

Iranian Nuclear Update: Rice warns Tehran of 'punitive measures', w/Video

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U.S. urges Iran to accept nuclear deal

Rice warns Tehran of 'punitive measures'
By Agence France Presse (AFP)
Compiled by Daily Star staff
Tuesday, July 22, 2008

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was due to meet Arab allies in the United Arab Emirates on Monday after warning Iran of "punitive measures" if it does not respond seriously in two weeks to an international incentive to freeze sensitive nuclear work. Meanwhile, the White House on Monday signaled that it expected Iran to reject a US-backed incentives package to end sensitive nuclear work and warned Tehran may therefore face additional sanctions.

"It is the position of the P5-plus-one that Iran should suspend its uranium enrichment, that we provided a very generous incentives package that they apparently are going to miss an opportunity to accept," said spokeswoman Dana Perino, referring to the five permanent UN Security Council members and Germany.

Rice "agreed with the other members to allow Iran to have two more weeks but after that I think that Iran could be looking at, is possibly looking at, additional sanctions," she said.

Rice sought to tighten the screws on Tehran after taking the unprecedented step of sending a top aide to meet Iran's chief negotiator Saeed Jalili at international talks in Geneva on Saturday. Rice, who arrived in Abu Dhabi at the start of an Asian tour, was due to be briefed on the talks by Undersecretary of State William Burns on the talks.

The United States had hitherto refused to sit with Iran on nuclear talks until it stopped enriching uranium.

The meeting sent a "very strong message to the Iranians that they can't go and stall ... and that they have to make a decision," Rice told reporters on her way to the UAE capital.

"It clarifies Iran's choices and we will see what Iran does in two weeks. But I think the diplomatic process now has a kind of new energy in it."

Six world powers have offered to start pre-negotiations during which Tehran would add no more uranium-enriching centrifuges and in return face no further sanctions - the so-called "freeze-for-freeze" approach.

"We expected to hear an answer from the Iranians, but as has been the case so many times with the Iranians what came through was not serious," Rice said, accusing Tehran of "small talk" and "meandering."

Jalili and EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana called their talks "constructive," but Solana lamented that Tehran had not given a final response to proposed incentives for it to abandon its nuclear programme.

Jalili insisted on Monday that the issue of halting enrichment had not even been raised.

But Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Reza Sheikh Attar said that Tehran "will respond to every positive step of Washington with a similar response."

Rice said diplomacy offered the possibility of both negotiations and the "possibility of punitive measures."

"And we are in the strongest possible position to demonstrate that if Iran doesn't act, then it's time to go back to that track."

She was referring to the UN Security Council, which has so far imposed three sets of sanctions on Iran.

Rice said she did not expect any "imminent action" as August is a slow month at the Security Council, but expected work to begin soon afterward on drafting another round of "punitive measures."

Rice said Washington would also look at other unilateral steps it can take to squeeze Iran's financial institutions.

She said Burns's presence in Geneva helped strengthen diplomacy involving the five permanent Security Council members - the United States, Russia, China, France and Britain - and Germany.

Rice was scheduled to hold talks with her Emirati counterpart, Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed al-Nahayan, in Abu Dhabi and meet foreign ministers and senior officials from other allied Arab countries.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari was expected to attend the meeting of the "GCC+3" bringing together the six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Egypt, Jordan and Iraq.

Rice said the discussions would cover the Middle East peace process, Lebanon, Syria, Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan. "It's this sort of GCC agenda that we always do. When things are moving quickly enough it's important to keep talking," she said.

Rice would not elaborate on prospects for setting up a US diplomatic presence in Iran for the first time since ties were severed in the wake of the Islamic Revolution in 1979 and the seizure of US hostages.

But she said any effort to set up an "interests section" would focus on improving US contacts with the Iranian people.

Iran, for its part, said on Monday it will respond to each positive step from the United States in the nuclear talks.

"Tehran will respond to every positive step of Washington with a similar response," Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Reza Sheikh Attar said, quoted by the student news agency ISNA. - AFP

http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=10&categ_id=2&article_id=94369

U.S. vs Iran: Missiles and Diplomacy July 21, 2008

(Globalpulse: July 17, 2008) Iran surprised the world with two rounds of missile tests. But the U.S. has diplomatic surprise of its own. Can a U-turn in the White House be the first step in ending the Iran nuclear crisis?

SOURCES: Press TV, Iran; Al Jazeera, Qatar; BBC, U.K.; FOX, U.S.; NBC, U.S.; ABC, U.S.; Wall Street Journal, U.S.; Deutsche Welle, Germany

{youtube}sxFETi38990{/youtube}

Fox: Rising Tentions in the Middle East July 19, 2008

{youtube}nlZqsBNBlrc{/youtube}

Fox: Rising Tentions in the Middle East July 16, 2008

{youtube}GPoK_DeuwGM{/youtube}

Russia Today: Interview with former US ambassador to the UN John Bolton July 16, 2008

Regime change in Tehran and the use of military force as a last resort are the two options to stop Iran's nuclear plans, said John Bolton, the former U.S. ambassador to the UN in an interview with RT.

{youtube}STRYPWjEhy8{/youtube}

West to flex military muscles against Iran

Press TV - The United States is set to lead a joint military exercise in the Atlantic Ocean to show off its combat capabilities as a warning to Iran.

The Joint Task Force Exercise (JTFEX) 08-4 'Operation Brimstone' will take place on July 21-31 in North Carolina and off the eastern US coast from Virginia to Florida, involving France, Britain and Brazil.

More than a dozen ships, including the US carrier strike group Theodore Roosevelt and expeditionary strike group Iwo Jima, the French submarine Amethyste, and the British HMS Illustrious Carrier Strike Group, as well as a Brazilian frigate will take part in the 10-day exercise.

Six vessels from the US Norfolk Naval State will play enemy at the exercise.

The drill is aimed at training for operation in shallow coastal waters such as the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz.

According to the Debkafile, both the Roosevelt and Iwo Jima are scheduled to be deployed in the Middle East in the coming months.

While Israel and the US claim to be committed to a diplomatic solution to Iran's nuclear standoff with the West, they have repeatedly threatened to launch a military strike against Iran should it continue to enrich uranium.

Following nuclear talks in Geneva on a package of incentives recently presented to Iran requiring the country to suspend uranium enrichment, Washington warned Tehran to choose between 'confrontation' and meeting Western demands over its enrichment program.

In response to growing threats from Israel and the US, Iran test-fired nine long and medium-range missiles to demonstrate the country's defensive military capabilities.

Tehran insists that its nuclear program is directed at generating electricity for a growing population and is in line with its rights under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

... Payvand News - 07/22/08 ...

 Deciphering White House Policy On Iran
 State Department Reporter Charles Wolfson Analyses The High-Stakes, Amorphous Diplomacy
 Comments 10
 WASHINGTON, July 23, 2008

(CBS) CBS News Reporter Charles Wolfson is a former Tel Aviv bureau chief for CBS News who now covers the State Department.

One can be forgiven for not understanding the Bush administration's policy as it tries to prevent Iran developing nuclear weapons.

The evolution of policy, from naming Iran a member of the 'axis of evil' in 2002, to last week's dispatch of the State Department's third ranking official, Under Secretary William Burns, to join Washington's allies at a negotiating table with Iran's chief nuclear negotiator, has been quite a long and frustrating path.

On the one hand, President George W. Bush and his administration have been pretty straightforward: isolate Tehran as much as possible and use the pressure of sanctions to get it to change course and give up what Washington sees as its pursuit of nuclear weapons. The problem is the strategy hasn't worked.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice recognized the need for a new direction when she spoke in May, 2006 about the U.S. joining its allies at the negotiating table 'if' Iran suspended its enrichment activities.

Fast forward a couple of years and stir in several sanctions resolutions from the U.N. Security Council - Iran hasn't done what, not only the U.S., but also the international community has demanded. Still, Ambassador Burns turned up in Geneva last week. Rice said it was a 'tactical' not a substantive change in policy.

The Woodrow Wilson Center's Aaron David Miller, who has followed the region for several decades, says the move to send Burns to Geneva shows the administration's 'capacity for pleasant surprises is still pretty

high.”

Miller thinks it compares to the Bush administration strategy in Middle East peacemaking; “It’s like Annapolis,” he said in a telephone interview. “It’s little risk for little gain.” And, one could say, possibly no gain at all.

In the wake of Iran’s response in Geneva to representatives of Britain, France, Germany, Russia, China and Amb. Burns at the table, even Secretary Rice seems to agree the concession bore little fruit. “Well, we expected to hear an answer from the Iranians,” she told reporters, “but as has been the case so many times with the Iranians, what came through was not serious.”

Another administration official, Under Secretary of Commerce Mario Mancuso, in remarks prepared for delivery at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, underscores a key to Iran’s ability to defy the will of the international community. Noting the global unity against its policies, Mancuso says, “Iran has a long history of making the most out of a losing hand.”

This brings us to where we go from here. Iran was given a couple of weeks to come up with a better answer than they furnished in Geneva last week.

“If there is not a serious answer, then we still have the New York channel,” said Rice. Great. Another three to six months will be spent spewing out another sanctions resolution at the United Nations. The sanctions resolutions already passed and the actions taken by various countries acting alone have, administration officials say, started to bite, even if they have not yet changed Tehran’s policy.

Iran’s ability to access the international financial markets has been pinched, but it's obviously not brought about the desired response in Geneva. Meanwhile, Iran keeps perfecting its efforts to develop the nuclear capability it so badly wants. While Washington would like Tehran to follow Libya’s example and give up the pursuit of nukes, the model Iran seems to have in mind is North Korea. First, develop a weapon or the capability to make one and then, perhaps, negotiate in good faith.

For now, there is virtually no indication Iran will give up its nuclear pursuits. Washington has dangled the notion of re-establishing diplomatic relations which were cut after the 1979 hostage crisis but even a move like that is no guarantee of seeing a suspension in nuclear enrichment activities.

Such a move, however, combined with sending Amb. Burns to Geneva, would serve to show the world the Bush administration has tried to make the diplomatic route work. That could be critical since there are still those in the administration who advocate the use of the military option, if necessary, to prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear state.

With six months left of the Bush administration, it appears a safe bet Tehran will let the clock run out and take its chances on “making the most out of a losing hand” with the next set of policymakers in Washington.

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http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2008/07/23/opinion/diplomatic/main4284734.shtml?source=RSSattr=World_4284734

Iran Won’t Relent on Nuclear Program

By ALAN COWELL

Published: July 24, 2008

PARIS -- As world powers await Iran’s reply to proposals concerning its nuclear program, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad insisted on Wednesday that Tehran would not “retreat one iota” from its atomic work, which includes the enrichment of uranium.

Mr. Ahmadinejad was speaking in a televised address during a visit to the western town of Yasouj, according to news agency reports from Tehran that also quoted him as sending more conciliatory messages alongside his familiar, firebrand oratory.

Last weekend, representatives of the United States, Russia, China, France, Britain and Germany met Iranian officials for talks in Geneva. For the first time at such gatherings, a senior U.S. official participated, although the talks produced no apparent progress on the main demand for Iran to curb uranium enrichment.

Tehran maintains its nuclear program is for peaceful, civilian purposes, but the six powers suspect it may be designed to produce weapons.

After the Geneva meeting, the six powers gave Iran two weeks to respond to their latest proposal offering a six-week freeze on efforts by the United States to secure new sanctions at the United Nations in return for an Iranian halt to any new nuclear activity.

On Monday, Condoleezza Rice, the U.S. secretary of state, accused Tehran of stalling and said the U.S. would seek further sanctions if Iran ignored the two-week deadline.

Mr. Ahmadinejad may have been addressing his own domestic audience as much as his country's foreign interlocutors in presenting himself as resisting pressure from outsiders.

He insisted that his country "will not retreat one iota in the face of oppressing powers."

"The Iranian nation has chosen its path," he said, according to news reports. But he also indicated readiness for further discussions.

"If you come forward based on law, justice and logic, the Iranian nation will negotiate on important global issues and will cooperate in solving the problems of humanity," he said, according to Reuters.

A report from Bloomberg quoted him as saying the "Iranian people consider nuclear energy as their undeniable right."

"They will stand until the end," he said.

At last weekend's discussions, the six-power negotiators said Iran presented a two-page document that would have extended the period of discussion for years without halting enrichment.

In his speech Wednesday, Mr. Ahmadinejad welcomed the fact that a United States official had attended last Saturday's meeting, calling it a "positive step forward" toward recognizing Iran's right to acquire nuclear technology, according to The Associated Press.

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/24/world/middleeast/24iran.html?_r=1&partner=rssnyt&emc=rss&oref=slogin

U.S. urges Iran to accept nuclear deal
12:31 | 23/ 07/ 2008 | RIA Novosti

MOSCOW. (RIA Novosti political commentator Pyotr Goncharov) - High-level international talks over Tehran's disputed nuclear program ended inconclusively on July 19.

The talks in Geneva focused on an updated package of incentives offered by the six world powers to Tehran in order to breathe life into the deadlocked talks.

Iran faces the following alternative: It must cooperate with advanced nuclear powers offering such cooperation; or it would inevitably face all-out political isolation.

Commenting on the results of the Solana-Jalili talks, State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said: "We hope the Iranian people understand that their leaders need to make a choice between cooperation, which would bring benefits to all, and confrontation, which can only lead to further isolation."

"It was a constructive meeting, but still we did not get an answer to our questions. We hope very much we get the answer and we hope it will be done in a couple of weeks," Solana told a news conference.

The UN Security Council pinned high hopes on a package of incentives virtually offering the required amount of enriched uranium and state-of-the-art technology to Iran. Drafted in early May and officially presented to Tehran on June 14, the package suggested that Iran get a temporary reprieve from economic and financial sanctions in exchange for freezing its enrichment activities.

The concerned parties which are used to Iranian negotiating tactics were not surprised after receiving no response from Tehran. However, the latest package of incentives falls short only of a hypothetical UN Security Council resolution that would allow Tehran to develop its own atomic bomb.

Still, everyone was waiting for the Iranian response because Tehran had more than enough time to study the Iran Six's proposals.

As the talks approached, the EU unilaterally froze the assets of the National Bank of Iran and declared additional sanctions against some Iranian officials linked with the country's missile and nuclear programs. Brussels made it clear that the EU wanted Tehran to engage in constructive negotiations.

President Ahmadenijad, a staunch advocate of the uranium-enrichment program, reportedly no longer has any say in nuclear matters, while Washington delegated Ambassador Burns to the talks in Geneva.

The talks were significant because it was the first time that a senior U.S. diplomat joined other envoys in meeting with the top Iranian nuclear negotiator. The shift in Bush administration policy is intended to help lead to a breakthrough in the impasse over the Iranian program. But, if Tehran fails to respond positively, this would only unify the international coalition dealing with Iran.

When his turn to speak arose, Ambassador Burns delivered a clear message: The United States is serious in its support for the package Mr. Solana conveyed in Tehran last month, is serious in its support of P5 + 1 unity, and the United States with its P1+5 partners, is serious that Iran must suspend uranium enrichment to continue any negotiations involving the United States.

In other words, no other package of incentives is forthcoming.

Ambassador Burns' presence at the talks implied that Washington was heeding the Russian stand. Mr. Burns, who served as U.S. Ambassador in Moscow in 2005-2008, repeatedly met with Russian experts on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and knows the Russian position that the Iranian nuclear program must be linked with the need to preserve the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The U.S. State Department's official statement is, in effect, an ultimatum to Tehran. Washington's patience has run out, and other members of the Iran Six coalition are also feeling restive.

It appears that all the parties at the talks have directly or indirectly agreed with this ultimatum. This prompted U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to ask the UN Security Council to pass another resolution on Iran and to toughen sanctions against Iran in case of Tehran's negative reply. Washington plans to launch this process in September.

Tehran has remained silent thus far because it probably did not expect this. The Iranian online media have only noted the sides' agreement to meet in two weeks. According to Jalili and Ahmadinejad, this is a step forward.

The Iranian side still declines to comment on the uranium enrichment issue which, as Jalili told journalists, was not even discussed in Geneva.

Tehran, which must choose between cooperation and confrontation, has probably taken the first step in the right direction.

The opinions expressed in this article are the author's and do not necessarily represent those of RIA Novosti.

<http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20080723/114691963.html>

Iran will not "retreat one iota" over its nuclear program, Ahmadinejad

July 23, 2008, 11:55 AM (GMT+02:00)

The Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said in a speech broadcast live on state TV Wednesday, July 23: "The Iranian nation will not retreat one iota in the face of oppressing powers."

In a different tone, he praised US participation in the six-power meeting with Iranian nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili in Geneva Saturday as a "positive step forward" toward recognizing Iran's right to acquire "nuclear technology."

The Iranian president said it would help repair "America's image in the world."

The powers gave Tehran until August 2 to respond to their offer of incentives for halting uranium enrichment or face stiff penalties.

<http://www.debka.com/index1.php>

