



Israel Critical of Iran Nuclear Talks

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Israeli officials say European Union-led negotiations over Iran's nuclear program are giving Tehran more time to develop nuclear weapons. U.S. officials are trying to reassure Israel there is still time for a diplomatic solution to the nuclear standoff.

U.N. and E.U. nuclear talks with Iran have settled on another round of negotiations next month in Baghdad.

And Israel is not happy about it.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says more time is just what Iran wants. "Well, my initial impression is that Iran has been given a [free chance]. It's got five weeks to continue enrichment without any limitation, any inhibition," he said.

U.S. President Barack Obama says Iran is not getting a free pass and must show it is serious about complying with its international obligations. "I've been very clear to Iran and to our negotiating partners that we're not going to have these talks just drag out in a stalling process. But so far at least we haven't given away anything other than the opportunity for us to negotiate and see if Iran comes to the table in good faith," he said.

With Israel openly considering a military strike to stop Iran's nuclear program...

Middle East analyst Malou Innocent says the Obama administration is pressing for more time. "The Israeli government believes that negotiations are worthless, that we should just immediately press forward with more pressure and possible military strikes. So there seems to be some tension between the Israeli and U.S. governments," she said.

The United States and European Union are tightening sanctions on Iran's oil and banking sectors.

President Obama says there will be no let up until the international community is satisfied that Iran's nuclear program is not for weapons. "Part of the reason we have been able to build a strong international coalition that isolates Iran around the nuclear issue is because the world has confidence that I've been sincere and my administration's been sincere about giving Iran an opportunity to pursue peaceful nuclear energy while foreclosing the pursuit of a nuclear weapon," he said.

With Iranian ally Bashar al-Assad under pressure in Damascus, analyst Malou Innocent says the Obama administration is telling Israel to be patient. "History is going in Israel's favor in terms of the international pressure being brought on the Iranian government and now the internal insurrection against Assad's regime. So many within Washington are trying to pressure Tel Aviv to back down on the pressure and allow events to carry forward," he said.

Iran insists that its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes.

U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon says Tehran deserves the chance to demonstrate that to the international community.