French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner has warned that the world must prepare for war with Iran. His comments come just days after the US military expressed similar concerns, that the diplomatic initiative had failed and that the time has now come to prepare for military action.

Quote: *"The nuclear Iranian crisis forces the world "to prepare for the worst" which "is war," French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner said Sunday evening, while emphasizing that negotiations should still be the preferred course of action. Kouchner, quoted by French daily Le Figaro, added that "Iran does whatever it pleases in Iraq ... one cannot find in the entire world a crisis greater than this one."*

Despite the talk of war, US Defence Secretary Robert Gates has said that the United States is still pursuing the diplomatic option. Britain, France and the US are pressing for more sanctions to be brought against Iran, while Germany has advised against imposing further sanctions, preferring instead to wait and see if a deal between the International Atomic Energy Agency and Iran will bear fruit. Russia and China have also expressed their opposition to further sanctions being imposed. Senior defence and intelligence officials have stated that the US has concrete plans for a strike on Iran, involving some 2000 targets comprising of both nuclear facilities and military installations. According to the officials, the US has two contingency plans for a strike on Iran. One is to bomb nuclear facilities only, while the second would involve a three day bombing campaign which would destroy Iran's military infrastructure, limiting its ability to respond to the attack.

Quote: *"Pentagon and CIA officers said that such a war would come to pass as a result of a "carefully calibrated program of escalation" that would lead to a "military showdown with Iran," the officials told the newspaper. This scenario could arise once it was apparent that diplomatic efforts with the country were hopeless. When Iran would be internationally denounced for its interference in Iraq, the US could conduct cross border raids on Iranian training camps and bomb factories. The report said that the raids would provoke a "major Iranian response" that could result in a halt to Gulf oil supplies; this in turn, said experts, would provide legitimacy to strike Iran's nuclear facilities and armed forces.*

Source Jerusalem Post