simulation exercises, does not effectively prevent the "qualitative" enhancement of nuclear weapons by an advanced nuclear weapon state like the U.S. On its part, the draft FMCT, by leaving out stockpiles and verification, will also only "quantity cap" the smaller nuclear weapons states.

India has all along advocated a verifiable FMCT, a position that was reiterated by Ambassador Jayant Prasad at the CD a day before the U.S. unveiled its draft text. Apart from standing its ground on this issue, New Delhi would do well to pursue some of the interesting proposals contained in the working paper submitted by Japan to the CD last month. Specifically, Japan is arguing that any ban on the future production of fissile material must lead to the permanent shutting down or conversion of military facilities currently used for the production of such material. Naturally, there would have to be a verifiable ban on their re-conversion. Also, the diversion of existing and future stocks of fissile material for civilian purposes to nuclear weapons purpose should be explicitly banned. This, in turn, has two implications. First, fissile material voluntarily declared as "excess" should never be reverted to nuclear weapons. Secondly, the voluntary safeguards agreements the five nuclear weapon states have signed with the International Atomic Energy Agency would have to be amended to ban the withdrawal of civilian nuclear material from international safeguards.

The Japanese proposal does not explicitly say so but eventually, all nuclear facilities in the nuclear weapons states other than those expressly designated as containing fissile material for military use must come under an IAEA safeguards regime identical to the one in force for non-nuclear weapons states.

It is in this context that the opposition to multilateral verification needs to be understood. Ambassador John Bolton's international verification will never be effective and is a 'Maginot Line' that will give the international community a false sense of security. But in the absence of non-discriminatory, transparent rules, what will emerge is a 'law of the jungle' compliance mechanism. A country such as the U.S., with the most advanced national technical means, should be free to level accusations of cheating against any country it likes. But the world will be powerless to verify U.S. compliance.

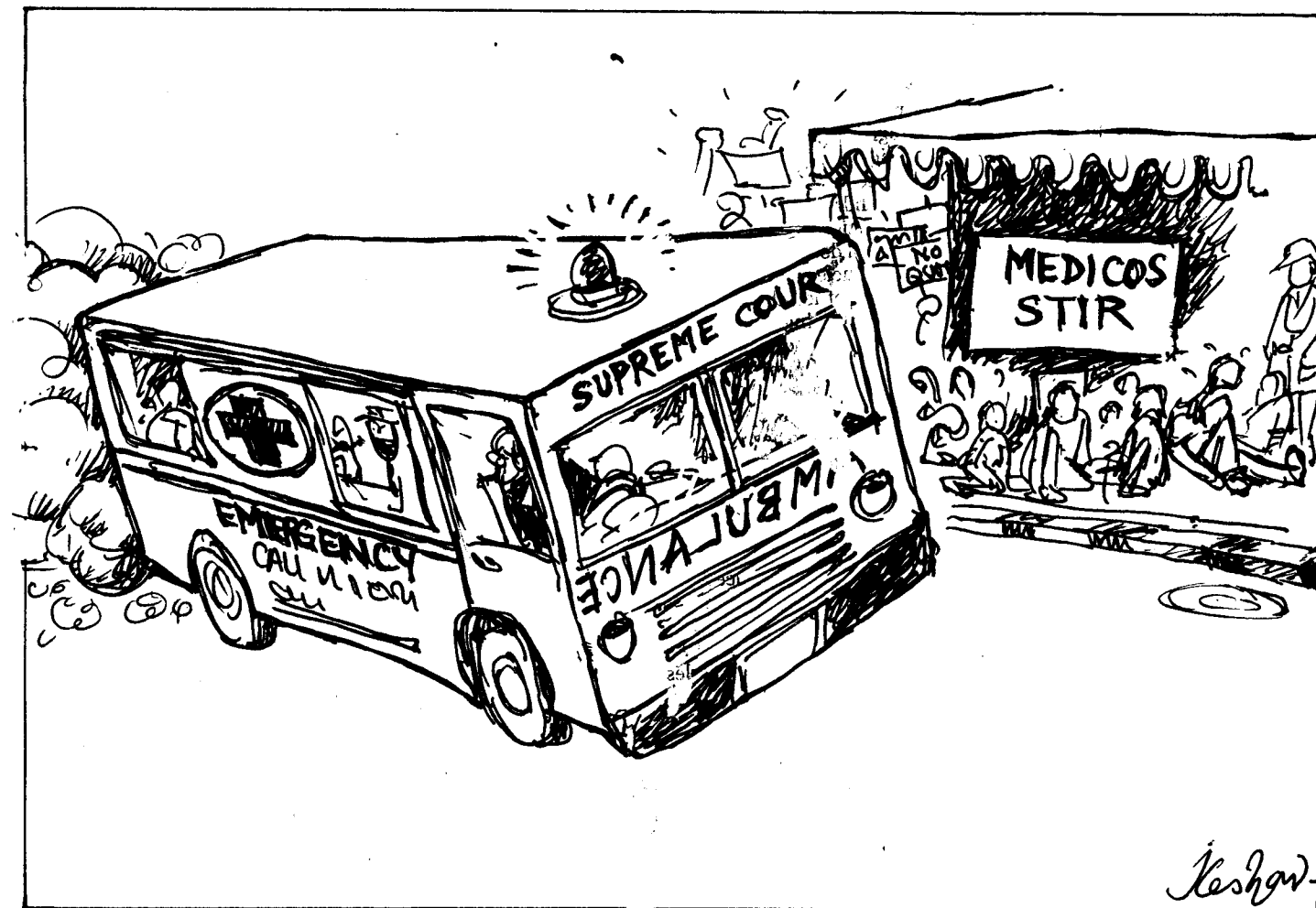
For all these reasons, the U.S. draft FMCT can hardly be considered an acceptable text. If there is to be an FMCT, the international community must insist on a suitable verification mechanism and a formula for steady disposition of existing stocks in line with the Article 6 disarmament obligations of nuclear weapons states under the NPT. India should also join other countries at the CD in pressing for quick progress on a treaty banning the weaponisation of outer space.

REALITY CHECK

United Nations disarmament negotiating body — a draft Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) and urged the countries present to adopt it by the end of the year. In the 'take it or leave it' style so typical of the Bush administration's approach to diplomacy, Mr. Rademaker threatened that if the CD were unwilling to adopt the treaty in 2006, its "continued existence ... as a meaningful international negotiating forum" would be in doubt and the U.S. itself could withdraw from its deliberations altogether.

The American draft FMCT is a short and simple document. Fissile material for non-explosive purposes is not included in its scope. Unlike the CTBT, the proposed FMCT will enter into force on the day all five nuclear-weapon states as defined by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) accede to it. While none of these provisions is controversial, many countries are likely to object to two other aspects of the draft. First, the U.S. proposal would leave existing stocks of fissile material unaffected, thus doing nothing to address the threat posed by the enormous over-

CARTOONSCAPE



N-PROGRAMME | IAEA chief says he has not made much progress in resolving outstanding verification issues

US, EU rally others to nudge Iran to agree

GEORGE JAHN
VIENNA, JUNE 13

THE head of the UN atomic agency on Monday told a 35-nation meeting overshadowed by a standoff over Tehran's uranium enrichment activities that he had made little progress in his probe of suspicious aspects of Iran's nuclear programme.

At that meeting, the US and Europe are lobbying other nations to join them in urging Iran to accept a six-nation package of rewards in exchange for freezing its uranium enrichment programme.

The International Atomic Energy Agency "has not made much progress in resolving outstanding verification is-

...sues," said IAEA chief Mohamed El-Baradei told the board member nations, alluding to suspicions that Tehran's nuclear activities could be used toward development of a weapons programme.

He described the rewards being offered to Tehran as addressing "the need of the international community to establish confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme."

Chief US delegate Gregory L. Schulte called on Iran to respond positively to the offer to Iran to negotiate—and suspend enrichment, which can be used both to generate power and create the fissile core of nuclear warheads.

"The next decision needs to be taken not in Vienna but in Tehran," he said adding US hoped it would be "a deci-

sion to refrain from further enrichment-related and reprocessing activities."

In Luxembourg, EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana said that he expected an Iranian response this week.

While the meeting is dominated by the nuclear standoff, delegates are not expected to start formally discussing the issue before late Wednesday. Two position papers issued before the meeting reflect a concerted Western effort to persuade board members to line up behind the six-nation offer.

This also shows Western commitment to secure a long-term Iranian moratorium on enrichment—even though Tehran initially is only asked to suspend such activity during the duration of any negotiations.

Dr. Baradei
95.7 1816

"We are...encouraging all board members to make firm statements to call on Iran" to negotiate on the offer, the US position paper said. If Tehran declines, the text warned that the US, Russia, China, Britain and France plus Germany "have agreed to pursue measures, including at the UN Security Council, (to) pressure the Iranian regime to change course."

The other text, issued by EU 3, also warned that if Iran remains defiant, "the Security Council will have no choice but to increase the pressure on Iran."

"The most important step for building confidence will be for Iran to refrain from all enrichment activities until international confidence is restored," the EU statement said.



German IAEA Ambassador Herbert Honsowitz (left) with his French counterpart Olivier Caron in Vienna. AP

Iran to offer counter N-deal

ASSOCIATED Press
Tehran, June 10

NEW PACKAGE

IRAN WILL make a counteroffer to a Western incentives package aimed at persuading the Islamic country to suspend uranium enrichment and restart negotiations over its nuclear programme, the Iranian foreign minister said on Saturday.

The counteroffer may be a variation of the package or an entirely new proposal, foreign minister Manouchehr Mottaki said, according to the state-run news agency IRNA. "We hope that Iran's real proposal, which might come within a modified or new package, will be examined carefully by Europe," he said.

Mottaki did not elaborate on how the Iranian version would differ from the offer made by the

five veto-wielding members of the U.N. Security Council —US, France, Britain, China and Russia — plus Germany. He said Iran supports "just, indiscriminatory and unconditional negotiations".

"We intend to take steps toward a comprehensive understanding that considers the rights of one side, Iran, and resolves the concerns of the other side at the same time," Mottaki said.

The contents of the Western package have not been made public, but diplomats said it includes economic rewards and a provision for some US nuclear technology, if Iran halts enriching uranium as an initial condition for restarting negotiations. However,

it also contains the implicit threat of UN sanctions if Iran remains defiant.

Iran has consistently refused to give up uranium enrichment, a process that can produce either fuel for a nuclear reactor or the material for a nuclear warhead.

The Islamic country insists its nuclear programme is peaceful and that it has the right to develop enrichment. The Big Six fear Iran wants to build an atomic bomb.

On Friday, a powerful hard-line cleric, Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati, came out against the Western incentive package, reflecting pressure by conservatives on the government to reject the offer.

"It's not good for Iran," Jannati said in his Friday prayer sermon, telling worshippers that the West had "no choice but to accept" Iran's enrichment programme.

JUN 11 2006

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

No halt in Iran's N-plan

Vienna: Iran accelerated uranium enrichment on the same day this week that world powers asked it to halt the work and open talks to guarantee it will not make nuclear weapons, the UN atomic agency said on Thursday in a report obtained by AFP.

Iran stepped up enrichment on June 6—the same day European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana visited Teheran to present a package of benefits to be discussed if Iran would suspend uranium enrichment, which makes nuclear reactor fuel or in highly refined form atom bomb material, the report said.

On that Tuesday, it said, Iran started feeding the raw material of uranium hexafluoride gas, or UF₆, into a connected series of 164 centrifuges—known as a cascade—to produce enriched uranium.

The report appears to dash hopes Iran is preparing an immediate pause in its nuclear fuel activities in order to start talks with six major powers on guaranteeing its programme is peaceful.

But Solana said in Paris on Thursday that he was "more optimistic than pessimistic" about the deadlock with Iran.

Iran said on Thursday it is open to nuclear talks with the West but that technology was not up for discussion. "We will negotiate about common concerns and for clearing up misunderstandings in the in-

ternational atmosphere," said hardline President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Iran is building new production lines of the centrifuges that carry out enrichment, the International Atomic Energy Agency said in the confidential report to be discussed by the IAEA's 35-nation board of governors next week in Vienna.

"This just shows there's a long way to go before there's a deal," nuclear analyst David Albright said from his ISIS think tank in Washington.

NUCLEAR IMPASSE

The report also said IAEA inspectors had found new traces of highly enriched uranium on equipment on Iran. But it was unclear whether the enriched uranium traces were contaminants from equipment Teheran had purchased abroad or from enrichment that had been carried out by Iran.

A European diplomat in Vienna described the report as negative on all counts for Iran. But the diplomat said this was not "crucial" since what mattered was getting Iran and the US-led "Iran six" of world powers to find a way of getting down to talks.

Teheran says it is seeking solely to use nuclear power to generate electricity but Washington and the EU fear this is a cover for developing nuclear weapons. AFP

10 JUN 2006

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Iran softens N-stand



Solana in Tehran (Reuters)

Me *Diary* *13*
Tehran, June 6 (Reuters): Proposals by six world powers today to end a dispute over Iran's nuclear fuel enrichment had positive points but also some "ambiguities" that must be removed, Tehran's chief negotiator said.

The proposals, which have not been made public but include incentives and penalties, seek to persuade Iran to give up enriching uranium, which the West fears will be used to build atomic bombs. Tehran says its nuclear aims are purely civilian.

European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana presented Iran's chief negotiator Ali Larijani with the package, agreed by the US, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany.

"The proposals had some positive steps in them and some ambiguities which should be removed," Larijani said. He did not elaborate on the "ambiguities".

"We hope, after we study the proposal in detail, we will have another round of talks and negotiations to achieve a balanced and logical conclusion," he said.

The US, Iran's arch foe which has been at the forefront of efforts to pressure the Islamic republic to give up enrichment, said it was heartening Iran was taking the incentives package seriously.

But Washington reiterated the Iranian government needed to suspend nuclear enrichment activities before any direct talks. Progress will depend on overcoming deep mutual mistrust.

Iran covered up sensitive nuclear fuel research and development work from the United Nations for almost 20 years until an Iranian exile group blew the whistle.

Tehran has impeded probes by the UN atomic energy agency since which have pointed to military links with nuclear work and possible secret activity, although no hard evidence of diversions into bomb-making has been found.

For its part, Washington, which broke ties with Tehran in 1980, says it wants a diplomatic solution but refuses to rule out military action.

"If the Iranians agree to suspend enrichment-related and reprocessing activities, then we'll be able to discuss more openly what the incentives are and we certainly hope that that's the case," White House spokesman Tony Snow told reporters travelling with President George W. Bush.

So far, Iran has refused to give up uranium enrichment that can be used to make fuel for nuclear power stations or, if enriched to a sufficiently high level, material for bombs. Iran says it is a national right.

Big six offer Iran can't refuse

ASSOCIATED Press
Vienna, Austria, June 2

THE US and five other world powers have an offer they say Iran can't refuse — if it knows what's best for it.

The six nations on Thursday came up with incentives they hope will persuade Tehran to stop suspect nuclear activities, but made it clear that Iran risks UN sanctions if it rejects the package.

"There are two paths ahead," British foreign secretary Margaret Becket said in announcing the proposals put together by the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China.

The package would be on the table for a proposed new round of bargaining with Tehran over what the West calls a rogue nuclear programme that could produce a bomb. The US, in a major policy shift, agreed this week to join those talks under certain conditions. It would be the first major public negotiations between the adversaries in more than a quarter century.

Secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice, met with the foreign ministers from the European nations that led talks with Iran that stalled last year. Also present were representatives of Russia and China, which have been Tehran's trading partners and might join in any future talks with Iran.

Since Russia and China hold vetoes in the UN security council, the US needs their cooperation to seek sanctions or other harsh measures by that body. "We are very satisfied by the results of today's meetings here in Vienna," US under-secretary of state, Nicholas Burns, said. "We consider them a step forward in our quest to deny Iran nuclear weapons capability."

The European Union on Thursday urged Iran to "grasp the hand extended to it" and return to international negotiations on its suspect nuclear programme.

In a statement issued by foreign minister Ursula Plassnik of Austria, which holds the EU's rotating presidency, the 25-nation bloc said resuming talks could raise hopes for a thaw in Tehran-Washington ties "after decades of 'non-relations' between Iran and the United States." "Iran should grasp the hand extended to it and return to the negotiating table," Plassnik said.

The powers agreed privately, however, that Iran could face tough security council sanctions if it fails to give up the enrichment of uranium and other disputed nuclear activities, US officials said.

Diplomats feared Iran would immediately reject any invitation to bargain if the threat of sanctions was explicit, officials involved in the discussions said on condi-



Ministers and officials at the British Residence in Vienna on Thursday.

REUTERS

tion of anonymity because the seven-party negotiations were private. The foreign ministers' statement threatens unspecified "further steps" in the security council.

The group's statement also contained no details of the incentives to be offered to Iran in the coming days. Diplomats previously have said the package includes help developing legitimate nuclear power plants and various economic benefits.

The Security Council, which can levy mandatory global sanctions and back its mandates with military force, has been reviewing Iran's case for two months. Its permanent, veto-holding members have been

If they (Iran) continue to say, 'We really don't care what your opinion is,' the world is going to act in concert

GEORGE W. BUSH

on Thursday.

At the White House, President Bush said, "If they continue to say to the world, 'We really don't care what your opinion is,' then the world is going to act in concert."

at odds over the possibility of sanctions, with Russia and China opposed.

Iran's foreign minister welcomed the idea of direct talks, but rebuffed the US condition that Tehran must put uranium enrichment on hold before talks can begin.

"Iran welcomes dialogue under just conditions but won't give up our rights," the state-run Iranian television quoted foreign minister Manouchehr Mottaki as saying

Not much time: Rice

THE US warned Iran it will not have much time to respond once it is offered an international package of rewards to encourage it to suspend uranium enrichment, suggesting that the window could soon close and be replaced by penalties. "It really needs to be within weeks," US secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice, told NBC's *Today* show, referring to the six-power package of perks or penalties aimed at halting Iran's enrichment activities. In separate comments on National Public Radio, Rice suggested she was ready to meet her Iranian counterpart, Manouchehr Mottaki, if Tehran agreed to suspend the activity that can be used to make nuclear arms and negotiate the details of the deal.

AP, Vienna

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

03 JUN 2006

Iran rejects US offer, will not halt nuclear plans

Vienna, June 1 (Reuters): Iran today spurned a US offer of direct talks on its nuclear programme as major world powers sought agreement on incentives to coax it to scrap potentially weapons-related atomic work.

Foreign minister Manouchehr Mottaki said Iran was open to talks with Washington, which severed ties with Tehran in 1980, but rejected a US condition it stop enriching uranium first.

"We will not give up our nation's natural right (to enrichment), we will not hold talks over it. But we are ready to hold talks over mutual concerns," Mottaki said in Tehran.

Speaking before Mottaki's statement, a senior US official said Tehran had only weeks to accept the diplomatic overture before facing sanctions.

Crude oil prices fell below \$71 a barrel today, deepening losses sparked by the US offer of talks.

Iran says it wants to purify uranium only to run civilian atomic power plants. But, enriched to a higher level, uranium is the key ingredient in detonating bombs.

Defying UN Security Council calls for it to halt nuclear fuel work, Tehran announced in April that it had produced its first batch of enriched uranium.

Foreign ministers of the five permanent UN Security Council powers plus Germany and the EU foreign policy chief were arriving in Vienna to finish the incentives package for Iran.

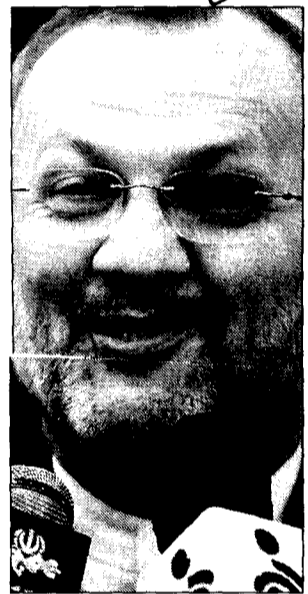
Washington's overture was a big policy shift that a senior US official said had won over Russia and China to pursuing

UN sanctions against Tehran if it spurned the sweeteners.

"What they've agreed is, if Iran does not accept this offer of negotiations, or accepts and then does not negotiate in good faith, we will return to the Security Council, we will get a resolution," the official said in Washington.

Russia, the council power with the most leverage on Iran due to hefty trade relations, said the US gesture presented "a real chance" to ease the crisis and urged Tehran to grasp it. "We call on Iran to constructively respond," the Russian foreign ministry said in a statement today.

European officials and nuclear analysts also welcomed the initiative, saying US engagement could address security issues many say are behind Tehran's pursuit of nuclear capability.



Iran foreign minister Manouchehr Mottaki in Tehran. (AFP)

World powers meet on Iranian nuke programme

AGENCIES

VIENNA, JUNE 1

WORLD powers converged on Vienna today for talks on how to resolve the Iran nuclear crisis, strengthened by a US decision to join in direct talks with Tehran if it agrees to suspend uranium enrichment.

Ahead of the meeting, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said Washington and international partners were close to a deal that would offer Iran economic incentives if it gives up nuclear activities that could produce a bomb—and penalties if it does not.

“We are agreed with our European partners on the essential elements of a package containing both benefits, if Iran



Condoleezza Rice with Austrian Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik at the foreign ministry in Vienna, on Thursday. AP

makes the right choice, and costs, if it does not,” Rice said on Wednesday before leaving Washington for Vienna.

But Iran remained defiant. Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki welcomed the prospect of direct

talks with Washington, but said: “Iran is interested in continuing” uranium enrichment.

Meanwhile, Russia on Thursday welcomed a US offer to hold talks with Tehran and said it provided a “real chance” to resolve the crisis.

EU MPs seek EU travel ban on Ahmadinejad

BRUSSELS: A group of European Parliament members is seeking an indefinite EU travel ban on Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad after he has called for Israel to be destroyed and questioned the Holocaust.

A group of 75 lawmakers from all major political groups in the EU assembly signed a petition, which was submitted on Thursday to EU president Austria and FIFA, the governing body of world soccer, asking them to prevent Ahmadinejad from traveling to Germany to watch his team play in the June 9–July 9 World Cup and banning him from traveling to any of the other 24 EU member states.

—Reuters

0 2 20 20 11

INDIAN EXPRESS

US ready to join meet on Iran

Vienna, May 31

THE UNITED States is ready for the first time to join talks with Iran over its nuclear programme provided Russia and China agree to sanctions if Tehran refuses to limit its atomic ambitions, diplomats said on Wednesday.

The Bush administration, seeking to enlist Russian support for a United Nations Security Council resolution on Iran, has also agreed to language ruling out the immediate threat of military force, American and European officials said on Tuesday.

A Western diplomat said the United States was "willing to sit at the table with the Iranians" along with the four other permanent UN Security Council members plus Germany to discuss a compromise package on the nuclear dispute.

The package, drafted by a European Union negotiating troika and due to be discussed at a meeting of world powers here on Thursday, offers Tehran incentives in return for guarantees that it will not develop nuclear weapons.

But the diplomat said Washington would only join the multi-party talks "if Russia and China can agree on Thursday to key aspects of the package, including some specific future sanctions if Iran rejects it".

His comments were confirmed by another diplomat from a second member of the UN permanent five, which is made up of Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States. They asked not to be named due to the sensitivity of the issue.

"It's not a done deal yet, but the United States is definitely extending itself to try to get to yes", the first diplomat said of possible US participation in nuclear talks.

He said Nick Burns, US Undersecretary of State for political affairs, would represent the United States at such talks.

The US agreement has improved the chances that the Russians will go along with the resolution, European diplomats said.



REUTERS

President George W. Bush with Iraqi ambassador to the United States Samir Sumaidaie at the Oval Office of the White House.

On the agenda

- Ready to attend talks if Russia and China agree to sanctions in case Iran refuses to limit atomic ambitions
- The US agreement has improved the chances that the Russians will go along with the resolution
- The resolution is to call on Iran to suspend various nuclear activities that are viewed in the West as part of a clandestine weapons program

The resolution is to call on Iran to suspend various nuclear activities that are viewed in the West as part of a clandestine weapons program, but that Iran maintains are peaceful in nature.

President Bush called President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia, President Jacques Chirac of France and Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany to press for agreement on a Security Council resolution demanding that Iran stop enriching uranium or face possible punitive action.

Also being negotiated are a package of benefits to be offered Iran if it cooperates in ending its nuclear activities.

AFP & NYT

NUCLEAR PROGRAMME | China, Russia opposed to resolution that mandates 'Iran suspend enrichment'

Iran resolution warns of 'future measures'

NICK WADHAMS
UNITED NATIONS, MAY 4

OVER Chinese and Russian opposition, Western nations circulated a UN Security Council resolution that would demand Iran abandon uranium enrichment or face the threat of unspecified further measures, a possible reference to sanctions.

Britain and France, backed by the United States, hope to wrap up negotiations on the legally binding resolution before a meeting of foreign ministers in New York on Monday. However, diplomats acknowledged that resistance from China and Russia may prolong talks well beyond that.

The resolution is the latest in weeks of negotiations over how to confront suspicions about Iran's nuclear programme, which Tehran insists is for peaceful purposes. The United States and France accuse the country of secretly trying to build nuclear weapons.



Jean Marc de La Sabliere (left) of France and Emyr Jones Parry of Britain, envoys to the UN, address the media after UNSC consultations on Iran. AP

"Once again, the key to this lies in Iran's hands," US Ambassador John Bolton said. "If they give up the pursuit of nuclear weapons, a lot of things are possible. If they continue to bluster and to threaten and obfuscate and try to

throw sand in our eyes, then we're onto a different circumstance." The resolution mandates that Iran suspend enrichment and warns the council would "consider such further measures as may be necessary to ensure

compliance"—language that opens the door to sanctions.

It calls on Iran to stop construction of a heavy-water reactor and demands that nations "exercise vigilance" in blocking the transfer of goods and technology that could help Iran's uranium processing and missile programmes. The council would also seek a report back from the UN nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, on Iran's compliance.

No time frame has been set for that report but France's UN Ambassador Jean-Marc de La Sabliere said he wanted it no later than early June. The resolution was written under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, which makes any demands mandatory and allows for the use of sanctions—and possibly force—if they are not obeyed. Any sanctions would require another resolution.

That could force a showdown with Russia, which has arms and technology deals with Iran, as well as China. Both nations have said they adamantly op-

pose tough council action, including sanctions, and the two could use their veto power on the council to block it.

"I don't think this draft as it stands now will produce good results," China's UN Ambassador Wang Guangya said. Meanwhile, President Bush has stressed that the US will continue to focus on diplomacy. But he refuses to rule out military action if necessary. When asked last month if the US would consider "the possibility of a nuclear strike" if Tehran refuses to halt uranium enrichment, Bush said.

Russia, a firm opponent of the resolution, was clearly wary that some language in the new draft could be seen as opening the door to military action. That would likely include the reference to "further measures." "We do not believe the matter can be resolved by use of force, so that does reflect in our attitude to various possibilities in the text of the resolution," Russia's UN Ambassador Vitaly Churkin said.

—AP

03 MAY 2006

Inspection under IAEA only: Iran

REUTERS

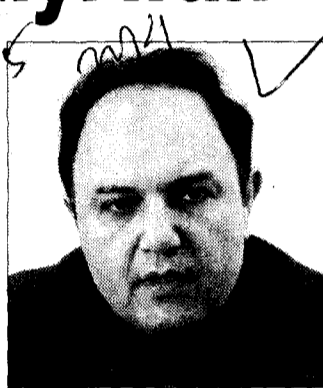
TEHRAN | APRIL 29

IRAN on Saturday said it was willing to resume allowing snap United Nations atomic inspections if its case was dropped by the UN Security Council and passed back to the IAEA.

But Mohammad Saeedi, deputy head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organisation, said Iran would not yield to UN demands that it abandon uranium enrichment, and criticised Friday's report by Mohamed ElBaradei, head of the IAEA, the UN nuclear watchdog.

ElBaradei said UN checks in Iran had been hampered and Tehran had rebuffed requests to stop making nuclear fuel.

"The report was not completely satisfactory for us and we believe that the report could have been done better than that," Saeedi told state television. However, Saeedi insisted Iran would be able to answer ElBaradei's concerns about the access granted to UN inspectors if Tehran's nuclear dossier were dropped by the UNSC, which has



Mohammad Saeedi

the power to impose sanctions.

"If the case returns to the agency again, we will begin the section that concerns the Additional Protocol," he said.

"The enrichment will continue. But...we will continue implementing the Additional Protocol as a voluntary measure."

The Additional Protocol to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty allows short-notice inspections of nuclear facilities.

"If they change their decision and choose the wise path, and the case returns to the IAEA, we believe we can solve all the issues mentioned in ElBaradei's eight-page report very quickly," he said.

3 0 100 2006

INDIAN EXPRESS

Iran continues enrichment, says IAEA *2/14* *in comment* *1-9-1*

VIENNA: Iran has successfully enriched uranium and continues related activities in defiance of the U.N. Security Council, the International Atomic Energy Agency said on Friday.

The finding was contained in a report prepared by IAEA chief Mohamed ElBaradei that also said Iran continued to rebuff the Agency's efforts to get answers to questions linked to suspicions Iran was attempting to make nuclear arms.

"After more than three years of Agency efforts to seek clarity about all aspects of Iran's nuclear programme, the existing gaps in knowledge continue to be a matter of concern," said the report. "Any progress in that regard requires full transparency and active cooperation by Iran."

On enrichment, the report, obtained by the Associated Press, said Iran's claimed to have enriched small amounts to a level of 3.6 per cent — fuel grade uranium as opposed to weapons grade enriched to levels above 90 per cent — appeared to be true according to initial IAEA analysis of samples it took. — AP

29 APR 2005

THE HINDU

Iran to consider opting out of NPT

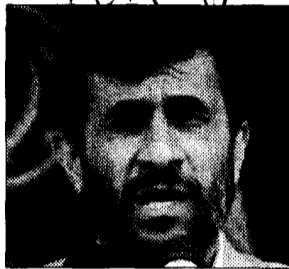
ASSOCIATED PRESS
TEHRAN, April 24

IRANIAN President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad hinted on Monday that Iran would consider withdrawing from the UN nuclear if membership produced no benefit.

"Working in the framework of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and the agency is our concrete policy," he added. "(But) if we see that they are violating our rights, or they don't want to accept (our rights), well, we will revise."

The UN body, the International Atomic Energy Agency, has accused Iran of failing to answer all questions about its nuclear programme and reported the country to the Security Council for non-compliance with its demands.

The Security Council has given Iran until Friday to suspend enrichment of uranium, a process that can produce



Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

fuel for nuclear reactors material for nuclear warheads.

Ahmadinejad also said that Israel was an artificial state that could not continue to exist. "Some 60 years has passed since the end of World War II, why should the people of Germany and Palestine pay now for a war in which the current generation was not involved," he said. "We say that this fake regime (Israel) cannot not logically continue to live," he said.

Ahmadinejad has long campaigned against Israel, saying last October that it should be "wiped off the map."

25 APR 2006

INDIAN EXPRESS

West struggles for unity on Iran crisis

AGENCE France-Presse
Moscow, April 19

WORLD POWERS struggled to show a united front on Wednesday over Iran's nuclear drive, fearing Tehran will exploit any split to forge ahead with uranium enrichment.

"I'd have thought this is the time for the world to send a clear, united message to the Iranian regime," British Prime Minister Tony Blair said in London as diplomats gathered in Moscow.

Tehran must receive a clear message to stop uranium enrichment and "desist from financing terrorist activities around the world and get back to their international obligations," Blair said. "Nobody is talking about military invasion," he added.

French foreign minister Philippe Douste-Blazy warned, too, that the world powers must be together if they were to dissuade Iran. "If the international community is united — China and Russia with us — the Iranians... will answer: 'We can not be isolated'," he said.

"If, on the contrary, the Chinese and the Russians, if the international community is not united it makes it easy for the Iranians to continue," to defy international demands to halt the program, he said.

Meanwhile, senior diplomats from the Group of Eight powers gathered for Moscow talks, ostensibly preparing for a July summit but clearly overshadowed by the Iran standoff.

The Moscow meeting of G8 political directors would be "another



Iranians in Tehran fill in registration forms indicating their readiness to carry out suicide attacks against Israel.

er opportunity in a different forum to talk about what are the diplomatic means to increase pressure on the Iranian regime," a US State Department spokesman said in Washington.

Iran sent a high-ranking delegation to Moscow to hold discussions with European diplomats "aimed at finding a solution" to the crisis, Foreign Minister

Manouchehr Mottaki told state radio in Tehran.

But the foreign ministry gave no indication of whether the envoys were bearing any concessions from the hardline leadership, with just over a week to go before the expiry of a UN Security Council deadline to freeze uranium enrichment.

The UN Security Council is

awaiting a report due by April 28 from Mohamed ElBaradei, head of the UN watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, on whether Iran has complied with its demands to freeze uranium enrichment. On Tuesday, senior officials from the five permanent Security Council members failed to agree on concrete action over Iran.

Seeking suicide bombers in UK

ROBERT Tait and Ewen MacAskill
Tehran/London, April 19

RELATIONS BETWEEN the West and the hardline Iranian regime are set to worsen after a Tehran-based group claimed on Tuesday night that it was trying to recruit Iranians and other Muslims in Britain to carry out suicide bombings against Israel.

The Committee for the Commemoration of Martyrs of the Global Islamic Campaign, which claims to be independent but has the backing of the regime, said it is targeting potential recruits in Britain because of the relative ease with which UK passport-holders can enter Israel. Mohammad Samadi, a spokesman for the group, said that striking at Israel was the priority of his recruitment drive. "The first target is Israel. All Jews are targets, whether military or civilian," he said.

Samadi's group was participating in a recruitment fair for "martyrdom seekers" being held in the grounds of the former US embassy in Tehran. Several hundred volunteers have signed up for missions in the past few days.

The volunteers were asked to complete forms specifying whether they prefer to carry out operations against "the Quds occupiers" (Israel), author Salman Rushdie or the "occupiers of Islamic lands", the US and Britain. The stall was festooned with portraits of Palestinian suicide bombers.

The British embassy has called on Iran to renounce support for the group. While the committee claims to be independent it has previously been linked with the Revolutionary Guards. It claims to have gathered 52,000 recruits — of whom 30 per cent are women.

When asked how Iranian volunteers would get into Israel, Samadi cited the precedent of bombers Asif Mohammed Hanif and Omar Sharif, two British Muslims who entered Israel as tourists and then posed as peace activists.

Samadi said recruits would not be told to attack British cities. "They would definitely not be sent to carry out an attack on London unless it was to kill Salman Rushdie." Israeli security analysts said there is no evidence that the group has been directly linked to suicide bombings or other attacks in Israel.

The Guardian

IAEA inspectors to visit Natanz, India favours diplomatic solution

REUTERS

TEHRAN, APRIL 18

SENIOR inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will arrive in Iran on Friday to visit nuclear sites, including the Natanz uranium enrichment facility, a senior Iranian official said on Tuesday.

The visit follows Iran's declaration last week that it had enriched uranium for use in power stations for the first time, stoking Western suspicions of a covert atomic bomb project.

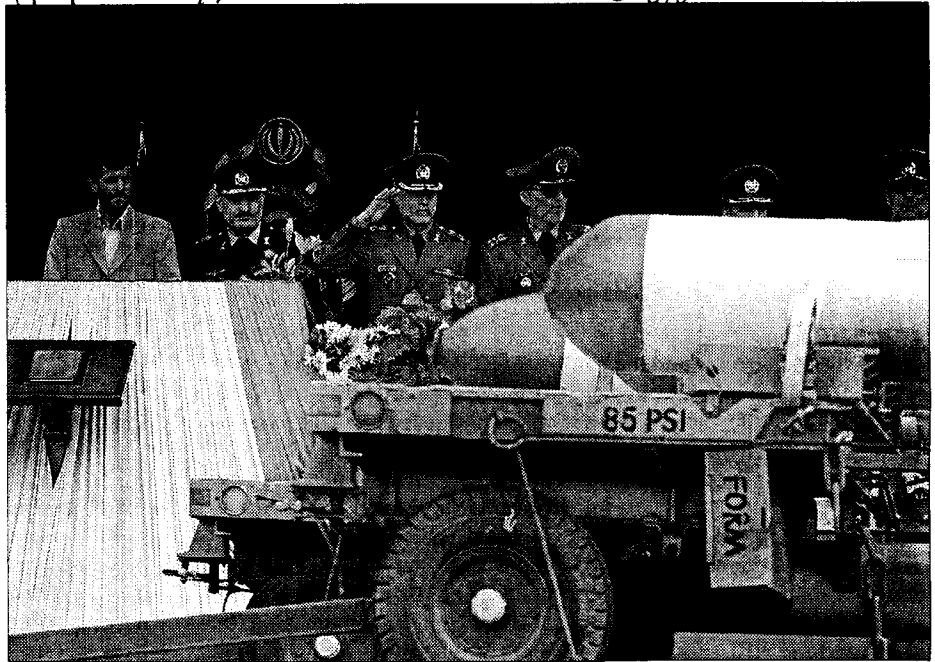
Iran insists it wants nuclear technology for civilian purposes to satisfy its booming demand for electricity. "We will discuss Iran's enrichment of uranium to 3.5 per cent," said the official, who asked not to be named.

IAEA Chief Mohamed El-Baradei, who visited Iran last week, said inspectors from the UN nuclear watchdog had taken samples and would report back to the IAEA's board on whether the Iranians had indeed achieved 3.5 per cent enrichment.

Experts say it would take Iran two decades to produce enough highly enriched uranium for one bomb from its current 164 centrifuges. But Iran says it will to install 3,000 centrifuges, which could make enough material for a warhead in one year.

Iranian officials say the enrichment plant at Natanz has a capacity for 54,000 centrifuges.

Meanwhile, China is disturbed by the deepening international stand-off over Iran's nuclear plans but still hopes for a negotiated solution, a senior Chinese envoy



Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (extreme left) reviews army weapons during a parade commemorating Army Day in Iran on Tuesday. AP

told Iranian officials, the foreign ministry said on Tuesday.

Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister Cui Tiankai visited Tehran on Friday after Iran announced it had enriched uranium, defying international calls for it to halt such work.

He urged his Iranian hosts and other countries to step back from confrontation, a spokesman for China's Foreign Ministry told a regular news conference on Tuesday.

Russia's Foreign Ministry warned that it remains opposed to sanctions against Iran, as senior diplomats from six countries prepared to meet Tuesday over dinner in Moscow to try to map out the next steps toward solving the Iranian nuclear crisis.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Mikhail Kamynin reaffirmed Moscow's insistence on more diplomacy.

Iran Army will 'cut off hand of aggressor: Ahmadinejad

TEHRAN: Iran's armed forces must be at the ready and will "cut off the hand of any aggressor", hardline President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said in a speech on Tuesday to mark National Army Day.

"The Army must always be equipped and ready, and have mastered the latest technology, to respond to any aggression," Ahmadinejad said in his speech, given during a military parade just south of the capital, Baghdad.

"The powerful Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran is in the service of peace and security and is no threat to anyone. But in the face of enemies, it is like a meteorite. It will cut off the hand of any aggressor and leave the enemy covered in shame," he said.

"We want peace, security and progress for all people, in particular the countries of the region and our neighbours," he added. —AFP

"We are convinced that neither sanctions nor the use of force will lead to the solution of the problem," Kamynin said, according to the ITAR-Tass news agency.

Meanwhile, India has favoured a diplomatic solution to the Iran nuclear imbroglio and wants confrontation to be avoided at all costs.

India's consistent position

has been that the issue must be resolved amicably through dialogue and discussion, E Ahamed, Minister of State for External Affairs and the Special Envoy, has said.

"All sides must work towards a diplomatic solution and confrontation must be avoided at all costs," he told reporters in Kuwait on Monday. —Reuters & PTI

14 APR 2006

THE IRANIAN PRESS

N-programme: Iran antics on

ASSOCIATED Press
Tehran, April 13

IRAN'S PRESIDENT declared on Thursday his country would not retreat on its uranium enrichment activities, and the visiting head of the UN atomic watchdog agency said he had not seen any diversion of nuclear material for weapons purposes, although "the picture is still hazy."

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad signaled there would be no concessions in talks with Mohamed ElBaradei, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, who arrived to head off a confrontation with the UN Security Council.

"We haven't seen diversion of nuclear material for weapons pur-

AP



IAEA chief
Mohammad
ElBaradei with
Iran's nuke
negotiator Ali
Larijani (right)
in Tehran.

Iran in the talks with the UN.

"We won't hold talks with anyone about the right of the Iranian nation (to enrich uranium) and no one has the right to retreat, even one iota," Ahmadinejad was quoted as saying by the official Islamic Republic News Agency.

Iran says its uranium enrichment is for power-generating purposes, while the West says it is intended for nuclear weapons. Western diplomats and experts familiar with Iran's program say it is still far from producing any weapons-grade uranium.

"Our answer to those who are angry about Iran achieving the full nuclear fuel cycle is just one phrase. We say: 'Be angry at us and die of this anger,'" Ahmadinejad said.

time until questions over its nuclear program had been resolved.

Iran's chief nuclear negotiator, Ali Larijani, said such moves were not acceptable. "Such proposals are not very important," he said.

Hours earlier, Ahmadinejad had said enrichment was a red line for

Global powers slam Iran

Tehran, April 12 (Reuters): The world's leading powers, including Russia and China, joined to condemn Iran today for advancing its atomic programme in defiance of the UN, but Moscow said force could not resolve the dispute.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad declared yesterday that Iran had produced its first batch of enriched uranium and would now press ahead with industrial-scale enrichment.

His announcement kept Tehran on a collision course with the UN and with western countries convinced Iran seeks atomic arms, not just fuel for power stations as it insists.

US secretary of state Condoleezza Rice said the UN Security Council, which last month told Tehran to halt all enrichment work, would need to take up the issue again.

When the council reconvenes, Rice said, it should take "strong steps to make certain (to) maintain the credibility of the international community".

She did not say what those steps might be, but her spokesman, Sean McCormack, said they would be stronger than the presidential

statement already issued by the Security Council.

Asked about the possibility of sanctions on Iran, White House spokesman Scott McClellan said: "That's a possibility as well, that's one option that's available." Russia and China, key players on the Iran issue with veto rights at the Security Council, have hitherto

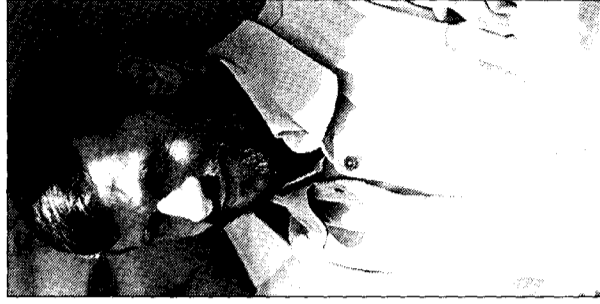
to opposed sanctions.

Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov said the use of force could not solve the standoff over Iran's nuclear programme.

"If such plans exist they will not be able to solve this problem. On the contrary they could create a dangerous explosive blaze in West Asia, where there are already enough blazes," he said.

President George W. Bush this week dismissed media reports of plans for strikes on Iran as "wild speculation" and said force might not be needed to curb its nuclear ambitions.

China's UN ambassador Wang Guangya said Tehran's enrichment move was "not in line with what is required of them by the international community". Russia's foreign ministry urged Iran to stop all enrichment work.



President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in Mashhad, Iran. (AFP)

Pak to keep N-deterrent

Islamabad, April 12 (Reuters): Pakistan, worried about a nuclear cooperation deal between rival India and the US, today said it will maintain a credible nuclear deterrent for its security.

Pakistan's Nuclear Command Authority (NCA), the top body that controls the country's nuclear assets, criticised the US-India deal and said it would help New Delhi expand its nuclear weapons programme. "The agreement would enable India to produce significant quantities of fissile material and nuclear weapons," said a NCA statement. "The NCA expressed firm resolve that credible minimum deterrence requirements will be met."

NUKE PROGRAMME ■ Iran insists it won't abandon right to uranium enrichment as NPT signatory

Tehran ready to negotiate on enrichment

ALI AKBAR DAREINI

TEHRAN, APRIL 4

IRAN is prepared to negotiate on the large-scale enrichment of uranium but will never abandon its right to enrich uranium, Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki told a press conference on Tuesday.

The UN Security Council has demanded that Iran suspend all enrichment of uranium and last week it asked the UN nuclear agency to report back in 30 days on whether Iran had complied with the demand.

Mottaki maintained Iran's line that it would not comply with the Security Council demand, saying the research-scale enrichment that Iran began in February was in exercise of its rights and will continue.

Iran has been conducting small-scale

Pak: Turkey for peaceful solution

► **ISLAMABAD:** Pakistani and Turkish diplomats have called for a peaceful resolution to the international dispute over Iran's nuclear programme, a government statement said on Tuesday.

Senior Pakistani Foreign Ministry official Riaz Mohammad Khan and Ali Iyagan, under-secretary for Turkey's foreign affairs, made the comments after bilateral talks in Islamabad on Monday, it said. The two sides "stressed the need for an amicable settlement of the Iran nuclear issue," the statement said. —AP

enrichment for what it says is research purposes, but it would require large-scale enrichment to fuel a nuclear reactor. Enrichment makes uranium suitable for reactor use but, taken to a high degree, it becomes suitable for a nuclear bomb.

The US and France have accused Iran of seeking enrichment as a part of a secret program to build nuclear weapons. Iran denies the charge, saying its nuclear ambitions are confined to the generation of electricity.

"The enrichment of uranium... is Iran's right as defined as a signatory to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty," Mottaki said. "One thing we can't give up and that is the right of the Iranian nation... We can't hold a dialogue with any country about giving up our rights," Mottaki insisted.

He added that Iran was prepared to talk to the international community about large-scale enrichment.

"For industrial-scale production of nuclear fuel, which is the next stage (of enrichment), we are ready for negotiations," Mottaki said.

Iran's first nuclear reactor, built with

Russian assistance at Bushehr in southwestern Iran, is due to come on stream later this year. Mottaki said there were two options for Iran's nuclear programme: cooperation or confrontation.

"Iran prefers the first option," he said. The big three European powers—Britain, France and Germany—negotiated with Iran for two years endeavoring to persuade it to abandon enrichment. Iran gave up on the negotiations last August and began resuming parts of its nuclear program that it had suspended as a goodwill gesture.

When Iran resumed enrichment early this year, the Europeans decided to push for Security Council action on the issue. The nuclear programme is a source of national pride in Iran, and even government opponents have expressed support for the programme. —Associated Press



Foreign Minister Mottaki at a news conference in Tehran on Tuesday

washingtonpost.com

Iran and N. Korea Cautioned At Summit

Bush, E.U. Leaders Demonstrate Unity

By Michael Abramowitz
Washington Post Staff Writer
Thursday, June 22, 2006; A01

VIENNA, June 21 -- President Bush and European Union leaders jointly prodded Iran and North Korea on Wednesday to back off from controversial weapons technology. The show of governmental unity came as anti-American demonstrators rallied nearby and Bush dismissed as "absurd" the suggestion that the United States is more of a threat than the two countries he once described as part of an "axis of evil."

Bush warned Iran to speed up consideration of a package of inducements being offered if the Tehran government suspends uranium enrichment, a key step toward possible development of nuclear weapons. And he demanded that North Korea refrain from test-firing a long-range missile that intelligence agencies say has been placed on a launch pad.

"It should make people nervous when non-transparent regimes who have announced they have nuclear warheads fire missiles," Bush said. "This is not the way peaceful nations conduct their affairs."

On both issues, Bush drew a strong endorsement from Austrian Chancellor Wolfgang Schuessel, following a summit here among U.S. and E.U. leaders. Schuessel, whose country holds the E.U.'s revolving presidency, said Europe would back the United States if North Korea violates international rules.

Schuessel also told Iran that it should quickly accept a recent U.S.-E.U. offer, which holds out the prospect of direct talks with the United States if Iran suspends uranium enrichment.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said Wednesday that his country would respond to the incentive offer by mid-August. Bush told reporters here that "it shouldn't take the Iranians that long to analyze what's a reasonable deal."

In Vienna, the tone between the summit leaders was friendly, a sign of the warming relations between European governments and the Bush administration since the fallout over the Iraq war. Although protesters railed against Bush outside the walls of the Hofburg Palace, inside the president seemed relaxed as he offered a passionate defense of his foreign policy since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. Several thousand Austrian police officers helped keep the peace in a city that one newspaper here described as a "fortress." Police estimated there were 15,000 demonstrators around the city.

Bush seemed most animated when a European journalist asked about a belief of many Europeans that the United States is the biggest threat to global stability.

"That's absurd," Bush replied curtly.

"We'll defend ourselves," he added, "but at the same time we're actively working with our partners to spread peace and democracy."

Bush picked up on the theme a few moments later, after an Austrian journalist raised the subject of recent opinion polls indicating that the image of America is falling around the world. The president said he had vowed after those terrorist attacks that he would "do everything to defend our people."

"For Europe, September 11th was a moment," Bush said. "For us, it was a change of thinking."

Schuessel rose to Bush's defense, recalling the American support for European reconstruction after World War II and saying Europeans "should not be naive" about the necessity of tough action against terrorists, in view of attacks on the continent. He said the suggestion that the United States was worse than Iran and North Korea was "grotesque."

Schuessel also said: "We can only have a victory in the fight against terror if we don't undermine our common values. It can never be a victory, a credible victory over terrorists if we give up our values: democracy, rule of law, individual rights."

That was a reference to allegations of wrongdoing by the United States in its open-ended detention of terrorism suspects. Many European governments want the prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to be closed right away.

Many European officials expected Schuessel to raise the Guantanamo issue with Bush, but Schuessel and U.S. officials said it was Bush who broached the subject, in an apparent effort to preempt their concerns.

As described by U.S. officials, Bush did not break new ground on the subject in the private meetings, repeating his general desire to close the facility. He outlined what the U.S. government considers the practical problems involved in returning large numbers of detainees to their home countries and noted that he was waiting for a Supreme Court decision on the administration's plan for military commissions to try detainees.

"There are some who need to be tried in U.S. courts," Bush said at the news conference. "They're cold-blooded killers. They will murder somebody if they are let out on the street."

Schuessel voiced understanding, though not necessarily agreement, with the president's statement. "We got clear, clear signals and a commitment from the American side -- no torture, no extraordinary or extra-territorial positions to deal with the terrorists," he said. U.S. officials said later that Bush only restated long-standing U.S. positions.

The meetings Wednesday were part of a continuing effort by Bush since his reelection in 2004 to rebuild relations with Europe. In the clearest sign of this, the administration has worked with France, Germany, Britain and the E.U. as they have taken the lead on the new diplomatic initiative to persuade Iran to restrict its nuclear program.

Russian and European diplomats had asked Iran to respond to the proposal by mid-July, ahead of a summit by the Group of Eight industrialized nations in St. Petersburg, Russia. U.S. officials were hoping for a response by the end of June.

It was unclear Wednesday why the Iranians were seeking an additional month. Some U.S. and European

officials speculated privately that the Iranians might be trying to complete a second centrifuge array known as a cascade before suspending their nuclear program for talks. Others say they believe the Tehran government simply has not been able to reach an internal consensus on how to negotiate with the West. Iran maintains that its nuclear program is solely to generate electricity.

Bush is the first U.S. president to visit Austria since Jimmy Carter in 1979. Though he was on the ground here for less than 24 hours, he found time for a little sightseeing, touring the Austrian National Library and hearing a performance by the Vienna Boys Choir.

Later Wednesday, Bush flew to Budapest, the capital of Hungary. He has frequently visited the emerging democracies of Eastern Europe, and his press secretary, Tony Snow, said that on this occasion he would offer an homage to the unsuccessful 1956 Hungarian uprising against Soviet rule and its relevance to his effort to spread democracy today.

Staff writer Dafna Linzer in Washington contributed to this report.

© 2006 The Washington Post Company

washingtonpost.com

Envoys Remain Split On Plan Against Iran

Degree of Sanctions by U.N. at Issue

By Peter Finn
Washington Post Foreign Service
Thursday, April 20, 2006; A19

MOSCOW, April 19 -- Senior diplomats from the U.N. Security Council's five permanent members ended two days of talks about Iran's nuclear program Wednesday with consensus for action against the Islamic state, but they continued to be divided as to what form it should take, U.S. Undersecretary of State R. Nicholas Burns said.

"Nearly every country is considering some form of sanctions, and this is a new development," Burns told reporters after the meeting. "Every country said that some type of action had to be taken . . . to, in effect, erect a barrier to Iran's progress. So the challenge for us will be what can we all agree on."

For weeks, the United States, Britain and France have been pressing for tough steps against Iran, while Russia and China have argued that a hard line might backfire. All have expressed public concern over Iran's program.

"All participants in the meeting agreed that urgent and constructive steps are demanded of Iran," Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Wednesday.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said last week that Iran was pursuing the enrichment of uranium on an industrial scale, which could allow it to accelerate the development of nuclear weapons.

That and recent statements by other Iranian officials that they would expand their experimental nuclear work has led to "a greater sense of urgency" among the major powers about Iran's ambitions, Burns said. "What I heard in the room last night was not agreement on the specifics but to the general notion that Iran has to feel isolation and that there is a cost to what they are doing," he said.

In late March, the U.N. Security Council gave Iran a month to stop enrichment and answer questions from the U.N. nuclear watchdog group, the International Atomic Energy Agency. Iran says that its program is peaceful and only for the generation of electricity.

The United States has asked the Security Council to invoke Chapter 7 of the U.N. charter, which allows the world body to decide on measures, including the use of force, "to maintain or restore international peace and security."

Russia spoke against the use of Chapter 7 at the meetings, fearing it would almost certainly lead to military action, according to a source familiar with the discussions who spoke on condition of anonymity.

But Russia said it would be willing to discuss other punitive options after the IAEA issues a report on

Iran's response to the Security Council statement, the source said. "We are convinced of the need to wait for the IAEA report due at the end of the month," Lavrov told reporters.

The source also said that Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister Cui Tiankai, who attended the session, was critical of Iran and had delivered a "tough message" privately to the Iranians during a stopover in Tehran before the Moscow meeting.

The diplomats discussed the pros and cons of a number of options in detail, Burns said. The United Nations, for instance, could decide to impose sanctions without invoking Chapter 7, and individual countries could also impose sanctions. The United States has had sanctions against Iran for more than 25 years.

Javier Solana, the European Union's foreign policy chief, said last week that the E.U. was considering targeted sanctions, but he added that "any military action is absolutely [off] the table for us."

An Iranian delegation arrived in Moscow on Wednesday for talks with Russian officials and, separately, with diplomats from Britain, France and Germany.

At a news conference on Wednesday, Burns also said that Washington wanted to include the former Soviet republics of Belarus, Georgia and Moldova on the agenda when leaders of the Group of Eight industrial countries meet in Russia later this year.

The United States is at odds with Russian policy toward the countries, which Moscow considers to be part of its natural sphere of influence.

© 2006 The Washington Post Company

Iran talks tough

Associated Press

TEHERAN, April 30 : Iran has warned that it would respond to any harsh action by the UN Security Council with an equally tough - but unspecified - response and insisted again it would continue uranium enrichment.

Yesterday, Iran offered to allow the resumption of intrusive "snap" inspections of its nuclear facilities if the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency were to resume its lead role managing Iran's dispute with the international community.

The White House rejected the proposal. "Our reac-

tions are totally compatible with the actions of the other parties. Against radical actions, Iran will react accordingly. If the UN Security Council makes decisions, the Islamic Republic of Iran will define and arrange its cooperation with the agency compatible with that," Foreign ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi said.

Mr Mohamed ElBaradei, head of the IAEA reported Friday to the UN Security Council that Iran defied the council's deadline to suspend uranium enrichment-related activities. His report opens the way for the council to take puni-

Pak warning

ISLAMABAD, April 30: Pakistan today warned against any use of force against Iran to settle the row over its controversial nuclear programme, saying it would hurt moderate forces in the Islamic world. "Pakistan desires a peaceful resolution to the issue as, God forbid, if there is an attack on Iran it will be a blow to moderate forces in the Islamic world," Foreign minister Khurshid M Kasuri said at the South Asian Journal Conference. ■ PTI

tive measures against Iran. While Mr Asefi said Iran wanted to solve its dispute with the interna-

Diagram
SP1
1/5
tional community through diplomacy, he declared that Teheran would not give in to pressure.

The spokesman was referring to the potential for UN Security Council sanctions in his remarks about "radical actions," but he did not elaborate on how Iran would respond.

Along with the USA, France and Britain say that Iran's actions require a strong response. Russia and China, the other two veto-wielding members of the council, support resolving the standoff through the IAEA and diplomatic action.

THE STATESMAN

01 MAY 2006

Iran threatens NPT pullout

In case of further pressure

Atul Aneja

DUBAI: Iran has signalled that it could quit the international nuclear treaty in case it was pressured further to stop its uranium enrichment programme.

In a letter to U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Parliament has said withdrawal from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) could be on the table in case "the U.N. Secretary-General and other members of the U.N. Security Council fail in their crucial responsibility to resolve differences peacefully."

Analysts say the letter has been timed to influence the debate within the Security Council on ways to stop the enrichment programme.

The Council is so far divided, with Russia and China opposing a proposed draft that envisions the possible imposition of sanctions or military action against Iran to ensure compliance.

The U.S., Britain and France have sponsored the draft. The Iranian lawmakers said they could "review Article 10 of the NPT."

This article allows signatories to withdraw from the treaty on grounds that continuation would jeopardise their national interests.

The country seeking withdrawal must cite details of the exceptional circumstances that have forced it to make the decision and must give a three-month notice to fellow signatories.

Parliament said it could ask the Government to retract its signatures to the Additional Protocol to the NPT. The Additional Protocol allows the International

815
P. 10-14

- Iranian Parliament writes to Kofi Annan

- Teheran reaffirms determination to continue enrichment

- Gulf nations issue appeal to Iran

Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors to carry out surprise inspection of nuclear sites, which they suspect, are part of an atomic weapons programme. Iran has halted inspections after the IAEA reported its case to the Security Council in January.

Reinforcing Iran's tough stand, Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi said Teheran could not be forced to suspend its enrichment programme. He warned, "Intervention by the Security Council in this issue is completely illegal". "Intervention by the U.N. Security Council would change the path of cooperation to confrontation. We recommend they do not do this."

Growing tensions

The growing tensions between the U.S. and Iran is generating anxiety among Teheran's Gulf neighbours.

At a daylong summit on Saturday in Riyadh, the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries urged Iran to step up efforts to defuse the crisis. "We appreciate Iran's efforts to reassure the region over its programme," United Arab Emirates Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed al-Nahayan told reporters after the summit.

THE HINDU

08 MAY 2006

N-STANDOFF | First letter in 27 years from an Iranian president to US president 'could lead to new openings' Iran letter to Bush talks of 'new solutions'

AGENCIES

TEHRAN, MAY 8

IRANIAN President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad wrote to President George W. Bush on Monday proposing "new solutions" to turn around Tehran's plummeting relationship with the United States and other Western powers—a move apparently timed to blunt US determination for a UN Security Council vote this week that could lead to punishing sanctions against the Islamic regime.

The letter was an abrupt about-face for the fiery Ahmadinejad who has spent months vilifying the Bush administration and its allies as bullies who were trying to wrongly deny the Iranians the right to enrich uranium for fuel in nuclear reactors to generate electricity. The Bush administration and some Western allies are concerned the programme is a cover for making nuclear weapons.



Mahmoud Ahmadinejad gestures in front of a banner showing Iranian and foreign officials as he visits a press fair, in Tehran on Monday. AP

The Ahmadinejad letter was the first from an Iranian head of state to an American president in 27 years and may signal a demand that he be treated as an equal in finding a way out of the prolonged dispute over its nuclear programme.

The Ahmadinejad letter, delivered by

the Iranian foreign minister to the Swiss Embassy in Tehran, proposed "new solutions for getting out of international problems and the current fragile situation of the world," spokesman Gholam-Hossein Elham told a news conference. Elham declined to reveal more, stressing "it is not an open letter." Asked whether the letter could lead to direct US-Iranian negotiations, he replied: "For the time being, it's just a letter."

In Turkey, Iran's top nuclear negotiator Ali Larjani said the letter "could lead to a new diplomatic opening" but also warned it contained no softening in Iran's position. He refused to give details of the letter's content, but said, "Perhaps, it could lead to a new diplomatic opening. It needs to be given some time."

In Washington, Bush's National Security Adviser, Stephen Hadley, said that he was not aware of any such letter, and he reiterated the administration's position on Iran's nuclear programme.

"The international community has been very clear to Iran what it needs to do," Hadley said on a TV show. "It needs to return to the suspension of its nuclear activities in order to open the door for a diplomatic resolution."

Meanwhile, six foreign ministers prepared on Monday to chart a common course on a UNSC resolution that would order Tehran to suspend its nuclear programmes. So far, however, the ministers, invited to a dinner in New York by US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, have not agreed on key points of the proposed measure, such as invoking Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, used in dozens of Council resolutions for peacekeeping missions and other legally binding actions.

Russia and China, which have veto power, fear too much pressure on Iran would be self-defeating or precipitate an oil crisis. Both worry the US would use the resolution to justify military action.

09 MAY 2006

AQ Khan gave N-knowhow to Syria: USA

Press Trust of India

Iran's yes & no

WASHINGTON, May 13. — In the first such revelation of its kind, US intelligence has said that the proliferation network headed by disgraced Pakistani scientist AQ Khan had offered and supplied nuclear weapons technology to Syria.

The startling disclosure was made in the "Intelligence Report to Congress" which said Pakistani investigators had confirmed reports from International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that Khan's black-marketing network "offered nuclear technology and hardware" to Syria. This is for the first time that Mr. Bush administration publicly linked Syria to Pakistan via Khan network. So far it has been saying that the network supplied nuclear materials and goods to only Libya, Iran and North Korea.

Syria maintains nuclear facilities in three places ~ Dayr, Al Hajar and Dubaya, said the "721 Report", named after a law that requires intelligence establishment to report to Congress about acquisitions of WMDs and advanced conventional munitions by various countries. The report covered the period

BALI, May 13. — Iran's president emboldened by the support of Muslim nations, said today he was willing to hold talks over his nuclear programme but not with countries that hold "bombs over our head." President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad made the comments after close-door talks with the heads of state from Indonesia, Pakistan, Nigeria, Turkey and Malaysia. AP

of 2004 but its release was delayed by the new Office of the Director of National Intelligence, said *The Washington Times* daily, which made public the contents of the report today.

"We are concerned that expertise of technology could have been transferred. We continue to monitor Syrian nuclear intentions with concern," said the intelligence report.

Visit forbidden

The Pakistan government has barred family members of Abdul Qadeer Khan from visiting him, reports AP from Islamabad. The move came as leaders of Pakistan's main Islamist alliance alleged that the health of the detained scientist has deteriorated.

14 MAY 2006

THE STATESMAN

Iran scorns EU N-offer

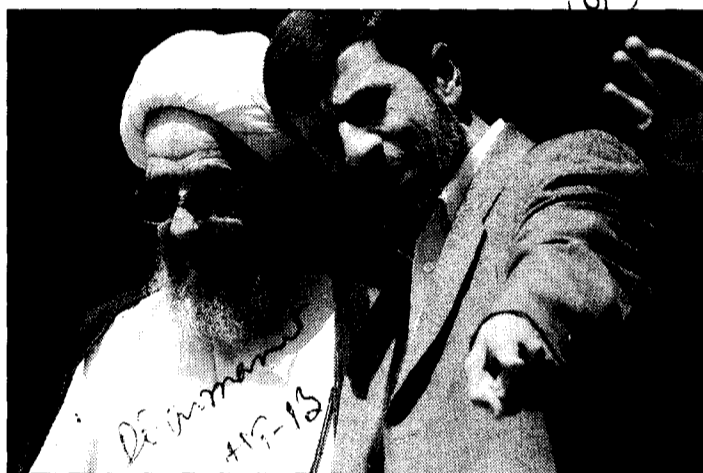
STEVEN R. Weisman
Washington, May 17

IRAN'S PRESIDENT on Wednesday rejected Europe's plan to offer incentives for Tehran to give up its nuclear research programme, despite word from diplomats that the package would include new assistance in building a light-water nuclear reactor for civilian use.

"They say they want to give us incentives!" Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad declared to a crowd in the central Iranian city of Arak, news services reported. "Do you think you are dealing with a four-year-old child to whom you can give some walnuts and chocolates and get gold from him?"

The offer to help with a light-water reactor, which could not easily be used to make weapons, is part of a new package of incentives the Europeans are assembling in one more attempt to salvage their negotiations with Iran, according to European and American diplomats. The package is also to contain threats of economic punishments if Iran does not cooperate.

In their bid to get Iran to suspend its uranium enrichment activities, Europeans had earlier



Iran's hardline President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (right) with the representative of the country's supreme leader in Arak on Wednesday.

AFP

held out the possibility of Iran's being allowed to have a light-water reactor. "The Europeans are dusting off and refining what has already been on the table and seeing what is possible in terms of new ideas," said a diplomat.

Ahmadinejad said on Wednesday that the earlier round of talks followed Iran's decision in 2003 to admit to two decades' worth of violations of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and suspend its nuclear programme.

After Ahmadinejad took office last year, Tehran reinstated the programmes, leading the EU to join with the US in calling for action by the Security Council.

A light-water reactor requires enriched uranium for fuel, but under the deal to be proposed by the West, Iran would be guaranteed a supply of fuel in return for giving up the fuel after it is used. That way, experts say, the reactor byproducts could not be used in a weapons programme.

The Bush administration has not formally endorsed the European package because it has not been completed and because Washington wants to make sure that Europe presents Iran with disincentives for defiance.

Diplomats acknowledged that they were far from certain that Iran would be interested in the proposal, to be discussed in London later this week or early next week by US, European, Russian and Chinese diplomats.

So far, Russia and China have rejected the US effort to get a Security Council resolution demanding that Iran cooperate or face possible sanctions.

The latest effort, European officials say, went badly. US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Russian foreign minister Sergey V. Lavrov had spoken harshly in both Russian and English — languages they both speak — in a way that filled others with dismay.

The hope of the US, Britain and France is that if the latest incentives are rejected by Iran, Russia might be more inclined to move a step toward possible sanctions. But that is a hope more than an expectation, European diplomats said.

The New York Times

18 MAY 2006

DISARMAMENT ■ US says it's time to stop production of bomb material New N-ban treaty proposed



File photo of a nuclear test in the US

ASSOCIATED PRESS
GENEVA, MAY 18

THE US today proposed that the 65-nation Conference on Disarmament negotiate a new treaty banning production of the nuclear material needed to make atomic bombs.

Stephen G Rademaker, acting US assistant secretary of state for arms control, told the body that developments in the nuclear programmes in North Korea and Iran showed it was time for a rapid agreement on a treaty to ban production of plutonium and highly enriched uranium, known as "fissile material".

"The treaty text that we are putting forward contains the provisions that would comprise a legally binding FMCT (Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty)," said Rademaker.

Rademaker said the proposal has widespread support

1915
'Nations opposing Iran have mental problems'

TEHRAN: Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on Thursday mocked those opposed to Tehran's nuclear programme, saying they were suffering mental problems. "Those who get upset at the happiness and progress of others are suffering from a mental problem and therefore should find a way to cure themselves," said Ahmadinejad in Zarandieh. He added that Tehran was ready to negotiate on its nuclear programme with all nations, except Israel. —AFP

and would give the conference a positive role for the first time since it completed the ban on nuclear bomb testing 10 years ago.

"The only possible avenue for progress in this conference is to concentrate its efforts on the one topic on which we most likely shall be

able to take action," he said.

But Hamid Eslamizad, a senior official at Iran's mission in Geneva, stressed that his country's uranium enrichment programme was entirely peaceful. Eslamizad said that US criticism of Iran's nuclear activities was reminiscent of similar, incorrect allegations by Rademaker when he told the conference in 2003 that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction and had been collaborating with Al-Qaeda.

"A couple of months later it was the US troops attacking Iraq in search of weapons of mass destruction," said Eslamizad. "Later on they could not find any weapons of mass destruction or any real linkages between the previous Iraqi regime and Al-Qaeda."

The proposal is 3 1/2 pages long and it would go into force with only the approval of the five permanent members of the UNSC— Britain, China, France, Russia and the US.

19 MAY 2006

Drug trafficking: Saudi to behead two Keralites

RAJEEV PI

KOCHI, MAY 11

LESS than a fortnight after Chief Minister Oommen Chandy himself turned up at the airport to receive Naushad, the Malayali immigrant worker who was spared after a court in Saudi Arabia ordered to have his eye gouged out, two Keralites have now been sentenced to be beheaded in the desert kingdom.

A Shariah court in Damam has ordered the duo, 48-year-old Hamsa Abubacker of Ma-

lappuram and 42-year-old Sheikh Mastan of Kozhikode, to be beheaded for drug trafficking. The Saudi police had allegedly caught Hamsa with some heroin as he got off an Indian Airlines flight from Mumbai three years ago. Reports say the local police caught Sheikh Mastan, who was already in the Saudi capital Riyadh, after Hamsa confessed that a man in Malappuram had asked him to deliver the package to Mastan.

Hamsa, originally hailing from Chavakkad in Thrissur, has been staying in Malappu-

ram for the past few years. He has a wife, two daughters and a son. Hamsa had been doing odd manual jobs back home before going to Saudi Arabia. Strangely, his wife, 41-year-old Rukhiya, had received a draft for Rs 5,000 sent in Hamsa's name three months ago, though Hamsa has been in jail for the last three years.

There are also apprehensions that Mastan may actually be someone else using a passport that he had procured using a false name and address, since his home can-

not be located at the Kozhikode address in his passport. The regional passport officer at Kozhikode told *The Indian Express* that his office has yet to get a communication from MEA to check up on the passport details of the two men.

The Dubai-based Radio Asia has reported today that 32 men from Kerala were executed in Saudi Arabia during the last 10 years for drug-related offences. Keralites make up the largest chunk among the 1.6 million Indians working in Saudi Arabia.

3 2 MA 1995

INDIAN EXPRESS

World frowns, Iran shrugs

JULIAN Borger/ROBERT Booth
Washington/Berlin, March 30

THE WORLD'S super powers on Thursday warned Iran to drop its uranium enrichment efforts, a day after the United Nations Security Council issued a formal demand. Yet Iran refused to halt the efforts, which the West suspects are a cover for a nuclear weapons programme.

Wednesday's UNSC statement, passed unanimously, called on the UN nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, to report back in 30 days on Tehran's compliance, but did not

make clear what would happen if Iran refused to cooperate.

On Friday, Britain, France, America, Russia and China presented a united front against the programme. The five permanent members of the UNSC, along with Germany, met in Berlin and agreed on what US secretary of state Condoleezza Rice called a "united opposition" to Iran's decision to restart a programme that could provide material for energy and nuclear weapons.

But Iran's ambassador to the IAEA, Aliasghar Soltaniyeh, said his country would not suspend uranium enrichment work. "We

will not, definitely, suspend again the enrichment," he said, adding the decision was not reversible.

Foreign minister Manouchehr Mottaki said Iran was willing "to continue with negotiations and also continue with our sincere and constructive cooperation with the agency". But he condemned "unjustified propaganda" about its nuclear programme. In what looked like a compromise, he offered to set up a "regional consortium" to enrich fuel for Iran. His statement implied that the consortium would be based in Iran.

The Guardian (with agencies)

Teheran for N-fuel unit in country

Associated Press

MOSCOW, March 28. — Teheran is calling for a nuclear fuel production centre to be set up in Iran with the involvement of other countries, the Iranian Embassy in Moscow said today.

The proposal, announced in a statement from Iran's embassy in Moscow, presents an alternative to a Russian offer to host Iran's nuclear fuel production as a way to ease concerns that enrichment conducted in Iran could be aiming to develop atomic weapons.

"In terms of satisfying its needs, Teheran cannot remain dependent on international suppliers," the Iranian government said in the statement.

"Iran would welcome the creation of an international nuclear fuel centre on its territory with the participation of other countries and in the framework of an international consortium." Moscow's proposal to

move Iran's uranium enrichment programme to Russia is meant to guarantee international oversight of fuel production and ensure it can't be used for weapons production. Iran insists its nuclear programme is only meant to generate power.

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov said today that the offer remains on the table, but "Iran should say unambiguously whether it is planning to accept or reject the offer in order to allay the international community's concerns," the Interfax news agency reported.

The Iranian statement reiterated that UNSC intervention in the dispute would "escalate tensions, entailing negative consequences that would be of benefit to no party." The statement came as top diplomats from the five permanent UNSC members, together with Germany, prepared for a Thursday meeting in Berlin to come to agreement on next steps concerning the programme.

29 MAR 2006

THE STATESMAN

No headway in Iran talks

24/3 ✓
Diamant
5/3

Press Trust of India

NEW YORK, March 21. — The UN Security Council's five veto-wielding members and Germany failed to reach an agreement on how to resolve the Iranian nuclear issue after holding four hours of talks but all sides committed to a new round of meetings to break the impasse.

The meeting was billed as an attempt to develop a long term strategy to deter Iran from producing any nuclear weapon but there was vast chasm in the positions taken by the United States, Britain and France on one side and Russia and China on the other.

The deadlock came as the USA and European officials said that Britain had presented Washington with a paper containing diplomatic strategy to resolve the crisis, including new talks and concessions, a US daily reported. The US representative at the talks Mr John Sawers, however, said there was no such proposal at the meeting.

At the meeting last night, officials were joined by their United Nations ~~Ambassadors~~ struggling to produce a consensus text

for the presidential statement on the Iranian nuclear issue. But no agreement could be reached in the face of strong opposition by Russia, backed by China, to the draft prepared by Britain and France with the backing of the USA.

The drafters would have another look at the draft to see if Russian views can be accommodated. The statement requires okay by all 15 members of the Council. Russia, diplomats say, is wary of what might follow the statement and it wants to ensure that a member or group of members cannot interpret it that it authorises them to take any action.

Britain and France were reported to be considering bringing in the Council a resolution under chapter seven of the Charter which makes it enforceable after the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reports non-compliance by Teheran to the demand made by the Council in the presidential statement.

The ministerial level talks were aimed at developing long-term strategy to deal with Iran which the USA and its allies suspect is insisting on enriching uranium itself with the aim of

producing nuclear weapons.

But Iran contends that enriching uranium is its right under the Nuclear Non proliferation Treaty to which it is a party and that it only wants to refine uranium for its civilian power plants.

Most diplomats described the discussions as "useful" and that they would be continued at the Security Council which is discussing a presidential statement.

US Undersecretary of State Mr Nicholas Burns told reporters that they remain "convinced that they will see a presidential statement. It just may take a couple of days." "All agreed that Iran is seeking nuclear weapons and is out of compliance with its international commitments. All agreed that they should stay united, stay together, to send one message" he added.

Diplomats said one of the major Russian concerns was that the statement gives only 14 days to IAEA to report on compliance to its demand that it stop enriching uranium. It was also opposed to the IAEA officials reporting to the Security Council rather than its Board.

22 MAR 2006

Deal with Moscow before US pact

Russia fuel as Bush winks

BHARAT BHUSHAN

New Delhi, March 15: President George W. Bush was aware of Russian plans to supply nuclear fuel for the Tarapur atomic power plant before his visit to India.

Moscow informed Bush and the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) almost simultaneously in February that it had taken this decision under the "safety exception clause".

The Russian decision did not follow but preceded the Bush visit, sources said.

Reports that Russia will supply fuel have come out on the eve of Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov's visit to India.

The Americans have reacted by saying such a step should be taken after Delhi fulfilled its obligations under the Indo-US nuclear pact concluded during Bush's visit.

But the Russians began fabrication of the low-enriched uranium fuel for Tarapur in December 2005 — nearly three months before the Bush visit. This is evidence enough that the decision had little to do with India's civilian and military nuclear separation plan presented to the US.

The Russian fuel is expected to reach in two consignments by air, with the first lot arriving any time now.

The Russian decision, according to the sources, was meant to demonstrate Moscow's "real political commit-

TARAPUR TALE

● Builders

General Electric of the US built the Tarapur plants in 1969

● Blocked

US stops fuel supply after the nuclear tests in 1974

● Lifeline

France and Russia supply fuel intermittently

● Last supply

From Moscow in 2001, provoking US protest

ment" to a strategic partnership with India.

Even now the consortium of nuclear fuel and technology suppliers, the NSG, has not ratified the Indo-US nuclear deal. Nor has the US Congress.

Russia, therefore, is not acting on a "go-ahead" from any external source. The talks with Moscow on fuel for Tarapur began last year when Prime Minister Manmohan Singh went there on May 9.

President Vladimir Putin, the sources added, responded positively to the Indian request, but did not make a commitment. The deal was sewn up during the summit between Singh and Putin in December 2005.

Although the high-point of the visit, the decision was kept secret. Even now the Russian decision was leaked by the US state department before New

Delhi confirmed it.

The Russians had insisted in their meetings with Singh in May 2005 that it would become easier for them to supply Tarapur fuel after India passed the Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery System (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Act. The act was passed by May 13. It seeks to prevent transfer of weapons of mass destruction and their technology.

The India-US joint statement of July 18, 2005 initially put a brake on the Russian decision on Tarapur fuel. The Russian foreign office wanted to wait till the India-US agreement went through.

In November 2005, after several high-level visits from India, Moscow indicated it would prefer to take the decision in May 2006 after the NSG meeting.

Last December, Singh took along with him Anil Kakodkar, chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, to Moscow. Kakodkar held separate meetings with the Russian atomic energy chief in which he impressed upon him the need to get the fuel by March to ensure reliable and safe operations at Tarapur.

Around the same time, the Russian political assessment changed. Moscow believed that after the Indo-US July 18 statement, where the road map was laid for the nuclear agreement, Washington was unlikely to react negatively.

■ See Page 8

16 MAR 2006

THE TELEGRAPH

Australia stands firm on uranium exports ban

Agencies
SYDNEY



DOWN: SYNDROME: DOWNER

AUSTRALIA will maintain its ban on uranium exports to India and other countries which have not signed the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, foreign minister Alexander Downer said on Sunday. His comments dashed hopes in New Delhi that the stance can be softened to help India meet energy demand.

Mr Downer said he would not change Australia's 30-year-old policy of not exporting uranium to treaty non-signatories. "There's no basis at this stage for us changing that policy now," he said. "We don't have any intention at this stage to change our policy in relation to uranium exports to those three countries, which are India, Pakistan and Israel, that haven't signed the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty," he added.

India's request to buy uranium from Australia, which has almost half the world's known resources, followed a landmark deal between India and the United States on civil nuclear energy, reached during the visit of US president George Bush.

Australian prime minister John Howard, during his own visit to India last week, made positive noises about the US agreement and left officials upbeat on the prospect of expanding a nuclear energy industry which accounts for just 3% output. Mr Downer said he was still keen to see the finer details of the US-Indian nuclear technology trading agreement.

16 MAR 2006

The Economic Times

Iran NPT quit threat

Tehran, March 12 (Agencies): Iran could leave the Nuclear non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) if its nuclear rights are not accounted for, foreign minister Manouchehr Mottaki warned today.

"If we reach a point where the existing mechanisms do not provide for the right of the Iranian people, then the policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran would be possibly revised and reconsidered," Mottaki told reporters. "At the moment we believe that there is a chance for different sides to continue the negotiations."

On Wednesday, the International Atomic Energy Agency sent an assessment report on Iran's programme to the Security Council after a failed three-year-old probe to confirm the true nature of Iran's activities.

The standoff has escalated in recent months, with Tehran insisting it will not stop the sensitive enrichment activities that the west suspects are cover for developing an atomic bomb.

Today, Iran said it was no longer considering the Russian compromise deal intended to overcome the dispute. Russia had proposed making nuclear fuel for Iran to ensure uranium was enriched only to the low level needed for power stations.

But Iran was unwilling to surrender its right to enrich uranium on its own soil.

Foreign ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi said Tehran was not considering reprising the Russian plan. "Now the situation has changed, the Russian proposal is not on the agenda," he said.

His Russian counterpart Mikhail Kamynin was quoted by the RIA news agency saying Moscow would weigh up the Iranian remarks and consider its position.

Konstantin Kosachev, chairman of the foreign affairs committee in Russia's State Duma, was quoted by RIA saying Iran's stance could "radicalise the nature of the United Nations Security Council discussion".

But another news agency quoted a Russian source familiar with the talks saying Russia had withdrawn the proposal anyway.

"After the IAEA board meeting, Moscow informed Tehran there was no longer any point in the joint venture proposal," Itar-Tass quoted the source as saying, referring to the UN watchdog.

MAR 2006

77

Draft proposal on N-deal sent to US Congress

Seeks exemption for India by amending Atomic Energy Act

S. Rajagopalan
Washington, March 10

IN A clear bid to put the Indo-US nuke deal on the fast track, the Bush Administration has presented a draft legislative proposal to the US Congress.

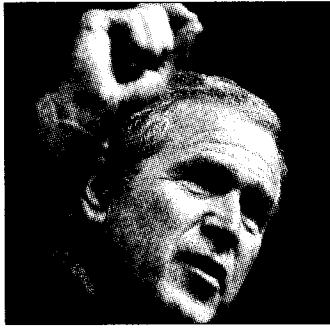
Although there was no immediate official word, reports citing congressional sources said the proposal was submitted on Thursday to the Senate foreign relations committee and the House international relations committee.

The proposal is said to urge the Congress to grant a special exemption for India by amending the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 which bans nuclear sales to states which are not signatories to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Although it is for the Congress to decide on the mechanics and timeline to pursue the matter, the Administration is understood to have requested action before May-end. By then, the US plans to approach the 45-nation Nuclear Suppliers Group to grant similar exemption to India, thus clearing the decks for implementation.

Given the divergent views within the Congress, it is unclear how fast the proposal will travel through the two principal committees and then the two chambers. But the Administration appears hopeful that the measure will secure approval, given the surge of opinion in favour of a strategic relationship with India.

CLEARING DECKS



As Richard Boucher, the assistant secretary of state for South and Central Asia, put it during an interaction with Indian and Pakistani journalists on Thursday: "This is an issue which is not going to divide up on partisan lines... both Houses, understand that the new relationship with India is very important to the US."

"There will be questions raised on whether this is the right way to do it for non-proliferation. I think we have answers to those questions and will find the support we need", Boucher said.

Congressional sources say the two high-power committees will hold hearings to consider the Administration's case and the separation plan that has been agreed to.

Iran N-plan goes to Security Council



Iran has not met the conditions at the IAEA... We'll therefore start action by the UNSC from next week

— Nicholas Burns

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
Vienna, March 9

THE UN watchdog on Thursday opened the way for Security Council action against Iran over its nuclear programme, sparking an angry reaction from Tehran which threatened Washington with "harm and pain" for leading the charge.

A report on Iran's programme, which the West fears is hiding a covert drive for the atom bomb, will now be sent to the UN body in New York. The

dossier will be brought up at the Security Council next week.

In Vienna, the International Atomic Energy Agency wrapped up three days of talks focused on the standoff.

Director Mohamed ElBaradei said it was still possible to reach a political settlement and urged all sides to "lower the rhetoric" to achieve this. "This is simply a new phase of diplomacy, an extension of diplomatic efforts to find a solution," he said.

Unlike the IAEA, the Security Council has enforcement pow-

ers and can impose punitive measures, including sanctions.

Europe and the US have led the drive for action, saying Iran has hidden the truth about its nuclear programme and should not be allowed to enrich uranium, which can provide the fuel for civilian reactors but also, in highly enriched form, the material for atomic weapons.

"Iran has not met the conditions at the IAEA: to suspend all enrichment and cooperate fully with inspectors, undersecretary of state Nicholas Burns said.

Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov said there was no military solution and cast doubts on the effectiveness of any sanctions against Tehran.

Russia has been trying to broker a compromise under which Iran could enrich uranium in Russia, so that it gets the nuclear fuel but not the technology for making bombs.

Iran has proposed suspending industrial-scale enrichment but doing research work, but the West says even small-scale enrichment is too dangerous.

IAEA | Moscow plan to allow Tehran to run 20 centrifuges opposed

Russia and West split over Iran nuclear issue

AGENCIES

VIENNA, MARCH 7

A STRONG US opposition appeared close to sinking a Russian initiative that would leave Iran with a small-scale uranium enrichment programme, diplomats said on Tuesday as Moscow and Washington struggled to find common ground on what to do about Tehran's nuclear ambitions.

One of the diplomats, who spoke outside a meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency's 35-nation board, said Germany remained open to the proposal, which would allow the Iranians to run 20 uranium enriching centrifuges domestically while ceding control of large-scale enrichment to Moscow on Russian soil.

On Monday US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice called IAEA director Mohammad ElBaradei and according to an administration official who was briefed on the conversation.

Rice's call came after ElBaradei suggested to reporters that the standoff with Iran could be resolved in a week or so, apparently an allusion to the Russian proposal. Washington's strategy is to get past the meeting of the IAEA that opened on Monday and, under a resolution passed by the agency's board in February, have the issue turned over to the United Nations Security Council immediately. But officials clearly fear that the Russian proposal is intended to slow that process.

American officials said they had been assured by the Russians that there was no formal proposal on the table. The Russian foreign minister, Sergey V Lavrov, had dinner in Washington on Monday evening with Rice and the national security adviser, Stephen Hadley, and he is scheduled to meet Bush in the Oval Office on Tuesday.

Under the Russian proposal, Iran would temporarily suspend all uranium enrichment activities at its facility at Natanz but then be allowed to do what Russia de-



IAEA chairman Yukiya Amano of Japan talks to Iran's representative to the UN Mohammad Mehdi Akhondzadeh Basti at Vienna on Monday. AP

'UN must compensate Iran'

► **TEHRAN:** President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has called on the UN nuclear agency to compensate Iran for suspending its nuclear activities since 2003, state television reported on Tuesday.

Ahmadinejad made the call before the IAEA began a second day of talks in Vienna that will include Iran's nuclear programme. "The IAEA now has to compensate Iran for causing damage to the development of its science, technology and economy" due to the suspension of nuclear activities, the television quoted Ahmadinejad. —AP

scribes as "limited research activities" in Iran's uranium enrichment programme, said the European officials

Iran would have to agree to a moratorium on production of enriched uranium on an industrial scale for between seven to nine years, ratify additional measures that let the nuclear agency conduct intrusive inspections of its nuclear facilities and cre-

ate a joint venture with Russia on the production of enriched uranium on Russian soil, the officials said. The proposal, which has not been made public, spurred ElBaradei to give an upbeat assessment about a possible swift resolution of the impasse over Iran's programme, an official familiar with his thinking said.

In a tonal shift, ElBaradei said Iran had made concessions on some issues. Calling Iran's activities at its uranium enrichment plant at Natanz "the sticking point," he added, "That issue is still being discussed this week, and I still hope that in the next week or so that agreement could still be reached."

In an interview on Monday evening, Nicholas Burns, the under secretary of state for political affairs, said the administration would reject any proposal that did not require the Iranians to stop domestic nuclear enrichment and reprocessing activities.

—With The New York Times

March 6, 2006

Iran Maintains Defiant Stance as Atomic Agency Takes Case

By NAZILA FATHI

TEHRAN, March 5 — Iran on Sunday reiterated its warning that it would begin making nuclear fuel on an industrial scale if the United Nations nuclear agency decided to send its case to the Security Council in its meeting on Monday.

The warning came a day before the start of a meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which will decide whether to send Iran's case to the Security Council for possible punitive actions.

The agency had demanded last month that Iran suspend its research and development program before the agency's meeting this week. But Iran brushed off the demand. The current Iranian program produces enriched uranium on a small scale. Enriched uranium can be used to make nuclear fuel; highly enriched uranium can be used to make nuclear weapons.

"If Iran's nuclear dossier is referred to the U.N. Security Council, uranium enrichment will be resumed," Iran's top nuclear negotiator, Ali Larijani, said at a news conference, referring to large-scale enrichment. "Nuclear research and development are part of Iran's national interests and sovereignty and we will not give them up."

"We will not accept the suspension of our research program," he said, "but we are willing to hold off on large-scale enrichment for a short period of time to remove concerns."

"This is our last proposal to end this standoff," he added.

European negotiators rejected the same proposal on Friday when Mr. Larijani offered it at a meeting in Vienna. "Europe will not accept such an offer because even a research program can give Iran the capability to develop nuclear weapons," said a Western diplomat in Tehran, speaking on condition of anonymity under diplomatic rules.

Justin Higgins, a State Department spokesman, said on Sunday, "This is only the latest in a long series of unhelpful statements and gestures that Iran has made with regard to its nuclear program."

Iran has so far rejected all international proposals for it to abandon its nuclear research program, including one made by Russia last week for uranium to be enriched by Russia on Russian soil and the fuel shipped back to Iran. The Russian proposal was backed by the United States and China.

Iran has warned that any sanctions against it could affect oil prices. But Mr. Larijani said Iran, which is OPEC's second-largest oil producer, would not use "oil as a weapon" because it respected the psychological security of the international community.

"But naturally if they change the situation that will automatically be affected, too," he warned, saying sanctions themselves, without any action by Iran, would affect prices.

He added that "sanctions will not affect us much, and some solutions have been thought about for those which would affect us."

The conservative daily Keyhan reported Sunday that a spy who had passed information to Americans about Iran's nuclear program for the past 10 years had been arrested. It said the man, who was not identified, had been arrested once before on the same charges but was released after he expressed regret.

The newspaper reported that another person accused of spying, an employee of the state telecommunication company, had been arrested and charged with selling fiber-optic telecommunications plans to the United States.

Tough Talk From Bolton on Iran

WASHINGTON, March 5 (Reuters) — John R. Bolton, the American ambassador to the United Nations, said Sunday that Iran faced "painful consequences" if it continued secret nuclear activities, and he said the matter would become more difficult to resolve if the international community did not confront it.

Mr. Bolton also reaffirmed that the United States would use "all tools at our disposal" to thwart Iran's nuclear program and was already "beefing up defensive measures."

"The Iran regime must be made aware that if it continues down the path of international isolation, there will be tangible and painful consequences," he told 4,500 delegates to the convention of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the leading pro-Israel lobbying group.

N-TALKS | Potential UN Security Council action against Tehran as early as next week

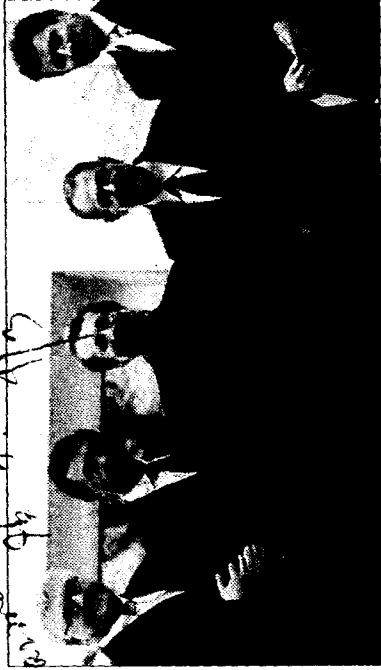
Negotiations between EU, Iran fail

GEORGE JAHN
VIENNA, MARCH 3

Talks between European Union negotiators and Iran over its nuclear ambitions broke up on Friday without any agreement, paving the way for potential UN Security Council action against Tehran as early as next week.

"Unfortunately we were not able to reach an agreement," said French Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy. He said the EU continues to demand "full and complete suspension" of uranium enrichment and related activities that have fed fears that Iran may be seeking nuclear arms.

Germany's Frank-Walter Steinmeier said the meeting ended "without achieving a re-



German Foreign Minister Steinmeier (left), his French counterpart Douste-Blazy, Iranian chief negotiator Larjani, EU foreign policy chief Solana and political director of Britain's Foreign Office in Vienna on Friday. AP

sult." The sides met for just over two hours. The talks took place just three days before a meeting of the IAEA's 35-nation board. The board put the Security Council on alert February 4 after Iran refused to heed requests to reimpose a suspension on enrichment, which can make either nuclear fuel or the fissile material for warheads.

Douste-Blazy, Steinmeier, EU foreign affairs chief Javier Solana

and John Sawes, a senior British official, met with Iranian chief negotiator Ali Larjani after his arrival from Moscow, where Russia tried to persuade Iran to accept its offer to enrich uranium for Iran.

Larjani warned that handing over the nuclear issue to the Council—as the US has demanded—would kill Moscow's initiative.

There had been little hope the Vienna meeting would achieve a breakthrough. Before it began, a Russian nuclear agency official confirmed the Moscow talks remained snagged over Iran's refusal to freeze enrichment at home.

Still, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said on Friday that a deal with Iran on its nuclear enrichment programme was still possible before next week's IAEA meeting. "There always is an opportunity to reach an agree-

ment," the Interfax news agency quoted Lavrov as saying.

By depriving the Iranians of domestic control of enrichment the Russian plan—backed by most in the international community including the US and the EU—is meant to eliminate the danger that Tehran might make the fissile core of nuclear warheads.

Iran restarted some enrichment activities last month, two years after voluntarily freezing the programme during talks with the Europeans. Those talks unraveled late last year after Tehran started work on pre-enrichment programmes.

While the Security Council is waiting until the end of next week's board meeting to decide further action, its involvement reflects the level of concern surrounding Iran's nuclear ambitions.

No headway in EU-Iran talks

VIENNA, March 3. —

Talks between European Union negotiators and Iran over its nuclear ambitions broke up today without any agreement, paving the way for potential UN Security Council action against Tehran as early as next week.

"Unfortunately we were not able to reach an agreement," French foreign minister Mr Philippe Douste-Blazy said. He said the EU continues to demand "full and complete suspension" of uranium enrichment and related activities that have fed fears that Iran maybe seeking nuclear arms. Germany's Mr Frank-Walter Steinmeier said the meeting ended "without achieving a result."

The sides met for just over two hours. The talks took place just three days before a meeting of the IAEA's 35-nation board. It put the UNSC on alert on 4 February after Iran refused to suspend enrichment. — AP

04 MAR 1997

717

IAEA says no evidence of Iranian n-weapons plan

Disarmament - 113
19.16

Report likely to influence agency's Vienna meet

Atul Aneja

DUBAI: As the countdown for a crucial meeting on Iran on March 6 gets under way, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has revealed that it has not found any evidence that Teheran had diverted material towards making atomic weapons.

In its report which has been circulated to its 35 board members, the IAEA said that its three years of investigations had not shown "any diversion of nuclear material to nuclear weapons or

other nuclear explosive devices", the Associated Press reported.

Cooperation sought

However, it called upon Iran to substantially increase its cooperation with the IAEA inspectors as the agency has not been able "to conclude that there are no undeclared nuclear materials or activities in Iran."

Without heightened cooperation, the agency would be unable to establish whether some of Iran's past nuclear activities under wraps were not linked to the

manufacture of nuclear weapons. Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki who has been visiting Japan said, "They (IAEA) could not find evidence which shows that Iran has diverted from its peaceful purposes of nuclear activities in Iran." The report is likely to strongly influence the March 6 meeting in Vienna where the IAEA board is expected to discuss the future course of action on Iran.

On February 4, the board had decided to report Iran's case to the U.N. Security Council, which can take action against Iran, including the imposition of economic sanctions.

Buoyed by the report, Iran is rushing the head of its Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Ali Larijani to Russia for another round of talks.

A Russian delegation led by Sergei Kiriyenko held talks with Iran over the weekend.

These discussions had revolved around the establishment of a joint venture facility in Russia, which would produce enriched uranium for generating electricity.

That meeting produced an "agreement in principle" on this subject.

However, later, differences appear to have surfaced on another issue — on whether Iran would be allowed to operate a small-scale enrichment plant for research purposes.

The IAEA report said that Iran had begun enrichment using 10 centrifuges — a move which can result in the production of only minute quantities of enriched uranium.

ElBaradei plays peace-maker

Atul Aneja

DUBAI: The moderating influence of Mohammad ElBaradei, the chief of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) appears visible in the report on Iran that was circulated among the grouping's board members on Monday.

Analysts point out that Mr. ElBaradei's efforts to buffer a confrontation between Iran with the United States and the European Union (E.U.) had become apparent earlier in February, when he urged key Western states to be more accommodative of Iran's position. Advocating that Iran be allowed small scale enrichment, officials close to Mr. ElBaradei were quoted

by Reuters news agency in a mid-February report as saying, "Natanz [Teheran's pilot enrichment plant] is Iran's bottomline, a sovereignty issue, a reality we may have to deal with."

Iran has also been sending conciliatory signals. An Iranian website Aftabnews reported that Iran's Expediency Council head, Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, met 11 Grand Ayatollahs at the seminary in Qom on January 29 to discuss the nuclear issue. A day later, the Persian language daily *Keyhan* gave details about a six-point proposal that had been handed over to the Europeans by Iranian negotiator Javad Vaedi in order to defuse the crisis.

Iran starts enrichment, puts off talks

AGENCIES

Vienna, February 13

IRAN HAS started small-scale enrichment of uranium — a process that can produce fuel for nuclear reactors or bombs, diplomats said on Monday. Tehran also abruptly postponed talks with its allies in Moscow on its disputed nuclear programme.

The move reflected Tehran's defiance of international pressure meant to ease concerns it wants to build nuclear arms that led to its recent referral to the UN Security Council. "Uranium gas has been fed into three machines," one senior diplomat fa-

miliar with Iran's nuclear file said. Another diplomat confirmed that limited enrichment had begun at Iran's Natanz site.

To produce significant amounts of enriched uranium, gas must be fed into hundreds of such machines. Uranium enriched to a low degree can be used for nuclear reactors, while highly enriched uranium is suitable for warheads.

Iran is years away from running the 50,000 centrifuges it says it wants to operate as a source of fuel for its Russian-built nuclear plant at Bushehr.

Even small-scale enrichment is significant, however, because

it represents symbolic determination on the part of Tehran to go ahead with a technology that most nations want it to give up because of fears of misuse.

Further piling on tension, an Iranian official announced Monday that talks with Moscow scheduled for Thursday on moving Iranian enrichment to Russia as a way ensuring Iran has no direct control were on indefinite hold. And the official, presidential spokesman Gholamhossein Elham, reiterated that his country may reconsider its adherence to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty if it judges that goes against its interests.



We can survive sanctions: Ahmadinejad

IRANIAN PRESIDENT Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said in an interview published on Monday that nations calling for economic sanctions over his country's nuclear programme would lose far more than Tehran. "These difficulties are the prelude to advancement," Ahmadinejad said in an interview published in *USA Today*. "I believe those who want to impose limitations on us will lose more than us," the Iranian leader said.

In the interview — Ahmadinejad's first with a US newspaper — he said that Iranians "do not have any problem with the people of United States." But he had harsh words for George W. Bush's administration, which may seek UN sanctions over Iran's decision to resume its nuclear programme. "They choose to threaten us and make false allegations, and they want to impose their lifestyle on others," Ahmadinejad said.

Under pressure, Iran puts NPT at stake

REUTERS
TEHRAN | FEBRUARY 11

IRAN may reconsider its membership of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) if it feels its enemies are using the accord to put unfair pressure on it, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said on Saturday.

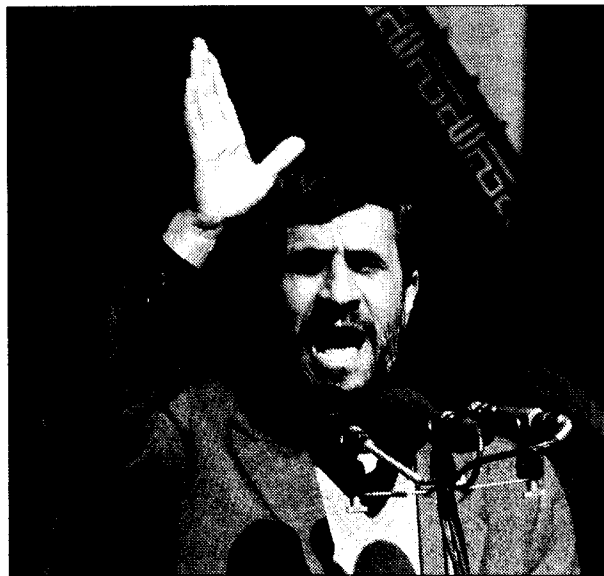
"The Islamic Republic's policy has been to follow its nuclear efforts in the framework of the (International Atomic Energy) Agency and the NPT," he told a huge crowd on the anniversary of the 1979 Islamic revolution.

"However, if we find out they are going to take advantage of these regulations to destroy the rights of the Iranian people, you should know that the Iranian nation will reconsider its policy," he added.

Western nations have successfully pushed for Iran to be reported to the UN Security Council for failing to convince the world its atomic scientists are working exclusively on power stations and not bombs.

The crowd voiced its approval of Ahmadinejad's remarks with chants of "Nuclear technology is our inalienable right."

But the President said Iran was not going to make a sudden withdrawal from the NPT, as North Korea did. "We would still like to be patient, so do not try to wear down



Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, delivers a speech in a ceremony marking 27th anniversary of the nation's Islamic Revolution at the Azadi Square in Tehran. AP

our patience," he said.

Russia and Iran will hold talks next week to see if any headway can be made on a Russian proposal that Moscow should enrich Tehran's uranium, thereby allaying fears that atomic fuel could be diverted for use in weapons.

But Ahmadinejad strongly suggested such proposals were not workable. "You are telling us not to produce our nuclear fuel and that you are going to produce it somewhere else instead and then give it back to us. Wow. Do you think we believe you?" he said.

"You have deprived our

country of spare parts for passenger planes for 27 years. What's the guarantee you will provide our nuclear fuel tomorrow?" he added.

The President adopted a defiant stance in the face of economic sanctions which the UN Security Council could impose on Iran. "They will not sell us things. Very well then, don't. The young people here have attained technology on nuclear power and stem cells with their bare hands. So they will be definitely be able to provide their own daily requirements."

Meanwhile former Iranian President Mohammad Khatami defended his coun-

try's nuclear programme on Saturday and, singling out Israel, said the West should focus its pressure on building a nuclear-free Middle East.

The UN's atomic watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), voted last weekend to report Iran to the UN Security Council over its nuclear programme.

"It would have been very good if the international community, especially the Europeans and the IAEA, would make efforts to have a nuclear-free region in the Middle East," Khatami told reporters on the sidelines of a conference in the Malaysian capital.

"But instead of focusing their efforts on achieving a nuclear-free Middle East, they have focused their efforts on Iran, who only wants peaceful nuclear technology," he said.

Khatami, a moderate whose eight-year term ended last year, said Iran was being unfairly targeted.

"Today, some countries in the Middle East as well as Asia have nuclear weapons, the biggest of which is Israel," he said.

"Iran neither has nuclear weapons nor wants to develop nuclear weapons. Thus pressure on Iran to relinquish its right to nuclear technology is an unfair and unjust pressure," added Khatami.

INDIAN EXPRESS

THE HINDU

Date:01/02/2006 URL:

<http://www.thehindu.com/2006/02/01/stories/2006020104861100.htm>

Opinion - News Analysis

A messy compromise on Iran

Siddharth Varadarajan

Reporting Teheran to the Security Council but deferring action till March will neither still Washington's appetite for confrontation nor make a diplomatic solution more likely.

IN REACHING agreement among themselves to report Iran to the United Nations Security Council for failing to comply with previous resolutions of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the P-5 countries and Germany have let the Manmohan Singh Government off the hook. If there is consensus in the February 2-3 IAEA Board of Governors (BoG) meeting on a draft resolution reporting Iran, India need simply go along. And even if Cuba, Venezuela, and one or more non-aligned countries refuse to support the resolution, the probable affirmative votes of Russia and China will likely provide the United Progressive Alliance Government with enough of a cushion to weather any domestic political criticism.

After Monday's meeting of Britain, China, Russia, France, Germany, and the United States, the numbers in favour of an affirmative vote in the 35-member BoG will be higher than what prevailed last September. Having facilitated that original vote — which found Iran in non-compliance with its safeguards obligations — India has reverted to being a minor player whose views matter little to the Iranians and even less to the P-5. In any event, now that the Big Five have decided on a certain course of action, there is precious little any country or group of countries can really do to stand in the way at this stage of the game at least.

Russia and China, which had hitherto been opposed to reporting Iran to the UNSC, have taken a pragmatic decision to step back. Their intention, presumably, is to fight another day, in a battleground where they can exercise their veto power.

In India, the debate over the Manmohan Singh Government's vote against Iran last September was so polarised that it was often forgotten that the stakes were much higher than merely the security of gas supplies or the fate of the civil nuclear cooperation agreement with the U.S. Today, what has to be grasped by everyone is that the U.S. is hell-bent on setting the stage for a military conflict with Iran. And that the course and outcome of such a conflict will have consequences even more disastrous for our region than the Iraq war so far.

The compromise struck in London on Monday only pushes back by a month the timetable by which this tragedy will be enacted. It has been decided that the Board of Governors will report Iran to the Security Council this week but the latter will not take up the matter for active consideration until after IAEA Director General Mohammed el-Baradei presents his latest report on Iran to the BoG in the first week of March. There is one last safety valve put

in by Russia and China: They insisted, and the U.S. and its allies agreed, that the Security Council should also "await... any Resolution from the March meeting [of the IAEA Board], before deciding to take action to reinforce the authority of the IAEA process."

On paper at least, this means the Security Council will not act even in March without explicit authorisation from another IAEA resolution. It remains to be seen how this clause is incorporated into the draft resolution to be circulated to the IAEA Board on February 2.

Last September, the compromise reached with India and other countries was that while Iran would be held non-compliant, the timing of the Security Council report would be decided later. The compromise today is that while Iran will be reported, the timing of any Security Council action would be decided later.

U.S.' gameplan

Each time it appeases Washington's relentless pressure on Iran, the international community is being made to climb higher and higher up a ladder whose final rungs can only be sanctions and war. This is precisely the route the U.S. followed against Iraq in its quest to effect regime change there. Its war of attrition using sanctions, inspections, no-fly-zones, air strikes, and impossible ultimatums lasted 12 years before ending finally in an invasion that surprised no one.

In a candid speech to the Arms Control Association in Washington last week, Hans Blix, former head of the U.N. Monitoring and Verification Commission (UNMOVIC), repeated a charge he has made before that the U.S. was never really interested in weapons inspections in Iraq. "My belief is that if we had been allowed to continue to carry out inspections for a couple of months more, we would then have been able to go to all the sites which were given by intelligence, and since there weren't any weapons of mass destruction, we would have reported that there weren't any." However, even with such a report, David Ruppe of the Global Security Newswire quoted him as saying, war probably would not have been averted as "there was a certain momentum behind it."

Is there a lesson in all this for the world to learn as the Iran crisis slowly unfolds? Mr. Blix certainly thinks there is. "Today, I think I worry about the spin and momentum on Iran," he said. And well he might. The U.S. is not unaware that there exists a resolution of the Iranian parliament, the Majlis, demanding that Iran withdraw its temporary acceptance of the Additional Protocol as soon as the IAEA refers its case to the Security Council. Iran is a highly politicised and polarised society and there is every likelihood that MPs will demand implementation of this resolution once the IAEA Board votes the way the U.S. wants it to. What would happen once Iran withdraws from the Additional Protocol, joining, in the process, the 106 countries who have yet to sign that document? IAEA inspectors would no longer be able to visit sites outside of those facilities that are already safeguarded.


If indeed Iran has built clandestine nuclear facilities — as Britain and the U.S. believe — there cannot be a worse outcome from the non-proliferation perspective than IAEA inspectors losing their 'go as you please' pass. However, in a perverse way, this is precisely what the Bush administration is hoping Iran will do. For once IAEA inspectors lose the special access they currently enjoy, this would allow the U.S. to seek yet another escalation — citing the urgency of regaining access.

Is there a way out of this impasse? There is, and that way consists of combining the continuation of inspections with the development of two compromise packages, one technical, the other economic. The first would seek to induce Iran to accept a version of Russia's offshore enrichment proposal that also fulfils Iran's rights as an NPT signatory. The second package would seek to provide Teheran guarantees against economic sanctions and military threats. Regardless of what the IAEA Board decides this week, India must join hands with other countries to insist that the U.S. and its allies not go down the path of coercion and confrontation.

© Copyright 2000 - 2006 The Hindu

The Indian **EXPRESS**

Wednesday, February 01, 2006

 PRINT THIS STORY

Close this window


Front Page

Russia, China too want Iran reported, UPA tells Left we need to go with all

Left leaders briefed by Foreign Secy, satisfaction in Delhi on global consensus, IAEA meets tomorrow

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 31 With Russia and China last night joining the other permanent members of the UN Security Council—the United States, Britain and France—to report Iran to the Security Council over its nuclear programme, the UPA government today told the Left parties that India would have to go along with this majority view when the IAEA board meets in Vienna on Thursday.

 Manmohan Singh

CPM's Prakash Karat and CPI's D Raja were briefed by Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran in Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's presence this evening.

The meeting was called at short notice after National Security Advisor M K Narayanan, India's Ambassador to US Ronnen Sen and Saran discussed the joint statement of the permanent members, Germany and EU on Iran this morning. The statement stopped short of any punitive measures and agreed to wait for IAEA chief Mohammed El Baradei's report in March before taking any action.

The major powers agreed that the IAEA Board "should report to the Security Council its decision on the steps required of Iran".

While demanding specific steps from Iran, such as suspending enrichment activity, it also gives Tehran one more chance to comply with its legal obligations.

The joint statement said, "the Security Council should await the Director General's report to the March meeting of the IAEA Board, which would include a report on the implementation of the February Board's Resolution, and any Resolution from the March meeting, before deciding to take action to reinforce the authority of the IAEA process."

The fact that China and Russia are now part of a growing consensus that Iran must be reported to the UNSC will make it extremely difficult for the Left to tie down the diplomatic establishment on the vote issue.

For now, Karat only said: "There will be no immediate need for a vote on February 2. The issue can be referred to Security Council without the need for a vote."

But PM's media advisor Sanjaya Baru said that the Left parties had been asked to reconsider their position on Iran. "The new scenario certainly has an influence on India's position... which will depend on the text of the resolution.

Last time (September 24, 2005) on the EU resolution, China and Russia abstained. Now all are together. Vote will happen if there is no consensus. There India will decide on the basis of its national interest," Baru said.

There is a quiet satisfaction in South Block that an international consensus is finally at hand. While a vote cannot be ruled out at this stage, the agreement among the major powers in London today strongly suggests that the IAEA might well be in a position to act against Iran on the basis of consensus.

The Government is also pleased that its decision last September to vote against Iran has been vindicated by the developments since then.

Iran has further isolated itself by resuming uranium enrichment activity and rejecting a proposal, also from Russia, that would have let Tehran pursue a civilian nuclear energy programme in return for abandoning its enrichment programme.

While Iranian officials have responded with bluster against the emerging international consensus, its diplomatic options are getting narrower. Ali Larijani, Iran's top nuclear negotiator, said any reporting or referral to the UNSC would mark "the end of diplomacy".

Despite the outrage across the political spectrum, the Government's judgement last September that the new regime in Iran was making a huge error in embarking on a nuclear confrontation with the world has turned out to be right.

While domestic debate on Iran has been presented as one more case of the "Third World versus the West", the Government's intelligence was fully aware of Iran's ambitious nuclear weapon programme.

Unlike the Left parties, the Government also rightly assessed that the current Iranian leadership is somewhat out of touch with global realities. Iran's inadequate appreciation of the consequences of its actions has pushed a frustrated Russia into putting Tehran on notice.

Russian media today quoted Foreign minister Sergei Lavrov as saying that Russian and Chinese diplomats, representing all the major powers, would soon travel to Tehran to persuade the regime there to cooperate with the IAEA.

JRL: http://www.indianexpress.com/full_story.php?content_id=87041

[Expressindia](#) | [The Indian Express](#) | [The Financial Express](#) | [Screen](#)
[Kashmir Live](#) | [Loksatta](#) | [Lokprabha](#)

[About Us](#) | [Advertise With Us](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Feedback](#) | [Labelled with ICRA](#)

© 2005: Indian Express Newspapers (Bombay) Ltd. All rights reserved throughout the world.

Iran defiant, but talks door ajar

Tehran, Feb. 5 (Agencies): A defiant Iran today ended snap UN checks of its nuclear sites and said it was resuming uranium enrichment, a day after being reported to the Security Council over concerns it is building nuclear weapons.

However, the foreign ministry left the door ajar for talks. "The door for negotiations is still open," foreign ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi said.

Diplomats warned that any defiant response from Tehran could escalate the dispute over the nuclear ambitions of the world's fourth biggest oil exporter. Tehran insists it needs nuclear technology only to generate electricity.

"Iran has stopped all voluntary measures that it undertook in the past two-and-a-half to three years," foreign minister Manouchehr Mottaki told a news conference. "We have no commitment to the Additional Protocol any more."

Iran's main measure was the suspension of uranium enrichment. If enriched to a low level, uranium can be used in power stations. If enriched further to weapons-grade, it can be used in warheads.

Iran signed the Additional Protocol to the nuclear Non-

Proliferation Treaty in 2003, thereby allowing short-notice inspections of its atomic sites.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad delivered a statement to the people of Iran, read out by a newscaster on state television today, explaining why the country needed atomic technology.

"The range of applications of this science is so wide in fields such as industry, medicine, agriculture, environment and energy that it is impossible to reach high economic and social targets without it," he said.

The International Atomic Energy Agency voted yesterday to report Iran to the Security Council, but the top UN body will take no action until an IAEA report on Iran is delivered in March.

Ahmadinejad said nothing could deflect Tehran's pursuit of atomic know-how. "Our enemies cannot do a damn thing. We do not need you at all. But you are in need of the Iranian nation."

But foreign ministry spokesman Asefi said Tehran would have talks with Moscow on February 16. He added the timing of Iran's resumption of a full atomic fuel cycle remained uncertain.

- 6 FEB 2006

THE TELEGRAPH

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2006

An unnecessary escalation

The International Atomic Energy Agency's decision to report Iran to the U.N. Security Council has opened a new and dangerous chapter in the crisis sparked by Western insistence that Teheran abandon its legitimate rights to the civilian nuclear fuel cycle. Saturday's vote by the IAEA Board of Governors has already led to a deterioration in the situation. In line with a law passed by its Parliament, Iran has ended its voluntary adherence to the Additional Protocol and announced an end to its self-imposed suspension of full-scale uranium enrichment. Once these two announcements are operationalised, IAEA inspectors will lose their ability to conduct spot checks at facilities and locations not covered by standard safeguards. If at all there are undeclared nuclear activities on the territory of Iran, the wider access granted by the Additional Protocol was the way to uncover these. As for the Russian offer of jointly operated enrichment facilities, this window for compromise can also now be assumed to have closed for all practical purposes. The fact that the United States and its allies have precipitated a situation where the protocol no longer obtains can only mean one of two things. They either do not believe their own rhetoric about Iran possessing illegal facilities, or they have a better way of uncovering or neutralising the same. It is no secret that Washington believes that the better way is sanctions and the use of force. Holding in abeyance for a month any action by the Security Council is neither here nor there since the U.S. now has the upper hand.

Even if the IAEA is able to answer the outstanding questions surrounding the extent of Iran's research work on the P-2 centrifuge between 1995 and 2002, the fact that Iran has refused to accept any of the five demands made by the Board of Governors in its February 4 resolution will inevitably pave the way for punitive action. The demands themselves are *ultra vires*, in that they have no bearing whatsoever on the IAEA's legal competences under its statute or Iran's obligations under the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty and its safeguards agreement. That the Manmohan Singh Government has chosen to give in to Washington's blackmail on the civilian nuclear cooperation front by voting for a resolution that is flawed in law and suspect in intent is bad enough. Worse is that it has ended up endorsing something equally pernicious: the five permanent Security Council members' act of arrogating to themselves the right to decide — behind closed doors — the fate of other countries and international organisations. India's inability to analyse the emerging realities and its readiness to get on the U.S. bandwagon do not advance its claims to big power status. With the world's big powers appeasing Washington's desire for a confrontation with Iran, the Manmohan Singh Government may not be in a position to stave off the inevitable. But the least it could have done is to have refused to back a resolution whose only effect will be the initiation of a new conflict on India's doorstep.

6 FEB 2006

THE HINDU

Iran referred to Security Council

Iran says it will move ahead on full-scale uranium enrichment

Disarmament #10-1

312

VIENNA: The United Nations nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, voted on Saturday to report Iran to the U.N. Security Council over fears Teheran was developing atomic weapons, in an historic move that opens the door to punitive action.

Iran reacted sharply, saying it would move ahead immediately on full-scale uranium enrichment, which it had suspended as a confidence-building gesture, and limit IAEA inspections. Enrichment makes nuclear reactor fuel but also atom bomb material.

U.S. satisfied

The United States expressed satisfaction with the decision.

"Saturday's vote sends Iran a very clear and unmistakable message that they need to abide by their international obligations and to heed the call of the international community," State Department spokesman Sean McCormack told AFP.

The resolution passed by 27-3, with five abstentions, a majority US ambassador Gregory Schulte called "overwhelming."

One month's time

The resolution put off any U.N. action against Iran for at least a month, to give time for diplomacy until the next IAEA meeting here in March.

But in a last-minute text change it mandated the board to "immediately thereafter (the March 6 board meeting) convey" a report and assessment by IAEA chief Mohamed ElBaradei on Iran to the Council.

The transmission of this report would clear the way for the Council to take action that is expected first to be a statement urging Iranian cooperation, with sanctions a possibility later on.

Mr. Schulte said the idea was to get Iran to yield to IAEA calls to suspend all uranium enrichment activities and to cooperate fully with IAEA inspectors, not



MAKING A POINT: Iran's Ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency, Ali Asgar Soltanieh, interacting with the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Agency, Yukiya Amano, before the IAEA session in Vienna on Saturday. - PHOTO: AFP

to punish the Islamic republic.

The IAEA has been investigating Iran for three years on U.S. charges that it is hiding nuclear weapons development but has reached no conclusions.

The goal is "to add the Council's weight... for Iran to choose a course of cooperation and negotiation over a course of confrontation," Mr. Schulte said.

Chinese ambassador Wu Hailong said his country did not see the resolution as allowing for UN punitive action but Mr. Schulte said it incorporated a September IAEA resolution that

found Iran in non-compliance for hiding nuclear activities for almost two decades, a finding that requires the current report to the Security Council.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel told a security conference in Munich that Iran had "overstepped the mark" with its nuclear programme, while U.S. Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said the world "did not want a nuclear Iran".

'Politically motivated'

But "our government has to implement full-scale enrich-

atomic weapons.

The U.S. finally accepted a wording calling for a Middle East zone free of "weapons of mass destruction" instead of just nuclear arms, as this lifted the exclusive focus on Israel, a diplomat said.

Cuba, Syria and Venezuela, which all have disputes with the United States, voted against it, while Algeria, Belarus, Indonesia, Libya and South Africa abstained.

Key non-aligned states Brazil, Egypt and India voted for it.

The five permanent Security Council members - Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States - and Germany had closed ranks over the resolution. Unlike the IAEA, the Security Council has enforcement powers.

The text is a compromise between the U.S. desire for immediate Security Council action and Russia's demand for time for more diplomacy.

Russia, a key trade partner of Iran, hopes the crisis can be defused without the Security Council imposing sanctions.

Moscow is sponsoring a compromise proposal for Iran to carry out uranium enrichment in Russia so that the Iranians do not master this technology which is considered a "breakout capacity" for making atomic weapons.

But Mr. Vaidi told Iranian state television that Iran may no longer even consider the Russian proposal.

Despite the IAEA call for Iran to suspend nuclear fuel work, Teheran pressed ahead in January with preparations for uranium enrichment, after having in August resumed uranium conversion that makes the feedstock gas for enrichment. - AFP

Reactions: Page 12
Text of IAEA resolution on
www.thehindu.in

5 FEB 2006

THE HINDU

IAEA puts off meeting

Session to resume today

*Document
H.D. 1
9/2*

VIENNA: The International Atomic Energy Agency has put off a decision on whether to send Iran to the United Nations Security Council over fears it was developing a nuclear weapon, with an emergency session put off to Saturday, an agency spokesman said. "The meeting will not take place on Friday and will resume at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday," the spokesman said. He did not give a reason for the delay.

The IAEA's 35-nation board of governors opened a meeting here on Thursday and had been due to resume on Friday.

Demands by some non-aligned countries to include mention of a Middle East nuclear-weapons-free zone in the resolution are complicating talks on sending the issue to the Council, diplomats said on Friday. "Once this is in terms of the Security Council, things are entirely different. The Security Council has already made a statement on the nuclear-weapons-free zone," a diplomat said, explaining why Arab countries wanted mention of the zone included. The diplomat was referring to UN statements such as UN resolution 687, made in 1991 on a ceasefire between Iraq and

• **Demand to include mention of a nuclear-weapons-free zone**

• **U.S. worried Iran will take advantage**

Kuwait. The Security Council has enforcement powers, unlike the IAEA.

The non-aligned diplomats want the zone to be mentioned if Iran is to be reported to the Council but the United States opposes this, diplomats said.

"The Americans are worried that once it (mention of a nuclear-weapons-free zone) is there (in the resolution), it will stay there forever and allow the Iranians to hide behind it," avoiding complying with IAEA demands, another diplomat said.

Diplomats said Egypt was lobbying strongly for the zone to be mentioned. Egypt and other Arab states regularly bring up the matter at IAEA general conferences, insisting that Israel, which is believed to have nuclear weapons, be part of a general security framework in the Middle East that bans atomic weapons.— AFP

1-4 FEB 2008

THE HINDU

IAEA adjourns meeting

Document

FD 1

372

Iran's allies promise to back anti-Teheran resolution

VIENNA: The board of governors of the 35-nation International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) adjourned until Friday its meeting to decide whether to haul Iran before the United Nations Security Council over suspected atomic weapons work, a spokesman said. The board, which began an emergency meeting on Thursday, put on hold its deliberations to allow further consultations on a European-led resolution demanding Iran's referral to the Security Council over its nuclear activities.

Iran's allies, Russia and China, have promised to back a resolution to take Teheran to the Security Council.

"Russia and China have said they are going to vote for the resolution" a Western diplomat said.

A European diplomat said negotiations among the five permanent Security Council nations on a resolution for the IAEA had been "very constructive."

Iran had threatened to retaliate if it was hauled before the Security Council by kick-starting sensitive fuel cycle work and blocking international inspections.

The IAEA has been investigating Iran for three years, and in September found the Islamic Republic in non-compliance with the Non-Proliferation

Treaty (NPT) for hiding sensitive nuclear activities for 18 years.

Such a finding requires a report to the Security Council but the IAEA held off on this to give Iran time to cooperate with a three-year-old agency investigation and stop nuclear fuel work. Instead, Iran moved on January 10 to start uranium enrichment.

"We will not back down"

In Teheran Iran's hardline President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad dismissed warnings that his country faced international isolation because of its nuclear drive, saying it was the West that was set to be isolated by Iran. "Be certain that we will not back down," said Ahmadinejad, branding the Western powers as "resembling old lions with no hair or mane, incapable of doing anything."

"The West says Iran must not master civilian nuclear technology even though they have nuclear technology and build a new bomb every day," he was quoted as saying by the ISNA news agency.

"No imminent threat"

However, IAEA's chief Mohamed ElBaradei has said Iran's nuclear programme was not an "imminent threat." "We are reaching a critical phase but it is not a crisis situation," he said. — AFP

THE HINDU

03 FEB 2006

Day before meet, IAEA says it has evidence on Iran's n-weapons plan

ELAINE SCIOLINO &
WILLIAM J BROAD

VIENNA, FEBRUARY 1

THE International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) says it has evidence that suggests links between Iran's ostensibly peaceful nuclear programme and its military work on high explosives and missiles, according to a report from the agency that was released to member countries on Tuesday and will be debated on Thursday.

Today, Iran's president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, said any decision taken by the West would have no effect in Iran's decisions, according to the Iranian news agency IRNA, quoting the president during a visit to Bushehr province. And, Iran's top nuclear negotiator, Ali Larijani, said some cameras monitoring Iran's nuclear facilities may be removed if Iran is reported to the security council.

Larijani reiterated that Iran would stop implementing the Additional Protocol of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which gives UN inspectors greater access to nuclear sites, if Tehran's case goes to the top world body, the agency said. The report will be debated by the 35 countries that make up the international agency's board when it meets in emergency session on Thursday to decide whether Iran should be reported to the UN Security Council for its nuclear activities.

The four-page report, which officials say was based at least in part on intelligence provided by the US, refers to a secretive Iranian entity called the Green Salt Project, which worked on uranium processing, high explosives and a missile warhead design. The combination suggests a "military-nuclear dimension," the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

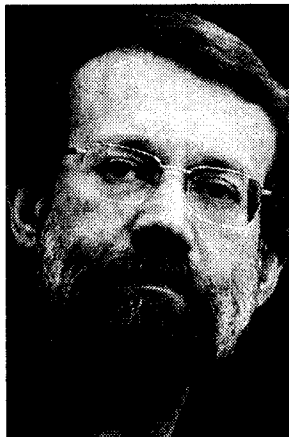
IAEA says it has evidence on Iran's n-weapons plan

report said, that if true would undercut Iran's claims that its nuclear programme is solely aimed at producing electrical power. The agency says it has repeatedly confronted Iran with the allegations, which Tehran dismissed as "baseless," adding that "it would provide further clarifications later," the report said. Iran also reiterated that all of its nuclear projects were conducted under the authority of its national atomic energy agency and not the military.

The report states that the country has not been fully cooperative on all of the outstanding nuclear issues that the agency has questioned for years. That shortcoming formed the basis of a resolution by the agency's board last fall that Iran was not complying with its international obligations under the treaty.

The Green Salt Project derives its name from uranium tetrafluoride, also known as green salt, which is an intermediate product in the conversion of uranium ore into uranium hexafluoride—a toxic gas that can undergo enrichment or purification into fuel for nuclear reactors or bombs.

The report suggests that the fuel project, the high explosives tests and the design of a missile re-entry vehicle "appear to have administrative in-



Larjani at a press meet in Tehran on Wednesday. AP

terconnections." It would seem to be the first time the agency has publicly suggested that the fuel production—which Iran has said is purely for civilian purposes—was linked to its military programmes.

The tests of high explosives are of particular concern: one of the key challenges in making a nuclear weapon is designing the ring of conventional explosives that can be used to compress the nuclear material, setting off a nuclear chain reaction.

It is highly unusual, Western experts said, for a group of uranium conversion experts ostensibly making fuel for nuclear reactors to also have administrative ties to people doing studies on explosives and re-entry vehicles, the technical name for missile warheads.

"The obvious technical connection is that these are all central elements of a programme to develop nuclear weapons and delivery capability," said Per F. Peterson, a professor of nuclear engineering at the University of California, Berkeley.

The alleged bureaucratic linkage of the various efforts would make them highly suspicious, Peterson said, because each could be separately viewed as potentially unrelated to nuclear weapons.

While the Bush administration has long argued that Iran was using its civilian programme to hide ambitions to build a nuclear weapon, the agency has always steered clear of that accusation. With the report, it has for the first time provided evidence directly suggesting that at least some of Iran's activities point to a military project.

The Vienna-based agency also said in its report that a 15-page document Iran had allowed it to read described procedures that would be useful only in making parts for nuclear weapons. The agency for the first time stated its own conclusions on the matter and did so quite bluntly, saying the document that Iran obtained from the black market "related to the fabrication of nuclear weapon components."

DEBATE | What is Iran's nuke programme for?

Iran says it needs energy, West demurs

REUTERS
JANUARY 31

IRAN's nuclear development drive has stirred debate about whether it poses a grave new risk to world peace and security. Following are key issues in the debate as the UN nuclear watchdog agency, IAEA, prepares to hold a crisis session on Thursday to weigh a Big Power resolution to report the matter to the UN Security Council.

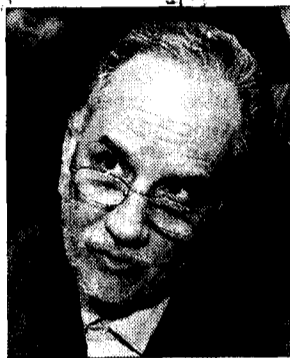
■ What is Iran really after?

The Islamic republic says it wants nuclear energy only to power its economy. Iran says it has every right to it as a signatory to the 1970 nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which mandates a peaceful use of atomic energy. Western powers suspect an Iranian atomic bomb programme is underway because Tehran concealed bomb-related nuclear research from the IAEA for 18 years until 2003. Analysts see the truth in between Iranian protestations and Western conclusions. They believe Iran may be trying to master the intricate technologies required for bombs before deciding whether to actually build them.

■ Does Iran really need nuclear technology?

Iran says it needs an alternative energy source to oil and gas, much of which is exported to earn money. Iran has long accused Washington of trying to stunt its development to preserve dominant US and Israeli power in the Middle East. Western leaders say Iran is so rich in fossil fuels that for it to pursue costly nuclear technology makes no sense and the only rationale must be covert bomb production.

■ Would Iran threaten world



Iran's Oil Minister Kazem Vaziri at the beginning of a meeting of oil ministers at OPEC's Vienna headquarters on Tuesday said, 'We are not mixing oil with politics. Iran will not stop exports.' Reuters

peace if it got the bomb?

Washington and EU say it would, given President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's calls for Israel to be "wiped off the map", dismissal of the Holocaust as "a myth", and what Western officials say is Iran's sponsorship of Islamic terrorism. Critics of Western policy suggest Iran may have legitimate security fears enclosed by countries with US troops stationed by an administration wedded to "regime change" in "enemy" states. According to this view, a nuclear arsenal would assure Iran does not end up like US-occupied Iraq, and would be unlikely to unleash nuclear warheads at Israel because of the certainty of a devastating Israeli or US response.

■ Would UN Security Council action be legal?

The West argues the IAEA is legally bound to transfer Iran's dossier to the Security Council, saying it is a serial NPT violator for having covered up atomic work and delayed or evaded inquiries. They call Iran's resumption of nuclear fuel development af-

Western leaders say Iran is so rich in fossil fuels that for it to pursue costly nuclear technology makes no sense and the only rationale must be covert bomb production

ter a two-year moratorium agreed with the EU a "red line" justifying referral to the Council. Iran contends there is no legal basis for Security Council referral or sanctions. Some analysts agree, noting the IAEA has found no hard proof Iran is building bombs, only hints to do so. A London commentator said it was inconceivable that all veto-wielding Security Council powers would agree to slap sanctions on a major oil producer "on the mere suspicion that it ultimately intended to break the law".

■ Is Iran being fairly treated by nuclear arbiters?

Non-Westerners perceive a crisis rife with double standards. They ask how developing states would not be motivated to pursue nuclear prowess when:

The original nuclear powers—the US, Britain, France, Russia and China—have fallen short of NPT commitments to do away with their arsenals, keeping them as pillars of security policy and their predominance on the world stage.

Israel, India and Pakistan—all with good relations with the West—refused to join the NPT, secretly developed atomic bombs and face no pressure to dismantle them.

Iran to be referred to Security Council

Press Trust of India

LONDON, Jan. 31. — Two days ahead of a crucial IAEA meeting to discuss Iran's controversial nuclear programme, key powers have agreed in a surprise move to refer the issue to the UN Security Council, but decided to put off any action by the world body until March in a compromise with Russia and China who favoured giving more time to Teheran.

British foreign secretary Mr

Jack Straw announced the decision here yesterday after a meeting of the five permanent Council members — the USA, Russia, Britain, China and France — plus Germany, after talks with Iran earlier in the day failed to achieve a breakthrough.

Foreign ministers of the six powers met last night to coordinate their position ahead of the emergency IAEA meeting scheduled for Thursday. If the IAEA agrees to refer it to the UNSC, Iran may face sanctions.

Iran is accused by the USA

Indian stand based on draft resolution: PM

NEW DELHI, Jan. 31. — In keeping with his tightrope walk on the Iran issue, the Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, today held deliberations with the Left leaders barely 48 hours before the crucial International Atomic Energy Agency meeting and declared that Delhi would decide on its position on the basis of the draft resolution. The draft resolution for the special IAEA meet, scheduled for 2 February, is to be worked out by the permanent five members of the UN Security Council and Germany. — SNS

Details on page 5

and EU of aiming to produce nuclear weapons but Teheran insists its nuclear programme is for civilian energy use only.

The foreign ministers' state-

The IAEA's two-day meeting in Vienna will see the possible referral of Iran to the UNSC. On 16 February, Russia and Iran will resume talks on Moscow's proposed compromise regarding the issue. The IAEA is to report on Iranian compliance in March.

During last night's talks, Russia, a key trading partner of Iran, had resisted any immediate move for sanctions against Teheran. As a result, Moscow won a concession, reflected in the joint statement that said the

UNSC should "await the IAEA director-general's report to the March meeting of the IAEA board... before deciding to take action to reinforce the authority of the IAEA process."

US President George W Bush, previewing his State of the Union address to be delivered today, said: "To the (Iranian) government, our message is that if you want to be a part of the family of nations, give up your nuclear weapons ambitions."

Iran asks Big Five to lay off:

page 2

A messy compromise on Iran

Reporting Teheran to the Security Council but deferring action till March will neither still Washington's appetite for confrontation nor make a diplomatic solution more likely.

Siddharth Varadarajan

IN REACHING agreement among themselves to report Iran to the United Nations Security Council for failing to comply with previous resolutions of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the P-5 countries and Germany have let the Manmohan Singh Government off the hook. If there is consensus in the February 2-3 IAEA Board of Governors (BoG) meeting on a draft resolution reporting Iran, India need simply go along. And even if Cuba, Venezuela, and one or more non-aligned countries refuse to support the resolution, the probable affirmative votes of Russia and China will likely provide the United Progressive Alliance Government with enough of a cushion to weather any domestic political criticism.

After Monday's meeting of Britain, China, Russia, France, Germany, and the United States, the numbers in favour of an affirmative vote in the 35-member BoG will be higher than what prevailed last September. Having facilitated that original vote — which found Iran in non-compliance with its safeguards obligations — India has reverted to being a minor player whose views matter little to the Iranians and even less to the P-5. In any event, now that the Big Five have decided on a certain course of action, there is precious little any country or group of countries can really do to stand in the way at this stage of the game at least.

Russia and China, which had hitherto been opposed to reporting Iran to the UNSC, have taken a pragmatic decision to step back. Their intention, presumably, is to fight another day, in a battleground where they can exercise their veto power.

In India, the debate over the Manmohan Singh Government's vote against Iran last September was so polarised that it was often forgotten that the stakes were much higher than merely the security of gas supplies or the fate of the civil nuclear cooperation agreement with the U.S. Today, what has to be grasped by everyone is that the U.S. is hell-bent on setting the stage for a military conflict with Iran. And that the course and outcome of such a conflict will have consequences even more disastrous for our region than the Iraq war so far.

The compromise struck in London on Monday only pushes back by a month the timetable by which this tragedy will be enacted. It has been decided that the Board of Governors will report Iran to the Security Council this week but the latter will not take up the matter for active consideration until after IAEA Director General Mohammed el-Baradei presents his latest report on Iran to the BoG in the first week of March. There is one last safety valve put in by Russia and China: They insisted, and the U.S. and its allies agreed, that the Security Council should also "await... any Resolution from the March meeting [of the IAEA Board], before

deciding to take action to reinforce the authority of the IAEA process."

On paper at least, this means the Security Council will not act even in March without explicit authorisation from another IAEA resolution. It remains to be seen how this clause is incorporated into the draft resolution to be circulated to the IAEA Board on February 2.

Last September, the compromise reached with India and other countries was that while Iran would be held non-compliant, the timing of the Security Council report would be decided later. The compromise today is that while Iran will be reported, the timing of any Security Council action would be decided later.

U.S.' gameplan

Each time it appeases Washington's relentless pressure on Iran, the international community is being made to climb higher and higher up a ladder whose final rungs can only be sanctions and war. This is precisely the route the U.S. followed against Iraq in its quest to effect regime change there. Its war of attrition using sanctions, inspections, no-fly-zones, air strikes, and impossible ultimatums lasted 12 years before ending finally in an invasion that surprised no one.

In a candid speech to the Arms Control Association in Washington last week, Hans

Blix, former head of the U.N. Monitoring and Verification Commission (UNMOVIC), repeated a charge he has made before that the U.S. was never really interested in weapons inspections in Iraq. "My belief is that if we had been allowed to continue to carry out inspections for a couple of months more, we would then have been able to go to all the sites which were given by intelligence, and since there weren't any weapons of mass destruction, we would have reported that there weren't any." However, even with such a report, David Ruppe of the Global Security Newswire quoted him as saying, war probably would not have been averted as "there was a certain momentum behind it."

Is there a lesson in all this for the world to learn as the Iran crisis slowly unfolds? Mr. Blix certainly thinks there is. "Today, I think I worry about the spin and momentum on Iran," he said. And well he might. The U.S. is not unaware that there exists a resolution of the Iranian parliament, the Majlis, demanding that Iran withdraw its temporary acceptance of the Additional Protocol as soon as the IAEA refers its case to the Security Council. Iran is a highly politicised and polarised society and there is every likelihood that MPs will demand implementation of this resolution once the IAEA Board votes the way the U.S. wants it to. What would happen once Iran withdraws from the Addi-

tional Protocol, joining, in the process, the 106 countries who have yet to sign that document? IAEA inspectors would no longer be able to visit sites outside of those facilities that are already safeguarded.

If indeed Iran has built clandestine nuclear facilities — as Britain and the U.S. believe — there cannot be a worse outcome from the non-proliferation perspective than IAEA inspectors losing their 'go as you please' pass. However, in a perverse way, this is precisely what the Bush administration is hoping Iran will do. For once IAEA inspectors lose the special access they currently enjoy, this would allow the U.S. to seek yet another escalation — citing the urgency of regaining access.

Is there a way out of this impasse? There is, and that way consists of combing the continuation of inspections with the development of two compromise packages, one technical, the other economic. The first would seek to induce Iran to accept a version of Russia's offshore enrichment proposal that also fulfils Iran's rights as an NPT signatory. The second package would seek to provide Teheran guarantees against economic sanctions and military threats. Regardless of what the IAEA Board decides this week, India must join hands with other countries to insist that the U.S. and its allies not go down the path of coercion and confrontation.

Persian puzzle: what happens next

What have the P-5 agreed to do?

The Foreign Ministers of Britain, China, France, Russia, and the U.S., as well as Germany, have agreed that this week's IAEA Board of Governors meeting "should report to the UN Security Council its decision on the steps required from Iran and ... all IAEA reports and resolutions, as adopted, relating to this issue." But they also agreed that the UNSC "should await the Director General's report to the March meeting of the IAEA Board, which would include a report on the implementation of the February Board's Resolution, and any Resolution from the March meeting, before deciding to take action to reinforce the authority of the IAEA process."

So in plain English...

They want Iran to be reported this week but the UNSC will not take up the matter until sometime in March, which gives one month for Russia to discuss its enrichment compromise formula with Iran, and for Iran to try and clear up the one outstanding question still remaining with the IAEA, i.e. the extent of its work on the P-2 centrifuge.

What will happen now at the IAEA Board of Governors meeting on

February 2?

There will be a resolution reporting Iran whose wording is likely to reflect the P-5 statement. But it is not clear how the Non-aligned group will react. Venezuela and Cuba, who are members of the Board, issued a statement last week along with NAM chair Malaysia rejecting any referral to the UNSC. So there could still be a vote. In such an event, Britain and the U.S. are assuming China and Russia will not abstain but will vote for referral.

Will India still have to decide what to do?

If there is a consensus resolution, no. But if some Board members object and there is a vote, India would have to choose between abstaining or voting for a referral. India has always said it favours the issue being resolved within the IAEA. As an independent country it is not bound by what the P-5 have decided.

What will Iran do?

There is a Majlis, or parliament, resolution mandating the Iranian government to withdraw its voluntary acceptance of the Additional Protocol if the country's file is referred to the UNSC. If that is invoked, the IAEA would lose its

right to conduct anything other than routine inspections of known nuclear facilities. If there are hidden nuclear facilities, as the U.S. alleges, it will no longer be able to search for them.

What will the Security Council do?

In dropping their opposition to the Iran file being sent to the UNSC, Russia and China probably decided to shift the diplomatic tug-of-war into an arena where they have the power of veto. The two are unlikely to accept economic or energy sanctions on Iran but minor restrictions like a travel ban could be imposed.

And then what can Iran do?

Like North Korea, it has the right to walk out of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and end all IAEA supervision. It would then be free to develop nuclear weapons if it felt threatened enough.

And the 'military option'?

The Bush administration has always said the option of attacking Iran remains very much on the table.

This sounds like Iraq...

Sooner or later, that's where things are heading. Like Iraq, the WMD issue is probably a cover to push for regime change.

1/2
Disarmament
11D-11

Bigger nuclear weapons will mean less security

Without any public debate, one side's new missiles give others an excuse to flout the non-proliferation treaty.

George Monbiot

IN NUCLEAR politics, every action is justified by the response it provokes. The United States explains its missile defence programme by claiming that other states are developing new weapons systems, which one day it might need to shoot down. In response, Russia has activated a new weapons system, the Topol-M, designed to "penetrate U.S. anti-missile defences."

Israel, citing the threat from Iran, insists on retaining its nuclear missiles. Threatened by them (and prompted, among other reasons, by his anti-semitism), the Iranian President says he wants to wipe Israel off the map, and appears to be developing a means to do so. Israel sees his response as vindicating its nuclear programme. It threatens an air strike, which grants retrospective validity to Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's designs. And so it goes on. Everyone turns out to be right in the end.

Today the deadline passes for the only objection any Briton is likely to be allowed to make to the latest £100 million of U.K. Government spending on Britain's nuclear capability. West Berkshire (local) council is permitted, on planning grounds, to ask the Government for a public inquiry into whether the Orion laser project at Aldermaston, West Berkshire, should go ahead. The Government is under no obligation to grant it. No one else has any power to impede the scheme. The Orion programme seems to be one of those projects whose purpose will be determined after it has begun, but it appears to have something to do with evading the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. It might help British engineers to design a new generation of bombs without having to test them. If so, it will strengthen the suspicion that the Government is considering not only replacing the U.K.'s existing Trident missiles, but also building an entirely new class of weapons to accompany them. In 2002, a spokesman at Aldermaston suggested that the plant might start building either mini-nukes or nuclear warheads for cruise missiles.

Three weeks ago, the British Royal Navy

20-11 25/1
Disarmament

- The Orion programme will strengthen suspicion that the U.K. is building an entirely new class of weapons.

- The U.S. has already spent about \$60 billion on "stockpile stewardship."

announced that it is spending £125 million upgrading the Faslane naval base on the River Clyde in Scotland. The base houses the submarines, which carry the U.K.'s Trident missiles. Like the Orion project, the spending has been approved before Parliament or the public has had a chance to decide whether it is necessary: what it means, in effect, is that the Trident replacement programme has already begun.

The U.K. Defence Secretary explains that a new missile system is necessary because "some countries" have not been "complying with their obligations under the non-proliferation treaty." In response, therefore, the U.K. will refuse to comply with its obligations under the Non-proliferation Treaty. This provides other countries with their justification for ... well, you've got the general idea. Last week, France joined the exclusive club of responsible nations (the U.K., the U.S., and North Korea) that have threatened other countries with a pre-emptive nuclear strike. What greater incentive could there be for the rogue states Jacques Chirac spoke of to "consider using ... weapons of mass destruction"?

Unlike the British Parliament, the U.S. Congress has been permitted to vote on such matters, and despite a great deal of belly-aching from the administration, has bravely sought to block a new nuclear weapons programme. For two years in a row it has refused to approve the money for George Bush's "robust nuclear earth penetrator," a mini-nuke that could have reduced the threshold for first use. But now it seems to have been duped.

Last year it approved initial funding for something called the "reliable replacement warhead" programme. The administration maintained that this was nothing more than the refurbishment of existing nuclear weapons. The legislators chose to believe it. David

Hobson, a Republican who sits on the House Appropriations Committee, and has led the fight against new weapons, was persuaded that "this is not a sneaky way to get a whole new powerful warhead type of thing in the future. We're not trying to do separate missions than those the warheads were designed for today." Ellen Tauscher, a Democrat who is fiercely opposed to proliferation, insisted "this is about tinkering at the margins of the existing weapons systems, nothing more." The programme would concentrate on replacing a few non-nuclear components, such as wires and electronics, in order to extend their life.

They seemed naive then and they seem more naive today. The U.S. has already spent about \$60 billion maintaining and refurbishing its weapons under a separate programme, called "stockpile stewardship." It wasn't easy to see why it needed a new scheme. Even before the reliable replacement warhead programme had been approved, the outgoing deputy head of the Nuclear National Security Administration (NNSA) had let slip that a new generation of weapons was "not the primary objective, but [it] would be a fortuitous associated event."

The "physics package"

Now the associated event is beginning to look like a primary objective. A couple of weeks ago, the *San Francisco Chronicle* interviewed the head of the NNSA, Linton Brookes. "I don't want to mislead you," he admitted. "I will personally be very surprised if we can get the advantages we want without redesigning the physics package."

The "physics package" is the nuclear warhead. He went on to explain that the warheads "will require new pits" (the "pit" is the plutonium core in which the reaction begins). "We are going to need to melt them down and recast them." The new warheads

would be bigger than the old ones. This is beginning to look like "a whole new powerful warhead type of thing."

Writing in the online magazine *OpenDemocracy* a few days ago, Professor of Peace Studies Paul Rogers suggested that an early candidate for replacement under the new programme would be America's Trident missiles. If this is the case, it "would suit the British very well, with the prospect of close collaboration and maybe even the sharing of some development costs."

So, without any proper public debate on either side of the Atlantic, both nations might have begun developing a new nuclear weapons programme, which could last for 40 or 50 years. Throughout that period, their missiles will continue to provide everyone else with an excuse to flout the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

When Iran is referred to the U.N. Security Council, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad will be able to turn every accusation it makes back on his accusers. He will insist that the council's members are asserting a monopoly of ultimate violence; that while there is as yet no definitive evidence that he is in breach of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, no one can doubt that they are. He will point to America's tacit endorsement of Israel's nuclear status and its overt endorsement of India's. He will assert that the enforcement of the global nuclear regime discriminates against Muslim states. And though he is wrong about many things, he will be right about all that.

This is not to say that the horripilation Iran's nuclear programme inspires is unjustified; nor is it to claim that no other state would seek to develop or maintain nuclear weapons if the official nuclear powers gave theirs up. But the refusal of the members of the security council to make any moves towards disarmament, their threats of pre-emptive bombing and their quiet development of new weapons systems guarantees the failure of both the UN and the International Atomic Energy Agency. Nothing could make us less secure than the billions we are spending in the name of security. — ©Guardian Newspapers Limited 2006

757-1111

Big powers disagree, Iran seeks talks

Moscow, Jan. 17 (Reuters): Russia and China made clear today they did not favour UN sanctions to induce Iran to scale back its nuclear programme, and Tehran urged the EU to return to the negotiating table.

A senior British official dismissed as "vacuous" the Iranian offer, contained in a letter from Javad Vaedi, deputy head of Iran's Supreme National Security Council.

Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov said Tehran should first halt all uranium enrichment work.

"Talks presuppose an obligation. The Iranian obligation was to stick to the moratorium," Lavrov said. "Now Iran (has departed from) the mora-

torium on scientific research."

Britain, France and Germany called off the talks last week after Tehran resumed uranium enrichment research, deepening western suspicions that it is bent on acquiring the bomb.

Washington and its EU allies say it is time the UN nuclear watchdog agency sent Iran's case to the UN Security Council, which could eventually decide to impose sanctions on Iran.

A senior Iranian official said Tehran's decision to resume nuclear fuel research was legal and "irreversible".

Ali Asghar Soltaniyeh, Iranian representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), also told the

students news agency ISNA that he would meet the agency's chief Mohamed El-Baradei to discuss Iran's plans. An IAEA spokesman could not confirm a meeting was planned.

Soltaniyeh reiterated Iran's threat to halt snap IAEA inspections of its nuclear sites if its case goes to the Security Council. The senior British official said referral to the council would not automatically lead to punitive measures.

"We don't see this leading straight into sanctions," the official said under condition he not be named. "We want to build gradual, sustained pressure over time. We are not going to New York to impose punitive economic sanctions."

Lavrov also said talk of

sanctions was premature.

"The question of sanctions against Iran puts the cart before the horse. Sanctions are in no way the best, or the only, way to solve the problem," he said. A Chinese foreign ministry spokesman said Beijing favoured diplomacy, urging all parties to "keep patient and make utmost efforts to resume the negotiations between the EU3 and Iran".

Germany earlier said council members remained at odds on the Iranian nuclear issue after yesterday's talks in London among the US, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany. However, participants did agree to call an emergency meeting of the IAEA board on February 2.

An Iranian source in Vien-

na said Iran had written to the EU trio proposing that talks resume immediately and saying Tehran was ready to "remove existing ambiguities regarding its peaceful nuclear programme through talks and negotiations".

Any Security Council action would need the consent of its five permanent members, including Russia and China, both wary of jeopardising their major economic interests in Iran.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Kong Quan said: "We hope the Iranian side can cooperate with the efforts by the international community to restart the diplomatic negotiations." China gets about 12 percent of its oil imports from Iran.



Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (right) with his Tajik counterpart Emomali Rakhmonov (left) in Tehran. (AFP)

washingtonpost.com

China Backs Talks In Iranian Standoff

Russia's Compromise Plan Endorsed

By Edward Cody
Washington Post Foreign Service
Friday, January 27, 2006; A14

BEIJING, Jan. 26 -- China endorsed a Russian compromise proposal for breaking the stalemate over Iran's nuclear program Thursday and joined Iran's visiting nuclear negotiator in calling for patience and more discussions on the Russian idea.

The Chinese stand, issued during talks with Ali Larijani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, suggested that the idea of having Iran send uranium to Russia for enrichment might become the common denominator of an agreement on preventing the Iranian government from developing nuclear weapons, rather than the sanctions envisioned by the Bush administration.

"We oppose impulsively using sanctions or threats of sanctions to solve problems," the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, Kong Quan, told reporters at a regular briefing.

Deputy Secretary of State Robert B. Zoellick had urged the Chinese leadership on Tuesday to join the United States and other nations in taking urgent steps to make sure Iran does not expand its nuclear research program into weapons production. China agrees that Iran should not have nuclear weapons, he said afterward, but differs with Washington over how to prevent it and how fast a solution has to be found.

Without mentioning the United States or its European allies directly, Quan urged other countries to pursue a solution to the crisis through more negotiations, and said China's leaders view the Russian suggestions as a good place to start. Larijani, at a news conference later, said that, in this regard, the views of China and Iran were "very close."

"The Russian idea is fruitful, but it needs to be discussed more, and we are in the process of this negotiation," he said, adding that another round of talks had been scheduled with Russia for mid-February.

"It needs to be considered in a broader package," he added. "There are different aspects around this idea. . . . So we need to be patient."

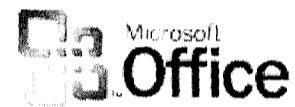
The United States, France and Britain have said they are running out of patience. They have urged the International Atomic Energy Agency, at an emergency session scheduled Feb. 2, to refer the Iranian nuclear standoff to the U.N. Security Council, which could impose sanctions or some other form of warning.

Since then, however, President Bush has hailed the Russian suggestion as a promising compromise. And

Advertisement

Microsoft

Today's Microsoft Office helps you
organize your inbox with
search folders and quick flags.



on Thursday at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, the head of the IAEA, Mohamed ElBaradei, said Moscow's plan could offer "the beginning of a solution," according to the Reuters news agency.

In Washington on Thursday, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said the time for referral had come. "The Iranians are doing nothing but trying to throw up chaff . . . and people shouldn't let them get away with it," she said in an interview with Reuters.

The foreign ministers of the five permanent Security Council members -- the United States, Britain, Russia, China and France -- plan to gather Monday in London, along with Germany, to lay groundwork for the IAEA decision.

The crisis atmosphere swelled this month when Iran removed U.N. seals on equipment that can be used to enrich uranium. The Iranian leadership repeatedly has said it has no intention of making weapons but retains the right under international conventions to enrich uranium for nuclear energy production.

Larijani has said that if the IAEA does refer Iran to the Security Council, Iran will take the next step and begin enriching uranium, in effect moving from research to making what could become weapons material. Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki has warned that such a step would prompt Iran to halt cooperation with the IAEA, including its surprise checks at nuclear research sites.

Against that background, Russia offered its compromise proposal, saying Iran could send its uranium to Russian facilities for enrichment to make sure none is diverted into weapons production.

China, which has veto power in the Security Council, traditionally has shied from the use of sanctions in international disputes. But Chinese analysts predicted that China would likely abstain in a vote on sanctions, seeking to maintain its good relations with Washington.

© 2006 The Washington Post Company

Advertising Links

[What's this?](#)

Hotel in Europe - Venere.com

Select and reserve hotels all over Europe at Venere.com. Comprehensive database with detailed descriptions, photos, maps, customer reviews and instant booking. Book now, pay on check out.
www.venere.com


Blumental Hotel Mürren Switzerland

Traditional cozy Swiss hotel with a lot of charm, atmosphere. Perfect for excursions, scenic hikes, walks in spring, summer, autumn. Rates \$60 US dollars. Free entry to the sporting center.
www.muerren.ch

Orbitz: Save on Hotels in Europe

Find a wide selection of Europe hotels sorted by star rating, distance and price. Guaranteed low rates on OrbitzSaver hotels. Just Orbitz and go.
www.orbitz.com

The New York Times
nytimes.com

PRINTER FRIENDLY FORMAT
SPONSORED BY 

January 17, 2006

Russia, China Want Talks Not Sanctions on Iran

By REUTERS

Filed at 9:02 a.m. ET

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russia and China made clear on Tuesday they did not favor U.N. sanctions to induce Iran to scale back its nuclear program, and Tehran urged the European Union to return to the negotiating table.

A senior British official dismissed as "vacuous" the Iranian offer, contained in a letter from Javad Vaeedi, deputy head of Iran's Supreme National Security Council.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Tehran should first halt all uranium enrichment work.

"Talks presuppose an obligation. The Iranian obligation was to stick to the moratorium," Lavrov said. "Now Iran (has departed from) the moratorium on scientific research."

Britain, France and Germany called off the talks last week after Tehran resumed uranium enrichment research, deepening Western suspicions that it is bent on acquiring the bomb.

Washington and its EU allies say it is time the U.N. nuclear watchdog agency sent Iran's case to the U.N. Security Council, which could eventually decide to impose sanctions on Iran.

A senior Iranian official said Tehran's decision to resume nuclear fuel research was legal and "irreversible."

Ali Asghar Soltaniyeh, Iranian representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), also told the students news agency ISNA that he would meet the agency's chief Mohamed ElBaradei later on Tuesday to discuss Iran's plans.

An IAEA spokesman could not confirm a meeting was planned.

Soltaniyeh reiterated Iran's threat to halt snap IAEA inspections of its nuclear sites if its case goes to the Security Council.

The senior British official said referral to the Council would not automatically lead to punitive measures.

"We don't see this leading straight into sanctions," the official told reporters under condition he not be named. "We want to build gradual, sustained pressure over time. We are not going to New York to impose punitive economic sanctions."

Lavrov also said talk of sanctions was premature.

``The question of sanctions against Iran puts the cart before the horse. Sanctions are in no way the best, or the only, way to solve the problem," he told a news briefing.

A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman said Beijing favored diplomacy, urging all parties to ``keep patient and make utmost efforts to resume the negotiations between the EU3 and Iran."

Germany earlier said Council members remained at odds on the Iranian nuclear issue after Monday's talks in London among the United States, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany.

However, participants did agree to call an emergency meeting of the IAEA board on February 2.

An Iranian source in Vienna said Iran had written to the EU trio proposing that talks resume immediately and saying Tehran was ready to ``remove existing ambiguities regarding its peaceful nuclear program through talks and negotiations."

RUSSIAN PROPOSAL

Iran's letter also said it wanted to pursue scheduled talks with Russia over Moscow's proposal to enrich uranium for Iran in a joint venture to prevent any diversion for military use.

``Iran believes that negotiations with Russia will continue seriously and constructively, and as planned, they will be on February 16 in Moscow," Vaeedi wrote.

Lavrov said that Russia's offer to enrich uranium for Iran remained on the table. Tehran has previously sent mixed signals on the idea, which has EU and U.S. support.

German Deputy Foreign Minister Gernot Erler said Iran must keep its promises if it wanted more talks with the EU3.

``Western states and the Europeans are ready at any time to restart talks, but only if Iran fulfils the pledges it has made," he said.

French Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy plans to go to Moscow on Wednesday to discuss Iran's standoff with the West.

``Iran will be at the top of the agenda," a Foreign Ministry spokesman said, citing the importance of Russia's stance.

Any Security Council action would need the consent of its five permanent members, including Russia and China, both wary of jeopardizing their major economic interests in Iran.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan said: ``We hope the Iranian side can cooperate with the efforts by the international community to restart the diplomatic negotiations."

China gets about 12 percent of its oil imports from Iran.

Arguing against sanctions, Lavrov said a U.N. embargo against Iraq had failed to change Saddam Hussein's behavior.

Asked under what conditions Russia would back sending Iran to the Council, he said the IAEA's role

had not been exhausted.

Moscow's \$1 billion stake in building Iran's first atomic reactor gives it potential leverage over Tehran.

Copyright 2006 Reuters Ltd. | [Home](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Search](#) | [Corrections](#) | [XML](#) | [Help](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Work for](#)

The New York Times

January 17, 2006

Russia and China Demand Iran Freeze Nuclear Activity, but Reject Referral to U.N.

By ELAINE SCIOLINO and ALAN COWELL

PARIS, Jan. 16 - Russia and China affirmed Monday that Iran must resume its freeze on certain nuclear activities, but refused a call by the Americans and the Europeans for the issue to be put before the United Nations Security Council, according to the British Foreign Office and senior European officials.

In one conciliatory gesture, Russia and China agreed not to block a move by France, Britain and Germany to convene a special session early next month of the 35 nations that make up the board of the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna, according to the officials. At that time, the nations could decide whether Iran should be referred to the Security Council for possible censure.

The Russian and Chinese positions were laid out during five hours of high-level talks in London that brought together the five permanent members of the Security Council - the United States, Russia, China, France and Britain - and Germany in an effort to forge a common position after Iran's resumption last week of nuclear work at three sites.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because of the normal diplomatic constraints of their governments.

Statements on Monday from both Moscow and Beijing underscored the difference with the Europeans.

In Moscow, President Vladimir V. Putin emphasized that Russia, the other European nations and the United States have "very close positions on the Iranian problem," but warned that the crisis should be resolved "without abrupt, erroneous steps."

In a joint news conference with Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany, on her first visit to Moscow since taking office, Mr. Putin urged caution, saying, "We must move very carefully in this area."

Mr. Putin also signaled that a Russian-led initiative to enrich Iran's uranium in Russia under Russian control might still offer a way out of the crisis.

Iran, which had seemed to reject the Russian proposal as inadequate, has expressed renewed interest in it in recent days. "We consider it constructive and are carefully studying it," Iran's ambassador to Moscow, Gholamreza Ansari, said on Russian television. "This is a good initiative to resolve the situation. We believe that Iran and Russia should find a way out of this jointly."

In Beijing, the Chinese Foreign Ministry also emphasized the need for negotiations, not confrontation, saying in a statement, "China believes that under the current situation, all relevant sides should remain

restrained and stick to solving the Iranian nuclear issue through negotiations."

The rush of diplomacy reflects the growing urgency of managing the relationship with Iran.

"This was a meeting to feel each other out," said a senior official involved in the London talks. "I don't think our positions are that far apart. Everyone agrees we must agree; the question now is what will we agree on. Now is the time to start an intense negotiating process to persuade countries of the board to proceed by consensus."

Asked about the Russian and Chinese position on a referral of Iran to the Security Council, the official replied, "That is certainly not something that is agreed to at the moment."

Both Russia and China have close economic and military partnerships with Iran and historically have preferred engagement with Iran as a way of moderating its behavior and opposed any action in the Security Council.

China is particularly reluctant to use the Security Council against Iran, saying last week that such action could complicate the issue and harden positions.

But Iran's recent behavior, combined with its history of concealment of its nuclear activities, has eroded confidence in assertions that its nuclear activities are intended for peaceful energy purposes and not for a weapons program.

There is a growing support for the position that Iran's case should come before the Security Council, if only to register condemnation of the Tehran government.

The seriousness of the London talks was reflected by the seniority of their delegations. R. Nicholas Burns, the under secretary of state for political affairs, led the American delegation. The Russians sent Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Kislyak, a top nuclear negotiator; the Chinese sent Zhang Yan, the director of arms control at the Foreign Ministry.

The United States, which has long been pressing for Iran to be judged by the Security Council, was particularly eager to push forward quickly, before Iran succeeds in dividing the international community.

En route to Liberia on Monday, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said she wanted the governing countries of the atomic energy agency to meet "as soon as possible," adding that the problem with waiting is that the Iranians will "try to take advantage of it to start to throw chaff now and to obfuscate."

Still, the diplomatic initiative is remarkable in that Britain, France and Germany - the three nations that forged a nuclear agreement with Iran in November 2004 under which it froze most of its nuclear activities - are now in lock step with the United States.

But the United States and the Europeans need time to conduct a global diplomatic offensive to win the maximum support from the atomic energy agency's board, a sort of mega-Security Council that includes countries as diverse as Syria, Libya, Brazil, Venezuela, Malaysia, Canada, Cuba and India, as well as the permanent Council members.

The international atomic agency usually makes decisions by consensus, but Iran could be referred to the Security Council if a majority votes in favor, no country votes against and the rest abstain.

The European trio had been negotiating with Iran for two and a half years as part of a plan to entice it with economic and political incentives in exchange for objective guarantees that it was not trying to produce a nuclear bomb. The Europeans have been operating with the support of the European Union and even of the Bush administration, despite its conviction that Iran was trying to become a nuclear power.

Iran was not punished last August after it restarted operations at its uranium conversion site in Isfahan. Even though it violated the accord with the European trio, the operations were not considered sufficiently sensitive to prompt a united retaliatory response.

Last September, the I.A.E.A . board found Iran in violation of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty because of its deception of the agency dating back nearly two decades. The resolution passed at the time cited the "absence of confidence" that Iran's nuclear program was exclusively for peaceful purposes.

But the board was deeply divided about whether to punish Iran and decided not to vote on whether to refer Iran to the Security Council.

When Iran broke the seals on machines at its uranium enrichment facility at Natanz and two related storage and testing locations and restarted nuclear work, the Europeans said it went too far, and they felt betrayed.

Last week in Berlin, foreign ministers of Britain, Germany and France, as well as Javier Solana, the European Union foreign policy chief, agreed that their negotiations with Iran had reached a dead end and recommended that consideration of its case at the Security Council was the next step.

Reflecting that feeling of betrayal, Foreign Secretary Jack Straw of Britain told a security conference in London before the nuclear talks on Monday, "The onus is on Iran to act to give the international community confidence that its nuclear program has exclusive peaceful purposes, confidence, I'm afraid, that has been sorely undermined by its history of concealment and deception."

Paradoxically, Iran's renewed research activities do not constitute a breach of its treaty obligations, although they violate the voluntary deal struck with the Europeans.

Although the agency board's member nations are becoming increasingly frustrated with Iran, there may be resistance in voting for hauling Iran before the Security Council in part because it could set a precedent for other countries with nuclear programs.

In a sign that board-member countries may have to be wooed, Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit of Egypt, a board member, issued a statement on Monday saying, "Dialogue is the best way to get out of the current crisis, and we have many factors which help towards an exit." He added that Egypt's vote would depend on prior consultations and on the language of draft resolutions.

The Saudi foreign minister, Saud al-Faisal bin Abdelaziz al-Saud, told the BBC on Monday that Western nations shared the blame in creating the impasse with Iran since it was the United States and its allies that helped Israel develop nuclear weapons.

"As long as you make one exception, you open the way for logical arguments of why him and not me," Prince Saud said. "The West in allowing Israel to establish its nuclear capability has done the damage."

Elaine Sciolino reported from Paris for this article and Alan Cowell from London.

washingtonpost.com

Canadians Move Right, Elect New Leadership

Liberal Party Out After 12-Year Run

By Doug Struck
Washington Post Foreign Service
Tuesday, January 24, 2006; A01

TORONTO, Jan. 23 -- Canadian voters, saying they were fed up with financial scandals and ready for a change, ended the 12-year run of the ruling Liberal Party on Monday, ousting Prime Minister Paul Martin in favor of a Conservative Party likely to steer a path closer to the United States.

Nearly complete returns in the national election gave a strong victory to Conservative leader Stephen Harper, 46, a political strategist from western Canada who jokes about being dull. He shrugged off Martin's accusations that he is too cozy with U.S. conservatives for liberal-leaning Canada, the same accusations that crippled his candidacy in 2004.

But Harper fell short of winning a clear majority in the 308-seat House of Commons. He will need to compromise with opponents to form a government and further his agenda of scaling back social programs, cutting taxes and winnowing the power of the federal government.

The Liberal Party will swap roles with the Conservatives, becoming the largest opposition party. That change is a stinging rebuff of the party, which has regularly dominated Canadian politics since the country's birth, and for Martin, 67, who has been prime minister for only 25 months. Canadians' pride in clean government was shaken by a kickback scandal in the Liberal Party, and by their suspicion that the Liberals had grown cocky in office, they said repeatedly in public opinion surveys.

"I just feel we need a change," said Karen Janes, 47, outside a polling station in central Toronto. "Twelve years is a long time."

Nearly complete returns showed the Liberals dropping to about 102 seats from 133. The Conservatives captured about 123 seats, more than the 98 they previously held but far from the 155-seat majority that some Conservative strategists had dreamed of winning.

"We showed Canadians tonight that we are truly a national party from coast to coast. We drew in the whole country," Rona Ambrose, a Conservative member of Parliament, said as the returns began to come in.

A step to the political right will be a change for Canada, which has grown increasingly more liberal on social and political issues than its southern neighbor, to the point that Martin attacked Harper as being "pro-American" in the campaign.

The Conservative Party and its political predecessors have in the past championed such positions as outlawing abortion and banning gay marriage, views that polls show are inconsistent with the more

Advertisement

10pm. Waiting for updates, ordering dinner.

tolerant tilt of Canadians.

"I think we have to give it a try. But I am very afraid that it will be too far right," said Florence Koven, 72, emerging from the polls after voting -- reluctantly, she said -- for the Conservative Party. "The unknown always concerns you. Mr. Harper says he is a changed man; we'll see how much he has changed."

Harper, who lost in 2004 when Martin's Liberals portrayed him as too close to U.S. right-wing politics, studiously avoided discussing social issues in this campaign, concentrating instead on his fiscal plans and his pledge to end government corruption.

He also managed to appeal to voters in Quebec, breaking a lock on the province's seats that had been held by the Liberals and Bloc Quebecois. The Bloc, which advocates separation of Quebec from the rest of Canada, appeared to have lost three or four seats from its current strength of 53 seats, according to partial returns.

The fourth-largest party, the National Democratic Party, which has championed social liberalism, appeared to have added as many as a dozen seats to its current bloc of 18.

The election of Harper, who represents Calgary, Alberta, also marks a historic shift of power from the traditional centers in the east to the energy-rich and increasingly affluent western provinces.

"We really have gone from two basic regions, Quebec and Ontario, to three with the West, in which there is a new center of power in Alberta," said Reginald Stuart, a Canadian political scientist.

Martin's ambition to remain prime minister was threatened by the disclosure of a kickback scheme surrounding his Liberal Party predecessor, and by the growing sense among Canadian voters that his party had been in power too long.

Harper hammered on that theme in the campaign, painting the ruling party as arrogant and suffused with what he dubbed "a sense of entitlement."

The tactic worked, and Martin spent much of the campaign defending his integrity. Martin was not personally involved in the scandal, in which aides of former prime minister Jean Chretien are alleged to have steered lucrative advertising contracts to political cronies who then funneled money back to Liberal political campaigns. Martin pleaded with voters to remember that he had ordered the public investigation into the allegations and fired government officials named in the probe.

Appearing increasingly desperate as opinion polls showed his party losing, Martin lashed out at Harper, portraying him as an "American-style" neoconservative with a hidden agenda at odds with Canadians.

Martin warned that Harper would try to reverse last year's vote legalizing same-sex marriage, would seek to erode abortion rights and would pack the judiciary with conservative judges.

Harper stayed above the fray, insisting that those social issues were not on his agenda. Instead, he promised to slightly reduce the national sales tax, replace a sputtering national day-care program with direct payments to parents and increase penalties for gun-related crimes.

He vowed to give more power to provinces and suggested a change that would open the first crack in Canada's traditionally sacrosanct national health care program. He proposes giving patients a right to

seek outside care if they are required to wait too long for a health care procedure in the national system.

Harper also is seen as ideologically closer to the Bush administration than is the Liberal Party, which balked at joining the invasion of Iraq and refused to sign on to the U.S. plan to develop an antiballistic missile system for North America. Harper has suggested he might revisit the missile defense decision and has said Canada would reject the Kyoto accord on global warming, as the Bush administration has done.

But some Canadians said they believed Harper would still try to enact a conservative social agenda.

"I would do anything to stop the Conservatives," said Phillip Clarkson, 53, a costume designer in Toronto. "I am gay. I want to be married someday. And I want there to be the opportunity to do it."

© 2006 The Washington Post Company

Advertising Links

What's this?

Mortgage Rates Hit Record Lows

\$160,000 loan as low as \$633/month. Compare rates - refinance now.
www.lowermybills.com

2.75% Fixed Student Loan Consolidation

70% lower monthly student loan payment at NextStudent. Consolidation rate locked as low as 2.75%. No costs. Flexible payment plans. Secure site. Pre-qualify in 60 seconds online.
www.nextstudent.com

Mortgage and Refinance Quotes

Apply today to get up to 4 quotes from top lenders. Any credit OK. Refinance, home equity, and home improvement loans are all available. Let lenders compete over you.
www.lowratesource.com

washingtonpost.com

Iran Tells Nuke Agency to Remove Cameras

By GEORGE JAHN
The Associated Press
Tuesday, February 7, 2006; 1:09 AM

VIENNA, Austria -- Iran has told the International Atomic Energy Agency to remove surveillance cameras and agency seals from sites and nuclear equipment by the end of next week in response to referral to the U.N. Security Council, the agency said Monday.

Iran's demands came two days after the IAEA reported Tehran to the council over its disputed atomic program.

In a confidential report to the IAEA's 35-member board on Monday, agency head Mohamed ElBaradei said Iran also announced a sharp reduction in the number and kind of IAEA inspections, effective immediately. The report was made available to The Associated Press.

Iranian officials had repeatedly warned they would stop honoring the so-called "Additional Protocol" to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty _ an agreement giving IAEA inspectors greater authority _ if the IAEA board referred their country to the council.

A diplomat close to the Vienna-based IAEA told the AP that Iran had also moved forward on another threat _ formally setting a date for resuming full-scale work on its uranium enrichment program. Iran says it wants to make fuel through enrichment, but the activity can also generate the nuclear core of warheads.

The diplomat, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the matter was confidential, refused to divulge the date.

Robert G. Joseph, the U.S. undersecretary of state for arms control, said Monday that Iran used negotiations with the European Union to play for time and develop its capabilities.

"I would say that Iran does have the capability to develop nuclear weapons and the means to deliver them," he said in a response to a question.

In Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Secretary-General Kofi Annan said he was still hopeful that Iran will take confidence-building measures with the IAEA.

"It's not the end of the road," Annan said of the Security Council referral. "I hope that in between, Iran will take steps that will help create an environment and confidence-building measures that will bring the partners back to the negotiating table."

Advertisement

Microsoft

Today's Microsoft Office helps you
organize your inbox with
search folders and quick flags.

Get more out of Outlook™



In his brief report, ElBaradei cited E. Khalilipour, vice president of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, as saying: "From the date of this letter, all voluntarily suspended non-legally binding measures including the provisions of the Additional Protocol and even beyond that will be suspended."

Calling on the agency to sharply reduce the number of inspectors in Iran, Khalilipour added: "All the Agency's containment and surveillance measures which were in place beyond the normal Agency safeguards measures should be removed by mid-February 2006."

Earlier, Russia's foreign minister warned against threatening Iran after Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld reportedly agreed with an interviewer at the German daily newspaper Handelsblatt that all options, including military response, remained on the table.

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov called for talks to continue with Tehran, adding: "I think that at the current stage, it is important not to make guesses about what will happen and even more important not to make threats."

U.S. Sen. Richard Lugar, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, urged the Security Council to impose strict sanctions on Iran if it fails to comply with U.N. resolutions and arms agreements and warned that inaction would greatly increase the chances of military conflict. He nonetheless stressed that the United States favors a diplomatic solution.

"Diplomatic and economic confrontations are preferable to military ones," Lugar said. But he cautioned that "in the field of nonproliferation, decisions delayed over the course of months and years may be as harmful as no decisions at all."

The Additional Protocol was signed by Iranian officials in 2003 as pressure intensified on Tehran to cooperate with IAEA inspectors probing more than 18 years of clandestine nuclear activities.

The protocol gives the agency inspecting powers beyond normal, allowing for inspections on short notice of areas and programs suspected of being misused for weapons activity.

North Korea _ the world's other major proliferation concern _ quit the Nonproliferation Treaty in January 2003, just a few months before U.S. officials announced that Pyongyang had told them it had nuclear weapons and may test, export or use them depending on U.S. actions.

Iranian officials have repeatedly said they will continue honoring the Nonproliferation Treaty. Still, the agreements linked to that treaty are insufficient for agency inspectors trying to establish whether Iran has had a secret nuclear arms program.

Unless Iran relents, the move to curtail voluntary cooperation means that ElBaradei will be stymied in trying to close the Iran nuclear file by March. And that could backfire on Tehran.

Russia and China agreed to Security Council referral on condition that the council take no action until March, when the IAEA board next meets. But if ElBaradei reports to that March 6 meeting that he was unable to make progress in establishing whether Iran constitutes a nuclear threat, the council will likely start to pressure Iran, launching a process that could end in sanctions.

Associated Press writers Edith M. Lederer at the United Nations, Vladimir Isachenkov in Moscow and

Barry Schweid in Washington contributed to this report.

© 2006 The Associated Press

Advertising Links

[What's this?](#)

Hotel in Europe - Venere.com

Select and reserve hotels all over Europe at Venere.com. Comprehensive database with detailed descriptions, photos, maps, customer reviews and instant booking. Book now, pay on check out.
www.venere.com

Blumental Hotel Mürren Switzerland

Traditional cozy Swiss hotel with a lot of charm, atmosphere. Perfect for excursions, scenic hikes, walks in spring, summer, autumn. Rates \$60 US dollars. Free entry to the sporting center.
www.muerren.ch

Hotel Europe

Stay at Hotel Europe and save. Hotels.com has lower rates on over 25,000 properties in 400 major cities. Reserve online or call now.
hotels.com

washingtonpost.com

Iran Ends Voluntary Cooperation on Nukes

By ALI AKBAR DAREINI
The Associated Press
Monday, February 6, 2006; 1:07 AM

TEHRAN, Iran -- Iran ended all voluntary cooperation with the U.N. nuclear watchdog agency Sunday, saying it would start uranium enrichment and bar surprise inspections of its facilities after being reported to the Security Council over fears it is seeking an atomic bomb.

However, the Islamic republic left the door open for further negotiations over its nuclear program and, in an apparent softening of its position, said it was willing to discuss Moscow's proposal to shift large-scale enrichment operations to Russian territory in an effort to allay suspicions.

A day earlier, an Iranian official at the International Atomic Energy Agency meeting in Vienna, Austria, said that proposal was "dead." The comment was made after the IAEA's 35-nation board of governors voted to report Iran to the council, which has the power to impose economic and political sanctions.

"The door for negotiations is still open," Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi said Sunday.

But President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said the West "can't do a thing" to stop Iran's progress.

"The era of coercion and domination has ended," Ahmadinejad was quoted as saying by the official Islamic Republic News Agency. "Issue as many resolutions like this as you want and make yourself happy. You can't prevent the progress of the Iranian nation.

"In the name of the IAEA they want to visit all our nuclear facilities and learn our defense capabilities, but we won't allow them to do this."

Uranium enriched to a low degree can be used for nuclear reactors, while highly enriched uranium is suitable for warheads. Iran insists it only wants to generate electricity, but the United States and some of its allies contend Tehran is trying to build a weapon.

Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki said Sunday that Iran had ended all voluntary cooperation with the IAEA. The action, ordered by Ahmadinejad, was required by a law passed last year.

The announcement means Iran has resumed uranium enrichment and no longer will allow snap IAEA inspections of its nuclear facilities, a voluntary measure it allowed in recent years in a goodwill gesture to build trust under a protocol to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

"We do not have any obligation toward the additional protocol (anymore)," Mottaki said.

Iran repeatedly has stressed it would continue to honor its commitments under the treaty but that it has the right to pursue a peaceful nuclear program.

"Adoption of the policy of resistance doesn't mean we are on non-speaking terms or noncooperative," Mottaki said. "Yesterday we had two options. One was the option of resistance and the other was surrender. We chose resistance."

"Our activities will continue within the NPT (and not beyond that)," he told a press conference. "We have withdrawn only the possibility of voluntary cooperation from them (IAEA and the West)."

Mottaki said the IAEA resolution was "the result of a political will based on U.S. hostility" toward Iran.

He said Iran would defend its right to possess nuclear technology and enrich uranium to produce nuclear fuel.

"We will continue this path," he told reporters.

The IAEA resolution requests the agency's Director General Mohamed ElBaradei to "report to the Security Council" with the steps Iran needs to take to dispel suspicions about its nuclear ambitions.

These include that it return to freezing uranium enrichment; consider stopping construction of a heavy-water reactor that could be the source of plutonium; formally ratify the agreement allowing the IAEA greater inspecting authority; and give the agency more power in its investigation of Iran's nuclear program.

Tensions were likely to rise as Iran rejects pressure from the outside. It started escalating last month after Iran removed U.N. seals and began nuclear research, including small-scale uranium enrichment.


That came after months of futile talks between Iran and Britain, Germany and France, which negotiated on behalf of the 25-nation European Union.

Asefi said Iranian diplomats still will attend Feb. 16 talks in Moscow concerning Russia's enrichment proposal.

"The proposal has to conform itself with the new circumstances," Asefi said Sunday. "If the Russian proposal makes itself compatible with the new conditions, it can be negotiated."

© 2006 The Associated Press

The New York Times
nytimes.com

PRINTER FRIENDLY FORMAT
SPONSORED BY 

February 5, 2006

Nuclear Panel Votes to Report Tehran to U.N.

By ELAINE SCIOLINO

VIENNA, Feb. 4 — The 35-nation board of the United Nations atomic energy agency voted here on Saturday to report Iran to the Security Council, a move that reflects increasing suspicion around the world that Iran is determined to develop nuclear weapons.

The resolution, which passed by a vote of 27 to 3, could change the course of diplomacy toward Iran and open the door to international punishment of the country.

Only Cuba, Syria and Venezuela voted against the European-drafted resolution. Five countries — Algeria, Belarus, Indonesia, Libya and South Africa — abstained.

After the vote, Iran announced that it would immediately end its voluntary nuclear cooperation with the agency and that it would begin full-scale production of enriched uranium, which can be used to produce electricity or to help build nuclear bombs.

In a letter ordering the country's nuclear commission to take those actions, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad wrote that after Iranian demonstrations of compliance and good will, "the nuclear agency has voted under pressure by few countries and has ignored our extensive cooperation and negated our legal right," the official IRNA news agency reported.

Mr. Ahmadinejad said that although the country would no longer observe the Additional Protocol that allows intrusive nuclear inspections, "all the country's peaceful activities will remain within the framework of the Nonproliferation Treaty."

The vote in Vienna was the climax of a two-and-a-half year campaign by the Bush administration to convince the world that suspicions about Iran's nuclear program are so serious that the issue must come before the Security Council for judgment.

It also signals the failure, at least for now, of the two-and-a-half year strategy of France, Britain and Germany that was based on the premise that Iran could be coaxed into freezing crucial nuclear activities if the political, technological, economic and security rewards from the West were enticing enough.

In recent months, the three countries have moved much closer to the position of the Bush administration, which has branded Iran part of an "axis of evil" and never held out much hope for the European negotiating track.

The resolution is a compromise between the Americans, who wanted immediate action, and the Russians and Chinese, who wanted a delay, and it will allow concrete Security Council action against Iran only after a delay of at least a month.

If that happens, the focus on Iran will begin to shift away from the largely technical atmosphere at the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna to the diplomatic arena of the Security Council in New York, which has responsibility for keeping peace and security in the world.

"The authorities in Tehran, rather than threatening the world, should listen to the world and take the steps necessary to start regaining its confidence," Gregory Schulte, the American ambassador to the I.A.E.A., told reporters after the vote.

Peter Jenkins, the British ambassador, told reporters that Iran should take the monthlong grace period to change its behavior and "begin rebuilding international confidence" as the only way to restart negotiations.

The month coincides with the schedule for the atomic agency's next formal, comprehensive assessment of the country's nuclear program.

It is conceivable, although highly unlikely, that by then Iran will take the bold steps necessary to convince both the team of nuclear inspectors at the I.A.E.A. as well as the international community that it is a negotiating partner that can be trusted.

But if Iran carries out its threat to end cooperation, it would severely limit the work of the agency's expert inspectors, who will no longer be allowed to do voluntary spot inspections in Iran and would lose access to important sites, including Iran's research centers and factories that make parts for the centrifuges that enrich uranium.

The vote in Vienna was promoted as a significant victory for the Bush administration, which spent months briefing members of the agency's board on intelligence that it said strongly suggested but did not prove that Iran's intent was to develop a weapon.

But suddenly the United States will have to decide what comes next. So far, the Bush administration has signaled only that it favors a go-slow approach based on diplomacy, not military force, and ruling out immediate sanctions or other punitive measures.

The White House issued a statement on Saturday from President Bush's ranch in Crawford, Tex., describing the agency's vote as "a clear message" to Iran. The statement ended with words directed to the Iranian people, saying, "Iran's true interests lie in working with the international community to enjoy the benefits of peaceful nuclear energy, not in isolating Iran by continuing to develop the capability to build nuclear weapons."

In Washington, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said Iran would have to suspend its enrichment-related uranium activities, cooperate fully on inspections and return to negotiations in order to avert its case being taken up at the Security Council.

R. Nicholas Burns, under secretary for political affairs, and Robert Joseph, under secretary for arms control and international security, said in a telephone briefing that although Iran had been making small concessions over recent months even as it moved forward on suspicious uranium activities, no such incremental steps, like simply keeping the talks going, would be enough to avoid a Security Council debate.

They did not specify what actions the United States would seek at the Security Council, but in the past, administration officials have said that no move will be made to impose heavy economic penalties on

Iran, like an oil embargo. Instead, the United States would likely seek punitive diplomatic or political steps, like suspending travel or freezing assets for top Iranian officials and business leaders in nuclear-related industries.

Some administration officials have publicly taken more hawkish public line in recent days, repeating that President Bush was keeping open all of his options — the code words for reserving the right to take military action if diplomacy fails as part of the campaign to get the Iranian government to back down.

Reporting a country to the Security Council is deeply humiliating and singles out a country as an unreliable actor on the global stage. Until recently, a pillar of Iran's foreign policy had been to avoid being judged in the world organization and to seek alignments with the Europeans, Russia and China against the United States and Israel.

But that changed last August, after Iran resumed converting uranium yellowcake into a gas that can be further purified for use in nuclear reactors as well as weapons. It was the first breach of its voluntary agreement with the Europeans and essentially broke off negotiations.

That was followed by the reopening last month of part of its nuclear enrichment plant at Natanz for what Iran called "research purposes." Even though Iran has yet to operate any of the machinery or process any uranium material there, its reopening was the second and much more serious violation of the agreement with the Europeans.

The resolution at the I.A.E.A. came at the end of a three-day emergency session of the agency board that was prompted by Iran's refusal to heed calls to close down the uranium enrichment facility again.

It calls for the immediate suspension of all activities related to the enrichment of uranium. It also recalls Iran's "many failures and breaches of its obligations" under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and "the absence of confidence that Iran's nuclear program is exclusively for peaceful purposes resulting from the history of concealment of Iran's nuclear activities."

Iran insists that its nuclear program is solely for peaceful purposes like generating electricity. But it kept its program hidden for 18 years from the I.A.E.A., fueling suspicions that it may have secret plans to become a nuclear weapons power.

The resolution was passed after the United States reversed itself and agreed late Friday to include a clause expressing support for a nuclear-free Middle East that indirectly criticized Israel's secret nuclear weapons status.

Even the United States' closest European allies favored the clause, which had been demanded by Egypt and also had the support of Russia and China. Isolated, the United States backed down.

The final resolution included a clause stating that "a solution to the Iranian issue would contribute to global nonproliferation efforts and to realizing the objective of a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction, including their means of delivery."

The vote on Saturday was particularly important because it had the backing of Russia and China, which had abstained in the last resolution on Iran last September.

Both Russia and China made clear in separate statements that although they supported the resolution, they did not agree with the two American arguments for reporting Iran to the world body: that Iran had

to be reported both because of "noncompliance" with its treaty obligations and in the interest of peace and security.

Grigory Berdennikov, the Russian ambassador to the atomic agency, said in a statement, "This problem will be solved within the framework of the I.A.E.A. without additional interference."

In a veiled message to the United States, the Europeans and Iran, Wu Hailongon, the Chinese ambassador to the I.A.E.A., called on "all relevant parties to exercise restraint and patience" and "refrain from taking any action that might further complicate or deteriorate the situation."

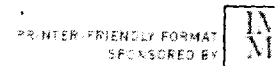
Among others backing the resolution was India, which had been pressured by the United States to vote yes if it expected to finalize a sweeping deal on nuclear energy cooperation with the United States, but will face intense domestic political opposition because of the decision.

The countries that voted for the resolution were Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Belgium, Britain, Canada, China, Colombia, Ecuador, Egypt, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, India, Japan, Norway, Portugal, Russia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Sweden, the United States and Yemen.

In recent years, the agency's board has reported Iraq, North Korea, Libya and Romania to the Security Council for possible censure because of their nuclear programs. But such action does not necessarily translate into action.

North Korea, which secretly built nuclear weapons and withdrew from the Nonproliferation Treaty three years ago, has been reported twice. Although the Security Council has denounced North Korea, it has never voted to punish it.

David E. Sanger and Steven R. Weisman contributed reporting from Washington for this article, and Nazila Fathi from Tehran.



February 4, 2006

U.S. Compromises on Wording of Iran Nuclear Resolution

By ELAINE SCIOLINO

VIENNA, Feb. 3 — The 35-nation board of the International Atomic Energy Agency put off a vote on a landmark resolution on Iran's nuclear program on Friday, largely because of American opposition to a clause indirectly criticizing Israel's nuclear weapons status, according to several diplomats.

But late Friday evening the dispute was apparently resolved after the Americans backed down and accepted compromise language, an American official said.

In Washington, R. Nicholas Burns, under secretary of state for political affairs, said the way had been cleared for the adoption of the resolution on Saturday. "The I.A.E.A. board is now poised to adopt a very important resolution declaring the international community's lack of confidence in Iran," he said. "This is a major development on this issue."

Earlier in the day, diplomats here had predicted the United States would have to accept a compromise on the clause, which mentions support for the creation of a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the Middle East. The clause was insisted upon by Egypt, with the strong backing of the nonaligned nations on the agency's board.

Egypt and other Arab states routinely demand references to a "nuclear-free zone" in the Middle East in Security Council documents. They argue that Israel — which has never admitted that it has nuclear weapons and, unlike Iran, has never signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty — should be made part of a general security framework in the Middle East.

The issue temporarily exposed a split between the Americans, who opposed the Egyptian demand, and Russia, China and the Europeans, who supported it.

On Thursday night, Britain circulated a new, informal draft that added a clause that recognized that "a solution to the Iranian nuclear issue would contribute to the goal of a Middle East free of all weapons of mass destruction, and their means of delivery."

That language reflected the official position of the 25-member European Union. But the United States delegation, led by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, initially opposed the compromise language, saying it could be used by Iran as a propaganda weapon against Israel, four senior diplomats said.

"The Americans are worried that once it is there, it will stay there forever and allow the Iranians to hide behind it," one ambassador involved in the negotiations said.

It was not immediately clear which compromise Washington had agreed to, though a senior official said

the resolution would make reference to a nuclear-free zone. Earlier, a State Department spokesman, Sean McCormack, had said the United States accepted in principle that "we all hope for a day when the Middle East achieves a state where there are not nuclear weapons." Throughout the day on Friday, the Europeans pressed the Americans to change their position.

"It's five against one," said one European ambassador.

Another key ambassador called the Americans "dogmatists," predicting that for the resolution to pass, "The Americans will have to give in."

Gregory Schulte, the American ambassador to the agency, told reporters that he expected strong support when a vote was taken. "We are convinced we have a solid majority for the resolution that reports Iran to the Security Council," he said. "And that majority is growing."

Many diplomats here also said the resolution might not pass with as strong a majority as many had hoped, because of opposition among the 16-member bloc of nonaligned countries.

Diplomats met behind closed doors throughout the day to meet some of the demands of the nonaligned countries, which wanted to delete all references to the Security Council or at least delay any report to New York until after the nuclear agency makes its full assessment of Iran's nuclear program in March.

The current text is a compromise between the American push for immediate action against Iran by the Security Council and Russia's preference for a monthlong delay for more diplomacy.

The resolution mentions Iran's "many failures and breaches of its obligations" under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, and "the absence of confidence that Iran's nuclear program is exclusively for peaceful purposes."

In one important concession, the draft resolution was changed to reflect the fact that actions taken by Iran to build international "confidence" that it is not pursuing a nuclear weapon are "voluntary and non-legally binding."

In another development, Javad Vaidi, the head of Iran's nuclear delegation, told reporters on Friday that if the resolution reported Iran to the Security Council, it would be the end of a Russian proposal under which uranium would be enriched for Iran's energy purposes at a site in Russia under solely Russian authority.

Underscoring the fluid nature of the diplomacy, however, a Russian diplomat said that talks on the proposal were continuing.

On Thursday, Iran informed the I.A.E.A. in a letter that all "voluntary" nuclear cooperation with the agency would end if the agency's board reported Iran's nuclear case to the Security Council. That would mean that the agency would no longer be allowed to do voluntary spot inspections and would lose access to important sites and installations.

Steven R. Weisman contributed reporting from Washington for this article.

Iran to top next week's Burns-Saran agenda

98-7
191.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

THE Iran nuclear issue, and US discussions on the crisis with various world powers, will figure prominently when US Under Secretary for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns arrives here next week for talks with Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran. On his way to India, Burns will make stop in London on Monday for talks on the Iran issue with officials from Russia, China and the EU-3—Britain, France and Germany—Russia and China.

The US is pushing to have the matter referred to the UN

Security Council and the talks in London will explore the possibilities of a special session of the International Atomic Energy Agency's board of governors for this purpose. Last September, following hectic diplomatic activity on the margins of the UN General Assembly, India had voted in favour of the resolution against Iran.

While India has always maintained that it favours negotiation to settle the issue, Iran's recent actions have made it more difficult for India and other likeminded countries to push for further talks.

Russia, trying hard to work out a solution, has expressed its

disappointment on Iran's latest move to break IAEA seals on equipment and machinery that can be used for uranium enrichment. For its part, India has so far preferred to remain quiet on the issue. But with the growing diplomatic consensus on referring the matter to the Security Council, New Delhi may be left with little choice but to make an open stand.

The January 19-20 talks between Burns and Saran will also see discussions on implementing the Indo-US nuclear deal. The agenda for US President George W Bush's upcoming visit to the country will be drawn up as well.

NI 19-1-2000

US pact will grant India N-power tag

Agreement to refocus on China, Pak proliferation

NILOVA Roy Chaudhury
New Delhi, January 12

THE INDO-US nuclear agreement, if implemented, will "obviously" confer nuclear power status on India, an influential American proponent of non-proliferation said on Thursday, supporting "in principle" the "enormous benefits" the deal would bring to bilateral relations.

"It'd be disingenuous to suggest that, if the (Indo-US) agreement (on civilian nuclear cooperation) comes through, it'll not grant nuclear power status to India. Obviously, it will", said Senator John Kerry, the Democratic contender in the 2004 US presidential elections against George W Bush, and an influential member of the Senate's foreign relations committee, speaking at the Observer Research Centre.

Kerry, who supported the deal "in principle", said that, although "enormous benefits" would accrue from the deal bilaterally, it could not be viewed only in the context of bilateral Indo-US relations, since global implications were involved.

The agreement would have "significant" international ramifications, involving the role of three important international bodies or agreements, par-

KERRY'S INDIA VISIT

Meeting with scientists

US SENATOR John Kerry will meet some of India's top nuclear scientists and officials in Mumbai on Friday. He is likely to meet top industrialists like Ratan Tata who are part of the Indo-US CEOs forum, set up during the visit of Manmohan Singh to Washington in July.

IANS, New Delhi

ticularly at a time when "Iran and other compelling issues are on the table". Kerry said he had spoken of the "very serious problem" developing in Iran "at length" with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and national security adviser M.K. Narayanan.

The other international benefit that would accrue from the debate on the Indo-US civil nuclear deal would be the return of the spotlight on the nuclear proliferation emanating from China and Pakistan and the A.Q. Khan network.

"We need to renew the

atmospherics" for those issues on which the US has not been firm enough, Kerry said.

The global aspect of the bilateral agreement would entail a consensus endorsement of the 44-nation Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), an amendment of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954. The Fissile Technology Control Regime (FCTR) would also be affected by the Indo-US agreement of July 18.

Kerry, noting that India had a domestic law in place against proliferation of nuclear material, said the Prime Minister had told him during their meeting that India would sign the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT).

The PM had told him "clearly that India will sign the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty." Refusing to be drawn into how the deal would fare in the US Congress, he said it would "depend on the four corners of the agreement". "In principle, it'd be better to have India as a participant in the IAEA procedures and standards than not to have it", he said.

Upbeat on the future of the Indo-US bilateral relations, Kerry said, "Future history is to be written. There's tremendous opportunity for us — if we take advantage of it and do what is needed".

HISTAN TIMES

13 JAN 2006

আবার পরমাণু-প্রশ্ন

ইরানের পরমাণু কর্মসূচি লইয়া বিশ্ব রাজনীতি আবার উত্তপ্ত। ইরানকে তাহার নিজস্ব পরমাণু কর্মসূচির রূপায়ণ হইতে নিরস্ত করিতে মার্কিন যুক্তরাষ্ট্র ও তাহার নেতৃত্বে ইউরোপীয় শক্তিসমূহ বেশ কিছু কাল যাবৎ চেষ্টা করিতেছে। ইন্টারন্যাশনাল অ্যাটমিক এনার্জি এজেন্সি, সংক্ষেপে আইএইএ-র রোষদৃষ্টি ইতিমধ্যেই ইরানের ওপর পড়িয়াছে, সে দেশের পারমাণবিক কর্মকেন্দ্রগুলির প্রতি নিষেধাজ্ঞা জারি হইয়াছে, এবং তাহা অমান্য করিলে ইরানের প্রতি কঠিন পদক্ষেপ লওয়ার লক্ষ্যে রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জের নিরাপত্তা পরিষদে বিষয়টি ওঠানো হইবে, এমন কথাও আলোচিত হইতেছে। গত বছরে নভেম্বর মাসে আইএইএ-র শেষ বৈঠকে বিষয়টি নিরাপত্তা পরিষদের কাছে প্রেরণ করিবার কথা ছিল, কিন্তু শেষ পর্যন্ত ইউরোপীয় ইউনিয়ন ও রাশিয়ার মধ্যস্থতায় পিছাইয়া আসা হয়। আন্তর্জাতিক স্তরে যখন এ বিষয়ে জল এমনিতেই প্রবল ঘোলা, এমন সময়ে ইরান ব্যাপারটিকে আরও জটিল করিয়া তুলিল। সে দেশের নাতানজ পরমাণু কেন্দ্রে কিছু কাল আগে রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জের নির্দেশক্রমে যে তালা ঝোলানো হইয়াছিল, ইরানি সরকারের তত্ত্বাবধানে সেই তালা খুলিয়া আবার ওই কেন্দ্রকে কার্যকর করিয়া তুলিবার প্রয়াস গৃহীত হইল। সঙ্গে সঙ্গে পশ্চিমী শক্তিগুলি প্রবল প্রতিক্রিয়া ব্যক্ত করিয়াছে, ইরানের পদক্ষেপকে ধিক্কৃত করিয়া নিজেদের উদ্বেগের সহস্র কারণ দর্শাইতে আরম্ভ করিয়াছে। ফল দাঁড়াইয়াছে, গত নভেম্বরের যে ক্ষীণ আশার আলোক দেখা যাইতেছিল, আবার তাহা পারস্পরিক দোষারোপ ও ভীতি-সংশয়ের অতল অন্ধকারে তলাইয়া গেল।

সন্দেহ নাই, মার্কিন যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের নেতৃত্বে যে পরমাণু নিরস্ত্রীকরণ কর্মসূচি রচিত ও রচিত হইয়াছে, তাহার লক্ষ্য ও পস্থা লইয়া স্বচ্ছতার বিশেষ অভাব। যে অভ্যন্তরীণ নিয়মতান্ত্রিকতার দ্বারা কোনও কার্যক্রমের স্বচ্ছতা ও গ্রহণযোগ্যতা নির্ধারিত হয়, তাহা এ ক্ষেত্রে অনস্তিত্বশীল। সেই কারণেই বিভিন্ন দেশের ক্ষেত্রে বিভিন্ন রকম ছাড়, বিভিন্ন নিয়ম, সেই কারণেই পাকিস্তানের পরমাণু বিজ্ঞানী বোমা-প্রযুক্তি অন্য দেশকে পাচার করার কথা স্বীকার করিলেও পাকিস্তানের প্রতি আমেরিকা ক্ষমাশীল থাকে, অথচ ইরানের ক্ষেত্রে প্রথম হইতেই অসহিষ্ণু মনোভাব লক্ষিত হয়। কারণ হিসাবে ইরানের মতো দেশগুলির স্থিতিশীলতা ও দায়িত্ববোধের অভাবকে শনাক্ত করা হয়, যে যুক্তি স্বাভাবিক ভাবেই সংশ্লিষ্ট দেশগুলির পক্ষে হয় অপমানজনক, নয়তো অগ্রহণযোগ্য। এই সকল কারণেই পরমাণু নিরস্ত্রীকরণ কর্মসূচি লইয়া বাদানুবাদ ও রাজনৈতিক দড়ি টানাটানির কোনও শেষ নাই। ইজরায়ালের সঙ্গে ইরানের যে শত্রুতার কারণে আমেরিকা ইরানের পরমাণু কর্মসূচি বিষয়ে বিশেষ ভাবে সন্দেহান, ইজরায়ালের সঙ্গে সেই নৈকট্যের কারণেই ইরানও আপন পরমাণু কর্মসূচি রূপায়ণে বিশেষ রকমের আগ্রহী ও দুঃসাহসী।

তবে, রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জ বা আইএইএ যেমন আপন জেদে অটল, ইরানও কিন্তু জটিল সমস্যাকে জটিলতর করিয়া তুলিতে পিছাইয়া নাই। সেখানকার কট্টরপন্থী প্রধানমন্ত্রী আহমদিনেজাদের নেতৃত্বে তাহারা যে শেষতম পদক্ষেপটি লইয়াছে, তাহা সেই কারণেই আপত্তিজনক। কেননা ইউরোপীয় ইউনিয়ন কিন্তু আমেরিকাকে চরম অবস্থান গ্রহণ হইতে নিরস্ত করিয়াছে, এমনকী শেষ পর্যন্ত নিরাপত্তা পরিষদে বিষয়টি না উঠাইয়া আইএইএ-র মাধ্যমে তাহার নিরসনের প্রস্তাবও স্বীকার করিয়াছে। রাশিয়া স্থির করিয়াছে পরমাণু-বিষয়ে ইরানের সঙ্গে হাত মিলাইবে, দক্ষিণ ইরানে একটি পরমাণু জ্বালানি কেন্দ্র নির্মাণে সহযোগিতা করিবে, ইহাও প্রকারান্তরে তেহরানের পরমাণু উচ্চাকাঙ্ক্ষার উপর নজরদারিরই সামিল। এই পরিস্থিতিতে সত্তর নূতন করিয়া একটি প্ররোচনামূলক পদক্ষেপ ইরানের পক্ষে সম্ভব কিংবা সুবুদ্ধিজাত হইয়াছে কিনা, তাহা একটি গুরুতর প্রশ্ন। আমেরিকাও যেমন ক্রমাগত ইরানকে 'অশুভ অক্ষ' ইত্যাদি নঞর্থক বিশেষণে ভূষিত করিয়া ক্রমাগত উশকানি দিয়া চলিয়াছে, আহমদিনেজাদের ইরানও কিন্তু এখন তাতে তাল মিলাইয়া 'ইজরায়ালকে ধ্বংস করিব' ইত্যাদি চরম বাক্যবর্ষণ করিতেছে। আন্তর্জাতিক বোঝাপড়ার ক্ষেত্রে যে এই জাতীয় মনোভাব বাঞ্ছনীয় নয়, বলাই বাহুল্য। নাতানজ-এর ঘটনাও তেমনই এক অকারণ প্ররোচনার উদাহরণ। ইরানকেও বুঝিতে হইবে যে, শত্রুর মুখে ছাই দিয়া যদি পরমাণু কার্যক্রম চালাইয়া যাইতে হয়, তবে বুদ্ধি খাটাইয়া পা ফেলা দরকার, এবং উল্টাপাল্টা কাজ করিয়া বন্ধুকে শত্রুর দলে ঠেলিয়া দেওয়া অত্যন্ত মূর্খামি।

13 JAN 2006

Iran resumes N-work, West on short fuse

REUTERS
TEHRAN, JANUARY 10

IRAN removed UN seals at its Natanz uranium enrichment plant and resumed research on nuclear fuel on Tuesday, drawing Western criticism but no threats of punitive action. Tehran denies wanting nuclear technology for anything but a civilian energy programme aimed at satisfying the Islamic Republic's booming demand for electricity.

But the United States and the European Union doubt that Iran's atomic ambitions are entirely peaceful and are likely to ask for the UN Security

Council, which can impose economic sanctions, to take up the matter, Western diplomats said. Western powers had called on Iran to refrain from any work that could help it develop atomic weapons.

"Iran's nuclear research centres have restarted their activities," Mohammad Saeedi, deputy head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organisation, told state television. He said work at the research facilities would be under the supervision of the UN nuclear watchdog.

Saeedi told a news conference Iran had come to an agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency

and consultations are taking place (within the EU) to coordinate a response," said Cristina Gallach, spokeswoman for EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana.

A spokesman for Britain's Foreign Office condemned the move, saying it jeopardised hopes of further negotiations. French President Jacques Chirac called on both Iran and North Korea to cooperate with the international community. "These countries would commit a serious error by not accepting the hand we are holding out to them," he said.

Russia, which is helping Iran build a nuclear power station, said Tehran should abide by



Mohammad Saeedi said work would be carried out under IAEA supervision

(IAEA) on what work Tehran would do. He gave no details.

The European Union was quick to denounce Iran's move. "This is very much a step in the wrong direction. We are extremely concerned

international commitments and that its decision to resume research caused concern.

China said it hoped the dispute could still be solved within the IAEA. Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan said Beijing backed a renewal of the moribund talks between Iran and the EU.

It is unclear if Iran will test equipment or actually produce small amounts of nuclear fuel in a laboratory environment. The IAEA was unable to provide any details.

One EU and one non-EU diplomat said Iran was planning to get 164 centrifuges running at the Natanz enrichment facility to begin master-

ing the technique of producing nuclear fuel. Centrifuges enrich uranium by spinning it at supersonic speed. However, such a small cascade would take many years to produce enough bomb-grade uranium for a single weapon.

If enriched to a low level, uranium can be used in power stations such as the one Iran is building at the southern port of Bushehr with Russian help. If enriched further, it can be used in atomic warheads.

An intelligence source said that Iran intended to feed uranium hexafluoride (UF6) into the cascade at Natanz soon, but had not informed the IAEA about this.

Global outcry with Iran on N-path

Associated Press

TEHERAN, Jan. 10. — Iran removed UN seals on some equipment at its uranium enrichment plant and resumed nuclear research today, defying demands it maintain the freeze on its nuclear program and sparking an outcry from Europe and the USA.

US officials denounced the move, calling it a step toward creating the material for nuclear bombs. Germany's foreign minister raised doubts over the future of European-led negotiations on Iran's nuclear programme, questioning whether there remains any basis for more talks.

Britain warned that the international community was "running out of patience" with Teheran, and foreign secretary Mr Jack Straw said Iran had breached resolutions by the UN nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency. "There was no good reason why Iran should have taken this step if its intentions are truly peaceful and it wanted to resolve long-standing international concerns," Mr Straw said.

The USA accuses Iran of seeking to develop nuclear weapons, a charge denied by Iran, which contends its program aims only to produce energy. France, Germany and Britain have been leading the long troubled negotiations with Iran aimed at ensuring its program is peaceful.

The seals were removed today from equipment at

China refuses to confirm Kim visit

BEIJING, Jan. 10. — China today declined to confirm or deny frenzied international media reports that North Korea's reclusive leader Kim Jong Il was making a secret visit to Beijing. "I am not authorised to release the specific information," Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Mr Kong Quan told reporters who repeatedly sought confirmation of the news that a special North Korean train had reached Beijing. "But I want to point out that China and North Korea are neighbours and maintain a tradition of exchanges of high-level visits," he said. — PTI



A visitor looks at pictures of Kim Jong-Il outside the N Korean embassy in Beijing on Tuesday. — AFP

the nuclear plant at Natanz, the centre of Iran's uranium enrichment programme.

However, Iran underlined that it was not resuming enrichment, a key process that can produce either material for a nuclear weapon or fuel for a reactor. Instead, it said it was restarting research activities at the plant.

"What we resume is merely in the field of research, not more than that," the deputy head of the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran, Mohammad Saeedi said. "Production of nuclear fuel" which would involve enrichment "remains suspended," he said.

Iranian nuclear workers removed the seals in the presence of IAEA inspectors, then researchers resumed their work, he said. Mr Saeedi didn't specify the equipment that had been unsealed. In Vienna, IAEA spokeswoman Ms Melissa Fleming confirmed the removal of the seals and said the agency's 35-nation board of governors would be informed later today.

The road ahead

■**Move:** Drive to master technology that could be used to make nuclear weapons.

■**Result:** Iran risks losing influential friends and giving foes long-sought leverage to haul it before the UNSC

■**Future:** Depending on the level of enrichment, the process results in either nuclear fuel or the fissile component of nuclear warheads.

■**Defence:** Says it is in sync with the NPT allowing nations to run peaceful atomic programs.

■**Controversies:** Iran has hidden its activities for decades. It has also turned to the black market in assembling basic elements of its now dismantled nuclear weapons programme.

■**Questions that remain...** A nearly three-year probe of the IAEA has turned up no "smoking gun" but plenty of munition for the West; Iran's record in helping clear up ambiguities also is spotty.

Apex court notice to Mulayam

✓
Corruption
HD-1

PIL seeks CBI probe into “disproportionate assets”

Legal Correspondent

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Monday issued notice to the Centre, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav and members of his family on a public interest petition seeking a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation into the alleged disproportionate assets amassed by Mr. Yadav and his family.

A three Judge Bench comprising Justices Ruma Pal, A.R. Lakshmanan and Dalveer Bhandari issued the notice on the petition filed by a social activist, Vishwanath Chaturvedi, who alleged that Mr. Yadav and his family had accumulated assets disproportionate to their known sources of income. The Bench asked the petitioner to file English translations of the Hindi documents he filed with the petition.

Mr. Chaturvedi alleged that Mr. Yadav and his relatives had amassed wealth by misusing power and authority.

He alleged that corruption had reached monstrous dimensions in Uttar Pradesh. Corruption had even reached the office of the Chief Minister and unless it was checked, the normal functioning of public offices would be affected.

He said he was in possession of copies of all the sale deeds for properties that Mr. Yadav and his sons had purchased in the last 28 years, most of them in posh localities and worth crores of rupees. During this period, Mr. Yadav and his sons had no business except political activities, he said.

He said he had met Governor T.V. Rajeshwar Rao on June 21, 2005 and requested him to take action against Mr. Yadav and his family but no action had been taken. On November 6, 2005, he presented a memorandum to the Union Home Minister, but it proved futile. Hence he had filed this petition for a direction to the Home Ministry to register cases.

Amar Singh apologises to Manmohan

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: Samajwadi Party general secretary and spokesman Amar Singh on Monday offered an apology to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh for his remarks that some people in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) were also involved in the phone tapping case. Mr. Singh, who fil-

ed a petition in the Supreme Court on Monday seeking a judicial probe into the incident, said he was mindful of “causing hurt to the Prime Minister,” as expressed by his press adviser Sanjay Baru.

Therefore, he tried to express his regrets to Dr. Singh personally over the phone, but was unable to get through.

10 JAN 2006

Iran plans to remove UN nuke seals

Tehran, Jan. 8 (Reuters): Iran today said it was preparing to remove UN seals at some nuclear research and development sites, despite strong Western opposition to its decision to resume atomic research halted over two years ago.

It would be the second time in five months that Iran, which insists its nuclear programme is peaceful, removed some seals put in place by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

European Union and US of-

ness as this will take place under the agency's supervision," he added.

A resumption of atomic research and development would mean all of Iran's nuclear programme, much of which was put on hold as part of negotiations with the EU that started in late 2003, was active once again apart from the actual enrichment of uranium at its unfinished Natanz facility.

Uranium enrichment is the most sensitive part of the nuclear fuel cycle since it can

be used to produce bomb-grade material as well as nuclear reactor fuel.

Iran has not publicly disclosed what activities it plans to resume on Monday. Diplomats and analysts say atomic research and development could involve some laboratory tests of uranium enrichment and the assembly of enrichment centrifuges.

"R&D activities will be under the IAEA's supervision and there is nothing to be worried about," Asefi said.

IAEA officials say an Iranian team failed to show up for talks in Vienna last week to explain what activities Iran planned to resume.

Asked why the Iranian team flew back from Vienna without meeting the IAEA, Javad Vaeedi, deputy head of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, told state television yesterday: "Holding any meeting has to be based on the attainment of an aim and a result. The cancellation of the meeting in fact took place in

this light."

Iran yesterday said an IAEA team had arrived in Tehran to supervise the resumption of research work. But an IAEA spokeswoman said the team were on a "routine visit" and that the agency was still awaiting clarifications from Iran.

Washington and the EU want Iran to agree to a proposal, put forward by Moscow, that Iran transfer all its uranium enrichment activities to a joint venture in Russia.

Document 9/1 1/3

9 JAN 2006

THE TELEGRAPH

Clandestine nuclear deals traced to Sudan

Hi-tech equipment imported into the country has disappeared

Ian Traynor and
Ian Cobain

International investigators and Western intelligence have for the first time named Sudan as a major conduit for sophisticated engineering equipment that could be used in nuclear weapons programmes.

Hundreds of millions of dollars worth of equipment was imported into the African country over a three-year period before the 9/11 attacks in New York and Washington in 2001 and has since disappeared, according to sources of the London-based *Guardian* newspaper.

Alarm over black market

Western Governments, U.N. detectives, and international analysts trying to stem the illicit trade in weapons of mass destruction technology are alarmed by the black market trade.

A European intelligence assessment obtained by the *Guardian* says Sudan has been using front companies and third countries to import machine tools, gauges and hi-tech processing equipment from western Europe for its military industries in recent years. But it says

Intelligence agencies suspect the equipment has been traded by the nuclear proliferation racket headed by the Pakistani scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan.

Sudan is also being used as a conduit, as much of the equipment is too sophisticated for the country. Western analysts and intelligence agencies suspect the equipment has been or is being traded by the nuclear proliferation racket headed by the Pakistani scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan, who admitted nuclear trading two years ago and is under house arrest in Islamabad.

Mr. Khan is known to have visited Sudan at least once between 1998 and 2002, and the suspicion is he may have used the country as a warehouse for the hi-tech engineering equipment he was selling to Libya, Iran and North Korea for the assembly of centrifuges for enriching uranium, the most common way of building a nuclear bomb. Sudan has been ravaged

by internal conflicts for decades and has until recently been governed by an Islamist regime. Analysts point out that a "failing state" such as Sudan is an ideal candidate for the illicit trading.

Investigators say the machinery has not been found in Sudan. Nor has it been found in Libya, since Tripoli gave up its secret nuclear bomb project in December 2003.

Osama link?

Given Osama bin Laden's long relationship with Sudan, there had been suspicions of Al-Qaeda involvement. But the goods have not been found in Afghanistan either.

"A huge amount of dual-use equipment was bought by Sudan and people don't know where it went to," said Mr Albright. "It's a big mystery. The equipment has not been found anywhere."

A senior international investigator confirmed that Sudan had been importing the material and that the transports had ceased in 2001.

"No one now seems to be buying to that extent," he said. "Perhaps the activity stopped because they got all that they needed." — ©*Guardian Newspapers Limited 2006*

THE HINDU

06 JAN 2006

The New York Times
nytimes.com

January 6, 2006

Iran's Nuclear Team Fails to Keep a Date With the U.N.

By ELAINE SCIOLINO

PARIS, Jan. 5 - Iran threw negotiations over its nuclear program into disarray on Thursday, abruptly canceling a high-level meeting with the United Nations' monitoring agency in Vienna. The leader of Iran's negotiating team was said to be returning to Tehran.

The unexpected turn of events stunned and frustrated officials of the International Atomic Energy Agency and foreign diplomats, who scrambled to make sense of Iran's decision. The meeting had been scheduled so Iran could explain its decision to restart nuclear research and development on Monday.

"There was no explanation," said Melissa Fleming, a spokeswoman for the agency. "We're still seeking clarification."

One possible explanation is that Iran has decided to defy the rest of the world and plunge ahead with nuclear activities, which risk international censure or sanctions and could shatter a 14-month agreement with France, Britain and Germany under which Iran agreed to suspend most of its nuclear work.

Another explanation is that in the face of strong international criticism, Iran's negotiating strategy is in chaos. Since President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad took power last year in Iran, officials who were part of its national security apparatus, including its nuclear negotiating team, have been replaced with people who are driven by hard-line views.

Certainly Iran's failure to explain its intentions erodes trust in the country as a reliable negotiating partner. In its letter to the atomic energy agency two days earlier announcing its research plans, Iran gave assurances that it intended to carry out the work under the supervision of agency inspectors, and asked the agency to take the necessary steps for the research to start again.

That position raised speculation that Iran was trying to test whether it could proceed with its nuclear program and stay within the boundaries of its international legal obligations, even if that violated its agreement with the Europeans.

In an address in Qum carried on state television on Thursday, Mr. Ahmadinejad repeated his assertions of Iran's intention to carry out nuclear research, saying some people "have said the Iranian nation has no right to nuclear research, but they should know that the Iranian nation and government will defend the right to nuclear research and technology, and will go forward prudently."

The negotiating team, led by Mohammad Saeedi, the deputy chief of Iran's atomic energy agency, had been expected to meet at 10 a.m. on Thursday with the director of the United Nations agency.

At first, the Iranians said in a telephone conversation that they would be late. Then, in a later telephone call, they canceled the meeting. Mr. Saeedi was returning home, the Iranian delegation told the agency.

That move suggested that there would be no explanation of Iran's intentions before it resumes its research on Monday.

American and European officials and some experts at the atomic energy agency said they were concerned that the research could focus on small-scale enrichment experiments, which could help advance Iran's knowledge about how to produce nuclear fuel - either for civilian plants or, at higher enrichment levels, for weapons.

In Washington on Thursday, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice warned Iran not to resume nuclear research, saying, "They shouldn't do it because it would really be a sign that they are not prepared to actually make diplomacy work."

She expressed confidence that the United States would succeed in taking Iran's case to the Security Council for an unspecified punishment should negotiations fail. However, the United States has thus far failed to persuade Russia and China to seek punitive measures, a difficult step because there is no clear-cut violation of Iran's obligations under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

Iran's decision in August to restart uranium enrichment activities in Isfahan violated the European agreement. But inspectors from the United Nations agency were there to break the seals on the equipment and have been monitoring the activities, which do not violate Iran's obligations under the treaty.

One official close to the talks said the Iranians were believed to have withdrawn because they had been caught off-guard by the uncompromising stance of Mohamed ElBaradei, the agency's director, in messages and in a meeting on Wednesday with Iran's ambassador to the United Nations office in Vienna, Mohammad Mehdi Akhondzadeh.

The official declined to be identified by name or even national origin because the official is not authorized to speak for attribution.

Dr. ElBaradei and his colleagues have harshly criticized Iran's decision to restart nuclear research, warning Iran of potential consequences of its action.

Among the issues outstanding are Iran's refusal to allow inspectors access to a site in Tehran called Lavisan-Shian, which was bulldozed by Iran in 2004 before it could be inspected. The agency wants to interview scientists who worked there and determine whether they were conducting nuclear research.

Another mystery is how Iran first obtained centrifuges used to enrich uranium. The agency is also still not convinced by Iran's explanations about the sources of both low- and high-enriched uranium found in Iran.

The Iranian delegation was apparently unprepared to respond to questions like these on Thursday, the official close to the talks said.

A number of Iranian officials, including President Ahmadinejad, have boldly asserted Iran's right to conduct nuclear research and its intention to proceed as scheduled, despite warnings from that to do so would risk punitive measures.

Iran's right to develop nuclear technology for peaceful energy purposes is extremely popular in Iran, and the president's remarks on Thursday were greeted with cries of "Ahmadinejad, our hero, we support you," Reuters reported from Tehran.

Iran building nuclear bomb, say EU spies

Document details web of front companies and middlemen

IAN Cobain and Ian Traynor
London, January 4

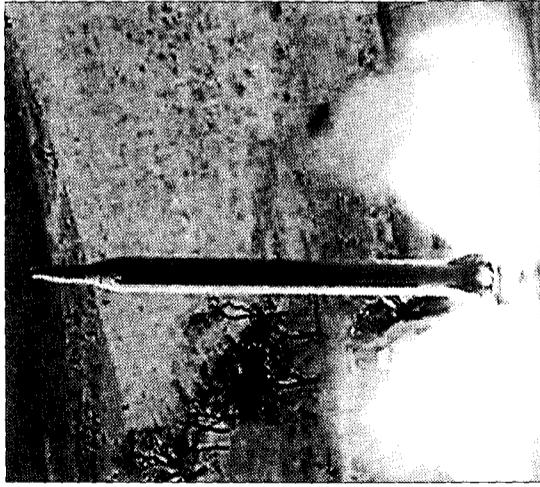
IRAN HAS been successfully scouring Europe for the sophisticated equipment needed to develop a nuclear bomb, according to the latest intelligence assessment of the country's weapons programmes by secret agents from UK, Germany, France and Belgium.

Scientists in Tehran are also shopping for parts for a ballistic missile capable of reaching Europe, with "import requests and acquisitions ... registered almost daily", the report seen by *The Guardian* concludes.

The warning came as Iran raised the stakes in its dispute with the US and the European Union on Tuesday by notifying the International Atomic Energy Authority that it intended to resume nuclear fuel research next week. It also refused to rule out a return to attempts at uranium enrichment, the key to the development of a nuclear weapon.

The 55-page intelligence assessment, dated July 1, 2005, has been used to brief EU ministers and to warn leading industrialists of the need for vigilance when exporting equipment or expertise to so-called rogue states.

It says Syria and Pakistan have also been buying technology and chemicals needed to develop rocket programmes and to enrich uranium. It outlines the role played by Russia in the West Asia arms build-up, and examines



A test launch of Iran's Shahab-3 missile.

the part that Chinese front companies have played in North Korea's nuclear weapons programme.

But it is the detailed assessment of Iran's nuclear purchasing programme that will most alarm Western leaders, who have long refused to believe Tehran's insistence that it wants

LEASH ON WEAPONS FIRM

THE US has frozen the financial accounts of two Iranian companies suspected of being involved in Iran's nuclear programme. It also prohibited Americans from doing business with Novin Energy Co. and Mesbah Energy Co. The firms are believed to be controlled by the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran.

AP, Washington

only to develop nuclear power for electricity.

The leak of the report may signal a growing frustration at Iran's refusal to abandon its programme to produce fuel for a Russian-built nuclear reactor.

The assessment declares that Iran has developed an extensive web of front companies, official bodies, academic institutes and mid-dlemen dedicated to obtaining — in western Europe and the former Soviet Union — the expertise, training, and equipment for nuclear programmes, missile development, and biological and chemical weapons arsenals.

"Iran also continues to seek the technology for military applications of all kinds," it says. Iran is also trying to extend the range of its Shahab-3 missile, which has a range of 750 miles — capable of reaching Israel.

The Guardian



Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (right) and government spokesman Gholam Hossein Elham at a meeting in Tehran on Tuesday.

AFP

Clash of two nuclear pacts

Beijing and Islamabad could be muddying the unfolding debate on Indo-US nuclear cooperation, argues C. RAJA MOHAN

DESPITE Pakistan's denial of reports that it is in talks with China for acquiring atomic reactors, New Delhi's suspicion that Beijing and Islamabad might be out to wreck the Indo-US nuclear deal is bound to grow. When Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran heads to Beijing over the weekend for another round of strategic dialogue, he would have an opportunity to find out where exactly China stands on the Indo-US nuclear pact.

That China and Pakistan are uncomfortable with the nuclear pact signed last July by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President George W. Bush is well-known. Both Beijing and Islamabad understand that the deal could transform Indo-US relations as well as regional geopolitics.

Washington has repeatedly rebuffed Pakistan's demand to have nuclear energy cooperation on the same lines as being proposed for India. The Indo-US nuclear pact is based on the premise that India is a responsible nuclear power. Even the best friends of Pakistan in Washington are not prepared to say the same about Islamabad. Given the extraordinary story of A.Q. Khan's nuclear Wal-Mart, there is little prospect of Pakistan being treated on par with India on nuclear energy cooperation.

While Beijing has been formally silent on the subject, commentary in the official Chinese media was sharply critical of Washington for the nuclear deal with India. Accusing the US of "double standards" on nuclear proliferation, the *People's Daily* last November said that if the US makes a "nuclear exception" for India, other powers could do the same with their own friends and weaken the global non-proliferation regime.

Earlier this week, the London-based *Financial Times* reported that Pakistan is negotiating the purchase of six to eight nuclear reactors from China at a cost of \$7-10 billion. The spokeswoman of the Pakistan foreign office, Tasneem Aslam, quickly denied the report, calling it "baseless".

The denial appears less than convincing. Much of the current reporting potential Sino-Pak nuclear cooperation has come amidst Chinese Atomic Energy Chief Sun Qin's to Mianwali in West Punjab to launch the construction of Chinese power reactor

Acceptance of Beijing's argument would make a mockery of the entire non-proliferation regime. The record says China sold nuclear weapon technologies to Pakistan, which passed them further on

called Chashma II. Pakistan prime minister, Shaukat Aziz, who was present at the occasion talked of expanding his country's atomic energy generation from the present 425 MW to about 8,800 MW by 2030. No one in Pakistan is denying these remarks; and no one can deny that currently China is Pakistan's only nuclear partner.

But having recently joined the Nuclear Suppliers Group — the 45-nation club of advanced countries trading in atomic energy technologies and materials — China is bound by certain rules. Under those rules neither India nor Pakistan is eligible for civilian nuclear energy cooperation. And that precisely is the reason why the Bush administration is seeking a modification of these rules in favour of India, and only India.

China, however, could sell reactors to Pakistan by claiming that it has past agreements with Islamabad that should be "grand-fathered" from the NSG rules. (The agreement on Chashma II was signed before China joined the NSG.)

Acceptance of Beijing's line would make a mockery of the entire non-proliferation regime. After all, the record says that China sold nuclear weapon and missile technologies to Pakistan and Islamabad passed them further on.

The real purpose of the talk on Sino-Pak nuclear cooperation might be to muddy the unfolding debate on the Indo-US nuclear pact in the American Congress and the NSG. Beijing and Islamabad are posing a simple question: if the US can make an exemption for India, why can't China do the same for Pakistan?

As India and the US seek to accelerate the implementation of the nuclear pact, this argument is likely to acquire some currency among the opponents of the Indo-US nuclear deal in Washington and the NSG. By pointing to the dangerous consequence of Sino-Pak nuclear collaboration, the opponents would argue it would make sense not to change the rules for anyone.

It is even more likely that both Beijing and Islamabad might have concluded that if the Indo-US nuclear pact falls apart, there would be little reason to worry about a future strategic partnership between New Delhi and Washington.

Unless there is a frank conversation between India and China on the subject, mutual suspicions could only grow at a time when they are launching 2006 as a Sino-Indian friendship year.

INDIAN L

05 JAN 2006