



Written by on June 9, 2010

UN Votes for Sanctions Against Iran

Voice of America News reported on June 9 that the United Nations Security Council had voted to impose a fourth round of sanctions against Iran in response to the nation's controversial nuclear-fuel enrichment program.

Iran has reportedly begun the process of enriching uranium fuel to a 20-percent level of U-235 required for a reactor in Tehran that is used to make medical isotopes. Weapons-grade uranium is enriched to about 90 percent U-235.?? Twelve nations in the 15-member council voted in favor of the measure, with Brazil and Turkey voting "no" and Lebanon abstaining. VOA reported:



Shortly before the vote, representatives for both Brazil and Turkey explained why they opposed the measure. Brazil's ambassador said the adoption of sanctions would send the wrong signal.?? Turkey and Brazil recently brokered a deal that calls for Iran to ship some of its uranium to Turkey in exchange for fuel to use in a Tehran research reactor. ??Representatives from both countries expressed concern Wednesday that the United States, Russia and France did not formally respond to the plan until hours before Wednesday's vote.?

The *Washington Post* reported that the Obama administration succeeded in securing support for sanctions from the council's major powers, including Russia and China, by offering assurances that the sanctions would not hamper their ability to trade with Iran.

The *Post* noted that the 10-page resolution would reinforce a range of economic, high-technology, and military sanctions against Iran and specifically target the head of the of Iranian atomic energy agency, Javad Rahiqi. It also imposes a travel ban and an asset freeze against 40 entities linked to Iran's high-level military leadership, including the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

AFP reported that Susan E. Rice, the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, said in an interview before the vote was taken: "Our aim remains to persuade Iran to halt its nuclear program and negotiate constructively and in earnest with the international community. We remain committed to the dual-track approach [pressure through sanctions coupled with negotiations]."

In another statement quoted by CNN after the vote, Rice stated: "These sanctions are not directed at the Iranian people," but instead, they "aim squarely at the nuclear ambitions" of the Iranian government, calling the sanctions "as tough as they are smart and precise. We are at this point because the government of Iran has chosen clearly and willfully to violate its commitments to the IAEA [the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency] and the resolutions of this [Security] Council."

Dr. Rice is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Aspen Strategy Group.

CNN also quoted a statement made by Mohammad Khazaei, Iran's ambassador to the UN, the day before the vote, stating that Iran would break off negotiations with the United States and its allies if



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new sanctions were put in place. "These hasty measures are mere deviation from the path of constructive transaction and an indicative of the fact that the other parties rather prefer confrontation," said Khazaee. "In such a condition, the Islamic Republic of Iran has no choice but to react accordingly in the way it considers appropriate."

A report in the *New York Times* observed: "Skeptics noted that this would be the fourth round of sanctions the Security Council has imposed on Iran since 2006, and that none have succeeded in pushing Iran back into negotiations over accusations that it is defying the International Atomic Energy Agency and trying to develop a nuclear bomb. Iran denies it is trying to build a nuclear weapon."

In response to the UN's approval of the sanctions, Rep. Howard L. Berman (D-Calif.), Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, issued a statement noting: "Today's news reinforces my determination to bring the Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act before the Foreign Affairs Committee for consideration next month."

H.R. 2194, the legislation to which Berman referred and which he introduced in the House on April 30, 2009, is officially titled the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2009. It was passed by the House last December 15 by a vote of 412-12. However, when the bill got to the Senate it was amended and on April 22 Berman asked unanimous consent that the House disagree to the Senate amendment and agree to a conference. On April 22, Speaker of the House Pelosi appointed conferees from the committees on Foreign Affairs, Financial Services, and Ways and Means committees, who will consider certain differences in the House and Senate bills.

Shortly after the December 15 vote noted above, Rep Ron Paul (R-Texas) published a weekly *Texas Straight Talk* column entitled, "[Iran Sanctions Are Precursor to War.](#)"

In his article, Rep. Paul noted, in part:

Last week the House overwhelmingly approved a measure to put a new round of sanctions on Iran. If this measure passes the Senate, the United States could no longer do business with anyone who sold refined petroleum products to Iran or helped them develop their ability to refine their own petroleum. The sad thing is that many of my colleagues voted for this measure because they felt it would deflect a military engagement with Iran. I would put the question to them, how would Congress react if another government threatened our critical trading partners in this way? Would we not view it as asking for war?

This policy is pure isolationism. It is designed to foment war by cutting off trade and diplomacy. Too many forget that the quagmire in Iraq began with an embargo. Sanctions are not diplomacy. They are a precursor to war and an embarrassment to a country that pays lip service to free trade. It is ironic that people who decry isolationism support actions like this....

With the exception of the military industrial complex, we all want a more peaceful world. Many are hysterical about the imminent threat of a nuclear Iran. Here are the facts: Iran has never been found out of compliance with the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) they signed. However, being surrounded by nuclear powers one can understand why they might want to become nuclear capable if only to defend themselves and to be treated more respectfully. After all, we don't sanction nuclear capable countries. We take diplomatic negotiations a lot more seriously, and we frequently send money to them instead. The non-nuclear countries are the ones we bomb. If Iran was attempting to violate the non-proliferation treaty, they could hardly be blamed, since US foreign policy gives them every incentive to do so.



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Photo: U.S. Ambassador Susan Rice speaks after a vote sanctioning Iran during a session of the United Nations Security Council, June 9, 2010: AP Images



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