IRAN, U.N. AGENCY PLAN TALKS AMID INSPECTION COUNTDOWN
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U.N. inspectors are poised to confer with Iran as it faces a Thursday cutoff for revealing key details on its atomic efforts, Reuters reports.

Plans for the Monday discussion became known as the International Atomic Energy Agency reportedly sought additional information on Iran's activities involving "exploding bridgewire detonators," which can be used to trigger nuclear blasts. Diplomatic insiders said the watchdog agency is pressing Iran to elaborate on a justification it provided last month for developing the components.

Tehran insists it only pursues such technologies for peaceful reasons, and says it already finished fulfilling seven pledges it made to the U.N. organization earlier this year. Those steps included permitting IAEA auditors at a pair of uranium facilities.

Separately, the global monitoring body is pushing Iran to promise additional actions related to existing commitments following the Thursday target, according to the insiders. The agency's concerns over exploding bridgewire detonators are considered less sensitive than some of its other suspicions about the Middle Eastern nation's past nuclear efforts, according to Reuters.

Monday's discussion was scheduled a day before Iran is set to hold new talks with six major powers over fears that Tehran's atomic efforts are masking the development of an arms capability. Worries have persisted over finalizing any long-term restrictions on the Persian Gulf power's nuclear work without full knowledge of Tehran's ability to potentially weaponize the activities.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani suggested in a speech that his country could provide "greater transparency" on its nuclear activities, Reuters reported on Sunday.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme religious leader, took a firmer stance against calls by Western powers for the multilateral talks to also account for Tehran's ballistic missiles.

"They expect us to limit our missile program while they constantly threaten Iran with military action," he said in a state media report. "So this is a stupid, idiotic expectation."

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1 This article is available in electronic format at: http://bit.ly/1hJy4Xp.