

MEMO

April 9, 2010

Nuclear-Armed Iran Would Kill Non-Proliferation Efforts

“Stop Iran’s nuclear weapons program now.” This is the central message that leaders gathering at the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington must send as they meet to discuss steps aimed at stopping nuclear proliferation. A nuclear-armed Iran would perhaps irreversibly undermine the global non-proliferation regime and spur a nuclear arms race in the Middle East. Because of Iran’s advanced nuclear program, the United States and its allies should impose crippling sanctions on Iran now, while there is still time for them to work. Such sanctions provide the best prospect at this time to persuade Tehran to suspend its nuclear pursuit.

The United States must prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapons capability to preserve the non-proliferation regime.

- As President Obama laid out in a major speech in Prague one year ago, there must be “real and immediate consequences” for countries that defy their responsibilities under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. “Rules must be binding. Violations must be punished,” he said.
- If the international community, and the United States in particular, fails to act in the face of Iranian violations, the integrity of the entire non-proliferation regime will be threatened and the credibility of U.S. efforts to achieve “a world without nuclear weapons” will be undermined.
- A nuclear Iran would spark a regional nuclear arms race and likely mark the end of the global non-proliferation regime. Saudi Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal said an Iranian nuclear weapon “will provide the impetus for further proliferation and, God forbid, see the region full of atomic weapons.”
- Obama said in a recent interview with CBS News that a nuclear-armed Iran is “bad for U.S. national security” and “bad for the entire world” because it “creates huge destabilizing effects in the region and will trigger an arms race in the Middle East.”



President Obama said Iran’s pursuit of nuclear weapons is “bad for U.S. national security.”

A nuclear-armed Iran would create instability in the Middle East, a strategically important region vital to U.S. national interests.

- Iran’s prestige and influence in the region, already expanding, would soar if it had nuclear weapons and would threaten American allies and interests in the region. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Adm. Michael Mullen said after a recent trip to the region that U.S. allies are concerned about a nuclear-armed Iran “with hegemonic ambitions and a desire to dominate its neighbors.”
- Efforts to secure an Israeli–Palestinian peace deal would be jeopardized as a nuclear-armed Iran would be emboldened to provide additional support to the terrorist groups Hizballah and Hamas.

- A nuclear-armed Iran would increase the chances for nuclear technology falling into terrorist hands and would substantially increase the prospects for nuclear terror.

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

- 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 between 3.5 and 5 percent) into uranium enriched to 20 percent—a level that represents 85 percent of the work necessary to produce fuel for a nuclear weapon.
- Iran announced on April 9 that it has developed an advanced, third-generation centrifuge that is 10 times more powerful in enriching uranium than the regime's first generation centrifuges.
- Despite sanctions preventing the sale of nuclear material to Iran, Iranian companies continue to skirt sanctions and obtain sensitive hardware. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is currently investigating a recent Iranian procurement of valves and gauges critical to the uranium enrichment process, according to a report in *The Wall Street Journal*.
- A recent report in *The New York Times* stated that IAEA inspectors and Western intelligence officials believe that Iran is preparing to build additional secret nuclear facilities like the one discovered near Qom.
- When that facility was revealed, Obama explained that “the size and configuration of this facility is inconsistent with a peaceful program.” Iran's attempt to build additional, similar facilities likewise indicates that its nuclear program is not for peaceful purposes.

The United States must enforce current law and impose now additional sanctions against Iran and companies doing business with Tehran.

- The U.S. government has a wide array of existing authority at its disposal, including the ability to sanction foreign investment in Iran's energy sector (the Iran Sanctions Act of 1996) and measures targeting the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)—a Specially Designated Global Terrorist Organization since 2007.
- The federal government should also stop awarding contracts to companies that do business in Iran. During the past decade the United States has awarded \$107 billion in contracts and grants to more than 70 companies violating the spirit of U.S. sanctions, *The New York Times* reported March 7.
- 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 now for America, along with like-minded nations, to implement their own comprehensive campaign of sanctions.
- Final passage by Congress of legislation that sanctions the sale and export to Iran of refined petroleum products and other similar legislation 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.
- 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.