



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on February 27, 2012

U.S. Intelligence: No Evidence Iran Building Nukes

In fact — as the *New York Times* [reported](#) on its front page over the weekend — the consensus view of the U.S. intelligence community since at least 2007 has been that the Islamic Republic stopped seeking to build nuclear bombs almost a decade ago. And that remains the predominant assessment today.

“They are certainly moving on that path, but we don’t believe they have actually made the decision to go ahead with a nuclear weapon,” U.S. Director of National Intelligence James Clapper told the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence in late January.



More recently, Clapper offered the same testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee on February 16. “I think they are keeping themselves in a position to make that decision,” he [explained](#). “But there are certain things they have not yet done and have not done for some time.”

Plenty of other senior officials agree. CIA boss David Petraeus, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Martin Dempsey have all made similar public assertions recently.

Of course, it is widely known that Iran is enriching uranium. The regime boasts about it. But nuclear missiles and weapons-grade material require enrichment of around 90 percent — a long way away from the less-than-20-percent purity the Iranian government is known to be working on.

The regime insists its program is solely for peaceful purposes — energy and medicine, for example — and that it will not be deterred by [Western terrorism](#) or threats. But advocates of military intervention from Europe to Israel and into the highest levels of the American political class insist otherwise.

Members of the immensely powerful clique known as the Council on Foreign Relations, for example, have been beating the war drums with increasing ferocity for years. And in the CFR’s most recent issue of *Foreign Affairs*, the organization’s flagship journal, Prof. Matthew Kroenig openly called for a U.S. war against Iran. More than a few top Western officials have issued similar battle cries.

Critics of the official U.S. intelligence assessments claim the 16 or so American spy agencies may be proceeding too cautiously — especially in the wake of their false claims regarding Iraq’s non-existent “Weapons of Mass Destruction” program used to drum up support for the invasion and occupation of that country. Some supposed experts cited in media reports even suggest that the lack of any evidence to show Iran is building a bomb simply means there is a “gap” in U.S. intelligence.

An unclassified summary of the 2007 National Intelligence Estimate — the consensus view of America’s sprawling global espionage apparatus — concluded that Iran had abandoned its atomic bomb-making operations years earlier. “We judge with high confidence that in fall 2003, Tehran halted its nuclear weapons program,” the report stated.

And nothing has really changed since then except the hysterical rhetoric — at least not in terms of the



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official U.S. intelligence community's views. According to officials cited in the *Times* piece, entitled "[U.S. Agencies See No Move by Iran to Build a Bomb](#)," the 2007 assessment "was largely reaffirmed in a 2010 National Intelligence Estimate" and "remains the consensus view of America's 16 intelligence agencies."

A report released late last week by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), meanwhile, was instantly seized upon by various interests. Israeli officials [claimed](#) the report offered "proof" that Israel's analysis of Iranian nuclear ambitions was accurate and that Iran was pursuing nuclear ambitions "without let-up." The Iranian regime, on the other hand, [alleged](#) that the report "proved" its nuclear enrichment program was solely for peaceful purposes.

In reality, it did neither. The most recent IAEA assessment simply showed what the Iranian dictatorship has acknowledged all along: That it is expanding its enrichment capabilities and enriching greater quantities of uranium up to 20 percent purity. The report also noted, however, that the UN nuclear agency had "serious concerns" about the potential military dimensions of the program — a fairly sharp contrast from U.S. assessments.

"Regarding the continuation of talks, we will continue negotiations to once again prove to the world that certain countries' claims are unfounded and that all our nuclear activities are for peaceful purposes," [said](#) Ali Asghar Soltanieh, the Iranian dictatorship's Ambassador to the IAEA. "But we will never relinquish our inalienable rights to the peaceful use of nuclear energy."

Russian strongman Vladimir Putin, meanwhile, [suggested](#) the West was hyping the nuclear non-issue to push for regime change in Tehran. "Under the guise of trying to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction ... they are attempting something else entirely and setting different goals — regime change," Putin was quoted as saying. "We have such suspicions."

Of course, many honest analysts do indeed suspect Tehran is secretly hoping to build atomic weapons — especially after witnessing what the U.S. military did to Iran's non-nuclear neighbors like Iraq and Afghanistan over the last decade. But as Charles Scaliger explained in a recent cover story for *The New American* magazine, developing offensive nuclear weapons capabilities is an extraordinarily complicated endeavor.

And even if the regime was both willing and able to create atomic weapons, which at this point remains highly questionable, it would hardly represent a doomsday scenario as war advocates suggest. The likelihood of Iran's tyrants actually using such weapons — other than as a deterrent, perhaps — is very slim.

"Nothing about the history of nuclear weapons suggests any likelihood of a nuclear Iran using such weapons for anything but a deterrent," Scaliger explained in the piece. "Nothing about the history of U.S. involvement in the Middle East suggests that another pre-emptive war in that region would be anything other than an unmitigated catastrophe."

As numerous top Israeli officials have [noted](#), the Islamic dictatorship — even if it did have nuclear weapons — would hardly represent an existential threat to the Jewish state. Despite not being a member of the IAEA, Israel almost certainly possesses its own atomic arsenal. And its military forces are vastly superior to Iran's.

Still, the war propaganda is likely to intensify in the coming months. But with the latest admission that there is no evidence of an Iranian nuclear-weapons program, a persuasive would-be selling point to build public support for yet another war in the Middle East remains even more elusive.



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“Amid intense pressure from various Western foreign policy elites to wage war on Iran, perhaps to install an obedient regime, the intelligence has removed the one possible pretext: an Iranian nuclear weapon,” [noted](#) John Glaser with the popular liberty-minded website Antiwar.com, citing the *Times* article. “And even the mainstream news media is now reporting it.”

But even as the establishment is forced to grudgingly acknowledge that there is no real evidence of a nuclear-weapons program, Western governments continue to pressure the tyrants in Tehran with increasingly vicious sanctions — measures that devastate the civilian population and, according to many experts, represent an act of war. Incredibly, it is all being done under the guise of fighting a hypothetical program that even U.S. intelligence agencies do not believe exists.

So, while the Syrian dictatorship may be in the crosshairs right [now](#) following [NATO’s devastating war on Libya](#), Iran could very well be the next target for regime change under [false pretenses](#). And with the Iranian regime allied to the communist Chinese dictatorship and the Russian government, analysts say World War III could be right around the corner.

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