



Written by [Steven J. DuBord](#) on November 21, 2009

Six Nations Urge Iran to Accept IAEA Deal

The five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council — the United States, Britain, France, Russia, and China — were joined by Germany in expressing disappointment over Iran's reluctance to accept an International Atomic Energy Agency plan designed to forestall Iran's nuclear weapons development.

Iran indicated on November 18 that it would not agree to the IAEA deal. Representatives of the six world powers met in Brussels on November 20 and decided against imposing sanctions. Instead they jointly urged Iran to accept the proposal.



"We urge Iran to reconsider the opportunity offered by this agreement ... and to engage seriously with us in dialogue and negotiations," the six nations said in a statement. One official, who asked for anonymity, downplayed the option of sanctions, saying, "These things are a matter of timing, and this was not the right time for it."

The plan put forth by the IAEA was that Iran would export its enriched uranium that could otherwise be used for nuclear weapons. The uranium would be sent to Russia and France for processing into fuel rods, and the rods would be returned to Iran one year later. These fuel rods can be used to power nuclear reactors, but they are not easily converted back into weapons-grade material.

On November 18, Iran said it would not export its enriched uranium, essentially rejecting the deal. Iranian Foreign Minister Manochehr Mottaki on November 19 dismissed the threat of any sanctions that could result, saying that they had not worked in the past and he didn't expect them to be tried again.

Mohamed ElBaradei, the IAEA chief, asked Iran to reconsider cooperating with the uranium export plan. "I would hate to see that we are moving back to sanctions," he said. "Because sanctions, at the end of the day ... really don't resolve issues."

ElBaradei noted that Iran had not yet given an official response to the IAEA, although Iranian officials had told him that Iran would only export its enriched uranium if fuel rods for their reactors were given up front.

"That to me is an extreme case of distrust," ElBaradei lamented. "And what we are really trying to do is replace distrust by a degree of trust."

U.S. State Department spokesman Robert Wood said the United States had not given up hope that Iran would agree to and implement the exchange program. "We continue to call on Iran to accept this proposal with regard to the Tehran research reactor. We think it's a good one," Wood stated. "We think it's a great way for Iran to show, if, indeed, its intentions are peaceful, that they want to cooperate with the international community with regard to its nuclear program."

Photo of Mohamed ElBaradel: AP Images



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