

# Boosting Transparency on Military Aspects of Iran's Nuclear Program

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## Understanding Tehran's past progress toward a nuclear bomb and mapping the facilities and personnel involved in such efforts can help head off any potential breakout attempts in the coming years.

Iran's refusal to come clean about its research and development related to nuclear weapons -- known as "possible military dimensions," or PMD, in the parlance of the diplomatic talks -- was long regarded as one of the toughest obstacles to a deal. Rather than confront the issue, negotiators made two key decisions that effectively sidestepped it.

First, negotiators from the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany, or the "P5+1," delinked implementation of a deal -- and sanctions relief -- from full resolution of concerns about military-related activity. Then, negotiators left it to the International Atomic Energy Agency and Iran to determine how to address those concerns. The IAEA and Iran concluded two side agreements: a "road map" for resolving international concerns about weapons-related activity and a document governing IAEA access to Iran's facility at Parchin.

The IAEA has insisted that these agreements remain confidential, saying that this is routine, even though it would make assessing Iranian cooperation more difficult. But the previous comprehensive agreement on this issue, from August 2007, was made public shortly after it was concluded. More transparency could surely be offered, at least to the IAEA's board of governors, without divulging details that jeopardize Iran's security.

It's not clear whether the absence of such transparency is a political or technical decision. Iran may have agreed to acknowledge the existence of past militarization efforts but requested discretion. More likely is that Iran refused to

change its long-standing policy of denying that it has engaged in nuclear weapons research, either to save face or to shield the personnel and facilities involved. Either way, the IAEA assessment of Iran's weaponization work, due Dec. 15, is unlikely to prove satisfying.

That Iran now has little incentive to soften its obstinacy on the weaponization issue in the future, even if it offers procedural cooperation with the IAEA to satisfy the requirements of the agreement announced in July, is not merely a matter of historical interest: inspectors' efforts to ensure that Iran does not resume nuclear weapons research will be hampered by a lack of forthrightness regarding past work and access to the personnel and facilities involved.

With the nuclear accord moving forward, policy makers must consider how to address known weaknesses regarding past military-related work. Some potentially useful steps:

First, the IAEA should make clear what will be confirmed about Iran's past activities and what won't. Establishing "known unknowns" is important to establishing a baseline for future assessments. Toward the same end, the United States and European allies should convene their nuclear weapons experts to determine as fully as possible a common and precise understanding of Iran's past weaponization progress.

Second, the IAEA board of governors, which is to review the inspectors' Dec. 15 report, should request that the agency's director general, Yukiya Amano, make public -- or at least make available to board member states -- his agreements with Iran. Further, the board should establish a high bar for endorsement of the IAEA findings, taking care to highlight unaddressed concerns. The IAEA and P5+1 should not hesitate to delay implementation of the nuclear agreement -- expected to occur in early 2016 -- and to push Iran for greater transparency if they believe Iranian cooperation to be insufficient.

Third, the U.S. and its allies should invest significant effort in monitoring sites, organizations, and individuals involved in Iran's past weaponization efforts and establish a regular mechanism to share such information. The international accord's prohibition on future Iranian research into nuclear explosives is one of its strong points, but the IAEA will need help verifying that Iran is adhering to its pledges.

Fourth, if the IAEA has not specifically secured access to Iranian nuclear sites for inspectors, the U.S. and its allies should use the provision of the international accord requiring that Iran admit inspectors to suspect sites to ensure adequate access to facilities and personnel related to past nuclear weapons research. Iranian assertions that no interviews with nuclear scientists or inspections of military sites will be permitted must be challenged lest they become de facto restrictions on IAEA activities.

In a strict sense, the IAEA's inquiry into Iranian nuclear weapons research and development is about the past. But it is also about the future. Understanding the progress Iran made toward a nuclear bomb, and mapping the networks of facilities and personnel involved in such efforts, can help head off any nuclear breakout attempt in the coming years.

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