

Iran Says No Snap Inspections Of Nuclear Sites

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TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — An Iranian official on Tuesday rebuked the chief of the U.N. atomic agency for demanding snap inspections of Iran's nuclear sites, saying the request hindered efforts to reach an agreement with world powers, state TV reported.

The United States and five other world powers face an end-of-the-month deadline to reach a framework agreement with Iran on its nuclear program. Western nations suspect Tehran is pursuing a nuclear weapons capability alongside the civilian program. Iran denies such allegations, insisting its nuclear activities are entirely peaceful.

Earlier this month Yukiya Amano, the head of the U.N.'s International Atomic Energy Agency, said Tehran should agree to snap inspections to reassure the international community.

Iran's nuclear spokesman Behrouz Kamalvandi said Amano's comments harm the delicate negotiations. "It would be much better if Amano only talked about the IAEA's seasonal and monthly reports," he said, according to state TV.

Last June, Kamalvandi said Iran may accept snap inspections as part of a final nuclear agreement.

Iran and the so-called P5+1 -- the U.S., Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany -- hope to reach a rough deal on the nuclear program by the end of March and a final agreement by June 30. Iran has called for a single-stage final accord soon.

Among the unresolved issues meant to be part of an agreement is a ruling by the atomic agency on whether Iran worked on nuclear arms in the past.

Tehran denies that, but the agency says it has information suggesting otherwise. It has remained essentially stalemated for a decade, however, in attempts to follow up on its suspicions.

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