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## U.S. Is Seeking a Range of Sanctions Against Iran

By MARK LANDLER  
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WASHINGTON — The Obama administration is scrambling to assemble a package of harsher economic sanctions against [Iran](#) over its nuclear program that could include a cutoff of investments to the country's oil-and-gas industry and restrictions on many more Iranian banks than those currently blacklisted, senior administration officials said Sunday.

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Ali Shaigan/Fars News Agency, via Associated Press

Iran showed new defiance Sunday by test-firing three short-range missiles near the city of Qum.

The administration also is seeking to build a broader coalition of partners for sanctions so that it may still be able to act against Iran even if China and Russia were to veto harsher measures proposed in the [United Nations Security Council](#).

"There are a variety of options still available," Defense Secretary [Robert M. Gates](#), speaking on CNN's "State of the Union," said of the potential list of targets for Iranian sanctions, notably in energy equipment and technology. He called it "a pretty rich list to pick from."

Administration officials began describing what new sanctions might look like with a critical face-to-face meeting between the United States and Iran just four days away. The Americans are expected to press their demand for quick access and blueprints to a newly disclosed Iranian nuclear site.

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In pushing for more stringent sanctions, the administration wants to accomplish two potentially irreconcilable goals: forcing Iran back to negotiations over its nuclear program — which the United States and its Western allies suspect is meant to create a weapon — while at the same time winning the support of Russia and China, which are eager to preserve their significant economic ties to Iran.

For now, administration officials said, the United States was not likely to win support for an embargo on shipments of gasoline or other refined fuel to Iran. The European allies,

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one official said, view this as a “blunt instrument” that could hurt ordinary Iranians, inflame public opinion and unite the country behind the government of President [Mahmoud Ahmadinejad](#), whose legitimacy within Iran has remained under a cloud since his June 12 re-election that opponents claim was rigged.

American efforts to marshal worldwide pressure against Iran have gained traction [since the revelation last Friday](#) that Iran was operating a clandestine nuclear site.

Even Israel, which has long warned that a military strike might be the only effective response to Iran’s ambitions, now seems satisfied to let [President Obama](#) play out his strategy of offering to talk while threatening to impose painful measures if those talks go nowhere.

Prime Minister [Benjamin Netanyahu](#) of Israel telephoned the House speaker, [Nancy Pelosi](#), and five other influential lawmakers on Thursday and Friday to urge the United States to pursue “crippling sanctions” against Iran, according to Israeli officials and people close to the lawmakers.

Secretary of State [Hillary Rodham Clinton](#) said on the CBS program “Face the Nation” that the administration was exploring how to “broaden and deepen sanctions.” Existing sanctions, she acknowledged, have been “leaky,” but the United States had learned from its experience with North Korea how to assemble a broad coalition behind punitive measures.

Still, the administration faces an uphill battle, both because of the nature of the countries it must persuade and because of changes inside Iran, particularly its disputed election and the ensuing protests.

“Sanctions out of the blue for punishment purposes, as much as I think they deserve it, probably don’t serve any useful purpose in resolving the issue,” said [Thomas R. Pickering](#), a former under secretary of state who has held informal negotiations with the Iranians.

Administration officials acknowledge it will be difficult to persuade Russia to agree to harsh, long-term sanctions against Iran, whatever the assurances that the Russian president, [Dmitri A. Medvedev](#), gave last week to Mr. Obama. China, these officials say, is even less dependable, given its reliance on Iranian oil and its swelling trade ties with Iran.

Iran has proved resilient to sanctions, having weathered them in one form or another since the Islamic Revolution in 1979. And the political upheaval there creates a new complication: Western countries do not want to impose measures that deepen the misery of ordinary people, because it could help the government and strangle the fragile protest movement.

Citing those fears, the French foreign minister, [Bernard Kouchner](#), said last Monday he was opposed to an embargo of refined fuel products. Another senior Western diplomat said such a measure was not likely to be on the menu of options, even though sanctions experts say it is probably the most effective short-term cudgel.

At a dinner in New York last week, the night before he addressed the [United Nations](#), Mr. Ahmadinejad told his guests he would “warmly welcome” additional sanctions because it would only make his country more self-sufficient, according to a person who was there.

“For sanctions to work, they not only have to be multilateral, but there has to be international solidarity over a prolonged period of time,” said Ray Takeyh, an Iran expert at the [Council on Foreign Relations](#) who was until last month a senior adviser to the Obama administration.

Mr. Takeyh said that he was skeptical that sanctions alone would alter Iran’s long-term behavior. But he said he would not be surprised if Iran came to the meeting on Thursday

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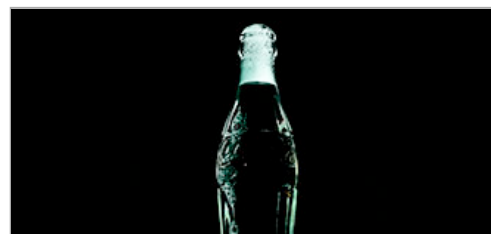
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with an offer to allow inspectors to visit the secret uranium enrichment plant near the holy city of Qum.

That would fall well short of the administration's demand that Iran hand over blueprints for the plant or produce key people involved in its design. But it might be enough to weaken solidarity, said Mr. Takeyh, who noted that the Iranians "tend to be tactically adroit."

Iran's missile tests on Sunday were interpreted by administration officials as a message to the West after the disclosure of the nuclear site. The missiles had a range of 90 to 125 miles, according to state-run television. Iran plans to fire two medium-range Shahab-1 and Shahab-2 missiles on Monday, the state-run Fars agency reported.

In assessing the threat posed by Iran, some countries still focus on economics. China has interests in Iranian oil and gas reserves that potentially total close to \$100 billion, according to experts. It needs Iranian cooperation to tap those reserves and move the fuel to China.

Russia, a neighbor of Iran, is more intertwined with it than any other world power, and has more concerns about upsetting relations. That partly explains why it has sought to dilute the impact of previous sanctions on Iran.

Political changes in Iran have also made it less vulnerable to some sanctions. Among the most common is to deny visas to senior officials to travel to Europe or the United States. But the new generation of Iranian leaders is a product of an Islamic theocracy, and is less likely to care about travel restrictions, experts say.

"They don't want to go shopping for their wives in Paris; they don't want to go visit their bank accounts in Geneva," said Danielle Pletka, an expert in the Middle East at the [American Enterprise Institute](#). "That reduces the leverage the international community has over them."

*Ethan Bronner contributed reporting from Jerusalem, Michael Wines from Beijing, and Nazila Fathi from Toronto.*

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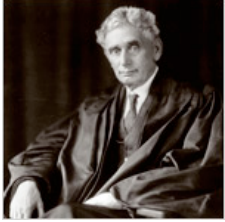
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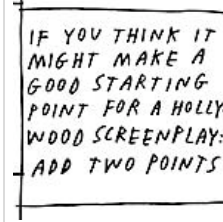
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