

EIBaradei whitewashes Iran's negative response to overseas enrichment

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Iran's ambassador to the IAEA, Ali Asghar Soltanieh, Thursday, Oct. 29, submitted Iran's reply to the IAEA proposal endorsed by world powers providing for Iran to send three-quarters of its low-enriched uranium to Russia and France for conversion into nuclear fuel. Its contents were not released by Tehran or the IAEA director Mohamed EIBaradei. Five hours after he received it, EIBaradei produced a formula for airbrushing its negative content: "Iran has provided an 'initial response' to a planned international nuclear fuel deal. More consultations were needed. The Director General is engaged in consultations with the government of Iran as well as all relevant parties, with the hope that agreement on his proposal can be reached soon."

IAEA director clearly handed Tehran a lifeline by withholding the contents of its response pending further "consultations" - a process Tehran is adept at spinning out forever. He thus helped Iran duck out of the Friday, Oct. 23 for submitting its answer - not once but twice.

DEBKAFfile reports that Iran's reply amounts to one yes and two nos.

The Iranian media reported that Iran would only agree to transfer its enriched uranium overseas in small batches over a period of time. These installments must be replaced by purchases of highly-enriched uranium. This stratagem would defeat the entire purpose of the deal which is to reduce Iran's stocks of enriched uranium and delay its progress toward a nuclear weapon.

According to DEBKAFfile's sources, instead of sending three-quarters of its enriched uranium overseas, Tehran is not prepared to ship more than 10 percent in each installment and have it replaced, which means at any given moment, Iran would remain with enough enriched uranium to build a nuclear weapon.

While Mahmoud Ahmadinejad earlier Thursday said his country was "ready to cooperate" with Western powers on a UN-brokered nuclear fuel deal, he stressed it would not give up an iota of its "nuclear rights." He meant what he said.

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