

# Newsday

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## Britain will boost Iran sanctions

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ROME - The British government will seek further sanctions against Iran over its atomic program, the prime minister said yesterday, as Iran's new nuclear negotiator had his first meeting with the European Union's foreign policy chief.

The Bush administration has led the push for sanctions against Iran, but last month agreed to Russian and Chinese demands to give the country until November to address international concerns.

The United States and some of its allies accuse Iran of secretly trying to develop nuclear weapons and have demanded it halt uranium enrichment, a key step atomic weapon production. Tehran denies the claim, saying its program is for peaceful purposes including generating electricity.

"We are absolutely clear that we are ready, and will push for, further sanctions against Iran," Prime Minister Gordon Brown said. "We will work through the United Nations to achieve this. We are prepared also to have tougher European sanctions. We want to make it clear that we do not support the nuclear ambitions of that country."

Brown sidestepped a question about military action, promulgated by some hawks in the Bush administration. "I believe the combination of our willingness to go through the UN process, which we will do, and our ability to take sanctions as a European Union, sends the strongest possible message to Iran," he said.

The EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana described his first meeting with Iran's new negotiator yesterday as "constructive" and said more talks were planned for November.

It was Saeed Jalili's first introduction to Solana since his appointment following the weekend resignation of Ali Larijani. Both Iranians took part in yesterday's session and said Iran would continue negotiations with the EU representative.

"Negotiation and cooperation is our basic approach," said Jalili. Larijani said the talks addressed Iran's work with the UN nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, which is conducting an investigation into Iran's past nuclear activities, as well as other issues.

The departure of the more moderate Larijani was seen as a victory for hard-line Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and a possible indication Iran might take an even more defiant position. But Larijani dismissed speculation over his resignation and alleged differences with Ahmadinejad, saying the replacement was merely a matter of a generational change.

The talks came as a poll showed 65 percent of the American public preferred economic or diplomatic moves against Iran, compared to 19 percent who favored military action or threats. When the question was asked in March, 13 percent chose threatened or actual

military steps. The new poll was conducted during Ahmadinejad's mixed reception in New York, a report for **Public Agenda**, a nonpartisan public policy group, and the journal Foreign Affairs said.

British prime minister sidesteps a question over military action against Iran.

Iran's new nuclear negotiator meets with EU foreign policy chief.