

Report: Iran to enrich its uranium if talks fail

- Story Highlights
- Official: Iran will notify U.N. that it will supply fuel for the Tehran reactor
- The reactor is the major producer of radio medicines in Iran, he said
- Iran shocked world by revealing the existence of a nuclear enrichment facility
- Iran says its nuclear program is only for peaceful purposes

October 11, 2009 -- Updated 1148 GMT (1948 HKT)

(CNN) -- Iran will move to further enrich its uranium for a research reactor if it cannot obtain the fuel from overseas, semi-official state media reported Saturday.



IAEA chief Mohammed ElBaradei said Iran's low-enriched uranium would be sent abroad and enriched.

If talks with world powers and the United Nations nuclear watchdog fail, Iran will notify the latter that it will supply fuel for the Tehran reactor, said Ali Shirzadian, a spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran.

"The reactor is the major producer of radio medicines in Iran and its current fuel meets its needs for one-and-a-half year," he told the semi-official Iranian Students News Agency.

It needs about 150 to 300 kilograms of 20 percent-pure uranium, Shirzadian said.

Representatives from Iran will meet with ones from the United States, Russia and France on October 19 at the U.N.'s International Atomic Energy Agency headquarters in Vienna, Austria, to discuss an agreement for enriched uranium.

A deal is important because it could reduce the amount of nuclear fuel Iran has to make a bomb.

Under an agreement, Iranian low-enriched uranium -- not weapons-grade material -- would be sent abroad and enriched further before being sent back for use in Iranian medical research, said [Mohamed ElBaradei](#), the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

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Iran recently sent shock waves through the international community by revealing the existence of a nuclear enrichment facility near the city of Qom. The Islamic republic says its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes, but the United States, among others, fears the country aims to build nuclear weapons.

During a news conference Sunday in London, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton reaffirmed the Obama administration's stance on Iran.

"It has a long way to go before any of us are convinced that Iran is willing to abide by its international obligations and to cease and desist any efforts toward its nuclear programs," Clinton said.

It is important for Iran to know that the world is watching, she said.

"The international community will not wait indefinitely for evidence that Iran is prepared to live up to its international obligations," said Clinton, who is on a diplomatic trip in Europe.

U.S. plans 'serious' sanctions if Iran diplomacy fails

- Story Highlights
- "Comprehensive" plan would target "key vulnerabilities," official says
- But U.S. would be mindful of actions that would harm Iranian people, he says
- International coalition is key to keeping pressure up, diplomat says

updated 4 hours, 29 minutes ago

By Elise Labott
CNN

WASHINGTON (CNN) -- The Obama administration is working on a substantial sanctions package against Iran in case current diplomatic efforts to curb its nuclear program fail, top officials told Congress on Tuesday.



Treasury Under Secretary Stuart Levy also developed some of the existing financial sanctions against Iran.

Under Secretary of the Treasury Stuart Levy, who developed some of the existing financial sanctions against Iran under the Bush administration, said at a Senate Banking Committee hearing that the "comprehensive" plan would target "key vulnerabilities and fissures" in Iran to show Tehran that it would face "serious costs" for thwarting international demands.

"It takes into account that no single sanction is a 'silver bullet'; we will need to impose measures simultaneously in many different forms in order to be effective," Levy said.

He stressed, however, that the United States would be mindful of actions that would harm the Iranian people or undercut the opposition battling the Iranian government.

The hearing comes as some members of Congress push for tougher U.S. sanctions on the [Iranian](#) regime in light of the recent revelation that Iran was building a second uranium enrichment facility near Qom, a dramatic development that jacked up tension between Iran and international powers.

During talks last week in Geneva, Switzerland, between Iranian officials and representatives of the so-called P5+1 -- the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China -- Iran agreed to admit inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency to the Qom facility.

Tehran also agreed "in principle" to ship its low-enriched uranium produced in Iran to third countries for further enrichment for a [nuclear](#) reactor used for medical research.

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- [U.N. to inspect Iran nuclear plant this month](#)
- [Analysis: Iran is winner in nuclear talks, for now](#)

Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg told the panel Tuesday that one reason for the Obama administration's engagement toward Iran was to secure international support for sanctions if Iran continued to defy international demands. Last week's talks, he said, shined a "spotlight" on Iran that makes inaction more costly.

Levy also stressed that an international coalition was key to keeping pressure on Iran.

"Because financial measures are most effective when imposed as part of a broad-based effort with support of the largest possible international coalition, we are working closely with our allies as we put together this strategy," he said. "The less united we are in applying pressure, the greater the risk our measures will not have the impact we seek."

Several lawmakers expressed doubt that Iran would negotiate in good faith and threatened legislation to impose tough new sanctions against Tehran.

Committee Chairman Christopher Dodd, D-Connecticut, said he planned to move forward this month on a proposal to expand financial restrictions, impose new sanctions on Iran's oil and gas sectors and ban both the export of refined gasoline products to Iran and the import of Iranian goods.

Steinberg said the United States and its allies will judge Iran's seriousness about the talks by whether it makes good on its commitments to ship the uranium out of the country and admit the IAEA inspectors, who are expected to visit the Qom facility October 25.

"By the end of the month, we will have some very clear indications of what their intentions are," he said.

4 October 2009 20:01 UK

Iran 'co-operation' draws praise

Mohamed ElBaradei: "I see that we are at a critical moment"

The US and the UN have given an upbeat assessment of the possibility of settling the nuclear dispute with Iran.

US National Security Adviser Jim Jones said Tehran was now "willing to come to the table", following talks this week between Iran and major powers.

The head of the UN's nuclear agency, who is in Tehran, said there had been a "gear shift" towards co-operation.

He announced that inspectors would visit a newly revealed nuclear site in the Iranian city of Qom, on 25 October.

The BBC's Richard Lister in Washington says the US administration is still a long way from taking Iranian co-operation on the nuclear issue for granted, but it does see some reasons for optimism.

Asked about Iran's offer to allow inspection of the Qom uranium enrichment facility and its agreement in principle to ship nuclear materials to Russia for re-processing, Mr Jones said these were "very significant" moves.

IRAN'S NUCLEAR SITES



Iran insists that all its nuclear facilities are for energy, not military purposes

Bushehr: Nuclear power plant

Isfahan: Uranium conversion plant

Natanz: Uranium enrichment plant, 4,592 working centrifuges, with 3,716 more installed

Second enrichment plant: Existence revealed to IAEA in Sept 2009. Separate reports say it is near Qom, and not yet operational

Arak: Heavy water plant

[Key nuclear sites in detail](#)

[A high-stakes game](#)

[Q&A: Iran and the nuclear issue](#)

[Talks herald new phase for Iran](#)

"We now have an Iran that is willing to come to the table," he told CBS television on Sunday.

Earlier the head of the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency, Mohamed ElBaradei, said in Tehran that inspectors would ensure that the Qom facility was for "peaceful purposes".

He added: "I see that we are shifting gears from confrontation into transparency and co-operation. I continue, of course, to call on Iran to be as transparent as possible."

Mr ElBaradei's visit comes as the New York Times quoted an internal IAEA report as saying Iran could have the know-

how to produce a workable nuclear bomb.

The confidential report, excerpts of which have also been published on the website of the Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS), emphasises that its conclusions are tentative and unconfirmed.

"The agency... assesses that Iran has sufficient information to be able to design and produce a workable implosion nuclear device," ISIS quoted the report as saying.

The New York Times said this went well beyond the public positions taken by the US and other countries on the possibility of Iran creating a bomb.

Mr Jones told CBS that whether Tehran was in a position to do so remained a matter of "conjecture".

Iranian 'engagement'

However on Sunday the US ambassador to the UN, Susan Rice, told NBC television that Iran had a "finite period" to come to a settlement on its nuclear programme.

"We're not interested in talking for talking sake," she said.



Iran says the enrichment plant at Qom is not operational yet

But she declined to set a deadline for Tehran to allow full international inspections.

Tehran insists it has the right to develop nuclear energy, but the revelation of the second enrichment facility has heightened fears among Western governments that it is trying to develop nuclear weapons.

Iran denies any attempt to develop a military nuclear capability.

The UN Security Council has demanded a halt to uranium enrichment by Iran.

The talks in Geneva earlier this week between Iran and six major powers - the five permanent members of the Security Council plus Germany - were the first since July 2008.

Officials said the talks marked "engagement" on the part of Tehran after the country agreed to co-operate "fully and

immediately" on opening the second enrichment facility to inspectors.

The two sides also agreed to hold further talks in October.

Report: Iran has A-bomb know-how



ElBaradei has held talks on inspections of Iran's nuclear site in Qom [AFP]

Staff at the International Atomic Energy Agency have written a confidential analysis conveying that Iran has "sufficient information to be able to design and produce a workable" atom bomb, *The New York Times* says.

The report, which gave unnamed European officials as sources, was posted on the newspaper's website late on Saturday, the day before Mohamed ElBaradei, the IAEA chief, announced in Tehran that inspections of the country's newly revealed nuclear plant in Qom would take place on October 25.

The IAEA analysts' conclusions are said to need further confirmation of the facts before certification.

The evidence used in the report was said to be gained from intelligence agencies and the agency's own investigations.

Extensive research

The analysts' report puts Iran at a further stage in the development of nuclear weapons than thought by many governments, including the US who said in 2007 that Tehran had stopped its efforts to construct such a weapon in 2003.

But the UK, France, Germany and Israel have said that Tehran has restarted work on the arm.

Washington is now re-evaluating that conclusion, a senior US official said last week.

The report, called Possible Military Dimensions of Iran's Nuclear Programme, also reportedly said that Iran had collected information on making a bomb from rogue nuclear experts and undertaken extensive research and testing on

developing the components of a weapon.

However, it does not say how much progress there has been in the developing of the weapon by the Iranian defence ministry, which is said to run the programme.

The *New York Times* quoted the report as saying that the weapon could hit parts of the Middle East and Europe, using the Shahab missile system.

ElBaradei's visit

The leak of the report could raise pressure on ElBaradei, who made the announcement on the planned inspection of the Qom nuclear facility at a joint news conference with Ali Akbar Salehi, the Iranian nuclear chief, on Sunday.

"It is important for us to send our inspectors to have a comprehensive verification of the facility and to make sure that it is for peaceful purposes," he said.

"We need transparency on the part of Iran and we need cooperation on the part of the international community."

Speaking from Tehran, Al Jazeera's Nazanine Moshiri reported on Sunday that ElBaradei is under a lot of pressure.

"There has been some criticism that perhaps in the past Mr ElBaradei has not been as critical of Iran as perhaps some people would like him to be," she said.

"And this report ... which comes from actually inside his own organisation, saying that perhaps Iran has progressed further than what Mr ElBaradei has been saying, is extremely damning."

Muhammad Sahimi, a professor of chemical engineering at the University of Southern California, told Al Jazeera: "The confidential report of the IAEA is mostly based on the document that was supposedly on a laptop supposedly stolen from Iran in 2004.

"But the authenticity of those documents has never been established, and it is in dispute whether those documents are authentic.

"But assuming that the documents are authentic, there is still a wide gap between having the knowledge or information and actually putting that knowledge into practice."

Earlier, Meir Javedanfar, an Israeli nuclear expert, said that Iran's revelation of its Qom nuclear facility had heightened tensions between Iran and the West.

"I think Mr ElBaradei will be testing Iran's response to the visit by the IAEA inspectors," he told Al Jazeera.

"If the Iranian government is going to co-operate and if the

IAEA is going to recognise that co-operation, then I think relations between the two sides would increase."

Geneva meeting

Iran agreed to allow IAEA inspectors unfettered access to the plant during talks with the permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany in Geneva earlier in the week.

But the talks ended without agreement on the idea of "freeze for freeze" - a suspension of further enrichment in return for a halt to additional UN sanctions against Iran.

However, Washington conceded that the Geneva meeting, which included the highest-level direct talks between the US and Iran in three decades, marked a "constructive" start to defusing the nuclear standoff.

Western officials said Iran had agreed "in principle" to ship out most of its enriched uranium for reprocessing in Russia and France for use in an internationally supervised research reactor in Tehran.

Analysis: Iran is winner in nuclear talks, at least for now

- Story Highlights
- At Thursday's meeting, Iran agreed to allow inspectors into Qom site
- U.S. envoy also had crucial meeting with Iranian counterpart
- With flexibility, Iran has largely neutralized efforts to impose new sanctions
- Moves also blunt potential threat of Israeli attack

October 3, 2009 -- Updated 1843 GMT (0243 HKT)

By Elise Labott
CNN

Editor's note: Since becoming State Department producer in 2000, Elise Labott has covered four secretaries of state and reported from more than 50 countries. Before joining CNN, she covered the United Nations.



IAEA Director General Mohammed ElBaradei is bound for Tehran, Iran, this weekend.

(CNN) -- The United States and its partners in the P5+1 -- Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China -- left Thursday's talks with Iran in Geneva, Switzerland, rightfully claiming progress.

The seven hours worth of talks ended much better than anyone anticipated. Iran pledged to admit International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors into its recently disclosed facility in Qom and agreed, in principle, to a proposal under which it ships most of its current stockpile of low-enriched uranium outside the country for further enrichment to power a reactor used for medical research.

Or so they thought. On Friday, Tehran's ambassador to Britain, a member of the Iranian delegation at the Geneva talks, denied that a deal had been reached. And on Saturday, headlines from Iran's Press TV quoted the Iranian government: "no deal with P5+1 on shipping Iran's enriched uranium abroad."

Of course the devil is in the details. But if these two agreements are actually implemented, it could mark the beginning of bringing Iran's nuclear program under strict international monitoring and provide important safeguards that could prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon.

What's more, Iran agreed to meet again with the group by the end of the month.

And if all of that wasn't enough, U.S. Undersecretary of State Bill Burns had a rare one-on-one meeting with his counterpart, Iranian chief negotiator Saeed Jalili, where they discussed among other things human rights.

The 45-minute meeting was described as a "sidebar" and didn't involve substantial negotiation of the issues, but it was the first genuine indication that Iran is taking President Obama up on his offer of engagement.

Yes, the P5+1, and the United States in particular, should be pleased. But the real winner in Thursday's round of talks is Iran, which has largely neutralized international efforts to impose new sanctions against Tehran.

[Iran](#) cleverly revealed its not-so-secret nuclear facility at Qom to the IAEA hours before Obama was to speak to the G-20 industrialized nations, where Iran's nuclear program was featured prominently on the agenda in his meetings with various leaders.

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- [Nuclear watchdog chief arrives in Iran](#)
- [Zakaria: Moment of truth coming on Iran](#)
- [Obama demands 'unfettered' access to Iran facilities](#)

Earlier in the week, Russian President Dmitri Medvedev, having softened from the Obama administration's efforts to "push the reset button" on its relationship with Iran and its decision to scrap missile defense in Poland and Russia, said he could consider tougher international sanctions if Iran did not comply with international demands.

But after Iran's disclosure, Medvedev suggested that Tehran's offer to open the site to IAEA inspectors could satisfy Moscow, which in turn would satisfy China, which has been just as reluctant as Russia to impose new sanctions.

Iran's supposed about-face also blunts the threat of Israeli attack, at least for now.

Israel has maintained for years that Iran was not being honest about the scope of its [nuclear program](#) and has pointed to the Qom facility as confirmation of its suspicions. Now that Iran has disclosed the facility, Israel may be satisfied that world powers will impose tougher sanctions if Iran doesn't follow through on its promises and stand down on military action.

A date for IAEA inspectors to get into the facility has not been set. [IAEA](#) Director Mohammed ElBaradei is headed to Tehran this weekend to work out the details. And the supposed deal on shipping Iranian enriched uranium abroad may be falling apart before it even begins. As the recent backtracking from Tehran shows, Iran's pledge at Thursday's talks to rid itself of its uranium stockpile is far from iron-clad.

More important, Iran has still not addressed the international community's overarching demand for it to stop enrichment. The talks in Geneva ended without agreement on the "freeze for freeze": a suspension of further Iranian enrichment for a halt to additional United Nations sanctions.

All in all, Iran's demonstration of flexibility this week gave it a welcome reprieve without really changing the fundamentals of its nuclear program.

While calling the talks a "constructive beginning," Obama said this diplomatic process would not be open-ended. He gave

Tehran two weeks to allow international inspectors complete access to its the newly disclosed nuclear facility or face increased international pressure.

Obama knows that two-week deadline is an artificial one. Fourteen days from now, Obama won't retract his offer to engage the Iranian regime if inspectors don't enter the facility. Neither will the P5+1 take its longstanding offer for better relations with the West off the table.

And as for further sanctions -- well, the last sanctions resolution on Iran passed last year took eight months through the U.N. Security Council, even in its watered-down form.

Two weeks is not a heck of a long time to get a handle on Iranian's nuclear program, but it's enough to get an initial glimpse as to whether Iran is coming clean with the international community or simply running down the clock while it continues its nuclear development.

3 October 2009 04:35 UK

UN nuclear chief to visit Iran



Iran says the enrichment plant at Qom is not operational yet

The head of the UN nuclear watchdog, Mohamed ElBaradei, is expected in Iran to discuss inspectors' access to a recently revealed uranium facility.

Iran announced the existence of the enrichment plant, built into a mountain near the city of Qom, late last month.

US President Barack Obama has urged the country to give the UN agency "unfettered access" within two weeks.

The IAEA chief is due in Tehran on Saturday, two days after talks in Geneva between world powers and Iran.

Officials said Mr ElBaradei would discuss dates and conditions for IAEA access to the site, and would meet Ali Akbar Salehi, head of the Iranian Atomic Energy Organisation.

Tehran insists it has the right to develop nuclear energy, but the revelation of the second enrichment facility has heightened fears among Western governments that it is trying to develop

nuclear weapons.

“ We're committed to serious and meaningful engagement, but we're not interested in talking for the sake of talking ”

US President Barack Obama

[A high-stakes game](#)

[Q&A: Iran and the nuclear issue](#)

[Talks herald new phase for Iran](#)

The talks in Geneva earlier this week were the first between Iran and the six world powers - the five permanent members of the Security Council plus Germany - since July 2008.

Officials said they marked "engagement" on the part of Iran after the country agreed to co-operate "fully and immediately" on the second enrichment facility.

The two sides also agreed to hold further talks in October.

Mr Obama underlined on Thursday that the US expected Tehran to take "constructive actions" to convince the world that it was not trying to build a nuclear weapon.

Obama demands 'unfettered' access to Iran facilities

- Story Highlights
- U.S., Iran hold talks on margins of multilateral meeting on Iran's nuclear plans
- Obama says talks are "constructive" start but demands more
- Foreign policy chief confirms another round of talks coming
- Newly revealed Iranian uranium facility is focus for world powers

October 2, 2009 -- Updated 0348 GMT (1148 HKT)

GENEVA, Switzerland (CNN) -- U.S. President Barack Obama called on Iran to provide the U.N. nuclear watchdog agency with "unfettered" access to the newly disclosed Qom uranium enrichment site, and Tehran's nuclear negotiator said the country would cooperate with inspectors.



President Obama said Iran must provide inspectors with "unfettered" access to the new site within two weeks.



1 of 2



Iran says it plans to cooperate "fully" and "immediately" with the U.N. nuclear agency and will invite representatives of the body to visit its newly revealed uranium enrichment facility "soon," said Javier Solana, the European Union foreign policy chief.

The IAEA has confirmed a trip to Iran by Director General Mohamed ElBaradei would take place soon, but no specific date has been announced. A senior U.S. official speaking on background told reporters that ElBaradei's trip to Tehran could come as early as this weekend.

In an exclusive interview with CNN's Christiane Amanpour on Thursday, Iran's chief nuclear negotiator, Saeed Jalili, said "transparency is not something new" for the Islamic republic's nuclear program.

"Iran has committed itself to follow all the obligations and the like," Jalili said, speaking through a translator provided by the Iranian delegation in Geneva.

"What I want to emphasize is that our cooperation with the agency and the way we look specifically regarding to nuclear energy is that we believe that nuclear warheads are illegitimate and no country should have these kind of weapons."

He said nuclear energy for peaceful purposes "is the right of every sovereign state and country."  [Watch more from the Jalili interview »](#)

There were a number of developments at a meeting Thursday in Geneva between Iran and world powers over Iran's nuclear program; Solana said the meeting "represented the start of what we hope will be an intensive process."

"I and all the representatives of the six countries were united in

underlining the importance of fully transparency and of rebuilding confidence through practical steps. In the course of the day, we had both plenary meetings and bilateral discussions allowing for detailed exchanges on all issues," Solana said.

The meeting occurred on the heels of the recent revelation that Iran was building a second uranium enrichment facility near the city of Qom, a dramatic development that jacked up tension between Iran and international powers.

International powers have threatened more sanctions if the Islamic republic doesn't change its ways.

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- [Don't threaten Iran, Carter says](#)
- [IAEA: Iran broke law by not revealing nuclear facility](#)
- [Meeting with Iran to test Obama 'engagement' policy](#)

At a news conference Thursday after the talks, Solana said International Atomic Energy Agency experts are expected to visit the facility near Qom "within the next couple of weeks."

IAEA spokesman Gill Tudor said Director General Mohamed ElBaradei "has been invited to Tehran by Iranian authorities. He will travel there soon to discuss a number of matters."

Solana confirmed that world powers and Iran will hold another round of talks before the end of the month, but it is not known where or exactly when.

"An agenda for that meeting will be worked out through diplomatic channels. It will focus on nuclear issues, including proposals previously put forward by both sides. It will also deal with global issues that any of the parties wish to address," Solana said.

Solana also said the world powers and Iran agreed in principle "that low-enriched uranium produced in Iran would be transported to third countries for further enrichment and fabrication into fuel assemblies for the Tehran research reactor, which produces isotopes for medical applications."

Details will be worked out at the next meeting, Solana said.

The senior U.S. official told reporters that the enrichment would happen in Russia.

"The potential advantage of this, if it's implemented, is that it would significantly reduce Iran's [low-enriched uranium] stockpile which itself is a source of anxiety in the Middle East and elsewhere," the senior U.S. official told reporters in a briefing Thursday.

Jalili, [Iran's](#) chief nuclear negotiator, noted at a news conference Thursday that the parties hope to reach a framework for future talks.

The Geneva talks also featured a proposal for Iran to send its enriched uranium to a third country for final processing to

ensure that it would be used for medical purposes, rather than a nuclear weapons program.

Of the third-party enrichment proposal, Obama said it might be "a step towards building confidence that Iran's [nuclear] program is, in fact, peaceful."

The president said Thursday in Washington that he expected to see "swift action" by Iran on the steps outlined in the Geneva talks.  [Watch Obama demand transparency »](#)

"This is a constructive beginning, but hard work lies ahead," Obama said, noting that an "intensive period" of negotiations with Iran will be occurring.

"Talk is no substitute for action," Obama said in urging Iran to take the necessary steps to meet its obligations under international non-proliferation agreements.

"This is about the global non-proliferation regime and Iran's right to peaceful nuclear energy," Obama said.

Iran participated in the talks along with the EU, Germany and the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council: the United States, Britain, France, Russia and China.

Top officials from the United States and Iran huddled on the margins of the Geneva talks on Iran's nuclear program.

Jalili met with William J. Burns, the U.S. undersecretary of state for political affairs who was leading the U.S. delegation, a senior U.S. official and a diplomatic source confirmed.

The men discussed the nuclear program, a sit-down described as the first face-to-face meeting over the Iran's nuclear program.

The diplomatic source, who characterized the meeting as "serious and frank," said world powers are pushing for a date for International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors to examine the [nuclear](#) facility in Qom.  [See a map of Iran's nuclear sites »](#)

They also discussed human rights issues, including detained Americans in Iran. Among those held in Iranian custody are three hikers who strayed from Iraqi territory into Iran.

The sources would talk only on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitive nature of the ongoing discussions with Iran.

"They certainly are historical talks," said David Albright, president of the Institute for Science and International Security and a former weapons inspector. "For the United States and Iran to sit down finally and start to talk about the significant differences between the two countries is extremely important, and I think it's long overdue."  [Watch commentators on concerns over Iran's nuclear program »](#)

The existence of the second uranium enrichment facility

prompted Obama and the leaders of Britain and France to publicly chide the Islamic republic last week at the G-20 summit in Pittsburgh and threaten further sanctions.

Iran claims that its nuclear program is intended for peaceful purposes, but many in the international community have accused the country of trying to develop a nuclear weapons capability.1
October 2009 20:57 UK

Obama in Iran inspection demand

President Obama: "We support Iran's right to peaceful nuclear power"

US President Barack Obama says Iran must give the UN inspectors "unfettered access" to its second uranium enrichment facility within two weeks.

"Iran must take concrete steps to build confidence that its nuclear programme will serve peaceful purposes," he said.

Tehran revealed last week that it was developing an enrichment site near Qom.

Mr Obama's demand came hours after talks between Iran and representatives of six world powers in Geneva ended with an agreement to continue dialogue.

The five permanent members of the UN Security Council, plus Germany, have been negotiating with Iran over its uranium-enrichment activities.

“ Iran was supposed to inform us on the day it was decided to construct the facility. They have not done that ”

Mohamed El Baradei, IAEA

[A high-stakes game](#)

[Q&A: Iran and the nuclear issue](#)

[Talks herald new phase for Iran](#)

Tehran insists it has the right to develop nuclear energy, but the revelation of the second enrichment facility near Qom last week raised fears among Western governments that it was trying to develop nuclear weapons.

Earlier, the head of the IAEA, Mohamed ElBaradei, said Iran had been "on wrong side of the law" in concealing the site, but also stressed he had no credible evidence that it had an operational nuclear weapons programme.

'Intensify' dialogue

Thursday's talks in Geneva were the first between the six world powers and Iran since July 2008, which ended in deadlock.

ANALYSIS



Paul Reynolds
BBC News, London

The talks in Geneva seem to have resulted in negotiations reaching a plateau. Whether a ravine lies ahead remains to be seen.

If it isn't so far, so good, then at least it is so far, not worse. The Iranians even called the talks productive, though the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said she wanted action as well as gestures.

One positive action was Iran's agreement to open up its Qom plant soon. Another was the readiness of the six contact countries to take some of Iran's low-enriched uranium and enrich it further outside Iran, to be used for medical isotopes, useful in imaging and treating cancers.

There was a one-on-one meeting between the Americans and the Iranians as well. Talk of further sanctions will be on hold for the moment, though planning goes on. But is all this prevarication and delay?

Although Western diplomats said there were no important developments in the morning session, US Undersecretary of State William Burns and Tehran's chief nuclear negotiator, Saeed Jalili, held what were described as "significant" one-on-one talks during lunch.

US state department deputy spokesman Robert Wood said that at the meeting, Mr Burns had taken the opportunity "to reiterate the international community's concerns about Iran's nuclear programme".

"He addressed the need for Iran to take concrete and practical steps that are consistent with its international obligations and that will build international confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of its programme," he said.

After the seven-party talks ended, the European Union's foreign policy chief told reporters that the six world powers and Iran had "agreed to intensify dialogue in the coming weeks" and hold further discussions before the end of the month.

An agenda for the next meeting would focus on nuclear issues, including proposals put forward by both sides, but also include "any global issues" that any of the parties wished to address,

Javier Solana said.

"Secondly, Iran has told us that it is plans to co-operate fully and immediately with the International Atomic Energy Agency on the new enrichment facility near Qom, and will invite experts from the agency to visit soon, we expect in the next couple of weeks," Mr Solana added.

The EU envoy also said it had been agreed in principle that some low-enriched uranium (LEU) produced in Iran would be sent to a third country for further enrichment and fabrication into fuel for the Tehran research reactor, which produces isotopes for medical applications.

The BBC's Jon Leyne in Geneva says it is clear there was no breakthrough at Thursday's talks, but neither did they collapse.

Both sides seemed keen to keep up the dialogue, at least for the time being, our correspondent says.

'Constructive atmosphere'

At the United Nations in New York, Iran's foreign minister told journalists that the six world powers had taken a different approach to talks than previously, and not reached a "hasty" judgement about Tehran's proposed agenda.



Iran insists its nuclear programme is for peaceful energy purposes

Manouchehr Mottaki said the negotiations in Geneva had been held in a "constructive" atmosphere and expressed hope that the other side would demonstrate political will and determination.

He declared that Iran was prepared to enhance the form of the discussions and raise them to the level of a "summit" meeting.

Mr Mottaki also said Iran had now announced all of its nuclear sites to the IAEA, and defended its right to pursue uranium enrichment.

His US counterpart, Hillary Clinton, said the Geneva talks had been "productive", but that she wanted clear progress from Tehran.

"There were a number of issues raised, put on the table, and now

we have to wait and see how quickly and whether Iran responds," she told reporters in Washington.

"We want to see concrete actions and positive results. I think today's meeting opened the door, but let's see what happens," she added.

1 October 2009 05:02 UK

World powers turn up heat on Iran



Iran insists its nuclear programme is for peaceful energy purposes

World powers have increased pressure on Iran, urging the country to reveal the nature of its nuclear programme during six-party talks in Geneva.

A spokesman for the German chancellor said Iran was "comprehensively failing to co-operate".

The International Atomic Energy Agency said Iran was the wrong side of the law in hiding a second uranium plant.

Tehran revealed the existence of the previously secret site, partially built into a mountain, last week.

"Iran was supposed to inform us on the day it was decided to construct the facility. They have not done that," Mohamed El Baradei, the head of the IAEA, told CNN-IBN Television.

Negotiations

Iran has said that it will allow IAEA inspectors in to view the site, thought to be near Qom, but has not said when the inspections can take place.

“ Iran was supposed to inform us on the day it was decided to construct the facility. They have not done that ”

Mohamed El Baradei
IAEA
[A high stakes game](#)
[Q&A: Iran and the nuclear issue](#)
[Talks herald new phase for Iran](#)

Iranian representatives will meet on Thursday for talks with the five permanent Security Council seat holders - the UK, China, France, Russia and the US - plus Germany - the so-called P+1.

The US and its allies are contemplating tightening sanctions against the country. The UN Security Council has so far imposed three sets of sanctions against Iran over its refusal to freeze its nuclear programme.

Pressure

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, in comments quoted by the Irna news agency, said he saw the discussions as both an opportunity and a test.

ANALYSIS



Paul Reynolds
BBC News, London

Western diplomats regard this meeting as crucial in determining whether Iran will negotiate on its nuclear programme. If there is no progress, consideration will be given to further sanctions and if, by the end of the year, there is still deadlock, then according to one diplomat, "it will be impossible to say that there is any more that diplomacy can do and we will be in a dangerous place". That, in plain language, is a reference to the possibility that Israel might thereafter decide to attack Iran's nuclear facilities.

The six countries negotiating with Iran will remind it of the freeze-freeze concept as a way of unblocking the impasse.

Under this, Iran would not add to the centrifuges it has already installed but would go on enriching uranium with its current machinery and the six would not press for further sanctions while enforcing those already in place. Talks would follow.

However, there is little optimism about the chances of a breakthrough. Any new sanctions would probably be aimed at Iran's

energy and financial sectors. It remains to be seen how far these might go and who agrees to put them into force.

He said the meeting represented an "exceptional opportunity for [Western countries] to change their situation in the world and correct their way of dealing with nations".

In an apparent reference to US President Barack Obama, he added: "These talks could be a test to verify whether some governments are determined to follow up the slogan of change".

In Washington, a US state department spokesman said he hoped the session would pave the way for further discussions with Iran.

"We're not going to make a snap judgement on Thursday. We're going to see how that meeting goes, evaluate the willingness of Iran to engage on these issues," PJ Crowley said.

Iran insists that all its nuclear facilities are for peaceful energy purposes and rejects accusations from the US and others that it is seeking a nuclear weapon.

Russia recently signalled it might be prepared to soften its opposition to further sanctions.

China, which is also a permanent Security Council member, has said such pressure would not be effective.

IAEA: Iran broke law by not revealing nuclear facility

- Story Highlights
- IAEA claims Iran failed to disclose existence of second nuclear facility
- IAEA chief: No credible evidence Iran has ongoing weapons program
- International community fears Iran is trying to develop nuclear weapons
- Iran has denied claims, says nuclear program would be used for peaceful purposes

updated 4 hours, 24 minutes ago

NEW DELHI, India (CNN) -- Iran broke international law by not disclosing sooner its recently revealed uranium enrichment site, the head of the United Nation's nuclear watchdog agency said.



IAEA's Mohamed El Baradei says he does not think Iran has an ongoing nuclear weapons program.

But the U.N. does not have credible evidence that Iran has an operational nuclear weapons program, Mohamed ElBaradei of the International Atomic Energy Agency said Tuesday.

"Iran has been on the wrong side of the law in so far as to inform the agency at an earlier date," ElBaradei told CNN's sister station in India, CNN-IBN. "Iran was supposed to inform us on the day it was decided to construct the facility. They have not done that."

Still, he said, "I do not think based on what we see that Iran has an ongoing [nuclear](#) weapons program."  [Watch uproar over Iran's nuclear ambitions >](#)

Iran has previously denied breaking the law.

"According to the [IAEA's] current governing rules, there was no urgency in reporting anything about this installation and we could have not announced it, but we did so on order to contribute to trust-building and transparency and we did so much sooner than the required time," Ali Akbar Salehi, director of the Iranian Atomic Energy Agency, said Sunday.

ElBaradei's comments came ahead of an expected meeting Thursday between Iran's nuclear negotiator, Saeed Jalili, and representatives of the five permanent U.N. Security Council members, plus Germany.

Don't Miss

- [Iran to give IAEA inspection timetable](#)
- [U.S. to Iran: Prove your nuclear program is peaceful](#)

The meeting is scheduled to take place in Geneva, Switzerland.

Last week, Iran wrote a letter to the IAEA revealing the existence of the facility. The admission prompted U.S. President Obama and the leaders of Britain and France to chide the Islamic republic publicly and threaten further sanctions.

Iran claims its nuclear enrichment program is intended for peaceful purposes, but the international community accuses the country of

continuing to try to develop nuclear weapons capability.

The facility is located on a military base near the city of Qom, about 100 miles (160 kilometers) southwest of Tehran, and is thought to be capable of housing 3,000 centrifuges, according to the officials and the [IAEA](#).

That is not enough to produce nuclear fuel to power a reactor, but sufficient to manufacture bomb-making material, according to a U.S. diplomatic source who read the letter.

Iran has said there is no nuclear material at the site. It announced Tuesday it will allow the IAEA to inspect the facility but did not offer a timetable.

"But we need to go and impress on him that we need to go, our inspector needs to go and inspect the facility and establish the facts, to discuss with them," ElBaradei said.

Gwynne Dyer: Sanctions against Iran now seem inevitable

4:00AM Tuesday Sep 29, 2009

By [Gwynne Dyer](#)



Analysts believe this satellite photo of a site on a military base near Qom, Iran, is most likely the location of the newly revealed centrifuge facility. Photo / AP/ GeoEye Satellite Image, IHS Jane's Analysis

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Your Views Should Iran be allowed to continue with its nuclear programme?

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The Iranians have been watching too many *James Bond* movies.

If you want to hide a secret uranium enrichment plant, you should bury it under some existing structure in the heart of the city.

Hollowing out a mountain just attracts the attention of every intelligence service in the world.

They start watching as soon as the first approach road shows up on the satellite photos.

Western intelligence agencies have known about Iran's second uranium enrichment plant, hidden in the mountains west of Qom, since construction began in 2006.

Amazingly, it took until now for Iran's spooks to realise that and warn Tehran to come clean.

The Iranian government has delivered a letter to the International Atomic Energy Agency admitting that the plant existed.

Hiding things always causes suspicion. "The revelation of this second nuclear enrichment site ... proves beyond any doubt that [Iran] wants to equip itself with nuclear weapons," said Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman.

The Qom discovery also brought Russian President Dmitry Medvedev around to the view that, "in some cases, sanctions are inevitable".

The United States, Britain, France and Germany were already convinced that Iran is working on nuclear weapons, and Russia makes five.

Out of the six countries negotiating with Iran (the five permanent members of the Security Council plus Germany), only China is still holding out, but it is starting to waver.

The test-firing of missiles by Iran's Revolutionary Guards this week can only heighten tensions.

Next Thursday's meeting between Iran and the Six may not be followed immediately by sanctions, but they are coming soon.

Yet it is still not clear that Iran is actually seeking nuclear weapons.

The religious leadership regularly declares them "un-Islamic".

On the other hand, the country has been facing the threat of attack by the United States or Israel, using conventional or even nuclear

weapons, for decades.

During the 1980s, the actual attacks on Iran were carried out by Saddam Hussein's Iraq, but with Washington's blessing.

It was the Reagan administration that gave Saddam access to the poison gas, and Reagan also lent Baghdad the US Air Force photo-interpreters who told Saddam which Iranian targets to hit.

It was the trigger-happy crew of the US missile cruiser Vincennes, operating illegally in Iranian waters, who mistakenly shot down Iran Air flight 655 in 1988, killing all 290 civilian passengers aboard.

And while neither the US nor its allies have attacked Iran directly for the past 20 years, the rhetoric about Iran coming out of Washington has been consistent: "rogue state"; "axis of evil"; "all the options are on the table".

So it's hardly surprising that the Iranians decided on a back-up site for uranium enrichment in case their main enrichment plant at Natanz was destroyed.

However, the site near Qom is much smaller, and could not supply the large quantities of slightly enriched uranium that a nuclear power station requires.

What it could do is supply the small quantities of highly enriched uranium that a nuclear weapons programme requires.

Many people therefore think that the Iranians meant to keep the Qom facility secret permanently, enriching uranium for nuclear weapons there while everybody monitored their innocent activities at Natanz.

Others, including myself, think that the secondary site near Qom is meant to give Iran the option of going flat-out for nuclear weapons if the United States or Israel attacks and destroys the main enrichment site at Natanz.

Both of these possible rationales were pretty stupid, since there was really no way that the Qom site could stay secret.

But it does matter which of those motives underlay the Qom site.

Was it to build secret nuclear weapons as soon as possible, or to have the ability to build nuclear weapons if attacked?

The probable answer, given the regime's theological objections to nuclear weapons, is that it genuinely wants an independent source of fuel for its civil nuclear power programme, since it has repeatedly been targeted by embargoes and sanctions in the past.

And it also wants the ability to produce nuclear weapons within six to 12 months if it is attacked. A number of other countries have sought and attained such a "threshold capability" over the years, and it is perfectly legal.

Maybe it shouldn't be legal, but under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty it is.

The current crisis is occurring because some countries believe Iran intends to go beyond that legal threshold, and actually make nuclear weapons now.

They are the same countries that mistakenly thought Iraq had weapons of mass destruction and invaded it in 2003.

They may be wrong this time, too.

Some governments will argue that Iran has already crossed that legal threshold by keeping the Qom site secret from the atomic energy agency.

Under the normal non-proliferation treaty rules, it would only have to declare the site six months before it actually starts processing uranium there, but in 2003 Iran voluntarily signed the so-called Subsidiary Arrangement, under which it promised to inform the agency of new nuclear facilities in the design stage.

It subsequently repudiated that extra obligation, but the IAEA says it cannot do so unilaterally.

So maybe Iran has now broken the law, or maybe it hasn't.

But sanctions are now almost certain, and the odds on this ending in US or Israeli military strikes on Iran just got a lot shorter.

*** Gwynne Dyer is a London-based independent journalist whose articles are published in 45 countries.**

29 September 2009 11:58 UK

Iran promises inspection 'soon'



Iran insists its nuclear programme is for peaceful energy purposes

Iran has said it will soon inform the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) of a timetable for inspection of its second uranium enrichment plant.

The head of Iran's atomic energy body was quoted as saying that it would resolve the issue with the UN body.

Meanwhile China called for restraint ahead of talks between Iran and the five permanent UN Security Council members plus Germany on 1 October.

Iran revealed the second plant, thought to be near Qom, on 21 September.

The IAEA had requested "specific information and access to the facility as soon as possible" after receiving the letter from Tehran admitting to the existence of the plant.

Iran told the agency that no nuclear material had been introduced into the "new pilot fuel enrichment plant" which it said was still under construction.

“ We hope relevant countries can make efforts for the relaxation of the situation instead of doing things to the contrary ”

Jiang Yu
Chinese Foreign Ministry
[Q&A: Iran and the nuclear issue](#)
[Talks herald new phase for Iran](#)

It also said that enrichment levels would only be high enough to make nuclear fuel, not a bomb.

Tougher sanctions

China's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu said she hoped that there would be a "relaxation of the situation".

"We hope relevant countries can make efforts. We support the maintenance of the international non-proliferation regime and uphold the proper handling of the issue through negotiations," she said.

Her comments came amid tensions between Iran and the West that have escalated yet further in the days leading up the talks in Geneva.

Iran has test-fired a series of medium- and longer-range missiles that put Israel, parts of Europe and US bases in the Gulf within potential striking range.

The White House called the move "provocative" but Iran's foreign ministry said the tests were merely part of an annual military drill, and were not a reaction to the nuclear crisis.

Iran insists that all its nuclear facilities are for peaceful energy purposes and refutes accusations from the US and others that it is seeking a nuclear weapon.

President Obama has hinted at pursuing tougher sanctions against Tehran if progress over the crisis is not made.

Russia recently signalled it might be prepared to soften its opposition to further sanctions.

China, which is also a permanent Security Council member, has said such pressure would not be effective.

28 September 2009 09:33 UK

Iran tests longest-range missiles



The Shahab-3 has a 2,000km range

Iran has successfully test-fired some of the longest range missiles in its arsenal, state media says.

The Revolutionary Guards tested the Shahab-3 and Sajjil rockets, which are believed to have ranges of up to 2,000km (1,240 miles), reports said.

The missiles' range could potentially reach Israel and US bases in the Gulf, analysts say.

The tests come amid heightened tension with the big international powers over Iran's nuclear ambitions.

Last week, Iran disclosed it was building a second uranium enrichment plant, despite UN demands that it cease its enrichment activities.

Iran is due to hold crucial talks with the five UN Security Council members plus Germany on Thursday on a wide range of security issues, including its nuclear programme.

'Secret plant'

"Iran successfully test-fires long-range Shahab 3 missile," Iran's Press TV said in a breaking news headline.

MAXIMUM MISSILE RANGE

Shahab-3b: 2,500km

Sajjil-1 and 2: 2,000km

Shahab-3a: 1,800km

Shahab-3: 1,300km

Shahab-2: 500km

Zelzal: up to 400km

Fateh: 170km

Tondar: 150km

Sources: GlobalSecurity.org,

AFP, Jane's,

Arms Control Association

[Iran's arsenal of missiles](#)

[Slow but sure missile advance](#)

Shortly after, the Fars news agency reported that a second missile, the two-stage Sajjil, was tested.

These tests are part of several days of military war game exercises known as Sacred Defence Week.

On Sunday, the medium-range Shahab-1 and 2 missiles with a range of 300 to 700km (186 to 434 miles) were tested.

The short-range Tondar-69 and Fateh-110 type, with a range of up to 170km (100 miles), were also tested.

But the BBC's Tehran correspondent Jon Leyne says that the testing of the longer range missiles will be of most concern to the West.

The Shahab-3 and Sajjil rockets are believed to be capable of reaching not only Israel and US bases in the Gulf, but also parts of Europe including Turkey.

Although the tests will have been planned in advance, Iran is unlikely to be unhappy if they are seen as a gesture of defiance by the West, our correspondent adds.

Iran is under increasingly pressure to co-operate fully over its nuclear ambitions - particularly since the revelation of a previously undisclosed uranium enrichment plant.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has insisted that the plant, near the holy city of Qom, does not breach UN regulations and says it is open for inspection by UN experts.

But leaders of the US, Britain and France accuse Tehran of keeping the plant secret in breach of UN rules.

They have raised the prospect of new, tougher sanctions against Iran if Thursday's meeting with the so-called P5+1 (US, UK, France, China, Russia and Germany) yields little progress.

U.S. to Iran: Prove your nuclear program is peaceful

- * Story Highlights
- * NEW: Sen. Jon Kyl says says he has no doubt Iran is trying to build a nuke
- * Newly revealed Iranian facility is illicit, Defense Secretary Gates tells CNN
- * Hillary Clinton challenges Iran to prove the plant is for peaceful purposes
- * Iranian official is quoted as saying U.S. charges are part of a propaganda ploy

updated 1 hour, 42 minutes ago

WASHINGTON (CNN) -- The United States wants Iran to provide international inspectors with full access to a newly disclosed underground uranium enrichment plant that Obama administration officials say is both illegal and probably intended for developing weapons.

"Don't assert it. Prove it," Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said of Iran's insistence its nuclear ambitions are peaceful.

"Don't assert it. Prove it," Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said of Iran's insistence its nuclear ambitions are peaceful.

However, an Iranian official called U.S. accusations about the planned

facility -- which Iran disclosed to the International Atomic Energy Agency last week -- a propaganda effort to discredit his country before crucial talks with the international community on its nuclear energy program.

Ali Akbar Salehi, director of the Iranian Atomic Energy Agency, called the new facility at the Qom site "very small" and "a back-up installation," the official Iranian news agency IRNA reported Sunday.

Salehi repeated earlier assertions that Iran complied with all international regulations in reporting the existence of the planned site, according to the IRNA report.

Two U.S. administration officials told CNN on Sunday that the United States plans to tell Iran this week it must provide "unfettered access" to the Qom site, the people involved in its construction and the timeline of its construction "within weeks."

The latest dispute comes ahead of planned talks Thursday involving Iran and the United States, Britain, Germany, France, Russia, and China about international concern over Iran's nuclear ambitions.

In interviews broadcast Sunday, top U.S. officials said Iran's newly revealed underground nuclear facility violates international requirements for reporting such operations, reinforcing the perception that Iran is trying to hide a weapons program.

Don't Miss

- * Iran tests missiles amid nuclear tension
- * Ahmadinejad rejects charges about nuclear efforts
- * Iran scenarios: 'Political damage' or diplomatic gains?
- * Officials: Obama shared info on Iran nuke site

"I think that, certainly, the intelligence people have no doubt that ... this is an illicit nuclear facility, if only ... because the Iranians kept it a secret," Defense Secretary Robert Gates said on CNN's "State of the Union" program.

"If they wanted it for peaceful nuclear purposes, there's no reason to put it so deep underground, no reason to be deceptive about it, keep it a ... secret for a protracted period of time," Gates said in the interview recorded Friday.

In a separate interview on the CBS program "Face the Nation," Secretary of State Hillary Clinton called for the strongest possible sanctions if Iran can't prove a peaceful intent for the newly disclosed facility and its entire nuclear program.

"It would have been disclosed if it were for peaceful purposes," said Clinton, who also was interviewed Friday. She added that Iran must do more than provide assurances at the meeting on Thursday, because past assurances proved false.

"They can open up their entire system to the kind of extensive investigation that the facts call for," Clinton said. Later, she said: "The Iranians keep insisting no, no, that's for peaceful purposes. That's fine. Prove it. Don't assert it. Prove it."

Clinton acknowledged that the United States knew of the previously undisclosed Iranian enrichment plant before Iran reported its existence to the IAEA.

After the interview with Clinton took place on Friday, Iran announced it would allow international inspection of the plant and said it met international guidelines for disclosing such a facility. Iran also repeated its insistence that its nuclear program is for peaceful energy production.

In the IRNA report on Sunday, Salehi noted that U.S. officials called the planned Qom facility secret even though they admitted knowing about it before Iran notified the IAEA.

"They wanted to make this news public at a time that would yield them most [political] gain," he said, adding later: "We never intended to show our power but the creation of this installation, in the heart of the mountain in case of an eventual attack, is in and of itself an achievement."

Gates and members of Congress from both parties said Iran's history of dishonesty over its nuclear program and the belligerent pronouncements of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad raised questions about such promises. Video Watch Gates talk about secret Iranian nuclear facility »

"I've got one rule of thumb: If the president of a country denies the Holocaust, you should believe the worst," said Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-South Carolina, on the CBS show.

Graham said a military strike by the United States and its allies on Iranian nuclear facilities should be a last resort, after sanctions by the international community. Gates, who was defense secretary under President George W. Bush and stayed on when President Obama took office in January, agreed that sanctions could bring the needed change in behavior.

"The reality is, there is no military option that does anything more than buy time," Gates said in the interview conducted Friday. "The estimates are one to three years or so. And the only way you end up not having a nuclear-capable Iran is for the Iranian government to decide that their security is diminished by having those weapons, as opposed to strengthened. And so I think, as I say, while you don't take options off the table, I think there's still room left for diplomacy."

Gates said "a variety of options" remained available, including sanctions on banking and equipment and technology for Iran's oil and gas industry.

The Pentagon chief acknowledged that "China's participation is clearly important" in an effort to impose economic sanctions on Iran for flouting international rules for the development of nuclear enrichment facilities.

Gates and Clinton both said that the upcoming talks offered the group of six world powers the opportunity for some potential "leverage" over the Iranians.

"I think we are all sensitive to the possibility of the Iranians trying to run the clock out on us... So nobody thinks of this as an open-ended process," Gates said.

In her interview, Clinton acknowledged that current sanctions against Iran's nuclear program were "leaky." She said the international coalition meeting with Iran could strengthen the sanctions effort, similar to the international backing for recent new sanctions against North Korea.

Senators on both sides of the aisle also expressed support for tough sanctions against Iran on Sunday. Video Watch senators discuss how to deal with Iran »

Sen. Evan Bayh, D-Indiana, advocated for "more sticks ... than carrots" in dealing with Iran in the upcoming talks.

"We've tried a variety of inducements to the Iranians over the years," Bayh said on CNN's "State of the Union." "Frankly, none of that has worked. What they respect more than anything is strength. They're contemptuous of weakness . . . So I think it needs to be mainly stiff economic and financial sanctions, with the possibility of other options lurking in the background if they don't change their behavior."

On NBC's "Meet the Press," Sen. Jon Kyl, R-Arizona, said he has no doubt Iran is trying to build a nuclear weapon.
advertisement

"And the question is: How do you get in there to see fully what they're doing and find a way to stop it? Without international support, it's very hard," Kyl said.

"But we haven't even exhausted the possibilities for unilateral U.S. sanctions," the senator said, adding, "what we're trying to do here eventually is to get a regime change with a group of people in there that are more representative of the Iranian people, who we really can talk with in a way that might end up with a good result." 27 September 2009 09:36 UK

Iran missile tests stoke tensions



The missiles tested are believed to have short ranges

Iran has tested two short-range missiles and announced plans for a controversial long-range missile test, state TV reports.

It says the short-range missiles were the Tondar and Fateh, with a reported range of up to 170km (100 miles).

Tehran said it would test a long-range Shahab-3 missile, believed to be capable of reaching Israel, on Monday.

The tests come amid mounting tensions between Iran and the West over Tehran's nuclear ambitions.

The tests are likely to be seen as a gesture of defiance by Iran, says the BBC's Tehran correspondent, Jon Leyne.

Earlier this week, Iran disclosed that it was building a second uranium enrichment plant, despite UN demands it cease its enrichment activities.

MAXIMUM MISSILE RANGE

Shahab-3b: 2,500km

Sajjil-1 and 2: 2,000km

Shahab-3a: 1,800km

Shahab-3: 1,300km

Shahab-2: 500km

Zelzal: up to 400km

Fateh: 170km

Tondar: 150km

Sources: *GlobalSecurity.org*,

AFP, Jane's,

Arms Control Association

Iran's arsenal of missiles

[Slow but sure missile advance](#)

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad insisted that the plant, near the holy city of Qom, did not breach UN regulations and said it was open for inspection by UN experts.

But leaders of the US, Britain and France accused Tehran of keeping the plant secret in breach of UN rules.

They raised the prospect of new, tougher sanctions against Iran if it does not fully co-operate with global powers.

Iran is due to meet with representatives of the so-called P5 + 1 on 1 October to discuss a range of issues, including its nuclear plans. The P5 + 1 groups together the five permanent members of the UN Security Council - the US, Russia, China, the UK and France - along with Germany.

'Mock targets'

Iran's state-run al-Alam and Press TV channels said on Sunday that the short-range missiles test-fired during military exercises were of Tondar-69 and Fateh-110 type.

ANALYSIS



BBC Tehran correspondent Jon Leyne

It's not the first time the Shahab missile has

been tested but it's still likely to provoke condemnation in Western capitals.

Rightly or not this will be seen as a gesture of defiance by Iran.

It comes two days after the existence was revealed of a previously undisclosed nuclear plant, though the test itself is likely to have been planned well in advance.

It aired footage of a missile launch in desert-like terrain, without giving specifics on the range of the missiles or other details.

Western defence experts believe the Fateh, or Conqueror, missile has a range of up to 170km (100 miles), while the Tondar (Thunder) can travel up to 150km (93 miles).

Iran says the Shahab-3 (Meteor-3), which was first tested in July 2008, can fly some 2,000km, which makes it capable of hitting Israel and US bases in the Gulf.

However, Western defence experts believe it could strike targets up to 1,300km (807 miles) away.

The experts say Iran's claim of the longer range could indicate that the 2008 test involved a newer, modified version of the Shahab 3, perhaps the rumoured Shahab 3b, which Iran says would have a range of up to 2,500km (1553 miles).

Many believe Iran is attempting to develop its Shahab missiles to carry nuclear warheads, but analysts say perfecting this ability is a complex process.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards announced on Saturday they would begin war games - codenamed The Great Prophet IV - to "improve the Islamic Republic armed forces' defence capabilities".

26 September 2009 22:19 UK

US welcomes Iran inspection offer



Western powers have been urging Iran to allow access to the site

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has welcomed Iran's decision to admit international inspectors to its newly revealed uranium

enrichment plant.

Speaking to reporters in New York, Mrs Clinton said it was always welcome when Iran decided to comply with international rules and regulations.

The US, France and UK accused Tehran of deception after it admitted to the plant's existence.

Iran says the site, near the city of Qom, is in line with UN regulations.

It maintains it wants atomic power only for the production of electricity.

But the revelations have raised tension ahead of next Thursday's talks between Iran and six global powers negotiating over Tehran's atomic programme.

Earlier Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman said the disclosure proved Iran wanted to equip itself with nuclear weapons" and that Israel wanted to see an "unequivocal" Western response to the development.

'Very hopeful'

IRAN'S NUCLEAR SITES



Iran insists nuclear facilities are for energy, not military purposes

Bushehr: Nuclear power plant

Isfahan: Uranium conversion plant

Natanz: Uranium enrichment plant, 4,592 working centrifuges, with 3,716 more installed

Qom: Second enrichment plant, not yet operational

Arak: Heavy water plant

[Key nuclear sites in detail](#)

[Q&A: Iran and the nuclear issue](#)

[Strategy fuels fears](#)

Iranian atomic energy chief Ali Akbar Salehi said on Saturday that inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) could visit the new site under Non-Proliferation Treaty rules.

Mrs Clinton said after meeting foreign ministers from Gulf countries: "It is always welcome when Iran makes a decision to comply with the international rules and regulations, and particularly with respect to the

IAEA.

"We are very hopeful that, in preparing for the meeting on October 1, Iran comes and shares with all of us what they are willing to do and give us a timetable on which they are willing to proceed."

The secretary of state's remarks came hours after President Barack Obama said he remained open to "serious, meaningful dialogue" with Iran to resolve the issue.

Failure to comply with inspectors could lead to tough international sanctions, he said.

On Friday, President Obama, French President Nicolas Sarkozy and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown demanded that Iran allow UN inspectors into the second site.

Subsidiary arrangement

Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said on Friday that Tehran had conformed to IAEA rules, by informing the agency about the site a year earlier than it needed to.

Obama: 'Iran must now co-operate fully'

But BBC world affairs correspondent Paul Reynolds says there is a dispute about the amount of notice that Iran is required to give the IAEA before a new nuclear facility becomes operational.

In 2003, Iran agreed on what is called a Subsidiary Arrangement, under which it is required to tell the IAEA at the preliminary design stage.

Iran later announced that it had repudiated this agreement, but the IAEA says that no unilateral repudiation is allowed.

On Saturday, the chief of staff for Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said the second enrichment plant would "become operational soon".

Meanwhile Iranian media reported that the elite Revolutionary Guards would start missile defence exercises on Sunday, in a move which seems guaranteed to increase tensions further.

25 September 2009 22:45 UK

Iran defiant amid new nuclear row



Ahmadinejad said Iran worked within rules set by the UN

Iran's newly-revealed nuclear facility is open for inspection by UN experts, the country's president has said.

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad insisted that the plant, thought to be under construction near the holy city of Qom, was being built in line with UN regulations.

Leaders of the US, UK and France have accused Iran of building a new plant to enrich uranium, in breach of UN rules.

They raised the prospect of new, tough sanctions against Iran if it does not fully co-operate with global powers.

However, at a news conference in New York, where he has been attending the United Nations General Assembly, Mr Ahmadinejad firmly rebutted the Western criticism.

Those leaders who had complained about the plant had made a big mistake and would regret the move, he said.

"We don't have any problems with inspections of the facility. We have no fears," he said, referring to calls for immediate access to the site by inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the UN watchdog.

**“ Mr Obama is not a nuclear expert.
We have to leave it to the IAEA to carry
out its duties
”**

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad
Iranian president

[Full text: Leaders' comments](#)

[Reaction to Western comments](#)

[Send us your comments](#)

He justified Iran's apparent concealment of the plant by saying there were no international requirements to declare any nuclear facility until 180 days before fissile material was introduced into it.

There was a flat denial of the claims - by US President Barack Obama, French President Nicolas Sarkozy and UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown - that the plant was a secret facility.

"If it was, why would we have informed the IAEA about it a year ahead of time?" Mr Ahmadinejad was reported as saying.

He reiterated Tehran's position that Iran was not interested in developing nuclear weapons, describing them as "against humanity".

'Serial deception'

Mr Ahmadinejad spoke out hours after Mr Obama, Mr Sarkozy and Mr Brown took to the stage in Pittsburgh - site of a G20 summit - to condemn the building of the new plant.

Iran's decision to build a secret facility represented a "direct challenge to the basic compact" of the global non-proliferation regime, Mr Obama said.

ANALYSIS



BBC World Affairs correspondent Paul Reynolds

Iranian ambitions for this site are not known. It could be that they wanted a back-up in case their main plant at Natanz was attacked. But another fear is that they intended to enrich uranium more highly at the secret plant, to a level suitable for a nuclear explosion.

The discovery will strengthen the demands by the US and its allies for further sanctions to be imposed on Iran unless it suspends all enrichment, as required by the Security Council.

[Iran on defensive over secret site](#)

Despite Iran's assertions that the facility was for peaceful purposes, the new plant was "not consistent" with that goal, the US president said.

Speaking after Mr Obama, Mr Brown accused the Iranians of "serial deception" and said: "Iran must abandon any military ambitions for its nuclear programme."

Mr Sarkozy described the situation as a challenge to the entire international community.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said he was "seriously concerned", and China urged Iran to work within the IAEA framework.

Talks due

The existence of Iran's first enrichment plant, at Natanz, was only confirmed after intelligence emerged from Iranian exile groups several years ago.

Western governments are said to have known of the existence of the new enrichment plant for some time.

In Washington, US officials said the Western nations decided to reveal their intelligence assessments when the Iranians realised the plant's secrecy was compromised.

IRAN'S NUCLEAR SITES



Iran insists that all its nuclear facilities are for energy, not military purposes

Bushehr: Nuclear power plant

Isfahan: Uranium conversion plant

Natanz: Uranium enrichment plant, 4,592 working centrifuges, with 3,716 more installed

Second enrichment plant: Existence revealed to IAEA in Sept 2009. Separate reports say it is near Qom, and not yet operational

Arak: Heavy water plant

[Key nuclear sites in detail](#)

The new facility is said to be underground at a mountain on the site of a former missile site belonging to the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, north-east of the holy city of Qom.

Construction on the facility - believed by the US to be large enough to contain 3,000 centrifuges, not large enough for commercial work - started in earnest in mid-2006, diplomatic sources said.

Iran's letter to the UN watchdog, the IAEA, on Monday informed it that "a new pilot fuel enrichment plant is under construction".

Iran told the agency that no nuclear material had been introduced into the plant, and enrichment levels would only be high enough to make nuclear fuel, not a bomb.

In response, the IAEA requested Iran to "provide specific information and access to the facility as soon as possible".

The disclosure of the new plant comes one day after world leaders stressed the need for greater co-operation against nuclear proliferation and shortly before Iran is due to resume talks with international powers on the issue.

Earlier this month, Tehran agreed to "comprehensive" discussions on a range of security issues - but made no mention of its own nuclear programme.

The talks are due to be held in Geneva on 1 October with Tehran and the five permanent UN Security Council members - US, UK, Russia, China and France - plus Germany.

25 September 2009 19:39 UK

Iran 'concealed nuclear facility'

US President Barack Obama: 'Iran must act immediately'

Iran concealed a partially-built second uranium enrichment plant in defiance of calls for transparency over its nuclear plans, US President Barack Obama says.

The US, UK and France said the UN had to be given immediate access and urged tough new sanctions, while Russia also said it was "seriously concerned".

But Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad denied that the facility was in breach of IAEA rules.

The Western leaders would regret their statements, he added.

Iran told the UN about the plant on Monday, saying it was not operational yet and would provide nuclear energy.

Tehran has previously acknowledged it has one enrichment plant, at Natanz.

“ **Iran must abandon any military ambitions for its nuclear programme** ”

Gordon Brown
UK Prime Minister

[Full text: Leaders' comments](#)

[Israel restrained but determined](#)

[Send us your comments](#)

Iran's decision to build a secret facility represented a "direct challenge to the basic compact" of the global non-proliferation regime, US President Barack Obama said, making a statement in Pittsburgh, where he is hosting a G20 summit.

Despite Iran's assertions that the facility was for peaceful purposes, the new plant was "not consistent" with that goal, the US president said.

'Line in the sand'

Speaking alongside UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown and French President Nicolas Sarkozy, Mr Obama said it was time for Iran to begin meeting its international commitments.

ANALYSIS



BBC World Affairs correspondent Paul Reynolds

Iranian ambitions for this site are not known. It could be that they wanted a back-up in case their main plant at Natanz was attacked. But another fear is that they intended to enrich uranium more highly at the secret plant, to a level suitable for a nuclear explosion.

The discovery will strengthen the demands by the US and its allies for further sanctions to be imposed on Iran unless it suspends all enrichment, as required by the Security Council.

[Iran on defensive over secret site](#)

"Iran must comply with UN Security Council resolutions and make clear it is prepared to meet its responsibilities as a member of the community of nations," Mr Obama said.

Tehran would be held accountable for any failure to meet these responsibilities, he said.

Speaking after Mr Obama, the French and British leaders used strong language to insist that Iran would now have to disclose full details of its entire nuclear programme or face new and tougher sanctions.

Gordon Brown stressed that the US, France and UK were "at one" on the issue, and accused the Iranians of "serial deception".

There was now "no choice but to draw a line in the sand" over the nuclear issue, he said.

"Iran must abandon any military ambitions for its nuclear programme."

Mr Sarkozy said the situation was a challenge to the entire international community.

"Everything must be put on the table," the French president said, adding that the world needed to see a "step change" from Iran in the coming months.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, informed of the plant's existence by Mr Obama this week, said the second plant was against the requirements of UN Security Council resolutions.

Iran must co-operate fully with the UN watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr Medvedev said.

China also said Iran should work with the UN watchdog, a foreign ministry spokesman said in Pittsburgh.

Underground plant

Speaking in New York, where he has been attending the UN General Assembly, Iran's President Ahmadinejad struck a defiant tone after the Pittsburgh proclamations.

"It's not a secret site. If it was, why would we have informed the IAEA about it a year ahead of time?" he said.

Ahmadinejad: 'We work within the framework of the IAEA'

He insisted Iran was acting within the boundaries of IAEA rules, saying it does not need to inform the agency of any new site until 180 days before any nuclear material is placed within it.

The existence of Iran's first enrichment plant, at Natanz, was only confirmed after intelligence emerged from Iranian exile groups several years ago.

Western governments are said to have known of the existence of the new enrichment plant for some time. Mr Obama was first told about it during the "transition" period before he took office in January, officials say.

In Washington, US officials said the Western nations decided to reveal their intelligence assessments when the Iranians realised the plant's secrecy was compromised.

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In response, the IAEA has requested Iran to "provide specific information and access to the facility as soon as possible", an IAEA statement adds.

The disclosure of the new plant comes one day after world leaders stressed the need for greater co-operation against nuclear proliferation and shortly before

Iran is due to resume talks with international powers on the issue.

Since taking office in January, Mr Obama has told Tehran that he is ready for direct talks on the nuclear issue, but has had no firm response from Iran.

Earlier this month, Tehran agreed to "comprehensive" talks on a range of security issues - but made no mention of its own nuclear programme.

The talks are due to be held in Geneva on 1 October with Tehran and the five permanent UN Security Council members - US, UK, Russia, China and France - plus Germany.

25 September 2009 09:13 UK

Iran 'has second enrichment site'



The Natanz enrichment plant is a key part of Iran's nuclear programme

Iran has revealed to the UN nuclear watchdog the existence of a second uranium enrichment plant, reports say.

Tehran made the announcement in a letter to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief Mohammed ElBaradei, sources are quoted as saying.

Iran has previously acknowledged it has one enrichment plant at Natanz, some 250km (150 miles) south of Tehran.

Iran is supposed to have stopped all enrichment under threat of sanctions from the UN Security Council.

News of the Iranian letter comes days before Iran is due to enter fresh talks over its controversial nuclear programme.

Diplomats close to the IAEA said Mr ElBaradei received the letter from Iran earlier this week, the Associated Press and Reuters reports.

Speaking to the BBC, the IAEA would neither confirm nor deny the reports, saying only that it was taking a serious look at the information.

If confirmed, the development would encourage fears that Iran has other secret facilities that could be used to make a nuclear bomb, the BBC's Tehran correspondent, Jon Leyne, says in London.

Iran has always insisted its nuclear programme is for peaceful means.

But the US and other Western nations fear Tehran is planning to develop an atomic weapon.

22 September 2009 23:38 UK

Iran tests new nuclear technology



The Natanz enrichment plant is a key part of Iran's nuclear programme

Iran says it has built a new generation of centrifuges for enriching uranium, and is testing them.

The head of Iran's nuclear agency made the announcement but did not say when they would be ready to go into production at the Natanz atomic plant.

Centrifuges can be used to produce fuel for nuclear power and also to make nuclear weapons.

The announcement comes a few days before Iran enters fresh talks on its controversial nuclear programme.

"Our scientists have built a new generation of centrifuges, and cascades with 10 centrifuges each are now being tested," said Ali Akbar Salehi, head of the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran, according to the semi-official Fars news agency.

Timing

Mr Salehi said the new centrifuges could enrich uranium with "more than five times the output capacity" of earlier centrifuges and Iran "plans to raise this capacity to 10 times", Fars reported.

The BBC's Tehran correspondent Jon Leyne, who is now in London, says it has been known for two years that Iran was working on upgrading this technology.

The fact that Iran made this announcement a few days before new talks might be seen either as a gesture of defiance, or perhaps as a way of Iran trying to increase its bargaining power, our correspondent adds.

Iran insists that its nuclear programme is for peaceful means, despite international concern that it is trying to develop an atomic weapon.

Six world powers are to hold talks with Iran in Geneva on 1 October.

20 September 2009 21:21 UK

Khamenei 'rejects' nuclear bombs



The US remains anti-Iranian, said Ayatollah Khamenei

Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has denied Western claims that Iran intends to develop nuclear arms.

"We fundamentally reject nuclear weapons and prohibit the production and the use of nuclear weapons," he said in a speech broadcast on state television.

The Iranian leader said the US knows it is "wrong" when it asserts Tehran is pursuing a covert nuclear bomb.

The US and five other countries are to hold talks with Iran shortly on a range of issues, including nuclear armaments.

The supreme leader's comments are the first official response to the United State's decision to scrap a European missile initiative, a plan put forward by the former Bush administration to counter, in part, any long-range Iranian missile threat.

"They [the US] falsely accuse the Islamic republic of producing nuclear weapons," said Ayatollah Khamenei.

"Despite friendly messages and words", the current US government was anti-Iranian, he said.

Iran has always denied assertions from the US, Israel and other European powers that it is seeking to build nuclear arms.

Tehran insists its uranium enrichment initiative is helping establish a purely peaceful civilian nuclear energy programme.

International talks with Iran are scheduled for 1 October.

The United States, Russia, the UK, France, China and Germany are set to attend.

The European Union says it expects the meeting to take place in Turkey.

18 September 2009 04:31 UK

Iran 'does not need' nuclear arms



Iran says its nuclear programme is for energy generation

The Iranian president has said his country sees no need for nuclear weapons, while insisting Iran will not abandon its pursuit of nuclear energy.

In an interview with US network NBC Mahmoud Ahmadinejad did not explicitly rule out the possibility that Iran would acquire nuclear weapons.

He said simply that such weapons were "not a part of our programs and plans".

Western powers maintain Iran is covertly developing nuclear arms, a charge Iran denies.

They have called on Iran to suspend its programme of uranium enrichment, which Tehran says is entirely peaceful.

Mr Ahmadinejad is due to address the UN General Assembly next week, and Iran is due to hold fresh talks on its nuclear programme with world powers next month.

Protest alert

In his interview with NBC, Mr Ahmadinejad said his country would not yield to pressure from the UN, the US and European states.

"If you are talking about the enrichment of uranium for peaceful purposes, this will never be closed down here in Iran," he was quoted as saying.

Asked repeatedly whether there were any conditions under which Iran would develop a nuclear weapon, Mr Ahmadinejad each time replied that Iran had no use for such arms.

"We don't need nuclear weapons," he said.

"Without such weapons, we are very much able to defend ourselves."

The Iranian leader also defended the conduct of Iran's disputed presidential elections in June.

Mr Ahmadinejad claimed victory, but opposition supporters who claimed the vote was rigged staged mass protests.

Dozens of people were killed in the resulting crackdown.

Iran's election laws are built on "the strongest... foundations," the president said, and "the law prevails. I don't see any problems."

In the Iranian capital, Tehran, security forces were on alert on Friday for an annual pro-Palestinian march that was expected to draw opposition leaders and their supporters.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards Corps said it would deal "decisively" with any effort to stage an opposition protest.

20 May 2009 14:40 UK

Iran's arsenal of missiles

Iran's missile programme has hit the headlines again with the announcement that it has successfully launched a new medium-range rocket, capable of reaching Israel and southern Europe.



The Shahab-3 is Iran's most advanced and longest-range missile

However, the launch may have taught Western observers little they did not already know about the scope and potential firepower of Tehran's arsenal.

Iran says its missile development programme is solely for scientific, surveillance or defensive purposes but there are concerns in the West and among Iran's neighbours that the rockets could be used to carry nuclear weapons.

Analysts have previously suggested that Iran staged missile tests to reinforce the message that it was ready to hit back if Israel or the US - or both - launched any kind of military strike on its nuclear facilities.

Western analysts are guarded in many of their assessments of Iran's missile fleet, which is difficult to evaluate without access to concrete information.

However, London-based defence analyst Christopher Pang told the BBC that despite the attention it attracts, Iran lags far behind in its missile development.

A report on Iran's nuclear capabilities, released earlier in May 2009 by the EastWest Institute think tank, said that "with the components and technologies it now has, Iran could hypothetically build missiles with a range of 3,000km or more".

But the group said it would be at least another 10 to 15 years before Iran developed advanced intermediate-range ballistic missiles or intercontinental ballistic missiles to carry nuclear warheads.

Below are details of some of Iran's key missile systems as they are viewed by Western-based analysts.

SHAHAB-3

The Shahab-3, launched in July 2008, is the longest-range missile Iran has successfully tested in public.

Conventional wisdom in the US suggested the Shahab-3 could strike targets up to 1,300km (807 miles) away, but Iran's military boasted in the test that the Shahab had a range of 2,000km (1,240 miles).



Tensions mount over Iran

This longer range could indicate that the July test involved a newer, modified version of the Shahab-3, perhaps the rumoured Shahab-3b, which Iran says would have a range of up to 2,500km.

Either range would be enough to put targets in the Gulf and in Israel within reach, although the longer range version could be sited further from Israeli air bases.

The Shahab-3, classed as a medium range ballistic missile (MRBM), is widely thought to be based on the technology behind North Korea's No Dong missiles, but is produced and developed in Iran.

Many believe Iran is attempting to develop Shahab missiles to carry nuclear warheads, but analysts say perfecting this ability would be a complex process.

SAJJIL-1 AND SAJJIL-2

Iran first tested a Sajjil rocket in November 2008, describing it as a highly accurate, surface-to-surface weapon.



Iran said the Sajjil-2 made use of "advanced technology"

Defence Minister Mohammed Najjar said at the time that Sajjil was a two-stage defensive missile with an "extraordinarily large capability". But analysts says surface-to-surface missiles are primarily defensive.

The Sajjil is believed to have a range of about 2,000km (1,240 miles), giving it one of the longest ranges of Iran's arsenal. It runs on solid fuel, which is considered to give a more accurate delivery than liquid fuel rockets.

Its high launching speed means several can be fired in quick succession, says GlobalSecurity.org, a US-based website.

In May 2009, Iran said it had successfully tested a Sajjil-2 missile. Announcing the launch, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said the missile used "advanced technology" and had "landed exactly" on its intended target.

The launch came as campaigning opened in Iran's presidential elections and was designed to reinforce the idea of national unity and strength, said Christopher Pang.

"It is meant to demonstrate that Iran is incrementally progressing to more advanced, sophisticated and most importantly, indigenous missile technology," he said.

Mr Pang said the launch also sent a signal to the UN as it considers imposing a fourth round of sanctions on Iran, that Tehran will not be deterred from continuing its missile development programme.

SHAHAB-1 and SHAHAB-2

The predecessors to the Shahab-3, these are Scud-type missiles with shorter ranges than the more modern weapon.



The earlier Shahab missiles are less accurate and less deadly

The missiles are based on North Korean and/or Libyan technology. Iran is thought to have up to 150 Shabab-2 missiles and up to 300 of the Shahab-1, according to GlobalSecurity.org.

These earlier versions of the Shahab missile are smaller and carry lighter fuel and payloads than the Shahab-3.

Scud technology is now decades old, and early versions of the missile were first used by Iran during its war with Iraq in the 1980s. Saddam Hussein also fired Scud-type missiles at Israel during the 1991 Gulf War, causing damage but little loss of life.

The current Iranian Scud missiles have a maximum range of 500km (310 miles), according to GlobalSecurity.org.

ZELZAL



Iran could use smaller, lighter missiles against targets in Afghanistan

The Zelzal, which Iran's Revolutionary Guards also tested in July 2008, is a shorter range missile said to be capable of hitting targets up to about 400km away (250 miles), although figures vary.

The missile is said to have been used against suspected militant training camps in Iraq in the early 2000s, and is thought to have been delivered to the Lebanese militia group Hezbollah. The group has never confirmed or denied that it has the Zelzal.

FATEH

The other type of missile tested alongside the Shahab-3, the Fateh, or Conqueror, has an even shorter range than the Zelzal, of up to 170km (100 miles).

But while the focus of concerns tends to be on the possibility of a conflict between Iran and Israel, analysts have suggested that shorter-range missiles serve Iran's other strategic interests as well.

Fateh missiles, for example, could be used to target US military interests to the east of Iran, in Afghanistan.

SAFIR

MAXIMUM MISSILE RANGE

Shahab-3b: 2,500km

Sajjil-1 and 2: 2,000km

Shahab-3a: 1,800km

Shahab-3: 1,300km

Shahab-2: 500km

Zelzal: up to 400km

Fateh: 170km

Sources: GlobalSecurity.org,

AFP, Jane's

Iran launched a Safir rocket in August 2008 and said the tests showed the rocket was capable of carrying a satellite into space.

In February 2009, President Ahmadinejad said Iran had "officially achieved a presence in space" by using a Safir-2 rocket to put its first domestically built satellite, Omid, into a low orbit.

Analysts said the Safir-2 was basically the same as the Shahab-3, meaning each launch could be used to improve the rocket's reliability and so enhance Iran's missile technology.

UK Foreign Office minister Bill Rammell said the "dual applications for satellite launching technology" were a cause for concern.