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Washington Times

August 29, 2006

Pg. 12

## **Iran Considered 'Banker Of Terror'**

By Associated Press

Iran, a primary source of funding for the militant group Hezbollah, is the "central banker of terror," a top Treasury Department official said yesterday in an interview with the Associated Press.

"Iran is like the elephant in the room, if you will. ... They are the central banker of terror. It is a country that has terrorism as a line item in its budget," said Stuart Levey, the department's undersecretary for terrorism and financial intelligence.

Iran faces a Thursday deadline imposed by the U.N. Security Council to suspend a key part of its nuclear program or face political and economic sanctions.

The key part of Iran's nuclear program deals with the enrichment of uranium, a process that can produce either fuel for a reactor or materials for weapons of mass destruction.

Iran last week responded to a package of Western incentives aimed at getting it to roll back its nuclear program.

Iranian officials said the Islamic country did not agree to halt enrichment -- the key demand -- before engaging in further talks. Other details have not been released.

Iran says its nuclear program is intended solely to generate electricity. The United States and Europe contend it secretly aims to develop nuclear weapons.

Mr. Levey said the United States was working not only to halt Iran's nuclear ambitions but to financially clamp down on its funding of Hezbollah and its role in the recent bloodshed in Lebanon.

He estimated that Iran was providing Hezbollah with more than \$100 million per year in financial support, in addition to military equipment.

<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20060828-105450-2178r.htm>

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Boston Globe  
August 29, 2006

## **Iran Calls US Threat To Pursue Sanctions 'Bullying'**

By Hossein Jasseb, Reuters

TEHRAN -- Iran said yesterday that a US threat to form an independent coalition to impose sanctions if the UN Security Council failed to act to curb Tehran's nuclear program was an insult to the world body.

John Bolton, the US ambassador to the United Nations, has indicated that Washington is prepared to act independently with close allies to freeze Iranian assets and restrict trade if the council did not do so. The Los Angeles Times first reported his comments on Saturday.

Washington has previously called for a swift response if Iran does not heed the Security Council's Thursday deadline to halt uranium enrichment, a process that can make fuel for reactors or material for warheads.

Yesterday, the Bush administration confirmed that it will introduce a Security Council resolution seeking sanctions against Iran.

But Bolton has said Washington is working on a parallel diplomatic track outside the United Nations in case Russia and China do not accept the resolution, according to the Los Angeles Times.

"You don't need Security Council authority to impose sanctions, just as we have," Bolton was quoted as saying.

"These remarks [by Bolton] are an obvious insult to the Security Council," Iranian government spokesman Gholamhossein Elham said at a weekly news conference. "These remarks are just bullying and baseless remarks and show that they [the US] are not competent to be a member of the Security Council."

Iran has shown no sign that it will halt enrichment, a process the West says Iran is using to build atomic bombs. Iran denies the charge, saying it wants only to generate electricity.

"The road that we have taken is irreversible," Iran's chief nuclear negotiator Ali Larijani was quoted by state television as saying. "Iran intends to produce the nuclear fuel that it is going to use."

Analysts say opposition from veto-wielding powers Russia and China, big trade partners of Iran who see no imminent threat to peace from Tehran, could delay a move toward sanctions.

The United States has had broad restrictions on almost all trade with Iran since 1987.

Some political analysts believe a US attempt to further isolate Iran outside the United Nations would show a lack of international support for the UN approach.

Washington could probably count on close allies such as Britain, Australia, and some east European states to join such a coalition, analysts say, but not necessarily on other allies such as Germany, Italy, and Japan, which have a significant commercial stake in Iran and rely on Iranian oil exports.

President Jacques Chirac of France yesterday urged Iran "to send the necessary signals to create the conditions for trust. There is always room for dialogue."

Iran has said it is ready for immediate talks but has refused to suspend enrichment before negotiations start, which was proposed in an incentives offer made by the United States, China, Russia, France, Britain, and Germany.

International Atomic Energy Agency chief Mohamed ElBaradei said he hoped there was room for talks to find a solution that would avert sanctions.

[http://www.boston.com/news/world/middleeast/articles/2006/08/29/iran\\_calls\\_us\\_threat\\_to\\_pursue\\_sanctions\\_bullying/](http://www.boston.com/news/world/middleeast/articles/2006/08/29/iran_calls_us_threat_to_pursue_sanctions_bullying/)

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New York Times  
August 29, 2006  
Pg. 12

# Japanese Company Suspected Of Selling Nuclear Equipment To Iran

By Martin Fackler

TOKYO, Aug. 28 — An investigation into a Japanese manufacturer suspected of exporting sophisticated measuring devices to Libya's former atomic weapons program has increasingly focused on whether the company also sold similar equipment to Iran, a government official said Monday.

The police and regulators have broadened their investigation of the company, the Mitutoyo Corporation, a maker of precision instruments, as evidence has emerged that it may have also sold equipment to Iran for use in making centrifuges to enrich uranium, said an official in the Trade Ministry, which administers export restrictions.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to comment on the investigation, led by the Tokyo police.

On Friday, the police arrested five Mitutoyo officials, including the president, on suspicion of exporting equipment to Libya before that country scrapped its weapons program three years ago.

The police say the equipment was shipped to Libya by Scomi Precision Engineering, a Malaysian company linked to Abdul Qadeer Khan, the Pakistani scientist who later confessed to selling nuclear technology. The increasing focus on Iran has shed light on the clandestine routes it has used to obtain nuclear-related technology to advance its enrichment program. Iran is in a standoff with the United Nations over the program, which Iran says will create fuel to generate power, but which the United States and others fear will be used to build nuclear weapons.

In April, Iran disclosed that it was trying to build more advanced and powerful centrifuges known as model P-2, which would speed its enrichment program. It is unclear whether the Japanese equipment has been used by Iran to develop the those centrifuges.

The Trade Ministry official said the police believe the shipments went to Iran via a small, unlisted Tokyo-based trading company called Seian, whose offices the police also raided on Friday. A Seian employee reached by telephone would not answer questions, but a description of the company provided by Teikoku Databank, a research company, listed the president as Ahmad Eftekhari Masumi, an Iranian name.

The Trade Ministry official refused to provide further details. But Japanese news reports, apparently based on briefings by the police exclusively to major local news media, say the police believe Mitutoyo has exported technology to Iran at least twice in the last several years, most recently four years ago.

The reports said the police were investigating whether Mitutoyo altered software used in its measuring devices to disguise it as less-advanced software that was subject to looser export restrictions.

The reports said Mitutoyo first came under scrutiny in 2003 when at least one of its measuring devices was discovered in Libya after that country relinquished its weapons program.

A spokesman at Mitutoyo, which is based in Kawasaki, in central Japan, would not comment on the reports of exports to Iran or software alterations.

*Makiko Inoue contributed reporting for this article.*

[http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/29/world/asia/29japan.html?\\_r=1&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/29/world/asia/29japan.html?_r=1&oref=slogin)

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Washington Times

August 29, 2006

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## Nation 'On Standby' For Nuclear Test

SEOUL -- North Korea has facilities on standby to test a nuclear explosion and could do so at any time, the chief of South Korea's main spy agency said yesterday, according to a lawmaker and a government official.

"Facilities for a nuclear test are always on standby, and considering the North's capability, the possibility [of a test] is always open," spy agency chief Kim Seung-kyu was quoted as telling a closed meeting of the parliamentary intelligence committee.

However, Mr. Kim said there is no sign that a test is imminent.

<http://www.washtimes.com/world/worldscene.htm>

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Washington Times

August 30, 2006

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## South Korea Quake Center Watches North

By Burt Herman, Associated Press

DAEJEON, South Korea -- A normally unburdened South Korean earthquake center has become the front line of the world's vigil for North Korea's first nuclear test, monitoring the peninsula's geological pulse with seismic sensors and sound detectors.

The Korea Earthquake Research Center recently was put on 24-hour watch as fears grew about a test. The Defense Ministry sent soldiers to scrutinize the center's wall of video screens, which display skittering graphs of data from some 90 seismic stations across South Korea. Alert systems have been installed to link government institutions with the earthquake center 100 miles south of Seoul.

U.S. and Japanese press this month reported that intelligence agencies were monitoring suspicious activity at a suspected North Korean underground nuclear-test site, detecting moving vehicles and cables that could be used to connect the test site to aboveground diagnostic equipment.

Many specialists think the North has enough radioactive material to make at least a half-dozen bombs. The North has claimed it has nuclear weapons, but no test proving it has been detected.

On Monday, the head of South Korea's intelligence agency, Kim Seung-kyu, said the North was ready to test a nuclear device at any time, but there was no direct sign that the communist nation was preparing a detonation. Still, the South Korean center remains on the lookout using two methods: infrasound and seismic waves.

The most reliable means of confirming a nuclear test would be from infrasound -- ultralow noises from an explosion below the range of human hearing.

Such infrasound can travel up to 620 miles, depending on wind direction, and would provide a relatively quick indication of a nuclear test, said Chi Heon-cheol, director of the earthquake center at the Korea Institute of Geoscience and Mineral Resources in Daejeon.

In the demilitarized zone dividing the Koreas, the center has deployed four infrasound arrays with tubes that detect minute changes in air pressure.

The network was completed several years ago and can also be used to detect other North Korean activity, such as the movement of tanks, Mr. Chi noted.

But even a blast as powerful as a nuclear explosion could be difficult to immediately confirm if the North thoroughly seals the underground site, he said.

So the center can also measure seismic tremors, although they would be less conclusive, he said. A North Korean nuclear explosion would likely generate the force of an earthquake measuring at least magnitude 4.2 and as strong as magnitude 5.0, he said.

The United States also is expected to be watching for any signs of a test with satellites and reconnaissance aircraft, such as high-flying U-2 spy planes that regularly draw the North's ire for flying near its territory.

The United States, China, Japan, Russia and South Korea have tried to persuade the North to abandon its nuclear program at six-party negotiations that have been on hold since November. The issue has taken on new urgency after Pyongyang raised tensions in early July by test-firing seven missiles over international objections.

<http://www.washtimes.com/world/20060830-120158-5259r.htm>

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Washington Post

August 30, 2006

Pg. 12

## Iran Enriching More Uranium

*U.S. Officials View the Act as Defiant As Deadline to Suspend Program Nears*

By Dafna Linzer, Washington Post Staff Writer

Iranian nuclear specialists have begun enriching a new batch of uranium in an apparent act of defiance just days ahead of a U.N. Security Council deadline for Tehran to stop such work or face the prospect of economic sanctions, officials in Washington and European capitals who have been monitoring Iran's efforts said yesterday.

Inspectors with the International Atomic Energy Agency plan to formally disclose the new enrichment work, as well as additional Iranian nuclear advances, in a report due out tomorrow, according to the officials, some of whom spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The officials stressed that the Iranians are working at a slow pace with small quantities of uranium, and that they are enriching the material to an extremely low level that could not be used for nuclear weapons. Still, it is unlikely that the Iranians will stop the work in time to meet the Security Council's deadline.

For three years, Iran and the United States have publicly sparred over a nuclear program that Tehran says it built to produce energy but which the Bush administration believes is a cover for nuclear weapons work. IAEA inspectors have been trying, without success, to determine the true nature of the program, which Iran kept secret for 18 years. Last month, the Security Council ordered Iran to shutter its nuclear facilities by Aug. 31 and cooperate with inspectors or face consequences. If Iran complied, U.S. officials said they were prepared to join talks on Iran's nuclear program and the possibility of future cooperation. But, yesterday, senior Bush administration officials said they are determined to impose sanctions against the Tehran government if it fails to comply, even though Russia and other nations seem reluctant to participate.

"We've seen no indication that Iran intends to comply with the U.N. Security Council's condition of suspending its nuclear program," Undersecretary of State R. Nicholas Burns, the administration's lead diplomat on the Iran issue, said in an interview. "Should it not comply by Thursday, and should the IAEA report confirm Iran's continued efforts to enrich uranium, the U.S. will move to begin sanctions discussion at the United Nations, and we expect a sanctions resolution to be passed," he said.

Despite comments over the weekend from senior Russian officials that it is too early for sanctions, Burns said the administration would press for the commitments that it believes Moscow and others made when they passed the deadline resolution in July.

Burns said he will meet his European, Chinese and Russian counterparts next week in Berlin, and that he expects sanctions to be in place by the end of September.

But other officials seemed less certain that the Bush administration could persuade the U.N. Security Council to approve or even enforce sanctions against one of the world's major oil exporters.

"We might take another shot at a resolution that puts sanctions forward. The exact nature of that and whether it will require additional steps or not, you know, we'll just have to wait and see," State Department spokesman Tom Casey said yesterday. John R. Bolton, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, also indicated that the administration may work outside the council.

European officials appeared less eager to discuss sanctions and were arranging to meet later this week in Europe with Iran's chief nuclear negotiator, Ali Larijani. The Iranians put forth what they said was a new proposal last week, and said they are eager for talks with the United States and its allies but will not comply with the resolution as a precondition for those discussions.

At the United Nations, Britain's ambassador said that the Iran situation will not come up for discussion again until mid-September. In France, Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy said he hopes sanctions can be averted.

"But Iran has less than a week to comply with the resolution. We shall make the most of the remaining time to have more detailed discussions regarding its response," he told reporters.

Privately, two senior administration officials said that if Russia or China balked at sanctions now, the United States would push a backup plan to restrict Iran's nuclear industry, freeze the assets of key members of the Tehran government, and prevent them from traveling abroad. The measures would be imposed collectively by the European Union and possibly Japan. Some hoped that the IAEA report would encourage nations to work harder on the Iran issue.

"A tough report puts the focus back on Iran, which has broken rules and has failed to cooperate, and takes it away from this perception that the U.S. is just bullying Iran," said George Perkovich, vice president at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "An IAEA report that calls it like it is makes it hard for countries to walk away from the issue because it will be clear that it isn't getting better."

Several times since international pressure began to build against Iran's nuclear program in 2003, Tehran has rushed to complete small projects immediately ahead of deadlines, calculating that technical achievements would give it a tactical advantage during negotiations.

Officials familiar with the inspectors' summer findings said they will report that Iran has produced several kilograms of low-enriched uranium and as much as 145 tons of converted uranium in the past year. Iran's two main nuclear facilities, the IAEA's most heavily monitored in the world, are outfitted with dozens of cameras pointed at every piece of equipment and barrel that contains uranium.

Inspectors continue to visit certain sites as well, but Iran ended voluntary cooperation with the agency several months ago and has threatened to end it entirely if the Security Council imposes sanctions.

Much of what is known by U.S. intelligence about Iran's nuclear program comes from the inspectors. Current intelligence assessments predict that Iran could have a nuclear weapon within a decade if it vastly improves its capabilities.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/08/29/AR2006082901605.html>

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New York Times  
August 30, 2006

## Iranian President Meets Press And Is Challenged

By Michael Slackman

TEHRAN, Aug. 29 — President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad meant to use Tuesday to focus attention on his challenge to the president of the United States: a face-off in a live televised debate.

But at a freewheeling two-hour news conference, Mr. Ahmadinejad also found himself challenged by local reporters who questioned the government's economic program and its tolerance of a critical press.

The marathon question-and-answer session offered a window into one of the many contradictions of Iranian politics and governance: even as the government grows more authoritarian, it is openly criticized and challenged on its performance.

This was Mr. Ahmadinejad's fourth news conference since taking office a year ago, and it came just three days before a deadline set by the United Nations Security Council for Iran to suspend its enrichment of uranium.

The president used the opportunity to continue Iran's defiant posture toward the West — the United States and Britain in particular. He made it clear that Iran would not meet the deadline and that it would risk sanctions.

"I announce that I am fully prepared to debate world and international issues with George Bush in a televised debate," he said in his prepared remarks. "Of course, only under the conditions that this debate is broadcast live and without censors, especially for the nation of U.S."

Although the White House immediately dismissed the challenge as a diversion, Mr. Ahmadinejad's remarks appeared intended to further three objectives: to position Iran as taking the moral high ground by making the United States look like the party unwilling to talk; to drive a wedge between the United States and Britain on one side and France and Germany on the other; and to reiterate Iran's determined refusal to give up its enrichment program.

"Peaceful nuclear energy is the right of the Iranian nation," he said, repeating what has become a mantra of his administration. "The Iranian nation has chosen that based upon international regulations, it wants to use it, and no one can stop it."

The news conference veered off into an unruly question-and-answer session, with reporters praising the president, questioning him and some jumping from their seats demanding that their questions be taken. The president politely admonished one reporter, saying he needed to behave better.

One reporter said he had no question but wanted to recite poetry.

A reporter for a small newspaper called The Path of the People stood to ask a question and said: "I was hoping when you arrived I would share my pain with you. Now I have no pain in my heart, only happiness."

But as the conference continued, Mr. Ahmadinejad found himself challenged on several issues of local importance, most focusing on the economy or on efforts to silence criticism of his government in the press.

One reporter said the government's decision to spend billions of dollars to subsidize gasoline amounted to welfare for the rich, an assertion the president disputed. Another said that although the president claimed to support the press, his spokesman sought to have the judiciary investigate critical reporters.

"This contradicts what you said," the reporter said into the microphone as Mr. Ahmadinejad listened. The same reporter said the president's interior minister had denied permits to 14 groups wanting to hold demonstrations.

The president responded quickly, dismissing the complaints, and he tried to move on. But the challenges kept coming — not one after the other, but more consistently as the confidence in the room seemed to grow.

"Food is very expensive to buy," said Nasser Alaghbandan, a reporter with the Tehran daily Jam-e-Jam, adding that whenever anyone asked the government spokesman about that issue he responded by citing government sticker prices, not actual prices.

At first Mr. Ahmadinejad responded with a quip, saying maybe the reporter should go shopping at the same store as his spokesman. He eventually said the rate of inflation was actually lower since he took office, but acknowledged that more needed to be done to bring down some specific costs, especially housing.

"I am not happy it increased," he said of the cost of housing.

As the news conference demonstrated, Iran's leadership faces two primary challenges simultaneously, its nuclear program and its economy. On the nuclear front the president was resolute. On the economy, the issue that was the core of his campaign, he cited some accomplishments but asked for patience and more time.

"I did not expect in 10, 11, 12 months, I did not expect the economic programs of the government would be tangible everywhere," he said, adding that they had been felt by some people.

The president, in his now trademark cream-colored suit and open collar with no tie, entered the packed conference hall from a side door. He climbed up onto a platform and briefly held his right hand over his head in a sort of hero's greeting to the crowd.



He smiled through much of the conference, joked with questioners, and bobbed and weaved around many questions. He avoided answering directly when asked if Iran would be willing to take steps to prove that it was not after a nuclear weapons program, or if it would be willing to have face-to-face talks with the United States. But Mr. Ahmadinejad did give some insight into sometimes ambiguous meaning of some of his statements. On Saturday the president said, "We are not a threat for any country, even the Zionist regime that is the enemy of the countries in the region."

A reporter asked if that represented a change in position from his earlier call for Israel to be removed from the region. He replied by saying that swatting a baby's hand to stop it from putting its fingers in a fire is not a threat.

"We are a peaceful country," he said, "but recognize legitimate defense as our legal right."

Iranian officials have also said they will be willing to hold talks on all issues regarding their nuclear program, so long as there are no preconditions. Asked if that meant that the government would be willing to consider, in the course of negotiations, suspending uranium enrichment, the president said: "We are ready to negotiate. They can put any question to us. Our response will be based on the inalienable rights of Iran."

On the topic of debating his American counterpart, Mr. Ahmadinejad's objective seemed as clear as when he sent Mr. Bush a letter last spring asking him to re-examine his foreign policies in the light of his Christian values.

While the White House dismissed the letter, and many of Iran's own intellectuals scoffed at it, the Iranian president won points among his growing legion of followers in the region. Political analysts said he was hoping for the same response with the debate proposal.

"He is saying we want to talk, but Bush is refusing," said Mustafa el-Labbad, an expert in Iranian affairs based in Cairo. "He wants to embarrass him by saying, 'We are willing to negotiate, but he is refusing.'"

[http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/30/world/middleeast/30iran.html?\\_r=1&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/30/world/middleeast/30iran.html?_r=1&oref=slogin)

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Washington Post

August 30, 2006

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## **Carter Agrees To Hold Talks With Khatami**

*Ex-President of Iran to Visit U.S. Amid Tensions Over Tehran's Nuclear Program*

By Robin Wright, Washington Post Staff Writer

For an event that would turn a page in American history, former president Jimmy Carter has agreed in principle to host former Iranian president Mohammad Khatami for talks during his visit to the United States starting this week. Carter's term as president was dominated by the rupture in relations after the 1979 Iranian revolution and the takeover of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, where 52 Americans were held hostage for 444 days until the day he left office.

Iranians made the overture for the meeting, and the Carter Center in Atlanta is working on the possible timing, said Phil Wise, the former president's aide.

"President Carter, in his role since leaving the White House, has made his office and services and center available to basically anybody who wants to talk. He believes that it is much better to be talking to people who you have problems with than not to, and that's the approach he takes now," Wise said. "I can confirm that President Carter is open to a meeting if the former president of Iran would like to have one."

Despite mounting tensions between Washington and Tehran over the latter's nuclear program, the Bush administration issued a visa for Khatami yesterday, as well as for about a dozen family and staff members, for a visit lasting about two weeks, the State Department confirmed. Khatami is expected to arrive in the United States tomorrow.

Khatami, a reformer who served as president from 1997 to 2005, is scheduled to speak at the Washington National Cathedral on Sept. 7. His schedule may include speeches at the University of Virginia and to an Islamic group in Chicago. He may also pay a private visit to Thomas Jefferson's home at Monticello, according to sources familiar with his trip. He will begin his visit in New York at a U.N. conference on the dialogue of civilizations.

The White House said yesterday that Khatami had been invited by private organizations and is not part of the current Iranian government.

"Mr. Khatami is free to meet with who he chooses and is able to speak freely in the United States -- the very freedoms that do not exist in Iran," a White House official said on the condition of anonymity.

"We expect that Khatami will face tough questions from his audience in the United States about the past and present behavior of the Iranian regime, especially with respect to human rights violations that occurred during his presidency," the official added.

Talks between Carter and Khatami, if they materialize, would be politically poignant.

"Carter, who has every reason to be angry about the way in which the Iranian revolution undid his presidency over the hostage affair, is willing to meet, with no hesitation, a person who was president of the Islamic republic and who has never disavowed Ayatollah Khomeini's actions when he was supreme leader," said William Quandt, a national security staffer in charge of the Middle East during the Carter administration.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/08/29/AR2006082901412.html>

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Washington Post

August 30, 2006

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## Ahmadinejad's High-Stakes Game

By David Ignatius

TEHRAN -- Drivers here play a high-risk game of chicken at every intersection. They barge into the frantic stream of traffic and you think there's going to be a crash for sure. But at the last moment someone usually gives way, and a collision is avoided.

Watching President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad at a news conference here Tuesday, I had the same mesmerizing anxiety as a passenger in a Tehran taxi. He has moved boldly -- recklessly, it seems to Americans -- into the international traffic flow. He keeps revving his motor, and it looks as if he and the West might be heading for a dangerous crackup over Iran's nuclear program. Will there be a collision, or will leaders produce a compromise at the final instant? Normally, drivers here stop in time -- except when they don't.

"The feeling here is that Iran will go to the threshold of a serious crisis, and the government will find a solution," says Kayhan Barzegar, a professor of international relations here. "It's a cultural matter to wait until the last minute." The unpredictable factor in this game of brinkmanship is Ahmadinejad. In another defiant move, he laid out a radical vision of an Iranian new world order. The U.N. Security Council is an outdated relic of the post-World War II era and should be abandoned, he said. On the nuclear issue, "no one can stop us." He challenged President Bush to a live debate and seemed certain he would come out the winner.

Seeing Ahmadinejad up close, you appreciate the fact that he is a formidable politician. He played the roomful of 150 journalists like a master performer. He has the look of a bantamweight fighter -- compact and agile, punching well above his weight. He's quick on his feet, answering a broad range of questions, including some critical ones about the Iranian economy, but he came away unscratched. He speaks more softly than you'd expect, making jokes and, on this occasion, avoiding some of his usual anti-Israel bombast. But the hard edge is never far away. His eyes can twinkle one moment and then suddenly become dark as night. My strongest feeling at the end of his performance was: He may be cocky and eccentric, but don't underestimate him.

With a Thursday deadline looming on the nuclear issue, you might expect that Tehran would feel like a garrison town. But it's surprisingly relaxed, and I think that's because most Iranians expect the crisis will be defused somehow. The regime has been putting on a show of defiance as the U.N. deadline approaches, shooting off new missiles in Persian Gulf war games, opening a new heavy-water reactor and festooning downtown streets with banners of Lebanon's Hezbollah leader, Hasan Nasrallah. But this isn't a militarized country, and it certainly isn't eager for confrontation with America.

"I don't think anyone can think of a way to resolve problems between the U.S. and Iran other than negotiations," says Ali Ahmadi, a 28-year-old writer at the opposition newspaper Sharq. Though he's critical of Ahmadinejad, he describes the technical achievements of Iran's nuclear program as "really satisfying," and he sums up Iran's dilemma this way: "We are watching how much it's worth to continue the nuclear program -- its price. I can see there is this ambivalence, this concern. Because people realize this choice can bring about certain harsh consequences."

Perhaps the most interesting fact of life in Tehran this week is that you can't find anyone who is opposed in principle to dialogue with the United States. Even a few months ago, that topic was almost taboo, but now here's

Ahmadinejad himself calling for a public debate with Bush. "The golden key to being popular here is to normalize relations with the U.S.," says Shahriar Khateri, a former member of the Revolutionary Guards who is now a doctor and a participant in a joint project with American scientists to study the effects of chemical weapons.

Iranians are patient people, and they seem to expect this crisis will play out a while longer. They don't want sanctions, but people I talked to don't seem very worried about them, either. Iranians have been living under some form of sanctions for several decades, and they've learned how to make their own cars, steel and pharmaceuticals -- and now missiles and nuclear reactors.

I come back to the fierce jockeying of Tehran's traffic jams. If Ahmadinejad behaves like most local drivers, he will go as far and fast as he can. It's only when the fender is about to be crushed that he will put on the brake. That's why this crisis is so dangerous -- it's easy to miscalculate when nobody knows the rules of the road.



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New York Times

August 31, 2006

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## **U.S. Drafting Sanctions As Iran Ignores Deadline**

By Helene Cooper and David E. Sanger

WASHINGTON, Aug. 30 — With Iran defying a Thursday deadline to halt production of nuclear fuel, the United States and three European allies are assembling a list of sanctions they would seek in the United Nations Security Council, beginning with restrictions on imports of nuclear-related equipment and material.

Eventually, punitive measures might expand to restrict travel by Iran's leaders and limit the country's access to global financial markets, according to diplomatic officials involved in the talks who spoke only on condition of anonymity.

Aside from the effort in the Council, the Bush administration is also seeking to persuade European financial institutions to end new lending to Iran. Some Swiss banks have already quietly agreed to limit their lending, American officials say.

Even as an agreement shapes up among the United States, Britain, France and Germany, the push for sanctions faces a high hurdle in the Council, given Russia and China's possession of veto power and their opposition to discussion of serious punishment for Iran.

In addition, the sanctions effort may also be hampered by a report to be issued Thursday by the International Atomic Energy Agency, in which inspectors will describe only slow progress by Iran in enriching uranium.

The report, according to diplomats familiar with its contents, will describe how Iran has resumed producing small amounts of enriched uranium since temporarily stopping in the spring, but has not increased the rate of production. Furthermore, the report is expected to say that the purity of the uranium enrichment would not be high enough for use in nuclear weapons, but only for power plants. Iran has long insisted that its program is for peaceful purposes only.

"The big question is why they appear to be moving so slowly," said one European official who has been involved in monitoring Iran's progress. One explanation, the official said, is that the Iranians have not wanted to escalate tensions by appearing to be racing ahead in the production of uranium.

Alternative explanations, offered by some American officials, are that the country's scientists have run into technical problems or that they are hiding some facilities. The mystery has been deepened by Iran's recent restrictions on where international inspectors can roam, and its refusal to allow them to see facilities that Iran has not declared to be related to its nuclear program.

The atomic agency's report is also expected to detail questions that Iran has failed to answer about suspected nuclear activities that it has declined to show to international inspectors.

European and American officials say, for example, that Iran has refused to elaborate on President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's claim earlier this year that the country has an active research project under way using an advanced type of enrichment centrifuge that it obtained from the Pakistani nuclear scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan.

In an interview, R. Nicholas Burns, the under secretary of state for political affairs, said that when the agency's report comes out on Thursday the American argument will focus on Iran's official refusal this month to stop enriching uranium despite an international ultimatum.

"The only criterion that matters is whether they met the conditions that the Security Council said they had to meet," he said. "And they haven't done it."

The list of proposed sanctions, according to American and European officials, would begin with low-impact measures like an embargo on the sale of nuclear-related goods to Iran, and the freezing of overseas assets and a ban on travel for Iranian officials directly involved in the nuclear program.

American sales to Iran have been restricted ever since the Iran hostage crisis. But European and Russian companies have sold technology for Iran's budding civilian nuclear program, and American officials said Wednesday that it was unclear whether the sanctions would force Russia to stop helping Iran complete its nuclear reactor at Bushehr. The Bushehr project is worth hundreds of millions of dollars to Russia, and the government of President Vladimir V. Putin is expected to argue that sanctions should not affect civilian projects that are already under way. "Stopping Bushehr would be the biggest impact of a nuclear-related sanction," said Robert J. Einhorn, a senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies and former assistant secretary of state for nonproliferation under President Bill Clinton.

American officials expect the debate within the Council to take weeks and say it could extend through the opening of the United Nations General Assembly in mid-September, an event that will include a speech by President Bush and meetings with other heads of state. The administration is preparing to use those meetings to press for the sanctions resolution, just as it used the same meeting four years ago to begin to build its case for demands against Iraq.

But Russia and China, among other countries, are concerned about any American-led escalation of a confrontation. Unlike the Bush administration's effort four years ago, however, American officials appear to be shying from using intelligence information to build their case. Instead, they are citing Mr. Ahmadinejad's public statements and Iran's refusal to comply with the Council resolution passed in July, with support from Russia and China, that demanded full suspension of enrichment by Aug. 31.

"Russia and China can't claim they didn't agree to impose some nonmilitary sanctions" if Iran refused to comply, Mr. Einhorn noted. American officials said Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice had received assurances in June that Russia would, at a minimum, sign on to a first phase of weak sanctions.

But it is unclear whether Russia or China will sign on to sanctions if they believe that commits them to voting in favor of further pressure.

Yet that is exactly the American strategy, as described by administration and European officials. If Iran still has not suspended uranium enrichment in a few weeks, the sanctions proposed by the United States and Europe would progress to a broader travel ban and freezing of assets for government members, a senior administration official said. Continued noncompliance would bring a ratcheting up of sanctions to include restrictions on commercial flights and on World Bank loans.

Iran has hinted at various times in recent months that it would respond to sanctions with actions of its own, from cutting oil production to threatening to withdraw from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, as North Korea did. Other American officials said they feared that sanctions could prompt Iran to spur the insurgency in Iraq or sponsor terrorism by Hezbollah. But Mr. Burns said on Wednesday, "We're not going to be intimidated by the Iranians." He is expected to travel to Berlin next week to begin work on drafting a Security Council resolution, administration officials said.

But despite the private assurances American officials say they have received, the public comments of senior Russian and Chinese officials have remained ambiguous. Russia's defense minister said last Friday that it was premature to consider punitive actions against Iran, adding that the issue was not "so urgent" that the Council should consider sanctions and expressing doubt that they would work in any case.

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## **U.S. Military Sees Iran's Nuke Bomb 5 Years Away**

By Rowan Scarborough, The Washington Times

The U.S. military is operating under the assumption that Iran is five to eight years away from being able to build its first nuclear weapon, a time span that explains a general lack of urgency within the Bush administration to use air strikes to disable Tehran's atomic program.

Defense sources familiar with discussions of senior military commanders say the five- to eight-year projection has been discussed inside the Pentagon, which is updating its war plan for Iran. The time frame is generally in line with last year's intelligence community estimate that Iran could have the capability to produce a nuclear weapon by the beginning or middle of the next decade.

But the sources said that while the five-year window provides President Bush additional time to decide on whether to launch military strikes, they suspect it underestimates Iran's determination to build a bomb as quickly as possible. Iran faces a United Nations Security Council deadline today to stop enriching uranium or face economic sanctions. Advocates of stopping Iran's nuclear ambitions point to gaps in what the U.S. intelligence community really knows about Iran's secretive process. They also point to the fact that Iraq was much closer to building the bomb than the U.S. thought in 1991, when Operation Desert Storm air strikes destroyed much of Baghdad's atomic capability. Some of this impatience was revealed in a bipartisan report Aug. 23 from the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. The report, which dealt with Iran's support for terrorism and quest for weapons of mass destruction, chastised the U.S. intelligence community for not devoting sufficient resources to Tehran. It also indirectly criticized current intelligence reporting on Iran as too timid.

"An important dimension of the detection of Iran's WMD program is how intelligence analysts use intelligence to characterize these programs in their analysis," the report said. "Intelligence community managers and analysts must provide their best analytic judgments about Iranian WMD programs and not shy away from provocative conclusions or bury disagreements in consensus assessments."

Concerning intelligence resources for Iran, the report said, "The national security community must dedicate the personnel and resources necessary to better assess Iran's plans, capabilities and intentions, and the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) must identify, establish, and report on intelligence goals and performance metrics to measure progress on critical fronts."

Retired Air Force Lt. Gen. Thomas McInerney, a prominent proponent in Washington of air strikes against Iran, said that whether the estimate is five years or 10 years, the time span instills complacency in war planning. He said that Mr. Bush is now following the State Department's diplomatic path, without a clear policy.

"Everyone is in the Jergens lotion mode -- 'woe is me.' Wringing our hands," the former fighter pilot said.

Gen. McInerney advocates using B-2 stealth bombers, cruise missiles and jet fighters to conduct a one- or two-day bombing campaign to take out Iran's air defenses, military facilities and about 40 nuclear targets, which includes a Russian-built reactor and an enrichment plant.

The Washington Times has previously reported that Israel has drafted plans for air strikes using long-range versions of the F-15 and F-16 fighters. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has often threatened to destroy Israel, which is within range of Iran's Shahab-3 ballistic missile.

The Times also reported that U.S. Central Command is updating a target list for Iran.

The House report said Iran owns the largest ballistic missile arsenal in the Middle East, and is also working on a missile re-entry vehicle that could carry a nuclear warhead.

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