

Chapter 1 : Exclusive: New National Intelligence Estimate on Iran complete – Foreign Policy

Scope Note This National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) assesses the status of Iran's nuclear program, and the program's outlook over the next 10 years.

Click to email this to a friend [Opens in new window](#) No. Israel is not alone in disagreeing with the conclusion of the NIE. But prior to that freeze, Iran had been developing a military nuclear capability under a broad civilian cover for fifteen years. The Iranian ballistic missile program is part of the Iranian nuclear weapons program; Iran does not have a civilian space program and it is doubtful that it would develop ballistic missiles with a range of thousands of kilometers in order to carry conventional warheads alone. But when the Iranians realized in that there was no actual threat behind their fears of U. As a result, the Iranians already have prepared enough uranium hexafluoride gas UF₆ for more than ten atomic bombs. Nuclear Intentions and Capabilities, has created more confusion than clarity. To many observers who heard news reports when it was first released, it appeared that the U. That impression was fostered by the opening sentence of the report: It might be suggested that the seemingly contradictory statements in the NIE are due to the fact that it is a product of sixteen different agencies that belong to the US intelligence community. There must have been a consensus of those drafting the report that caused them to lead with the idea that in Iran was no longer developing nuclear weapons. This conclusion put the U. It was not the first time that the U. In those days, we thought the most important action that we could take was to brief our counterparts in Washington and convince them that this was a danger soon to be faced by the entire Free World. It was not easy to convince them that this subject should be on the table. We sought to do so at a meeting in Washington where a very well-known ambassador represented the U. At the end of our discussions, the U. It took American experts another two years, until , for the American intelligence community to understand that the Iranians were going nuclear. Today, Israel is not alone in disagreeing with the conclusion of the NIE. We are not that generous with Iran. For this reason, it is very important that the NIE be carefully analyzed. There is no argument about the civilian side: Iranian enrichment efforts continue. We believe that this report of the U. I would not have permitted such a report to be issued by Israeli Military Intelligence while containing such holes in its arguments. Shortly thereafter, in March , the regional environment quickly became dominated by the outbreak of the Iraq War and the downfall of Saddam Hussein. By July , the Iranians opened negotiations with the EU-3, which sought to halt the Iranian nuclear program. It was in the context of the Western detection of their nuclear program and the Iraq War that led Iran to halt its nuclear program across the board in , with the exception of their surface-to-surface missile program. But prior to that freeze, Iran was developing a military nuclear capability under a broad civilian cover. A nuclear weapons program is comprised of three key elements: A delivery system, requiring the development of surface-to-surface missiles. The accumulation of fissile material through uranium enrichment and plutonium production. Weaponization – preparing a warhead from the fissile material and fitting it into a missile. Several of these elements in the Iranian nuclear program were in fact soon resumed. At the beginning of , the Iranians were concentrating all their efforts on the centrifuge program at their facility in Natanz, where they had managed to build a cascade with centrifuges. Today, they have reached a capacity of 3, centrifuges. If parts of the nuclear weapons program were restarted, there is every reason to believe that all parts were reactivated as well. At the same time, the Iranians were busy with procurement activities, with a focus on obtaining all the materials and components needed for uranium enrichment. At the beginning of , we know that Iran was attempting to procure fast high voltage switches suitable for a nuclear weapons system. The Iranian Ministry of Defense was also supervising the mining of uranium in southeast Iran. By March , the Lavizan facility had disappeared; it had been dismantled. When Iran renewed its nuclear enrichment program in January , there is no evidence that they did not renew the work of the weaponization group at the same time. In February , the Iranian opposition charged that Iran had erected a new command and control center: In addition, they identified yet another facility at Khojir, where they claimed the production of nuclear warheads was being undertaken. Its Shihab 3 missile can carry a warhead of approximately kilograms over a distance of 1,, kilometers. These missiles are under the command of the

Revolutionary Guard, not the Iranian military. Iranian missile exercises showed that the missiles are aimed at both Tel Aviv and Riyadh. Iran is continuing to develop even longer-range missiles with a range of 3,000 kilometers that could reach all of Europe perhaps with the exception of Portugal, while those with a range of 6,000 kilometers could reach the east coast of the U.S. The original missile technology was delivered to the Iranians by North Korea, and the Iranians have made substantial efforts to improve their range. The Europeans said they did not understand why Israel was trying to scare them with a nuclear military threat since they had lived with such a threat during the Cold War. They were also of the opinion that, in the end, if Iran did achieve a nuclear military capability, the U.S. Based upon this finding, Israeli military intelligence estimates that late 2003 is the earliest possible date that Iran will be technically capable of producing enough highly enriched uranium for a weapon. Paragraph D of the NIE says that Iranian entities are continuing to develop a range of technical capabilities that could be applied to producing nuclear weapons if a decision is made to do so. Paragraph F of the NIE notes: We assess that Iran probably would use covert facilities rather than its declared nuclear sites for the production of highly enriched uranium for a weapon. We assess that Iran has the scientific, technical, and industrial capacity to produce nuclear weapons if it decides to do so. All of this means that the Iranians will have enough fissile material no later than 2005 and that if they decide to build a nuclear military plant, no one can promise that we or the Americans will know about it, if they indeed actually did halt their nuclear weapons program in 2003. It would be a mistake to conclude that Iranian nuclear weapons ambitions have been halted on the basis of reading the first sentence of the NIE alone. In my view, any distinction between Iranian military and civilian nuclear programs is artificial. The enrichment of uranium, critical to both civilian and military uses, is continuing. Once they have enough enriched uranium, they will be months away from building a nuclear bomb if they decide to do so. Soon thereafter, Russia and Iran reached agreement on a schedule to complete the plutonium-based nuclear facility in Bushehr. Prior to this, China had come to join the economic pressure on Iran. The NIE has clearly weakened international support for tougher sanctions against Iran, and it closes off any military option for the Bush administration. The NIE has sent a signal to Tehran that the danger of external sanctions has ended. Furthermore, the NIE has weakened Turkey and the moderate Sunni countries in the region that were seeking to build a coalition against Iran. So, ironically, the NIE opens the way for Iran to achieve its military nuclear ambitions without any interference. One of the major issues that arise from the report is its admission that the Iranians had a nuclear weaponization project for fifteen years, from the end of the 1980s until 2003. How far did the Iranians go in those fifteen years? How many obstacles do they still face? By saying that if the Iranians have the ability to enrich uranium, they can have a bomb within a very short period of time, the NIE actually alludes to the idea that the Iranians have already gone a very long way in the context of weaponization. The first thing an intelligence organization has to know is to ask the right questions, but this question is not asked, nor is it answered. Furthermore, it is a totally wrong approach to make this differentiation between the military and the civilian parts of the Iranian nuclear program. Part of it can be justified by civilian needs, so the Iranians do it under civilian cover. Part of it cannot be justified by civilian needs, but it is all part of the same program, and the part of the program that is designated to develop the fissile material is ongoing. Between 1988 and 2003, the Iranians refrained from any nuclear activity. In other words, once the U.S. The fact is that Iran has moved forward with conversion. As a result, the Iranians already have prepared, through the conversion process, enough uranium hexafluoride gas UF₆ for more than ten atomic bombs. Iran has moved forward with enrichment too. Some claim that maybe they have not yet reached the point where they can really perform enrichment in a robust way and not worry about failing. If we believe the NIE judgment about their technical capabilities, then the Iranians are not far away from the point where they will have the ability to produce an ample supply of enriched uranium in order to make a bomb. Bearing in mind that they probably have everything else they need to proceed, the Iranians will be able to do whatever is still needed to finish their weaponization activities without being worried about a military move. Only such a military move can really stop them right now. So we see the harsh repercussions of the very poor work that the American intelligence agencies have done. He is also the former head of the Research and Assessment Division of Military Intelligence, with special responsibility for preparing the National Intelligence Assessment. In addition, he served as the military secretary of the Minister of Defense.

U.S. efforts to contain Iran and prevent it from attaining nuclear weapons have been set back by the release of part of the most recent National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on Iran's nuclear program.

The Council imposed sanctions after Iran refused to do so. A May U. In June , in the immediate wake of the disputed Iranian presidential election , Iran initially agreed to a deal to relinquish its stockpile of low-enriched uranium in return for fuel for a medical research reactor, but then backed out of the deal. A detailed analysis by physicists at the Federation of American Scientists concludes that such an estimate would depend on the total number and overall efficiency of the centrifuges Iran has in operation, and the amount of low-enriched uranium it has stockpiled to serve as "feedstock" for a possible high-enrichment program. Congressional Research Service report quotes 24 February IAEA report saying that Iran has stockpiled pounds of percent-enriched uranium "an enrichment level necessary for medical applications" as an indication of their capacity to enrich to higher levels. The Israeli Mossad reportedly shared this belief. It has been strongly suggested that intelligence agencies already knew about these facilities but the reports had been classified. This "six months" clause was standard for implementation of all IAEA safeguards agreements until , when the IAEA Board of Governors decided that facilities should be reported during the planning phase, even before construction began. Iran was the last country to accept that decision, and only did so on 26 February , after the IAEA investigation began. The Bush Administration did not respond to the proposal, as senior U. The proposal reportedly was widely blessed by the Iranian government, including Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei. France, Germany and the United Kingdom the EU-3 undertook a diplomatic initiative with Iran to resolve questions about its nuclear program. On 21 October , in Tehran, the Iranian government and EU-3 Foreign Ministers issued a statement known as the Tehran Declaration [91] in which Iran agreed to co-operate with the IAEA, to sign and implement an Additional Protocol as a voluntary, confidence-building measure, and to suspend its enrichment and reprocessing activities during the course of the negotiations. The IAEA reported 10 November , [92] that "it is clear that Iran has failed in a number of instances over an extended period of time to meet its obligations under its Safeguards Agreement with respect to the reporting of nuclear material and its processing and use, as well as the declaration of facilities where such material has been processed and stored. It was also obligated to report to the IAEA experiments with the separation of plutonium. However, the Islamic Republic reneged on its promise to permit the IAEA to carry out their inspections and suspended the Additional Protocol agreement outlined above in October The measure was said at the time to be a voluntary, confidence-building measure, to continue for some reasonable period of time six months being mentioned as a reference as negotiations with the EU-3 continued. On 24 November, Iran sought to amend the terms of its agreement with the EU to exclude a handful of the equipment from this deal for research work. This request was dropped four days later. According to Seyyed Hossein Mousavian, one of the Iranian representatives to the Paris Agreement negotiations, the Iranians made it clear to their European counterparts that Iran would not consider a permanent end to uranium enrichment: Before the Paris [Agreement] text was signed, Dr Rohani The ambassadors delivered his message to their foreign ministers prior to the signing of the Paris agreed text Although Iranians presented an offer, which included voluntary restrictions on the enrichment volume and output, it was rejected. Reportedly, it included benefits in the political, trade and nuclear fields, as well as long-term supplies of nuclear materials and assurances of non-aggression by the EU but not the US. The delay in restarting the program was to allow the IAEA to re-install monitoring equipment. The actual resumption of the program coincided with the election of President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad, and the appointment of Ali Larijani as the chief Iranian nuclear negotiator. In August , with the assistance of Pakistan [] a group of US government experts and international scientists concluded that traces of bomb-grade uranium found in Iran came from contaminated Pakistani equipment and were not evidence of a clandestine nuclear weapons program in Iran. Sources in Vienna and the State Department reportedly stated that, for all practical purposes, the HEU issue has been resolved. The offer was rejected out of hand by the EU and the United States. On 24 September , after Iran abandoned the Paris

Agreement, the Board found that Iran had been in non-compliance with its safeguards agreement, based largely on facts that had been reported as early as November. Two permanent council members, Russia and China, agreed to referral only on condition that the council take no action before March. The three members who voted against referral were Venezuela, Syria and Cuba. The Iranians indicated that while they would not be willing to give up their right to enrichment in principle, they were willing to [] consider the compromise solution. However, in March, the Bush Administration made it clear that they would not accept any enrichment at all in Iran. President Ahmadinejad made the announcement in a televised address from the northeastern city of Mashhad, where he said "I am officially announcing that Iran joined the group of those countries which have nuclear technology. On 13 April, after US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said on 12 April the Security Council must consider "strong steps" to induce Tehran to change course in its nuclear ambition; President Ahmadinejad vowed that Iran will not back away from uranium enrichment and that the world must treat Iran as a nuclear power, saying "Our answer to those who are angry about Iran achieving the full nuclear fuel cycle is just one phrase. In addition, a series of images dating back to shows the underground enrichment buildings and its subsequent covering by soil, concrete, and other materials. Both facilities were already subject to IAEA inspections and safeguards. On 28 July, the UN Security Council approved a resolution to give Iran until the end of August to suspend uranium enrichment or face the threat of sanctions.

Chapter 3 : NPR Choice page

The National Intelligence Estimate on Iran's Nuclear Intentions and Capabilities e mission of the Center for the Study of Intelligence (CSI) is to stimulate within CIA and the Intelligence Community the constructive discussion of important issues of the day, to expand knowledge of lessons learned from.

Bush "by the intelligence community ", "outlines an increasingly perilous situation in which the United States has little control and there is a strong possibility of further deterioration," Karen DeYoung and Walter Pincus reported for the Washington Post. But it couches glimmers of optimism in deep uncertainty about whether the Iraqi leaders will be able to transcend sectarian interests and fight against extremists, establish effective national institutions and end rampant corruption," DeYoung and Pincus wrote. The NIE "emphasizes that although al-Qaeda activities in Iraq remain a problem, they have been surpassed by Iraqi-on-Iraqi violence as the primary source of conflict and the most immediate threat to U. Iran , which the administration has charged with supplying and directing Iraqi extremists, is mentioned but is not a focus," they wrote. NIE Act of The National Intelligence Estimate, according to the National Strategic Intelligence Act, , "means the product of the process of considering and weighing the possibilities, probabilities and facts disclosed by national security intelligence with regard to any situation, and of drawing conclusions from such possibilities, probabilities and facts. NIEs cover a wide range of issue--from military to technological to economic to political trends. They are often drafted in response to a specific request from a policymaker. Estimates are designed not just to provide information but to help policymakers think through issues. They are prepared by CIA with the participation of other agencies of the Intelligence Community and are coordinated with these agencies. When there are alternative views about a subject within the Intelligence Community, the NIEs include such views. Both the original link and a subsequent archive link to the article are inactive. Therefore, the majority of the article is posted below. The report concluded that Baghdad had chemical and biological weapons and was seeking to reconstitute its nuclear program. Tenet , to assess the accuracy of the intelligence reports produced before the war, according to officials familiar with the review. Separately, the CIA is now in the process of turning over to Congress the underlying documents that were used by analysts to prepare the national estimate, just as lawmakers in both the House of Representatives and the Senate are preparing for their own reviews of the prewar intelligence. Both Secretary of State Colin L. Tenet have been forced in recent days to defend their handling of intelligence in the months that lead up to the war. At the same time, intelligence analysts inside the government continue to complain about the role played over the past year by a special Pentagon unit that provided policy makers with an alternative, and more hawkish, view of intelligence related to Iraq. Office of Net Assessment.. The fragments of intelligence that came in periodically after the inspectors were withdrawn were never enough to prove that Mr. Hussein had abandoned his weapons programs, and so the natural inclination was to assume that those programs were still under way. Bush has pointed to the discovery of two suspected mobile labs as evidence that Iraq was trying to develop biological weapons. But postwar searches of Iraqi military facilities and interrogations of Iraqi officers have failed to turn up any evidence that chemical weapons were deployed. Even as it was being produced last fall, the estimate was already at the center of a political struggle between Democrats in Congress and the CIA and the Bush administration over the threat posed by Mr. Tenet provided a letter to Mr. So the administration could not have been misled or ill-served by it because it was never used to formulate policy. The administration only used it to sell the policy to a skeptical Congress.

Chapter 4 : Nuclear program of Iran - Wikipedia

The new estimate is that, at the earliest, Iran might be able to produce enough highly enriched uranium for a nuclear device by but that it is likely to take much longer than that, possibly as late as

The recent publication of the National Intelligence Estimate NIE by sixteen American intelligence agencies has caused shockwaves in Washington and foreign capitals across the globe. However as with most things, looks can be deceptive and first impressions inaccurate. Far from undercutting US policy, the NIE assessment provides the necessary cover for a new phase of US Iranian relations, one that moves the relationship from the covert shadows and into the open. Indeed, the NIE raises several issues around US-Iranian relation, nuclear proliferation and the nature of intelligence that have still not been covered adequately in the western media. Firstly, there is a myth that US-Iranian relations have been at best horrendous and at worst two steps away from an armed conflict. Yet this is an inaccurate portrayal, notwithstanding the colourful rhetoric that emanates periodically from both sides. Indeed, far from Iran playing a destabilising role in the Middle East, the US continues to be able to leverage Iran to keep other states in check while also allowing it to justify its huge military presence in the region. The Iranian reaction to the NIE was also revealing, instead of reacting with caution and thus avoiding the trap of a different conclusion emerging from any NIE in the future, Iranians have gleefully embraced the assessment and called for a new rapprochement with Washington. President Ahmadinejad called the document "a positive step forward" and was quoted by the Fars news agency as saying "If one or two other steps are taken, the conditions will be ripe and will lose their complexities and the way will be open for interactions between the two sides. There are no ambiguities and the ground has been set for cooperation on different issues. On both sides of the Atlantic intelligence agencies were not just wrong about what was going on in Baghdad in , but were consistently wrong in the years leading up to the war. The conclusions of the NIE, though a shock to many who were expecting a US strike on Iran, are consistent with the views of the Pentagon who are hostile to any attack as evidenced by leaks in recent weeks, the State Department and even the White House. Indeed, it was President Bush that appointed Robert Gates as US defence secretary knowing that he had written articles in the past advocating a rapprochement with Iran and that he was then serving on the Baker-Hamilton commission who were advocating more direct diplomacy with Iran. Yet despite the fact that intelligence assessments can never be exact and are more of an art rather than a science, they are still viewed as hallowed by many and are frequently used to justify a pre-arranged policy. This makes them very susceptible to being politicised by an establishment who despite the debacle of the Iraq war remain eager to mislead their publics when they believe this becomes necessary. The last thing the NIE brings to the fore is the continuing hypocrisy that surrounds nuclear non-proliferation. Since the publication of the NIE, politicians on both sides of the Atlantic have warned about the dangers of complacency, with British Foreign Secretary David Milliband being especially vociferous in an article in the Financial Times shortly after. What is galling is to take lessons on nuclear non-proliferation from a country such as the United States that is the only country in history to have dropped two atomic bombs on a civilian population or the United Kingdom who while lecturing the world on nuclear non-proliferation is spending tens of billions on upgrading its own Trident nuclear based submarines. Of course, the US and the UK will act in their national interest, yet then why deny that to the Muslim world? What is becoming increasingly clear is that the Muslim world lacks a coherent presence in the international arena to address issues such as those that emanate from the NIE. By remaining divided and split into 50 plus states, it becomes easier for outside powers to manipulate the situation and undermine our security, just look at Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine. What Muslims need to do is remove their current leaderships, unify their resources and implement the Islamic Khilafah Caliphate system. Only then can the Muslim world adequately confront all the challenges of the 21st century and compete effectively with the leading nations of the world.

Chapter 5 : National Intelligence Estimate - SourceWatch

After months of escalating rhetoric demanding that Iran abandon its aspirations to acquire nuclear weapons, the National Intelligence Estimate's revelation that Iran halted its nuclear weapons.

Team B NIEs are considered to be "estimative" products, in that they present what intelligence analysts estimate may be the course of future events. Coordination of NIEs involves not only trying to resolve any inter-agency differences, but also assigning confidence levels to the key judgments and rigorously evaluating the sourcing for them. This office was superseded in by National Intelligence Officers. This group of experts became the National Intelligence Council in . In the early years, the National Intelligence Council reported to the Director of Central Intelligence in his role as the head of the Intelligence Community ; however, in , the Director of National Intelligence became the head of the Intelligence Community. The TOR defines the key estimative questions, determines drafting responsibilities, and sets the drafting and publication schedule. Representatives from the relevant IC agencies meet to hone and coordinate line-by-line the full text of the NIE. Working with their agencies, representatives also assign the confidence levels to each key judgment. IC representatives discuss the quality of sources with intelligence collectors to ensure the draft does not contain erroneous information. The process of interagency coordination and an insistence on analytic rigor normally push the completion of NIEs to several months or even more than a year. Since a rushed product can result in poor or inaccurate assessments, the IC must balance the urgency for a requested assessment with a commitment to analytical rigor. Such collaboration can lead to: Gridlock, where many different interests slow the analytic process. Compromise, where the estimates contain only "lowest common denominator" language. Groupthink, where opposing views are subconsciously discouraged. Charges of politicization come from both Democrats and Republicans, but normally emerge from the side that does not agree with the policy implications of the analysis. Changes or reversals in NIE assessments over time cause some legislators to question whether the change resulted from newly collected intelligence or whether analysts changed their position to support a specific political agenda. For example, the IC accusation of politicization surfaced after the key judgments of NIEs on the ballistic missile threat to the United States changed between and . Congress has investigated the issue of politicization within the IC numerous times, as have independent commissions. To date, these investigations have never found evidence of politicization by analysts.

Chapter 6 : Iran, Proliferation and the National Intelligence Estimate

National Intelligence Estimates (NIEs) are United States federal government documents that are the authoritative assessment of the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) on intelligence related to a particular national security issue.

Chapter 7 : National Intelligence Estimate - Wikipedia

The opening sentence of the U.S. National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) of November stated: "We judge with high confidence that in Fall , Tehran halted its nuclear weapons program." This conclusion put the U.S. intelligence community at odds with Israel, which believes that Iran only.

Chapter 8 : U.S. still believes Iran not on verge of nuclear weapon | Reuters

Former Gov. Mike Huckabee of Arkansas is again making misleading statements about how long he was unaware of a National Intelligence Estimate finding that Iran was not pursuing nuclear weapons.

Chapter 9 : The U.S. National Intelligence Estimate on Iran and Its Aftermath: A Roundtable of Israeli Experts

The U.S. intelligence community has completed and is circulating a new National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on Iran's

nuclear weapons program that walks back the conclusion of the NIE.