**Iran: We will continue to enrich uranium despite receiving Russian fuel**

Comment by Iran FM comes as U.S. says Iran's use of Russian fuel in its first nuclear reactor proves it does not need a separate nuclear program.

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Iran will continue to enrich its own uranium, Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki told the country's semi-official Fars news agency on Saturday, hours after Russian nuclear fuel began to be inserted into Iran's first nuclear reactor.

Iranian and Russian engineers began the weeklong operation to load uranium fuel into the Bushehr nuclear power plant, a major milestone as Tehran forges ahead with its atomic program despite U.N. sanctions.

Last week, White House spokesman Robert Gibbs told reporters the United States felt that the fact that the Bushehr reactor would operate solely on Russian fuel proved that "underscores that Iran does not need its own enrichment capability if its intentions, as it states, are for a peaceful nuclear program."

Gibbs added that the Bushehr plant proved "to the world that, if the Iranians are sincere in a peaceful program, their needs can be met without undertaking its own enrichment program, which call into question its motives.

However, speaking to Fars on Saturday, Mottaki said that if the United States "would pay attention to the Islamic Parliament's respective ratification they would realize that [Iran's] government has been asked to arrange for production of 20.000 megawatts of nuclear electricity through nuclear power plants."

The newly christened Bushehr plant is reportedly planned to produce 1,000 megawatts of electricity.

Mottaki said that Iran's scale need to energy is obvious and that is the reason why we want to produce the required fuel ourselves," adding that "as a member of the NPT agreement…Iran is permitted to produce the nuclear fuel that its power plants need, and the additional amount, too, can be delivered to those other countries that might need it afterwards."

The United States, the European Union and the UN Security Council have imposed sanctions on Iran over a nuclear program the West suspects is aimed at developing atomic weapons.

On Friday AFP reported that Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said his country was ready for immediate talks with world powers over a nuclear fuel swap deal, saying Iran was "ready to resume in late August or in early September" talks with the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council over an exchange of enriched uranium.