

Iran and Nuclear Weapons

Commentary for October 16, 2009 — Will Iran Develop and Deploy Them?

The current state of Iranian nuclear development is a concern to most all observers in the Near East. Publicly Iran denies it is developing nuclear weapons, yet their actions say otherwise. Iran has purchased and is using equipment to produce nuclear material to make both nuclear fuel for energy and for nuclear weapons. Such is the analysis of most media in the United States, Europe, Israel, and the Near East.

Production of nuclear material for energy production is different than producing nuclear material for weapons. A considerable amount of Iran's nuclear material is being processed using nuclear weapon production techniques. Iran is also actively developing and testing missile systems to deliver small nuclear warheads with a potential to reach Israel and beyond.

Iran has stable borders due to its geographical situation. It has not invaded outside its relatively stable borders in hundreds of years, but Iran has been subject to attacks from outsiders, the latest being the long war with Saddam Hussein's Iraq from 1980 to 1988. Here is my "opinion" based on analysis.

Iran will not test a nuclear weapon until it develops reliable missile systems to deliver those nuclear weapons. That means that Iran will bypass the usual sequence of nuclear weapons development, which is:

1. Prepare all nuclear materials.
2. Develop reliable nuclear weapons.
3. Test the nuclear weapons.
4. At the same time, develop a reliable bomber delivery capability for the weapons.
5. Decrease the size of the nuclear weapons to fit on a missile.
6. Develop a reliable missile delivery system for its nuclear weapons.

This has been the sequence of nuclear weapons development by every nuclear power up to the present, although some nuclear tests have been conducted without fanfare.

Iranian Nuclear Weapons Development

I believe Iran's nuclear development sequence will be different. Iran will not attempt to achieve point #4 in the above sequence. The Iranian sequence of nuclear development will be:

1. Prepare all nuclear materials.
2. Develop a reliable missile delivery system for its nuclear weapons.
3. Develop reliable nuclear weapons.
4. ~~At the same time, develop a reliable bomber delivery capability for the weapons~~ [omitted by Iran].



5. Decrease the size of the nuclear weapons to fit on a missile.
6. Test the nuclear weapons and missile system together.

The first step in the Iranian sequence of nuclear weapons development is the same. I believe the last step will be the testing of those nuclear weapons. Iranian nuclear testing will come after a reliable missile delivery system has been developed that can reach Israel and other potential enemies with nuclear weapons. This sequence of events will allow Iran to publicly deny that it is even developing nuclear weapons right up to its first nuclear test.

Why not build a bomber force? There are problems with developing a bomber force before developing a missile force. A bomber force is tremendously expensive and demands a large infrastructure of material, manpower, and training, all being vulnerable to attack while their buildup occurs. Bombers are vulnerable; if they cannot reach their targets neither can their nuclear payloads. A missile delivery system for nuclear weapons also requires a great deal of infrastructure but less manpower to operate, maintain, and train. (Creation of the industrial capacity to make your own missiles also has economic benefits.) Most important, ballistic missiles are very difficult to intercept.

So ... I believe that Iran will not test a nuclear weapon until its missile system is perfected. At that time Iran may conduct a combined test of a missile system with a nuclear warhead detonation. Until then Iran will continue to deny they are developing any nuclear weapons. A successful combined missile launch and nuclear test would put great fear into the hearts of its neighboring countries. The threat of nuclear weapons is useful in international relations.

What If Iran Is Attacked?

If Iran is attacked by Israel (or by Israel with help by the United States) most countries in the region will shed crocodile tears, publicly denouncing the attack, but privately they would rejoice. One danger to such an attack might be for Iran to try to close the Strait of Hormuz to tanker shipping. Large bulk oil tankers are vulnerable to anti-ship missiles and naval mines.

“More than 90 percent of all oil exported from the Persian Gulf, or nearly 17 million barrels per day (bpd), transits this outgoing lane. This is nearly two-fifths of the world’s oil supply.”

• [“Iran: The Threat to the Strait of Hormuz”¹](#)

Disruption of oil shipments through the Persian Gulf would greatly affect the world economy. Oil prices would skyrocket. Even if the Strait of Hormuz could be opened again, insurance costs of shipping would still keep prices high by 2 or 3 times or more above present prices.² So what will happen? Tension is building. Iran is developing a missile delivery system to combine with small nuclear bombs to fit those missiles. A nuclear test will indicate that Iran feels prepared to load missiles with nuclear warheads and threaten its neighbors. When such a test occurs, reactions will likely be swift. Israel may move against Iran before a nuclear test.

Prophetically, how does this all play out? Jerusalem survives to Christ’s return and the towns north of Jerusalem are also present. Israel will expand its present borders (see [“The Land of Israel in Prophecy”](#) and [“New Prophetic Discoveries Concerning the End Time”](#)). Before Christ’s return peace and prosperity will come to the Middle East. Damascus, Syria, and the cities of Gaza are extant.³ Although nearby towns are mentioned in prophecies, Tel Aviv (the present capital of Israel founded after New Testament times) is not directly mentioned.

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1. A July 1, 2008 Stratfor Global Intelligence webpage (accessed October 15, 2009).
 2. Shutting down Persian Gulf shipments would greatly harm the Iranian economy, cutting its exports of oil, and perhaps even cause a collapse of the Iranian government.
 3. Disaster could still occur. Hiroshima and Nagasaki are flourishing cities today with 1.6 and ½ million people respectively, 64 years after being devastated in a nuclear attack at the end of World War II.