

Sunday, 13 January 2008, 21:47 GMT

Iran nuclear answers 'in a month'

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad meets IAEA chief Mohamed ElBaradei.

ElBaradei has failed to persuade Iran to stop uranium enrichment

Iran has agreed to clarify all outstanding questions over its past nuclear activities within a month, the UN nuclear watchdog has announced.

The IAEA made the announcement after talks in Tehran held by the agency's head, Mohamed ElBaradei.

A senior official from Iran's atomic energy agency confirmed the agreement, saying Iran has nothing to hide.

Western countries fear Iran is refusing to suspend uranium enrichment because it wants to produce a nuclear weapon.

Tehran denies this, insisting the programme is solely to generate electricity.

An IAEA spokeswoman said Mr ElBaradei had also received information on Iran's "new generation of centrifuges".

Uranium quandary

The announcement by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) came after Mohamed ElBaradei's two-day visit to Iran, during which he met top officials including President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

He has been trying to resolve various issues about the history of Iran's nuclear programme.

Bushehr nuclear reactor, photographed in April 2007

Iran insists its nuclear programme is only to provide energy

The deputy head of Iran's atomic energy agency, Mohammed Saeedi, said his country would "respond within the space of four weeks to the remaining questions so that the IAEA can make a transparent report on the Iranian nuclear programme.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran has nothing to hide, and that's why it does not fear answering the remaining questions. I am optimistic."

But the BBC's Jon Leyne in Tehran says that even if Iran does provide all the answers, this is not going to solve this crisis.

The West is more concerned about Iran's current activities than the history, our correspondent says.

Washington said the agreement does not go far enough and that Iran should stop enriching uranium.

"Answering questions about their past nuclear activities is a step, but they still need to suspend their enrichment and reprocessing activity," said White House spokesman Gordon Johndroe.

The fear is that the uranium enrichment programme could be used to make a nuclear bomb, as US President George W Bush has stressed during his current tour of the region.

In a speech in Abu Dhabi on Sunday, he said Iran was the "world's leading state sponsor of terrorism".

Sanction push

Mr ElBaradei will also be looking at how to monitor Iran's future nuclear activities.

But so far he has made little progress in persuading Iran to stop the controversial process of enriching uranium.

The US is currently pushing for a third round of UN sanctions against Iran over its refusal to stop enriching uranium, a process which can be used both to make atomic fuel and a bomb.

Washington has said it believes Iran is planning to build a nuclear bomb.

Its campaign for tougher sanctions lost some steam when a US intelligence report last month suggested Iran had abandoned its nuclear weapons programme in 2003.

Thursday, 6 December 2007, 16:08 GMT

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Iran nuclear report divides reporters

World media reaction to the US intelligence report suggesting that Iran had suspended any nuclear weapons programme is divided.

IRAN

Jomhuri-ye Eslami

The report proves that Iran's nuclear activities are totally clear and peaceful, so the act of sending Iran's nuclear dossier to the UNSC was totally illegal and happened for political not technical reasons. The report stresses that Iran had sought nuclear weapons until 2003 and then halted its activities because of diplomatic pressures. This is the point that [US President George W] Bush is trying to use in order to increase pressure on Iran.

Iran

The release of certain parts of the intelligence report regarding Iran's nuclear activities has weakened the position of anti-Iran countries at the 5+1 talks, and instead it has strengthened the position of China and Russia. This situation will create an atmosphere in which keeping Iran's nuclear dossier on the UN Security Council agenda will be very difficult. However we cannot believe that America will drop its hostile policies against the country because it is obviously controlled by the Zionists.

Qods

One point in the report that we cannot close our eyes to is the allegation that Iran sought nuclear weapons until 2003. It means that Iran has the intention of and knowledge to build nuclear weapons and has halted its programmes because of international pressure. Although the report explicitly confirms the [International Atomic Energy Agency] IAEA reports, it implicitly tries to follow previous objectives against the country.

Sharl Kamlah in Arabic-language Al-Vefagh

Tehran never sought these weapons. It does not need a US report to acquit it. The latest CIA report was enough to say that Iran's credibility is clear. However, the US intelligence report with its accurate facts did not only embarrass Bush's administration but also dealt a painful blow to the policy of this

administration at a very critical and harmful time. In spite of this, it is obvious that Bush will only use the report to attest to his viewpoint that says that pressure has borne fruit. And hence more pressure should be applied to make Iran halt its programme once and for all.

Tabnak news website political review blog.

The harm caused by the IAEA report is less than that of [National Intelligence Estimate] NIE report. The agency has never presented any evidence that shows Iran's deviation from a peaceful nuclear programme.

Jorgeh satirical blog

Instead of spending millions of dollars on CIA spy games, you could have asked us from the start.

ARABIC

London's Al-Quds Al-Arabi

A strike against Iran is still probable... US antagonism towards Iran will not subside completely. What worries Washington and Tel Aviv is Iran's growing expertise in the field of nuclear technology. The line between military and peaceful use of enriched uranium is very narrow.

Yasir al-Za'trah in Jordan's Al-Dustur

The report will certainly have a negative effect on Bush's efforts to mobilise US public opinion to support a decision for war [against Iran]. But this does not mean that war has become a marginalised possibility. In brief, as long as Bush is in the White House, it will be difficult to disregard the possibility of war, regardless of its form, content and duration. This also does not mean that a Democrat president will be lenient in handling the issue.

Hasan al-Barari in Jordan's Al-Ghad

The release of the report will weaken his [Bush's] ability to make the international community proceed on the issue of imposing sanctions on Iran. However, it cannot be imagined that Bush will accept this relapse, because the decision to go to war is the most likely and because [Iranian President Mahmoud] Ahmadinejad keeps stating - all the time - that Iran has the right to produce nuclear energy.

Ahmad Ziban in Qatar's Al-Rayah

Not everything that US intelligence says is true. Therefore not everything that came out in the recent intelligence report on Iran is necessary 100% correct; i.e. there is nothing that proves that Iran had a programme for producing nuclear weapons that was halted in 2003.

Hasan Madn in United Arab Emirates' Al-Khalij

It shows how the current US administration despises the whole world. The Iranian president has the right to appear today happy and rejoicing because the intelligence report offered him a gift on a golden plate not only to present to his critics inside the ruling elite in Iran, but also to continue his hardline approach in managing the discord with Washington.

Sati Nur-al-Din in Lebanon's Al-Safir

The report contained nothing new of which the entire world is not aware. Iran does not have a military nuclear programme. The bomb is forbidden by Islamic law and according to a clear fatwa by Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Adnan Ali in Syria's Al-Thawrah

The position of US President George Bush on the report submitted by his intelligence agencies, which asserts the peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme, attracts one's attention and cannot be explained except from two perspectives: either President Bush, as with his case over the Iraq war, is setting escalation with Iran as a target, or else Bush, and this is the second possibility, wanted to camouflage a possible change that might be under way in his administration's management of the crisis with Iran; and wanted once more to use intelligence agencies to pass this change.

Talal Awkal in Palestinian Al-Ayyam

The US-Iranian tension is subsiding after the statement made by the national security adviser, which was compatible with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) report, stating that Iran had frozen its military nuclear programme in 2003. The United States, despite Israeli instigation, is starting to say that it prefers a diplomatic solution in dealing with Iranian nuclear dossiers.

Palestinian Al-Quds

US President George Bush stands alone in the United States in warning against the Iranian nuclear danger while the US intelligence reports stress the opposite. So where does he get his information and evaluations. It is noteworthy that Israel is the only country in the world that stands with Bush and stresses the Iranian nuclear danger. So is this a coincidence, or do they have common reasons to heat up the front with Iran?

Nahid Munir al-Rayyis in Palestinian Filastin

Sixteen US intelligence agencies took part in drafting the report which admitted that Iran had stopped its military nuclear programme back in 2003. This report compliments the report presented by the IAEA's chief [Mohamed] ElBaradei. Only two people in the world, Bush and [Israeli Prime Minister Ehud] Olmert, did not like that and insist the report is not correct. They still see the Iranian nuclear programme as very dangerous, and would like to mobilise the entire world to exact vengeance on Iran.

ISRAEL

Ha'aretz

The American intelligence report has changed nothing fundamental - except that Israel's strategic importance has decreased regarding the Iranian threat. The report establishes that if Iran wants to produce a bomb it can do so, and if it doesn't want to, it won't. This evaluation may have a restraining effect in internal American politics. But in Israeli politics it should cause the opposite reaction, because any weakness in the American approach, which is bound to affect Europe, endangers Israel.

Jerusalem Post

If one were looking for a new definition of chutzpah, it would be hard to do better than the latest US National Intelligence Estimate on Iran. This document declares that Iran successfully hid its military nuclear programme from the US for years, while claiming "moderate confidence" that Iran is not hiding such a programme now. The NIE may obscure but does not change the fact that the Iranian menace will grow and the world will become a more dangerous place, until the regime falls or is forced to back down. Through a politically tainted effort to sow unwarranted complacency, the agencies charged with advancing America's security and interests have delivered a terrible blow to their own mandates.

RUSSIA

Kommersant

Kommersant has learnt from its sources in Washington that the US intelligence report which repudiated the White House's position on the Iranian problem was the result of a struggle between factions in the Bush administration. According to our sources, the report was essentially inspired by former President George Bush Sr, who was keen to outplay Vice-President Richard Cheney's faction and protect his son from fresh failures. However, there has been no softening in the US position on the Iranian problem. Yesterday the White House confirmed that a draft document on fresh sanctions against Iran would be tabled at the UN Security Council in the very near future... It's worth noting that the UN Security Council's working schedule for the rest of the year, which was released on Tuesday, includes the issue of nuclear non-proliferation, focusing on the "Iranian nuclear file". However, at the same time there is no specific date in the Security Council's work plan for consideration of the Iranian issue. That means that any member of the UN Security Council could initiate a discussion at any moment, presenting its partners in the Security Council with the necessity of making a final choice.

Igor Kryuchkov in Gazeta

The US president believes that it is important that, according to the report, Iran abandoned nuclear research for military purposes because of increased international pressure.

Vadim Markushin in Krasnaya Zvezda

The visit to Moscow by Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Saeed Jalili, the US intelligence report on Iran's nuclear programme, as well as President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's participation in the summit of the Persian Gulf countries - all these extraordinary facts as a whole have created a new perspective on the relations between the world community and the Islamic republic.

CHINA

Li Xuejiang in Renmin Ribao

The judgment made by the report that Iran suspended its nuclear weapons programme long ago is after all a good thing that will make people feel comforted. It will greatly ease the tense atmosphere which is nearing confrontation between the United States and Iran, as it has undoubtedly deprived the war-mongering US hawks of a reason and excuse to start war, and their clamour for war can only die down. If they "cry wolf" loudly again as before, not many people will pay attention even if they shout themselves hoarse.

Lao Ren in Renmin Wang

The contents of the report can only make people ask: Why is the CIA always making mistakes on important issues? The Iraq war was also launched by the US government on the basis of CIA intelligence. The so-called intelligence that "Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction" was proved wrong by the facts. Could the US intelligence agencies be worried that they will have to shoulder responsibility for the use of force against Iran?

Institute of American Studies' Yuan Peng in China Daily

It could provide a pretext for the administration to de-escalate tension and avoid a military conflict with Tehran... Currently, the Bush administration has neither enough troops nor adequate international support to launch such a war.

China Foreign Affairs University's Gong Shaopeng in China Daily

US strategy towards Iran has always been changing dramatically... I've repeatedly warned that countries should think twice about negative consequences before deciding to follow US dealings with Iran. I believe people will take my advice this time.

EUROPE

Omid Nouripour in Germany's Der Spiegel

The Apocalypse has been postponed for now. Given the time that has been won, there is no chance for Bush to set military action in motion against Iran in his last 12 months in office. Now the international community can plan further negotiations with greater care.

The correct balance between incentives and pressure must be found. It was ever more difficult to maintain that balance in the last talks between the USA, Russia, China, France, Britain and Germany.

France's Le Monde

The US intelligence services' report on Iran published on Monday, 3 December, is sufficiently ambiguous not to allow the secret service to be accused of error or an attempt at massaging the information... Despite its nuances and even contradictions, the report confirms the strategy used hitherto by the West, and followed by Russia and China. It confirmed that the military programme was stopped by international pressure, and that enriching uranium in centrifuges would "probably" be the way Iran would choose to obtain the fissile material needed to make a bomb... The American report underlines the reasons for the mullahs' stubbornness over uranium-enrichment: thanks to enrichment, Iran does not rule out any assumptions for the future, including a nuclear weapon.

TURKEY

Sami Kohen in Milliyet

According to the report, Iran once worked on a nuclear weapons programme, but suspended this activity in 2003 due to international pressure... Bush started the Iraq war with the claim that [former Iraqi leader] Saddam [Husseini] had been producing weapons of mass destruction. It was later revealed that this was not true and that the CIA had misled or was itself misled. Now this report disproves the previous reports and claims about Iran's nuclear activities and consequently acquits Iran.

Soli Ozel in Sabah

After the announcement of this report, it has become more difficult for the Bush administration and/or Israel to initiate a military operation against Iran. In fact, it has become impossible. Looking at it from this angle, it might even be claimed that this report, which was prepared by the intelligence institutions, aimed to prevent Bush and especially Vice-President [Dick] Cheney - the king of the hawks - from dragging the country into a new adventure.

Ibrahim Karagul in Yeni Safak

The report has been an enormous blow to the US administration. The Bush administration has taken the option of intervention against Iran off the table. This caused great joy in Iran. The world has come to the point of accepting Iran's thesis and Tehran has won the nuclear struggle.

PAKISTAN

Pakistan

US President Bush has said that despite the consensus report of the US secret agencies, his viewpoint about Iran has not changed. Mr Bush's tenure as president is going to expire in a year, and the chances of success for his Republican party are decreasing day by day. This is a golden opportunity for Mr Bush to trust the reports of his intelligence agencies and resolve issues with Iran amicably.

Iran 'hoodwinked' CIA over nuclear plans

By Tim Shipman in Washington, Philip Sherwell and Carolynne Wheeler
Last Updated: 2:40am GMT 12/12/2007

British spy chiefs have grave doubts that Iran has mothballed its nuclear weapons programme, as a US intelligence report claimed last week, and believe the CIA has been hoodwinked by Teheran.

Iran 'hoodwinked' CIA over nuclear plans

Analysts believe that Iranian staff, knowing their phones were tapped, deliberately gave misinformation

The timing of the CIA report has also provoked fury in the British Government, where officials believe it has undermined efforts to impose tough new sanctions on Iran and made an Israeli attack on its nuclear facilities more likely.

The security services in London want concrete evidence to allay concerns that the Islamic state has fed disinformation to the CIA.

The report used new evidence - including human sources, wireless intercepts and evidence from an Iranian defector - to conclude that Teheran suspended the bomb-making side of its nuclear programme in 2003. But British intelligence is concerned that US spy chiefs were so determined to avoid giving President Bush a reason to go to war - as their reports on Saddam Hussein's weapons programmes did in Iraq - that they got it wrong this time.

A senior British official delivered a withering assessment of US intelligence-gathering abilities in the Middle East and revealed that British spies shared the concerns of Israeli defence chiefs that Iran was still pursuing nuclear weapons.
advertisement

The source said British analysts believed that Iranian nuclear staff, knowing their phones were tapped, deliberately gave misinformation. "We are sceptical. We want to know what the basis of it is, where did it come from? Was it on the basis of the defector? Was it on the basis of the intercept material? They say things on the phone because they know we are up on the phones. They say black is white. They will say anything to throw us off.

"It's not as if the American intelligence agencies are regarded as brilliant performers in that region. They got badly burned over Iraq."

A US intelligence source has revealed that some American spies share the concerns of the British and the Israelis. "Many middle- ranking CIA veterans believe Iran is still committed to producing nuclear weapons and are concerned that the agency lost a number of its best sources in Iran in 2004," the official said.

The Foreign Office is studying a new text of a third United Nations Security Council resolution that would impose tough travel bans on regime figures and penalise banks that do business with Iran.

But diplomats say the chances of winning Chinese and Russian support for the move are in freefall. A Western diplomat said: "It's created a lot of difficulties because of the timing, just as we were about to go for a third resolution."

Bruce Reidel, who spent 25 years on the Middle East desks at the CIA and the National Security Council, said: "By going public they have embarrassed our friends, particularly the British and the Israelis. They have given our foes insights into our most secret intelligence and taken most of the options off the table."

Ephraim Sneh, until recently Israel's deputy minister of defence, warned that military action would be the only option if the world community did not institute robust sanctions. "No one can rule out with high confidence that somewhere in Iran, 70 times the size of Israel, there is one lab working on the weapons programme," Mr Sneh told The Sunday Telegraph.

"[Military action] is not a desired option; it is a last resort. That's why sanctions are so important. We have to urge the international community to be serious about sanctions and to take necessary measures to defend the civilian population."

Monday, 20 November 2006, 21:55 GMT

'No proof' of Iran nuclear arms

The US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has not found conclusive evidence that Iran is developing nuclear weapons, a US magazine has reported.

Veteran investigative reporter Seymour Hersh, writing in The New Yorker, cites a secret CIA report based on intelligence such as satellite images.

Correspondents say the alleged document appears to challenge Washington's views regarding Iranian nuclear intentions.

The article says the White House was dismissive about the CIA report.

The US and Europe say Iran is pursuing a clandestine nuclear weapons programme - a charge Iran has strongly denied.

'Hostile' response

The CIA assessment, according to unnamed officials quoted in the article, casts doubt on how far Iran has actually progressed to making a nuclear weapon.

The White House is not going to dignify the work of an author who has viciously degraded our troops

Dana Perino

White House spokeswoman

"The CIA found no conclusive evidence, as yet, of a secret Iranian nuclear weapons program running parallel to the civilian operations that Iran has declared to the International Atomic Energy Agency," Mr Hersh wrote.

It says the agency based its conclusions on technical intelligence, such as satellite photography and measurements from sensors planted by US and Israeli agents.

The article says: "A current senior intelligence official confirmed the existence of the CIA analysis, and told me that the White House had been hostile to it."

White House spokeswoman Dana Perino criticised the article, calling it an "error-filled" piece in a "series of inaccuracy-riddled articles about the Bush administration".

"The White House is not going to dignify the work of an author who has viciously degraded our troops, and whose articles consistently rely on outright falsehoods to justify his own radical views," she was quoted by AFP news agency as saying.

The BBC's Adam Brookes in Washington says if the New Yorker article is correct, it would suggest that the CIA is being more cautious than the Bush administration in evaluating whether or not Iran is on its way to building a bomb.

And he says, as with Iraq, it suggests political battles to come over how intelligence is used as a basis for American foreign policy.

Tuesday, 23 October 2007, 19:56 GMT 20:56 UK

Iran nuclear envoy vows no change

Iran's new nuclear negotiator has said his country will continue nuclear discussions "with strength".

Saeed Jalili, who was in Rome for talks with EU envoy Javier Solana, said there was a consensus on the issue in Iran.

Mr Jalili said after the meeting Iran sees nuclear talks with the EU as a way of improving relations. He added Tehran supported "dialogue and negotiation".

Mr Solana said the meeting with Mr Jalili was "constructive" and that more talks were planned for November.

Mr Jalili's predecessor - who resigned on Saturday - backed him, saying Iran's nuclear policy would not change.

Ali Larjani resigned over reported disagreements with President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. More than 180 Iranian MPs have signed a letter praising him.

Iran's nuclear policies are stable and they don't change with a change in the secretary of the council or even presidents
Ali Larjani, Iran's outgoing negotiator

MPs add to nuclear splits

The resignation revealed growing splits on how to proceed on the nuclear issue, says the BBC's Jon Leyne in Tehran.

But in his first public comments since taking over the position, Iran's new representative denied there were splits.

"We will continue the nuclear discussions with strength. The nuclear issue is an issue on which there is a consensus of national harmony," Mr Jalili was reported as saying in Rome ahead of the talks with Mr Solana.

Mr Larjani, who accompanied Mr Jalili to Rome, said: "Iran's nuclear policies are stable and they don't change with a change in the secretary of the council or even presidents."

Diplomatic push

Western countries suspect Iran of trying to build nuclear weapons but Tehran says its programme is peaceful.

Iran's nuclear negotiator Ali Larjani - 31/5/2007
Mr Larjani is said to disagree with President Ahmadinejad

UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown said on Tuesday that he would seek to tighten sanctions aimed at discouraging Iran's nuclear programme.

"We will work through the United Nations to achieve this. We are prepared also to have tougher European sanctions," Mr Brown said after meeting Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert in London.

"We want to make it clear that we do not support the nuclear ambitions of [Iran]," he said.

On Monday, 183 MPs signed a letter praising Mr Larjani's performance as a nuclear negotiator after he was replaced by Mr Jalili, the deputy foreign minister and a close ally of President Ahmadinejad.

The letter came as former Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati - now senior foreign policy adviser to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei - said the resignation had come at the wrong time.

Mr Ahmadinejad accepted Mr Larjani's resignation, which had been tendered repeatedly, on Saturday.

Mr Larjani accompanied his successor to the Rome talks as the representative of Ayatollah Khamenei.

Iran is developing the technology to enrich uranium on an industrial scale. The enriched uranium can be used as fuel in a nuclear power station.

Some Western countries, led by the US, fear Iran will further process the enriched uranium for use in nuclear weapons.

Tuesday, 23 October 2007, 15:28 GMT 16:28 UK

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[Iranian MPs add to nuclear splits](#)

[Iran's nuclear negotiator Ali Larjani - 31/5/2007](#)

[Mr Larjani had led talks on the nuclear programme with the West](#)

[More than 180 Iranian MPs have signed a letter praising former chief nuclear negotiator Ali Larjani, who has resigned from his post.](#)

A top foreign policy adviser to Iran's supreme leader also said Mr Larjani should not have been allowed to resign.

The BBC's Jon Leyne in Tehran says the resignation has revealed growing splits on how to proceed on the nuclear issue.

But Mr Larjani and his replacement, Saeed Jalili, said on Tuesday there was a consensus on nuclear policy in Iran.

"We will continue the nuclear discussions with strength. The nuclear issue is an issue on which there is a consensus of national harmony," Mr Jalili said in Rome where the two men met EU envoy Javier Solana.

"Iran's nuclear policies are stable and will not change," said Mr Larjani.

Western countries suspect Iran of trying to build nuclear weapons but Tehran says its programme is peaceful.

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown said he would seek to tighten sanctions aimed at discouraging Iran's nuclear programme.

"We will work through the United Nations to achieve this. We are prepared also to have tougher European sanctions," Mr Brown said after meeting Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert in London.

"We want to make it clear that we do not support the nuclear ambitions of [Iran]," he said.

'Poor timing'

On Monday, 183 MPs signed a letter praising Mr Larijani's performance as a nuclear negotiator after he was replaced by Mr Jalili, the deputy foreign minister and a close ally of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Mr Larijani had repeatedly offered his resignation and, on Saturday, Mr Ahmadinejad finally accepted it.

The letter came as former foreign minister Ali Akbar Velayati - now senior foreign policy adviser to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei - said the resignation had come at the wrong time.

It would be better if this did not happen, or at least it was prevented

Ali Akbar Velayati
Advisor to Ayatollah Khamenei

Profile: Ali Larijani
All eyes on new negotiator

"In the very important and sensitive situation where the nuclear issue is at the moment it would be better if this did not happen, or at least it was prevented," Mr Velayati said.

Although he was appointed by Mr Ahmadinejad, Mr Larijani reported directly to Ayatollah Khamenei, who usually has the final say on all state issues.

This is not an argument over whether Iran should have a nuclear programme, just how to get there, our correspondent says.

He says pragmatists believe in negotiating with the international community and talk of following the path of Japan, which has quietly gained a civilian nuclear programme that some observers believe could be quickly adapted to produce nuclear weapons.

By contrast, Mr Ahmadinejad seems almost to want a confrontation - it is not just that he wants the nuclear programme, he wants also to use it to challenge the West and by doing so to build up Iran's power, our correspondent adds.

'Fall-out'

Mr Jalili was meeting Mr Solana in Rome for the first time since taking over the position.

Mr Brown said Mr Solana would warn the Iranian negotiators about the risk of further sanctions during the Rome meeting.

Iran's nuclear facility at Natanz - file photo
Iran is working to enrich uranium on an industrial scale

The EU hopes to determine whether Mr Jalili's appointment signals a strengthening of Iran's stance on its nuclear programme.

But Mr Larijani accompanied his successor to the Rome talks, as the representative of Ayatollah Khamenei.

The deputy speaker of Iran's parliament has said that Mr Larijani resigned because he could no longer work with Mr Ahmadinejad, confirming suspicions that they had fallen out on policy, and possibly personality as well.

Iran is developing the technology to enrich uranium on an industrial scale. The enriched uranium can be used as fuel in a nuclear power station.

Some Western countries, led by the US, fear Iran will further process the enriched uranium for use in nuclear weapons.

23 October 2007, 04:46 GMT 05:46 UK
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EU to meet new Iran nuclear chief

Saeed Jalili
Saeed Jalili has a reputation in Iran of being a hard-liner
Iran's new chief nuclear negotiator is to meet EU envoy Javier Solana in Rome as diplomats try to detect any hardening in Tehran's policy.

The talks will be the first with the EU since Saeed Jalili, a close ally of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, took over from Ali Larijani.

Mr Larijani quit amid differences with President Ahmadinejad over how to proceed with negotiations.

However, he is due to accompany his successor to the Rome meeting.

SAEED JALILI
Born in 1965
Is close to President Ahmadinejad
Considered a hard-line diplomat
Appointed deputy foreign minister in charge of Europe and American affairs in 2005
Has worked in supreme leader's office

All eyes on new negotiator

The deputy speaker of the Iranian parliament has said that Mr Larijani resigned because he could no longer work with Mr Ahmadinejad, confirming suspicions that they had fallen out on policy, and possibly personality as well.

But he will still be in Rome for the talks as the representative of Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

The talks are due to begin in the afternoon at the Italian city's lavish Doria Pamfili villa, Reuters news agency reports.

Divisions

One of Ayatollah Khamenei's top advisers said Mr Larijani should not have been allowed to resign.

It is once more sign of deep divisions within the Iranian government about their tactics in the nuclear dispute, the BBC's Jon Leyne reports from Tehran.

The UN Security Council is waiting for reports from Mr Solana and from its nuclear watchdog, the IAEA, before deciding on a third round of tougher sanctions against Iran.

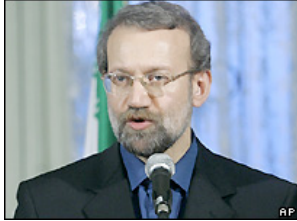
Iran is developing the technology to enrich uranium on an industrial scale. The enriched uranium can be used as fuel in a nuclear power station.

Some Western countries, led by the US, fear Iran will further process the enriched uranium for use in nuclear weapons.

The IAEA says there are outstanding questions about Iran's nuclear activities but that it has recently reached agreement with Tehran on a "work plan" to resolve those issues.

Saturday, 20 October 2007, 09:39 GMT 10:39 UK

Iran's nuclear negotiator resigns



Iran's chief negotiator with the West over Tehran's nuclear programme, Ali Larjani, has resigned.

A government spokesman said Mr Larjani had repeatedly offered his resignation and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had finally accepted it.

Mr Larjani had differences with the president over how to proceed with the negotiations, correspondents say.

Western countries suspect Iran of trying to build nuclear weapons but Tehran says its programme is peaceful.

The spokesman, Gholam Hossein Elham, said a deputy foreign minister, Saeed Jalili, would replace Mr Larjani in time for a meeting on Tuesday with the European Union's foreign policy head Javier Solana.

Russian proposals?

The BBC's Jon Leyne, in Tehran, says Mr Larjani has had differences with President Ahmadinejad over how to proceed with negotiations over the country's nuclear programme.

SAEED JALILI

- Born in 1965
- Is close to President Ahmadinejad
- Considered a hard-line diplomat
- Appointed deputy foreign minister in charge of Europe and American affairs in 2005
- Has worked in Supreme Leader's office



Mr Larjani has favoured further negotiations with the West over Iran's uranium enrichment programme, as opposed to the president's more hard-line approach, our correspondent says.

The resignation comes just days after Russian President Vladimir Putin visited Tehran and expressed qualified support for Iran's right to a peaceful nuclear programme.

Some Iranian media reported that Mr Putin had offered new compromise proposals over the stand-off with some Western countries.

Media close to President Ahmadinejad, however, have denied that the Russian president made new proposals.

The resignation is a sign, says our correspondent, that Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has thrown his weight behind President Ahmadinejad and his hard-line approach on the nuclear issue.

Although Mr Larjani is a conservative who was appointed by Mr Ahmadinejad to be Tehran's point man on the nuclear issue, his successor is known to be a close ally of the president.

The UN Security Council is waiting for reports from the EU's Mr Solana and from the UN's nuclear watchdog, the IAEA, before deciding on a third round of tougher sanctions against Iran.

Iran is developing the technology to enrich uranium on an industrial scale. The enriched uranium can be used as fuel in a nuclear power station.

HAVE YOUR SAY

"The Iranian president obviously feel he holds the all the aces"

Javaid, UK

[Send us your comments](#)

Some Western countries, led by the US, fear Iran will further process the enriched uranium for use in nuclear weapons.

Iran says it has the right under the international Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to develop nuclear power.

The IAEA says there are outstanding questions about Iran's nuclear activities but that it has recently reached agreement with Tehran on a "work plan" to resolve those issues.

Friday, 28 September 2007, 21:32 GMT 22:32 UK

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[Iran sanctions decision delayed](#)

[Uranium enrichment facility at Isfahan \(2005\)](#)

[Iran has denied its nuclear work is intended to develop weapons](#)

[The world's major powers will delay until November a decision on whether to impose tougher sanctions on Iran over its controversial nuclear programme.](#)

The five permanent UN Security Council members and Germany said they would wait until they saw reports from the UN and EU before drafting a resolution.

Tehran denies Western accusations that it is trying to build a nuclear weapon.

On Tuesday, Iran's president said the sanctions were "illegal" in a speech at the UN General Assembly in New York.

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said the debate over his country's nuclear programme was "closed" and that the issue was now in the hands of the UN's nuclear watchdog.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) recently reached agreement with Tehran on a "work plan" to resolve outstanding questions about its nuclear activities.

'Compromise'

In the joint statement issued after meeting in New York, the representatives of the six countries - the US, UK, France, China, Russia and Germany - welcomed the IAEA's agreement with Iran.

"We call upon Iran, however, to produce tangible results rapidly and effectively by clarifying all outstanding issues and concerns on Iran's nuclear programme, including topics which could have a military nuclear dimension," the statement said.

Sanctions as a political tool for exerting pressure are ineffective in making Iran change its basically rational policy choice

Manouchehr Mottaki

Iranian foreign minister

The powers said they continued to be seriously concerned by the programme, but that they would delay any resolution until they received reports by IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei and EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana.

"We agree to finalise a text for a third UN Security Council sanctions resolution... with the intention of bringing it to a vote in the UN Security Council unless the November reports of Dr Solana and Dr ElBaradei show a positive outcome of their efforts," the statement said.

The ministers said they had also asked Mr Solana to meet Iran's top nuclear negotiator, Ali Larijani, "to lay the foundation for future negotiations".

Afterwards, French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner said the meeting had been split between those countries pushing for negotiations and those wanting immediate sanctions.

"There is a compromise, but a good compromise," he said. "We are still working on sanctions."

'Racing ahead'

The US Undersecretary of State, Nicholas Burns, said the joint statement sent a very tough and strict message to Iran.

He warned Iran was trying to accelerate its uranium enrichment programme, but said Washington was confident it would be reined in eventually.

"There is no question they're racing ahead," he told the BBC.

"The question is: can we find the right combination of pressure and diplomatic inducements, negotiations, to convince them that they'd be a lot better off if they would just stop this nuclear business and become a civilised member of the international community and a peaceful member of that community?"

Earlier, the Iranian foreign minister, Manouchehr Mottaki, insisted tougher sanctions would not change his country's nuclear programme.

"Sanctions as a political tool for exerting pressure are ineffective in making Iran change its basically rational policy choice," he told the Asia Society in New York.