

Iran invites international groups to bid on nuclear plants

Normal business for a normal country ...

The Jerusalem Post (AP)
August 29, 2006

An Iranian senior official Tuesday said Tehran would pursue nuclear activities despite international pressure and invited Western companies to bid for tenders to build nuclear plants, a news agency reported.

"We have had ... another 21 thousand megawatts of nuclear power plants approved by the parliament that will be built in the next 20 years," Seyed Ala'addin Barojerdi, chairman of Iran's Parliament National Security and Foreign Affairs Commission, was quoted as saying by national news agency Bernama.

"(The) international tenders for building of two of these nuclear power plants have been so far presented and we would be willing to see the Western companies participate in these projects."

If there are no takers, he said the Iranian government would undertake the projects on its own.

"This is not a trend that could be stopped and we shall definitely (be) involved in the construction of what we do need for ourselves" in the future, he said after meeting Malaysian parliament officials.

No other details were available. Seyed Ala'addin could not be reached for comment.

The UN Security Council has given Iran an Aug. 31 deadline to suspend all uranium enrichment activities or face possible economic or political sanctions.

Last week, Iran offered to pursue negotiations but refused to suspend uranium enrichment beforehand. Iran has denied consistently that it has a nuclear weapons program and says its nuclear programs are for civilian use only.

An Iran Embassy official said Seyed Ala'addin also met with Malaysian Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar on Tuesday to discuss Iran's position on its nuclear program.

Seyed Ala'addin earlier visited Indonesia before flying to Kuala Lumpur late Monday for an overnight trip, said the official who declined to be named because he is not authorized to speak to the media.

Syed Hamid's aides confirmed the meeting but declined to give details.

Malaysia chairs the 56-nation Organization of Islamic Conference while Indonesia is the world's most populous Muslim nation