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International Reaction to Iran-Russia Nuclear Pact Varies

By Michael Bowman

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Reaction to Sunday's nuclear fuel accord between Iran and Russia varies greatly on opposite sides of the Atlantic, with U.S. officials disapproving and Europeans expressing satisfaction with the safeguards built into the deal.

The deal, signed at Iran's Bushehr atomic plant in the south of the country, calls for Russia to supply uranium fuel and for Iran to ship back spent nuclear materials. Observers say the agreement will facilitate the activation of Iran's first atomic power station perhaps in a matter of months.

The Bush administration had strenuously objected to the accord. One of President Bush's allies in Congress says it takes Iran a step closer to being able to produce nuclear weapons not just nuclear energy, as Tehran insists.

Republican Senator John McCain spoke on *Fox News Sunday*. "A nuclear-armed Iran is a very destabilizing turn of events and could ratchet up the possibility of conflict in that region. This is a very serious step, because most experts believe that Iran is on the road to acquisition of weapons of mass destruction and they have means to deliver them, as well," said Mr. McCain.

But European governments appear to be taking a more neutral stance. Speaking on CNN's *Late Edition* program, Britain's ambassador to the United States, David Manning, did not specifically endorse the Iran-Russia accord. But he expressed satisfaction with the terms of the agreement.

"The Russians will supply the fuel. The Iranians will use it. They will do so under full-scale safeguards. The important thing is that, when the fuel has been used, it

will be returned to Russia," explained Mr. Manning.

That view was echoed by Germany's ambassador in Washington. Wolfgang Ischinger said European nations and the United States all want the same thing when it comes to Iran. "There is no difference in our concern for Iran having, potentially in the future, nuclear weapons and the American concern. Our concern is the same," he said.

Yet, while European nations have employed a diplomatic approach to curbing Iran's nuclear ambitions, the Bush administration has left all options open, including economic sanctions and military intervention. Speaking on CBS's *Face the Nation* program, former U.S. national security advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski said the Bush administration has a decision to make.

"Do we [the United States] work with the Europeans in trying to get Iran to fulfill its obligations under the non-proliferation treaty? Or do we stand on the sidelines, let the Europeans negotiate and therefore not succeed, in my judgment?" asked Mr. Brzezinski.

The Iranian-Russian agreement came on the eve of a meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which has been monitoring Iran's nuclear program.

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Iran, Russia Sign Nuclear Agreement

Iran and Russia have signed an agreement for Russia to provide nuclear fuel to Iran, and for Tehran to return the spent fuel to Russia. The United States, which suspects Iran of seeking to develop nuclear weapons, opposed the deal. The agreement was signed Sunday at the Bushehr nuclear plant in southern Iran, and paves the way for Iran to start up its first nuclear power plant sometime next year. The

deal calls for Russia to supply Iran with nuclear fuel, with a...



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The International Atomic Energy Agency says it is trying to find out if Iran accepted in its entirety, what is termed, an "extensive offer" in the 1980s from the nuclear black-market network headed by a top Pakistani scientist. IAEA chief Mohamed ElBaradei says Iran has admitted it received an offer from the A.Q. Khan network, including full knowledge of nuclear enrichment technology. But Iran claims it turned down essential parts of the offer, which could have been used...



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EU Says Iran Must Honor UN Nuclear Accords; Downplays Russia-Iran Nuclear Deal

Russia and Iran signed a nuclear fuel agreement Sunday that is part of a plan to bring Iran's first nuclear reactor on line by mid-2006. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, who held talks with EU officials in Luxembourg, defended the deal as being in line with international statutes. "It's entirely within the resolution of the IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency] - our cooperation with Iran on nuclear energy is under IAEA monitoring and there is nothing ...

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The United Nations says Iran has refused to allow nuclear inspectors to revisit a suspect military site. In a report to the International Atomic Energy Agency Friday in Vienna, inspectors say Iran recently refused to grant them access to its Parchin military base, where Washington says Tehran is simulating atomic weapons tests. Deputy Director General for Safeguards Pierre Goldschmidt said Iranian officials claimed the previous visit in January had fulfilled...



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