

**Headlines**

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## **Israel May 'Go it Alone' against Iran**

by Herb Keinon

Israel is carefully watching the world's reaction to Iran's continued refusal to suspend uranium enrichment, with some high-level officials arguing it is now clear that when it comes to stopping Iran, Israel "may have to go it alone," *The Jerusalem Post* has learned.

One senior source said on Tuesday that Iran "flipped the world the bird" by not responding positively to the Western incentive plan to stop uranium enrichment. He expressed frustration that the Russians and Chinese were already saying that Iran's offer of a "new formula" and willingness to enter "serious negotiations" was an opening to keep on talking.

"The Iranians know the world will do nothing," he said. "This is similar to the world's attempts to appease Hitler in the 1930s - they are trying to feed the beast."

He said there was a need to understand that "when push comes to shove," Israel would have to be prepared to "slow down" the Iranian nuclear threat by itself.

Having said this, he did not rule out the possibility of US military action, but said that if this were to take place, it would probably not occur until the spring or summer of 2008, a few months before President George W. Bush leaves the international stage. The US presidential elections, which Bush cannot contest because of term limits, are in November 2008.

Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, in a meeting in Paris with French Foreign Minister Phillippe Douste-Blazy Wednesday, said Iran "poses a global threat" and needed to be dealt with by the whole international community.

"The first thing they need to do is stop the enrichment of uranium," Livni said. "Everyday that passes brings the Iranians closer to building a nuclear bomb. The world can't afford a nuclear Iran." She said the Iranian reply to the Western incentives was just an attempt to "gain time."

Government officials said Israel's role at this time is to warn the world of the dangers of

an Iranian nuclear potential. Some government officials are sending the message to their counterparts abroad that the firm implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701 on Lebanon will send a strong message to Iran - which is testing the world's resolve - that it is serious about implementing Security Council resolutions.

Meanwhile, the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI) reported Wednesday that the Iranian news service Al-Borz, which it said is known to have access to sources in the Iranian government, predicted that President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad would announce what the news service called Iran's "nuclear birth" on the first anniversary of his government later this month.

In addition, an article Tuesday on the *Teheran Times* Web site, considered to be affiliated with the Foreign Ministry, implied that Iran's nuclear technology had already reached the point of no return. "If the West is seeking to impede Iran's nuclear industry, it should realize that Iran has passed this stage," the report read.

Diplomats from Europe, the US, Russia and China were poring over details of Iran's counterproposal to the Western nuclear incentives package Wednesday. Initial comments from Russia and China made clear Washington is likely to face difficulty getting at least those nations to agree to any tough sanctions against Iran.

In Paris, however, Douste-Blazy made clear that his government was sticking by the UN demand for Iran to halt enrichment by the end of this month as a precondition to further talks. Israeli officials said France has consistently advocated a firm position with Iran regarding the nuclear issue.

"I want to point out again that France is available to negotiate, and to recall that, as we have always said... a return to the negotiating table is linked to the suspension of uranium enrichment," Douste-Blazy said.

However, Russia's Foreign Ministry said it would continue to seek a political, negotiated solution to the dispute with Iran. China appealed for dialogue, urging "constructive measures" by Iran but also urging other parties to "remain calm and patient, show flexibility, stick to the orientation of peaceful resolution and create favorable conditions for resuming talks as soon as possible."

In London, a British Foreign Office spokesman predicted "some hard discussions" when the Security Council takes up the Iran issue in the coming weeks.



Iran said Tuesday it was ready for "serious negotiations" on its nuclear program and cast the counterproposal as a new formula to resolve the crisis with the West. But a semiofficial news agency said the government was unwilling to abandon uranium enrichment.

The world powers, the five permanent UN Security Council members plus Germany, have given Iran until August 31 to accept the incentives package.

*AP contributed to this report.*

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