**Tehran details Iran nuclear deal amid debate over UN sanctions**

Tehran officially informed the IAEA today that it was ready to ship 1,200 kg of enriched uranium to Turkey. Turkey and Brazil are lobbying hard to save the deal from being ruined by UN sanctions.

By Scott Peterson

May 24, 2010

CS Monitor

*http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2010/0524/Tehran-details-Iran-nuclear-deal-amid-debate-over-UN-sanctions*

Meeting the first deadline of a key nuclear fuel deal, Iran on Monday officially informed the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that it was ready to ship to Turkey more than half of its current stock of low-enriched uranium (LEU), in exchange for nuclear fuel to power its small medical research reactor.

The letter was handed to IAEA chief Yukiya Amano Monday morning in Vienna in the presence of the ambassadors of Turkey and Brazil.

Precisely one week after those two countries clinched a deal similar to a US-backed one put to Iran in October, the Islamic republic now awaits a “positive response” from the so-called Vienna group – the US, Russia, France, and the IAEA – to "pave the way to commence negotiation" on the logistics of the deal.

IN PICTURES: Nuclear Weapons

Tehran says it is ready to export 1,200 kg of its homemade LEU in a month, which would leave too little inside Iran to immediately enrich enough for a nuclear weapon.

“A possible agreement with the Vienna group … will provide a peaceful and constructive solution for the whole world," Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Ramin Mehmanparast said on Monday during a visit to Istanbul.

But Iran's letter comes amid an intensifying debate about the best way to address international concerns over Iran's nuclear program. Turkey and Brazil, which successfully revived a deal the US had originally backed, firmly maintain that the best course is to use the the fuel swap agreement to get Tehran back to the negotiating table where a fuller solution can be worked out.

The US, suspecting Iran's nuclear energy program to be a guise for developing nuclear weapons, has ratcheted up pressure for a fourth round of United Nations sanctions on Iran – a step that senior Iranian officials say could unravel the entire nuclear deal.

“Iran accepted the conditions in order to create an atmosphere based on trust and cooperation,” said Mr. Mehmanparast.

Khamenei has likely signed off on Iran nuclear deal – analyst

Under the nuclear fuel swap deal, Iran’s 3.5 percent enriched uranium would be stored in Turkey under IAEA seal, and then traded within a year for 20 percent enriched fuel rods made abroad for a reactor that makes isotopes for medical purposes.

Analysts say that the deal, negotiated in Tehran with sign-off by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad – who has declared repeatedly that Iran would not step back “one iota” from its nuclear rights – almost certainly has the backing of Iran’s supreme religious leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

“I don’t see this as merely an Ahmadinejad move,” says Farideh Farhi, an Iran specialist at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. “I think there is no way you could have gotten the kind of reaction you get now in Iran – like 238 members of the parliament writing a letter in support – unless there is a definite signal from the highest office.”

Iran demands 'inalienable rights' under NPT

The letter to the IAEA restates that Iran remains “committed to its obligations” under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and notes its “wide-ranging cooperation with the IAEA.”

In return, it “expects that the inalienable rights enshrined” by the IAEA Statute and the NPT – which include nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and energy production – will be respected. Under the NPT, Iran has the right to enrich uranium – the process that creates nuclear fuel – but which at higher levels of enrichment creates the material used for weapons. Still, due to IAEA concerns, the UN Security Council (UNSC) has issued several resolutions requiring Iran to halt all uranium enrichment.

Not mentioned, either in Iran’s letter to the IAEA or the tri-partite deal agreed on May 17, are still unresolved IAEA concerns about possible weaponization projects that Iran denies.

Turkish PM sent weekend letters to 14 Security Council members

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton brushed aside the significance of the Iran-Turkey-Brazil within hours of its signing last week, declaring that Washington had cobbled together agreement of the five permanent UN Security Council members for “strong” new sanctions against Iran.

Nine of the 15 UN Security Council members would have to approve sanctions for them to take effect. While not among the five permanent members that can veto any resolution, Turkey and Brazil are rising regional powers that could persuade some fellow rotating members on the council not to support the sanctions.

Turkey’s Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Sunday night spoke with Mr. Ahmadinejad. He said the deal could be a “very important turning point” in Iran’s relations with the West over the nuclear program and other disputes, and told Ahmadinejad it would have positive “reverberations around the world.”

Over the weekend, Mr. Erdogan sent letters to 26 key interested parties – including the other 14 members of the UN Security Council.

In those letters, he said the swap agreement – known here as the Tehran Declaration – was “still an effective road” and that “Turkey’s fair and commonsense approach will continue.”

Erdogan added: “Turkey will do everything within its power to win support for this declaration.”

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who was in Tehran last week to push for the deal, defended it on his weekly radio show.

“We were not there to negotiate a nuclear deal,” he said, according to the Associated Press. “We went there to try to convince Iran to accept a proposal made by Turkey and Brazil – to sit at the negotiating table.”

Larijani vows to abandon deal if US presses on with sanctions

Senior Iranian officials have stated that the deal could collapse if another round of sanctions is passed against Iran, which – along with Turkey and Brazil – dismiss further sanctions as pointless and ineffective.

Iran’s economy is already in experiencing hardship with high unemployment, inflation, and mismanagement. Besides the UN sanctions push, the US Congress has been pushing through much tougher sanctions legislation.

“If the Americans want to seek adventure, whether in the [UN Security Council] or in [the US] Congress, all the efforts of Turkey and Brazil will be in vain and this path will be abandoned,” Ali Larijani, Iran’s influential speaker of parliament and former nuclear negotiator, said over the weekend. “In this situation [Iran’s] parliament will make a different decision over Iran’s cooperation with the IAEA.”