

28 September 2012 Last updated at 04:38 GMT

## Iran claims right to retaliate, after Israel UN speech



Mr Netanyahu showed a drawing illustrating Iran's alleged progress towards nuclear weapons

Iran has warned it is ready to retaliate against attack after Israel's prime minister urged a red line to be drawn over its nuclear programme.

Benjamin Netanyahu told the UN time was running out to stop Iran having enough enriched uranium for a nuclear bomb.

In response, Iran's deputy UN ambassador said his country was strong enough to defend itself.

Israel and Western countries suspect Iran is seeking a nuclear capability. Tehran says its programme is peaceful.

Iranian deputy UN ambassador Eshagh al-Habib said his country was: "strong enough to defend itself and reserves its full right to retaliate with full force against any attack".

He accused Mr Netanyahu of making "baseless allegations" in his address to the UN General Assembly in New York.

Mr Netanyahu told delegates at the annual meeting of the assembly that Iran could have enough material to make a nuclear bomb by the middle of next year, and a clear message needed to be

sent to stop Tehran in its tracks.

## Analysis



Jonathan Marcus BBC Diplomatic Correspondent

Mr Netanyahu is a man at home in US politics and his message was more attuned to that audience. It was a message of grand simplifications: "the great battle between the modern and the medieval" - in other words between modernity and the forces of radical Islam.

This was the cue for Mr Netanyahu to move to his main focus, the potential threat from a nuclear armed Iran. The "hour was getting very late" he said.

The Israeli prime minister also twice made positive reference to US President Barack Obama's own comments and actions.

It was perhaps a realisation that the antipathy between the two leaders was reaching damaging proportions and also maybe a hint that, while still favouring Republican presidential contender Mitt Romney, Mr Netanyahu has sampled the political mood in the US and is re-balancing himself ahead of a possible second Obama victory.

- [Messages behind leaders' speeches](#)

"Red lines don't lead to war, red lines prevent war," he said. "Nothing could imperil the world more than a nuclear-armed Iran."

He said sanctions passed over the past seven years had not affected Tehran's programme. "The hour is very late," he told delegates. "The Iranian nuclear calendar does not take time out."

He said he was convinced that faced with a "clear red line, Iran will back down" and added that he was confident the US and Israel could chart a common path on the issue.

On Tuesday, in his own address to the General Assembly, US President Barack Obama stressed the US would "do what we must" to stop Tehran acquiring nuclear arms.

However, while the Obama administration has not ruled out a military option, it says sanctions and multilateral negotiations with Iran must still be given time to work.

Earlier this month, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said the US was not prepared to commit to drawing "red lines".

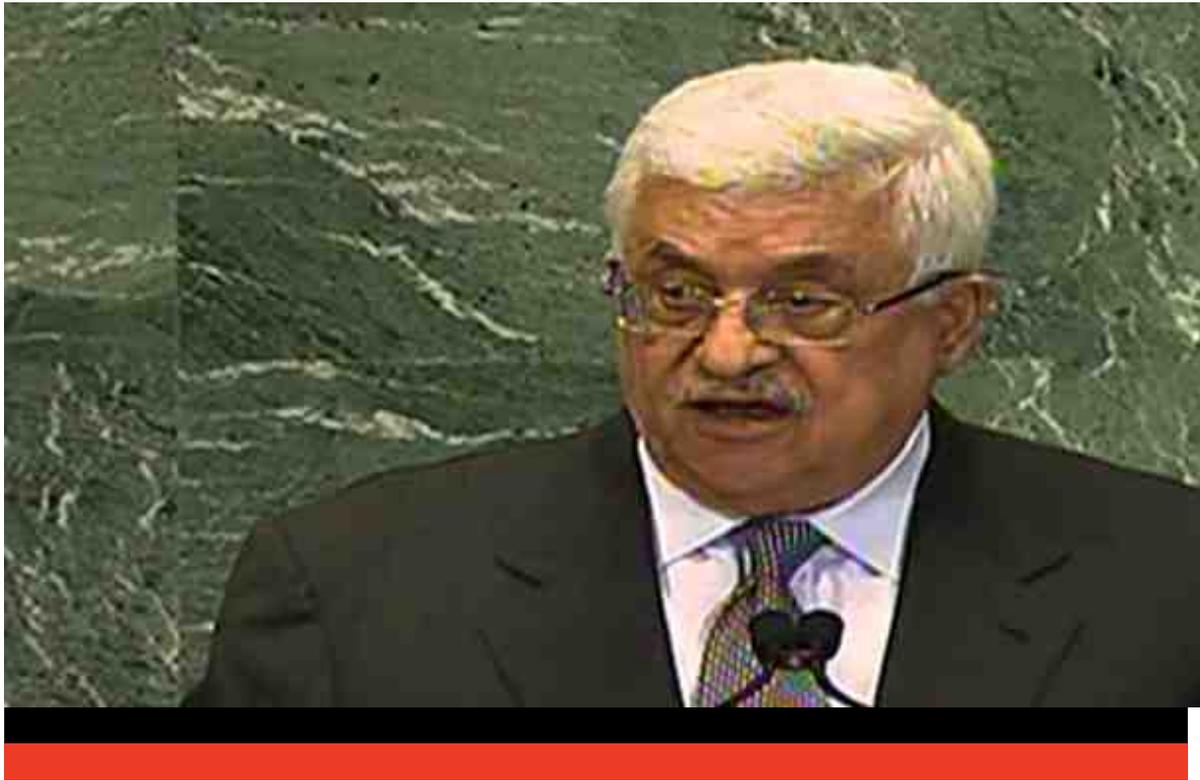
On Wednesday, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad accused Western countries of nuclear "intimidation".

"Continued threat by the uncivilised Zionists [Israel] to resort to military action is a clear example of this bitter reality," he told the General Assembly.

'Ethnic cleansing'

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas highlighted the Palestinians' UN status, saying he

would continue to seek full membership.



President Mahmoud Abbas says a Palestinian state must be realised

But he said negotiations had begun with "regional organisations and member states" aimed at adopting a resolution making Palestine "a non-member state of the United Nations during this session".

"In our endeavour," he added, "we do not seek to delegitimise an existing state - that is Israel - but rather to assert the state that must be realised - that is Palestine."

Currently, the Palestine Liberation Organisation only has "permanent observer" status. Last year, a bid for full-member status failed because of a lack of support at the UN Security Council.

The change would allow Palestinians to participate in General Assembly debates. It would also improve their chances of joining UN agencies and the International Criminal Court.

Last year, Palestinians joined the UN cultural agency Unesco, despite Israeli and US opposition.

Mr Abbas also denounced Israeli construction in and around East Jerusalem. "It is a campaign of ethnic cleansing against the Palestinian people via the demolition of their homes," he said.

26 September 2012 Last updated at 21:48 GMT

## **UN: Iran's Mahmoud Ahmadinejad rejects**

# nuclear 'threat'



President Ahmadinejad criticised what he called a "new language of threat"

Iran's president has accused the West of nuclear "intimidation" in a UN General Assembly address boycotted by the United States and Israel.

It was [using a nuclear arms race to threaten other nations](#) to accept the status quo, said Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

He told reporters later that Iran was ready for talks with the US.

The West suspects Iran of trying to develop nuclear weapons, but Tehran insists its nuclear programme is solely for peaceful purposes.

'Soulful breeze'

It was Mr Ahmadinejad's eighth and final speech at a debate of the UN General Assembly before he steps down.

"[The] arms race and intimidation by nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction by the hegemonic powers have become prevalent," he told the 193-nation annual gathering.

He said the world was in need of a new order and a fresh way of thinking, as "the existence of discrimination and monopoly in the UN is in no way acceptable".

He closed with a poetic exhortation to the second coming of Jesus Christ.

He said this event would complete "the soulful breeze of the spring" - an apparent reference to the Arab Spring - as Christ would be accompanied by "a perfect human being... named Imam al-Mahdi... he will lead humanity into achieving its glorious and eternal ideals".

At a news conference later, the Iranian leader said Tehran was ready for dialogue with the US, despite Washington's use of sanctions "as revenge on the people".

And he said his country was not afraid of nuclear attacks against nuclear facilities - "Iran can neutralise" such attacks, he said.

On the eve of the General Assembly debate, Mr Ahmadinejad had told a UN meeting that Israel was a "fake regime", prompting Israel's UN Ambassador, Ron Prosor, to walk out.

"Iran will continue to face the full force of sanctions... until it gives up its ambitions to spread a nuclear shadow across the world"

David Cameron UK Prime Minister

The Iranian leader refrained from such inflammatory remarks during Wednesday's half-hour speech, which the Israeli and the US delegations had chosen to boycott due to his recent attacks on Israel.

"Over the past couple of days, we've seen Mr Ahmadinejad once again use his trip to the UN... to spout paranoid theories and repulsive slurs against Israel," said Erin Pelton, spokeswoman for the US mission to the UN.

Red lines

Later, UK Prime Minister David Cameron told the assembly that said [pressure to stop Iran's nuclear programme](#) should come from the UN.

"Iran will continue to face the full force of sanctions and scrutiny from this United Nations until it gives up its ambitions to spread a nuclear shadow across the world," Mr Cameron said.

In his address to the General Assembly on Tuesday, US President Barack Obama had again stressed the US would "do what we must" to stop Tehran acquiring nuclear arms.

Six weeks before the US election, he said a nuclear-armed Iran was "not a challenge that can be contained".

Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu has been pressing Washington to set Tehran "red lines" which, if crossed, would lead to military intervention.

Mr Netanyahu recently warned that Iran was only six or seven months from having "90%" of what it needed to make a nuclear bomb and that it needed to be stopped. He is expected to take the same message to the General Assembly on Thursday.

23 September 2012 Last updated at 10:33 GMT

## Germany's Siemens denies Iranian nuclear

# sabotage claim



Iran maintains that its nuclear programme is solely for civilian purposes

German engineering company Siemens has denied allegations that it planted explosive devices inside nuclear equipment destined for Iran.

Siemens said it has "no business ties to the Iranian nuclear programme".

An Iranian MP said the devices had been discovered before they could explode.

Iran is under UN sanctions and the MP did not say where the equipment had come from. Tehran is engaged in a standoff with Western countries which suspect it is building a nuclear bomb.

The UN's nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has expressed "serious concern" that Iran had continued to defy UN Security Council resolutions which demand the suspension of uranium enrichment and had failed to resolve questions about possible nuclear weapons development.

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has warned that Iran is only six or seven months from having "90%" of what it needs to make a nuclear bomb, and has urged the US to draw a "red line" which if crossed would lead to military intervention.

Iran has insisted that its nuclear programme is solely for peaceful purposes, and warned that it will retaliate if it comes under attack.

Mystery deepens

Iranian lawmaker Alaeddin Boroujerdi, head of parliament's security committee, said on Saturday that the authorities believed the equipment "was supposed to explode after being put to work, in order to dismantle all our systems".

"But the wisdom of our experts thwarted the enemy conspiracy."

## **International sanctions against Iran**

## US

- Longstanding ban on all trade with Iran except for activities "intended to benefit the Iranian people"
- New sanctions against foreign firms dealing with Iran's oil sector and central bank

## EU

- Restrictions on trade in equipment which could be used for uranium enrichment
- Asset freeze on individuals and organisations linked with nuclear programme
- Export ban on natural gas technology

## UN

- Ban on sales of heavy weaponry and nuclear technology to Iran
- Iranian arms exports blocked, and asset freeze for key individuals and firms
- Cargo inspections to detect and stop Iran's acquisition of illicit materials

Mr Boroujerdi said the explosives were planted at a Siemens factory and the company had to take responsibility.

The Munich-based German firm denied the charge. It said its nuclear division has had no business links with Iran since the 1979 Islamic revolution.

"Siemens rejects the allegations and stresses that we have no business ties to the Iranian nuclear program," spokesman Alexander Machowetz said.

The Iranian accusation raises some intriguing questions, says the BBC's Steve Evans in Berlin.

They include, he says:

- Has the Iranian MP simply got it wrong?
- Is Iran buying Siemens equipment through a third party?
- Is there something more underhand going on, with sabotaged equipment being sold with the secret approval of Western intelligence agencies?

In June 2010, a virus - the Stuxnet - was found to have infected computer systems at Iranian nuclear plants.

It, too, was connected to a Siemens product but the company denied all knowledge.

Unconfirmed reports linked the virus to a government agency, perhaps in the US or Israel.

The latest allegations deepen the mystery, says our Berlin correspondent.



17 September 2012 Last updated at 15:23 GMT

## Iran warns of IAEA 'terrorist infiltration'



Fereydu Abbasi-Davani insisted that Iran's nuclear programme was solely for peaceful purposes

Iran's nuclear chief has warned that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) may have been infiltrated by "terrorists and saboteurs".

Fereydu Abbasi-Davani said explosions had cut power lines to a uranium enrichment facility last month shortly before a visit by IAEA inspectors.

He also accused the UN's nuclear watchdog of mismanagement and said it was influenced by

"certain states".

On Thursday, the IAEA rebuked Iran for refusing to suspend uranium enrichment.

The 35-member governing board expressed "serious concern" that Iran continued to defy UN Security Council resolutions demanding a halt and had failed to resolve questions about possible weapons development.

Israel's prime minister warned on Sunday that Iran was only six or seven months from having "90%" of what it needed to make a nuclear bomb.

Benjamin Netanyahu told US media that the only way to stop this was for Washington to draw a "red line" on Iran's nuclear activity and declare that crossing it would lead to military intervention.

Iran has insisted that its nuclear programme is solely for peaceful purposes, and warned that it will retaliate if it comes under attack.

'Covert decisions'

In a speech to the IAEA's general conference in Vienna on Monday, the head of the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran stressed that it had "always opposed and will always denounce the manufacture and use of weapons of mass destruction".



Construction of the Fordo enrichment facility was revealed by satellite images in 2009

Then in an unusually outspoken attack on the IAEA, Mr Abbasi-Davani said "terrorists and saboteurs might have intruded the agency and might be making decisions covertly"

He cited an incident on 17 August, when power lines from the city of Qom to the underground uranium enrichment facility at Fordo were cut.

The following day, he said, the IAEA sought an unannounced inspection.

"Does this visit have any connection to that detonation? Who other than the IAEA inspectors can have access to the complex in such a short time?"

"It should be recalled that power cut-off is one of the ways to break down centrifuge machines," he added, referring to the equipment used to increase the proportion of fissile uranium-235 atoms within uranium.

But Mr Abbasi-Davani said sabotage attempts against Iran's nuclear programme had failed and

would continue to fail.

For his part, the head of the IAEA, Yukiya Amano said the agency was committed to intensifying dialogue with Iran, despite the lack of progress so far. The last meeting on 24 August ended without agreement.

This comes a day before the EU's foreign policy chief, Catherine Ashton, is due to meet Iran's chief nuclear negotiator, Said Jalili, in Istanbul.

Baroness Ashton is the lead negotiator for the so-called P5+1 - the US, UK, France, China, Russia and Germany.

13 September 2012 Last updated at 17:29 GMT

## Iran nuclear: UN watchdog IAEA rebukes Tehran



Construction of one site was revealed by satellite images in 2009

The UN nuclear agency has rebuked Iran for failing to stop atomic activity.

The board of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) expressed "serious concern" about Tehran's refusal to suspend uranium enrichment.

Iran insists that its nuclear programme is peaceful in purpose but the US, Israel and other states fear it is building nuclear weapons.

Thirty-one out of 35 member states voted in favour of the resolution, one voted against and three abstained.

Cuba opposed the measure and Egypt, Ecuador and Tunisia abstained. All four countries are members of the Non-Aligned Movement, of which Iran is currently the rotating president.

Another member of the movement, South Africa, had introduced an amendment on a minor change of wording that resulted in a delay of several hours.

A total of six resolutions against Iran have been passed by the UN Security Council, four with

sanctions attached.

'Procrastination'

The IAEA's resolution was proposed by the United States, China, Russia, Germany, France and the United Kingdom.

This move is a display of unity by the six world powers, says the BBC's Bethany Bell, in Vienna.

It also increases the pressure on Iran at a time when Israel has stepped up hints about a possible military strike, our correspondent adds.

The US and EU have also imposed additional, unilateral sanctions that have targeted Iran's vital oil exports.

Last weekend, EU foreign ministers said they were considering additional measures.

On Thursday, in its statement to the board, the 27-nation bloc described Iran's "procrastination" as "unacceptable".

"Iran has not engaged seriously and without preconditions in talks aimed at restoring international confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear programme," it said.

The IAEA has held a series of high-profile meetings with Iran that began in January to agree how to carry out its investigations.

But its Director General Yukiya Amano said this week that no concrete results had been achieved and called the lack of progress "frustrating".

10 September 2012 Last updated at 13:38 GMT

## **UN nuclear watchdog 'frustrated' over Iran access delays**



Satellite images have shown suspicious activity at the Parchin military site, the IAEA says

The UN's nuclear watchdog has urged Iran to grant inspectors immediate entry to the Parchin military site, calling delays in access "frustrating".

The complex is suspected of being used for tests related to nuclear weapons - a claim Iran

denies.

"We consider it essential for Iran to engage with us without further delay," the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said Monday.

Inspectors trying to visit Parchin have repeatedly been refused entry.

Iran has been accused of delaying access in order to buy time and remove evidence of experiments related to nuclear weapons.

The IAEA's Yukiya Amano said the agency and Iran had made no concrete progress since talks began in January.

Satellite images taken at Parchin "further strengthen our assessment that it is necessary to have access to the location without further delay in order to obtain the required clarifications," Mr Amano said at an IAEA board meeting.

"Without Iran's full engagement, we will not be able to start the process to resolve all outstanding issues, including those concerning possible military dimensions to its nuclear programme."

#### High explosives

The complex at Parchin, south of Tehran, is dedicated to the research, development and production of ammunition, rockets and explosives.

Concerns about its possible role in Iran's nuclear programme emerged in 2004, when reports surfaced that a large explosives containment vessel had been built there to conduct hydrodynamic experiments.

The IAEA has warned that hydrodynamic experiments, which involve high explosives in conjunction with nuclear material or nuclear material surrogates, are "strong indicators of possible weapon development".

In 2005, IAEA inspectors were twice given access to parts of Parchin and were able to take several environmental samples.

A report issued in 2006 noted that they "did not observe any unusual activities in the buildings visited, and the results of the analysis of environmental samples did not indicate the presence of nuclear material".

But suspicions about Parchin persisted and the IAEA has repeatedly sought to visit the facility again. The latest attempt came in February, when inspectors were turned away despite "intensive efforts".

Iran says it needs nuclear material for energy and medical needs.



30 August 2012 Last updated at 20:39 GMT

## Iran nuclear crisis: Fordo capacity doubled - IAEA



Construction of the Fordo site was revealed by satellite images in 2009

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the UN's nuclear watchdog, says Iran has doubled production capacity at the Fordo nuclear site.

The latest IAEA quarterly report also said Iran had "significantly hampered" the agency's ability to inspect the Parchin military site.

Iran has produced 189kg (417 lb) of higher-grade enriched uranium since 2010, it added.

Iran denies its nuclear programme has any military aspect.

The number of enrichment centrifuges at Fordo, at a facility buried deep inside a mountain near the holy city of Qom, had more than doubled to 2,140 from 1,064 in May, the IAEA said.

However, the new machines were not yet operating, it said.

Iran says the aim of the Fordo site is to enrich uranium for civilian use up to a maximum of 20%.

In May, UN nuclear inspectors found traces of uranium enriched at 27% at the site, but Iran said those readings could be accidental.

Analysts say 27% would bring Iran closer to making weapons-grade uranium.

Although the new centrifuges are not yet operating, their installation will worry Israel, says the BBC's James Reynolds.

The Israeli government fears that Iran is developing its nuclear capabilities in a location which may be safe from Israeli air strikes.

In Thursday's report, the IAEA also said the Parchin site had been "sanitised" and that Iran had "been conducting activities at that location that will significantly hamper the agency's ability to conduct effective verification", if inspectors were granted access.

The Parchin site is suspected of being used for experiments related to nuclear weapons.

The overall Parchin complex is one of Iran's leading munitions centres - for the research, development and production of ammunition, rockets and high explosives.

Iran says it needs nuclear material for energy and medical needs.

But in this report, the IAEA concludes that it is unable to say that all nuclear material in Iran is for peaceful activities, our correspondent says.

19 June 2012 Last updated at 19:35 GMT

## **Iran nuclear talks in Moscow end 'without breakthrough'**



Catherine Ashton said major differences remain after two days of talks

The latest round of talks on Iran's nuclear programme has ended with no clear breakthrough, officials say.

EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton said "significant gaps" remained after "tough and frank" exchanges in the talks, in Russia's capital Moscow.

Chief Iranian negotiator Saeed Jalili described the two days of negotiations as "serious", but reiterated enriching uranium was Iran's inalienable right.

Iran denies Western claims it is seeking to develop nuclear weapons.

The talks between Iran and the so-called P5+1 - the US, China, Russia, France, the UK and Germany - follow other recent inconclusive rounds in Istanbul and Baghdad.

Ms Ashton said the sides had agreed to continue talks on a technical level before deciding on whether to hold further high-level talks.

Mr Jalili agreed this expert-level meeting needed to be held.

"The expert meeting could provide clear ideas for the talks," he said. "Today they [the world powers] are facing a great test in order to obtain the confidence of the Iranian people," he told reporters.

The P5+1 are demanding that Iran suspend enrichment of uranium to 20%, close down an underground enrichment facility near the city of Qom and export its stockpile of 20%-enriched uranium - measures described by one Western diplomat as "stop, shut and ship".

In return, the world powers say they are prepared to start by offering help with nuclear safety measures.

But Iran wants the West to lift sanctions, including an EU oil embargo and US measures against Iran's central bank.

It says its "non-negotiable" right to enrich uranium must be recognised. It has denounced UN Security Council resolutions against it as illegal.

8 June 2012 Last updated at 17:58 GMT

## **'No progress' at Iran nuclear talks - UN**

# watchdog



The IAEA's chief inspector Herman Nackaerts said a date for further talks had yet to be fixed

Talks on Iran's nuclear programme have ended with "no progress", according to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the UN's nuclear watchdog.

The IAEA had been trying to get access to sites inside Iran, including one at Parchin suspected of being used for experiments related to nuclear weapons.

The lack of progress at the talks in Vienna was "disappointing", the IAEA's chief inspector Herman Nackaerts said.

Iran denies its nuclear programme has any military aspect.

Iran's ambassador to the IAEA, Ali Ashghar Soltanieh, said his country would continue to seek to allay fears about the programme.

"We are ready to remove all ambiguities and prove to the world that our activities are exclusively for peaceful purposes and none of these allegations [of developing a bomb] are true," he said, according to the French news agency AFP.

More talks between Iran and six powers - Britain, the US, China, Russia, France and Germany - are due to be held in Moscow in 10 days' time.

Diplomats say they want Iran to suspend all uranium enrichment and to give up its stockpile of enriched uranium, the BBC's James Reynolds reports.

Iran has suggested that it has no intention of doing either, he adds.

Last November, an IAEA report claimed Iran had "carried out activities relevant to the development of a nuclear device".

The UN agency, which is based in the Austrian capital, says that since November it has obtained more information relating to possible high-explosive tests at Parchin, which could be relevant to nuclear warheads.

4 June 2012 Last updated at 11:38 GMT

## **Fresh Iran nuclear talks to be held this**

## week



Experts at the IAEA use satellite imagery to study Iran's facilities (file photo)

Iran has agreed to meet officials from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna on Friday for further talks about its nuclear activities.

IAEA chief Yukiya Amano said he would urge Iran to allow early access to its Parchin facility near Tehran.

The IAEA, the UN's nuclear watchdog, wants to visit Parchin because of suspicions that it was used for experiments related to nuclear weapons.

Iran denies its nuclear programme has a military aspect.

More talks between Iran and six powers - Britain, the US, China, Russia, France and Germany - are due to be held in Moscow next month.

The powers are seeking an agreement by Iran to curb uranium enrichment and allow UN inspectors to verify its nuclear activity is peaceful.

Last November, an IAEA report claimed Iran had "carried out activities relevant to the development of a nuclear device".

The IAEA, which is based in the Austrian capital, says that since November it has obtained more information relating to possible high-explosive tests there, which could be relevant to nuclear warheads.

## Obama 'gave full backing to Stuxnet attack on Iran'

13:40 1 June 2012

*Paul Marks, senior technology correspondent*



(Image: News Pictures/MCP/Rex Features)

When George W Bush handed over the presidential reins to Barack Obama in 2008, he asked that the incoming man continue running what he regarded as two of his administration's most promising security programs: the remotely-piloted drone war against Al Qaeda in Afghanistan - and the development of a cyberweapon nicknamed 'the bug', aimed at destroying Iran's nascent nuclear capability.

Obama agreed - but we have now come to know that bug by another name: [Stuxnet](#).

This revelation is at the heart of an apparently impeccably-sourced book due to be published in the US on 5 June. In *Confront and Conceal: Obama's Secret Wars and Surprising Use of American Power*, author David Sanger alleges that Stuxnet, which eventually wrecked hundreds of uranium centrifuges in Iran in 2010, was created by cyberweapons experts at the US National Security Agency in collaboration with 'Unit 8200', a cyber operation of Israeli intelligence.

The worm worked by issuing commands that [suddenly slowed the fast-spinning centrifuges](#) -

smashing them to pieces in the process. While motives alone have always suggested US and Israeli involvement in Stuxnet - they are after all the most vocal opponents of Iran's nuclear power and weapons capability - the book is the first account to provide evidence to back that theory. No forensic analysis has yet come close to identifying the authors of the worm.

Sanger says the Stuxnet program - then codenamed "Olympic Games" - began under the Bush administration with a low level spyware campaign that gradually mapped the network configuration of the computer and embedded control systems in Iran's Natanz uranium enrichment plant. Once the spyware reported back, coders were able to construct software that would use that map to invade the plant's control systems to issue overspeed and sudden braking commands - while reporting that all was fine to operators. The plant's management fired some operators as a result, thinking them incompetent.

Some of Sanger's anonymous sources - who he says are "American, European and Israeli" - are extraordinarily close to the White House and [publication of an excerpt in the New York Times](#) (where Sanger is a journalist) today will doubtless have kicked off a hunt for moles in Washington, DC. For instance, Sanger describes in detail one such Bush administration meeting in the White House Situation Room in which the wrecked "rubble" of a test centrifuge from the Oak Ridge Lab in Tennessee was revealed to demonstrate how well an early version of Stuxnet worked in tests.

Under Obama, all was not sweetness and light between the US and Israeli coding teams: Stuxnet was meant to stay within the Natanz network only - but Sanger quotes a US source saying a coding error by the Israelis led to the bug copying itself in the outside world. As a result Obama is said to have come close to shutting the program down - but decided its continuing nuclear havoc was worth the risk. However, Stuxnet's subsequent discovery by antivirus firms, who undertook widely-publicised analyses of its code, tipped off the Iranians to its presence.

Stuxnet's heritage lives on however: in proving that malware can attack and destroy industrial infrastructure, it was merely in the vanguard of a new breed of viruses, like the recently discovered [Flame](#), [whose capabilities could be profound](#)

25 May 2012 Last updated at 18:02 GMT

## Iran enrichment 'at higher level' - IAEA



Construction of the Fordo site was revealed by satellite images in 2009

UN nuclear inspectors have found traces of uranium enriched at 27% at Iran's Fordo nuclear site, a confidential report obtained by the BBC suggests.

The [report](#) by the nuclear watchdog IAEA comes a day after Iran and world powers held talks on Iran's nuclear programme.

Iran says the aim of the Fordo site is to enrich uranium for civilian use up to a maximum of 20%, and the latest readings could be accidental.

Analysts say 27% would bring Iran closer to making weapons-grade uranium.

The latest report by the International Atomic Energy Agency says Iranian officials told inspectors that the production of such particles "may happen for technical reasons beyond the operator's control".

Iran insists its nuclear work is purely peaceful, but Western countries fear it is seeking nuclear weapons, which require uranium enriched up to 90%.

Access sought

After the latest high-level talks in Baghdad, EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton said "significant differences" remained, but some common ground had been found.

[Continue reading the main story](#)

## Analysis



Bethany Bell BBC News, Vienna

The West is very concerned about Iran's ability to enrich uranium up to 20%, amid fears Tehran could be trying to develop a nuclear weapon.

There are civilian uses for 20% enriched uranium, but it is also a significant technical step towards producing weapons-grade uranium.

Iran has told the agency it was a mistake in starting up the cascades of centrifuges, the machines used to enrich uranium.

Nuclear experts say that is plausible. But one senior diplomat in Vienna refused to speculate. "It can happen," he said, "it needs to be checked".

More talks between Iran and six powers - Britain, the US, China, Russia, France and Germany - are due to be held in Moscow next month.

The goal of the international team, led Mrs Ashton, is an agreement by Iran to curb uranium enrichment and allow UN inspectors to verify its nuclear activity is peaceful.

The previous series of full international talks with Iran broke down in early 2011.

Last November an IAEA report claimed Iran had "carried out activities relevant to the

development of a nuclear device".

In its latest report, the Vienna-based agency reaffirms that it is seeking access to the Parchin military site.

The IAEA says that since November it has obtained more information relating to possible high-explosive tests there, which could be relevant to nuclear warheads.

24 May 2012 Last updated at 14:45 ET

## **Fresh Iran nuclear talks to be held in Moscow**



The EU's Catherine Ashton and Iran's Saeed Jalili led the two delegations

A fresh round of talks on Iran's nuclear programme will be held in Moscow in June, officials announced after a second day of talks in Baghdad.

The EU's foreign policy chief said "significant differences" remained, but some common ground had been found.

Six world powers made Iran an offer if it stopped processing medium-enriched uranium, which can be used to make nuclear weapons, EU officials said.

But Tehran insists that uranium enrichment is its non-negotiable right.

Speaking at a news conference after the talks on Thursday evening, the EU's Catherine Ashton described the two days of talks in the Iraqi capital as "intense".

"It is clear that we both want to make progress, and that there is some common ground. However, significant differences remain," she said.

A new meeting would be held in Moscow on 18-19 June, she said.

Speaking shortly afterwards, Iran's chief negotiator Saeed Jalili reiterated that peaceful nuclear energy and uranium enrichment were Iran's "right".



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EU's Catherine Ashton: "We agree on the need for further discussion to expand the common ground"

The BBC's James Reynolds at the talks says no-one was expecting any immediate breakthrough.

Earlier, an unnamed Western diplomat was quoted by the Associated Press as saying that negotiators for the six world powers presented Iran with a package combining new and old proposals.

It included an offer of medical isotopes and co-operation on nuclear safety.

In exchange, Tehran would stop its 20% uranium enrichment programme as a first step, the diplomat said.

Iran's official Irna news agency quoted government officials as describing the offer as "nitpicking" and the student news agency Isna said the package was "not balanced".

Iranian media said Mr Jalili, presented Tehran's own five-point package of proposals on "nuclear and non-nuclear issues".

Mrs Ashton confirmed that Tehran had offered its five-point plan, without giving further details.

Talks in Baghdad were extended for an additional day.

Decades of mistrust

The goal of the six powers' team, led Mrs Ashton, is an Iranian agreement to curb uranium enrichment and allow UN inspectors to verify its nuclear activity is for peaceful purposes only.

Iran's priority is to secure an end to international sanctions that isolate the country and damage its economy.

Tehran has repeatedly said it is not seeking nuclear arms.

The talks are being closely watched by Israel, which says Iran is trying to buy time to keep its nuclear plants in full operation. Tel Aviv has hinted at military action unless Iran's nuclear development is curbed.

Security was tight for the talks, with thousands of Iraqi police and troops protecting the venue inside Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone.

On Tuesday, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief Yukiya Amano said an agreement with Iran over nuclear inspections was expected "quite soon" following his recent talks in Tehran.

22 May 2012 Last updated at 06:56 ET

## Iran nuclear investigation accord 'expected soon'



Mr Amano said the talks had helped both sides understand each other's position

The head of the UN nuclear watchdog has said it is close to signing an accord with Iran after his talks in Tehran.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief said the deal could increase Tehran's co-operation with IAEA investigations into its atomic activity.

Yukiya Amano said he expected a deal with Iran to be signed "quite soon".

The US and its allies accuse Iran of developing a nuclear bomb, but Tehran says its purpose is peaceful.

"[A] decision was made to conclude and sign the agreement... I can say it will be signed quite soon," Mr Amano said shortly after arriving back in Vienna, where the IAEA is based.

He said that after holding talks in the Iranian capital with the country's chief nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili, "we understand each other's position better" though differences remained on

"some details".

### **'New beginning'**

As part of the talks, Mr Amano said the issue of access to the Parchin military site had been raised and that this would form part of the agreement.

Though no further details of the deal were immediately available, the IAEA is thought to be seeking access for its investigators to Iranian sites, nuclear scientists and documents to check intelligence suggesting Tehran is attempting to develop nuclear bombs, reports say.

News of the potential agreement comes ahead of a meeting between Iranian negotiators and representatives from six world powers - the US, Russia, China, the UK, France and Germany - in the Iraqi capital, Baghdad, for negotiations on Wednesday.

The six-power coalition will be led by European Union foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton.

Mr Jalili has said his country hopes for a new beginning when the talks start.