



Written by on November 17, 2009

UN Nuke Chief in Secret Talks With Iran

The Times of London reported on November 17 that UN and Iranian officials have been engaged in secret negotiations toward an agreement to persuade world powers to lift sanctions against Iran that would allow Tehran to continue with most of its nuclear program in return for cooperation with UN inspectors.

The *Times* report is based on a document outlining a 13-point agreement that reportedly was drawn up in September by Mohamed ElBaradei, the director general of the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The British newspaper reported that the IAEA denied the existence of the document, which was leaked to the *Times* by one of the negotiating parties who became alarmed at the contents of the agreement.



According to the report, "The plan would require the UN Security Council to revoke the three existing sanctions and five resolutions ordering Iran to halt its uranium enrichment — an unthinkable development at a time when the West is focused on how to impose more, not fewer, sanctions on Iran."

Just the day before the *Times* disclosure, the agency posted a report on its website entitled "[Latest IAEA Safeguards Reports Sent to IAEA Board](#)" that noted: "IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei has circulated his latest reports on nuclear safeguards in Iran and Syria to the Agency's Board of Governors, the 35-member policymaking body, in advance of their meeting next week."

The report also noted that circulation of the reports is restricted and that they cannot be released to the public "unless the IAEA Board decides otherwise."

A report in LaosNews.net noted that ElBaradei has reportedly been working to reach an agreement to lift international sanctions imposed on Tehran in order to break the stalemate over Iran's nuclear program. ElBaradei will step down as the IAEA chief at the end of November, and — so the story goes — in order to leave a positive legacy, he has been stepping up pressure for a deal with Tehran that he can present to the United States, Russia, China, Britain, France, and Germany and break the impasse.

Meanwhile, reports AsiaNews, a separate report emanating from the IAEA stated that Iran's secrecy surrounding its new uranium enrichment facility near Qom "lowers the level of confidence" that there are no other undeclared sites. The existence of the Qom facility was made public by Iran in September, and Iran maintains that its construction began in 2007, while satellite photos show that it began in 2002.

The report cited U.S. State Department spokesman Ian Kelly who said that "Iran continues to refuse to comply fully with its international nuclear obligations" and that Washington will continue to "put



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pressure" on Tehran.

On the same day that the story about negotiations between the IAEA and Iran broke, President Obama said in China that there would be consequences if Iran would not demonstrate that its nuclear program was "peaceful and transparent" and has called for an answer to a UN-proposed agreement by the end of the year.

In response, Iran's nuclear envoy Ali Asghar Soltanieh retorted that Obama's remarks would weaken the IAEA by casting doubt on its findings.

AP reported that the agency had stated that Iran had fully cooperated with it and inspections would continue, said Soltanieh. "In the report it is clearly said that no centrifuge machine has been installed in the [Qom] site and no nuclear fissile has been used there," he said, describing the report as repeating previous IAEA statements that Iran's nuclear activities were designed for peaceful purposes.

If the IAEA's reports seem somewhat disjointed and inconsistent, it is perhaps because like most UN-spawned international agencies, its true mission has little to do with maintaining "peace," but much to do with maintaining UN control over those nations of the world that have the audacity to resist its directives. In all likelihood, when ElBaradei met with the Iranians, he offered more sticks than carrots. Saddam Hussein was an object lesson: Comply or be removed from power.

Photo of Mohamed ElBaradei: AP Images



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