

USADI Dispatch

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USADI Commentary

EU's Nuclear "Direct Dialogue" with Iran: An Exercise in Futility

Ten months ago the European Union's Big-3, France, Germany, and Britain, signed an agreement with Iran. In return for Tehran's cooperation with the United Nations nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the EU promised to provide Iran with advanced technology. The EU trumpeted this as sign of success for its traditional soft approach in dealing with rouge states, bragging that diplomacy, and not sanctions, bring results.

That was 10 months ago. In the meantime, Iran's clerical regime has had plenty of time to push its clandestine nuclear weapons program forward and from all indications is very close to the point of nuclear no return.

During this period there was no shortage of talks or leniency in dealing with Tehran. In three consecutive meetings of the IAEA Board of Governors, the US government essentially deferred Iran's nuclear case to its European allies. Still, as more revelations have surfaced, it has become evident that Tehran had no intention of fulfilling its commitments and that its cooperation had been just a sham.

The EU-3's engagement with Tehran over its nuclear program has been simply an exercise in futility. Its human rights dialogue with Iran has not fared any better. The same, of course, cannot be said about its commercial and business deals with the mullahs, which have skyrocketed during the past year.

Following his meeting with EU officials, Iran's Foreign Minister made it clear that Tehran was going to resume building centrifuges to enrich uranium.

The EU's failed engagement with the clerical regime must serve as a stark reminder to the folks at the Council of Foreign Relations' Task force and other appeasement advocates that, when it comes to a terror-monger tyranny like the mullahs' regime, engagement and direct dialogue will get nowhere. Period.

It should be also a reminder to those who emphasize multilateralism and cooperation with the European allies for a unified approach on Iran. The EU-3 has nothing but failure to offer in this regard. If anything, the US government must take the lead in dealing with Iran's nuclear problem through firmness and press the Europeans to join in.

The prospect of a nuclear Iran nuclear is far too destructive to leave it to Europeans to handle. They have too many commercial ties to Tehran and some of them even have geo-political rivalries with Washington.

More troubling is that words have not been followed with deeds. Tehran is relentlessly pursuing its nuclear plans and continuing its meddling in Iraq. We must not give them the impression that Washington is in the election mode and not willing to tackle the challenge right now.

The ruling theocracy in Iran is bent on acquiring the A-bomb. It seeks political and military regional hegemony, a cornerstone of the Khomeini's vision for an Islamic Empire. No amount of negotiations and incentives would dissuade the mullahs.

Only when this reign of terror has been brought down by the Iranian people will the specter of a nuclear-armed Iran diminish. Meanwhile, come September, the IAEA must refer Iran's file to the United Nations Security Council. No more negotiations.

Financial Times

August 5, 2004

Support grows for UN showdown with Iran

The US administration is gaining European support for a diplomatic showdown with Iran over its nuclear programme next month, as a first step towards imposing sanctions.

US officials and European diplomats said momentum was building after a bad tempered meeting in Paris last week between Iran and France, Germany and the UK - the three governments that negotiated a nuclear deal with Iran last October.

Iran was warned that if it continued to move in the wrong direction, it could not avoid the issue being referred to the United Nations Security Council at the next meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency on September 13.

Although meetings with Tehran continue, loss of European support would deal a serious blow to Iran which has long pursued a strategy of widening transatlantic divisions over policy towards the Islamic regime.

The hardliners' rigging of elections this year also depleted Tehran's diplomatic capital with Europe. Officials said France and the UK supported the US position, while Germany was close. The Bush administration, which accuses Iran of using its civilian nuclear programme as a front for developing weapons, is piling on the pressure while refusing to negotiate directly with Iran.

Condoleezza Rice, national security adviser, said this week that Iran would be confronted, probably in September, with some "very tough resolutions"...

The US Alliance for Democratic Iran (USADI), is an independent, non-profit organization, which aims to advance a US policy on Iran that will benefit America's interests, through supporting Iranian people's aspirations for a democratic, secular, and peaceful government, free of tyranny, fundamentalism, weapons of mass destruction, and terrorism. The USADI is not affiliated with any government agencies, political groups or parties.

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Defense News

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Put the Brakes on Iran's Nuclear Drive

The widening international crisis over Iran's nuclear program took another turn in late July, when Tehran was revealed to have restarted its development of advanced centrifuges in contravention of a deal recently struck with Britain, France and Germany.

Iran's abrupt about-face, however, marks just the latest episode in what has become a long-running drama. Iranian nuclear ambitions have bedeviled the international community since late 2002, when an Iranian opposition group exposed the existence of an advanced uranium enrichment facility in the central Iranian town of Natanz. Since then, a series of discoveries by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and disclosures by the Iranians themselves, have uncovered a nuclear program of unprecedented scope. . .

Iran is trying to acquire an offensive nuclear capability... Sure enough, Iran's leaders recently placed the country's nuclear program under the control of their powerful clerical army, the Pasdaran — a telltale sign of their true intentions. That fanatical group has long served as the regime's enforcement arm, responsible for everything from the domestic persecution of dissidents to the orchestration of assassinations abroad.

And because the Pasdaran is the regime's principal point of contact with groups like Hizbollah and Hamas, Iran's nuclear advances now also carry with them a substantial danger of proliferation to terrorist groups.

Iran's nuclear program is part of a larger strategy. In tandem with its nuclear progress, the Iranian regime has invested heavily in a broad national rearmament. The resulting military gains have already made Tehran capable of virtually controlling vital Arabian Gulf oil shipping lanes. . .

Consistent support for terrorism, ongoing efforts to acquire weapons of mass destruction, and persistent dreams of regional dominance have made clear that Iran's mullahs themselves, not just their nuclear aspirations, are the real problem.

For Washington, the consequences of inaction are enormous. Already, Iran's successes have prompted weaker regional states to gravitate into its orbit. If armed with atomic weapons, Tehran's potential for nuclear blackmail would cement its regional hegemony — much to the detriment of American interests.

Tehran's progress so far has only been enabled by international indecision. The United States therefore must be prepared to take the lead in preventing it from going any further. At stake are nothing less than the geopolitical balance in the Middle East and the long-term success of U.S. strategy there.

Excerpts from an article by Ilan Berman, vice president for policy at the American Foreign Policy Council

USA Today

August 2, 2004

Iran acquiring nuclear materials

WASHINGTON — The brewing problem of Iran's apparent plan to make nuclear weapons is approaching a flash point, threatening to create another explosive situation for Americans in the Middle East and spark a regional arms race. International nuclear inspectors and European diplomats report that Iran is moving aggressively to build equipment and acquire materials necessary for atomic bomb making.

But unfolding events suggest Iran is now moving into dangerous stages where its nuclear energy program can be converted quickly to make weapons — potentially by 2005. . .

If Iran succeeds in making weapons, an anti-American theocracy that supports terrorists and the eradication of Israel would be capable of nuclear strikes anywhere in the Middle East using its well-known arsenal of Shahab medium-range missiles.

Officials at the Vienna, Austria-based International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) recently confirmed that Iran has resumed construction of high-speed aluminum centrifuges that could be used to "enrich" uranium to weapons-grade levels.

That comes as European diplomats are reporting that Iranian agents are trying to buy deuterium gas. This can be used to make nuclear fuel for energy, but it also is commonly used for boosting nuclear explosions.

So far, the Bush administration has been trying to pressure Iran diplomatically with negligible results.

In June, the IAEA rebuked Tehran for not fully cooperating with nuclear inspectors.

In retaliation, Iran said it was resuming production and testing of its enrichment centrifuges, which it had agreed in October to keep idle.

Bush diplomats are now working with European allies to bring the Iranian problem to the United Nations Security Council in hopes of imposing economic sanctions. . .