Iran–The Worst Deal

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***President Obama’s nuclear deal with Iran is not only a bad deal, but the worst deal possible–because Iran probably already has the bomb.***

***Consider the facts.***

***Iran A-Bomb Overdue***

Historically, judging from open source estimates, the time required for all other nations to develop atomic weapons is 3-12 years.  Iran, which has had a nuclear program for over six decades and been crashing on the bomb for 25-30 years, should have developed atomic weapons by now.

For example:

The United States during the World War II Manhattan Project (1942-1945) built the first atomic bombs, two different designs, in just 3 years.  In just 3 years, when the atomic bomb was merely a theoretical possibility, the U.S. invented the two basic A-Bomb designs–the gun-type A-Bomb used on Hiroshima and the implosion-type A-Bomb used on Nagasaki–that are the basis for all atomic (fission) weapons and are the technological gateway to more sophisticated and powerful thermonuclear (fusion) weapons, including the H-Bomb.  In just 3 years, the U.S. invented and built the nuclear scientific and industrial infrastructure that mass produced thousands of A-Bombs and H-Bombs after 1945 during the Cold War.

Read Richard Rhodes’ *The Making of the Atomic Bomb* (1987) and consider whether it seems plausible that–where the U.S. invented the bomb and its nuclear weapons infrastructure in just 3 years using 1930s and 1940s era science and technology–supposedly (according to the Obama Administration) Iran has not yet duplicated the U.S. feat of World War II.  Yet Iran has access to copious unclassified materials on making and designing fission and fusion weapons.  Yet Iran is informed and equipped with 21st Century science and technology.  And Iran has been crashing on the bomb for 8-10 times longer than the U.S. WWII Manhattan Project–for 25-30 years.

Consider also that all other nuclear weapon states, some of them poorer and less sophisticated than Iran, have developed atomic weapons in 12 years or less:

* The USSR’s atomic bomb project (1943-1949) tested its first A-Bomb in 6 years.
* The United Kingdom’s A-bomb (1940-1952), slowed by politics and a bad economy, took 12 years.  Mistakenly believing that their scientific and material contributions to the Manhattan Project would entitle the U.K. to share the A-Bomb with the U.S., when their hope was disappointed, the United Kingdom, economically shattered by World War II and politically divided by the peace, working on their own tested their first A-Bomb in 7 years.
* France independently, unassisted by anybody, developed A-Bombs (1956-1960) in 4 years.
* China’s A-Bombs (1955-1964) took 9 years.
* Israel, at the time a nation less populous than Chicago, is variously estimated to have built A-Bombs (1956/59-1966) in 7-10 years.  (A declassified CIA report retrieved and reported by the Nuclear Threat Initiative on June 3, 2009, assesses that Israel built its first atomic weapons in December 1966).
* India built A-Bombs (1967-1972) in 5 years.
* South Africa built A-Bombs (1967-1977/79) in 10-12 years.  South Africa also designed a nuclear warhead for delivery by its medium-range missiles, before abandoning its nuclear weapons program.
* Pakistan tested for political reasons in 1998, but developed and deployed bombs much earlier (1972-1984) in 12 years.  (According to a letter from A.Q. Khan, the father of Pakistan’s atomic bomb, to General Zia al Haq, Pakistan’s President, they had a uranium bomb by 1984.)
* North Korea tested in 2006, but developed a nuclear arsenal of bombs and missiles much earlier (1984-1992/94) in 8-10 years.  (In an open hearing before Congress on January 25, 1994, then Director of Central Intelligence R. James Woolsey testified that North Korea had already built a small number of atomic weapons, and would continue to build more.)

Iran started a nuclear program under the Shah in the 1950s, some 65 years ago.  Revolutionary Iran began a crash program on atomic weapons, their version of the Manhattan Project, during the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988).

President Obama claims the Mullahs still do not have atomic weapons, even though Iran has been working on the bomb for 65 years, crashing on the bomb for 25-30 years.  Yet  other nuclear weapon states, all ten of them, developed the bomb in 3-12 years.

Given everything we know about the history of nuclear weapons development and Iran’s capabilities, the assessment that Iran does not yet have the bomb seems based more on wishful thinking than on prudence.

***Nuclear Testing Unnecessary***

Doesn’t Iran need a full-yield explosive test to prove its nuclear weapon?

No.  Component testing is sufficient.

The U.S. never tested the Hiroshima gun-type uranium bomb–Hiroshima was the test.  The 1945 Trinity test at Alamogordo was of a more complicated implosion plutonium bomb used on Nagasaki, and it worked perfectly both times, at Trinity and Nagasaki.  Israel and South Africa clandestinely deployed nuclear weapons without testing.  Pakistan and North Korea deployed nuclear weapons years prior to testing.

The U.S. has not performed any nuclear test since 1992, 23 years ago, even though its aged  weapons are being patched together and maintained using different materials and makeshift components–becoming over the years essentially different nuclear weapons from those that were originally deployed brand new decades ago.  So the U.S. should know from its own experience that even highly sophisticated thermonuclear H-Bombs can be made and fielded for use without nuclear testing.

***Iranian H-Bomb?***

The A-Bomb is the technological gateway to more sophisticated nuclear weapons, including the H-Bomb.  H-Bombs can be hundreds of times more powerful than the A-Bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The historical record indicates that, once the A-Bomb is achieved, development of the H-Bomb can be achieved in 3-8 years:

* The U.S., after developing the first A-Bombs in 1945, tested the first H-Bomb in 1952–7 years later.
* The USSR tested its A-Bomb in 1949 and its H-Bomb in 1953–4 years later.
* The United Kingdom tested its A-Bomb in 1952 and its H-Bomb in 1957–5 years later.
* France, after testing its A-Bomb in 1960, tested its H-Bomb in 1968–8 years later.
* China, after its first A-Bomb test in 1964, tested its H-Bomb in 1967–3 years later.
* India claimed that it tested a low-yield fusion (H-Bomb) weapon among its virtually simultaneous 5 nuclear tests in 1998.  Pakistan allegedly tested a boosted-fission weapon (more sophisticated than an implosion A-Bomb) among its 6 near simultaneous tests competing with India in 1998.  Pakistan claimed it could build H-Bombs in 3-6 years.  So many tests conducted at once indicates both India and Pakistan were drawing from a stockpile of weapons developed and deployed long before the tests.
* In 1986, Israeli nuclear scientist Mordechai Vanunu defected to the United Kingdom and provided evidence, reported in the press, that Israel has a wide array of sophisticated atomic and thermonuclear weapons.  The respected Wisconsin Project estimates that Israel has the H-Bomb as well as small battlefield nuclear weapons, deliverable by artillery, including Enhanced Radiation Warheads (also called neutron warheads or the N-Bomb, designed to minimize explosive yield to reduce collateral damage to buildings, while maximizing output of neutrons and other radiation lethal to people.  The N-Bomb was originally intended to stop Soviet tanks invading Western Europe while minimizing damage to civilian infrastructure.)    In 1983, years before the Vanunu defection, Sam Cohen, the inventor of the U.S. N-Bomb who had very close ties to Israel, told me that he knew for a fact that Israel has the H-Bomb and neutron warheads.
* South Africa, before abandoning its nuclear weapons program, reportedly sought tritium from Israel to develop a South African H-Bomb.  At that point, South Africa’s version of the Manhattan Project had been in operation for 12 years.

Timelines for fission and fusion weapons development by the U.S. and other nations indicate that, not only is an Iranian A-Bomb already likely, but Iran after 25-30 years may have even more sophisticated weapons.

***Russia Helps Iran and Others***

The Obama Administration assumes that Iran’s nuclear weapons program is limited to Iranian indigenous capabilities.  But there is compelling evidence that Iran’s nuclear and missile programs are being helped by Russia and North Korea–which could greatly accelerate Iran’s timeline for nuclear weapons development and the technological sophistication of their weapons.

After the  fall of the USSR in 1991, Russia’s military and intelligence services retained a Cold War mentality that saw the U.S. and NATO as a potentially imminent threat to a weakened Russia.

In 1995 a military think tank called INOBIS, that serves the Russian General Staff, wrote a paper *Conceptual Provisions of a Strategy for Countering the Main External Threats to Russian Federation National Security* (Moscow: INOBIS, Institute for Defense Studies, October 1995).  INOBIS recommended that Russia deliberately proliferate missile and nuclear technology to nations hostile to the United States.  Nuclear and missile proliferation would balance growing U.S. power and thwart Washington’s efforts to establish a New World Order dominated by America, according to INOBIS.

Iran and North Korea were specifically named in the INOBIS paper as two nations Russia should help develop missiles and nuclear weapons.

The INOBIS paper only came to light in the West because then Congressman Curt Weldon, a Russian speaker and well connected to Russian political leaders and defense scientists, obtained a bootleg copy in Moscow.  Unfortunately,  Weldon’s efforts to educate policymakers and the public about the dire implications of the INOBIS paper, by holding hearings before the House Armed Services Committee, came to naught, because the press ignored the hearings.

Weldon’s copy of the INOBIS paper was stamped “Approved” presumably by the Russian General Staff.  And there is much in Russian behavior that looks like implementation of the INOBIS policy to proliferate nuclear and missile technologies to enemies of America.  For example:

* Russia transferred to Saddam Hussein’s Iraq gyroscopes and accelerometers from its SS-N-18 submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM), that has multiple nuclear warheads and intercontinental range.  Missile guidance systems are “crown jewel” technology guarded as jealously as nuclear weapons.  This would be much worse than the Advanced Inertial Reference Sphere from the U.S. Minuteman III intercontinental missile being transferred to Israel.  Russia has never explained how the SS-N-18 guidance system ended up with Saddam Hussein.
* Russia transferred to North Korea 10 Golf-class ballistic missile nuclear submarines and one SS-N-6 submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) minus its nuclear warhead, allegedly for scrap.  But North Korea is refurbishing these and recently conducted a successful cold launch of an SLBM as a future nuclear delivery system.
* Russian generals, two of their top experts on specialized nuclear weapons for electromagnetic pulse (EMP), demarched the Congressional EMP Commission in 2004 to warn that design information for Russia’s Super-EMP warhead had been “accidentally” transferred to North Korea, and that North Korea might test a Super-EMP warhead “in a few years.”  A few years later, in 2006, North Korea conducted its first nuclear test of a low-yield device, consistent with the design of a Super-EMP warhead.  In 2009, South Korean military intelligence told the press that Russians are in North Korea working on Super-EMP weapons.  In 2012, a military commentator for the Peoples Republic of China stated that North Korea has Super-EMP nuclear warheads.
* Russia has spent 20 years building the Bushehr nuclear power plant for Iran, completely unnecessary as a source of electricity for oil rich Iran, but an excuse for collaboration between Russian and Iranian scientists on all aspects of the nuclear fuel cycle and nuclear industrial infrastructure necessary for development of weapons.
* A foreign national, who appears to be a Russian scientist, with extensive experience in nuclear weapons design, construction, and testing, was in Iran prior to 2003 helping them design and perform non-fissile testing of a uranium implosion-type nuclear weapon.  According to the International Atomic Energy Agency 2011 report on Iran’s nuclear program: *“The Agency has strong indications that the development by Iran of the high explosives initiation system, and its development of the high speed diagnostic configuration used to monitor related experiments, were assisted by the work of a foreign expert who was not only knowledgeable in these technologies, but who, a Member State has informed the Agency, worked for much of his career with this technology in the nuclear weapon program of the country of his origin.”*
* Reza Kahlili, the only CIA operative to successfully penetrate the scientific wing of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, reported that years ago Iran acquired several tactical nuclear warheads from Russia–including a neutron warhead.  (See Kahlili in World Net Daily April 24, 2012 and Washington Times October 27, 2011).

In June 2002, when the West first learned about Iran’s clandestine nuclear weapons program from Iranian dissidents, Russian General Yuri Baluyevski, Deputy Chief of the General Staff, declared: “Iran does have nuclear weapons.  These are non-strategic nuclear weapons…As for the danger of Iran’s attack on the United States, the danger is zero.”  (STRATFOR Intelligence June 4, 2002).

General Baluyevski’s intimate and complacent knowledge about Iran’s clandestine nuclear weapons program, at a time when that program was newly revealed to the West, has never been explained.  Shortly afterwards, Baluyevski was promoted to Chief of the General Staff, Russia’s highest military rank.

***North Korea Helps Iran***

North Korea appears to be helping Iran’s missile and nuclear weapon programs too.

Iran and North Korea are strategic partners by treaty that commits them to sharing scientific research and military technology.  Iran’s Shahab-3 medium-range missile is based on North Korea’s Nodong, with improvements made with help from Russia.  Iran’s so-called Space Launch Vehicle uses boosters designed by North Korea.

Following North Korea’s example, Iran has on four occasions orbited satellites on south polar trajectories that would evade U.S. National Missile Defenses, at altitudes that would, if the satellites contained a nuclear warhead, place an EMP field over the 48 contiguous United States, causing a protracted blackout that could kill millions.  North Korean scientists are in Iran helping with their missile and, reportedly, their nuclear weapon programs.  (See Kahlili in World Net Daily January 7, 2013.)

Iranian scientists reportedly have participated in all three North Korean nuclear tests.

Given the known intimate collaboration between Iran and North Korea, prudence dictates that Iran’s nuclear weapons program should be regarded as a threat at least equivalent to that posed by North Korea.  The North American Aerospace Defense (NORAD) Commander, Admiral William Gortney, at an April 7, 2015, Pentagon press conference, warned that NORAD assesses North Korea’s KN-08 intercontinental missile can make a nuclear strike on the U.S. mainland.  NORAD is returning critical functions to its underground command post inside Cheyenne Mountain and spending $700 million to further protect the mountain against an EMP attack by North Korea or others.

Members of President Ronald Reagan’s national security brain trust–including Dr. William Graham (Reagan’s Science Advisor, Administrator of NASA, and Chairman of the Congressional EMP Commission); Ambassador Henry Cooper (Director of the Strategic Defense Initiative); and Fritz Ermarth (Chairman of the National Intelligence Council)–in a February 1, 2015 article warn that Iran is probably capable of making a nuclear EMP attack, that could kill up to 9 of 10 Americans–right now.

***The Smoking Gun***

Every Senator and Congressman should read the International Atomic Energy Agency’s 2011 report *Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement and Relevant Provisions of Security Council Resolutions in the Islamic Republic of Iran*.  The IAEA is too timorous to say so, but their report not only proves that Iran has a nuclear weapons program–it is a “smoking gun” that Iran already has the bomb.

The IAEA report describes Iran’s: organizations and projects for nuclear weapons development;.     nuclear weapon calculations, modeling, and experiments; development, testing, and manufacture of nuclear weapon components.  A cautious analyst can reasonably infer from the IAEA report that–prior to 2003–Iran already had all the knowledge and components needed to build the bomb.

For example:

More than 12 years ago, Iran procured equipment necessary for nuclear weapon development.  According to the IAEA report, some examples of Iranian procurement included:

* *“…high speed electronic switches and spark gaps (useful for triggering and firing detonators); high speed cameras (useful in experimental diagnostics); neutron sources (useful for calibrating neutron measuring equipment); radiation detection and measuring equipment (useful in a nuclear material production environment); and training courses on topics relevant to nuclear explosions development (such as neutron cross-section calculations and shock wave interactions/hydrodynamics).”*

More than 12 years ago, Iran conducted hydrodynamic experiments that, according to the IAEA report “are strong indicators of possible weapon development”:

* “*One necessary step in a nuclear weapon development program is determining whether a theoretical design of an implosion device, the behavior of which can be studied through computer simulations, will work in practice.  To that end, high explosive tests referred to as ‘hydrodynamic experiments’ are conducted in which fissile and nuclear components may be replaced with surrogate materials….Iran has manufactured simulated nuclear explosives components using high density materials such as tungsten.”*

More than 12 years ago, Iran evidently cast and shaped uranium metal into hemispheres for a nuclear implosion device (a sophisticated nuclear weapon design).  According to the IAEA report:

* *“For use in a nuclear device, HEU* [Highly Enriched Uranium] *retrieved from the enrichment process is first converted to metal.  The metal is then cast and machined into suitable components for a nuclear core…Iran has acknowledged that…Iran received the uranium metal document which describes…processes for the conversion of uranium compounds into uranium metal and the production of hemispherical enriched uranium metallic components.  The uranium metal document is known to have been available to the clandestine nuclear supply network that provided Iran with assistance in developing its centrifuge enrichment capability, and is also known to be part of a larger packet of information which includes elements of a nuclear explosive design.  A similar package of information, which surfaced in 2003, was provided by the same network to Libya.  The information in the Libyan package, which was first reviewed by Agency experts in January 2004, included details on the design and construction of, and manufacture of components for, a nuclear explosive device.”*

Iran evidently verified the design of a nuclear weapon with non-fissile explosive testing in a containment chamber more than 12 years ago.  During the WWII Manhattan Project, at this stage the U.S. was 16 months from the bomb.  According to the IAEA report:

* *“…Iran constructed a large explosives containment vessel in which to conduct hydrodynamic experiments.  The explosives vessel, or chamber, is said to have been put in place in Parchin in 2000….the Agency has been able to confirm the date of construction of the cylinder and some of its design features (such as its dimensions), and that it was designed to contain the detonation of up to 70 kilograms of high explosives, which would be suitable for carrying out the kind of experiments described…above…Iran was conducting high explosive testing, possibly in association with nuclear materials….Hydrodynamic experiments such as those described above, which involve high explosives in conjunction with nuclear material or nuclear material surrogates, are strong indicators of possible weapon development.”*

More than 12 years ago, Iran developed and tested exploding bridgewire detonators, necessary to an implosion nuclear weapon.  During the WWII Manhattan Project, at this stage the U.S. was 6 months from the bomb.  According to the IAEA report:

* *“The development of safe, fast-acting detonators, and equipment suitable for firing the detonators, is an integral part of a program to develop an implosion type nuclear device.  Included among the alleged studies documentation are a number of documents relating to the development by Iran, during the period 2002-2003, of fast functioning detonators known as ‘exploding bridgewire detonators’ or ‘EBWs’….Iran told the Agency that it had developed EBWs for civil and conventional military applications….Notwithstanding, given their possible application in a nuclear explosive device, and the fact that there are limited civilian and conventional military applications for such technology, Iran’s development of such detonators and equipment is a matter of concern…”*

More than 12 years ago, Iran manufactured neutron initiators which are used to start a fission chain-reaction in a nuclear weapon.  According to the IAEA report:

* *“The Agency has information from a Member State that Iran has undertaken work to manufacture small capsules suitable for use as containers of a component containing nuclear material.  The Agency was also informed by a different Member State that Iran may also have experimented with such components in order to assess their performance in generating neutrons.  Such components, if placed in the core of an implosion type nuclear device and compressed, could produce a burst of neutrons suitable for initiating a fission chain reaction….The design of the capsule, and the material associated with it, are consistent with the device design information which the clandestine nuclear supply network allegedly provided to Iran.”*

More than 12 years ago, Iran drafted 14 different workable designs for a nuclear weapon to fit inside the re-entry vehicle for the high-explosive (HE) warhead of Iran’s Shahab-3 medium-range missile.  Since designing a nuclear weapon is a lot harder than changing the shape of a re-entry vehicle–obviously Iran was trying to hide a nuclear warhead by disguising it as the HE warhead of the Shahab-3.  According to the IAEA report:

* *“The alleged studies documentation contains extensive information regarding work which is alleged to have been conducted by Iran during the period 2002-2003 under what was known as Project 111.  From that information, the project appears to have consisted of a structured and comprehensive program of engineering studies to examine how to incorporate a new spherical payload into the existing payload chamber which would be mounted in the re-entry vehicle of the Shahab-3 missile…Iran conducted computer modeling studies of at least 14 progressive design iterations of the payload chamber and its contents to examine how they would stand up to the various stresses that would be encountered on being launched and traveling on a ballistic trajectory to a target…During these studies, prototype components were allegedly manufactured at workshops known to exist in Iran but which Iran refused the Agency permission to visit.  The six engineering groups said to have worked on Project 111 produced many technical reports…The Agency has studied these reports extensively and finds that…part of the activities undertaken within Project 111…was being given to subjecting the prototype payload and its chamber to engineering stress tests to see how well they would stand up in practice simulated launch and flight stresses (so-called ‘environmental testing’).  This work would have complemented the engineering modeling simulation studies referred to…above….activities described as those of Project 111…are highly relevant to a nuclear weapon program.”*

More than 12 years ago, Iran developed fusing systems for a nuclear missile warhead to perform a ground-burst or high-altitude burst above 3,000 meters.  According to the IAEA report:

* *“…as part of the studies carried out by the engineering groups under Project 111 to integrate the new payload into the re-entry vehicle of the Shahab 3 missile, additional work was conducted on the development of a prototype firing system that would enable the payload to explode both in the air above a target, or upon impact of the re-entry vehicle with the ground….The Agency, in conjunction with experts from Member States other than those which had provided the information in question, carried out an assessment of the possible nature of the new payload.  As a result of that assessment, it was concluded that any payload option other than nuclear which could also be expected to have an airburst option (such as  chemical weapons) could be ruled out.”*

The Congressional EMP Commission found that in 2002 Iran apparently performed at least 5 fusing tests of the Shahab-3 at high-altitudes–explicable only as practicing nuclear electromagnetic pulse (EMP) attacks.

Obama claims his nuclear deal blocks Iran’s pathway to the bomb by preventing uranium enrichment.  But the 2011 IAEA report warns Iran is clandestinely pursuing uranium and plutonium pathways to the bomb in underground and other facilities inaccessible to the West:

* *“Between 2003 and 2004, the Agency confirmed a number of significant failures on the part of Iran to meet its obligations under its Safeguards Agreement with respect to reporting of nuclear material, the processing and use of undeclared nuclear material and the failure to declare facilities where the nuclear material had been received, stored and processed.  Specifically, it was discovered that, as early as the late 1970s and early 1980s, and continuing into the 1990s and 2000s, Iran had used undeclared nuclear material for testing and experimentation in several uranium conversion, enrichment, fabrication and irradiation activities, including the separation of plutonium, at undeclared locations and facilities.”*

The IAEA warns, in language that is perhaps excessively diplomatic: “…the Agency is unable to provide credible assurance about the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran, and therefore to conclude that all nuclear material in Iran is in peaceful activities.”

Significantly, according to the IAEA report: **“Iran was asked to comment on this assessment and agreed in the course of a meeting with the Agency which took place in Tehran in May 2008 that, if the information upon which it is based were true, it would constitute a program for development of a nuclear weapon.”**

Tehran denied to the IAEA that they have a nuclear weapons program.  However, since Iran provided or verified some of the provocative information in the IAEA report, and given their response above, Iran appears to be following a policy of “deliberate ambiguity” about being a nuclear weapons state, just as did North Korea during the Clinton Administration’s Agreed Framework–until Pyongyang removed all doubt by nuclear testing in 2006.

Like President Clinton’s nuclear deal with North Korea, that pretended Pyongyang’s clandestine nuclear weapons program was frozen, Obama’s nuclear deal will enable Iran to clandestinely build and improve nuclear weapons and missiles so that the fact of a nuclear-armed terror-state will become irreversible.

***U.S. Intelligence Community–See No Evil***

Why does the U.S. intelligence community not see the “smoking gun” that Iran already has at least atomic weapons, and maybe more advanced nuclear weapons?

Perhaps the U.S. intelligence community does see the “smoking gun.”  But maybe President Obama, like President Clinton before him in the case of North Korea, does not want to admit that a rogue state has “gone nuclear” on his watch, and would prefer to promote the fiction that he has solved the problem by negotiation.

President Obama certainly acts like Iran is already a nuclear missile state.  He acts afraid.

Obama’s Middle Eastern policy of “leading from behind” looks a lot like disengagement–running away from traditional allies, Israel and the moderate Arab states–to appease Iranian strategic interests.  Obama is placid in the face of Iranian sponsorship of the Houthis overthrowing an important U.S. ally in Yemen.  He is unwilling to support Egypt’s U.S.-educated President Abdel el-Sisi’s heroic stand against the Muslim Brotherhood and radical Islam.  Obama watches passively while the Iranian Revolutionary Guard takes over former U.S. ally Iraq–for whom thousands of Americans were sacrificed.

As of this writing, Obama has done no more than issue the feeblest of protests against Moscow sending ground troops to Syria to prop up dictator and war criminal Bashar Assad–Russia and Iran’s strategic partner.

Officially, according to the leader of the U.S. intelligence community, the Director of National Intelligence (DNI), General  James Clapper, Iran does not have the bomb, and President Obama’s nuclear deal is the best bet to prevent them from getting one.

Yet Obama and Clapper also say Iran is only months away from getting the bomb.  Such near proximity to the bomb would seem to pose an insurmountable problem for any deal that is supposed to stop Iran’s bomb and be assuredly verifiable.

Nonetheless, DNI Clapper is telling Congress and the American people that the U.S. intelligence community knows not only that Iran does not yet have the bomb–they will know if Iran cheats on President Obama’s nuclear deal.  Or at least that is the impression he is trying hard to create, so far without quite saying so, exactly.

Democrats on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence gist a letter from DNI Clapper as saying, in their words, “We are confident that this monitoring and the highly intrusive inspections provided for in the agreement–along with our own intelligence capabilities–make it nearly impossible for Iran to develop a covert enrichment effort without detection.”

Reporter Patrick Tucker in a September 9 article paraphrases DNI Clapper as saying at a conference that day, in Tucker’s words, “either take the deal–and trust in the intelligence community’s ability to monitor Iran’s behavior–or see Tehran obtain nuclear arms.”

What DNI Clapper has said publicly, and so far to the Congress, about verifying the Iran nuclear deal sounds a lot more nuanced and ambiguous, like what Clapper actually said on September 9:  “We were required, within five days after the deal was struck, to submit to Congress a very detailed assessment of our capabilities, what we could do, and where we had lesser capabilities to monitor the agreement.  I come away pretty confident–I won’t say 100 percent, but pretty confident–that we can, in fact, verify, through our own sources what the International Community will be able to…observe and monitor.”

What?

Independently being able to match the sorry record of the “International Community”–which means the UN International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)–in monitoring Iran’s nuclear program is not the same thing as an ironclad guarantee that Iranian cheating on the nuclear deal will be detected.  Indeed, it is a virtual guarantee that cheating will go undetected, since the IAEA has been bamboozled by clandestine nuclear weapons programs in North Korea, Iraq, Syria, Libya and, for 30 years, in Iran.

No doubt when under hard questioning by Congress and the press DNI Clapper will be less ambivalent and give something like an ironclad guarantee that detecting Iran’s nuclear cheating will be a “slam dunk”–because Clapper and other intelligence community leaders have lied to Congress before to advance President Obama’s agenda.

Clapper lied to Congress about the National Security Agency program monitoring the communications of the American people–a program supported by President Obama.  Clapper said the NSA was not engaged in such monitoring.  Untrue.

Clapper lied to Congress and the American people during the 2013 nuclear crisis with North Korea when he dismissed a Defense Intelligence Agency assessment that North Korea has nuclear missiles.  Clapper was covering for President Obama’s false assertion that North Korea does not have nuclear missiles, and could not deliver on its threats to make a nuclear strike against the United States.  Untrue.

CIA Director Mike Morrell lied to Congress about the Benghazi terrorist attack, when he tried to help then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and President Obama cover their tracks over the fiction that Benghazi was spontaneous, even legitimate, violence, provoked by a culturally insensitive video.  Untrue.

After nearly 8 years of the Obama Administration, the leadership of the intelligence community is so thoroughly politicized and partisan that they simply cannot be trusted to tell the truth.

The truth is that U.S. intelligence and the IAEA have not in the past, and will not in the future, be competent enough or brave enough to declare that Iran has the bomb.  Even the 2011 IAEA report that has such excellent data–a “smoking gun” that Iran does already have the bomb–was not enough to move the IAEA to declare the obvious, that Iran has a clandestine nuclear weapons program, and that they probably already have the bomb.

The IAEA and the U.S. intelligence community did not even know about Iran’s nuclear weapons program until 2002.  They did not discover the program themselves, but were told about it by Iranian dissidents.  By then Iran had been crashing on the bomb for 17 years.

Clapper claims the intelligence community has mysterious new capabilities that will enable them to detect Iran’s nuclear cheating.  But even if this is true, it is unlikely that the likes of Clapper will alert Congress and the American people–if President Obama wants to maintain the fiction that his historic agreement with Iran is working.  Just like President Clinton maintained the fiction that his historic Agreed Framework averted a North Korea armed with nuclear missiles.

President Obama, like most Democrats, is an arms control true believer.  The Obama Administration had to be dragged kicking and screaming to admit that Russia is cheating on the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

It is a “slam dunk” that if Clapper does catch Iran cheating on Obama’s nuclear deal, the American people will not hear about it until the next Republican administration.

A more objective assessment of U.S. intelligence community capabilities to detect clandestine nuclear weapon programs by Iran or other rogue states is provided by the Department of Defense’s blue ribbon Defense Science Board.  The DSB analysis *Assessment of Nuclear Monitoring and Verification Technology* (January 2014) is tantamount to an admission that Iran probably already has the bomb.

DOD/DSB’s *Assessment of Nuclear Monitoring and Verification Technology* warns, “The technology and processes designed for treaty verification and inspections are inadequate to future monitoring realities”:

* –Current U.S. methods and technologies for monitoring rogue state nuclear weapon programs are unlikely to detect small or nascent nuclear weapon programs.
* –U.S. intelligence would not likely detect clandestine nuclear warheads, as monitoring technologies are designed to look for more obvious delivery systems, like missiles and bombers.
* –An adversary could successfully disguise clandestine nuclear weapon programs and operations as non-nuclear military programs and operations.
* –U.S. intelligence would not likely recognize a clandestine nuclear weapons program employing unfamiliar or new technologies to build the bomb, according to the Defense Science Board.

Why is DNI Clapper not admitting this?

Why is DNI Clapper, and no one in the intelligence community, admitting the possibility that Iran might already have the bomb, especially when there are many U.S. and Israeli experts who say so?  Whatever happened to the “9/11 Commission Implementation Act” and the “Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004” that direct the intelligence community to not only tolerate, but to promote, B-Teaming, alternative analysis, and alternative views, as a safeguard against being surprised?

A cocksure intelligence community that places such a high premium on “speaking with one voice” that alternative views are suppressed is a sure sign of the triumph of politics over intelligence, and over intelligent national security.

***Toward A New National Security Strategy***

Prudent policymakers should face the facts that Iran almost certainly already has a small arsenal of atomic weapons,  probably warheads for the Shahab-3 missile, and maybe for intercontinental delivery by satellite.  Iran may even have more advanced specialized nuclear weapons, such as a neutron bomb or Super-EMP warhead.

A cautious and responsible U.S. defense policy should assume that Iran does have Super-EMP nuclear warheads, since nuclear EMP attack is a recurrent if not central theme in Iranian military doctrine.   Iranian missile and satellite launches appear to practice EMP attack.  And Iran has a strategic partnership with North Korea that, thanks to Russia, almost certainly has Super-EMP nuclear warheads.

Iran and North Korea becoming nuclear weapon states requires the United States to invent a new national security strategy that relies less on blunt military force and more on the “black arts” of intelligence and the more subtle weapons of statecraft.

If Iran already has the bomb–unless we or our allies have excellent intelligence on the location of all their weapons and very high confidence that they can be destroyed–then large-scale military operations to disarm Iran are too risky.  Even the survival of a single Iranian atomic bomb could mean the vaporization of a U.S. or allied city.  With a single nuclear warhead, Iran could make an EMP attack that permanently blacks-out the electric grid and other life sustaining critical infrastructures, and returns America or Europe to the Dark Ages.

Since our intelligence on Iran’s nuclear capabilities is so poor, for all we know, there may already be an Iranian nuclear missile on a freighter moored in Venezuela, waiting and perhaps hoping for the Infidels to begin the war to end all wars against Islam, and so bring on their long awaited jihadist doomsday.

A nuclear armed Iran is an existential threat to the world, but also a strategic opportunity for the United States to re-educate its intelligence community on how to achieve regime change without war.  During the Cold War, the CIA was adept at engineering coups d’etat, revolutions, counter-revolutions, special operations and all the “black arts” of intelligence that have been indispensable to war avoidance and cost-effective statecraft for centuries.

In no small part because the CIA does not do counter-revolutions any more, the United States has increasingly turned to its military–and to war–as its instrument of first resort, when war should always be the instrument of last resort.  Consequently, thousands of the best and most patriotic Americans have died, lost limbs, and been permanently traumatized in seemingly endless, pointless, unwinnable wars.

The American spirit itself has become a casualty.  Many Americans are ready to retreat from the world into isolationism, into a “Fortress America”–and let our allies fend for themselves.  And who can blame them when so many lives have been ruined and so much treasure wasted so stupidly, as in Iraq and Afghanistan?

American soldiers are too valuable to waste in the role of “World Policeman.”  U.S. military power should be conserved to deter, not wage war against, all bad actors–but only employed large-scale to defeat aggression during a supreme international crisis, when the future of freedom and world order is really at stake, as during World War II and the Cold War.

American losses in lives, treasure, and morale, wasted in the deserts of the Middle East, all might have been saved–and even a nuclear armed Iran avoided–if the CIA and U.S. intelligence community still knew how to play the “Great Game” as played by Great Britain and Russia in the Middle East and South Asia during the 19th and early 20th centuries.  Now, as then, a small number of agents and area experts armed with cash and arms and with license to do the necessary could protect national and international interests–and at far lower cost in lives, money, and arms than is required to fight a war.

Iran is ripe for a counter-revolution.

The Mullahs and Iranian Revolutionary Guard are hated by most of the people, especially the young and students.  In 2009 the Iranian people did rise up.  But they received no support from the United States.

CIA can learn to do its job again in Iran.  CIA can learn by providing resources and helping Mossad and the intelligence services of the moderate Arab states, who are still masters of the  “black arts.”  Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait  and others, as much as Israel and the United States, fear an Iran with nuclear missiles.

A CIA capable of overthrowing Iran would be far more valuable to the national security toolkit than all the aircraft carriers, planes, bombs, and infantry divisions that would be necessary to disarm a nuclear armed Iran by blunt force.  A “new” national security strategy that relies a lot less on war and a lot more on spy-craft would really be a return to the original, apparently forgotten, national security strategy that won the Cold War.

Unfortunately, the Obama Administration is unlikely to revitalize the CIA or implement any of the other high priority steps listed below, with the possible exception of the last:

* –Prohibit Iran from testing long-range missiles or orbiting satellites–shoot them down.  Such surgical military operations are highly unlikely to result in Iranian nuclear retaliation, and are far less provocative than a massive bombing campaign or invasion.
* –Strengthen U.S. and NATO missile defenses.
* –Harden the electric grid and other critical infrastructures against nuclear EMP attack.

The dysfunctionally optimistic may wrongly conclude that, if Iran has had the bomb for over a decade and not used it, then the West may have nothing to worry about, as even the Mullahs can be deterred.  Revolutionary Iran’s history of reckless and suicidal confrontation with the West, including by being the world’s leading sponsor of international terrorism–before getting nuclear weapons–does not support such optimism.  That Iran has kept its “Islamic Bomb” a secret, and not exploited the bomb for international prestige or nuclear blackmail, especially given the apocalyptic ideology of the Mullahs, indicates that they intend to use it.

Why has Iran not yet used its bomb?  Why does Iran support international terrorism?  Actions driven by jihadist ideology are generally incomprehensible to the West.  Maybe Iran calculates it needs more and better bombs and intercontinental missiles in order to annihilate the Infidels.  Maybe the Mullahs are looking for signs and portents from Allah to tell them when to act.

What seems certain is that Obama’s nuclear deal profoundly misunderstands both Iran’s worldview and nuclear capabilities.  Unknowingly, the world sits atop a nuclear powder keg.  And in Anno Domini 2015, as 101 years ago in 1914 when the West stood on the verge of another holocaust born of hubris, all that remains is for the fuse to be lit.

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[http://www.familysecuritymatters.org/publications/detail/iran-the-worst-deal](https://owa.ara.com/owa/redir.aspx?C=OJ0febz00R9qkBIGXncfQf1KRVo_41TQjtNbypNQNdAnZSSF2EXXCA..&URL=https%3a%2f%2furldefense.proofpoint.com%2fv2%2furl%3fu%3dhttp-3A__www.familysecuritymatters.org_publications_detail_iran-2Dthe-2Dworst-2Ddeal%26d%3dDwMFAg%26c%3djTZAAM0XhIN6PlQBQ9oQqw%26r%3d1PLqNpCdaocrhNXnN3980Q%26m%3duPieF1YY01HlT8QlYN4dcGXjGUrOSq5KtidysFwFygY%26s%3dHEtWfTB6DMM4lTFF294I1W05ou8uLY2OJlKiQzPpVu4%26e%3d)