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Reuters  
September 11, 2009

## **RPT-US Drafts UN Resolution Urging Nuclear Disarmament**

By Louis Charbonneau

UNITED NATIONS, Sept 11 (Reuters) - The United States has drafted a U.N. Security Council resolution calling on all countries with atomic weapons to get rid of them, a text Washington hopes will be approved by a special council session presided over by U.S. President Barack Obama.

The 15-nation council will debate the draft resolution on Sept. 24 on the sidelines of the annual meeting of the General Assembly, where Obama is making his debut appearance at the United Nations. Washington holds the rotating presidency of the Security Council during September.

The draft resolution was circulated to the full council on Friday, diplomats said.

The text, obtained by Reuters, calls for signatories of the 1970 nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to begin talks on nuclear arms reduction and to negotiate "a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, and calls on all other states to join in this endeavor."

Diplomats said the U.S. draft was yet another example of the sharp shift on disarmament policy taken by the Obama administration. Obama's predecessor, George W. Bush, had angered many NPT members by ignoring disarmament commitments made by previous U.S. governments, analysts say.

The five permanent council members -- the United States, Britain, France, Russia and China -- all have nuclear weapons. The "other states" -- referred to but not named in the text -- are Pakistan and India, which have not signed the NPT but are known to have atomic arsenals, and Israel, which neither confirms nor denies having nuclear arms but is presumed to have a sizable stockpile warheads.

Council diplomats told Reuters it also referred to North Korea, which withdrew from the treaty in 2003 and later tested two nuclear devices -- one in 2006 and another earlier this year.

It also urges those countries outside the NPT to join it. Becoming a party to the NPT would require scrapping their nuclear arsenals, something the nuclear powers outside the pact have refused to do so far.

The draft resolution does not name specific countries, but it clearly has North Korea and Iran in mind when it says the council "deplores in particular the current major challenges to the nonproliferation regime that the Security Council has determined to be threats to international peace and security."

### **URGES ALL STATES TO JOIN TEST BAN TREATY**

The West suspects Iran is developing nuclear weapons under cover of a civilian atomic energy program and have pushed three rounds of U.N. sanctions against it, despite initial objections raised by Russia and China. Tehran says its atomic program is entirely peaceful and is aimed solely at the production of electricity.

Without referring to any specific regions, the draft resolution has the council "welcoming and supporting the steps taken to conclude nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties." Egypt and other Arab states have long called for the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East - which would mean Israel would have to get rid of any atomic bombs it possesses.

The draft resolution also calls for the creation of a treaty that would ban the production of fissile material made specifically for nuclear weapons.

The U.S. resolution would also urge "all states to refrain from conducting a nuclear test explosion and to join the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, thereby bringing the treaty into force."

The United States signed the treaty, which would ban all nuclear tests, in 1996 during the administration of President Bill Clinton, a Democrat. In 1999, the then-Republican-majority U.S. Senate made clear that it opposed the treaty as an unnecessary limitation on its military research options.

When Bush took office in 2001 his administration said it did not want its options limited by such a treaty and never asked the Senate to vote on the test ban treaty.

Washington is joined by China, North Korea, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Israel and Pakistan as hold-out countries whose ratification is necessary for the treaty to enter into force. There will be a major conference on the test ban treaty on Sept. 24-25 at U.N. headquarters in New York.

The draft resolution also voices support for the U.N. nuclear watchdog in Vienna, the International Atomic Energy Agency, and urges countries to accept its more rigorous inspection regime under the agency's so-called Additional Protocol intended to smoke out clandestine nuclear weapons activities.

It also expresses the hope that next year's NPT review conference will be a success. The last review conference in 2005 was a failure and some delegates accused the United States, Iran and Egypt of sabotaging the meeting and preventing it from agreeing on an overhaul of the landmark arms control pact.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/latestCrisis/idUSB731605>

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New York Times  
September 12, 2009

## **U.S. To Accept Iran's Proposal To Hold Talks**

By Mark Landler and David E. Sanger

WASHINGTON — The Obama administration said Friday that the United States would accept Iran's offer to meet, fulfilling President Obama's pledge to hold unconditional talks despite the Iranian government's insistence that it would not negotiate over the future of its nuclear program.

The decision to engage directly with Iran would put a senior representative of the Obama administration at the bargaining table, along with emissaries from five other nations, for the first time since Mr. Obama took office.

The decision is bound to raise protests from conservatives who contend that unconditional talks are naïve, and from human rights groups that say the United States should not legitimize an Iranian government that appears to have manipulated its presidential election in June and crushed protests after the vote.

In advance of Friday's announcement, senior administration officials said that their offer to negotiate directly with the Iranians, for what could turn into the first substantive talks since the Iranian Revolution in 1979, was, as a senior official had earlier put it, a "bona fide offer."

But at the same time, officials said their expectations were extremely low. They also said their willingness to proceed was based in part on a recognition that some form of talks had to take place before the United States could make a case for imposing far stronger sanctions on Iran.

"We'll be looking to see if they are willing to engage seriously on these issues," said a State Department spokesman, Philip J. Crowley. "If we have talks, we will plan to bring up the nuclear issue."

The talks would also include Britain, France, Russia, China and Germany, which in the past have negotiated with Iran without the presence of an American representative, except for one meeting at the end of the administration of President George W. Bush.

During his first term, talks with unfriendly countries like North Korea and Iran were usually rejected out of hand in the hope of speeding their collapse. That loosened in Mr. Bush's second term, but even then agreements to talk were usually under highly restricted conditions.

The result was a stalemate — one that Mr. Obama argued during last year's presidential campaign was a huge mistake, in part because Iran was producing nuclear material while the standoff dragged on.

The United Nations Security Council has issued several rounds of sanctions against Iran for failing to comply with resolutions demanding it stop enriching uranium. It has called on Tehran to answer questions from international arms inspectors about documents that suggest that the country worked in the past on a nuclear weapons design.

Iran's government insists that its efforts are aimed at the peaceful generation of electricity, and has charged that the documents were Western forgeries.

Iran made its offer to meet in a five-page letter delivered to several nations on Wednesday. Titled "Cooperation, Peace and Justice," it touched on political, social and economic themes, called for reform of the United Nations and a Middle East peace settlement, and for universal nuclear disarmament.

But the letter said nothing about Iran's nuclear program, and as recently as this week President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad vowed never to halt the fuel production, saying Iran would not relinquish its fundamental rights.

Administration officials were dismissive of the letter, saying that it rehashed past statements and offers. But they said they would consider the offer to meet, and they spent less than 48 hours studying its contents before deciding to tell Iran that the United States would join its negotiating partners in talks.

It is unclear where the discussions will take place, but the most likely American representative is William J. Burns, the under secretary of state for political affairs, who is leading the diplomatic effort.

The first announcement of the decision was made Friday in Brussels by Javier Solana, the foreign policy chief of the European Union, who acts as an intermediary for the six countries.

Hours earlier, the United States ambassador to the United Nations, Susan E. Rice, appeared to take a softer line on Iran, saying the administration would not impose "artificial deadlines" on Iran.

It was difficult to judge Mr. Obama's outreach to Iran because, she said, "the elections and their aftermath have added a layer of complexity to assessing the overtures and offers of diplomatic engagement."

Some administration officials argued that Mr. Obama's overtures, which included a videotaped New Year's greeting and at least one letter to Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, had thrown the Iranian leadership off balance. They thought that for the first time in recent history, the United States had Iran on the defensive, rather than the other way around.

Russia and China have expressed deep reservations about imposing additional sanctions on Iran. On Thursday, the Russian foreign minister, Sergey V. Lavrov, expressed opposition to additional sanctions.

On Friday, Mr. Crowley also said the United States would be willing to hold direct talks with North Korea over its nuclear program, within the context of existing six-party negotiations.

"We are prepared to meet with North Korea," he said. "When it'll happen, where it'll happen, we'll have to wait and see."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/12/world/middleeast/12nuke.html>

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Reuters

September 12, 2009

## **U.S. to Focus on Nuclear Issue in Iran Talks: W. House**

MINNEAPOLIS (Reuters) - The United States will focus on Iran's nuclear program, which the West suspects is to develop weapons, in upcoming talks with Tehran despite its refusal to discuss the subject, the White House said on Saturday.

"This may not have been a topic that they wanted to be brought up but I can assure that it's a topic that we'll bring up," White House spokesman Robert Gibbs told reporters on Air Force One as President Barack Obama traveled to talk about his healthcare initiative.

The United States said on Friday it would accept Iran's offer of wide-ranging talks with major powers despite the Islamic Republic's stated refusal to discuss its nuclear program.

Iran has repeatedly said its nuclear program is for civil energy uses, not weapons.

Gibbs welcomed Iran's willingness to talk, but expressed disappointment that it ignored the nuclear issue and he made it clear that the subject would come up during the discussions.

"The Iranians have responsibilities to the international community to walk away from their ... ballistic nuclear weapons program," Gibbs said. "That's what the focus from our side will be in these talks and that's our goal."

Six major powers -- the permanent U.N. Security Council members Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States, as well as Germany -- offered Iran trade and diplomatic incentives in 2006 in exchange for a halt to uranium enrichment.

They improved the offer last year but retained the demand that Iran suspend uranium enrichment, something Tehran has ruled out as a precondition.

Iran on Wednesday handed over a five-page proposal that offered wide-ranging talks with the West but was silent on its nuclear program.

"We think this gives us an avenue to directly address the Iranians, what we think their responsibilities are, to put pressure on them throughout the international community and strengthen our hand as we move forward," Gibbs said.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/gc08/idUSTRE58B1FW20090912>

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Washington Times  
September 13, 2009

## **U.S. Calls Iran's Bluff On Talks, Will Raise Nukes Issue**

By Barbara Slavin and Eli Lake, The Washington Times

For the past 30 years, the United States and Iran have been out of sync: When one side was ready for comprehensive negotiations, the other was not.

Now the Obama administration has asked the Islamic Republic to meet and clarify a vague proposal for talks that Iran made last week. In doing so, the United States is calling Iran's bluff at a difficult and delicate moment in that country's political evolution.

The proposal said Iran was prepared to "enter into a dialogue on negotiations in order to lay the ground for lasting peace" with the U.S. and five other world powers, but made no mention of U.S. and U.N. demands that it suspend a uranium-enrichment program that could give it the capacity to make nuclear weapons. On Saturday, however, Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki told Iranian state television, "Should the conditions be ripe, there is a possibility of talks about the nuclear issue with the West, given the new package we have presented."

White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said the focus would be the nuclear program. "This may not have been a topic that they wanted to be brought up, but I can assure you that it's a topic that we'll bring up," he told reporters on Air Force One, Reuters news agency reported.

The U.S. decision to agree to meet with Iran without preconditions implements President Obama's campaign pledge to exhaust diplomatic efforts before resorting to new sanctions or military force.

Already, Mr. Obama has sent Persian New Year's greetings to Iran's people and government and two letters to Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. All of this took place, however, before a June 12 presidential election produced the biggest mass protests against the regime since the 1979 Islamic revolution. With at least 36 people killed and more than 100 academics and political figures placed as defendants in show trials, millions of Iranians still believe that opposition leader Mir Hossein Mousavi won the election, not the official victor, incumbent President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Given this backdrop, many Iran specialists are skeptical that the Tehran government is really ready to engage and suspect it is playing for time to complete a nuclear weapons program, stave off more sanctions and bolster its legitimacy before an increasingly disaffected public.

"Iran policy is a conundrum with a capital C," said Karim Sadjadpour, an Iran specialist at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "The Obama administration faces the difficult task of reconciling how to deal with a disgraced regime, which presents urgent national security challenges, while at the same time not betraying a popularly driven movement whose success could have enormously positive implications for the United States."

Beyond curbing nuclear proliferation, Iranian cooperation could help stabilize Iran's neighbors, Iraq and Afghanistan, making it easier for the Obama administration to cap U.S. troop deployments and nip in the bud a gathering rebellion in U.S. Democratic Party ranks.

However, Mr. Sadjadpour said he doubted that Iran would moderate its policies "as long as Ahmadinejad is president and Khamenei is supreme leader. ... I don't think anyone at the White House is confident about the prospects of a diplomatic breakthrough with Iran."

In announcing the decision Friday, State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley said that the U.S. was testing Iran.

"If Iran refuses to negotiate seriously, we - the United States and the international community and the [U.N.] Security Council - can draw conclusions from that," he said. "And then based on that, we'll make some judgments in the future."

Congress is already preparing new sanctions legislation that would cut off Iran's central bank from U.S. financial markets, pressure companies that sell gasoline to Iran to stop, and bar from U.S. ports international shipping companies that do business with Iran.

Israel, which sees Iran's nuclear program as an existential threat, is also putting pressure on the Obama administration to limit the time for talks.

"I think the real Israeli concern is how long the negotiation phase will last," said Avner Cohen, a nuclear specialist at the University of Maryland. "The current understanding is, until the new year."

A senior administration official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he was discussing internal deliberations, said Mr. Obama would take stock of the Iranian program at a meeting of 20 top economic powers later this month in Pittsburgh and that the end of the calendar year was still the deadline for progress.

On the sanctions front, the official said the Obama administration had been meeting with allies to discuss ways to punish Iran if it continues to enrich uranium. "If the effort to affect Iranians through direct talks will not be productive, we have to prepare the ground so we would be in a position where we could move," he said. While declining to give details, the official said that sanctions to this point have been "incremental" and that sanctions if talks failed would not be incremental.

Undersecretary of State William Burns will represent the U.S. in talks, to be conducted along with Britain, France, Russia, China and Germany. Mr. Burns attended a session in Geneva in 2008 with Iranians, but Iran at the time was not ready for substantive negotiations with a lame-duck U.S. administration.

The senior U.S. official would not say how Mr. Obama would evaluate Iranian seriousness now.

"There has always been a basic assumption that this cannot be an open-ended process; we are not going to be talking for its own sake. How we evaluate the time is largely determined by Iranian behavior," the official said.

He added that the president's goal of eliminating all nuclear weapons, an obligation that eventually also would apply to Israel, was not linked to these negotiations.

The U.S. decision to meet with Iran has caused consternation among human rights advocates, who fear it will demoralize Iranians who have finally stood up to a government that has denied them many of the freedoms they sought in the revolution against Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi.

"Right now, I can say most of the human rights and political activists in Iran are under tremendous pressure," said Hadi Ghaemi, a spokesman for the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran.

He noted that advisers to Mr. Mousavi and another opposition candidate, Mehdi Karroubi, have been arrested and said, "There are serious concerns that these leaders themselves could be arrested at any moment. Any offer or actual negotiation with the Iranian government at this time should not legitimize the criminal acts of the government in the postelection era. If these talks happen, the U.S. side should hold Iran accountable for grave human rights violations that have taken place."

Mohsen Sazegara, a participant in the 1979 revolution who helped establish Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards but has since become a prominent dissident, also said the U.S. decision to seek a meeting with Iran would bolster an unpopular government.

The government wants to meet with the U.S. to "say to the people of Iran that we are legitimate and look, 'President Obama is sending people to meet with us.' They are saying to the people of Iran, who don't think they are legitimate, that 'America thinks we are legitimate.' "

Asked about human rights concerns, the U.S. official said, "At the end of the day, it is society in Iran that determines the legitimacy of the government. What is going on in Iran will determine how it is perceived. We are dealing here with a nuclear program that has to be dealt with. There is time pressure to handle this."

"The clock is ticking, and the quick U.S. response may be an acknowledgment of the need to push the timeline," said Jim Walsh, a proliferation specialist at MIT who has participated in talks with Iranian and North Korean officials and academics.

John Limbert, one of 52 Americans held hostage at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran from 1979 to '81, also said the U.S. was right to offer to meet without preconditions.

"It's always going to be the wrong time" to negotiate, said Mr. Limbert, author of a new book, "Negotiating with Iran: Wrestling the Ghosts of History."

"To say you won't engage because this is a bad regime is an insult to our own intelligence," given that the U.S. deals with plenty of governments that abuse human rights, he said. "As much as you'd like to see Iranians get better treatment from their government, our not engaging will have little to do with it."

With talks, however, the U.S. can raise these issues and that of three American hikers and an Iranian-American scholar currently in Iranian custody, Mr. Limbert said.

<http://washingtontimes.com/news/2009/sep/13/us-calls-irans-bluff-on-talks/>

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RIA Novosti

15 September 2009

## **Medvedev Hopes N. Korea will Stop Nuclear Tests**

MOSCOW, September 15 (RIA Novosti) - Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said on Tuesday he hopes North Korea will pay attention to international appeals to stop nuclear tests and launches.

Medvedev told participants of the Valdai discussion club that Russia, which boasts long-term relations with the communist state, is ready to make a contribution to North Korea's disarmament.

"We cannot turn a blind eye to developments [in North Korea] and cannot but think about what may happen if Korean long-range missiles get nuclear warheads," he said.

"North Korea is a difficult partner," he also said, adding that a global consolidated position on the North Korean nuclear problem was necessary.

The communist state quit international talks and announced the restart of its nuclear program after the UN Security Council condemned its April 5 long-range missile launch. The Security Council imposed tougher sanctions on the North after it conducted its second nuclear test in May.

Pyongyang has in recent months maintained that it will only discuss its nuclear program with Washington.

Washington has been unresponsive to Pyongyang's request so far, demanding the North return to international talks involving the two Koreas, Russia, China, Japan and the United States.

<http://en.rian.ru/valdai/20090915/156137072.html>

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RIA Novosti

15 September 2009

## **Solomonov to Keep Working on Bulava Development - Roscosmos**

MOSCOW, September 15 (RIA Novosti) - The former head of the research institute that designed the Bulava and Topol-M ballistic missiles will most likely retain his post as general designer, the Russian Federal Space Agency Roscosmos said on Tuesday.

Yury Solomonov occupied the posts of general director and general designer of the Moscow Institute of Thermal Technology (MITT) before quitting in July after a series of unsuccessful Bulava submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) tests.

"I am certain that Yury Solomonov will keep his post as general designer of the Bulava and Topol-M missiles. We have told the new leadership of the institute to focus on work rather than on cadre reshuffling," Anatoly Perminov, the head of Roscosmos, told a news conference in Moscow.

A special selection commission elected on Monday Sergei Nikulin, the head of the Moscow-based mechanical engineering plant Vympel, as the winner of the contest to fill the position of the MITT general director. His appointment is pending upon approval by Roscosmos.

Perminov said the MITT, which successfully developed the Topol-M land-based intercontinental ballistic missile, will continue work on the development of the Bulava SLBM.



The Bulava (SS-NX-30) SLBM has suffered six failures in 11 tests. Although the results of a probe into the failures have not been announced, experts have so far blamed the poor quality of missile components provided by a large number of sub-contractors as the main cause of the unsuccessful tests.

The missile carries up to 10 MIRV warheads and has an estimated range of over 8,000 kilometers (5,000 miles). The three-stage solid-propellant ballistic missile is designed for deployment on new Borey class nuclear-powered strategic submarines.

Russia's top brass expects the Bulava, along with Topol-M land-based ballistic missiles, to become the core of Russia's nuclear triad.

[http://en.rian.ru/military\\_news/20090915/156136868.html](http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20090915/156136868.html)

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Xinhua News - China  
12 September 2009

## **Iran not to Compromise on Its Nuclear Right: FM**

TEHRAN, Sept. 12 (Xinhua) -- Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki said on Saturday Tehran is ready for talks with world powers but there will not be any compromise on its nuclear right, Iran's English-language satellite channel Press TV reported.

"Iran is seriously willing to enter talks with the world powers on the basis of the items mentioned in the latest package," Mottaki told a press conference with his visiting Turkish counterpart Ahmet Davutoglu.

But "we cannot make any compromise in terms of the Iranian nation's inalienable right," the Iranian foreign minister added.

Mottaki slammed the three rounds of UN sanctions against Iran as "a failed policy" which he said cannot stop Tehran from pursuing its legitimate rights.

To initiate talks with the six major powers that are dealing with Iran's nuclear issue, Iran on Wednesday handed over its new package of proposals on global issues.

However, White House spokesman Robert Gibbs on Thursday criticized Iran's proposal for its failure to live up to its international obligations, saying that "Iran obviously has two paths that they can choose: one of those paths leads to increased international isolation if they don't take concrete steps to end their program."

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Friday that Iran must remain firm on its nuclear rights.

"We must remain firm on our rights," Khamenei told Friday prayer worshippers in a sermon broadcast live on state television, "if we give up our rights, whether nuclear rights or other (rights), it will lead to the decline (of the Islamic regime)."

The United States and other Western countries claimed that Iran intended to secretly develop nuclear weapons. The UN Security Council also required Iran to suspend its uranium enrichment activity.

Iran, however, insisted that its nuclear plan is only for peaceful purposes, vowing to continue its uranium enrichment activity despite pressure and sanctions from Western countries.

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-09/12/content\\_12041674.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-09/12/content_12041674.htm)

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Agence France-Presse (AFP)  
News Hosted by Google  
September 12, 2009

## **Iran has No Desire to Develop Atomic Bomb: Vahidi**

TEHRAN — Defence Minister Ahmad Vahidi on Saturday renewed Iran's insistence that it has no ambitions to develop an atomic bomb as world powers sought urgent talks on its latest proposals to allay concerns.



"We regard production of weapons of mass destruction as contrary to our religious, human and national principles," the Fars news agency quoted Vahidi as saying.

"Manufacturing nuclear weapons is not, and has never been, on our agenda."

Vahidi is wanted by Argentina in connection with a deadly 1994 bombing against a Jewish centre in Buenos Aires but was unanimously approved as defence minister in a vote of confidence in parliament last week.

His comments came as six world powers - Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United States -- considered new proposals handed over by Iran on Wednesday to delay Western concerns about the real purpose of its nuclear programme.

Washington has already expressed disappointment with the proposals. "It is not really responsive to our greatest concern," assistant secretary of state for public affairs, Philip Crowley, told reporters on Thursday.

The UN Security Council has given Iran repeated ultimatums to suspend uranium enrichment, the process which produces nuclear fuel or, in highly extended form, the fissile core of an atomic bomb.

But on Friday, Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei insisted once again that the regime would not bow to international pressure over its nuclear programme.

The Security Council has adopted three sets of sanctions against Iran over its failure to heed the ultimatums.

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iEkfZgKHYgHYd3sjQ9XbDgeAmkw>

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Ha'aretz Daily – Israel  
13 September 2009

## **Iran Again Rules Out Talks on Nuclear 'Rights'**

By Barak Ravid and Amir Oren, and Haaretz Service

Iran will not negotiate about its nuclear "rights," President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said on Sunday, after the United States said it would focus on the Islamic state's atomic activities in upcoming talks with Tehran.

Iran last week handed over a five-page proposal to the major powers, including the United States, in which Tehran said it was willing to discuss global nuclear disarmament as well as other international issues in wide-ranging talks.

But the document did not mention Iran's own nuclear program, which the West suspects is aimed at making bombs, and officials have made clear the issue will not be part of any discussions with the major powers.

"From the Iranian nation's viewpoint, [Iran's] nuclear case is closed," official media quoted Ahmadinejad as telling Britain's new ambassador to Tehran.

"Possessing peaceful nuclear technology is the Iranian nation's legal and definitive right and it will not hold discussions about its undeniable rights," he said.

But he added Iran was ready to talk about international cooperation to resolve global economic and security issues.

Iran has repeatedly said its nuclear program is for civil energy uses, not weapons.

The United States has said it would accept Iran's offer of wide-ranging talks despite Tehran's stated refusal to discuss its nuclear program, making clear it intended to raise the issue anyway.

"This may not have been a topic that they wanted to be brought up but I can assure that it's a topic that we'll bring up," White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said on Saturday.

Six major powers -- the permanent U.N. Security Council members Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States, as well as Germany -- offered Iran trade and diplomatic incentives in 2006 in exchange for a halt to uranium enrichment.

They improved the offer last year but retained the demand that Iran suspend uranium enrichment, something Tehran has ruled out as a precondition.

Ahmadinejad also told British Ambassador Simon Gass when he presented his credentials, that Iran had many "negative memories" about its ties with Britain, state broadcaster IRIB said.

"Of course our look is towards the future and expansion of ties and we hope that the British government has learnt from its past and is moving towards correcting its past actions," said the president, who often rails against the West.

### **U.S. disappointed by Iran response to dialogue offer**

The United States was reportedly disappointed by the Iranian response to the willingness of the Western powers to open dialogue with it.

The Obama administration announced at the end of last week it was ready to begin such a dialogue.

The United States and the five other Western powers are said to want to start talks even before the United Nations General Assembly opens on September 23.

State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley said Friday: "Now we are willing to meet with Iran. We hope to meet with Iran. We want to see serious engagement on the nuclear issue, in particular."

A senior government official in Jerusalem commented on the Iranian response, "Iran has spat in the face of the United States and the world."

Iran delivered its response to foreign diplomats in Tehran on Wednesday, which was released publicly on the non-profit Web news site ProPublica Friday morning.

Israel received a copy of the response a few hours earlier.

American officials reportedly told Israel they were disappointed by the document. A senior government official in Jerusalem said, "The Iranians didn't leave even a shred to move ahead with. There will be talks, but it seems the time has come to move to paralyzing sanctions against Iran."

Iran said it was ready to embark on comprehensive, all-encompassing and constructive negotiations "to lay the groundwork for lasting peace and regionally inspired and generated stability for the region and beyond."

Iran called for a world free of weapons of mass destruction. However, the document ignored the demand from six Western states for a freeze on uranium enrichment. Iran insists its nuclear production is strictly for peaceful, non-military use.

While the Iranian document does not mention Israel, it calls for efforts "to draw up a comprehensive, democratic and equitable plan to help the people of Palestine to achieve all-embracing peace."

The U.S. representative in the dialogue with Iran will be American Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Bill Burns, who met once with the Iranians at the end of the Bush administration.

Deputy Foreign Minister Daniel Ayalon, who is to arrive in Washington Sunday, will meet with Burns to discuss the Iranian issue.

Finance Minister Yuval Steinitz is also to meet with American officials this week in Washington on the Iranian issue, particularly with Under Secretary of the Treasury Stuart Levey, who is responsible for formulating new sanctions against Iran.

Senior U.S. administration officials told the New York Times over the weekend they had little expectation of success from talks with Iran.

The French Foreign Ministry said the Iranian document did not constitute a response to the proposal to open talks on its nuclear program.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, however, called the document a step forward and rejected the possibility of further sanctions against Iran.

Meanwhile, U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates declared his opposition Friday to an attack on Iran's nuclear facilities. Speaking to a group of 50 American scholars, community leaders and other civilians at the Pentagon, Gates said the best response to Iranian attempts to attain nuclear weapons was dialogue.

"There's a lot of talk about a military effort to take out their nuclear capabilities, but, in my view, it would only be a temporary solution.

You could buy one to three years by doing that, but they would simply go deeper and more covert, and it would unify the country and their commitment,"

Gates told the group, which was preparing for a tour of U.S. military facilities in South and Central America.

Gates also told his guests that the Iranian nuclear issue is one of the greatest problems the world has faced in years, and it could touch off a nuclear arms race in the Middle East. He said the only long-term solution is to persuade the Iranian regime that "their long-term security interests are diminished by having nuclear weapons, rather than enhanced."

<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1114127.html>

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Agence France-Presse (AFP)

News Hosted by Google

September 13, 2009

## **Iran Ready to Talk but not on Nuclear Issues: Ahmadinejad**

By Jay Deshmukh (AFP)

TEHRAN — President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said on Sunday that Iran was ready to talk with world powers on global issues but will not negotiate over Tehran's right to nuclear technology.

"We are ready to talk about international cooperation and resolving global economic and security problems as we believe that such issues cannot be resolved without everyone's participation," Ahmadinejad was quoted by Fars news agency as telling the new British ambassador to Tehran, Simon Gass.

But Ahmadinejad, who is to attend the UN General Assembly meeting later this month in New York, ruled out any talks on Iran's controversial nuclear programme.

He also did not directly respond to the call by world powers for urgent talks with Tehran.

"Having peaceful nuclear technology is Iran's lawful and definite right and Iranians will not negotiate with anyone over their undeniable rights," the hardliner told Gass as the British envoy presented his credentials.

Iran on Wednesday handed over to the six world powers -- the United States, Britain, France, Russia, China and Germany -- its latest package of proposals aimed at allaying Western concerns over its nuclear programme.

The official IRNA news agency quoted Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu as saying that Ankara was prepared to host talks between Iran and the six over the proposals, but his spokesman later denied this.

"Turkey is ready to do what it can to help overcome differences between the parties and reach an agreement as soon as possible," foreign ministry spokesman Burak Ozugergin told AFP.

He stressed that Turkey does not want to undermine ongoing efforts to reach a deal and therefore does not envisage hosting talks.

Ozugergin said he thought IRNA had misinterpreted comments by Davutoglu, who was on a two-day visit to Iran.

A US non-profit investigative journalism group, Pro Publica, has said it obtained a copy of proposals in which Tehran said it was prepared to hold "comprehensive, all-encompassing and constructive negotiations."

The talks would address nuclear disarmament as well as a global framework for the use of "clean nuclear energy," according to the document published on Pro Publica's website, but it did not address Iran's own nuclear programme.

US Assistant Secretary of State Philip Crowley told reporters in Washington that Tehran's package was "not really responsive to our greatest concern" which was Iran's uranium enrichment programme, the process which produces nuclear fuel or, in highly extended form, the fissile core of an atomic bomb.

Iran says its nuclear drive is solely aimed at generating electricity for its growing population.

"We will seek an early meeting, and we will seek to test Iran's willingness to engage," Crowley said in Washington.

European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana said he was in contact with Iran's top nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili in a bid to arrange a meeting at the "earliest possible opportunity."

Ahmadinejad on Sunday gave no direct response to the call for urgent talks and reiterated that for Tehran "the nuclear issue is over."

World powers have given a late September deadline to Tehran for starting talks with them and have threatened to impose sanctions on the Islamic republic if it fails to discuss the sensitive issue with them.

The UN Security Council has already adopted three sets of sanctions against Iran over its failure to heed the repeated ultimatums to suspend uranium enrichment.

Analysts say that Iran's offer of talks amounts to an opening bid to engage world powers in negotiations even if it fails to respond to their concerns about its nuclear programme.

Jacqueline Shire, an analyst at the Institute for Science and International Security, said Iran clearly demonstrates it is "not ignoring" the six powers by responding to their offer for talks with a proposal.

Washington-based National Iranian American Council president Trita Parsi welcomed the proposal.

The offer should not be seen through the West's focus on nuclear issues, but through Iran's "long-standing objective to be recognized as a regional power with a permanent seat at the table of regional decision-making," he said.

[http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5j-9\\_dsiB3ok769DAZq5sLrHtkZpg](http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5j-9_dsiB3ok769DAZq5sLrHtkZpg)

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Gulf Times – Qatar  
13 September 2009

## **Pressure Can Alter Nuke Goals: Israel**

Reuters/Geneva

World powers have a good chance of forcing Iran to stop atomic projects with bomb-making potential if they toughen political and economic leverage, but there is no time to lose, an Israeli official said yesterday.

"The clock is ticking," Deputy Prime Minister Dan Meridor said in an interview, adding any delay would only make the issue harder to solve and there was a risk Iran's neighbours would themselves seek nuclear arms if no progress was made soon.

"If there is enough political and economic action put together, there is a good chance that Iran will listen to reason. I don't think they are irrational," he said.

Meridor, also minister of intelligence and atomic energy, declined to elaborate on previous Israeli hints of strikes against its foe or give a precise estimate of when he believed Iran would attain the capability to make a nuclear weapon.

But he said that ability was "not very far away".

[http://www.gulf-times.com/site/topics/article.asp?cu\\_no=2&item\\_no=314396&version=1&template\\_id=37&parent\\_id=17](http://www.gulf-times.com/site/topics/article.asp?cu_no=2&item_no=314396&version=1&template_id=37&parent_id=17)

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Reuters  
September 14, 2009

## **Iran's Talks with World Powers to Start Next Month**

By Hossein Jaseb

TEHRAN (Reuters) - Iran and world powers seeking to resolve a dispute over Tehran's nuclear program will start talks on October 1, in what a senior U.S. official described as an "important first step."

In Vienna, the head of the United Nations nuclear watchdog urged the U.N. Security Council to give it more powers to prevent the spread of atom bomb technology and avoid relying on sanctions he said often did not work.

Mohamed ElBaradei's call was a clear reference to the case of Iran, which is expanding a declared uranium enrichment program without clarifying allegations of illicit nuclear weapons research.

But the chief U.S. delegate, in contrast with ElBaradei's message, said any nuclear outlaws must face "serious consequences" at the Security Council, an apparent allusion to sanctions.

"Failure to impose meaningful consequences puts at risk everything we have achieved (with non-proliferation rules). We cannot let this happen," said U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu also said on Monday the time had come for tougher sanctions against Iran.

"I believe that now is the time to start harsh sanctions against Iran -- if not now then when? These harsh sanctions can be effective," Netanyahu was quoted by a parliamentary official as telling a legislative committee.

"I believe that the international community can act effectively," said Netanyahu, whose country is widely believed to be the Middle East's only nuclear power.

His comments appeared to signal -- amid wide speculation that Israel could opt to attack Iranian nuclear facilities -- that it had not given up on international diplomacy to curb Tehran's atomic ambitions.

In Brussels, a spokeswoman for European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana confirmed he had talked to Iranian chief nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili on the phone and that they had agreed on a meeting on October 1.

Solana has been representing the six powers -- the United States, France, Germany, Britain, China and Russia -- in long-running efforts to defuse the row over Iranian atomic activity which the West suspects is aimed at making bombs.

"It's an important first step and we are hoping for the best," U.S. Secretary of Energy Steven Chu said in Vienna about the talks announced for early October.

Media in Iran, which says its nuclear program is for peaceful power purposes, said the venue had yet to be decided.

"In talks between Saeed Jalili and Javier Solana, October 1 was announced as the starting date of Iran's talks with the 5+1 countries," the semi-official Mehr News Agency said, referring to the group of six powers.

#### NUCLEAR "RIGHTS"

Iran last week handed over a package of proposals to the world powers in which Tehran said it was willing to discuss global nuclear disarmament as well as other international issues in wide-ranging talks.

But the document did not mention Iran's own nuclear program, and officials in Tehran have made clear it will not be part of any such discussions.

The United States has said it will accept Iran's offer of talks despite Tehran's stated refusal to discuss its nuclear work, making clear it intended to raise the issue anyway.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Hassan Qashqavi reiterated Tehran's position at a news conference on Monday:

"Iran will not talk about its definite rights, but as you might be aware, a part of the proposed (Iranian) package addresses removal of global concerns ... (and) nuclear disarmament," he said.

U.S. President Barack Obama, who came to office pledging a policy of engagement toward Iran, has suggested it may face harsher international sanctions if it does not accept good-faith talks by the end of September.

The six powers offered Iran trade and diplomatic incentives in 2006 in exchange for a halt to uranium enrichment.

They improved the offer last year but retained the suspension demand, something Tehran has repeatedly ruled out as a precondition. Refined uranium can be used as fuel for nuclear power plants but also provide material for bombs.

ElBaradei, outgoing chief of the International Atomic Energy Agency, welcomed the U.S. offer to revive dialogue with Iran without preconditions. But he suggested threats of tougher sanctions on Iran if the talks fizzled would go nowhere.

"We must keep open the channels of communication with those with whom we have issues that need to be resolved rather than seeking to isolate them," ElBaradei said in an address opening the annual meeting of 150 IAEA member nations.

"The Council needs to develop a comprehensive compliance mechanism that does not rely only on sanctions, which too often hurt the vulnerable and the innocent," ElBaradei said, referring to the example of Saddam Hussein's Iraq and to North Korea.

ElBaradei reiterated that Iran's stonewalling of requests for IAEA access to check intelligence reports pointing to military nuclear dimensions to the program was unacceptable.

"If we are to restore confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear program, Iran needs to engage substantively with the agency to clarify ... the difficult and important questions regarding the authenticity of information relating to alleged weaponization studies," he said.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/topNews/idUSLA38110920090914?sp=true>

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Washington Post  
September 15, 2009

## **Iran Agrees To New Talks with 6 Global Powers**

By Joby Warrick, Washington Post Staff Writer

VIENNA, Sept. 14 -- Iran, facing stiffening pressure over its nuclear program, has agreed to a new round of talks with global powers this fall but also repeated Monday its vow to fend off any attacks against its nuclear facilities.

European Union officials announced an Oct. 1 date for the new talks, which will include Iran's top nuclear negotiator and representatives of the United States, Germany, France, Britain, Russia and China. The discussion will be the first between Iran and the six world powers in more than a year.

Iran in recent days has appeared to rule out curbs on its atomic energy program, declaring its pursuit of nuclear power to be an "inalienable right." But U.S. and E.U. officials expressed hope Monday that the new talks could ultimately include Iran's nuclear ambitions.

"This is an important first step," said Steven Chu, the U.S. energy secretary, who was attending a meeting at the Vienna headquarters of the U.N. nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency.

In Tehran, a Foreign Ministry spokesman appeared to dampen expectations. "Talks will focus on disarmament and international concerns, not the Iranian rights enshrined by the Non-Proliferation Treaty," said spokesman Hassan Qashqavi, referring to Iran's claim of a legitimate right to seek peaceful nuclear power.

Qashqavi was quoted by the state-run Islamic Republic News Agency as saying the talks would include a package of proposals intended to reduce tensions.

"We have repeatedly announced that the Iranian nation is for dialogue and is ready to have it within framework of the package of proposals," Qashqavi said.

The United States and many of its allies suspect that Iran intends either to build a nuclear bomb or develop the capacity to make one quickly if it chooses to. Western powers have threatened new sanctions against Iran if it does not halt production of enriched uranium, the key ingredient in both commercial nuclear fuel and nuclear weapons. U.S. intelligence officials say they think Iran already possesses enough enriched uranium to make at least one nuclear bomb, though such a move would require additional enrichment and overcoming numerous other technical hurdles.

At the Vienna IAEA meeting, the head of Iran's nuclear energy organization said the Islamic republic had publicly "forsworn the non-peaceful uses" of nuclear technology. But Ali Akbar Salehi, who heads Iran's nuclear energy organization, warned against preemptive strikes against the country's nuclear facilities. He railed against what he called the "arrogance" of declared nuclear powers such as the United States that would seek to prevent other countries from developing a nuclear infrastructure.

"While taking every threat seriously, [Iran] is in the meantime confident of its capacity to defend itself," said Salehi, speaking at the annual conference of the IAEA's 150 member states. "Our preparedness extends from a generalized civil defense to a comprehensive military defense."

IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei, in his last address to the agency's general conference before stepping down in November, called for greater transparency from Iran. He noted that there remained "questions and allegations that cast doubt on the peaceful nature" of the country's nuclear initiatives.

But ElBaradei also urged Western nations to favor diplomacy over conflict, and he accused the Bush administration of rushing into war in Iraq without waiting for the results of U.N. investigations into allegations about Iraqi weapons of mass destruction.

"A major cause for regret," he said, "was the fact that, despite the agency and the United Nations providing impartial and factual information that pointed to the absence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, a war was launched against that country, with tragic consequences."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/09/14/AR2009091402433.html>

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Times of London  
September 15, 2009

## **US and Iran to Hold First Face-to-Face Talks Over Nuclear Issue**

Catherine Philp, Diplomatic Correspondent

The US and Iran are to hold their first face-to-face talks in three decades after the European Union struck a deal to resume nuclear negotiations.

Iranian officials and representatives of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany will meet on October 1 after Washington accepted proposals from Tehran as the basis for new talks. It will be the first time in a year that Iran has met representatives of the six leading world powers and the first time that the US has sent its officials in person.

The talks, the first between the two nations since the severing of diplomatic relations in 1980, are a last-ditch effort to engage Iran diplomatically. Tehran has repeatedly refused to halt uranium enrichment or negotiate its "nuclear rights". Western officials indicated last week that the diplomatic track was all but exhausted and that the groundwork was being prepared for new sanctions.

With Russia unwilling to back tough sanctions on the Iranian energy sector, however, Washington agreed to the talks to test Tehran's seriousness about dialogue.

The venue is yet to be decided but Western leaders will meet at the UN General Assembly next week to thrash out the agenda. The talks will be conducted by low-ranking government officials.

Hopes of a breakthrough remain low. The five-page proposal submitted by Tehran last week was long on rhetoric about global peace and brotherhood and low on detail about its nuclear programme.

Washington expressed disappointment, saying that it was "not really responsive to our greatest concern". Moscow, however, said that the proposal had offered "something to dig into".

Western diplomats said that Tehran's emphasis on global non-proliferation was a thinly veiled reference to Israel's covert nuclear arsenal and a distraction from the real issue — Iran's failure to give assurances over the peaceful nature of its nuclear programme.

Hassan Ghashghavi, the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman, said that Iran was trying to address those fears. "As you saw, one of the objectives of the package is to certainly remove the concern about the nuclear issue by focusing on global disarmament and implementing a slogan that nuclear energy is for everyone but atomic bomb for no-one," he said.

Tehran claims that its nuclear programme is for civilian energy generation only but refuses to address the specific allegations of weaponisation research, dismissing intelligence as "fabricated". The chief of the UN atomic watchdog said last week that the agency had reached a stalemate with Tehran over its continued evasions.

The European Union's Swedish presidency said on Monday that the outcome of the talks should be awaited before weighing any threat of future sanctions. "The focus now should be on that particular meeting," Carl Bildt, the Foreign Minister, said. "Exactly what will happen after that is somewhat dependent on what happens in the talks."

[http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/middle\\_east/article6834512.ece](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/middle_east/article6834512.ece)

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Agence France-Presse (AFP)  
News Hosted by Google  
September 15, 2009



## Iran Nuclear Talks Probably in Turkey: Solana

BRUSSELS — Talks next month between Iran and six world powers on Tehran's nuclear programme will probably be held in Turkey, European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana said on Tuesday.

The talks from October 1 will "very likely" be held in Turkey, Solana told reporters in Brussels ahead of EU foreign ministers' talks.

The five UN Security Council permanent members -- the United States, Russia, China, Britain and France -- plus Germany are due to take part in the talks with Iran's top nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili.

"At this point in time, we are going to try to enter into a negotiation," said Solana, stressing the "double-track approach," -- the carrot and stick of trade, aid and sanctions.

It will be the first high-level meeting since the Obama administration took over in the United States and initiated its more open policy towards Tehran, a European diplomatic source said.

The last encounter, with the United States taking part, was in July 2008 in Geneva.

The meeting comes after Iran submitted a document to world powers laying out its position on resolving several global security problems. The text said the Islamic republic was ready to enter into negotiations on a number of issues.

Western nations are calling on Iran to halt its uranium enrichment drive which they suspect is for making atomic weapons.

Tehran denies the charges and says its nuclear programme has peaceful goals.

The United States has said the new offers from Iran are "not really responsive" to concerns about its nuclear programme, dampening hopes for new talks aimed at breaking a three-year impasse.

Tehran is already under three sets of UN sanctions and European diplomats said Friday that the EU could consider introducing more unilateral sanctions if the UN Security Council cannot agree to do so.

Europe and others envisage adopting fresh sanctions if the impasse persists, but are aware that reluctance from veto-wielding UN Security Council nations Russia and China could limit their effectiveness.

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5h861IhnXekw56sqHoo7EolsR4QvQ>

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Al Jazeera

September 12, 2009

## US 'Ready For' Direct N Korea Talks

The US has said it is willing to negotiate with North Korea in an attempt to bring Pyongyang back to six-nation talks on nuclear disarmament, a state department official said.

The move, announced by Philip Crowley, the US state department spokesman, on Friday, is largely seen as a policy shift by Washington.

The US had earlier said it would sit down with North Korea only if Pyongyang agreed to return to talks within the six-party framework, which also include China, Japan, Russia and South Korea.

"We are prepared to enter into a bilateral discussion with North Korea," Crowley said.

"We've made no decisions at this point, other than just to say we are prepared for a bilateral talk, if that will help advance the six-party process."

### 'Major concession'

He denied the move marked a significant change in policy, saying any bilateral meeting would be aimed at bringing Pyongyang back to multilateral talks.

But John Harrison, a professor at the S Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore, told Al Jazeera the move was a significant step by the US.

"One of the biggest things North Korea has wanted throughout this [six-party] process is direct discussions with the United States.

"And the United States's position has always been that this is an international issue, one that's dealing with regional security and there should be regional partners.

"So this concession is fairly major."

Crowley said it was unlikely that any bilateral talks would take place before the UN General Assembly, to be held in New York later this month, and he declined to say whether Stephen Bosworth, the US special envoy, might accept the North's invitation to visit Pyongyang.

For his part, Bosworth gave no hint of a change in plan when he spoke in Tokyo last week.

Six-party partner South Korea said that direct talks between Pyongyang and Washington were welcome as a move to advance the stalled negotiation process.

"South Korea will not oppose US-North Korea bilateral talks if they are held to advance the six-party talks to resolve the North Korea nuclear issue," Moon Tae-young, a South Korean foreign ministry spokesman, said.

### **Nuclear tests**

Talks on Pyongyang's nuclear programme have unfolded in fits and starts, with North Korea taking some steps to disable its nuclear facilities after agreeing an aid-for-disarmament deal in September 2005.

However, it has carried two nuclear tests since, first in 2006 and then in May this year.

Despite condemnation from the UN Security Council over its nuclear testing, the North followed the test in May with several missile tests, ratcheting up tension with Japan and South Korea.

Recently, Pyongyang has softened its posture and sought bilateral talks with Washington, while still trying to have the six-party negotiations scrapped.

Pyongyang said last week it had reached the final stages of enriching uranium and was also building more plutonium-based atomic weapons.

<http://english.aljazeera.net/news/asia-pacific/2009/09/200991232321701890.html>

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UPI.com

September 13, 2009

## **Japan Wary of 'No First-Strike' Proposal**

TOKYO, Sept. 13 (UPI) -- Japan is reluctant to agree to a proposal by a nuclear non-proliferation panel urging the United States to adopt a "no first-strike" policy, sources say.

The International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament, a joint effort of the Australian and Japanese governments, has proposed urging Washington to agree to limiting its use of nuclear weapons to deterrence, ruling out a first strike. But Tokyo's representative on the commission has expressed reservations, unnamed ICNND sources told the Japanese news agency Kyodo.

The sources said that while Japan has agreed to the principle of reducing the role of nuclear weapons, it won't go along with the "no first use" idea, and also has misgivings about a suggested timetable and weapons reductions.

The commission, which is co-chaired by former Japanese and Australian foreign ministers, looks to reinvigorate international efforts on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, and envisions working with U.S. President Barack Obama on a new nuclear doctrine, the news agency said.

Tokyo, however, reportedly fears a weakening of its U.S. nuclear umbrella.

[http://www.upi.com/Top\\_News/2009/09/13/Japan-wary-of-no-first-strike-proposal/UPI-28201252876802/](http://www.upi.com/Top_News/2009/09/13/Japan-wary-of-no-first-strike-proposal/UPI-28201252876802/)

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Dong-A Ilbo –South Korea  
September 14, 2009

## **Gov't Wary of Direct Talks Between N. Korea and US**

South Korea questioned yesterday the shift in U.S. policy to hold bilateral talks with North Korea.

Seoul officials said the bilateral talks can send a wrong message to Pyongyang that it can achieve what it wants through the meeting while keeping its nuclear ambition. Others, however, say South Korea could get alienated in the bilateral process between North Korea and the U.S.

U.S. State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley told a news briefing Friday that Washington is prepared to hold a bilateral meeting with Pyongyang. He said a decision on that will come within two weeks after consultations with relevant countries, adding Pyongyang's request for a meeting with U.S. envoy for North Korea Stephen Bosworth will be considered.

“Any discussion that we would have with North Korea will be in the context of the six-party process. The purpose of that discussion will be to try to convince North Korea to return to a multilateral process,” Crowley said.

Foreign media interpreted the move as a major shift in a U.S. policy. ABC said Washington has shifted gears in dealing with Pyongyang. CNN said the Obama administration has made a dramatic policy shift for North Korea by expressing its willingness to hold bilateral dialogue to get the communist country back to the six-party talks.

To this, a key official at South Korea's presidential office of Cheong Wa Dae welcomed the change in U.S. policy yesterday, saying, “There is no reason to oppose bilateral discussion between Washington and Pyongyang if they speak of denuclearizing Pyongyang.”

The official also urged caution, saying, “It's difficult to say if bilateral relations between Washington and Pyongyang have advanced to holding dialogue because no final decision has been made.”

Certain experts in Seoul warned that South Korea will be sidelined in the bilateral process given that it and the U.S. have appeared out of sync in dealing with North Korea.

South Korea is particularly worried over the bilateral talks coming earlier than expected given that the U.S. decision to hold the dialogue with North Korea will come in two weeks.

Seoul and Washington set a discordant tone when Bosworth headed for Tokyo after visiting Seoul last week. A Seoul official at the time said, “This is not the time for the U.S. and North Korea to meet.”

Bosworth, however, said in Tokyo Tuesday that he will consider in Washington visiting Pyongyang.

Considering such disagreement and possible changes in Pyongyang-Washington relations, Seoul officials are urging their government to craft a backup plan.

One official said, “The U.S. can push independent policy in accordance with its domestic schedule and needs, so in case Washington and Seoul have different opinions on sanctions against Pyongyang, we should devise countermeasures and reaffirm bilateral cooperation between South Korea and the U.S.”

<http://english.donga.com/srv/service.php3?bicode=050000&biid=2009091411788>

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Associated Press (AP)  
News Hosted by Google  
September 15, 2009

## **S Korea Says N Korea Unwilling to Give Up Nukes**

By JAE-SOON CHANG (AP)

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea's president said Tuesday that North Korea is showing no sign of giving up nuclear weapons, although the communist regime has made recent conciliatory gestures because U.N. sanctions against it are working.

In a joint interview with South Korea's Yonhap news agency and Japan's Kyodo news agency, conservative President Lee Myung-bak also accused the North of trying to win economic aid while holding on to atomic weapons.

He urged other members of the stalled six-nation talks with North Korea to "redouble efforts" to rid the North of nuclear weapons.

Lee's remarks came as the United States is preparing to accept North Korea's offer to hold direct talks, and they underline his deep skepticism about a neighbor that is abruptly taking a softer line following nuclear and missile tests just a few months ago.

"It appears to be true that North Korea is fairly embarrassed because of greater than expected real effects" of U.N. sanctions, Lee said, according to a published Yonhap transcript. Lee's office confirmed its contents.

"North Korea is using some conciliatory strategy toward the United States, South Korea and Japan in order to get out of this crisis, but for now, North Korea is not showing any sincerity or sign that it will give up nuclear weapons," he said.

North Korea pulled out of talks with the U.S., South Korea, China, Russia and Japan in April, protesting international criticism of its launch of a rocket that other nations suspected was a test of long-range missile technology.

In May, it conducted a nuclear test that drew tough new U.N. sanctions on the North's weapons exports and financial dealings. The sanctions also allow inspections of suspect North Korean cargo in ports and on the high seas.

Amid the sanctions, the North has been taking conciliatory gestures, freeing detained American and South Korean citizens and pledging to resume suspended joint projects and family reunions with South Korea.

The North also has invited Washington's special envoy on North Korea, Stephen Bosworth, to visit Pyongyang for bilateral negotiations that would be the countries' first nuclear talks since President Barack Obama took office.

Over the weekend, the State Department said the U.S. is preparing to accept the offer, but said the talks will be part of efforts to resume the six-nation negotiations.

South Korea has said it does not oppose the direct talks.

Lee said the North's goal with the conciliatory gestures appears to be to "receive economic cooperation while trying to buy time to make it a fait accompli" for it to possess nuclear weapons.

On relations with Japan, Lee said he expects the sensitive ties will improve further with Tokyo's incoming government of Yukio Hatoyama, who is expected to be elected as Japan's next prime minister in a vote in parliament's lower house Wednesday.

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5iURO8fOyWVOA0ytFlaAGuC9F7R9wD9ANLO980>

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Dong-A Ilbo –South Korea  
September 15, 2009

## **US Changes Nuke Negotiating Tactics With NK**

The United States plans bilateral talks with North Korea for the first time since President Barack Obama's inauguration.

Observers say the situation is similar to that of 2002, when the two governments spoke after North Korea's second nuclear crisis erupted. The Obama administration, however, has ruled out following the negotiating pattern of former Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill, who served as chief U.S. representative to the six-party nuclear talks under the previous administration.

The new U.S. special envoy to North Korea, Stephen Bosworth, has a comprehensive approach to negotiations. He plans to create a detailed roadmap that includes the date when North Korea agrees to scrap its nuclear program.

Bosworth changed Washington's approach in negotiating with Pyongyang based on the understanding that the U.S. should not follow patterns under which it negotiated details after announcing a joint statement with North Korea in 2005

His approach also reflects his displeasure over Hill's approach to North Korea. Since Hill was often given the right of discretion from then Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, he negotiated with Pyongyang behind the scenes and later encouraged other members to the six-way talks to confirm such negotiations.

This approach was useful when North Korea chose to snub the six-party talks, but the agreements were denied by Pyongyang when it had a conflict of interest with Washington.

A high-ranking South Korean official said, "Based on the reflection that Hill's former negotiating patterns were ineffective, Bosworth will prefer not to hold bilateral talks with North Korea. Instead, he will ask North Korea to participate in the six-party talks and negotiate with other members."

When Hill held negotiations with North Korea shortly after its first nuclear test in October 2006, he failed to effectively deal with issues on North Korea's nuclear weapons but nonetheless had sanctions on the Stalinist country lifted at its request.

Similarly, he reached an agreement with Pyongyang in 2007 to suggest concrete measures to add to the 2005 joint announcement. The 2007 agreement, however, did not contain the words "nuclear weapons."

On the other hand, Bosworth wants the U.S. to keep imposing sanctions on North Korea unless it destroys its nuclear weapons. In short, he wants to cooperate with members of the six-party talks to negotiate with Pyongyang while using both dialogue and sanctions.

<http://english.donga.com/srv/service.php3?bicode=050000&biid=2009091527568>

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The Independent – U.K.  
13 September 2009

## 'Dirty Bomb' Breakthrough

By Nina Lakhani

British scientists have developed a revolutionary method of treating victims of radiation contamination. Trials of a new device, no bigger than a small suitcase, which can rapidly detect the extent of cellular damage caused by exposure to a nuclear "dirty bomb" or a radiation leak, will be announced this week. It could mean doctors being able to scan hundreds of potential victims at an incident within hours.

Current methods involve scientists taking blood samples which then undergo a complex battery of tests. Experts estimate that existing UK labs could handle only 100 samples a week.

Dr Kai Rothkamm, of the UK Health Protection Agency, said: "If there was a major radiological or nuclear event the hospitals in this country could be overwhelmed."

The new equipment will assess the total body dose of radiation by detecting the damage to proteins in the nucleus of cells. Each machine will be capable of processing 30 samples per hour.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/dirty-bomb-breakthrough-1786616.html>

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New York Times  
September 15, 2009

## U.S. Kills Top Qaeda Leader In Southern Somalia

By Jeffrey Gettleman and Eric Schmitt

NAIROBI, Kenya — American commandos killed one of the most wanted Islamic militants in Africa in a daylight raid in southern Somalia on Monday, according to American and Somali officials, an indication of the Obama administration's willingness to use combat troops strategically against Al Qaeda's growing influence in the region.

Western intelligence agents have described the militant, Saleh Ali Saleh Nabhan, as the ringleader of a Qaeda cell in Kenya responsible for the bombing of an Israeli hotel on the Kenyan coast in 2002. Mr. Nabhan may have also played a role in the attacks on two American embassies in East Africa in 1998.

American military forces have been hunting him for years, and on Monday, around 1 p.m., villagers near the town of Baraawe said four military helicopters suddenly materialized over the horizon and shot at two trucks rumbling through the desert.

The trucks were carrying leaders of the Shabab, an Islamist extremist group fighting to overthrow Somalia's weak but internationally recognized government. The Shabab work hand-in-hand with foreign terrorists, according to Western and Somali agents, and in the past few months, as the battle for control of Somalia has intensified, the group seems to be drawing increasingly close to Al Qaeda.

American officials on Monday provided few details, but confirmed that Special Operations forces, operating from a nearby American warship, participated in the helicopter raid.

Under the administration of President George W. Bush, the American military used long-range Tomahawk cruise missiles and AC-130 gunships to carry out strikes against terrorism suspects in Somalia. One American adviser said the decision to use commandos and not long-range missiles in this case may reflect a shift by the Obama administration to go to greater lengths to avoid civilian deaths. In the past, many Somali villagers have been killed by American missiles.

But urgency was a major, if not overriding, factor as well. A senior American military official said the Special Operations forces, who had kept Mr. Nabhan under lengthy surveillance waiting for the right moment to strike, acted quickly after tracking Mr. Nabhan to a location away from civilians on Monday. "We have been watching him for a long, long time," said the military official.

Despite the danger of conducting the mission during the day, the strategy ensured that the troops could more accurately identify their target, attack it and confirm the deaths afterward. "This approach was, 'Let's do it very quickly, very swiftly and confirm he's gone,'" the adviser said.

Mr. Nabhan played an increasingly important role as a senior instructor for new militant recruits, including some Americans, as well as a liaison to senior Qaeda leaders in Pakistan, the senior American adviser said.

"This is very significant because it takes away a person who's been a main conduit between the East Africa extremists and big Al Qaeda," said the adviser, who like several United States officials spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the classified nature of the mission.

The helicopters, with commandos firing .50-caliber machine guns and other automatic weapons, quickly disabled the trucks, according to villagers in the area, and several of the Shabab fighters tried to fire back. Shabab leaders said that six foreign fighters, including Mr. Nabhan, were quickly killed, along with three Somali Shabab. The helicopters landed, and the commandos inspected the wreckage and carried away the bodies of Mr. Nabhan and the other fighters for identification, a senior American military official said.

"We are very upset, very upset," said a Shabab official from the town of Merka, near where the raid happened. "This is a big loss for us."

Mr. Nabhan, who was thought to be around 30 years old and of Yemeni descent, was born in Mombasa, on Kenya's coast. American intelligence sources have said that he masterminded the suicide bombing of the Paradise hotel in Mombasa, which killed 11 Kenyans and 3 Israelis and wounded dozens of others.

The Paradise was a popular Israeli hangout, complete with a kosher restaurant and synagogue. That same day, Nov. 28, 2002, a group of assailants fired several missiles at an Israeli passenger jet at the Mombasa airport, narrowly missing it. Intelligence agents said Mr. Nabhan helped fire the missiles.

Mr. Nabhan was one of the handful of Qaeda terrorists hiding out in Somalia for years, taking advantage of the country's chaos to elude agents pursuing them.

Mr. Nabhan was believed to be a close associate of Fazul Abdullah Mohamed, Al Qaeda's East Africa operations chief, who helped organize the bombings of the American Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, which killed more than 200 people. American military forces have tried to kill Mr. Nabhan and Mr. Mohamed with airstrikes several times in recent years.

The Baraawe area, like much of southern Somalia, is controlled by the Shabab. There is increasing evidence that foreign jihadists, like Mr. Nabhan, are leading Somali Shabab and training them in suicide bombs.

American officials said Mr. Nabhan's death is likely to send other suspects scurrying for cover. When they resurface, there may be killings of those suspected of being informants, sowing further turmoil in their ranks, American officials said.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/15/world/africa/15raid.html>

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Washington Post  
World Digest  
September 15, 2009

## **Bin Laden Threatens To Escalate Warfare**

Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden described President Obama as "powerless" to stop the war in Afghanistan and threatened to step up guerrilla warfare there in a new audiotape released to mark the anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks in the United States.

In the 11-minute tape, addressed to the American people, bin Laden said Obama is only following the warlike policies of his predecessor, George W. Bush. Bin Laden urged Americans to "liberate" themselves from the influence of "neoconservatives and the Israeli lobby."

The tape was posted on radical Islamist Web sites two days after the anniversary of the 2001 suicide plane hijackings.

Bin Laden usually addresses Americans in a message timed around the date of the attacks, which sparked the U.S.-led war in Afghanistan the same year, and then in Iraq two years later.

Bin Laden said Americans had not understood that al-Qaeda carried out the attacks in retaliation for U.S. support of Israel. If America reconsiders its alliance with the Jewish state, al-Qaeda will respond on "sound and just bases," he said.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/09/14/AR2009091403264.html>

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New York Times  
September 15, 2009

## **Life Terms for Plot to Bomb Trans-Atlantic Flights From London**

By JOHN F. BURNS

LONDON — A High Court judge on Monday imposed minimum prison terms of 32 to 40 years on three men convicted last week, after two trials, of plotting to smuggle liquid explosives onto at least seven trans-Atlantic airliners heading to the United States and Canada from London, with the aim of blowing the aircraft apart in midair.

The judge, Sir Richard Henriques, called the plot "the most grave and wicked conspiracy ever proven within this jurisdiction" and compared it, in its potential for inflicting mass loss of life, to the Sept. 11 attacks. He gave all three men the maximum of life imprisonment but followed standard British practice by specifying the minimum period each man would have to serve before becoming eligible for parole.

The plot's ringleader in Britain, Abdulla Ahmed Ali, 28, was given a minimum term of 40 years. Assad Sarwar, 29, received a 36-year minimum after he was identified at the trials as the chemical expert and "quartermaster" of the plot, responsible for acquiring materials, including the explosive concentration of hydrogen peroxide that would have been injected into plastic soft-drink bottles intended to serve as bombs.

A third man, Tanvir Hussain, 28, named by prosecutors as Mr. Ali's right-hand man, was told that he would have to serve at least 32 years.

Judge Henriques, 65, known in the British judiciary for his tough sentencing in an era when the trend has often been toward greater leniency, was unsparing as he passed sentences on the plotters, saying they had amassed enough explosives to make 20 bombs. He aligned himself squarely with the prosecutors, who were faced with defense arguments that the plotters had intended only to set off minor explosions at a terminal at London's Heathrow Airport to attract attention to Muslim grievances over the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and not to kill people or attack airliners.

"The intention was to perpetrate a terrorist outrage that would stand alongside the events of Sept. 11, 2001, in history," the judge said. "I'm satisfied that the plot would have succeeded but for the intervention of the police and the security service." He added, "Had this conspiracy not been interrupted, a massive loss of life would almost certainly have resulted — and if the detonation was over land, the number of victims would have been even greater still."



As the judge passed sentence at Woolwich Crown Court in south London on Mr. Ali, the plot leader, he glanced down at a small book he was holding but was otherwise expressionless, the BBC reported. The BBC reporter said that Mr. Sarwar and Mr. Hussain were similarly undemonstrative. The reporter did not identify the book held by Mr. Ali.

The sentences, among the harshest ever imposed in Britain in a murder plot in which nobody was killed, seemed likely to ease the sometimes severe strains that had developed between the United States and Britain over the case. The friction was compounded when the five other defendants in the trial were acquitted of plotting to bomb airliners; one of the five, Umar Islam, 31, was convicted on the lesser charge of conspiracy to commit murder.

Another of the five, Donald Stewart-Whyte, 23, was acquitted on both charges, but the jury did not reach a verdict on the murder conspiracy charge against the remaining three, and they will learn after a hearing on Oct. 5 whether they will face a third trial on the charge.

Global interest in the case, which ran for 17 months over the course of the two trials, has been high, partly because discovery of the plot in August 2006 led to worldwide, time-consuming restrictions at airport security checkpoints that are still in place on the liquids and creams passengers can carry aboard aircraft.

American involvement was pervasive from the start and led to bitter confrontations between officials in London and Washington — not least when the first trial ended last September with the jury convicting Mr. Ali, Mr. Sarwar and Mr. Hussain of conspiracy to commit murder but not reaching a verdict on the main charge of plotting to attack airliners, an outcome some American and British officials attributed to poor handling of the prosecution's case.

There was also unease over the fact that British courts, unlike their American counterparts, do not allow the use of electronic intercepts as evidence, voiding for court purposes extensive recordings of telephone conversations in which the plotters discussed their plans.

Mr. Islam, the fourth man convicted of a charge last week, received a 22-year term for conspiracy to murder. He had been declared not guilty of the aircraft bombing charge after the jury concluded he was not aware that aircraft were the targets.

All four men sentenced on Monday and the three men facing the possibility of a third trial — Ibrahim Savant, 28; Arafat Waheed Khan, 28; and Waheed Zaman, 25 — are British citizens with family ties in Pakistan, where prosecutors said the plot was masterminded by a British-born man with Pakistani origins, Rashid Rauf.

Mr. Rauf's involvement was another flashpoint between American and British officials investigating the plot. It was his arrest in Pakistan — at the urging of American officials, as British intelligence officers have said — that set off a chain reaction that prompted the British authorities to round up the plotters on Aug. 9, 2006, at a time when British investigators thought that they lacked enough evidence to guarantee successful prosecutions.

Mr. Rauf's role in the case threatened at one point to turn into farce. Known as an alcohol-drinking troublemaker at school, he fled Britain in 2002 when his uncle was brutally murdered in Birmingham and he was identified as a suspect. British intelligence officials have said he may have had links to the London transit bombings in 2005 in which 56 people, including four suicide bombers, were killed.

After his arrest in Pakistan in 2006, Britain sought his extradition in the airliner bombing case but he escaped from Pakistani police officers. American officials have said he was eventually killed in a missile strike in northern Pakistan last November.

[http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/15/world/europe/15london.html?\\_r=1&ref=world](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/15/world/europe/15london.html?_r=1&ref=world)

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Ha'aretz Daily – Israel

ANALYSIS

12 September 2009

## **Clock Ticking for Iran as Israel Appears Ready for Strike**

By Amos Harel

In the rare moments when it's not preoccupied with the decline of U.S. President Barack Obama in the polls and with the debate over its government's proposed health-care reforms, the American press continues to deal almost obsessively with another pressing issue: the deadlock in efforts to stop Iran's nuclear program and the growing likelihood that the endgame will be an Israeli attack on Iran's nuclear facilities.

In the past few weeks alone, an editorial in The Wall Street Journal warned the president that the United States must put a quick halt to the Iranian nuclear program, because otherwise Israel will bomb the facilities.

"An Israeli strike on Iran would be the most dangerous foreign policy issue President Obama could face," the paper wrote. Former vice president Dick Cheney revealed that while in office he supported an American strike against Iran, but was compelled to accept the approach of president George W. Bush, who preferred the diplomatic route.

Another Republican ultra-hawk, former ambassador to the United Nations John Bolton, maintains that additional sanctions alone will not be enough to make the Iranians abandon their nuclear ambitions. William Cohen, who served as secretary of defense during Bill Clinton's second presidential term (1997-2001), says that "there is a countdown taking place" and that Israel "is not going to sit indifferently on the sidelines and watch Iran continue on its way toward a nuclear-weapons capability."

The chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Adm. Mike Mullen, explains that "a very narrow window" exists between the possibility of resolving the issue and an attack on Iran.

An op-ed in The Los Angeles Times states (with some justification) that if Iran does not respond in September to the demands made of it, the world should brace itself for an Israeli attack. However, the author adds (mistakenly) that in the event of an Israeli strike, Obama "will probably learn of the operation from CNN rather than the CIA."

This month will mark a critical juncture in Iran's race for nuclear capability. The timetable is getting ever shorter: Most Western intelligence services share the assessment that over the course of 2010, Iran will accumulate sufficient fissionable material to produce two or three nuclear bombs. If the Iranians succeed in dispersing this material among a large number of secret sites, it will reduce the likelihood that the project can be stopped.

Even though Obama has now been in office for seven and a half months, Tehran has not responded to his offer to engage in direct dialogue about the nuclear issue.

At first the talks were deferred in anticipation of the Iranian presidential elections in June, then because of the internal crisis that erupted there in their wake, and now the regime is engaging in additional - and typical - delay tactics. Last week, for the first time, Tehran announced readiness in principle to conduct negotiations with the international community.

### **Peaceful enrichment**

The European Union appears to want to reach a decision on the subject ahead of the authorization of a fourth round of international sanctions against Iran, in the context of the G-20 conference to be held in Pittsburgh in about two weeks. Israel is apprehensive that the Americans may delay a final decision until December.

The impression gained by Israelis who have visited Washington lately is that Obama is gradually backing away from the Bush administration's fundamental demand that Iran cease to enrich uranium as a precondition for beginning a dialogue.

Subsequently, they believe, the United States will offer Iran the following compromise: The Iranians will be allowed to enrich uranium for peaceful purposes (under tight international supervision), the previous sanctions imposed on Iran will be lifted and the two sides will reach understandings concerning Iran's interests in a number of arenas, notably Iraq, ahead of the planned withdrawal of U.S. troops from there.

Obama would be able to present such an arrangement as an accomplishment. After all, before the election in November he promised to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear bomb, not to force it to stop enriching uranium. From Israel's point of view, however, this will probably not be enough.

According to Maj. Gen. (res.) Giora Eiland, former head of Israel's National Security Council, "The United States was ready to sign an agreement to that effect Thursday. The prospect that Iran will agree, despite the temptation of gaining international recognition for its right to enrich uranium, remains small."

In his view, "For its strategy to succeed, America needs a broad and binding international coalition. I still don't see them getting Russia and China to back such a move, and their support is essential."

Despite its fear that Iran will use the peaceful enrichment go-ahead to continue advancing secretly toward a bomb, Israel might, as a fallback position, accept such a compromise as long as it is clear that the international supervision is strong enough and that, in anticipation of the likely eventuality Iran will be found cheating, a broad coalition to toughen the sanctions is put together in advance.

If the dialogue fails, or never begins, more severe sanctions might be put into place: a ban on the purchase of oil from Iran and on the export of petroleum distillates to it, or even a maritime embargo. But the potential effectiveness of these moves, with Tehran already well past the halfway mark toward achieving its goal, is in doubt.

### **Looking the other way**

So, the moment of truth will arrive at some point between the end of 2009 and the middle of 2010: Should Iran be attacked? American experts agree that this would involve an Israeli strike. It is very unlikely that Obama will be the one dispatching American planes to Natanz.

During the past year, military experts and commentators are increasingly coming around to the view that the Israel Air Force is capable of executing the mission. The Israel Defense Forces was significantly upgraded during the tenure of Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi. The goal, it is argued, is not to liquidate the Iranian project but to set it back. According to this line of thought, if an attack, American or Israeli, causes a couple of years' delay in the project it will have achieved its aim. Similarly, before launching the attack on the Iraqi reactor in 1981, Israel did not foresee the chain of events that finally forced Saddam Hussein to forgo his nuclear ambitions.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Ehud Barak take a similar view of the Iranian threat. At least, that is what both their public statements and their comments in closed meetings suggest.

For an Israeli attack to be considered, Israel would need the tacit approval of the Obama administration, if only in the sense that it looks the other way. This is due above all to the necessity of passing through the Iraqi air corridor, as American soldiers will still be in Iraq in 2011. No less important is strategic coordination for the day after: How will the United States react to a prolonged aerial attack by Israel on the nuclear sites and to the regional flare-up that might follow?

These are matters that would have to be agreed on directly between Obama and Netanyahu. The disparity in their policy stances, together with the total lack of personal chemistry between them, is liable to prove a hindrance.

Iran is likely to respond to an Israeli attack by opening fronts nearby, via Hezbollah from Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza. Three years after the Second Lebanon War and at the end of a broad process of learning lessons from that conflict, the IDF is quite confident of its ability to deal with Hezbollah. At the same time, it's clear that Israel will be subjected to extensive rocket attacks that can be expected to cover most of the country.

A key question would be Syria's behavior. Israel has a salient interest in having Damascus be no more than a spectator in a confrontation. If the attack on Iran is perceived to have been successful, that is probably how the Syrians will respond.

But an attack on Iran will reopen a decades-old blood feud - and the Iranians have both a long memory and a great deal of patience. With decisions like this looming within a year, it's no wonder that Netanyahu wants to get the Gilad Shalit affair wrapped up.

A decision to attack Iran would mean that the IDF bears central responsibility for resolving the nuclear threat. In the years when Mossad director Meir Dagan held prime minister Ariel Sharon in his thrall (and even more so his successor, Ehud Olmert), the general belief was that the espionage agency could, together with political efforts, contain the Iranian nuclear project. And, indeed, if Western intelligence services had to push back their forecasts repeatedly over the past decade regarding when the project would be completed, it's a safe bet that not all of Iran's delays were due to divine providence. At present, however, no action looms - other than an attack - that is capable of preventing Iran from achieving its goal.

Deep and impressive cooperation exists between the IDF and the Mossad in many arenas. But this is clouded by professional differences and personal friction between the heads of the two organizations. In a few cases, it even looked as though the two were merrily pouring salt on each others' wounds.

<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/1113816.html>

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Yonhap News – South Korea

EDITORIAL

14 September 2009

## **Bilateral Talks**

A U.S. push for bilateral contacts with North Korea is certainly aimed at wooing the recalcitrant country back to multilateral talks for denuclearization. This intention was clearly manifested by remarks by Philip Crowley, the assistant secretary of state for public affairs. ``We are prepared to enter into bilateral discussions with North Korea ... and it's designed to convince North Korea to come back to the six-party process and to take affirmative steps towards denuclearization," he said Friday.

It is hoped that the Washington will successfully push bilateral dialogue with Pyongyang in the context of the six-nation negotiations to ensure the reclusive state's abandonment of its nuclear ambition. The Barack Obama administration has so far maintained a firm position that it would not make direct contacts with the North unless the latter comes back to the multilateral talks. On the other hand, the North has boycotted the six-party talks, especially since the U.N. Security Council imposed tougher sanctions on the Stalinist country for its missile launch and nuclear test early this year.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/news/2009/09/14/0200000000AEN20090914000300320.HTML>

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