

Iran Says Russian Plan Could Revive Talks

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Iranian leader Mahmoud Ahmadinejad shaking hands with Patrushev as Jalili looks on at Tehran talks Tuesday. **Morteza Nikoubazi**

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran welcomed on Tuesday a Russian attempt to revive talks with six world powers that are concerned about its uranium enrichment program, a potential pathway to nuclear weapons, but was vague about what the agenda should be.

After meeting Security Council chief Nikolai Patrushev, his Iranian counterpart said a proposal by Moscow — details of which have not been made public — could be used to restart the talks that stalled in January.

"Our Russian friends' suggestion could be a basis for starting talks for regional and international cooperation especially in the field of peaceful nuclear activities," Saeed Jalili, secretary general of Iran's National Security Council, told state broadcaster IRIB.

Jalili's general remarks gave no indication that Iran was now prepared, unlike previously, to address what the powers see as the crucial concern — its uranium enrichment drive, which

UN inspectors say Iran has not proved is for peaceful energy only.

Talks between Iran and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council — the United States, Russia, China, Britain and France, plus Germany — in Istanbul in January foundered with Iran insisting on having what it says is its right to produce nuclear fuel recognized.

Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told U.S. President Barack Obama in July of Moscow's "step-by-step" approach under which Iran could address questions about its nuclear program and be rewarded with a gradual easing of sanctions.

"We and the six countries as seven countries can create the grounds for cooperation through this strategy," Jalili said.

The United States has cautiously welcomed Russia's overture to Iran, but says it will continue a "dual approach" of sanctions pressure and the possibility of talks. "We welcome any Russian effort to persuade Iran that it's time to change course and meet its international obligations," State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland told reporters on Monday.

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