

IAEA finds no evidence of Iranian nuclear-weapons plan

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CASMI Statement: IAEA finds no evidence of Iranian nuclear-weapons plan, 2 March 2006

After Iraq, US Tries to Dupe the World Community again

On March 2, an Associated Press report made it clear that the IAEA's multi-year investigation has not shown "any diversion of nuclear material to nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices." This verdict sharply contradicts the February 4th resolution of the Board of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which reports Iran to the UN Security Council, and strongly challenges the US deceptive propaganda war on Iran.

The February resolution was the result of some three years of massive political and economic pressure by the US administration on the EU-3 (France, Germany and the UK) and other Board members of the IAEA, particularly China, India and Russia.

The resolution has no legal basis: it preempts the final report of the IAEA investigation due on March 6th and thus tries to influence and frame the final decision improperly.

It has no formal technical validity either: it contains no reference to the report of the inspectors dated January 31, 2006, whose summary states that Iran has continued to cooperate with the IAEA to provide requisite declarations and access to locations in a timely manner as if the voluntary Additional Protocol is in force. Instead it takes the opposite stance by stressing breaches of Iran's obligations.

The resolution fails to recognize the crucial point that the IAEA has not found Iran in violation of its Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) obligations, only in minor breaches of NPT Safeguard Agreement. The former is applicable in cases of weaponization; the latter comes into play when certain things are supposed to be reported, such as a lab experiment, purchase of equipment, etc., and are not. There is a fundamental difference between the two: the former sends a country to the UN Security Council; the latter is only discussed by the IAEA Governing Board and the violator may be censured.

We should recall that Libya and Pakistan were both in breach of their international obligations but were left alone because of their friendly relationship with the US. Additionally Brazil and South Korea were in far worse positions than Iran ever has been regarding their experimentation with enriched uranium material, but neither the US nor the IAEA pursued their case for possible reporting to the Security Council. These examples clearly suggest that IAEA safeguards are enforced selectively without any logical rationale,

except for the fact that if the country is not a client state of the US, the threshold for referral to the Security Council is much lower.

The verdict of the IAEA resolution, that there is a lack of confidence that Iran's program is just for peaceful purposes, is not legally tenable. It is also blatantly hypocritical as item (e.) of the resolution specifically states that Iran is a special case of verification. This clause has been added to assure other member states of the IAEA Board that they will not be targeted next.

In fact, as the nuclear physicist Dr. Gordon Prather has argued, it is the IAEA Board that is in breach of Article IV of the NPT by demanding that Iran should halt its enrichment related activities when, after hundreds of snap intrusive visits over a 3 -year period, there is no shred of evidence that there exists any nuclear weaponization program in Iran.

The real and serious breaches of the NPT are found elsewhere:

- By imposing trade sanctions against Iran and by preventing Iran from collaborating with nuclear states, the US government has been in breach of part 2 of Article IV of the NPT which gives all non-nuclear countries "the right to participate in, the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy".
- The US government and the European nuclear states are in breach of the NPT by supporting the nuclear weapons program of Israel which is not a signatory to the NPT.
- The US government is in breach of the NPT by collaborating on nuclear technology with India, which still is not a signatory to the NPT.
- All five permanent member states of the UN Security Council are in breach of Article VI of the NPT which requires them to take effective measures for nuclear disarmament.

The IAEA resolution to report Iran to the UN Security Council is a key step in the Bush administration's war drive against Iran; it is a reminiscent of the prelude to the invasion of Iraq, setting the scene to achieve regime change in order to control the oil resources of the region. The aim is to replace the defiant Islamic Republic with a client state which supports the US and Israel.

The massive escalation of threats and reports of military intervention plans in Iran including the use of tactical nuclear weapons following the adoption of the IAEA resolution testifies to the real aims of the US administration. The US-led allegations regarding Iran's nuclear weapons program play the same deceptive role here as claims about the non-existent Weapons of Mass Destruction of Saddam's regime did in the run-up to the invasion of Iraq.

The US plan for regime change in Iran dates back to President G. W. Bush's State of the Union Speech of January 2002 in which Iran was branded as part of an "Axis of Evil" ? even after Iran had aided the US in overthrowing the Taliban regime. The renowned investigative journalist Seymour Hersh, who first revealed the Abu Ghraib prison scandal, exposed the US

strategy to achieve regime change in Iran in his two articles in the New Yorker in January 2005 published when Mohammad Khatami was Iran's President. Hersh explained that in every interview he had with leading US administration officials it was stressed to him that the next target after Iraq was Iran.

The Bush administrations' intentions can also be seen clearly in the \$75 million destabilization funds requested by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice from the US Congress in order to support opposition groups against the Islamic Republic, and in the current resolution before the US Congress entitled: "Condemning the Government of Iran for violating its international nuclear nonproliferation obligations and expressing support for efforts to report Iran to the United Nations Security Council."

In the words of Ron Paul, Congressman (R-TX):

"Those reading this bill may find themselves feeling a sense of deja vu. In many cases one can just substitute 'Iraq' for 'Iran' in this bill and we could be back in the pre-2003 run- up to war with Iraq. And the logic of this current push for war is much the same as was the logic used in the argument for war on Iraq. As earlier with Iraq, this resolution demands that Iran perform the impossible task of proving a negative ? in this case that Iran does not have plans to build a nuclear weapon."

There is no credible evidence that Iran has secret plans for military use of nuclear energy. However, there is a clear need in Iran for increased power production capacity to support the needs of a population of 70 million. In fact, the US government itself was instrumental in persuading Iran to start a nuclear technology program. See Iran's Nuclear Program. Part I: Its History. Under the administration of former US President Gerald Ford, Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, and Paul Wolfowitz, were all deeply involved in the US pushing the Shah to start Iran's nuclear energy initiative.

Those IAEA member states that voted for the resolution have allowed the Bush administration to misuse the IAEA for the neo-conservatives' own narrow political aims. Referral of Iran to the UN Security Council is a trap set by the US, into which Europe, China, Russia and other IAEA board member states have walked, unmindful ? or unconcerned ? about the ultimate objective of regime change in Iran through foreign intervention. The chief U.S. delegate to IAEA says: "Iran [is] forging ahead to acquire the material, equipment and expertise to produce nuclear weapons?This is not a peaceful program?This is not innocent research and development." But the world has not been offered any evidence to substantiate the charges. All nation's leaders are expected to take the allegations at face value, not questioning the track record of the Bush administration on this kind of guesswork in the past.. The March 6th report of the IAEA firmly invalidates the US allegations on Iran.

We call upon the world community to stand up to prevent another US-instigated program of sanctions against a country in the Middle East, which in the case of Iraq led to the death of half a million children and acted as a prelude to the invasion of the county.

We call upon the world community to prevent another US-led illegal war with no end in sight. A war in Iran will be a new catastrophic conflagration in the Middle East, one which can lead to the killing of hundreds of thousands of people in the region, as well as major social and economic disaster with both regional and global ramifications.

We call upon the UN Security Council members and IAEA Board members to stand up

against US pressure to refer Iran to the UN Security Council for imposition of sanctions, a major step in the US war drive on Iran. All matters related to Iran's nuclear program should be resolved strictly under the auspices of the IAEA itself and thus be guaranteed to be handled peacefully and not as a manifestation of a US political and military agenda for Iran.

End.

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