

South Africa Considers Russia and Iran for Nuclear Power Expansion

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South Africa is open to partnering with Russia or Iran to expand its civilian nuclear power capacity, according to Mineral and Petroleum Resources Minister Gwede Mantashe. This stance, however, could strain relations with the United States and potentially delay the renewal of a crucial energy agreement.

South Africa, home to Africa's only nuclear power plant, Koeberg, plans to add 2,500 megawatts of new nuclear capacity to address ongoing electricity shortages and reduce carbon emissions. Minister Mantashe, a strong advocate for nuclear energy expansion, emphasized that the bidding process would be open to all countries.

"We cannot impose conditions that exclude any specific country, such as Iran or Russia, from participating in the bidding process," Minister Mantashe stated. "Our priority is to select the best offer available, regardless of its origin."

This announcement comes as South Africa faces increased scrutiny from the United States following a recent executive order. This order, among other things, raises concerns regarding South Africa's relationship with Iran, alleging – without substantiation – the development of commercial, military, and nuclear ties. The potential partnership with either Russia or Iran in the nuclear energy sector could further complicate these relations.