

Nuke deal only set Iran back a month, Netanyahu says

PM calls for Islamic Republic to be stripped of all centrifuges, brands boycott organizers as 'classical anti-Semites'

BY RAPHAEL AHREN | February 17, 2014, 10:31 pm |

The interim nuclear deal the international community signed with Iran only distanced the Islamic Republic one month from acquiring a nuclear weapon, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Monday evening.

Speaking on the eve of nuclear negotiations between six world powers and Tehran, which start Tuesday in Vienna and aim at a permanent agreement, Netanyahu said the talks' only acceptable outcome is for Iran to be left without a single centrifuge and without any capability to enrich uranium.

He also lashed out at those who would boycott Israel, calling them "anti-Semites in modern garb," while saying security would remain Israel's main concern in talks with the Palestinians.

"Our goal is to prevent Iran from having the capacity to manufacture or put together a nuclear weapon," he told American Jewish leaders in Jerusalem. "What ought to be the goal of these negotiations? Not merely to prevent Iran from having nuclear weapons. It's to prevent Iran from having the capability to manufacture nuclear weapons."

Netanyahu said Jerusalem had calculated that the deal reached in November, which cuts back Iran's enrichment activity in return for an easing of sanctions, had only set the program back by four weeks. He said Iran was allowed to keep its current centrifuges in place and to continue to develop an advanced type of centrifuge, while at the same time working on developing long-range ballistic missiles.

"We made an estimation of how much time has been saved by the interim deal. How much has Iran regressed by agreeing to dilute the 20 percent enriched uranium that they have to 3.5 percent?"

"That is what Iran has given to the world. Which means it has given practically nothing. But Iran has received a great deal," chiefly the easing of sanctions, Netanyahu said. "Iran has given practically zero. It's given four weeks, but it's receiving a new position in the world, it's being

legitimized. Everybody's embracing Iran, because of a smile," he said, referring to the ostensibly more moderate statements by Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.

"Iran has not changed one iota in its calls to annihilate the Jewish state. And yet this regime is being embraced," he added.

Iran has to be stripped of its capacity to create nuclear weapons, Netanyahu said. "Zero centrifuges. Not one. Zero. They don't need any centrifuges and they don't have the right to enrichment. I think that is something that requires firmness and clarity. It may not be fashionable, but it's the right thing, it is the truthful thing."

Speaking at the same conference minutes before Netanyahu, US Ambassador to Israel Dan Shapiro told the American Jewish leaders that in Vienna, Washington was seeking to obtain verifiable assurances that Iran's nuclear program is peaceful and that the regime will not acquire a nuclear weapon. "That is the goal and we will keep our eyes firmly focused on that goal," he said.

Shapiro also said that the US and five other world powers negotiating with Iran would "halt" even the "modest sanctions relief" that was part of the interim deal if Iran did not honor its commitments as set forth in the agreement.

On Monday, diplomats familiar with the UN's nuclear watchdog said Iran was honoring its part of the bargain, [but that the country had also increased its uranium stockpile](#), Reuters reported.

If economic and diplomatic pressure are not successful in curbing Iran's drive toward a nuclear bomb, "the president [Obama] said, all options are on the table," Shapiro said. "And he has ensured that a military option is available should it be necessary."

Netanyahu delivered his speech to the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, which is currently holding its annual Israel Leadership Mission to Israel.

Addressing increasing boycott calls, he called for Israel to "fight back" and "delegitimize the delegitimizers."

"I think that it is important that the boycotters be exposed for what they are. They are classical anti-Semites in modern garb," Netanyahu said.

He said Israeli is fighting BDS both by exposing the boycotters and with its booming high-tech sector.

"The most eerie and disgraceful thing is that people on the soil of Europe are talking about the boycott of Jews. That is outrageous," he said. "The boycotters make their goal clear: to end the Jewish state."

Speaking on peace talks, Netanyahu said the Palestinians must recognize Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people and agree to ironclad security arrangements. He reiterated his position that he will not outsource Israel's security to international forces.

"Peace is not easy, but it becomes possible when you keep in mind the main elements of peace: mutual recognition and Israel's capacity to defend itself by itself. These are not matters on which we intend to compromise. Peace always includes compromise but I will never compromise on Israel's security," he said.

At the end of his 35-minute speech, Netanyahu thanked the Conference of Presidents, which had arrived in Israel after a visit to Madrid, and briefly joked about the Spanish government's plan to grant citizenship to Jews who had been expelled hundreds of years ago. "As the son of a well-known hispanist, I have a message: We appreciate the gesture, but keep your passports."

© 2014 THE TIMES OF ISRAEL, ALL RIGHTS RESERVED