

## 3rd UPDATE: Iran Has Not Suspended Uranium Enrichment - IAEA

Contributed by AFP, AP  
Monday, 15 September 2008

Iran Blocking Nuclear Weapons Probe, UN Says

3rd UPDATE: Iran Has Not Suspended Uranium Enrichment - IAEA

(Updates with amounts of enriched uranium produced)

VIENNA (AFP)--Iran is continuing to defy U.N. demands it suspend uranium enrichment, the U.N. atomic watchdog said Monday.

"Contrary to the decisions of the (U.N.) Security Council, Iran has not suspended its enrichment related activities," the International Atomic Energy Agency wrote in its latest report on Tehran's disputed nuclear drive.

The report said Iran is now operating close to 3,800 uranium gas centrifuges at its enrichment plant in Natanz, 200 more than in May when IAEA published its previous report.

Another so-called "cascade" of 164 machines was similarly up and running but wasn't being fed with uranium gas.

In addition, Iran was also testing different types of advanced centrifuges elsewhere at Natanz, the report said.

The total number therefore appears to coincide with comments made by Iran's deputy foreign minister, Alireza Sheikh Attar, last month when he said that "nearly 4,000" centrifuges were working in Natanz.

So far, the Natanz facility has produced a total of 480 kilograms of low-enriched uranium, it said.

It would need 1,700 kgs for a so-called "break-out scenario" in which Tehran would take the LEU and enrich it further for use in an atom bomb, a U.N. official said.

Enriched uranium is used to make fuel for nuclear power plants, but can also be used to make the fissile material for an atom bomb.

The U.S. and other Western countries are concerned that Iran is indeed covertly trying to develop a bomb, but Tehran vehemently rejects the charge, saying its nuclear program is geared solely towards energy generation.

Iran is under three sets of U.N. Security Council sanctions over its refusal to freeze enrichment and risks further sanctions for failing to give a clear response to an incentives package offered by six world powers in return for a halt to the sensitive work.

Iran Blocking Nuclear Weapons Probe, UN Says  
GEORGE JAHN | September 15, 2008 1

VIENNA, Austria &mdash; Iran has steadfastly blocked a U.N. investigation into allegations it tried to make nuclear arms and the probe is now deadlocked, the International Atomic Energy Agency said Monday.

The conclusion was contained in an IAEA report released Monday to the 35-nation IAEA board and the U.N. Security Council, which has already imposed three sets of sanctions on Iran over its nuclear defiance.

"We've arrived at a gridlock," said a senior U.N. official who requested anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the restricted report by the U.N. nuclear watchdog made available to The Associated Press.

Since its last report in May, "the agency ... has not been able to make any substantive progress," the IAEA report said, calling the impasse a matter of "serious concern."

The document said Iran has now amassed a third of the amount of enriched uranium it could reprocess into the material for the fissile core of a nuclear weapon.

The United States and its allies allege Iran wants to develop its uranium enrichment program to make nuclear weapons. But oil-rich Iran insists it only wants to make nuclear fuel and IAEA oversight and inspections of its known enrichment program has not come up with any evidence that contradicts that.

In Washington, the White House threatened more sanctions if Iran continues to defy the U.N.

"This report shows once again that Iran is refusing to cooperate with the international community," said White House spokesman Gordon Johndroe. "The Iranian regime's continued defiance only further isolates the Iranian people. We urge Iran to suspend its uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities or face further implementation of the existing United Nations Security Council sanctions and the possibility of new sanctions."

The report confirmed Iran continues to expand its uranium enrichment program in defiance of the three sets of U.N. sanctions.

The document said Iran was now either fully or partially operating 6,000 centrifuges at its cavernous underground facility at Natanz. Beyond those machines, which spin uranium gas into enriched uranium, it was testing 12 more advanced prototypes at its above-ground experimental site at Natanz, a city about 300 miles south of Tehran.

To date, Iran had produced about 1,000 pounds of low enriched uranium suitable for nuclear fuel, said the report. Asked to put that figure into context, U.N. officials said Iran would need three times that amount to begin the process of enriching to the level needed to produce a nuclear weapon.

Running smoothly, 3,000 centrifuges could produce enough nuclear material for a bomb within 18 months.

Iran's refusal to end enrichment has been the main trigger for sanctions and continues to be the overriding concern for the United States and others who suspect the program is aimed at making weapons.

If Iran continues to block investigators, the IAEA "will not be able to provide credible assurance about the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran," said the report.

Anticipating U.S. condemnation, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Hasan Qashqavi said in Tehran ahead of the report's release that his country expected the IAEA not to bow to U.S. "pressures."

Intelligence received by the IAEA in its investigations, as well as from the U.S. and other agency board member nations, suggest Iran experimented with an undeclared uranium enrichment program that was linked to a missile project and drew up blueprints on refitting missiles to allow them to carry nuclear warheads.

The intelligence also suggested Iran was researching construction of an underground site that apparently could be used to test fire nuclear bombs and ordered "dual use" equipment from abroad that could be part of an atomic weapons program.

Additionally, Iran possesses diagrams showing how to mold uranium metal into the shape of warheads.

U.S. intelligence estimates that Iran conducted such experiments until 2003. Iran rejects such allegations and says documents backing them up are fabricated.

In Tehran, the official news agency reported Iranian warplanes and air defense units are taking part in ongoing war games. The war games follow Israel's major aerial exercise over the eastern Mediterranean in June, which was widely interpreted as a rehearsal for a possible strike on Iran's nuclear facilities.

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U.S. urges Iran to stop nuclear activities  
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WASHINGTON, Sept. 15 (Xinhua) -- The United States on Monday reiterated its call for Iran to stop enriching uranium and other reprocessing activities or face the possibility of further sanctions.

"We urge Iran to suspend its uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities or face further implementation of the existing United Nations Security Council sanctions and the possibility of new sanctions," U.S. National Security Council spokesman Gordon Johndroe told reporters.

The spokesman made the remarks after the International Atomic Energy Agency reported it had been unable to make much progress in investigating Tehran's suspect nuclear program.

The United States and its allies have accused Iran of developing nuclear weapons, but Iran insists that its nuclear program is only for peaceful purposes.

Iran till now has been under three UN sanctions over its disputed nuclear program.

Editor: Mu Xuequan

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UN nuclear watchdog says Iran blocking arms probe  
By GEORGE JAHN, Associated Press Writer  
Monday, September 15, 2008

(09-15) 07:21 PDT VIENNA, Austria (AP) --

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The United States and its allies allege Iran wants to develop its uranium enrichment program to make nuclear weapons. But oil-rich Iran insists it only wants to make nuclear fuel and IAEA oversight and inspections of its known enrichment program has not come up with any evidence that contradicts that.

In Washington, the White House threatened more sanctions if Iran continues to defy the U.N.

"This report shows once again that Iran is refusing to cooperate with the international community," said White House spokesman Gordon Johndroe. "The Iranian regime's continued defiance only further isolates the Iranian people. We urge Iran to suspend its uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities or face further implementation of the existing United Nations Security Council sanctions and the possibility of new sanctions."

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 US: Iran courting new sanctions with IAEA stalemate

Published: 09.15.08, 17:24 / Israel News

The White House warned Iran Monday that it faced possible new sanctions after the United Nations atomic watchdog reported it had been unable to make much progress in investigating Tehran's suspect nuclear program.

"We urge Iran to suspend its uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities or face further implementation of the existing UN Security Council sanctions and the possibility of new sanctions," said White House spokesman Gordon Johndroe. (AFP)

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 IAEA report: Iran blocks weapons probe

VIENNA (AP) &mdash; U.N. efforts to investigate allegations that Iran tried to make nuclear arms have run into a dead end, with Tehran steadfastly blocking efforts to probe the accusations, the International Atomic Energy Agency said Monday.

The conclusion was contained in an IAEA report released Monday to the 35-nation IAEA board and the U.N. Security Council, which has already imposed three sets of sanctions because of Tehran's nuclear defiance.

"We've arrived at a gridlock," said a senior U.N. official of the lack of progress. He demanded anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the restricted report, made available to The Associated Press.

The document also said that &mdash; through uranium enrichment &mdash; Tehran now has amassed a third of the amount of enriched uranium it could reprocess into the material serving as the fissile core of a nuclear weapon, should it choose to do so.

The U.S. and its allies say Iran wants to develop its enrichment program for its weapons applications. But Tehran insists it seeks the technology only to create nuclear fuel, and IAEA oversight and inspections of the Islamic Republic's known enrichment program has not come up with any indications that contradict what Tehran says.

The six-page report confirmed that Iran continues to expand its uranium enrichment program in defiance of three sets of U.N. Security Council sanctions imposed in attempts to force Tehran to mothball such activities.

The document said Iran was now either fully or partially operating 6,000 centrifuges at its cavernous underground facility at Natanz. Beyond those machines, which spin uranium gas into enriched uranium, it was testing 12 more advanced prototypes at its aboveground experimental site at Natanz, a city about 500 kilometers (300 miles) south of Tehran.

To date, Iran had enriched 480 kilograms &mdash; about 1,000 pounds &mdash; of low enriched uranium suitable for nuclear fuel, the report said. Asked to put that figure into context, U.N. officials said Tehran would need three times that amount to begin the process of enriching to the level needed to produce a nuclear weapon.

Running smoothly, 3,000 centrifuges could produce enough nuclear material for a bomb within 18 months, were they configured for that function.

Iran's refusal to end enrichment has been the main trigger for the Security Council sanctions and continues to be the overriding concern for Washington and others accusing Tehran of wanting to make a bomb.

But with Tehran repeatedly saying it was not planning to stop its enrichment program &mdash; and even giving progress reports on its expansion &mdash; the conclusions on enrichment revealed little new. That left the IAEA's acknowledgment &mdash; that it had been stonewalled in months of efforts to shed more light on the allegations of past secret Iranian experiments geared toward developing nuclear arms &mdash; the most striking part of the report.

Since its last report in May, "the agency ... has not been able to make any substantive progress," the document said. It called the impasse a matter of "serious concern."

If Iran continues to block investigators, the IAEA "will not be able to provide credible assurance about the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran," the report said.

Anticipating U.S. condemnation, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Hasan Qashqavi said in Tehran before the report's release that his country expected the IAEA not to bow to U.S. "pressures."

But Washington condemned Iranian "stonewalling" of the agency.

"We agree ... that unanswered questions about weaponization are of 'serious concern,'" said Gregory L. Schulte, Washington's chief delegate to the IAEA. He will represent the U.S. at a meeting of the IAEA board starting next week and focusing mainly on Iran's nuclear activities.

Tehran's refusal to cooperate with IAEA efforts to investigate the allegations is "particularly troubling as it continues in violation of three Security Council resolutions to develop the ability to produce fissile material that could be weaponized into a nuclear bomb," he said.

Intelligence received by the IAEA in its investigations, as well as from the U.S. and other agency board member nations, suggest Iran experimented with an undeclared uranium enrichment program that was linked to a missile project and drew up blueprints on refitting missiles to allow them to carry nuclear warheads.

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