



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on March 31, 2010

G8 Pushes Iran Sanctions, Meets Resistance

As the world's leading economies gathered this week for a "Group of Eight" summit, government leaders urged the international community to increase pressure on the Iranian regime over its nuclear program. But not everybody is on board.

Officials from several countries cited in [international media reports](#) indicated that new United Nations sanctions on Iran were likely imminent. Concerns over the Russian and Chinese regimes' hesitancy have continued to hold up the efforts, but it appears that both governments may be willing to consider at least some form of international pressure.



Russian President Dmitry Medvedev [announced](#) over the weekend that, while his government did not believe further punishment of Iran was the best option, it was not off the table either. Top Obama advisor David Axelrod [told](#) CNN that he was pleased with Russia's cooperation so far, and that he believed it would eventually support new efforts to pressure Iran.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton also [expressed](#) optimism about the prospect of China's support as well. "I think, as the weeks go forward and we begin the hard work of trying to come up with a Security Council resolution, China will be involved. They will be making their suggestions," she told a Canadian television station in an interview. "As in any effort, we're going to have to try to come to some consensus and we're in the middle of that process."

But the communist Chinese regime has deep ties with Iran, and even recently suggested that it would not support the "crippling sanctions" being pushed by some Western governments. "As everyone knows, pressure and sanctions are not the fundamental way forward to resolving the Iran nuclear issue, and cannot fundamentally solve this issue," [explained](#) Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi in early March. "We don't think diplomatic efforts have been exhausted."

Iranian officials still [insist](#) the nuclear enrichment is for purely peaceful purposes, but several governments — particularly the United States, Israel, and various European states — are not buying it, claiming instead that the Islamic regime is using the program as cover to develop atomic weapons. Even Western governments admit that, if Iran were attempting to produce bombs, it would still have years to go before it could successfully enrich nuclear material to the required level. And U.S. intelligence agencies also concluded in the [2007 National Intelligence Estimate](#) that Iran was not seeking to produce nuclear weapons.

The International Atomic Energy Agency has been monitoring Iran's activities and so far has found no evidence of nuclear material diversion, but the new chief [expressed](#) frustration over the regime's lack of clarification as to its intentions.

"So far I haven't got the response that I hoped," [said](#) IAEA boss Yukiya Amano. However, he also noted



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that new sanctions would make resolution more difficult. "As Iran quite often declares, they don't want to act under pressure," he added.

Various governments around the world also oppose a new round of UN sanctions, including members of the UN Security Council. Despite intense foreign [lobbying](#), the Turkish Prime Minister, for example, [said](#) his government favors a diplomatic solution. He also pointed out that past sanctions have been ineffective and that the governments which lobbied for them are not even in compliance. Similarly, Brazil's government has [balked](#) at sanctions as well, with its leftist president saying it is "not prudent to push Iran into a corner." Lebanon, too, opposes the proposals.

Even as the Obama administration becomes increasingly vocal about Iran's alleged clandestine nuclear activities and the supposed need for tough new international sanctions, various [media reports](#) claim that the proposals are being quietly watered down to obtain broader support. "U.S. and European officials considering new sanctions against Iran have decided to set aside some of the harshest of the measures as they seek broader international agreement in United Nations Security Council negotiations," [explained](#) a *Los Angeles Times* article, citing unnamed officials.

But some American lawmakers are fighting hard to impose harsh penalties on the Islamic nation. "Mr. President, you have stated this issue is a priority for your administration. You have attempted to engage the Iranian regime for over a year. You have gone to the United Nations Security Council in an effort to impose tough new sanctions on Iran. But time is not on our side," [claims](#) a letter to Obama signed by legislators from both sides of the aisle. "We cannot allow those who would oppose or delay sanctions to govern either the timing or content of our efforts."

Not everybody in Congress supports new sanctions though. Constitutionalist Representative Ron Paul [explained](#) that such measures were a precursor to war and an "embarrassment to a country that pays lip service to free trade." He also noted that many Iranians resent U.S. involvement in their domestic affairs and that such actions are useful to the oppressive regime by providing a scapegoat. "The answer is not to cut off gasoline to the Iranian people," Paul said. "The answer is to stay out of their affairs and trade with them honestly."

But despite all the rhetoric over imposing "new" sanctions, the old ones are not even being enforced. In fact, the U.S. government is actually helping to enrich some companies that are defying its rules. The *New York Times* recently [exposed](#) the fact that the U.S. government has provided billions of dollars in grants, loans, and contracts to companies violating existing measures against Iran. In all, over \$100 billion in American taxpayer money was dispensed to firms doing business in the nation during the last decade. And two thirds of those businesses continue to operate there with no plans to leave, according to the *Times'* analysis.

But even if the sanctions were enforced, they are counterproductive and only serve to solidify the power of the oppressive regime in Tehran. And of course, this is not the first time the federal government has ignored the advice of the Founding Fathers in a vain attempt to police the world. Attentive readers will likely remember that less than a decade ago, American officials were also spewing rhetoric about Iraq's alleged nuclear weapons. The claims turned out to be lies, but America is still mired in a seemingly never-ending conflict because of it.

And besides, even if Iran did somehow manage to build a nuclear weapon, would it really dare to use it? The regime knows that America, Israel and various European countries possess massive nuclear stockpiles with the potential to flatten the entire nation. It would be suicide. Iran's rulers certainly



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remember what happened to neighboring nations that do not possess a nuclear deterrent (think Iraq and Afghanistan), so if it was seeking a bomb it would not be necessarily surprising. But the chances of the regime offensively deploying it are probably zero. As fanatical as Iran's tyrants may be, they are not suicidal or stupid.

Americans should urge their representatives to obey the Constitution and follow the wise advice of the nation's Founders: nonintervention, peace, and commerce with all nations. Decades of U.S. meddling in the Middle East has caused more than enough damage already.

Photo of Hillary Clinton with Canadian Foreign Minister Lawrence Cannon at G8 Summit: AP Images



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