



# National Iranian American Council

PROMOTING IRANIAN-AMERICAN PARTICIPATION IN AMERICAN CIVIC LIFE

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### IAEA'S LATEST IRAN REPORT: TIME TO MOVE ON

The latest IAEA safeguards report on Iran's nuclear activities is an important report that brings an end to almost all the technical issues that in the past five years have concerned the IAEA regarding Iran's declared civilian nuclear program. As such, it provides a good backdrop for the need to move beyond the current deadlock.

In the report the Agency states unambiguously that on the issues of Polonium-210 experiments and Gchine mine, contamination at a technical university and procurement of a former head of Iran's Physics Research Center (PHRC).

Hence, the conclusion: "the Agency considers those questions no longer outstanding at this stage," and Director Mohammad ElBaradei's statement in a question and answer session with reporters that "we have managed to clarify all the remaining outstanding issues, including the most important issue, which is the scope and na-

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ture of Iran's enrichment program."

The report also suggests that Iran has again voluntarily implemented the Additional Protocol in the past few months, allowing the IAEA extensive inspections and access. Relying on this voluntary implementation, the IAEA has not found any evidence of diversion to a weapons program in Iran's past activities but demands the signing and permanent implementation of the protocol for the IAEA's purposes of monitoring Iran's present declared program. Iran has said that its previous offer of signing the protocol is no longer on the table as long as Iran's case at the UN Security Council.

The one issue that has not been resolved involves "alleged studies" done by Iran that can be connected to weaponization. These studies come out of a laptop that was reportedly given to the U.S. intelligence by an Iranian "walk-in" source who stole the laptop from someone else. The most troublesome aspect of the information in the laptop is the plans for "the design for a missile re-entry vehicle, which could have a nuclear military dimension."

In the work plan signed between the IAEA and Iran in August 2007, along with a timetable to resolve the above-mentioned issues, Iran agreed to review and assess the documentation generated out of the laptop provided it was given the documentation.

But the Agency was only able to give Iran some documentation until early February because the country in possession of the documents, namely the United States, either would not

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give the documents to the IAEA or would not give that agency permission to share the documents with Iran. It was only on February 15, or a mere one week before the publication of the current report, that Iran was informed that the IAEA is ready to give Iran a second batch of documents.

Iran's response to the first batch of documents was that they were fabrications (with names of non-existent individuals and offices). Iran has yet to respond to the IAEA further requests of meeting over the second batch of documents but there is reason to believe that its response to the second batch will be different.

If Iran continues to insist that the documents are fabricated and IAEA's own stance remains that these are "alleged weaponization studies that Iran supposedly conducted in the past," (i.e., it cannot confirm the veracity of the documents) and IAEA has not "detected any use of nuclear material in connection with the alleged studies, nor does it have any credible information in this regard," it is not clear how the IAEA can and should proceed.

It is true that the IAEA makes an observation in paragraph 39 of its report that the computer image made available to Iran showing "a schematic layout" of the inner cone of a re-entry vehicle, as being "assessed by the

Agency as quite likely to be able to accommodate a nuclear device."

But it does not and presumably cannot make an independent assessment of whether the information itself is fabricated as Iran claims. Hence it is quite possible that for the coming year are we going to be facing a specter of a back and forth between Iran and the IAEA, not over Iran's nuclear program but over documents about alleged studies that no one (except the Iranians) seem to be sure whether they are fake or not.

This is why the best bet at this point is that this report will be used by both sides in ways that suits their purposes. Iran's president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has already declared the report a victory for Iran. Meanwhile, the United States will again push and probably get a Security Council resolution that will not go much beyond the previous resolutions in terms of impact but presumably make a political point that the Security Council route is not really exhausted.

But the reality is that everyone is exhausted and ready to move on (with the exception of the Bush Administration that is just exhausted). Perhaps ElBaradei's last words in his interview give us some hints about the exhaustion (and exasperation) the IAEA must be feeling regarding the

continuation of the deadlock:

"A durable solution requires confidence about Iran's nuclear program, it requires a regional security arrangement, it requires normal trade relationship between Iran and the international community... Definitely the Agency will continue to do as much as we can to make sure that we also contribute to the confidence-building process with regard to the past and present nuclear activities in Iran, but naturally, we can not provide assurance about future intentions. That is inherently a diplomatic process that needs the engagement of all the parties."

Some European governments and the Bush Administration will undoubtedly be upset and once again accuse ElBaradei for going beyond his technical mandate and talking about ways to overcome the deadlock politically and diplomatically. But in this day and age of ineffective policies shouldn't calling it as is be everyone's mandate?

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