

## Iran Issues Warning to US

By [Global Research](#)

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)  
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Iran said Friday it could defeat any American military action over its controversial nuclear drive, in one of the Islamic regime's boldest challenges yet to the United States.

"You can start a war but it won't be you who finishes it," said General Yahya Rahim Safavi, the head of the Revolutionary Guards and among the regime's most powerful figures.

"The Americans know better than anyone that their troops in the region and in [Iraq](#) are vulnerable. I would advise them not to commit such a strategic error," he told reporters on the sidelines of a pro-Palestinian conference in Tehran.

The United States accuses Iran of using an atomic energy drive as a mask for weapons development. Last weekend US news reports said President George W. Bush's administration was refining plans for preventive strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities.

"I would advise them to first get out of their quagmire in Iraq before getting into an even bigger one," General Safavi said with a grin.

"We have American forces in the region under total surveillance. For the past two years, we have been ready for any scenario, whether sanctions or an attack."

Iran announced this week it had successfully enriched uranium to make nuclear fuel, despite a UN Security Council demand for the sensitive work to be halted by April 28.

The Islamic regime says it only wants to generate atomic energy, but enrichment can be extended to make the fissile core of a nuclear warhead — something the United States is convinced that "axis of evil" member Iran wants to acquire.

At a Friday prayer sermon in Tehran, senior cleric Ayatollah Ahmad Janati simply branded the US as a "decaying power" lacking the "stamina" to block Iran's ambitions.

And hardline President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad told AFP that a US push for tough United Nations sanctions was of "no importance".

"She is free to say whatever she wants," the president replied when asked to respond to comments by US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice highlighting part of the UN charter that provides for sanctions backed up by the threat of military action.

"We give no importance to her comments," he said with a broad smile.

On Thursday, Rice said that faced with Iran's intransigence, the United States "will look at the full range of options available to the United Nations".

“There is no doubt that Iran continues to defy the will of the international community,” Rice said, after Iran also dismissed a personal appeal from the UN atomic watchdog chief Mohamed ElBaradei.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief must give a report at the end of April on Iranian compliance with the Security Council demand. In Tehran he said that after three years of investigations Iran’s activities were “still hazy and not very clear”.

Although the United States has been prodding the council to take a tough stand against the Islamic republic, including possible sanctions, it has run into opposition from veto-wielding members Russia and China.

Representatives of the five permanent members of the Security Council plus Germany are to meet in Moscow Tuesday to discuss the crisis.

In seeking to deter international action, Iran has been playing up its oil wealth, its military might in strategic Gulf waters and its influence across the region — such as in Iraq, Lebanon and the Palestinian territories.

At the Tehran conference, Iran continued to thumb its nose at the United States and Israel.

“The Zionist regime is an injustice and by its very nature a permanent threat,” Ahmadinejad told the gathering of regime officials, visiting Palestinian militant leaders and foreign sympathisers.

“Whether you like it or not, the Zionist regime is on the road to being eliminated,” said Ahmadinejad, whose regime does not recognise Israel and who drew international condemnation last year when he said Israel should be “wiped off the map”.

Unfazed by his critics, the hardliner went on to repeat his controversial stance on the Holocaust.

“If there is serious doubt over the Holocaust, there is no doubt over the catastrophe and Holocaust being faced by the Palestinians,” said the president, who had previously dismissed as a “myth” the killing of an estimated six million Jews by the Nazis and their allies during World War II.

“I tell the governments who support Zionism to ... let the migrants (Jews) return to their countries of origin. If you think you owe them something, give them some of your land,” he said.

Iran’s turbaned supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, also accused the United States of seeking to place the entire region under Israeli control.

“The plots by the American government against Iran, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon aimed at governing the Middle East with the control of the Zionist regime will not succeed,” Khamenei said.

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