

U.N. agrees to Iran's nuclear weapons program

Proposed deal for policing Iranian enrichment freeze prohibits reprocessing plutonium

BY GEORGE JAHN
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

VIENNA, Austria — The U.N. nuclear agency agreed Monday on a plan for policing Iran's nuclear programs designed to avoid a showdown at the United Nations. But Iran's representative immediately raised questions about the wording of the pact, and the United States said it retained the right to take the case to the U.N. Security Council on its own.

U.S. chief delegate Jackie Sanders listed more than a dozen open questions about Iran's past nuclear activities still before the International Atomic Energy Agency, despite a nearly two-year investigation.

"This makes it clear that the IAEA cannot ... offer the necessary assurances that Iran is not attempting to produce nuclear material for weapons," she said.

Sanders spoke shortly after the board passed a toned-down resolution authorizing IAEA head Mohamed ElBaradei to monitor Iran's commitment to freeze uranium enrichment activities that can produce either low-grade nuclear fuel or the raw material for atomic weapons.

The issue of what's included in the suspension of activities had dominated the meeting since it opened Thursday, with the Iranian insistence on exempting some equipment forcing the meeting to continue Monday, after a weekend adjournment.

The United States — which has labeled Iran part of an "axis of evil" with North Korea and prewar Iraq — wants the Islamic Republic referred to the Security Council, where it could face sanctions for allegedly

violating the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

"We believe Iran's nuclear weapons program poses a growing threat to international peace and security," Sanders said, alluding to the possibility of a unilateral U.S. push. "Any member of the United Nations may bring to the attention of the Security Council any situation that might endanger the maintenance of international peace and security."

White House press secretary Scott McClellan urged vigilance, telling reporters in Washington "the implementation and verification of the agreement is critical."

France, Germany and Britain, who negotiated a Nov. 7 agreement with Iran on the suspension, came to the meeting saying the deal meant that all equipment used for enrichment must be at a standstill. Iran, which insists its nuclear program is peaceful, had demanded it be allowed to run 20 centrifuges for research.

Seeking to avoid tough measures by the board that could have led to referral to the Security Council, Iran delivered a letter to the agency Sunday pledging "not to conduct any testing with these sets of components."

Hossein Mousavian, the chief Iranian delegate to the meeting said the commitment meant "we are not going to introduce material or any gas" into the centrifuges — a pledge that seemed to fall short of the European demands.

Later, Iranian delegate Cyrus Nasseri appeared to move closer to the European interpretation, telling reporters Iran "will not" run even empty centrifuges.

The enrichment process involves introducing uranium hexafluoride gas into centrifuges that spin them to low-level nuclear fuel or highly enriched uranium used in the core of nuclear warheads.

Delegates to the meeting, including senior diplomats with nuclear expertise, suggested the contradictory language was meant to ease fears among Iranian hard-liners that Tehran gave up too much in exchange for a resolution that didn't even include an indirect mention of possible Security Council referral.

That lack of a "trigger mechanism" beginning the referral process in case of violations disappointed the United States, which insists Iran is trying to make nuclear weapons.

The deal with the Europeans commits the Iranians to the freeze only during negotiations with France, Germany and Britain on economic, political and technological aid from the 25-nation European Union. Those talks are set to start in mid-December.

But ElBaradei urged Iran to keep suspension in place as long as possible. That, he said, was needed "to mitigate the confidence deficit" in Iran, its record of past clandestine activities and continued reluctance to fully cooperate with an agency probe of its nuclear agenda.

The proposed deal also commits Iran to a pledge not to reprocess plutonium, which it would be able to do in several years' time, once it completes work on a heavy-water reactor in the city of Arak.

With the EU deal envisaging a light-water reactor for Iran, from which extraction of weapons-grade nuclear material is difficult, diplomats said the Europeans hoped Iran would not complete its heavy-water facility.

Iran's nuclear history

The International Atomic Energy Agency passed a toned-down resolution Monday on policing Iran's vow to freeze all programs linked to uranium enrichment.

Key events since the U.S. learned of Iranian facilities in mid-2002

U.S. learned of two secret Iranian nuclear facilities.

U.S. pressure culminated in U.N. resolution.

Iran admitted enriching uranium for electricity.

Iran agreed to inspections.

Iran learned it could build more centrifuges.

TURKMENISTAN

Known Iranian nuclear facilities

Tehran
Research reactors

Arak
Heavy water production

Natanz
Uranium enrichment

Saghand
Uranium mines

Isfahan
Research reactors, uranium enrichment

Bushehr
Light water reactor under construction

0 200 mi
0 200 km

Western diplomats said IAEA found Pakistani enriched uranium in Iran. IAEA called for full suspension of all enrichment-related activities after Iran admitted converting a few tons into gas.

2002	2003	2004
A S O N D J F M A M J J A S O N D	A S O N D J F M A M J J A S O N D	A S O N D J F M A M J J A S O N D
IAEA visited Natanz; learned Iran could build more centrifuges.	IAEA deemed uranium samples from Iran pure enough to use in weapons.	Iran announced it has frozen tons of raw uranium. IAEA will monitor.

SOURCES: Nuclear Threat Initiative; AP reports

AP

Congo prepares to protect eastern Rwanda border

Unconfirmed reports of armed Rwandan troops crossing into Congo raise fears of reigniting war

BY EDDY ISANGO
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

KINSHASA, Congo — Congo intends to send 10,000 reinforcements toward its eastern border with Rwanda, a presidential spokesman said Monday, after credible reports that thousands of Rwandan troops crossed into its territory, raising fears of reigniting a devastating five-year regional war.

A Western diplomat said Monday that thousands of Rwandan troops moved into the remote forested hills of east Congo — an account supported by park rangers and local chiefs near the border of the two neighbors and wartime enemies.

Rwanda refused to confirm or deny the reported incursion, and the U.N. mission in Congo said U.N. helicopter patrols and other sorties had failed to turn up any immediate sign of Rwandan troops.

The reports of a Rwandan incursion come just days after Rwanda threatened to send its forces into

eastern Congo to hunt down Rwandan Hutu rebels. Rwanda argued that a 5-month-old U.N.-led disarmament campaign there had failed to act aggressively enough.

In Kinshasa, Congo's capital, President Laurent Kabila told international diplomats he would send reinforcements toward the border to "assure the security of the civilian population and to contain the Rwandan aggression," presidential spokesman Kudura Kasango said.

Kasango and other Congolese authorities said they had received no official report of any Rwandan incursion.

The Western diplomat, however, citing his embassy's own sources, said "it is certain" that thousands of Rwandan forces had moved into territory north of Congo's main eastern city, Goma, since Friday.

The diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity, cited what he said were accounts to his embassy from its

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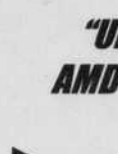


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