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Sharon in NY



Bush and Putin – divided on Iran  
Photo: AFP

### Sharon asks S. Africa to act against Iran

Prime minister meets with South African president in U.S., asks him to act for referral of Iran nuke issue to U.N. Security Council. Meanwhile, President Bush says referring matter to U.N. depends on diplomatic contacts

Attila Somfalvi and Reuters

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon met with South African President Thabo Mbeki Friday and asked him to advance the referral of Iran's nuclear program to discussion at the United Nations Security Council.

Meanwhile, President George W. Bush said he is confident "the world will see to it that Iran goes to the U.N. Security Council if it does not live up to its agreements."

Sharon and the South African president, who met on the sidelines of the U.N. summit in New York, discussed the Iranian question. Diplomatic officials characterized the meeting as a good one.

Israel is currently acting to convince South Africa, which is a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency's governing council, to support the referral of the Iranian issue to the Security Council for possible sanctions.

Until now, the South Africans have resisted the move. The governing council is comprised of 35 countries, including Russia,

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Yes

No

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China, India and Pakistan, which oppose the move.

### 'We are against Iran becoming nuclear power'

President Bush said on Friday he was confident Iran would be referred to the U.N. Security Council for possible sanctions if necessary over its nuclear program, while Russian President Vladimir Putin said he wanted to make sure diplomacy was exhausted.

Ahead of a key meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency's board of governors next week, Washington and the European Union have sought support for a possible referral of Iran to the Security Council for breaching its nonproliferation obligations.

Russia is among several countries that are cool to that idea. Bush acknowledged after a meeting with Putin at the White House that the effort could require more diplomacy.

"...When that referral will happen is a matter of diplomacy," Bush told a joint news conference.

Both leaders emphasized that they shared a goal of preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon.

But Putin, who met with Iran's new president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on Thursday on the sidelines of the United Nations summit in New York, suggested there was more room for negotiation with Tehran.

"Of course, we are against the fact that Iran would become a nuclear power, and will continue to do so in the future under any circumstances," Putin said. "Now, as regards as to how we can control this situation, there are many ways and means to do so."

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