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Iran Agrees to Nuclear Fuel Deal

Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei, director of the UN-spawned International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), announced on October 21 that Iranian negotiators have agreed to a draft agreement that will provide for Iran to ship much of its stockpile of low-enriched uranium to Russia for further processing. Though officially an independent agency, the Vienna-headquartered IAEA reports to both the UN General Assembly and Security Council.



IAEA delegations from Iran, France, Russia, the United States, and the United Nations have until October 23 to decide whether they will sign the agreement, which ElBaradei describes as "a balanced approach to the problem." The "problem" refers to fears among Western nations that Iran will amass a stockpile of enriched uranium sufficient to build a nuclear weapon.

"Everyone is aware that the transaction using Iran's low enriched uranium to be manufactured into fuel is a very important confidence-building measure that can defuse the crisis that has been going on for years," ElBaradei told reporters. "The spirit here was very constructive."

Under the proposed agreement, the fuel processed in Russia would be turned into metal fuel rods in another country, then shipped back to Iran to power its small research reactor in Tehran, which is used to make medical isotopes. The part of the proposal designed to relieve Western tensions is that the bulk of Iran's stockpile of low-enriched uranium (up to three-fourths) would be sent out of the country, thus keeping Iran's supply too low to build weapons.

Ali Asghar Soltanieh, Iran's chief delegate to the IAEA, praised the draft, but stressed that senior Iranian officials in Tehran still had to approve it. "We have to thoroughly study this text and also [need] further elaboration in capitals, he was quoted by the AP.

While the draft agreed to in Vienna is supposed to relieve Western fears that Iran will be able to produce one or more nuclear weapons, apparently lost amidst the discussions is the incredible irony that the United States should regard Russia as a trustworthy partner to help keep Iran's uranium enrichment program in check.

Iran has so far not been proven to have the capability to enrich a sufficient supply of uranium to a sufficient degree to manufacture even one crude nuclear weapon. And even if it managed to do so, there is the challenge of delivery. While the recently tested Iranian missiles have the range to reach all of the Middle East and parts of Southeastern Europe, they have not been proven to have the accuracy needed to strike their intended targets. Furthermore, launching one or two nuclear-armed missiles would be a suicidal exercise for the Iranians, since they lack the defensive capabilities to prevent



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retaliatory annihilation by a number of nations, including Israel, which the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Federation of American Scientists believe possesses as many as 75-200 nuclear weapons.

But more important than Iran's nuclear capabilities (or lack thereof) is the trustworthiness and potential threat of Russia, itself. First let's look at its nuclear capability. As noted in the article "Russian nuclear forces, 2008" published in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* for May/June 2008:

Russia reduced its total nuclear weapon stockpile by about 1,000 warheads during the last year; however, it still has the largest arsenal in the world. As of early 2008, we estimate that Russia has approximately 5,200 nuclear warheads in its operational stockpile and 8,800 in reserve or awaiting dismantlement, for a total of 14,000 nuclear weapons.

Unlike during the Cold War period, however, when fear of nuclear attack by Russia's Soviet predecessors was used to terrorize Americans into accepting disarmament programs that would turn our own arsenal over to the UN, we are told that today's Russia poses no threat to us, because the big bad communists have relinquished power and Russia is now a Westernized, "capitalist" country.

Such assurances are about as credible as the Big Bad Wolf pretending to be Grandma, however. Those who think that present-day Russia is free from the grasp of the old communist regime and its KGB intelligence apparatus have been badly misled. Consider a brief history of Russia's present political leadership:

Since the supposed collapse of the Soviet Union, all of the key centers of power — political, economic, military, intelligence — in Russia and the other "former" Soviet states have remained in the hands of lifelong communists. Current President Dmitry Medvedev's mentor, Vladimir Putin, joined the Communist Party of the Soviet Union when he was a law student at Leningrad State University. He joined the KGB while young and served the Soviet spy agency until 1991. In 1998 President Boris Yeltsin appointed Putin head of the FSB (one of the successor agencies to the KGB). In 1999, Yeltsin appointed Putin acting prime minister of the Government of the Russian Federation. Putin was elected president in 2000 and was reelected in 2004. Unable to serve for a third term, Putin was replaced by his hand-picked successor, Dmitry Medvedev, who subsequently appointed Putin prime minister of Russia.

But there is more to the story than lingering communist influence in Russia. Since September 11, 2001, Americans have been told that the major threat to our national security comes from Islamic terrorists. That attacks against our nation have come from terrorists with origins in the Islamic world is undeniable, including not only 9-11 but earlier attacks against the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut on October 23, 1983, and the attack on the Navy destroyer *U.S.S. Cole* on October 12, 2000. However, what is not widely known is that most of the terrorist attacks against us have been carried out by individuals motivated not by the Islamic faith, but by a longstanding communist agenda geared towards world domination.

The most radical Islamic terrorist groups have long subsisted on Soviet-Russian support. For example, shortly after Yasser Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was formed at the Arab-Cairo Summit in 1964, the group began sending hundreds of recruits to terrorist training camps in the Soviet Union, East Germany, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Cuba. For years, Arafat's chief contact in the Soviet Union was Vladimir Buljakov, head of the Soviet Foreign Ministry's Middle East Department. In a 1982 speech to a Soviet delegation visiting Beirut, Arafat stated: "We look to you, comrade, the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party and the socialist bloc, full of hope, as friend to friend



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... in considering the question of liberation and progress in the world."

Iran has also benefitted from both Russian and Chinese support of its weapons programs. As William F. Jasper observed in his article for *The New American* online on May 11, entitled "[U.S., Russia 'Reset' the Convergence Agenda](#)":

Yes, Iran and North Korea do pose some thorny problems concerning nuclear proliferation. However, before we go falling all over ourselves in a rush to invite Putin, Medvedev, Lavrov & Company to merge with us in a great cooperative effort to "solve" these problems, a little honesty is in order. To the extent that North Korea and Iran present genuine nuclear weapons threats, it is thanks to Putin, Medvedev, Lavrov & Company (and their Kremlin predecessors), along with the Beijing Boys. The missile programs in Iran and North Korea would still be back in the slingshot stage without the crucial, long-running (and ongoing) help provided by Russia and China. (For background on assistance by Moscow and Beijing for Iran's nuclear weapons and missile programs, see "[Iranian Weapons of Mass Destruction](#).")

The United States has a nearly 60-year history of fighting the puppet — as in Korea, Vietnam, and now the Middle East — while accommodating and even assisting the puppet master.

Photo of Mohamed ElBaradei: AP Images



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