

The Facts on Iran: What's the Rush?

Iran's nuclear programme is certainly a cause for concern. Greenpeace is opposed to uranium enrichment in any country, because any such programme can be used to develop nuclear weapons. But, what is the rush to take Iran to the Security Council when there is every indication it will only endanger what progress has been made to date and further entrench the differences already apparent in the debate?

And as the facts show, it is a complicated situation, but there is time to achieve a diplomatic resolution.

FACT 1. US and other intelligence agencies are of the opinion that Iran is at least 10 years away from developing a nuclear weapon¹. Whilst attention should be focused on Iran, it is actually years away from attaining a nuclear weapons capability, if indeed it is pursuing one. Meanwhile there are 9 nuclear weapons states in the world today (US, Russia, UK, France, China, India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea). Diplomatic and media attention should be focused on a global solution to these 9 nuclear weapons problem states. There are 442 nuclear reactors in 32 countries throughout the world, each producing materials that can be used in nuclear weapons. One has to question the rationale for so much diplomatic and media time being spent on the Iran case, given the lack of action taken to address the existing nuclear weapons and nuclear energy problem; the lack of attention to the widely recognized regional solution, which is a Middle East Nuclear Free Zone; or the global solution, the commencement of long-overdue negotiations on nuclear disarmament, and the complete phase out of nuclear energy.

FACT 2: Most key outstanding issues have been resolved. The IAEA Director General reported in September 2005 that, "...all the declared nuclear material in Iran has been accounted for, and therefore such material is not diverted to prohibited activities. The Agency is, however, still not in a position to conclude that there are no undeclared nuclear materials or activities in Iran. The process of drawing such a conclusion... is a time consuming process..."² The remaining issues can be resolved quickly with Iran's pro-active cooperation; Greenpeace again calls on Iran to build trust by once and for all clearing **the outstanding questions, which are:** 1) the scope and chronology of Iran's past work on P-1 and P-2 centrifuges, 2) the origins of nuclear contaminants found in Iran, 3) past experiments with plutonium, polonium and beryllium and 4) the true nature of a variety of meetings between 1987 and the late-1990s as part of Iran's attempt to purchase blueprints and other material and equipment that would assist them in the construction and operation of a full-scale uranium enrichment plant. There are also questions remaining about Iran's

¹ August 2005 US National Intelligence Estimate ordered by the National Intelligence Council in January 2005, first major review since 2001 of what is known and what is unknown about Iran. Reported in Washington Post, 2 August 2005, "Iran is judged 10 years from nuclear bomb, U.S. Intelligence Review Contrasts With Administration Statements."

² Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Report to the IAEA Board of Governors, GOV/2005/67, para. 51, 2 September 2005

procurement of so-called 'dual-use' equipment i.e. equipment which can be used for both conventional and nuclear purposes.

FACT 3: In the last three years, Iran has not breached any of its legal obligations. There is no proof that Iran has broken its legal obligations, according to the IAEA. Since ElBaradei's visit in 2003, Iran reminds us that it has given unprecedented access to the agency, pointing out that it has given more than 1,500 person days of inspections (on-site) to the IAEA inspectors, as well as access to military sites that it has no legal obligation under the safeguards agreement to allow access to. Iran has not helped the situation by delaying and impeding access to certain non-nuclear facilities, which are admittedly not part of safeguards agreements, but which could help clear residual doubts. However, it is appropriate to recognize that until February 2006 Iran went beyond its obligations in allowing this voluntary access. In closing off access, any information about Iran's nuclear programme is less likely to be fair, balanced and verified by an independent technical body such as the Agency.

FACT 4: Iran has been found to conceal facilities in the past of a nuclear nature, including undeclared activities under its Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA. The key facilities were listed in the June 2003 Report of the IAEA to the Board (the Tehran Jibr Ibn Hayan Multipurpose Laboratories (JHL), the Esfahan Fuel Manufacturing (FMP), the Natanz Pilot Fuel Enrichment Plant (PFEP) and Fuel Enrichment Plant (FEP) and the Arak Iran Nuclear Research reactor (IR-40)). These facilities are under Agency Safeguards, although the Agency cannot say with certainty whether or not there are any other nuclear facilities or activities. Iranian leaders should do themselves a favour and remove all suspicion in this regard by answering all the remaining outstanding questions of the Agency and the international community. In sum, Iran was found in non-compliance, but this non-compliance has been rectified through corrective measures and noted in the Director General's reports and thus **is historical and not current.**

FACT 5: Other cases have taken longer to resolve. As the Director General has also reported, the broader conclusion of the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities under the Additional Protocol, under normal circumstances, is a time consuming process. In view of Iran's past undeclared nuclear activities, and its pattern of concealment, this conclusion can be expected to take longer than in normal circumstances. It might be recalled that the broader conclusion in the case of Japan took more than six years, more than five years in the case of Canada, and such a conclusion has yet to be drawn for EU countries. Additional protocols for two of the three nuclear-weapon States are still not in force, and 26 of the 71 States with significant nuclear activities also do not have Additional Protocol agreements in force.

FACT 6. Iran did have contacts with the Khan network and received assistance and actively involved itself in the nuclear black market, as did many other countries. Significant revelations on these illicit activities were made in the November 2005 IAEA Board Report, that indicated that inspectors were shown (but not given copies of) blueprints that could assist in providing key components for a nuclear weapon, in particular details of how to turn uranium into a metal that can be machined to a high degree of accuracy and that could be used in a nuclear weapon. **While Iran has shown these blueprints and placed them under agency seals, as the latest report (27 Feb 2006) states, "it did not include dimensions or other specifications for the machined pieces for such components, i.e., they are not detailed enough for nuclear weapons purposes.** Questions still remain about what Iran either accidentally or intentionally

received on nuclear weapons designs. Iran is continuing to provide only limited information regarding meetings, which took place from 1987 through to late-1990's with the Khan network. The Agency admits, "Iran has been more forthcoming in providing access to additional documentation... and permitting interviews with individuals who had been involved... there still remain issues to be resolved..."³ Iran can only benefit from resolving these outstanding issues.

FACT 7. Other countries also need to come clean about the Khan network and the illegal black market in nuclear technology. What is required is an honest open accounting about what we do and don't know by everyone and not just Iran. In the resolution passed at the March 2004 Board Meeting, States reiterated their call for "urgent, full and close cooperation" by "third countries" on outstanding questions concerning Iran's programme. To date the level of cooperation by said third countries has been extremely limited, in providing access to Khan himself and his network. While Iran must come clean, there are other countries hiding information and protecting individuals who must also come clean.

FACT 8: Several countries most vocal for Iran's referral to the Security Council have historically been those encouraging, aiding and abetting Iran's nuclear programme. It was as early as 1957 that the US and Iran signed a nuclear cooperation agreement for the US to supply Iran with technical assistance and cooperation on research on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy as well as the lease of several kilograms of enriched uranium. Two years later the Tehran Nuclear Research Center (TNRC) was established and by 1967 it had its first US supplied and fuelled reactor there. The U.S. also sold hot cells to Iran, which could be used for separating plutonium from the spent fuel, and then used for the production of atomic bombs.

In 1974 the German contractor Siemens began construction of two 1,200-1,300 megawatt electric (MWe) pressurized water nuclear reactors near Bushehr. The Shah of Iran intended that this program would provide Iran the infrastructure essential for industrializing the country. The Bushehr I reactor was 85 percent complete and the Bushehr II reactor was partially complete prior to the 1979 Iranian Revolution, after which construction of both reactors halted. Ayatollah Khomeini declared this project "anti-Islamic," and the government of Mehdi Bazargan soon abandoned it. In the 1980's a consortium of German, Argentinian and Spanish companies put in a bid to complete the Bushehr reactor but the deal fell through. In February 1990 Spanish companies agreed a protocol with Iran to complete the Bushehr reactors and supply it with fuel but once again the deal fell through due to US pressure. It was not until January 1996 that Iran and Russia finally signed a deal to complete the Bushehr reactors.

Also in 1974 Iran signed a deal with Framatome to build two 950Mw nuclear reactors at Karun and although the site was surveyed and site preparations began the 1979 revolution halted this programme before construction could start. Furthermore, Iran loaned the French Eurodif \$1 billion as an up-front payment for uranium enrichment services at the plant it was constructing at Tricastin. However, after the Islamic Revolution in 1979, the deals fell through with the International Commerce Commission (ICC) ruling that France must repay Iran the \$1 billion and that Tehran would retain a small share in Eurodif. In the mid-1970s, France

³ Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Report to the IAEA Board of Governors, GOV/2005/87, para. 20, 18 November 2005

also provided assistance for the establishment of the Nuclear Technology Centre at Isfahan for training the personnel working with the Bushehr reactors.⁴

As can be seen from the above, Iran was once in good favour, and its nuclear programme actively encouraged and resourced by key members of what is now the Nuclear Suppliers Group. The situation with Iran provides another example of the dangers of promoting and providing nuclear materials and technology, which are always proliferation risks, and it also exemplifies the problems that occur as relations between governments change over time.

FACT 9. If States are serious about all potential proliferators, then the IAEA Board of Governors should treat all countries alike. Numerous other countries have more advanced enrichment programmes than Iran, also run by their military infrastructure. In Brazil, the military runs the nuclear programme, enriching uranium for civil purposes, and still hopes to obtain nuclear powered submarines that would most likely require weapons-grade uranium as fuel. Pakistan's whole nuclear weapons programme relies on uranium enrichment, and the know-how was stolen by Khan from URENCO⁵ with little Western outrage. Furthermore, legitimate security concerns in the region do exist about Israel's nuclear arsenal, and its nuclear programme, which do not only have to be recognized but addressed. This issue has been thus far inadequately acknowledged and dealt with as a matter of relevance for the Board. There has been and will continue to be political pressure to start the process of achieving a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone in the Middle East. The Saudi Foreign Minister has reiterated this point recently in stating, "I think the West allowing Israel to establish nuclear capability has done the damage we are all suffering from now. There are other countries that are perhaps now pursuing the same role. We hope that Iran will resist temptation because they do not need these weapons. Where are they going to use these weapons – in Israel? If they hit Israel they are going to hit Palestinians and if they miss Israel they are going to hit Saudi Arabia."⁶

FACT 10. Iran does not need nuclear power as a prime energy source given the availability of natural resources. Greenpeace supports a massive uptake of market-ready renewable energy and energy efficiency to start the energy revolution, which is necessary to fight global climate change and help end the nuclear threat.

⁴ See <http://www.dawn.com/2004/01/30/fea.htm> and http://nti.org/e_research/profiles/Iran/1825.html

⁵ Urenco is a Dutch, German and British company responsible for the production and marketing of uranium enrichment, using Urenco's own centrifuge technology.

⁶ Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal of Saudi Arabia, interview on BBC News on 16 January 2006