

Iran Maintains Defiant Stance as Atomic Agency Takes Case

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TEHRAN, March 5 — [Iran](#) on Sunday reiterated its warning that it would begin making nuclear fuel on an industrial scale if the [United Nations](#) nuclear agency decided to send its case to the Security Council in its meeting on Monday.

The warning came a day before the start of a meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which will decide whether to send Iran's case to the Security Council for possible punitive actions.

The agency had demanded last month that Iran suspend its research and development program before the agency's meeting this week. But Iran brushed off the demand. The current Iranian program produces enriched uranium on a small scale. Enriched uranium can be used to make nuclear fuel; highly enriched uranium can be used to make nuclear weapons.

"If Iran's nuclear dossier is referred to the U.N. Security Council, uranium enrichment will be resumed," Iran's top nuclear negotiator, Ali Larijani, said at a news conference, referring to large-scale enrichment. "Nuclear research and development are part of Iran's national interests and sovereignty and we will not give them up."

"We will not accept the suspension of our research program," he said, "but we are willing to hold off on large-scale enrichment for a short period of time to remove concerns."

"This is our last proposal to end this standoff," he added.

European negotiators rejected the same proposal on Friday when Mr. Larijani offered it at a meeting in Vienna. "Europe will not accept such an offer because even a research program can give Iran the capability to develop nuclear weapons," said a Western diplomat in Tehran, speaking on condition of anonymity under diplomatic rules.

Justin Higgins, a State Department spokesman, said on Sunday, "This is only the latest in a long series of unhelpful statements and gestures that Iran has made with regard to its nuclear program."

Iran has so far rejected all international proposals for it to abandon its nuclear research program, including one made by Russia last week for uranium to be enriched by Russia on Russian soil and the fuel shipped back to Iran. The Russian proposal was backed by the United States and China.

Iran has warned that any sanctions against it could affect oil prices. But Mr. Larijani said Iran, which is OPEC's second-largest oil producer, would not use "oil as a weapon" because it respected the psychological security of the international community.

"But naturally if they change the situation that will automatically be affected, too," he warned, saying sanctions themselves, without any action by Iran, would affect prices.

He added that "sanctions will not affect us much, and some solutions have been thought about for those which would affect us."

The conservative daily Keyhan reported Sunday that a spy who had passed information to Americans about Iran's nuclear program for the past 10 years had been arrested. It said the man, who was not identified, had been arrested once before on the same charges but was released after he expressed regret.

The newspaper reported that another person accused of spying, an employee of the state telecommunication company, had been arrested and charged with selling fiber-optic telecommunications plans to the United States.

Tough Talk From Bolton on Iran

WASHINGTON, March 5 (Reuters) — [John R. Bolton](#), the American ambassador to the United Nations, said Sunday that Iran faced "painful consequences" if it continued secret nuclear activities, and he said the matter would become more difficult to resolve if the international community did not confront it.

Mr. Bolton also reaffirmed that the United States would use "all tools at our disposal" to thwart Iran's nuclear program and was already "beefing up defensive measures."

"The Iran regime must be made aware that if it continues down the path of international isolation, there will be tangible and painful consequences," he told 4,500 delegates to the convention of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the leading pro-Israel lobbying group.