

“Massive Ordnance Penetrator,”: US wants bunker-buster fast, denies Iran is reason

By [Global Research](#)

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The Pentagon is speeding up delivery of a colossal bomb designed to destroy hidden weapons bunkers buried underground and shielded by 10,000 pounds of reinforced concrete, AP reported.

Call it Plan B for dealing with Iran, which recently revealed a long-suspected nuclear site deep inside a mountain near the holy city of Qom.

The 15-ton behemoth – called the “massive ordnance penetrator,” or MOP – will be the largest non-nuclear bomb in the U.S. arsenal and will carry 5,300 pounds of explosives. The bomb is about 10 times more powerful than the weapon it is designed to replace.

The Pentagon has awarded a nearly \$52 million contract to speed up placement of the bomb aboard the B-2 Stealth bomber, and officials say the bomb could be fielded as soon as next summer.

Pentagon officials acknowledge that the new bomb is intended to blow up fortified sites like those used by Iran and North Korea for their nuclear programs, but they deny there is a specific target in mind.

“I don’t think anybody can divine potential targets,” Pentagon press secretary Geoff Morrell said. “This is just a capability that we think is necessary given the world we live in.”

The Obama administration has struggled to counter suspicions lingering from George W. Bush’s presidency that the United States is either planning to bomb Iranian nuclear facilities itself or would look the other way if Israel did the same.

The administration has been careful not to take military action off the table even as it reaches out to Iran with historic talks this month. Tougher sanctions are the immediate backup if diplomacy fails to stop what the West fears is a drive for a nuclear weapon.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates recently said a strike against Iran’s nuclear facilities would probably only buy time. Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Adm. Mike Mullen has called a strike an option he doesn’t want to use.

The new U.S. bomb would be the culmination of planning begun in the Bush years. The Obama administration’s plans to bring the bomb on line more quickly indicate that the weapon is still part of the long-range backup plan.

“Without going into any intelligence, there are countries that have used technology to go

further underground and to take those facilities and make them hardened," Pentagon spokesman Bryan Whitman said. "This is not a new phenomenon, but it is a growing one."

After testing began in 2007, development of the bomb was slowed by about two years because of budgetary issues, Whitman said, and the administration moved last summer to return to the previous schedule.

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The precision-guided bomb is designed to drill through earth and almost any underground encasement to reach weapons depots, labs or hideouts.

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