

# MEMMO

March 2010

## Crippling Sanctions Needed to Prevent Nuclear Iran

**Iran's quest for a nuclear weapons capability is clear—from its efforts to buy nuclear weapons from Pakistan in the 1980s to its current production of uranium enriched more closely to the level required for producing a nuclear bomb. Because crippling sanctions still provide the best prospect at this time to persuade Tehran to abandon its nuclear pursuit, the United States should immediately tighten enforcement of sanctions law while pushing for the imposition of new, tougher measures.**

Iran is aggressively advancing its nuclear weapons program in defiance of the international community.

- *The Washington Post* reported on March 14 that documents and statements from A.Q. Khan, the father of Pakistan's nuclear program, make clear that Iran demanded to buy nuclear bombs from Pakistan in the 1980s.
- Pakistan instead gave Iran bomb-related drawings, parts for centrifuges and a secret worldwide list of suppliers.
- Today, rather than suspend its enrichment of uranium as required by multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions, Iran is converting its stockpile of low enriched uranium (uranium gas enriched to 3.5 percent) into uranium enriched to 20 percent.
- Enriching uranium to the 20 percent level represents 85 to 90 percent of the work needed to produce the fuel for a nuclear weapon. This process could be completed in a matter of months.
- At the end of January 2010, Iran had produced more than 4,500 pounds of low-enriched uranium that—if further enriched to a weapons-grade level—is enough for two nuclear weapons.
- In its February 2010 report, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) raised concerns that Iran continues to carry out undisclosed activities related to the development of a nuclear weapon.
- The IAEA, citing “extensive” information collected from a variety of sources, expressed concern that Iran is advancing its efforts to construct a nuclear warhead, missiles to deliver such a warhead and a mechanism to detonate such a weapon.



**The IAEA said Iran is carrying out undisclosed experiments needed to produce a nuclear weapon.**

The United States must prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapons capability.

- Noting Iran is a “short-term, mid-term, and long-term” threat to the United States, Vice President Joseph Biden said during his recent trip to Israel, “The United States is determined to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, period.”
- A nuclear Iran would likely spark a regional nuclear arms race and mark the end of the global non-proliferation regime. Saudi Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal said that an Iranian nuclear weapon “will provide the impetus for further proliferation and, God forbid, see the region full of atomic weapons.”
- A nuclear-armed Iran would be emboldened to provide additional support to terrorists. Terrorist groups such as Hizballah and Hamas would be strengthened by the belief that a nuclear Iran would be able to deter outside powers from responding to their actions.
- A nuclear-armed Tehran would seek to assert regional hegemony and amplify its interference in the domestic affairs of its neighbors. As Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Adm. Michael Mullen said after a recent trip to the region, American allies are not only concerned about a nuclear-armed Iran but “an Iran with hegemonic ambitions and a desire to dominate its neighbors.”

The United States must enforce current sanctions and punish companies that violate American law.

- Successive American administrations have failed to enforce sanctions law against Iran and companies doing business in Iran. That must change.
- During the past decade the federal government has awarded \$107 billion in contracts and grants to more than 70 companies that are doing business in Iran, *The New York Times* reported March 7.
- Despite designating Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a terrorist entity in 2007, the United States has failed to enforce sanctions on the Guard. Washington should bar foreign entities that continue to do business with the IRGC from doing business in the United States.
- The U.S. government should enforce the Iran Sanctions Act – originally passed in 1996 – and sanction foreign entities investing more than \$20 million a year in Iran’s energy sector.

The United States should impose additional crippling sanctions against Iran and companies doing business with the Iranian regime.

- Having rejected repeated diplomatic overtures by the United States and the international community, it is time for the immediate imposition of crippling sanctions on Iran.
- The administration has been rightly pushing for tough multilateral sanctions at the United Nations. But given the protracted nature of Security Council negotiations, it is time for America, along with like-minded nations, to immediately implement their own comprehensive campaign of sanctions.
- American and international sanctions on Iran must be overwhelming to change the dynamic within Iran and to alter the policies of Iranian leaders. Sanctions should target Iran’s finance, insurance, shipping, transportation, natural gas and manufacturing industries in addition to Tehran’s dependence on refined petroleum.
- Final passage by Congress of legislation that prohibits the sale and export to Iran of refined petroleum products is critical. With Iran forced to import up to 40 percent of its gasoline and diesel, limiting the country’s access to such products would have a dramatic economic effect and could force the regime to change course.