

# Nuclear program of Iran

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(Redirected from Iran's nuclear program)



**This article documents a current event.**  
Information may change rapidly as the event progresses.

Originally started under the Shah of Iran in the 1950s, with the help of the United States, the **Iranian nuclear program** is an effort by Iran to develop nuclear technology. After the 1979 revolution, the program was temporarily disbanded. It was soon resumed, albeit with less Western assistance than the pre-revolution era. Iran's current nuclear program consists of many research sites, a uranium mine, a nuclear reactor, and uranium processing facilities that include a uranium enrichment plant. The Iranian government asserts the program's only goal is to develop the capacity for peaceful nuclear power generation. However, the United States accuses Iran of a clandestine intention to develop nuclear weapons, based on possible evidence of a secret nuclear weapons program. Iran plans to generate 6000MW of electricity with nuclear power plants by 2010<sup>[1]</sup>, but as of 2006 nuclear power does not contribute significantly to the Iranian energy grid.

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## History

### U.S.-Iran nuclear cooperation in the 1950s and 60s

The foundations for Iran's nuclear program were laid during the Cold War, in the late 1950s under auspices of the U.S. within the framework of bilateral agreements between the U.S. and Iran. A civil nuclear cooperation program was signed as soon as 1957 with the U.S. under the Atoms for Peace program. The Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi was ruling Iran at that time, and after Mohammed Mossadegh's 1953 overthrow supported by the CIA, the regime appeared sufficiently stable and friendly to the West that nuclear proliferation would not become a threat.

In 1959 the Tehran Nuclear Research Center (TNRC) was established, run by the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI). The TNRC was equipped with a U.S.-supplied 5-megawatt nuclear research reactor, operational from 1967 and fuelled with highly enriched uranium.<sup>[2]</sup> Iran signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1968 and ratified it in 1970. With the establishment of Iran's atomic agency and the NPT in place, plans were drawn by the Shah Mohammad Pahlavi to construct up to 23 nuclear power stations across the country together with the USA by the year 2000.



Iranian newspaper clip from 1968 reads: "A quarter of Iran's Nuclear Energy scientists are women." The picture shows some female Iranian PhDs posing in front of Tehran's research reactor.

### U.S.-Iran nuclear cooperation in the 1970s

In August 1974, the Shah envisioned a time when the world's oil supply would run out, and declared, "Petroleum is a noble material, much too valuable to burn... We envision producing, as soon as possible, 23 000 megawatts of electricity using nuclear plants." Bushehr would be the first plant, and would supply energy to the inland city of Shiraz. In 1975, the Bonn firm Kraftwerk Union AG, a joint venture of Siemens AG and AEG Telefunken, signed a contract worth \$4 to \$6 billion to build the pressurized water reactor nuclear power plant. Construction of the two 1,196 MWe nuclear generating units was subcontracted to ThyssenKrupp, and was to have been completed in 1981.

By 1975, The U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, had signed *National Security Decision Memorandum 292*, titled "**U.S.-Iran Nuclear Cooperation**," which laid out the details of the sale of nuclear energy equipment to Iran projected to bring U.S. corporations more than \$6 billion in revenue. At the time, Iran was pumping as much as 6 million barrels (950,000 m<sup>3</sup>) of oil a day, compared with about 4 million barrels (640,000 m<sup>3</sup>) daily today.

President Gerald Ford even signed a directive in 1976 offering Tehran the chance to buy and operate a U.S.-built reprocessing facility for extracting plutonium from nuclear reactor fuel. The deal was for a complete "nuclear fuel cycle", with all the dangerous consequences that would entail including the possibility of this plutonium being used sooner or later to make weapons. The Ford strategy paper said the "introduction of nuclear power will both provide for the growing needs of Iran's economy and free remaining oil reserves for export or conversion to petrochemicals."<sup>[3]</sup>

President Ford's team endorsed Iranian plans to build a massive nuclear energy industry, but also worked hard to complete a multibillion-dollar deal that would have given Tehran control of large quantities of plutonium and enriched uranium -- the two pathways to a nuclear bomb. Iran, a U.S. ally then, had deep pockets and close ties to Washington. U.S. companies, including Westinghouse and General Electric, scrambled to do business there.

'I don't think the issue of proliferation came up', Henry A. Kissinger, who was President Ford's secretary of state, said in an interview for this article".<sup>[3]</sup>

A number of declassified documents were found on the website of the President Ford Library and Museum<sup>[4]</sup> Two

documents in particular, dated April 22, 1975 and April 20, 1976, show that the United States and Iran held negotiations for cooperation in the use of nuclear energy and the United States was willing to help Iran by setting up **uranium enrichment** and fuel **reprocessing facilities**.<sup>[5]</sup>

Accordingly, vice-president Dick Cheney, secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, and Paul Wolfowitz were all involved in backing Iran's Nuclear Program designed to extract plutonium from nuclear reactor fuel.<sup>[6]</sup>

## After the 1979 Revolution

After the 1979 Revolution, Iran informed the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) of its plans to restart its nuclear program using indigenously-made nuclear fuel, and in 1983 the IAEA even planned to provide assistance to Iran under its Technical Assistance Program to produce enriched uranium. An IAEA report stated clearly that its aim was to “contribute to the formation of local expertise and manpower needed to sustain an ambitious programme in the field of nuclear power reactor technology and fuel cycle technology”. However, the IAEA was forced to terminate the program under U.S. pressure.<sup>[7]</sup> The revolution was a turning point in terms of foreign cooperation on nuclear technology.

Another result of the 1979 Revolution was France's refusal to give any enriched uranium to Iran after 1979. Iran also didn't get back its investment from Eurodif. The joint stock company Eurodif was formed in 1973 by France, Belgium, Spain and Sweden. In 1975 Sweden's 10% share in Eurodif went to Iran as a result of an arrangement between France and Iran. The French government subsidiary company Cogéma and the Iranian Government established the Sofidif (*Société franco-iranienne pour l'enrichissement de l'uranium par diffusion gazeuse*) enterprise with 60% and 40% shares, respectively. In turn, Sofidif acquired a 25% share in EURODIF, which gave Iran its 10% share of Eurodif. Reza Shah Pahlavi lent 1 billion dollars (and another 180 million dollars in 1977) for the construction of the Eurodif factory, to have the right of buying 10% of the production of the site.

The U.S. was also paid to deliver new fuel and upgrade its power in accordance with a contract signed before the revolution. The U.S. delivered neither the fuel nor returned the billions of dollars payment it had received. Germany was paid for in full, billions of dollars for the two nuclear facilities in Bushehr, but after three decades, Germany has also refused to export any equipment or refund the money.<sup>[8]</sup> Iran's government suspended its payments and tried refunding the loan by making pressure on France by handling terrorist groups, including the Hezbollah who took French citizens in hostage in the 1980s. In 1982, president François Mitterrand refused to give any uranium to Iran, which also claimed the \$1 billion debt. In 1986, Eurodif manager Georges Besse was assassinated; the act was allegedly claimed by left-wing militants from Action Directe. However, they denied any responsibility during their trial.<sup>[9]</sup> In their investigation *La République atomique, France-Iran le pacte nucléaire*, David Carr-Brown and Dominique Lorentz pointed out toward the Iranian intelligence services' responsibility. More importantly, they also showed how the French hostage scandal was connected with the Iranian blackmail. Finally an agreement was found in 1991: France refunded more than 1.6 billion dollars. Iran remained shareholder of Eurodif via Sofidif, a Franco-Iranian consortium shareholder to 25% of Eurodif. However, Iran abstained itself from asking for the produced uranium.<sup>[10][11]</sup>

Kraftwerk Union, the joint venture of Siemens AG and AEG Telefunken who had signed a contract with Iran in 1975, fully withdrew from the Bushehr nuclear project in July 1979, after work stopped in January 1979, with one reactor 50% complete, and the other reactor 85% complete. They said they based their action on Iran's non-payment of \$450 million in overdue payments. The company had received \$2.5 billion of the total contract. Their cancellation came after certainty that the Iranian government would unilaterally terminate the contract themselves, following the revolution, which paralyzed Iran's economy and led to a crisis in Iran's relations with the West. The French company Framatome, a subsidiary of Areva, also withdrew itself.

In 1984, Kraftwerk Union did a preliminary assessment to see if it could resume work on the project, but declined to do so while the Iran-Iraq War continued. In April of that year, the U.S. State Department said, "We believe it would take at least two to three years to complete construction of the reactors at Bushehr." The spokesperson also said that the light water power reactors at Bushehr "are not particularly well-suited for a weapons program." The spokesman went on to say, "In addition, we have no evidence of Iranian construction of other facilities that would

be necessary to separate plutonium from spent reactor fuel."

The Bushehr reactors were then damaged by multiple Iraqi air strikes between March 24, 1984 to 1988 and work on the nuclear program came to a standstill. In 1990, Iran began to look outwards towards partners for its nuclear program; however, due to a radically different political climate and punitive U.S. economic sanctions, few candidates existed.

According to IAEA spokesperson Melissa Fleming, IAEA inspectors visited Iran's uranium mines in 1992.

In 1995, Iran signed a contract with Russia to resume work on the partially complete Bushehr plant, installing into the existing Bushehr I building a 915MWe VVER-1000 pressurized water reactor. The construction is being done by the state-controlled company Atomstroyexport (Russian for Atomic Construction Export), an arm of Russia's atomic energy ministry, Minatom. There are no current plans to complete Bushehr II reactor.

In 1996, the U.S. tried, without success, to block China from selling to Tehran a conversion plant. China also provided Iran with gas needed in for the enriched uranium process.

## Since 2000

On August 14, 2002, Alireza Jafarzadeh, a prominent Iranian dissident, revealed the existence of two unknown nuclear sites, a uranium enrichment facility in Natanz (part of which is underground) and a heavy water facility in Arak.

On November 14, 2004, Iran's chief nuclear negotiator announced a voluntary and temporary suspension of its uranium enrichment program (enrichment is not a violation of the NPT) after pressure from the United Kingdom, France, and Germany acting on behalf of the European Union (EU) (known in this context as the *EU-3*). The measure was said at the time to be a confidence-building measure, to continue for some reasonable period of time, six months being mentioned as a reference. On November 24, Iran sought to amend the terms of its agreement with the EU to exclude a handful of the equipment from this deal for research work. This request was dropped four days later.



Seen here in this ISNA footage is Gholam Reza Aghazadeh and AEOI officials with a sample of Yellowcake during a public announcement on the 11 April 2006 in Mashad that Iran had managed to successfully complete the fuel cycle by itself.

On August 8 and August 10, 2005, the Iranian government resumed its conversion of uranium at the Isfahan facility, coming only five days after the election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, allegedly with continued suspension of enrichment activities. This led to (on September 19, 2005) the European Union pressuring the IAEA to bring Iran's nuclear program before the United Nations Security Council. In January 2006, James Risen, a *New York Times* reporter, alleged in his book *State of War* that in February 2000, a U.S. covert operation - code-named *Operation Merlin* - had backfired. It originally aimed to provide Iran with a flawed design for building a nuclear weapon, in order to delay the Iranian nuclear weapons program. Instead, the plan may have accelerated Iran's nuclear program by providing useful information, once the flaws were identified.<sup>[12]</sup>

On February 4, 2006, the 35 member Board of Governors of the IAEA voted 27-3 (with five abstentions: Algeria, Belarus, Indonesia, Libya and South Africa) to report Iran to the UN Security Council. The measure was sponsored by the United Kingdom, France and Germany, and it was backed by the United States. Two permanent council members, Russia and China, agreed to referral only on condition that the council take no action before March. The three members who voted against referral were Venezuela, Syria and Cuba.<sup>[13][14]</sup>

On April 11, 2006, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said Iran had successfully enriched uranium. This came about when Ahmadinejad announced the news in a televised address from the northeastern city of Mashhad, saying "I am officially announcing that Iran joined the group of those countries which have nuclear technology." The uranium was enriched to 3.5% using over a hundred centrifuges. At this level, it could be used in a nuclear reactor if enough of it was made; uranium for a nuclear bomb would require around 90% enrichment and many thousands of centrifuges to be built and operated.

On April 13, 2006, After US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said (on Wednesday, April 12, 2006) the Security Council must consider "strong steps" to induce Tehran to change course in its nuclear ambition; President Ahmadinejad vowed that Iran won't back away from uranium enrichment and that the world must treat Iran as a nuclear power, saying "Our answer to those who are angry about Iran achieving the full nuclear fuel cycle is just one phrase. We say: Be angry at us and die of this anger," because "We won't hold talks with anyone about the right of the Iranian nation to enrich uranium."

On April 14, 2006, The Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS (<http://www.isis-online.org/>)) published a series of analyzed satellite images of Iran's nuclear facilities at Natanz and Esfahan<sup>[15]</sup>. Featured in these images is a new tunnel entrance near the Uranium Conversion Facility (UCF) at Esfahan and continued construction at the Natanz uranium enrichment site. In addition, a series of images dating back to 2002 shows the underground enrichment buildings and its subsequent covering by dirt, concrete, and other materials.

## Nuclear power as a political issue

Iran's nuclear program has become political in two ways: local and international. Iranian politicians use it as part of their populist platform, and there is international speculation about Iran's possible use of nuclear technology. Iran is a member of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which it ratified in 1970 — however, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) believes that recent Iranian non-cooperation makes it impossible to conduct adequate inspections to ensure that the technology is not being diverted for weapons use. On February 4, 2006, the IAEA voted 27-3 to report Iran's program to the United Nations Security Council, at the initiative of several Western countries, including the United Kingdom, the United States, Germany and France.

### Iran's nuclear program and the NPT

1. Nothing in this Treaty shall be interpreted as affecting the inalienable right of all the Parties to the Treaty to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in conformity with Articles I and II of this Treaty.
2. All the Parties to the Treaty undertake to facilitate, and have the right to participate in, the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Parties to the Treaty in a position to do so shall also co-operate in contributing alone or together with other States or international organizations to the further development of the applications of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, especially in the territories of non-nuclear-weapon States Party to the Treaty, with due consideration for the needs of the developing areas of the world. 1968 Non Proliferation Nuclear Treaty (<http://www.un.org/events/npt2005/npptreaty.html>)

Iranian nuclear power has become a political discussion of significance in both Iran and Western countries. A considerable disjunct emerges between the political views of Iranians and that of the West. The Iranian public sees nuclear power as a way to modernize and diversify energy-sources. The Iranian public, nearly all political candidates, and the current government are unified on this point: Iran should be developing its peaceful nuclear industry. Western government feel the peaceful nuclear program has hidden intentions, including the possible production of nuclear weapons.

Iranians say there is currently no evidence that Iran is using its nuclear power capabilities to produce nuclear weapons, and the known facilities do not have the capability to produce weapons grade material. Any other use outside peaceful energy production would be a violation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which Iran ratified in 1970. Some of Iran's leaders before the revolution have also expressed their support in this regard. Ardeshir Zahedi for example, who signed Iran into the NPT during the Pahlavi dynasty, in an interview in May 2006, voiced his support for Iran's Nuclear Program stating it as an "inalienable right of Iran".<sup>[1]</sup> (<http://www.baztab.ir/news/38520.php>)

### Views on Iran's Nuclear Program

## The Iranian Point of View

Iran says that nuclear power is necessary for a booming population and rapidly industrializing nation. It points to the fact that Iran's population has more than doubled in 20 years, the country regularly imports gasoline and electricity, and that burning fossil fuel in large amounts harms Iran's environment drastically [18].

Additionally, Iran wishes to diversify its sources of energy, which will eventually become depleted. In taking a stance that the Shah expresses decades ago, Iranians feel its valuable oil should be used for high value products, not simple electricity generation. Iran also raises financial questions, claiming that developing the excess capacity in its oil industry would cost it \$40 billion, let alone pay for the power plants. Harnessing nuclear power costs a fraction of this, considering Iran has supplies of accessible uranium ore [19].

Dr. William O. Beeman, Brown University's Middle East Studies program professor [20], who spent years in Iran, says that the Iranian nuclear issue is a unified point of their political discussion:

"The Iranian side of the discourse is that they want to be known and seen as a modern, developing state with a modern, developing industrial base. The history of relations between Iran and the West for the last hundred years has included Iran's developing various kinds of industrial and technological advances to prove to themselves--and to attempt to prove to the world--that they are, in fact, that kind of country."

The nuclear-power issue is exactly that. When Iranians talk about it, and talk about the United States, they say, "The United States is trying to repress us; they're trying to keep us down and keep us backward, make us a second-class nation. And we have the ability to develop a nuclear industry, and we're being told we're not good enough, or we can't". And this makes people furious--not just the clerical establishment, but this makes the person on the street, even 16- and 17-year-olds, absolutely boil with anger. It is such an emotional issue that absolutely no politician could ever back down on this question. [21]

Dr. William O. Beeman also points out that the United States policy towards the Iranian nuclear program has shifted greatly from the 1970s:

"White House staff members, who are trying to prevent Iran from developing its own nuclear energy capacity and who refuse to take military action against Iran "off the table", have conveniently forgotten that the United States was the midwife to the Iranian nuclear program 30 years ago.

The Iran based newspaper Baztab recently reported that the United States had provided 5 kg of 19.7% enriched uranium to Iran before the revolution.[23] The 1979 revolution marked a turning point in US policy, justified by a government that was becoming more fundamentalist and anti-Western. This previous involvement provided foreign countries the opportunity to keep tabs on the progress of the Iranian program, but since 1979 foreign involvement in the program is virtually null.

After the 1979 Iranian Revolution, Iran informed the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) of its plans to restart its nuclear program using indigenously-made nuclear fuel, and in 1983 the IAEA even planned to provide assistance to Iran under its Technical Assistance Program to produce enriched uranium. An IAEA report stated clearly that its aim was to "contribute to the formation of local expertise and manpower needed to sustain an ambitious programme in the field of nuclear power reactor technology and fuel cycle technology". However, the IAEA was forced to terminate the program under U.S. pressure.

Iran also believes it has a legal right to enrich uranium for peaceful purposes under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, a right which in 2005 the U.S. and the EU-3 began to assert had been forfeited by a "clandestine" nuclear program that supposedly came to light in 2002. In fact, Iran's enrichment program was openly discussed on national radio, and IAEA inspectors had even visited Iran's uranium mines. [16]. ([24]) Iranian politicians compare its treatment as a signatory to the NPT with three nations that have not signed the NPT: Israel, India, and Pakistan. Each of these nations developed an indigenous nuclear weapons capability: Israel by 1968 [25], India by 1974 [26]

and Pakistan by 1990 [27].

## Zbigniew Brzezinski

*Note that this section may not present NPOV, but is primarily intended to show viewpoint of a politician Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski.*

The UPI claimed on July 19, 2004, that making a speech at the Council of Foreign Relations in Washington, Brzezinski emphasized that a military choice of disrupting Iran's nuclear facilities should be "***a last resort, only to be used under extreme provocation or in the face of imminent danger.***" And added that "*It would be much tougher to take out Iran's nuclear facilities than the Osirak operation of 1981. There are multiple sites, some of them deep underground, and they are close to cities, so it would be a very difficult operation which could involve large numbers of civilian casualties.*"<sup>[16]</sup>

From a speech delivered by Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski on October 12, 2004, at the Johns Hopkins University entitled "Threats, Dangers, and Uncertainties", which was sponsored by the Office of Force Transformation and the United States Navy as part of seminar series called "National Security in the 21st Century — Rethinking the Principles of War":

"Already a younger generation [in Iran] wants greater modernization in the society. This younger generation is more nationalistic than religious, and they want to play a role in the government. They want nuclear weapons if Israel has them and that is not an illegitimate view. Iran is now a serious country with a serious role and it does not have a record of irrational aggression".

From a keynote address delivered by Brzezinsky on March 16, 2006, at the Center for American Progress entitled "Iraq: Next Steps for U.S. Policy":

"Why is it[our policy towards Iran] so different from our policy towards North Korea? North Korea is perhaps doing more of what we don't want the Iranians to be doing. Yet with North Korea we are engaged in direct multilateral negotiations{...}. We refuse to do that in the case of Iran."

"Are we perhaps trying to prevent a compromise? Do we really want Iran to desist, or do we want to drive it into extremism? It surely cannot be our deliberate intention to fuse Iranian nationalism with Iranian fundamentalism. But that is precisely what we are doing. As a general proposition, without going into any further detail on Iran, in international affairs, sometimes delaying something undesirable is far more effective than seeking directly to prevent it. And I believe that in the long run, time is on our side with Iran."<sup>[17]</sup>

See also Been there, done that (<http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/commentary/la-op-brzezinski23apr23,0,3700317.story?coll=la-news-comment-opinions>), the article in Los Angeles Times by Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski, April 23, 2006.

## Mordechai Vanunu

Former Israeli nuclear technician Mordechai Vanunu on Iranian nuclear program:

"Under the control of the IAEA, Iran does not pose any threat. Western experts perfectly know the nature of the Iranian nuclear program, contrary to Israel, which does not let anyone enter its nuclear facilities. That is why Iran decided to take a step forward and to tell the world: "You can not demand more transparency from us while closing your eyes to what is happening in Israel!" As long as the world continues to ignore Israel's atomic weapons, they will not have the moral authority to say anything about Iran. If the world is really concerned, if they want to put an end to nuclear proliferation, then they have to start from the beginning, that is, Israel".

## Opinions in the Islamic world

On December 14, 2001, Iran's former president and an Islamic cleric, Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani alluded to Iran's position toward Israel and the Western world. He said (according to a translation by the BBC):

*If one day, the Islamic world is also equipped with weapons like those that Israel possesses now, then the imperialists' strategy will reach a standstill because the use of even one nuclear bomb inside Israel will destroy everything. However, it will only harm the Islamic world. It is not irrational to contemplate such an eventuality.* [2]

(<http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/iran/2001/011214-text.html>) [3] (<http://www.c-d-i.org/Proliferation/confront.htm>) [4] (<http://www.washtimes.com/op-ed/20040515-104213-4929r.htm>)

However, years later on December 3, 2004, he backtracked:

*Allah willing, we expect to soon join the club of the countries that have a nuclear industry, with all its branches, except the military one, in which we are not interested. We want to get what we're entitled to. I say unequivocally that for no price will we be willing to relinquish our legal and international right. I also say unequivocally to those who make false claims: Iran is not pursuing nuclear weapons, but it will not give up its rights. Your provocation will not make us pursue nuclear weapons. We hope that you come to your senses soon and do not get the world involved in disputes and crises.* [5]

(<http://memritv.org/Transcript.asp?P1=399>)

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei issued a fatwa forbidding the production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons on August 9, 2005. The text of the fatwa has not been released although it was referenced in an official statement at a meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna. [32]

The San Francisco Chronicle reported on October 31, 2003, that Grand Ayatollahs, like Ayatollah Yousef Sanei, and Iranian clerics led by Ayatollah Ali Khamenei have repeatedly declared that Islam forbids the development and use of all weapons of mass destruction. SFGate.com quoted Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as saying: "The Islamic Republic of Iran, based on its fundamental religious and legal beliefs, would never resort to the use of weapons of mass destruction. In contrast to the propaganda of our enemies, fundamentally we are against any production of weapons of mass destruction in any form."

On February 16, 2006, the reformist Internet daily Rooz reported for the first time that an extremist cleric from Qom had issued what the daily called "a new fatwa," which states that "shari'a does not forbid the use of nuclear weapons."; However, on February 21, 2006, the same cleric denied such reports quoting him as saying that the use of nuclear weapons is allowed. The cleric restated that Islam forbids use of nuclear weapons in an interview with IRNA.

On April 21, 2006, representatives of the Palestinian leadership spoke at a rally in Damascus. Anwar Raja a PFLP representative declared:

*We, the Palestinian people, are in favor of Iran having a nuclear bomb, not just energy for peaceful purposes.* [6] (<http://memritv.org/Transcript.asp?P1=1114>)

## US viewpoint

*See also: Iran and nuclear weapons*

Since 2002, the United States has maintained that Iran does not need nuclear power because it has abundant oil and natural gas reserves and oil power is cheaper to produce than nuclear power. Also, in testimony to Congress in 2003, the U.S. Ambassador to the UN, John Bolton, claimed that the natural gas, which is currently being flared (burned off without being used) by Iran, if used for electricity generation, could be used to generate 4000 megawatts of continuous electricity - as much as all four Bushehr reactors.<sup>[18]</sup> However the UK Parliament Office

of Science and Technology on investigating this claim found it was not supported by an analysis of the facts — for example much of the gas flared off by Iran is not recoverable for energy use.<sup>[19][20]</sup> Hubbert peak theory and the lag-time in building nuclear power plants (as demanded for the USA by President Bush in February 2006) also indicate that even oil-producers are wise to consider alternative power sources that will allow them to conserve oil, maximising income as global production reduces.

One theory behind the U.S.'s resistance to accepting Iran's nuclear power (and/or weapons) ambition lies in Middle Eastern geopolitics. In essence, the U.S. believes that it should guard against Iran obtaining a nuclear weapons capability. The potential combination of nuclear weapons with a government that has supported terrorism in the past is a risk deemed unreasonably high by the current U.S. administration. U.S. interests are also at risk should Iran develop nuclear weapons, such as the security of military installations; United States 5th Fleet, Incirlik Air Base, and current U.S. Marine Corps and Army forces stationed throughout the Middle East.

Some argue that Iran's current nuclear facilities as well as environmental samples taken from these sites contradict with what would be reasonably expected to be found with a civilian only nuclear program. The existence of the Natanz nuclear facility in central Iran was discovered in mid-2002 through satellite imagery, when confronted with evidence of discovery Iran stated that officially the project was aimed at the "eradication of deserts." Permission was eventually granted to the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors to visit the site and they did so on 21 February 2003. At Natanz the inspectors found facilities including a fuel enrichment plant (FEP) covering 100,000 square meters capable of housing 50,000 gas centrifuges. The FEP is buried 8 meters under the ground, and is also protected by a reinforced concrete wall 2.5 meters thick, which itself is protected by another concrete wall. Other Iranian nuclear facilities are also often either heavily guarded (such as with anti-aircraft guns), buried, or kept secret until evidence of discovery. On August 26, 2003 the IAEA reported that it had found particles of highly enriched uranium (36%) in environmental samples taken at Natanz. After nine months of foreign scientific analysis, conclusions were reported to the IAEA that the highly enriched uranium was the result of contaminated equipment brought from Pakistan.<sup>[21]</sup> For the past 18 years, Iran has built its nuclear program with the help of Abdul Qadeer Khan, a top Pakistani nuclear scientist known for selling nuclear technology on the black market. It is this type of secrecy, underground facilities, and environmental evidence that lead some to believe that Iran has non-peaceful nuclear intentions. Iran refutes claims of non-peaceful nuclear activity by making statements that the facilities are for civilian use only, and are heavily protected to prevent countries including Israel and the United States from destroying them.

## Iran's Stance towards Israel since 2004

With the election of conservative president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, and the defeat of moderate former leader Mohammad Khatami, Iran's public attitude toward Israel hardened, and relations between the two countries deteriorated. Ahmadinejad made anti-Zionist and revisionist statements regarding the Holocaust. He also made a controversial speech which in some translations (notably [7] (<http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=countries&Area=iran&ID=SR3906>) by the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI) and the New York Times[8] (<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/30/weekinreview/30iran.html?ex=1147233600&en=0de274360830cbae&ei=5070>) )had been construed as a threat to the nation of Israel although this interpretation has been challenged by both US academics [9] (<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article12790.htm>) [10] (<http://www.juancole.com/2006/05/hitchens-hacker-and-hitchens.html>) and Iranian government officials [11] ([http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2006-02/21/content\\_522405.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2006-02/21/content_522405.htm)) Israeli officials have publicly rejected the legitimacy of Iran possessing nuclear weapons in the present or future and have claimed that Iran is actively pursuing such a weapons program. Due to the prominent nature of Ahmadinejad's anti-zionist speeches and remarks about the Holocaust, fears have been voiced about the possibility of aggression by a nuclear armed Iran.

The Iranian Shahab-3 missiles put all of Israel within range of a potential Iranian attack. A military parade in 2005 had Iranian missiles with banners on saying, "Israel should be wiped off the map" and "Death to Israel".[12] ([http://www.missilethreat.com/news/chinese\\_md.html](http://www.missilethreat.com/news/chinese_md.html))

The main causes for Israeli concern can be summed up in 3 points:

- Some Iranian leaders deny Israel's right to exist, refuse to recognise the government of Israel and have made other provocative statements regarding Jews and the Holocaust.
- Iran is not cooperating with the U.N. or IAEA in a manner that would eliminate doubts on the intentions of its nuclear program. [13] (<http://www.iaea.org/NewsCenter/News/2006/iranreport.html>) [14] (<http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Board/2006/gov2006-14.pdf>).
- Iran's new Shahab-3 ground to ground missiles have a range of 1300Km, a striking distance that covers Israel.

## International response



IAEA Flag.

The claims and counterclaims have put pressure on Iran to reveal all aspects of its nuclear program. Some pressure has also come from Iran's trade partners: Europe, Japan, and Russia. In January of 2005, the European Union countries of Germany, France, and the United Kingdom suggested that Iran should be referred to the U.N. Security Council for possible sanctions. This marked a turning point in the European stance with regard to Iranian nuclear ambitions, an unusual move in recent time which paralleled United States foreign policy views in the Middle East. Iran has claimed this to be a result of an attempt by the U.S. government to prevent it from obtaining nuclear technology.

Regarding the involvement of the IAEA, under the auspices of the UN, Iran has responded to the American accusations by cooperating with the agency, since the enrichment activities they have recommenced are not in violation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. In August 2005, Iranian officials said they had lost much of their confidence in the IAEA; the Speaker of the Majlis said that he regarded an IAEA resolution summoning Iran to suspend uranium conversion to be "illegal". Iran's degree of cooperation has, in general, varied depending on other geopolitical issues: at times the IAEA has had to admonish Iran, while at other times it has praised it. In January of 2005, IAEA Secretary General Mohamed ElBaradei remarked that after three years of inspections, the IAEA could not confirm that Iran's nuclear technology program is for peaceful purposes.



UN Security Council chamber in New York.

However, there is evidence that Pakistan's Abdul Qadeer Khan provided Iran with nuclear technology [28]. The United States accuses Iran of seeking the "capacity" to build bombs, or obtaining technology which "could be" used to make bombs. In Paragraph 52 of his November 2003 report the Director-General of the IAEA confirmed that "to date, there is no evidence that the previously undeclared nuclear material and activities referred to above were related to a nuclear weapons program." [17] After one more year and over tens of thousands of man-hours of inspections, El Baradei again confirmed in Paragraph 112 of his November 2004 report that "all the declared nuclear material in Iran has been accounted for, and therefore such material is not diverted to prohibited activities." [18] On January 31st 2006, the IAEA reported that "Iran has continued to facilitate access under its Safeguards Agreement as requested by the Agency...including by providing in a timely manner the requisite declarations and access to locations." [19]

## The Bushehr project

The Bushehr Nuclear Power Facility is located 17 kilometers south of the city of Bushehr (also known as Bushire), between the fishing villages of Halileh and Bandargeh along the Persian Gulf.

The facility was the idea of the Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, who envisioned a time when the world's oil supply

would run out. In August 1974, he said that, "Petroleum is a noble material, much too valuable to burn... We envision producing, as soon as possible, 23 000 megawatts of electricity using nuclear plants" Instead, he wanted a national electrical grid powered by clean nuclear power plants. Bushehr would be the first plant, and would supply energy to the inland city of Shiraz.

In 1975, the Bonn firm Kraftwerk Union AG, a joint venture of Siemens AG and AEG Telefunken, signed a contract worth \$4 to \$6 billion to build the pressurized water reactor nuclear power plant. Construction of the two 1,196 MWe nuclear generating units was subcontracted to ThyssenKrupp AG, and was to have been completed in 1981.

Kraftwerk Union was eager to work with the Iranian government because, as spokesman Joachim Hospe said in 1976, "To fully exploit our nuclear power plant capacity, we have to land at least three contracts a year for delivery abroad. The market here is about saturated, and the United States has cornered most of the rest of Europe, so we have to concentrate on the third world."

Kraftwerk Union fully withdrew from the Bushehr nuclear project in July 1979, after work stopped in January 1979, with one reactor 50% complete, and the other reactor 85% complete. They said they based their action on Iran's non-payment of \$450 million in overdue payments. The company had received \$2.5 billion of the total contract. Their cancellation came after certainty that the Iranian government would unilaterally terminate the contract themselves, following the 1979 Iranian Revolution, which paralyzed Iran's economy and led to a crisis in Iran's relations with the West.

In 1984, Kraftwerk Union did a preliminary assessment to see if it could resume work on the project, but declined to do so while the Iran-Iraq war continued. In April of that year, the U.S. State Department said, "We believe it would take at least two to three years to complete construction of the reactors at Bushehr." The spokesperson also said that the light water power reactors at Bushehr "are not particularly well-suited for a weapons program." The spokesman went on to say, "In addition, we have no evidence of Iranian construction of other facilities that would be necessary to separate plutonium from spent reactor fuel."

The reactors were then damaged by multiple Iraqi air strikes from 1984 to 1988. Shortly afterwards Iraq invaded Iran and the nuclear program was stopped until the end of the war.

In 1990, Iran began to look outwards towards partners for its nuclear program; however, due to a radically different political climate and punitive U.S. economic sanctions, few candidates existed.

In 1995 Iran signed a contract with Russia to resume work on the partially complete Bushehr plant, installing into the existing Bushehr I building a 915MWe VVER-1000 pressurized water reactor. The construction is being done by the state-controlled company Atomstroyexport (Russian for Atomic Construction Export), an arm of Russia's atomic energy ministry, Minatom. There are no current plans to complete Bushehr II reactor.

In late 2001, U.S. intelligence officers told journalist Seymour Hersh that Iran's most important nuclear facilities were not at Bushehr, which can be monitored by the International Atomic Energy Agency, but at clandestine sites under military control.

It was not until 2002 that the USA began to question Iran's nuclear intentions after the MKO (a now US controlled terrorist group<sup>[22]</sup>) revealed the existence of the Natanz and Arak facilities.

## Other facilities

- Bushehr: (28.83484° N 50.89356° E ([http://kvaleberg.com/extensions/mapsources/index.php?params=28.83484\\_N\\_50.89356\\_E\\_{{5}}}}](http://kvaleberg.com/extensions/mapsources/index.php?params=28.83484_N_50.89356_E_{{5}}))) A two reactor light water nuclear power plant. [15] (<http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/iran/bushehr.htm>)
- Arak: First exposed in 2002 by Iran's leading critic, Alireza Jafarzadeh, a heavy water production facility. Iran is constructing a heavy water moderated reactor at this location, which should be ready for

commissioning in 2014. [16]

(<http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/iran/arak.htm>) [17]

(<http://www.parliament.the-stationery->



Zirconium Production Plant (ZPP), Isfahan, Iran. Here, special alloys are made that have direct applications in claddings for nuclear power plants. The ZPP plant is also capable of producing other special alloys for industrial purposes.

[office.co.uk/pa/cm200506/cmhansrd/cm060116/text/60116w25.htm#qn\\_244](http://office.co.uk/pa/cm200506/cmhansrd/cm060116/text/60116w25.htm#qn_244))

- **Saghand:** (32°28'45"N, 55°24'30"E ([http://kvaleberg.com/extensions/mapsources/index.php?params=32\\_28\\_45\\_N\\_55\\_24\\_30\\_E\\_](http://kvaleberg.com/extensions/mapsources/index.php?params=32_28_45_N_55_24_30_E_))) Location of Iran's first uranium ore mines, expected to become operational by March 2005. The deposit is estimated to contain 3,000 to 5,000 tons of uranium oxide at a density of about 500 ppm over an area of 100 to 150 square kilometers. [18] (<http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/iran/saghand.htm>)
- **Natanz:** (33°43'24.43"N, 51°43'37.55"E ([http://kvaleberg.com/extensions/mapsources/index.php?params=33\\_43\\_24.43\\_N\\_51\\_43\\_37.55\\_E\\_{{9}}](http://kvaleberg.com/extensions/mapsources/index.php?params=33_43_24.43_N_51_43_37.55_E_{{9}})))) This is a uranium enrichment facility for converting uranium ore into a form usable by power plants by means of a system of a centrifuge cascade. First exposed in 2002 by Iran's leading critic, Alireza Jafarzadeh, currently it is thought to have a few hundred working centrifuges, and would require the installation and continual operation of many thousands of centrifuges in order to enrich uranium for bomb use (HEU) within the timespan of many years. However, Iran has declared that it intends to install some 3,000 centrifuges in 2006, which could produce enough fissile material for one bomb every nine months. [19] (<http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/iran/natanz.htm>)
- **Tehran Nuclear Research Center (TNRC):** Run by the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI). It is equipped with a U.S.-supplied 5-megawatt nuclear research reactor capable of producing 600g of plutonium annually in spent fuel. 17 years production would be sufficient to make a single atomic bomb. Storage of the waste is closely monitored by the IAEA so extracting the plutonium is not possible as long as Iran is abiding the NPT.
- **Nuclear Technology Center of Isfahan:** A nuclear research facility. The Isfahan Center currently operates four small nuclear research reactors, all supplied by China. It is run by the AEOI. [20] (<http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/iran/esfahan.htm>)
- **Isfahan Uranium Conversion Facility,** located in Isfahan converts yellowcake into uranium hexafluoride. As of late October 2004, the site is 70% operational with 21 of 24 workshops completed. There is also a Zirconium Production Plant (ZPP) located nearby that produces the necessary ingredients and alloys for nuclear reactors. [21] (<http://www.reuters.com/newsArticle.jhtml?type=worldNews&storyID=6590762>)
- **Bonab Atomic Energy Research Center:** Research facility investigating the applications of nuclear technology in agriculture. It is run by the AEOI.
- **Center for Agricultural Research and Nuclear Medicine at Hashtgerd, Karaj:** Established in 1991 and run by the AEOI.



Uranium Conversion Facility (UCF), Isfahan. Here, uranium oxides are claimed to be produced as well as uranium hexafluoride and other uranium

[22] (<http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/iran/karaj.htm>)

compounds. This facility constitutes the fuel fabrication part of Iran's fuel cycle.

- Anarak waste storage site, near Yazd.
- Ardekan Nuclear Fuel Site: Construction is reportedly scheduled to be finished in mid-2005.
- Lashkar Ab'ad pilot plant for isotope separation. Established in 2002, laser enrichment experiments were carried out there, however, the plant has been shut down since Iran declared it has no intentions of enriching uranium using the laser isotope separation technique.
- Parchin: Iran granted IAEA inspectors access to the Parchin military complex on November 1, 2005. The inspectors "did not observe any unusual activities in the buildings visited".<sup>[23]</sup>
- Lavizan:(35°46'23"N 51°29'52"E ([http://kvaleberg.com/extensions/mapsources/index.php?params=35\\_46\\_23\\_N\\_51\\_29\\_52\\_E\\_{{{9}}}}](http://kvaleberg.com/extensions/mapsources/index.php?params=35_46_23_N_51_29_52_E_{{{9}}}}))) All buildings at the former Lavizan-Shian Technical Research Center site were demolished between August 2003 and March 2004 and topsoil has been removed. Environmental samples taken by IAEA inspectors show no trace of radiation. The site is to be returned to the City of Teheran.<sup>[23]</sup>
- Chalous: Suspected, but not confirmed facility, according to the IAEA.
- Yazd Radiation Processing Center

## Timeline

1956: Marion King Hubbert publishes his prediction that world oil production will peak in the year 2000.<sup>[24]</sup>

1967: The Tehran Nuclear Research Center is built and run by the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI).

July 1968: Iran signs the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty and ratifies it. It goes into effect on March 5, 1970.

1970s: Under the rule of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, plans are made to construct up to twenty nuclear power stations across the country with U.S. support and backing. Numerous contracts are signed with various Western firms, and the German firm Kraftwerk Union (a subsidiary of Siemens AG) begins construction on the Bushehr power plant in 1974.

1975: Massachusetts Institute of Technology signs a contract with the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran to provide training for Iranian nuclear engineers.

1979: Iran's Islamic revolution puts a freeze on the existing nuclear program and the Bushehr contract with Siemens AG is terminated as the German firm leaves.

1982: Iranian officials announced that they planned to build a reactor powered by their own uranium at the Isfahan Nuclear Technology Centre.

1983: International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors inspect Iranian nuclear facilities, and report on proposed cooperation agreement to help Iran manufacture enriched uranium fuel as part of Iran's "ambitious programme in the field of nuclear power reactor technology and fuel cycle technology." The assistance program is later terminated under U.S. pressure.

1984: Iranian radio announced that negotiations with Niger on the purchase of uranium were nearing conclusion.

1985: Iranian radio program openly discusses the significance of the discovery of uranium deposits in Iran with the director of Iran's Atomic Energy Organisation.

1990: Iran begins negotiations with Soviet Union regarding the re-construction of the Bushehr power plant.

1992: Iran signs an agreement with China for the building of two 950-watt reactors in Darkhovin (Western Iran). To date, construction has not yet begun.

January 1995: Iran signs an \$800 million contract with the Russian Ministry of Atomic Energy (MinAtom) to complete reactors at Bushehr under IAEA safeguards.<sup>[25]</sup>

1996: China and Iran inform the IAEA of plans to construct a nuclear enrichment facility in Iran, but China withdraws from the contract under U.S. pressure. Iran advises the IAEA that it plans to pursue the construction anyway.

January 29, 2002: US president George W. Bush speaks of an "Axis of evil" gathering Iran, Iraq and North Korea during his State of the Union Address.

August 2002: A leading critic of Tehran and former member of the National Council of Resistance Alireza Jafarzadeh, relying on the information obtained from sources well placed within the Iranian regime, and leaked by Iran's main opposition organization, the MEK, exposed two secret nuclear facilities in Natanz and Arak.

December 2002: The U.S. accuses Iran of attempting to make nuclear weapon.

16 June 2003: Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, declares that "Iran failed to report certain nuclear materials and activities" and requests "co-operative actions" from the country. However, at no point does the International Atomic Energy Agency declare Iran in breach of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. [23] ([http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/low/world/middle\\_east/3210412.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/low/world/middle_east/3210412.stm))

October 2003: Iran begins to hold negotiations with IAEA members with respect to a more stringent set of nuclear inspections.<sup>[24]</sup> ([http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/low/world/middle\\_east/3210412.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/low/world/middle_east/3210412.stm))

October 31, 2003: The IAEA declares that Iran has submitted a "comprehensive" declaration of its nuclear program.<sup>[25]</sup> ([http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/low/world/middle\\_east/3210412.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/low/world/middle_east/3210412.stm))

November 11, 2003: The IAEA declares that there is no evidence that Iran is attempting to build an atomic bomb. <sup>[26]</sup> ([http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/low/world/middle\\_east/3210412.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/low/world/middle_east/3210412.stm))

November 13, 2003: Washington claims that the IAEA report is "impossible to believe". The UN stands behind the facts provided in the report. <sup>[27]</sup> ([http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/low/world/middle\\_east/3210412.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/low/world/middle_east/3210412.stm))

December 18, 2003: Iran signs the Additional Protocol to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty<sup>[26]</sup>

June 2004: Kamal Kharrazi, Iran's foreign minister, responding to demands that Iran halt its nuclear program, says: "We won't accept any new obligations. Iran has a high technical capability and has to be recognised by the international community as a member of the nuclear club. This is an irreversible path." <sup>[28]</sup> (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2004/06/13/wiran13.xml&sSheet=/news/2004/06/13/ixworld.html>)

June 14, 2004: Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, accuses Iran of "less than satisfactory" cooperation during the IAEA's investigation of its nuclear program. ElBaradei demands "accelerated and proactive cooperation" from Iran.

July 27, 2004: Iran breaks seals placed upon uranium centrifuges by the International Atomic Energy Agency and resumes construction of the centrifuges at Natanz. (AP) ([http://ap.washingtontimes.com/dynamic/stories/N/NUCLEAR\\_AGENCY\\_IRAN?SITE=DCTMS&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT](http://ap.washingtontimes.com/dynamic/stories/N/NUCLEAR_AGENCY_IRAN?SITE=DCTMS&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT))

July 31, 2004: Iran states that it has resumed building nuclear centrifuges to enrich uranium, reversing a voluntary October 2003 pledge to Britain, France, and Germany to suspend all uranium enrichment-related activities. The United States contends that the purpose is to produce weapons-grade uranium.

August 10, 2004: Several long-standing charges and questions regarding weapons-grade uranium samples are clarified by the IAEA. The samples match Pakistani and Russian sources which had contaminated imported Iranian equipment from those countries. (Jane's Intelligence) ([http://www.janes.com/security/international\\_security/news/jdw/jdw040810\\_1\\_n.shtml](http://www.janes.com/security/international_security/news/jdw/jdw040810_1_n.shtml))

August 24, 2004: Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi declares in Wellington, New Zealand, that Iran will retaliate with force against Israel or any nation that attempts a pre-emptive strike on its nuclear program. Earlier in the week, Israel's Chief of Staff, General Moshe Ya'alon, told an Israeli newspaper that "Iran is striving for nuclear capability and I suggest that in this matter [Israel] not rely on others."

September 6, 2004: The latest IAEA report finds that "unresolved issues surrounding Iran's atomic programme are being clarified or resolved outright". [29] ([http://www.janes.com/security/international\\_security/news/jdw/jdw040906\\_1\\_n.shtml](http://www.janes.com/security/international_security/news/jdw/jdw040906_1_n.shtml))

September 18, 2004: The IAEA, the United Nations's nuclear watchdog agency, unanimously adopts a resolution calling on Iran to suspend all activities related to uranium enrichment.

September 21, 2004: In defiance of the United Nations, Iran announces that it will continue its nuclear program converting 37 tonnes of yellowcake uranium for processing in centrifuges. (Reuters) (<http://www.reuters.com/newsArticle.jhtml?type=topNews&storyID=6292567>)

October 18, 2004: Iran states that it is willing to negotiate with the U.K., Germany, and France regarding a suspension of its uranium enrichment activities, but that it will never renounce its right to enrich uranium.

October 24, 2004: The European Union makes a proposal to provide civilian nuclear technology to Iran in exchange for Iran terminating its uranium enrichment program permanently. Iran rejects this outright saying it will not renounce its right to enrichment technologies. A decision to refer the matter from the International Atomic Energy Agency to the United Nations Security Council is expected on November 25, 2004.

November 15, 2004: Talks between Iran and three European Union members, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany, result in a compromise. Iran agrees to temporarily suspend its active uranium enrichment program for the duration of a second round of talks, during which attempts will be made at arriving at a permanent, mutually-beneficial solution.

November 15, 2004: A confidential UN report is leaked. The report states that all nuclear materials within Iran have been accounted for and there is no evidence of any military nuclear program. Nevertheless, it still cannot discount the possibility of such a program because it does not have perfect knowledge. (BBC) ([http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/4013321.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/4013321.stm))

November 22, 2004: Iran declares that it will voluntarily suspend its uranium enrichment program to enter negotiations with the EU. Iran will review its decision in three months. The EU seeks to have the suspension made permanent and is willing to provide economic and political incentives.

November 24, 2004: Iran seeks to obtain permission from the European Union, in accordance with its recent agreement with the EU, to allow it to continue working with 24 centrifuges for research purposes.

November 28, 2004: Iran withdraws its demand that some of its technology be exempted from a freeze on nuclear enrichment activities. (BBC) ([http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/4049967.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4049967.stm))

June 2005, the US secretary of state Condoleezza Rice said IAEA head Mohamed ElBaradei should either *toughen his stance on Iran* or fail to be chosen for a third term as IAEA head. Following a one on one meeting between Ms Rice and Dr ElBaredai on 9 June the US withdrew its opposition and Dr ElBaradei was re-elected to his position on 13 June 2005. [27]

August 8 and August 10, 2005: Iran resumed the conversion of uranium at the Isfahan facility, under IAEA

safeguards, but does not engage in enrichment of uranium.

August 9, 2005: The Iranian Head of State Ayatollah Ali Khamenei issued a fatwa forbidding the production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons. The full text of the fatwa was released in an official statement at the meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna.

August 11, 2005: The thirty-five-member governing board of the IAEA adopted a resolution calling upon Iran to suspend uranium conversion, and instructing director general Mohammed ElBaradei to submit a report on Iran's nuclear program by September 3, 2005. The resolution is considered by many to be weak since it does not include the threat of referral to the security council.

August 15, 2005: Iran's new president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, installed his new government. Ali Larijani replaced Hassan Rowhani as secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, Iran's top policy-making body, with nuclear policy in his purview.

September 15, 2005: At a United Nations high-level summit, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad stated Iran had the right to develop a civil nuclear-power programme within the terms of the 1970 treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. He offers a compromise solution in which foreign companies will be permitted to invest and participate in Iran's nuclear program, thus ensuring that it cannot be secretly used to make weapons. The majority of the U.S. delegation left during his speech, but the U.S./UN mission denied there was a walkout.<sup>[28]</sup>

October 10 2005, Iranian Oil Ministry Deputy for International Affairs Hadi Nejad-Hosseini said that Iran could run out of oil reserves in nine decades.<sup>[29]</sup>

November 5, 2005: The Iranian government approved a plan that allows foreign investors to participate in the work at the Natanz uranium enrichment plant. The cabinet also authorized the AEOI to take necessary measures to attract foreign and domestic investment in the uranium enrichment process.<sup>[30]</sup>

November 19, 2005: The IAEA released a report saying that Iran was still blocking nuclear inspectors from the United Nations from visiting for a second time a site known as Parchin military complex, where Iran was not legally required to allow inspections at all. IAEA Director-General Mohamed El-Baradei said in the report, "Iran's full transparency is indispensable and overdue." Separately, Iran confirmed that it had resumed the conversion of new quantities of uranium pursuant to its rights under the NPT, despite an IAEA resolution to stop such work. CNA ([http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/afp\\_world/view/179393/1/.html](http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/afp_world/view/179393/1/.html))

January, 2006: Iran provides the European negotiating side with a six-point proposal, which includes an offer to again suspend uranium enrichment for a period of 2 years, pending the outcome of continued negotiations. The offer is dismissed by the Europeans, and not reported in the Western press.<sup>[31]</sup>

January 31, 2006: The IAEA reports that "Iran has continued to facilitate access under its Safeguards Agreement as requested by the Agency ... including by providing in a timely manner the requisite declarations and access to locations" and lists outstanding issues.<sup>[32]</sup>

January 2006: *The New York Times* reporter James Risen published *State of War*, in which he alleged a CIA operation code-named *Operation Merlin* backfired and may have helped Iran in its nuclear program, in an attempt to delay it feeding them false information.

February 2, 2006: Pakistani Finance Minister Sirajul Haq: "Attack on Iran will be construed as attack on us" [30] (<http://www.turkishweekly.net/news.php?id=25479>)

February 4, 2006: The IAEA votes 27-3 to report Iran to the United Nations Security Council. After the vote, Iran announced its intention to end voluntary cooperation with the IAEA beyond basic Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty requirements, and to resume enrichment of uranium. <sup>[33]</sup>

March, 2006: The U.S. National Security Strategy decried Iran, stating that "Iran has violated its Non-Proliferation Treaty safeguards obligations and refuses to provide objective guarantees that its nuclear program is solely for

peaceful purposes."<sup>[34]</sup>

March 15, 2006: Mahmoud Ahmadinejad makes a statement in Tehran, which includes the following words: "One of the main reasons why the big powers oppose Iran on the nuclear issue is for the sake of the Zionist regime, so as to let this regime live on."<sup>[35]</sup>

March 27, 2006: In a *Foreign Policy* article entitled "Fool Me Twice", Joseph Cirincione, director for non-proliferation at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, claimed that "some senior officials have already made up their minds: They want to hit Iran." and that there "may be a coordinated campaign to prepare for a military strike on Iran." Joseph Cirincione also warns "that a military strike would be disastrous for the United States. It would rally the Iranian public around an otherwise unpopular regime, inflame anti-American anger around the Muslim world, and jeopardize the already fragile U.S. position in Iraq. And it would accelerate, not delay, the Iranian nuclear program. Hard-liners in Tehran would be proven right in their claim that the only thing that can deter the United States is a nuclear bomb. Iranian leaders could respond with a crash nuclear program that could produce a bomb in a few years."<sup>[36]</sup>

April 11, 2006: Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad announced that Iran has enriched uranium to reactor-grade from 164 of their centrifuges. "I am officially announcing that Iran has joined the group of those countries which have nuclear technology. This is the result of the Iranian nation's resistance.

Based on international regulations, we will continue our path until we achieve production of industrial-scale enrichment," - Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. He reiterated the claim that the enrichment was carried for purely civil power purposes and not for weapons purposes.

April 26, 2006: Supreme Leader of Iran, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said that Americans should know that if they assault Iran their interests will be harmed anywhere in the world that is possible, and that the Iranian nation will respond to any blow with double the intensity.<sup>[37]</sup>

April 28, 2006: The International Atomic Energy Agency hands a report titled *Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement in the Islamic Republic of Iran* to the UN Security Council.<sup>[38]</sup> The IAEA says that Iran has stepped up its uranium enrichment programs during the 30 day period covered by the report.<sup>[39]</sup>







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## See also

- AIPAC espionage scandal
- Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
- 13 steps, *Article 6* of the NPT (disarmament pledge)
- Operation Merlin
- Petrodollar warfare
- Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty
- Global Nuclear Energy Partnership
- Ali Larijani, Iran's nuclear negotiator [31] ([http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/4417028.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4417028.stm))
- Iranian Nuclear Crisis
- Iran and nuclear weapons
- Iran and weapons of mass destruction
- Military of Iran
- Atomic Energy Organization of Iran


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