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Leaked Statements on IAEA Claim Iran Has Covert Nuclear Weapons Program

By John Glaser

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Statements leaked anonymously ahead of next week's International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) report on Iran's nuclear program warn that [the study will reveal evidence that Iran has been working secretly to develop a nuclear weapons capability.](#)

According to Western diplomats who refused to reveal their identity, the evidence will include satellite images of what of is supposedly a large steel container used for high-explosives tests related to nuclear arms as well as intelligence that Iran made computer models of a nuclear warhead.

The statements have added fuel to the fire of [US, European, and Israeli bellicosity towards Iran.](#) Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has allegedly been [pushing his cabinet to support a unilateral attack](#) on Iran, and on Wednesday Israel [tested a ballistic missile](#) while making public statements about an Iranian nuclear threat.

Meanwhile, Britain unveiled [preparations and plans to attack Iran](#), supposedly in case of a U.S. attack in which they would play an assisting role. And a bipartisan House committee on Wednesday unanimously [pushed forward two bills that would impose harsher sanctions](#) on Iran's energy and banking sector.

Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi [said that the U.S. exerted pressure](#) on the IAEA to reveal a biased result. "If the IAEA is impartial it should resist the pressures exerted by certain countries and do its job professionally," Salehi said.

“The Americans raised documents like this in the past: the Niger scandal,” he added. “The documents were used as a pretext to invade Iraq,” Salehi added. “After killing tens of thousands of innocent people, it was discovered that it was a forged document.”

The Niger scandal, in which the U.S. claimed Iraq received material for weapons of mass destruction from Niger, was concocted with inaccurate US and Italian intelligence in the lead up to the 2003 invasion of Iraq. The IAEA at the time [actually debunked the claims, noting indications of a crude forgery](#).

The IAEA report is due to be released to the public on Tuesday, so for now these anonymous statements claiming a serious Iranian nuclear threat are all the public has. If the claims are true, one wonders why such evidence has not yet been discovered.

Back in May, [Seymour Hersh wrote in the New Yorker](#) that “despite years of covert operations inside Iran, extensive satellite imagery, and the recruitment of Iranian intelligence assets, the United States and its allies, including Israel, have been unable to find irrefutable evidence of an ongoing hidden nuclear-weapons program in Iran.”

“A government consultant who has read the highly classified 2011 National Intelligence Estimate update,” wrote Hersh, “depicted the report as reinforcing the essential conclusion of the 2007 paper: Iran halted weaponization in 2003. ‘There’s more evidence to support that assessment,’ the consultant told me.”

Unfortunately, the anonymous leaks are being used to rally fear, anger, and certainty among the public about Iran’s nuclear weapons. Hans Blix, former head of the IAEA, recently [urged caution on the part of the US](#), Israel and their western allies. He warned that Tehran was acting out of a perception of threat, and must be reassured that it does not need a nuclear deterrent. “I think the talks that will resume should give Iran insurance that they will not be attacked from the outside under any circumstances,” said Mr Blix.

Indeed, Israel and its Western allies have done all they can to make Iran feel threatened. For years now, a [concerted covert US campaign](#) of cyber-terrorism, commercial sabotage, targeted assassinations, and proxy wars [has been under way in Iran](#), not to mention a harsh sanctions regime. Additionally, US-supported Israeli agents have [admitted to committing terrorist acts, including assassinations](#), on people inside Iran.

The United States has long been [garrisoning Iran’s surroundings](#) with sophisticated weapons and military capabilities. Aside from two long and unnecessary wars directly to Iran’s east and west, the US has patrolled a fleet of Navy warships off the Iranian coast in the Persian Gulf and regularly sends significant amounts of security assistance to nearly all of Iran’s neighboring countries including Turkey, Kuwait, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan.

One way to ensure that all of these aggressive postures won’t eventually result in a unilateral attack or invasion of Iran, is if they have nuclear weapons capability. While sufficient evidence

of such illicit activities has yet to be presented, the Iranian leadership certainly recognizes this logic of mutually assured destruction.

Furthermore, the notion Iran would work to attain nuclear weapons in order to deploy them against Israel or the United States is a virtual impossibility. They're intention – if it exists as such – would be to deter aggression, not to have themselves incinerated in a retaliatory nuclear attack.

Incidentally, the US has failed to take opportunities to nullify the Iranian nuclear issue. Other than refusing to simply deescalate aggressive militaristic postures, the US has also had the opportunity to push for an agreement that would make the Middle East a nuclear-weapons-free-zone. Iran has [repeatedly voiced support for such an agreement](#), so long as Israel complies as well. But the US and Israel refused to have Israel disarm its secret nuclear weapons program.

Attacking Iran could have disastrous results, which are hopefully not unfamiliar possibilities in the ranks of America's national security state. As [Robert Dreyfuss at *Nation* magazine recently explained](#), a unilateral, preemptive strike “would lead to a regional conflagration,” prompting retaliatory attacks from Iranian proxies and allies in the region, which could then give justification for further attacks from Israel and the west.

Dreyfuss explained “an attack by either the United States or Israel makes no strategic sense, especially since many analysts believe that even a sustained attack might not succeed in doing anything more than delaying Iran's program while convincing Tehran to accelerate it and to move its facilities underground into hardened sites.”