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טל ענבר מכון פיש - 109079					

Iran's centrifuges again enriching uranium at full speed

Late 2010 lull attributed to Stuxnet computer worm

• Jerusalem Post staff

Iran's uranium enrichment program is again operating at full speed, following reports that the country's enrichment capabilities were severely damaged by a malicious computer worm during the past few months, Reuters reported on Tuesday.

In November 2010, Teheran suspended uranium enrichment at the Natanz nuclear facility and officials in the country's atomic agency admitted that computer malfunc-

tions were damaging to the country's centrifuges.

Last week, International Atomic Energy Agency Director-General Yukiya Amano said enrichment was now "continuing steadily."

Late last month, Iran's envoy to the IAEA, Ali Asghar Soltanieh, said during a news conference in Moscow that the West should abandon its confrontational attitude toward Teheran and should accept the fact that Iran will continue enriching uranium even if its nuclear

facilities are attacked.

"No sanction resolution, threat, virus, or even military strike can prevent Iran from enriching uranium," Soltanieh was quoted as saying.

Iran is currently enriching uranium to a low level, but it is estimated the country has enough low enriched uranium it can enrich to a high grade to manufacture at least two atomic bombs.

Several reports have said that Stuxnet, the computer worm that wreaked havoc with the computers controlling Iran's centrifuges,

was developed by Israel, perhaps in cooperation with another country.

On Monday, an Israeli expert said that Teheran's recent launch of new satellites may indicate the country has mastered the craft of building ballistic missiles with a range and accuracy acceptable for carrying a nuclear warhead.

If the Iranians succeed in sending satellites into space, the same missile technology could be applied for military purposes, Tal Inbar, head of

the Space Research Center at Israel's [Fisher Institute](#) for Air and Space Strategic Studies in Herzliya, told *The Jerusalem Post*.

"We are seeing a major breakthrough for the Iranians," Inbar said. "They are currently working on nine different satellites. They are thorough and demonstrate impressive results."

"If they are good at launching satellites, they can also launch missiles for military purposes," he said.

Yaakov Katz contributed to this report.