

Iran Nuclear Timeline

Contributed by Iran Nuclear Watch Blog
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The following is an overview of Iran's nuclear program from its inception in 1957 until present day. Many entries contain links to source documents from the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency. For inquiries regarding the Iran Nuclear Timeline, please contact the Center for Arms Control and Nonproliferation's Iran Policy Analyst, Carah Ong, at cong@armscontrolcenter.org.

1957

The US and Iran sign a civil nuclear cooperation agreement as part of the US Atoms for Peace program. Under the "Iran-United States Agreement for Cooperation concerning Civil Uses of Atomic Energy of 1957," the US provides technical assistance and the lease of several kilograms of enriched uranium.

Mid 1960s

Iran begins conducting nuclear research and development under the auspices of the US within the framework of bilateral agreements between the two countries.

1967

Under the Shah's government, the Tehran Nuclear Research Center (TNRC) is built at Tehran University. TNRC has a safeguarded 5-megawatt nuclear research reactor, which is supplied by the US company, GA Technologies. The US supplies 5.545kg of enriched uranium, of which 5.165kg contain fissile isotopes. The US also supplies 112g of plutonium, of which 104g are fissile isotopes. The reactor goes critical in November.

1968

July 1 , 1968

Iran signs the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). The treaty goes into effect on March 5, 1970.

1969

March 13, 1969

The White House extends the "Iran-United States Agreement for Cooperation concerning Civil Uses of Atomic Energy of 1957" for ten more years.

1974

Iran makes a \$1 billion loan to the French Atomic Energy Commission to build a uranium enrichment plant at Tricastin, France for the Eurodif consortium. In return, Iran will receive a 10% stake in the plant and may increase its share to 15% in later years.

March 1974

Under encouragement from the US to expand its non-oil energy sources, the Shah embarks on a program to build 23 nuclear reactors.

May 1974

Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi visits Iran and the two countries issue a communiqué stating that contacts will be made "between the atomic energy organizations in the two countries in order to establish a basis for cooperation in this field."

May 15, 1974

Iran concludes a nuclear safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency as required under the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). Safeguards Agreement

November 1974

The government awards a contract to Kraftwerk Union (a subsidiary of Siemens) of West Germany to construct two Siemens 1,200-megawatt nuclear reactors at Bushehr. Iran also signs a contract with the French company Framatome to build two 950 megawatt pressurized reactors at Darkhovin on the Karoon River, south of the city of Ahvaz.

1975

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology signs a contract with the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran to provide training for the first cadre of Iranian nuclear engineers.

February 1975

The Iranian-Indian Nuclear Cooperation Treaty is signed.

August 1975

Work begins on the Bushehr nuclear reactors.

Mid 1970s

The Nuclear Technology Center at Esfahan (Isfahan) is founded with French assistance in order to provide training for the personnel that would be working with the Bushehr reactors.

1976

Iran expresses interest in acquiring uranium enrichment technology.

South Africa agrees to supply \$700 million of yellowcake to Iran and in return Iran will help finance an enrichment plant in South Africa.

1977

April 12, 1977 The United States and Iran sign an agreement to exchange nuclear technology and cooperate in nuclear safety.

October 1977

In an address to the symposium, "The US and Iran, An Increasing Partnership," Mr. Sydney Sober, a representative of the US State Department, declares that the Shah's government is going to purchase eight nuclear reactors from the US for generating electricity.

1978

Iran buys four gas lasers from the US company Liscem. Jeff Eerkens, head of Liscem, obtains a license from the Department of Energy (DOE) to ship the lasers. Eerkens' application states that the lasers will be used for laboratory plasma research, but the gas lasers can also be modified to enrich uranium. DOE approves the sale because it has doubts about the viability of the process.

The final draft of the US-Iran Nuclear Energy Agreement is signed. The purpose of the agreement is to facilitate cooperation in the field of nuclear energy and to govern the export and transfer of equipment and material to Iran's nuclear energy program. Under the agreement, Iran will also receive American technology and help in searching for uranium deposits.

October 1978 Facing internal criticism of the nuclear power program and financial difficulties, the Shah suspends Iran's extensive nuclear purchase program.

1979

February 1979

The Islamic Revolution topples the Shah's government. The Bushehr-1 reactor is only 90% complete and only 60% of its equipment is installed. The Bushehr-2 reactor is only 50% complete. The government of Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan decides that Iran does not need nuclear energy, and work at Bushehr is halted. The US stops its supply of highly enriched uranium (HEU) to Iran. Iran cancels contracts with France for the Darkhovin nuclear reactors. Iran refuses to accept shipment of lasers from the US company Liscem that can be used in theory to enrich uranium. Iran cancels its agreements for the Eurodif consortium and asks France to return its \$1 billion loan for the uranium enrichment plant at Tricastin. Litigation between Iran and France and Iran and Germany over nuclear contracts will continue throughout the 1980s.

Late 1970s The US says it has obtained intelligence indicating that the Shah set up a clandestine nuclear weapons development program. According to Akbar Etemad, director of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran from 1974 until October 1978, researchers at the Tehran Nuclear Research Center carried out laboratory experiments in which plutonium was extracted from spent fuel using chemical agents.

1984-1987

During the Iran-Iraq war, Iraq bombs the Bushehr nuclear reactor site in Iran six times (in March 1984, February 1985, March 1985, July 1986, and twice in November 1987), destroying the entire core area of both reactors.

1985

September 1985 The foreign ministers of Iran, Syria, and Libya say that their countries should develop nuclear weapons to counter the Israeli nuclear threat.

December 1985

Argentina and Iran sign a nuclear cooperation agreement in which Argentina agrees to supply Iran with Highly Enriched Uranium (20% enriched).

Mid-1980s Iran and North Korea begin cooperating on nuclear issues in the mid-1980s.

Early 1990s

In the early 1990s, reports surface that Iran and North Korea have cooperated in nuclear weapons development and that North Korea has assisted Iran in uranium exploration and mining.

1991

China provides Iran, under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards, with uranium hexafluoride. In the same year Iran also receives from China uranium hexafluoride, uranium tetrafluoride and uranium dioxide, without reporting the transfer to the IAEA.

1995

January 1995

Iran signs a contract with the Russian Ministry of Atomic Energy to build lightweight water reactors at Bushehr, under the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards.

1998

October 20, 1998

The US House of Representatives passes the Iran Nuclear Proliferation Prevention Act of 1998. H.R. 4851

2001

December 31, 2001

The US Department of Defense delivers a classified version of the Congressionally mandated US Nuclear Posture Review (NPR). Discussing "requirements for nuclear strike capabilities," the NPR lists Iran as "among the countries that could be involved in immediate, potential, or unexpected contingencies." The NPR also says "nuclear weapons could be employed against targets able to withstand non-nuclear attack (for example, deep underground bunkers or bio-weapon facilities)." The NPR represents a significant shift in US policy to expand the potential uses of nuclear weapons and consider the use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapons states.

2002

September 2002

Russian technicians begin construction of a nuclear reactor at Bushehr despite strong objections from US. This is the first work on the site since the Germans stopped work in 1979.

September 16, 2002

Iran issues a statement to the International Atomic Energy Agency General Conference on the state of Iran's nuclear energy program. Iran Statement

2003

February 9, 2003

Iran's program and efforts for building sophisticated facilities at Natanz and several other sites that can eventually produce enriched uranium are revealed. President Mohammad Khatami announces the existence of the Natanz and other facilities on Iran's state-run television and invites the International Atomic Energy Agency to visit them.

February 2003

Iran removes International Atomic Energy Agency seals and cameras in its nuclear facilities and begins feeding nuclear feedstock into centrifuges, the process required to enrich fuel for use in reactors or bombs.

February 27, 2003

International Atomic Energy Agency Director General Mohammad El Baradei, accompanied by a team of inspectors, visits Iran. They report that while there is no evidence of Iran diverting nuclear material for building weapons, there are numerous causes for concern, including evidence that Iran had received information about casting uranium metal into hemispheres.

May 2, 2003

Iran faxes a letter to the United States through Swiss diplomatic intermediaries offering to engage in a broad dialogue with the United States, including full cooperation on nuclear programs, acceptance of Israel and the termination of Iranian support for Palestinian militant groups. The United States does not respond to the letter. "Burn Offering" by Gareth Porter

July 2003

A preliminary International Atomic Energy Agency report on Iran's nuclear program is published.

August 26, 2003

The International Atomic Energy Agency publishes a follow-up report on Iran's nuclear program.

September 8, 2003

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Mohamed ElBaradei briefs the IAEA's Board of Governors on nuclear safeguards in Iran. Director General Statement

September 12, 2003

The International Atomic Energy Agency gives Iran a deadline to reveal all the details of its nuclear activities by October 31, 2003.

September 30, 2003

International Atomic Energy Agency Director General Mohamed ElBaradei and a team of inspectors begin a visit to Iran to begin talks and inspections.

October 2003

Iran and three members of the European Union (EU) – Britain, France and Germany – begin engaging in negotiations to ensure that Iran will not develop nuclear weapons capabilities.

November 2003

Iran says it will suspend its uranium enrichment program and will allow tougher UN inspections of its nuclear facilities. In addition, the International Atomic Energy Agency concludes there is no evidence of a nuclear weapons program.

November 26, 2003

The International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors adopts a resolution on the implementation of Non-Proliferation Treaty safeguards in Iran. Iran Resolution

December 18, 2003

Ambassador Ali A. Salehi of Iran and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Mohamed ElBaradei sign an Additional Protocol to Iran's Non-Proliferation Treaty Safeguards Agreement. The Additional Protocol grants IAEA inspectors greater authority in its nuclear verification programs.

2004

February 24, 2004

The International Atomic Energy Agency Director General Mohamed ElBaradei issues a report to the Board of Governors on implementation of the Nonproliferation Treaty Safeguards Agreement with Iran. Director General Report

March 5, 2004

Iran responds with a Note Verbale to the International Atomic Energy Agency Director General Report on the implementation of the Nonproliferation Treaty Safeguards Agreement. The Note Verbale contains explanations to points made in the Director General's report. Iran Note Verbale

March 13, 2004

The International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors adopts a resolution on Implementation of Non-Proliferation Treaty Safeguards Agreement in Iran. Iran Resolution

March 30, 2004

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) responds to Iran's Note Verbale. IAEA Secretariate Response

June 18, 2004

The International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors adopts a resolution on implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty Safeguards Agreement in Iran. Resolution Director General Statement

September 13, 2004

The International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors meets on Iran and other nuclear issues and Director General Mohamed ElBaradei issues a statement. Director General Statement

September 18, 2004

The International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors adopts a resolution on the implementation of Non-Proliferation Treaty Safeguards Agreement in Iran and Iran's failure to suspend its enrichment program. Resolution

November 2004

The International Atomic Energy Agency releases a list of locations relevant to the implementation of safeguards in Iran. List of Locations

November 14, 2004

Iran agrees to suspend most of its uranium enrichment under a deal with Britain, France and Germany, also known as the EU-3. Iran-EU Agreement

November 18, 2004

International Atomic Energy Agency Director General Mohamed ElBaradei briefs the Board of Governors on verification in Iran and other issues. Director General Statement

November 29, 2004

The International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors adopts a resolution on the implementation of the Nonproliferation Treaty Nuclear Safeguards Agreement in Iran. Director General Statement Resolution

2005

May 3, 2005

H.E. Dr. Kamal Kharrazi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran delivers a statement to the 2005 Nonproliferation Treaty Review Conference. Statement

June 14, 2005

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Mohamed ElBaradei updates the IAEA Board of Directors in IAEA verification in Iran. Director General Statement

August 1, 2005

Iran issues a Note Verbale to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) stating that it has "decided to resume the uranium conversion activities at UCF [Uranium Conversion Facility] in Esfahan on 1 August 2005." Iran requests the IAEA "to be prepared for the implementation of the Safeguards related activities in a timely manner prior to the resumption of the UCF activities." IAEA Communication

August 1, 2005

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Mohamed ElBaradei responds to Iran's Note Verbale and calls on Iran to not take any action that would prejudice the negotiation process with the European Union-3 or undermine the IAEA inspection process. Director General Statement

August 8, 2005

Iran begins to feed uranium ore concentrate into the first part of the process line at its Uranium Conversion Facility.

August 10, 2005

Iran begins to remove International Atomic Energy Agency seals at the Uranium Conversion Facility in Esfahan.

August 11, 2005

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors urges Iran to suspend all enrichment activities and re-instate IAEA seals. Resolution Director General's Statement

September 2005

Iran announces that it has resumed uranium conversion at its Isfahan plants, but maintains that it is for peaceful purposes.

September 12, 2005

Iran issues a Note Verbale to the International Atomic Energy Agency on its nuclear policy and activities. Note Verbale

September 19, 2005

International Atomic Energy Agency Director General Mohamed ElBaradei issues a statement on a broad range of issues including Iran's nuclear program. Dr. ElBaradei notes that good progress has been made in terms of Iran's corrections of past breaches and in terms of the IAEA's ability to verify certain aspects of Iran's nuclear program. He notes, however, that progress has been slow in regards to receiving information in relation to Iran's centrifuge enrichment activities. Director General Statement

September 24, 2005

The International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors adopts a resolution on the implementation of safeguards Iran. The resolution finds that Iran's activities constitute non-compliance and calls on Iran to return to the negotiating process. Resolution

November 4, 2005

Iran issues a Note Verbale responding to the Board of Governors September 24 Resolution and outlining its nuclear

policy and activities. INFCIRC/661

November 24, 2005

The International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors discusses a report from Director General Mohamed ElBardei on Iran's nuclear program.

2006

January 3, 2006

The International Atomic Energy Agency receives a Note Verbale from Iran stating that the country has decided to resume Research and Development on its peaceful nuclear energy program beginning January 9, 2006. Director General Statement

January 10, 2006

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors confirm that Iran has started to remove IAEA seals on enrichment-related equipment and material at Natanz and at two other locations.

January 13, 2006

The Britain, France and Germany (EU-3) issue a statement to the International Atomic Energy Agency entitled "E3/EU Statement on the Iran Nuclear Issue" reporting on their assessment of the situation. The statement calls Iran's decision to restart enrichment activity a clear rejection of the process the E3/EU and Iran have been engaged in for over two years with the support of the international community. Statement

January 24, 2006

Iran submits a document to the International Atomic Energy Agency entitled "Short Glance on Iranian Nuclear Issue."

February 2, 2006

Director of National Intelligence, John D. Negroponte testifies to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence regarding Iran's nuclear capabilities. According to Negroponte, "We [the National Intelligence Community] judge that Tehran probably does not yet have a nuclear weapon and probably has not yet produced or acquired the necessary fissile material." He also said that Iran is seeking a nuclear weapon and it "is reason for immediate concern." He added that if Iran continues on its current path, it "will likely have the capability to produce a nuclear weapon within the next decade." Negroponte's Testimony

February 2, 2006

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors holds a special meeting on Iran at the IAEA's headquarters in Vienna.

February 4, 2006

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors adopts a resolution requesting the IAEA Director General to report to the United Nations Security Council all IAEA reports and resolutions, as adopted, relating to the implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty Safeguards Agreement in Iran.

February 27, 2006

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Mohamed ElBaradei issues a report to the Board of Governors providing an update on the developments that have taken place since November 2005 on Iran's nuclear program. Dr. ElBaradei's report states that although the IAEA has not seen indications of diversion of nuclear material to nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, there remain uncertainties with regard to both the scope and the nature of Iran's nuclear program. Director General Statement

March 8, 2006

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Mohamed ElBaradei sends his February 27 report on the implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty Safeguards Agreement in Iran to the IAEA Board of Governors and the United Nations Security Council.

March 16, 2006

President George W. Bush presents the United States National Security Strategy of 2006. The NSS states that "The proliferation of nuclear weapons poses the greatest threat to our national security. Nuclear weapons are unique in their capacity to inflict instant loss of life on a massive scale. For this reason, nuclear weapons hold special appeal to rogue states and terrorists." The report goes on to state that "We may face no greater challenge from a single country than from Iran." White House Statement Full Text of the National Security Strategy

March 29, 2006

The United Nations Security Council issues a Presidential Statement calling on Iran to re-establish full and sustained suspension of all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities, including research and development. The Statement notes with concern the International Atomic Energy Agency Director General Statement of February 27. Presidential Statement

April 11, 2006

Iranian President Ahmadinejad announces that Iran has successfully enriched uranium at its Natanz nuclear facility. BBC News Article

April 17, 2006

Journalist Seymour Hersh publishes a controversial article in the New Yorker in which he claims that the United States is planning a military attack on Iran. The article states that, "One of the military's initial option plans, as presented to the White House by the Pentagon this winter, calls for the use of a bunker-buster tactical nuclear weapon, such as the B61-11, against underground nuclear sites. One target is Iran's main centrifuge plant, at Natanz, nearly two hundred miles south of Tehran." "The Iran Plans" by Seymour Hersh

April 28, 2006

International Atomic Energy Agency Director General Mohamed ElBaradei issues a report to the Board of Governors and the United Nations Security Council as requested by the March 29 Security Council presidential statement. Dr. ElBaradei's report states that he can not provide evidence to verify that Iran's nuclear program is intended exclusively for peaceful purposes. The report confirms Iran's claims to have enriched uranium to the level of 3.6 percent. Director General Report

May 8, 2006

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad sends an 18-page letter to President George W. Bush in which he discusses "undeniable contradictions that exist in the international arena." The letter is the first direct communication between the Presidents of Iran and the United States since 1979. U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice rejects the letter, saying that it does not address "the issues that we're dealing with in a concrete way." President Ahmadinejad Letter

May 31, 2006

The United States offers to join European-Iranian negotiations over Iran's nuclear program provided that Iran first suspend all uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities. US Department of State News Article

June 6, 2006

China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States (also known as the P5 + 1) offer Iran a new proposal. Although specifics are not revealed, the proposal requires Iran to suspend all of its enrichment related activities. However, the proposal does not preclude the future possibility that Iran could eventually develop indigenous enrichment capabilities once all outstanding questions have been resolved and international confidence has been restored in the peaceful nature of its nuclear program. In exchange, the proposal offers Iran a package of incentives believed to include a commitment to help Iran build light-water power plants through joint projects; support Iranian membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO); and a US pledge to lift certain economic sanctions against Iran to allow the purchase of agricultural appliances and the sale of Boeing aircraft parts. Iran issues a statement saying it will respond to the offer by August 22.

June 8, 2006

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General issues a statement on progress in Iran. Director General Statement

July 10, 2006

Journalist Seymour Hersh publishes a second controversial article in the New Yorker in which he reveals current and former senior Pentagon officials are claiming that a military attack on Iran would be too costly for the United States. According to the article, "The military leadership is also raising tactical arguments against the proposal for bombing Iran, many of which are related to the consequences for Iraq." "Last Stand" by Seymour Hersh.

July 12, 2006

Negotiating members from the United States, Britain, France, China, Russia and Germany meet in Paris and announce that they will refer Iran's case to the Security Council, having not received a response to their June 6 proposed negotiation package. Iran reaffirms that it will respond to the offer by August 22.

July 31, 2006

The United Nations Security Council adopts Resolution 1696 under Article 40 of Chapter VII of the UN charter. The resolution gives Iran until August 31, 2006 to "suspend all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities, including research and development" or face potential economic and diplomatic sanctions. The resolution is approved in a 14-1 vote. Qatar, representing Arab states on the UN Security Council, is the only dissenting vote. It is the first legally binding resolution on Iran and includes the threat of sanctions for noncompliance. Iran responds calling Resolution 1696 unwarranted and illegal. Resolution 1696

August 22, 2006

As it said it would, Iran delivers a 21-page point-by-point counteroffer to the P5+1 (Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States + Germany) to embassies in Iran. Switzerland receives the memo on behalf of the United States, which has not had an embassy in Iran since the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Details of the memo are not made public, however Iranians say they are offering a "fresh approach" and are ready for "serious negotiations," beginning Aug. 23. August 26, 2006

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad announces the formal opening of a heavy-water production plant at Arak. Analysts fear the plant will eventually be able to produce enough weapons-grade plutonium for two bombs a year. Ahmadinejad and Ari Larjani, Iran's chief nuclear negotiator, shrug off the possibility of sanctions and reiterate Iran's commitment to produce its own nuclear fuel. "Iran's Heavy-Water Reactor: A Plutonium Bomb Factory" by Robert J. Einhorn

August 29, 2006

As Iranian nuclear specialists begin enriching a new batch of uranium, President Ahmadinejad challenges President Bush to a live televised debate. The White House quickly dismisses Ahmadinejad's challenge as a "diversion."

August 31, 2006

The IAEA reports to the United Nations Security Council that Iran has continued to enrich uranium despite UN calls for it to stop its enrichment activities by August 31. President Bush calls Iran a "grave threat" and says "there must be consequences" for Tehran's actions. IAEA Board Report

September 11, 2006

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice signals that a temporary suspension of Iran's nuclear programs might be enough to allow the first direct negotiations involving the United States and Iran in more than a quarter-century. Iran's confidential response to the P5+1 package of incentives (offered June 6, 2006) is first posted on the Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS) website. In a detailed and sometimes rambling document originally given to foreign governments, Iran stops short of rejecting demands to halt its nuclear enrichment program, saying the issue could be resolved in talks. Islamic Republic of Iran's Response and ISIS Analysis of Response

September 13, 2006

The IAEA protests in a letter to Rep. Peter Hoekstra (R-MI-2), chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, that a recent report by the Subcommittee on Intelligence Policy describing Iran's nuclear program as a strategic threat contains "erroneous, misleading, and unsubstantiated information." The IAEA dismisses as untrue a claim that Iran is enriching uranium to weapons-grade levels; Iran is enriching to 3.6 percent, not the 90 percent needed for nuclear weapons. IAEA Letter

September 19, 2006

The United States and five other countries back off on demands for U.N. sanctions on Iran, setting early October as a new deadline for the country to suspend nuclear activities; in a separate meeting, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad maintains that Iran's nuclear program is for peaceful purposes.

September 26, 2006

Russia and Iran agree on a September 2007 launch of Iran's nuclear power plant at Bushehr, with electricity production to begin two months later. Globalsecurity.org Article on history of Bushehr facility

October 3, 2006

Mohammad Saeedi, deputy chief of Iran's Atomic Energy Agency, proposes that France create a consortium to enrich Tehran's uranium, saying such an arrangement could satisfy international demands for outside oversight. U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice suggests the international community will have no choice but to impose sanctions on Iran if it refuses to suspend its uranium-enrichment efforts.

October 17, 2006

European Union foreign ministers express backing for gradual sanctions against Iran's nuclear program. EU foreign ministers in Luxembourg say in their final statement that "Iran's continuation of enrichment-related activities has left the EU no choice but to support consultations" on United Nations sanctions. Nevertheless, they say, the door to negotiations remains open.

October 25, 2006

Iran expands its controversial nuclear work by starting a second cascade of centrifuges to enrich uranium. This second cascade of centrifuges, based in Natanz, doubles Tehran's enrichment capacity. Iran says it plans to install 3,000 centrifuges at Natanz by the end of 2006. BBC News Article

November 5, 2006

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Mohammad Ali Hosseini says Tehran is ready to consider negotiating with the United States on regional issues, including Iraq, if Washington requests it.

November 8, 2006

The day after Republicans receive an electoral "thumpin'", President Bush announces that Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld will step down and Robert Gates, president of Texas A&M University, will be nominated to replace him. In July 2004, Gates coauthored a Council on Foreign Relations report with Zbigniew Brzezinski, former National Security Advisor to Jimmy Carter, calling for "a revised strategic approach to Iran." The report points out that "the current lack of sustained engagement with Iran harms U.S. interests in a critical region of the world and that direct dialogue with Tehran on specific areas of mutual concern should be pursued." "Iran: Time for a New Approach" by Robert Gates and Zbigniew Brzezinski

November 20, 2006

Journalist Seymour Hersh publishes his third New Yorker article about possible American military strikes against Iran. This time around, Hersh writes: "If the Democrats won on November 7th, the Vice-President said, that victory would not stop the Administration from pursuing a military option with Iran." Hersh concludes that if Cheney is as influential in the last two years of Bush's term as he has been in the first six, many in the administration feel an attack against Iran is a distinct possibility. "The Next Act" by Seymour Hersh

November 23, 2006

The IAEA reports that new traces of uranium were found in Iranian facilities. The IAEA concludes that it "will remain unable to make further progress in its efforts to verify the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran unless Iran addresses the long outstanding verification issues, including through the implementation of the Additional Protocol, and provides the necessary transparency." The IAEA also waives Iran's request for technical help in building the heavy-water reactor near Arak but leaves room for Tehran to renew its request. The waiver prevents IAEA help for at least the next two years. The 40-megawatt heavy-water reactor at Arak is due to be finished in 2009, according to Iranian officials. In response to the denial, Manouchehr Mottaki, Iran's foreign minister, says: "If they help us, we will appreciate it. If not, we will do it by ourselves." IAEA Board Report

November 29, 2006

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad writes a letter to the American people praising them as "truth-loving and justice-seeking" and urging them to "play an instrumental role" in helping to change Bush administration policy in the Middle East. U.S. State Department spokesman Tom Casey called the letter "a public relations stunt" by Tehran and refused "to dignify" the Iranian president's accusations of the Bush administration "with a specific reaction." Ahmadinejad's Letter2007

The Bushehr nuclear reactor is expected to be completed by Russia and will go online. The reactor was originally started by German company Kraftwerk Union, a subsidiary of Siemens, in 1975.

2011-2016

Iran is expected to have the capability to build a nuclear weapon. "When Could Iran Get the Bomb?" by David Albright

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