

Updates on Iran's Nuclear Program

11 Jan 2012

There have been some major events surrounding Iran's nuclear program. First, Debka reports that Iran may test a low yield nuclear device. Second, another of Iran's top nuclear program scientists has been assassinated.

According to debkafile's Iranian sources, Tehran is preparing an underground test of a one-kiloton nuclear device during 2012, much like the test carried out by North Korea in 2006. Underground facilities are under construction in great secrecy behind the noise and fury raised by the start of advanced uranium enrichment at Iran's fortified, subterranean Fordo site near Qom.

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As quoted by the London Times Monday, Jan. 1, INSS experts, headed by Gen. (ret.) Giora Eiland, a former head of Israel's National Security Council, deduced from a simulation study they staged last week that. Their conclusion is that neither the US nor Israel will use force to stop Iran's first nuclear test which they predicted would take place in January 2013.

Our Iranian sources stress, however, that Tehran does not intend to wait for the next swearing-in of a US president in January 2013, whether Barack Obama is returned for a second term or replaced by a Republican figure, before moving on to a nuclear test.

Iran's Islamist rulers have come to the conclusion from the Bush and Obama presidencies that America is a paper tiger and sure to shrink from attacking their nuclear program – especially while the West is sunk in profound economic distress. (<http://www.debka.com/article/21635/>)

UNITED NATIONS - Iran urged the UN Security Council and Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Wednesday to condemn the latest in a series of assassinations of Iranian nuclear scientists, which it said were "cruel, inhumane and criminal acts of terrorism."

Iran's UN Ambassador Mohammad Khazaee appealed to Ban and the 15-nation council "to condemn, in the strongest term, these inhumane terrorist acts and to take effective steps towards elimination of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations."

"Any kind of political and economic pressures or terrorist attacks targeting the Iranian nuclear scientists, could not prevent our nation in exercising this right" to pursue its nuclear program, Khazaee said in a letter, obtained by Reuters. (<http://www.jpost.com/IranianThreat/News/Article.aspx?id=253237>)

Please read both articles for more important information.

Analysis. It appears from the articles that Iran is following North Korea's nuclear development plan. First do a test with a small "proof of concept" device that doesn't expend a lot of fissile material. If it doesn't work then we have not wasted a lot of expensive highly enriched uranium or plutonium. If it does work and the yield is within the bounds of the theoretical yield, then we have proved the concept relatively cheaply. The fissile material we saved can be used to build a bigger device that will get the World's attention.

In the intelligence field we are tasked with two important tasks: define the enemy's capabilities and determine his intentions to use those capabilities to our detriment. We can pretty well determine an

enemy's capabilities by watching to see what kinds of weapons systems he builds. Both North Korea and Iran have nuclear weapons programs. I believe their intentions are entirely different.

North Korea's nuclear program is designed to preserve its existence. North Korea wants a peace treaty with South Korea and the United States that guarantees its permanent existence. That it will not get. I suspect that Kim Il Sung's dream of a unified Korea under Kim family rule has long since been forgotten. North Korea has descended into the basic survival mode. It sees nuclear weapons as the deterrent necessary to keep the South from invading or the weapon to destroy large parts of South Korea if it does. Or to keep South Korea from overthrowing the Kim regime even if Kim invades the South. To me this means that North Korea will not be a first user of nuclear weapons except to repel invasion. Besides, the People's Republic of China has said that it will not defend North Korea if Kim invades the South.

The Iranian nuclear program also has a defensive component to it. It is meant to retaliate against anyone who attacks Iran. Iran's nuclear program also has, I believe, a major offensive component to it. That offensive component is the destruction of Israel and perhaps to attack the United States. Beyond that I believe that Iran would attack Saudi Arabia with nuclear weapons. It would do this as part of the efforts to bring forth the Hidden Imam and to become the leading sect of Islam.

The Sunni-Shiite sectarian civil war is already well under way. The current battlefield is Syria. The deployment of Arab League monitors has turned out to be somewhere between totally ineffective and a smoke screen for Assad's continued killing of his own people. The recent arrival of the Kuznetsov carrier group has done little to stop the killing. If anything it has encouraged Assad. He knows he will not share Qaddafi's fate while the Russians support him.

Back in Iran, their nuclear program has suffered another setback as one of their senior nuclear scientists has been assassinated. I believe these assassinations are counter productive at best. Killing a senior scientist may put their nuclear program back a few months. It will take that long to find a replacement. If you wish to alter the course of history by assassination, you must kill the people who make the decisions not the people who are as much pawns of the regime as the ordinary citizen.