

IRAN WARNS ISRAEL ON PRE-EMPTIVE STRIKES

By Anton La Guardia, Diplomatic Editor
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Note from Pastor Kevin: Every day seems to bring another news item of increasing saber rattling between Iran and the West. Jesus said that the last days would be typified by "wars and RUMORS of wars" (Matthew 24)." If these rumors turn into fact and an actual exchange of missiles takes place, then the world will be a very different place when the dust settles. One thing can be assured from scripture, Iran (Persia) will continue to remain a power in the region until God destroys them as they attempt to join others in an invasion of Israel. Ezekiel 38 and 39 describe this attack and God's judgment on the invading nations.

Iran warned America and Israel last night that it was ready to launch pre-emptive strikes to stop them attacking its nuclear facilities.

Ali Shamkhani, the Iranian defence minister, said the presence of American forces in Iraq and Afghanistan was not a threat to Teheran. On the contrary, American soldiers were now "hostages" to Iran.



The Bushehr reactor in Iran

His comments came as America and Britain decided to increase diplomatic pressure on Iran to curb its nuclear programme. However, they agreed to delay any move to impose sanctions until after November's presidential election in America.

Iran says it has an "indisputable right" to nuclear technology for civilian purposes, but America is convinced that [this is a cover for producing atomic weapons](#).

The crisis has intensified since June when Iran partly reneged on an agreement with European countries to suspend its uranium enrichment programme. Last week, Teheran made a show of testing its 800-mile range Shahab-3 missiles, saying it had improved their accuracy.

On Monday, it threatened to attack Israel's nuclear reactor at Dimona if Israel tried to destroy Iran's nuclear facilities as it did Saddam Hussein's Osiraq nuclear reactor in 1981 - often held up as the model for effective pre-emptive action.

In the latest outburst, Mr Shamkhani told the al-Jazeera satellite television network: "We will not sit (with our arms folded) to wait for what others will do to us.

"Some military commanders in Iran are convinced that preventive operations which the Americans talk about are not their monopoly.

"America is not the only one present in the region. We are also present, from Khost to Kandahar in Afghanistan; we are

present in the Gulf and we can be present in Iraq."

The governing board of the International Atomic Energy Agency will meet in Vienna next month to discuss a catalogue of Iranian breaches of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Hardline members of the Bush administration demand that Iran be reported to the United Nations for possible sanctions.

But, meeting privately at a barbecue in Washington last weekend, Jack Straw, the Foreign Secretary, and Colin Powell, the secretary of state, decided to avoid an immediate confrontation with Teheran.

Several sources said they opted instead for a step-by-step strategy that would result in a referral to the UN Security Council only at the atomic agency's board meeting in November or even March next year.

After more than a year of inspections to uncover the scale of Iran's nuclear programme, Teheran raised the stakes this summer by resuming production, assembly and testing of uranium enrichment centrifuges - key equipment that can make fissile material for nuclear power reactors or nuclear weapons.