

# **IRAN THREATENS U.S. WITH** **'HARM AND PAIN'**

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By GEORGE JAHN

VIENNA, Austria (AP) - Iran threatened the United States with "harm and pain" Wednesday for its role in hauling Tehran before the U.N. Security Council over its nuclear program.

But the United States and its European allies said Iran's nuclear intransigence left the world no choice but to ask for Security Council action. The council could impose economic and political sanctions on Iran.

The statements were delivered to the 35-member board of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which is meeting to focus on Tehran's refusal to freeze uranium enrichment.

The meeting is in effect the last step before the Security Council begins considering Iran's nuclear activities and international fears they could be misused to make weapons. It began with both Iran and nations which oppose its enrichment plans sticking to their positions, reflecting the deadlock that prompted the IAEA board to seek Security Council intervention.

"The United States has the power to cause harm and pain," said a statement delivered by the Iranian delegation. "But the United States is also susceptible to harm and pain. So if that is the path that the U.S. wishes to choose, let the ball roll."

The statement did not elaborate on what Iran meant by "harm and pain," and Iranian officials were not immediately available to comment.

But diplomats accredited to the meeting and in contact with the Iranians said the statement could be a veiled threat to use oil as an economic weapon.

Iran is the second-largest producer within the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, and a boycott could target Europe, China or India.

The republic also could cause difficulties in southern Iraq. On Tuesday, U.S. Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld accused Tehran of dispatching elements of its Revolutionary Guard to stir trouble inside Iraq.

Iran's statement was unusually harsh, reflecting Tehran's frustration at

failing to deflect the threat of Security Council action against it in the coming weeks. Tehran maintains its nuclear program is for generating electricity.

"Our nation has made its decision to fully use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and all have to give in to this decision made by the Iranian nation," Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said in Iran. "We have made our choice."

Iran also attacked "warmongers in Washington" for what it said was an unjust accusation that Tehran's nuclear intentions were mainly for military use. It also suggested America was vulnerable, despite its strength.

"Surely we are not naive about the United States' ... intention to flex muscles," the statement said. "But we also see the bone fractures underneath."

It also threatened broader retaliation, without being specific, saying Iran "will adapt our policy and adjust our approach to conform with the new exigencies."

Earlier, U.S. delegate Gregory Schulte insisted in comments to the board that "the time has now come for the Security Council to act."

He ticked off Iran's decision to curtail agency inspections, its expanding uranium enrichment program and worrying conclusions by IAEA inspectors that suggest at least past interest in nuclear arms as contributing to "mounting international concerns" about Tehran's nuclear intentions.

"Iran has still not come clean," he said.

Schulte listed Tehran's possession of plans that could only be used to make nuclear warheads, links between its nuclear programs and the military, and its determination to develop a large-scale enrichment program that could be misused to make nuclear arms.

"IAEA inspectors have no doubt this information was expressly intended for the fabrication of nuclear weapons components," Schulte said of documents showing how to form fissile material into warheads.

Separately, France, Germany and Britain, which spearheaded the Feb. 4 IAEA resolution clearing the path for Security Council action, warned that what is known about Iran's enrichment program could represent only "the tip of the iceberg."

It also spoke of "indicators of a possible military dimension to Iran's (nuclear) program" as "a legitimate source of intense concern."

"We believe that the time has ... come for the U.N. Security Council to

reinforce the authority" of the IAEA and its board, the European statement said.

Ahmadinejad's comments - and U.S. and Russian statements the day before rejecting any compromise allowing Tehran to enrich uranium domestically - set the stage for Security Council action once the IAEA board meeting hears about the latest investigations into Iran's nuclear program and debates the issue.

Russia and China, which have Security Council vetoes, may use them to foil any resolution in that chamber that would meaningfully increase pressure on Iran, their political and economic ally. Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing appealed Tuesday for more negotiations and suggested Security Council involvement was not needed.

The Chinese and Russian statements to the board were relatively moderate, said delegates inside the closed meeting. China urged "more time for diplomacy" before any Security Council action, one delegate said on condition of anonymity, quoting from the Chinese statement.

Associated Press reporter Palma Benczenleitner contributed to this report.