

# MEMMO

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## IAEA Must Inspect Secret Iranian Nuclear Sites

Last week, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu revealed the existence of a secret nuclear warehouse in Tehran housing documents and equipment from Iran's nuclear weapons program. The facility is the second secret Iranian nuclear site discovered by Israel this year. These sites provide new evidence of Iran's continuing nuclear ambitions and potential violations of Iran's obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the official verification agency for the NPT, is duty bound to investigate this new information. The IAEA must demand immediate access to the sites in question and ensure Iran is not hiding material for a nuclear weapons program.

### The Iranian facilities provide new insight into Tehran's nuclear weapons program.

- The newly disclosed site allegedly contains as much as 300 tons of nuclear related equipment and material stored in 15 shipping containers. More than 30 pounds of radioactive material was recently removed from the site, according to Israeli intelligence.
- While the precise nature of this material is still unknown, its discovery comes after the IAEA failed to investigate another secret Iranian site that Israel revealed in May—the 55,000 pages of documents Israel seized from that site provided detailed information concerning Iran's long-standing nuclear quest, including:
  - A draft contract that gave the Iranian military control over the process of converting uranium into fuel suitable for nuclear weapons.
  - Photos of a chamber used for high-explosive tests at the Parchin military base. The IAEA has known of the existence of the chamber but has been unable to determine its location due to Iranian obstructionism. High explosives are a crucial component of nuclear weaponization.
  - Records referring to uranium deuteride—a substance whose use is almost exclusively for neutron initiators that start the chemical reaction in nuclear weapons.
  - Documents on the challenges of integrating a nuclear weapon into a warhead.
  - Explicit mention of plans to build an initial batch of five nuclear weapons.
- British and American intelligence officials validated the authenticity of the information retrieved from the first site. A nuclear engineer and former inspector for the IAEA noted “the papers show these guys were working on nuclear bombs.”



*In a speech to the U.N. General Assembly on Sept. 27, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu revealed the existence of a secret Iranian atomic warehouse in Tehran. (AP/Richard Drew)*

## **The two sites conclusively demonstrate Iran's intent to build nuclear weapons.**

- The recent discovery of a second Iranian facility with undisclosed nuclear equipment, combined with the quantity and specificity of material in the first archive, indicates Iran's continuing determination to maintain the option to build nuclear weapons.
- The seized documents prove that the Iranian regime made a conscious decision in 2003 to maintain a covert weaponization effort, despite an agreement with the E3 (France, Germany and the U.K.) to end such activity. These documents specifically reference conversations among senior Iranian officials discussing the "covert" and "overt" parts of their nuclear program.
- No country that has genuinely committed to end nuclear development has maintained such nuclear facilities. For example, South Africa destroyed or turned over to the IAEA all information on its nuclear program including written plans, studies and other documentation. Libya relinquished its nuclear archive to the United States in 2004. Both allowed the U.S. to remove all equipment and technology related to a nuclear weapons effort.
- The existence of the nuclear archive and equipment is a likely violation of the NPT as well as the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, both of which prohibit Iran from activities that would assist in the design and development of nuclear weapons. It certainly violates Iran's treaty obligation to be transparent in all aspects of its nuclear program.

## **These discoveries highlight the shortcomings of current IAEA inspections.**

- The discoveries clearly show that current IAEA monitoring is insufficient. In 2017, IAEA inspectors spent 3,000 days in Iran; however, their monitoring did not reveal the warehouse with nuclear equipment nor evidence of the nuclear activity contained in the uncovered documents.
- The IAEA has thus far refused to visit either site in Iran—arguing that this new information cannot be taken at "face value" and the agency must conduct an "independent assessment" of the findings.
- Yet, because the IAEA is not an intelligence agency and does not have independent intelligence capabilities, it has always relied on third-party intelligence. Iran's major nuclear sites have all been uncovered by outside intelligence—not the IAEA—including, Natanz, Arak and Fordow.
- The IAEA cannot attest to the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program without ascertaining the whereabouts of the nuclear equipment disclosed in the archive—including streak cameras, framing cameras and flash x-ray cameras—which Iran is prohibited from acquiring or using under Section T of the 2015 nuclear agreement.
- In 2015, the IAEA closed its investigation into the possible military dimensions of Iran's nuclear program without resolution of the issue. These newly discovered sites clearly prove that the IAEA has much additional work to do to uncover significant details about Iran's nuclear quest.
- The IAEA must demand access to both these sites, in addition to those mentioned in seized Iranian documents, and it should consider reopening Iran's nuclear file.
- The IAEA must also increase the transparency of its inspections in Iran. The agency has reduced the amount of information it provides both to states and the public. Instead, it treats Iran like a "normal" state adhering to IAEA rules. However, these "abnormal" secret nuclear sites must force the IAEA to reevaluate its treatment of Tehran.