

MEMO

August 21, 2015

Update on Iranian Self-Inspection: AP Story Confirmed

Since the August 19 Associated Press (AP) report that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will permit Iran to self-inspect at the Parchin military facility, some have questioned its accuracy. In response, yesterday the AP confirmed its story and released the text of the draft agreement. No one involved in the negotiations has challenged the truth of the story.

Congress must not only insist that this agreement be released, but must also demand that the second IAEA side agreement with Iran be made available. The agreement reportedly governs the IAEA's ability to interview Iranian scientists. Is it possible that the IAEA has also agreed to allow Iran to interview its scientists and provide the answers?

What Caused the Confusion?

- Following the initial report on Aug. 19, AP staff cut several paragraphs from the original story while adding some commentary. This revision triggered a flood of accusations that AP was retracting key elements of the original piece.
- However, AP subsequently released the actual text of the draft agreement, restored the cut paragraphs, added details not present in the original story, and publicly stood by the story's authenticity.

What the Draft Side Agreement Reportedly Says

- Iran will be granted discretion to withhold access to areas at Parchin that it declares off-limits due to military significance.
- Iran will be granted discretion to withhold photos and videos from areas at Parchin that it declares off-limits due to military significance.
- The role of IAEA inspectors will be limited to observing their Iranian counterparts.

What Experts are Saying about the Iranian Self-Inspection

- Olli Heinonen, deputy IAEA director general from 2005 to 2010, told the AP he could think of no instance where a country being probed was allowed to do its own investigation.
- David Albright, president of the Institute for Science and International Security, called the side agreement "unprecedented and risky."

The Potential for Establishing A Dangerous Precedent

- Allowing Iran to inspect its own military facility represents a dangerous change to established arms control protocol. And as a result of this measure, one of the dangers moving forward is that a new precedent has been established that will prevent the IAEA from inspecting future suspect Iranian military facilities.
- The JCPOA explicitly recognizes the possibility that Iran and the IAEA can reach agreement on measures short of inspection of suspect facilities. It is not hard to imagine that Iran will insist in following the Parchin precedent if it continues to insist that the IAEA will never be allowed to inspect military sites.

This Side Deal Only Increases the Urgency for Congress to Reject the JCPOA

- Over the past two years, the administration has told lawmakers and reporters that any deal with Iran would require Iran to provide IAEA's international inspectors robust access to the Parchin military base. Clearly, the side agreement does not bear this out.
- The fact that Iran will be the one to investigate its own suspected illicit nuclear weaponization activity is grounds enough for America to seek a better agreement.
- Any deal with Iran must provide Congressional access to secret side agreements between the P5+1 and Iran; Congress cannot approve a deal that it cannot review.
- This revelation sets a dangerous precedent for international nonproliferation efforts and discredits the stated "don't trust, but verify" approach. It provides just another reason that Congress must reject this deal and urge the administration to work with our allies to maintain economic pressure on Iran. In time, this will lead Iran to return to negotiations to forge a better deal that will truly close off all of its paths to a nuclear weapon.