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Caving In to the Mullahs

With new evidence of Iran's nuclear deceptions emerging almost daily, it is troubling that Europe seemed to have coaxed the U.S. into yet another wrist-slapping exercise. At the board meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna Tuesday, Washington gave in to European demands and agreed in a draft resolution to tone down criticism of Iran's clandestine nuclear program and even praise Teheran's "cooperation" with the IAEA.

Yet there is no longer any doubt that Iran is pursuing nuclear weapons. Hassan Rohani, of the Supreme Council for National Security, practically admitted as much: "We want Iran to be recognized as a member of the nuclear club, that means Iran be recognized as a country having the nuclear fuel cycle, and enriching uranium."

The issue is how to deal with the problem. As always, Europe is more interested in process than results and wants to keep the dialogue alive....

But even with thousands of U.S. troops breathing down the mullahs' necks, Iran seems determined to soft-pedal the negotiations and to draw them out. Europe's diplomacy, ostensibly designed to bring about a peaceful solution, is so inadequate that it may actually create a situation where nothing short of military intervention will stop the Iranians from acquiring the ultimate weapon.

If diplomacy is to have any chance, the Western world needs to up the ante. All the Europeans are telling the Iranians at the moment is that if they don't play ball the EU won't sign an extended trade agreement. But Teheran knows that with its current human rights record and last month's sham elections, even the EU couldn't justify extending economic ties.

Europe must be willing to drag Iran before the U.N. Security Council. It must threaten economic sanctions and go through with them if necessary. Given that Europe is Iran's biggest trading partner, this would seriously hurt the mullahs. Iran clearly wants to muscle its way into the select fraternity of nuclear-armed nations. But if the weak-kneed "diplomacy" of the West allows that to happen, we may as well write off non-proliferation policy and let everyone who wants to extract nuclear blackmail in the door.