

Israel: Hit Iran with new sanctions now

By [HILARY LEILA KRIEGER](#)
WASHINGTON



Talkbacks for this article: **33**

Israeli officials Thursday night urged "crisper" and "faster" moves to sanction Iran after a UN report found the Islamic Republic had expanded its program to obtain nuclear weapons.

The officials welcomed the Bush administration's stated interest in pressing for expanded sanctions, but expressed mounting concern over the slow pace of international action.

"I don't think we've got endless amounts of time to deal with this problem. The message has to be much crisper and sooner," said a senior Israeli source in Washington. "This is the time that these things have to be dealt with."

THE IRANIAN THREAT

JPost.com special: [news](#), [opinion](#), [blogs](#) and [more](#)



The US has indicated that new sanctions will likely follow from Iran's defiance of a unanimous Security Council resolution passed in December demanding that it halt uranium enrichment and other activity suspected of furthering a nuclear weapons program.

"Iran has not suspended its enrichment-related activities," said the International Atomic Energy Agency report issued Thursday as the 60-day window on Iranian compliance with the Security Council resolution expired. In fact, the report found that nuclear efforts had been expanded.

The report detailed recent developments showing Teheran expanding its enrichment efforts - setting up nearly 1,000 uranium-spinning centrifuges in and above an underground bunker and bringing nearly nine tons of the gaseous feedstock into the facility at Natanz in preparation for enrichment. It said Iranian officials had informed the UN agency that they would expand centrifuge installations to have close to 3,000 ready by May.

The IAEA report noted Iran's continued building of both the Arak reactor and heavy water production plant - in defiance of the Security Council.

The six-page report also said that a lack of Iranian cooperation meant agency experts remain unable to progress with efforts "to verify fully the past development of Iran's nuclear program."

The current sanctions, barring trade in sensitive nuclear materials and freezing assets of top Iranian officials and institutions linked to the nuclear program, could be beefed up to include wider economic pressures and arms limitations, according to those knowledgeable on the issue. The State Department has declined to provide specifics.

Getting the additional measures in a unanimous Security Council resolution as was passed on December 23, however, requires potentially long and complicated discussions with the Russians, Chinese and Europeans, some of whom reportedly want to explore openings with Iran.

Still, according to the Israeli assessment, "in general terms, the Europeans are still there."

"There may be different viewpoints on how to go, but people are pretty much in the same ballpark. They are considering other measures that could be incorporated with the resolution," said one Washington-based Israeli source. "There's a clear desire to get a second resolution, to get it on track and get it passed to send a strong and clear message to Teheran."