

Defense & Foreign Affairs

Special Analysis

Founded in 1972. Formerly *Defense & Foreign Affairs Daily*
Volume XXV, No. 93 Monday, December 10, 2007

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US NIE on Iranian Nuclear Programs Fabricated “Intelligence” to Facilitate State/White House Deal With Clerics

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Analysis. By Gregory R. Copley, Editor, GIS. Highly-reliable intelligence and policy sources in Washington, DC, as well as in Tehran and Riyadh, have indicated that the December 3, 2007, US National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) which stated that Iran had abandoned its nuclear weapons program in 2003 was not in any way based on confirmed intelligence data, but rather was created merely to facilitate a change in US strategy to support — and even go beyond — the recommendations of the US State Department and the Iraq Study Group which had been headed by former US Secretary of State James Baker.

Indeed, although there was little evidence of significant progress in the Iranian nuclear weapons production program, there has been no evidence that Iran had deliberately stopped that program. Moreover, there is strong evidence that Iran had maintained and considerably *strengthened* its nuclear and other strategic weapons programs since 2003, including the operational roll-out of a nuclear weapons-based National Command Authority (NCA) structure in Iran, paralleling one developed in North Korea (DPRK).¹

The December 3, 2007, US NIE confirmed that the US White House had gone along with major pressure from the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia — and particularly the strong axis which exists between Saudi National Security Advisor Prince Bandar Bin Sultan and the US State Dept. (and former Sec. of State Baker) — to bring about a Saudi-led *rapprochement* between the ruling Iranian clerics and the United States, despite the reality that such an accord would essentially confirm the clerics in place as Iran’s leaders, significantly dampening any chances of a successful popular action to remove the clerics in the short-term.

The deal certainly saved the clerics by ruling out any US military action against Iranian targets in the near-term, but also won for the US some degree of commitment that Syria, as Iran’s regional surrogate, would refrain from interference in the election of the next Lebanese President later in December 2007, and would halt its smuggling of weapons, including improvised explosive devices (IEDs) into Iraq. This “deal”, whether codified or not in a formal sense, essentially would also allow Iranian surrogate force *HizbAllah* a key rôle in the new governance framework in Lebanon. This essentially reduces short-term attacks on US forces in Iraq, paving the way for an early withdrawal or scaling down of US Forces in Iraq, but freezes the gains made by the Iran-Syria axis in the region, ready for a resurgence of Iranian-Syrian actions when the US has essentially left the region, presumably coinciding with the end of the Administration of US Pres. George W. Bush in the beginning of 2009.

Despite the strenuous protests in Lebanon against Syrian (and therefore Iranian) interference in the Lebanese political process, the process now allows for the election of pro-Syrian Gen. Michel Suleiman as Lebanon’s next President.

The move by the US is against the long-term strategic interests of the US, but supports the short-term objectives of both the US State Dept. and the Bush White House, essentially disregarding the interests of Israel and Lebanon.

One senior US source said: "Essentially, what the NIE did was to confirm the supremacy in Washington of the State Department, suppressing the Defense Department's strategic worldview. It gave away the farm for a few moments of 'peace' so that the White House and State Department could declare victory and go home. The NIE is a lie, and through it we have condemned the Iranian people to more years of servitude under the mullahs; we have allowed Russia to declare real victory in the 'great game' for Persia, ending a couple of hundred years of Western victory; and we will all live to see Iran, at some stage, revive the use of its nuclear blackmail."

GIS/*Defense & Foreign Affairs* sources confirmed that Iran had a number — possibly as many as 10 or 15 — imported nuclear warheads already in its system, including its first three in 1991-92 from Kazakhstan. In February 1992, *Defense & Foreign Affairs Strategic Policy* journal reported, in a study entitled *Iran Acquires Nuclear Weapons and Moves to Provide Cover to Syria*, Senior Editor Yossef Bodansky noted: "By the end of 1991, Iran had all (or virtually all) the components needed to make three operational nuclear weapons: aerial bombs and/or surface-to-surface missile (SSM) warheads. *Defense & Foreign Affairs Strategic Policy* has learned from highly-reliable sources that the weapons were assembled from parts bought in the ex-Soviet Muslim republics. These weapons can become operational as early as February to April 1992. Tehran is committed to providing Syria with a nuclear umbrella before June 1992."

What was revealed subsequently by this Service was the fact that the weapons came from ex-Soviet stocks sold on the black market in Kazakhstan, and that Iran later acquired additional nuclear weapons from Ukraine and North Korea.

In the short term, following the NIE, Iran has begun to broaden its strategic actions; the US-led sanctions have virtually come to mean nothing. The US, to a large degree, was comforted by the reduction or curtailment of apparent military decisionmaking capability of Iranian Pres. Mahmud Ahmadi-Nejad, by "Supreme Leader" "Ayatollah" Ali Khamene'i, following the President's trip to New York for the United Nations General Assembly.

Footnotes:

1. See, particularly, *Defense & Foreign Affairs Special Analysis*, September 27, 2004: *Iran, North Korea Test Deployments of National Command Authority Systems, New Nuclear Systems*.

Other non-related issues to the Iran affairs removed from bottom of this report.
