**Defiant Iran rejects new UN sanctions**

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World powers have slapped new military and financial sanctions on Iran aiming to rein in its suspect nuclear program, but stressed that the door remains open for talks.

A US-drafted resolution was adopted on Wednesday by 12 votes in favor in the 15-member Security Council, with Lebanon abstaining and Brazil and Turkey voting against.

Though swiftly hailed by co-sponsors Britain, France and the United States, the move drew an immediate, scornful reaction from Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

"These resolutions are not worth a dime for the Iranian nation," said Ahmadinejad, who earlier threatened to suspend negotiations with six major powers if the sanctions were imposed.

He compared the world powers' resolutions to "a used hanky which should be thrown in the dust bin."

US President Barack Obama said Iran now faces the "toughest-ever" sanctions regime, sending "an unmistakable message about the international community's commitment to stopping the spread of nuclear weapons."

But Obama, who has offered to resume dialogue with Tehran, stressed the sanctions did not spell an end to diplomatic overtures, urging Iran to "take a different and better path."

The Iranian president was due in China for a visit likely marred by unusually strong criticism of Beijing by Iran's atomic chief for the Asian giant's support of the measure.

Despite the backing of Russia and China, it was one of the least supported of the four Iran sanctions resolutions adopted at the United Nations. It expands an arms embargo and bars the country from sensitive activities such as uranium mining.

The resolution also authorizes states to conduct high-sea inspections of vessels believed to be ferrying banned items for Iran and adds 40 entities to a list of people and groups subject to travel restrictions and financial sanctions.

Tehran maintains its uranium enrichment program is for peaceful civilian purposes, while the Western nations have charged that Iran is covertly seeking to develop nuclear weapons.

Israel welcomed the new sanctions against the Jewish state's arch-foe, but said more was needed to stop Tehran acquiring nuclear weapons, including "strong action" from individual countries.

Western powers had initially pushed for crippling sanctions that would have notably targeted Iran's oil industry but months of hard-nosed bargaining with Beijing and Moscow watered down the resolution to protect their substantial energy and economic interests in Iran.

Chinese Ambassador Li Baodong said the resolution aimed to coax Iran back to the negotiating table and to fulfill its obligations as a signatory of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

"Sanctions can never fundamentally resolve," he said, stressing the measures could be suspended or even lifted if Tehran suspends uranium enrichment and reprocessing.

Russia said a package of economic and energy incentives offered by six major powers to Iran in exchange for halting uranium enrichment remained on the table.

The sanctions "should not do undue damage" to the Iranian economy and the Iranian people, stressed Russian envoy to the UN Vitaly Churkin.

Japan said it supported the fresh sanctions but still hoped for a diplomatic solution.

"It becomes important that the international community firmly implements the UN Security Council resolution and works towards a peaceful and diplomatic solution for the nuclear issue and demands Iran make a prudent decision," Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada said in a statement.

EU foreign affairs chief Catherine Ashton's office said the resolution "keeps the door open for continued engagement" between world powers and Iran.

"Sanctions are not the endgame or the final solution," the EU statement said. "We hope that today's decision will bring Iran to the negotiating table."

The resolution was approved despite efforts by Brazil and Turkey to head off the measures and promote a nuclear fuel swap deal they reached with Tehran last month, which had been coolly received by the six major powers.

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva later slammed the new sanctions as a "Pyrrhic victory" that comes with a massive burden to the victors and said the move "weakened the UN Security Council."

Lebanon had earlier indicated it could not support the resolution due to domestic political considerations, a reference to the presence of the powerful, Iranian-backed Hezbollah in the Lebanese government.