

# MEMMO

---

Aug. 20, 2018

## **Iranian Nuclear Weapons Archive Provides Proof of Intent**

An extensive archive of Iranian nuclear documents released in July sheds light on the advanced nature of the regime's nuclear ambitions. The documents are among thousands smuggled out of Iran by Israel in a covert operation earlier this year. The fact that Iran secretly retained information on how to build nuclear weapons—and refused to disclose it to inspectors as required by the 2015 Iran nuclear deal—raises questions about Iran's long-term objectives. Other states that ended their nuclear programs destroyed or handed over similar materials. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)—which failed to uncover this nuclear archive—must demand access to the remaining documents and other Iranian sites revealed in this extraordinary discovery.

---

### **The archive provides new insight into Iran's nuclear weapon program.**

- The archive revealed information far more detailed than previously available about Iran's nuclear weapons quest. It clearly demonstrates that Tehran consistently lied when contending that it never had a nuclear weapons program. Iran warehoused more than 55,000 pages of nuclear records in 32 safes.
- The secret documents include:
  - Photos of a chamber used for high-explosive tests at Iran's Parchin military base. The IAEA was aware of the existence of the chamber, but had been unable to confirm its location due to Iranian obstructionism. High-explosive tests 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 discussing the integration of a nuclear weapon into a warhead.
  - A draft contract that gave the Iranian military control over the process of converting uranium into fuel suitable for nuclear weapons.
  - Explicit plans to build an initial batch of five nuclear weapons.
- British and American intelligence officials validated the information uncovered by the Israeli operation. After reviewing the documents, a nuclear engineer and former inspector for the IAEA concluded that “the papers show these guys [the Iranians] were working on nuclear bomb.”

### **The archive conclusively demonstrates Iran's continued intent to build nuclear weapons.**

- The quantity and specificity of material in the archive, combined with its careful cataloguing, indicates that Iran remains determined to maintain the option to build nuclear arms.
- Seized documents prove that the Iranian regime made a conscious decision in 2003 to maintain a covert nuclear weaponization effort, despite an agreement with the E3 (France, Germany and the United Kingdom) to end such activity. They specifically reference conversations among senior Iranian officials discussing the “covert” and “overt” parts of their nuclear program.

- No country genuinely committed to ending its nuclear development has maintained such a detailed nuclear archive. 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.
- The archive's existence is a violation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the 2015 nuclear deal (formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA), both of which prohibit Iran from activities that would assist in the design and development of nuclear weapons.

### **The archive highlights the shortcomings of IAEA inspections.**

- The archive clearly shows that current IAEA monitoring is insufficient. In 2017, IAEA inspectors spent a total of 3,000 days in Iran; however, this monitoring did not reveal the warehouse where the archive was held, nor the evidence of nuclear activity contained in the uncovered documents.
- The IAEA has declined to comment on the archive and reportedly has conducted no follow-up inspections based on the newly revealed information.
- 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 JCPOA.
- In 2015, the IAEA closed its investigation into the possible military dimensions of Iran's nuclear program. The archive clearly proves that the IAEA has much additional work to do to uncover significant details about Iran's nuclear quest. The IAEA must demand access to sites named in these documents and 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 to the public, as it treats Iran today like a "normal" state adhering to IAEA rules. However, this "abnormal" archive must force the IAEA to reevaluate its treatment of Tehran.