

Chem-Bio News

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Chem-Demil News

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CB Daily Report

Chem-Bio News

ANOTHER PUZZLE AFTER IRAN MOVES NUCLEAR FUEL

By David E. Sanger
The New York Times
February 26, 2010

"When Iran was caught last September building a secret, underground nuclear enrichment plant at a military base near the city of Qum, the country's leaders insisted they had no other choice. With its nuclear facilities under constant threat of attack, they said, only a fool would leave them out in the open.

So imagine the surprise of international inspectors almost two weeks ago when they watched as Iran moved nearly its entire stockpile of low-enriched nuclear fuel to an above-ground plant. It was as if, one official noted, a bull's-eye had been painted on it.

Why take such a huge risk?

That mystery is the subject of fervent debate among many who are trying to decode Iran's intentions. The theories run from the bizarre to the mundane: Under one, Iran is actually taunting the Israelis to strike first. Under another, it is simply escalating the confrontation with the West to win further concessions in negotiations. The simplest explanation, and the one that the Obama administration subscribes to, is that Iran has run short of suitable storage containers for radioactive fuel, so it had to move everything."

The full article can be found at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/27/world/middleeast/27iran.html>
[Return to Top](#)

IRAN'S HARD-LINERS LOOK TO JUSTIFY A NUCLEAR ARSENAL

By Hossein Aryan
Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty
March 03, 2010

"During the commissioning ceremony for Iran's first domestically built destroyer earlier this month, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei denied that Iran seeks to possess nuclear weapons. He said that weapons of mass destruction are haram, or forbidden by Islam, in the Islamic republic.

The comments came just one day after the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) announced that Iran might be working on a nuclear warhead and suggested for the first time that Tehran has either resumed such work or never stopped it, as U.S. intelligence agencies famously concluded it did in 2003.

Khamenei's latest remarks are not the first time he has used religious precepts to deny that Iran wants nuclear arms. In September 2004, as the IAEA Governing Council was debating Iran's nuclear program, a government spokesman announced that Khamenei had issued a fatwa banning the use of nuclear weapons.

Such a fatwa -- which was never published in any Iranian newspaper -- and similar statements are meant to persuade non-Muslims that Islam forbids the use of such weapons, but they carry no legal weight in Iran. In addition, Shi'ite tradition holds that only sources of emulation (marja) may issue religious rulings -- and Khamenei is not a marja. Although politically he is Iran's supreme leader, religiously he is considered a minor ayatollah.

Khamenei and many other Iranian officials have repeatedly emphasized the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program. However, in the face of mounting evidence to the contrary, these official declarations appear to fall within the old tradition of dissimulation known as taqiyyeh or ketman. In a political context, taqiyyeh is the concealment of one's beliefs and actions in potentially hostile situations; under it, a true believer must not allow the "infidel" to know what he is up to at any given time.

Some Shi'ite scholars attribute this practice to Imam Hassan, the second Shi'ite imam, who concealed his right to power and ceded the caliphate to the Umayyads in order to save Islam from devastating internal strife. The contrasting practice of tabiyeh (mobilization of forces) is attributed to Iman Hussein, the third iman, who rebelled against the Umayyads to restore to power the Holy House of Ali.

In addition, Khamenei's purported fatwa and other statements that nuclear weapons are banned by Islamic teachings fly in the face of his own earlier statements as president of Iran. In February 1987, when the country was still locked in a bitter war against Iraq, Khamenei told a gathering of Iranian nuclear scientists: "Regarding atomic energy, we need it now.... Our nation has always been threatened from outside. The least we can do to face this danger is to let our enemies know that we can defend ourselves. Therefore, every step you take here is in defense of your country and your revolution. With this in mind, work hard and quickly."

In 1988, Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani -- the speaker of the Majlis and commander in chief of Iran's armed forces -- was even more explicit. In a speech to soldiers, he said: "With regard to chemical, bacteriological, and radiological weapons training, it was made very clear during the [Iran-Iraq] war that these weapons are very decisive. It was also made clear that the moral teachings of the world are

not very effective when war reaches a serious stage and the world does not respect its own resolutions and closes its eyes to violations and aggressions that are committed on the battlefield. We should fully equip ourselves both in the offensive and defensive use of chemical, bacteriological, and radiological weapons."

The full article can be found at:

http://www.rferl.org/content/Irans_HardLiners_Are_Looking_To_Justify_A_Nuclear_Arsenal/1969251.html

[Return to Top](#)

NEW HIGH TECH NUCLEAR LAB FOR EU

By Anna Lewcock

Chemistry World

March 02, 2010

"A new state-of-the-art facility in Germany will significantly boost Europe's ability to identify and characterise minute traces of nuclear material as part of ongoing safeguarding and non-proliferation activities.

In an announcement made during the recent annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in San Diego, the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) has teamed up with the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) to establish a new laboratory in Karlsruhe which will house Europe's only large geometry secondary ion mass spectrometer (LG-SIMS), a piece of kit that will vastly improve the speed and accuracy of nuclear material detection.

For the last decade or so, the JRC's Institute for Transuranium Elements (ITU) has been using a standard SIMS technique to analyse samples taken from facilities around the world by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)."

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"However, the fairly low mass resolution of the SIMS technique currently used in the ITU labs means the information gleaned from samples is fairly broad brushed, with low mass resolution leaving space for misinterpretation of results. Significantly increasing mass resolution, however, typically kills secondary ion transmission and makes it impossible to separate the signal from background noise.

In contrast, the new LG-SIMS machine will have 10 times the mass resolution of the current machines without affecting transmission, which will make a huge difference to the quality and volume of information specialists are able to gather.

The increased sensitivity of the technique means samples can also be analysed much faster - in just a day rather a week - which is particularly important if analysis is being carried out to detect clandestine nuclear activities.

LG-SIMS can also uncover the minor uranium isotopes - such as uranium 234 and 236 - hidden in the sample, rather than just the 235 and 238 isotopes, which define how enriched the uranium is (enriched uranium being a key ingredient for nuclear weapons and nuclear power generation). Uranium-236 is not natural but is continuously produced in nuclear reactors - finding the 236 isotope therefore tells you that the uranium in the sample has been through a reactor. Identifying these minor isotopes in a sample can also reveal how the uranium was processed and enriched.

The new LG-SIMS lab should be up and running in Karlsruhe by the end of 2010 after an investment of Euro3.5 million (£3.2 million), the bulk of which will come from the JRC. A second European LG-SIMS facility is also due to be established by the IAEA in Vienna."

The full article can be found at: <http://www.rsc.org/chemistryworld/News/2010/March/02031001.asp>

[Return to Top](#)

UK MUST AVOID 'NEGLECTED DECLINE' IN RESEARCH

By Sarah Houlton
Chemistry World
March 03, 2010

“Investment in science should be a government priority and PhD programmes should last four years, according to a report from the UK's Council for Science and Technology (CST). The report from the prime minister's top science advisory body analyses the whole breadth of science and engineering in the UK, and prescribes action it hopes will ensure the UK is not overtaken in the research stakes by countries such as India and China.

The CST report says its vision is that UK research will be 'successful and globally competitive' in 20 years' time, but in the face of increasingly severe global competition the research base must avoid 'undergoing either managed or neglected decline'.”

The full article can be found at: <http://www.rsc.org/chemistryworld/News/2010/March/03031001.asp>
[Return to Top](#)

Chem-Demil News

PUEBLO CHEMICAL DEPOT COMPLETES ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

US Army Element, Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives News Release
February 26, 2010

“The Pueblo Chemical Depot, in conjunction with the Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives (ACWA) Program, has completed an environmental assessment to meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA, and Title 32 Code of Federal Regulations Part 651. The environmental assessment concluded that no significant impacts would occur as a result of the construction and operation of the Army's Explosive Destruction System (EDS) and/or other explosive destruction technologies (EDT), at the U.S. Army Pueblo Chemical Depot in Colorado.

The Environmental Assessment, the draft “Finding of No Significant Impact,” and other supporting documents may be found on the ACWA Web site at www.pmacwa.army.mil and at the following information repositories:

- Robert Hoag Rawlings Public Library, 100 East Abriendo Ave. in Pueblo
- Avondale Water and Sanitation District, 321 3rd St. in Avondale
- Boone Community Center, 421 East First St. in Boone.

The public comment period on the draft “Finding of No Significant Impact” is from Feb. 27 through April 27, 2010. Comments may be submitted via the ACWA Web site noted above, may be e-mailed to ACWAHQ.environmental@conus.army.mil, may be faxed to 410-436-1992 or mailed to U.S. Army Element ACWA, 5183 Blackhawk Rd., ATTN: AMSAW-RM, Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD 21010-5424. A decision will be made on this proposed action after a sixty-day public comment period. The required public comment period is thirty-days. The additional thirty days will offer the community more time to review the information, ask questions, and learn about this important effort.

A public meeting is scheduled for March 18, 2010 from 6-8 p.m. at the Olde Towne Carriage House, 102 S. Victoria, in Pueblo. The meeting will begin with an informal poster session, followed by formal presentations.

Alternatives being evaluated for possible use include the Army's EDS and/or commercially available EDTs used in other countries. These technologies were reviewed by the National Academy of Sciences for safe and efficient disposal of munitions. Use of these technologies would augment the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant's (PCAPP) neutralization/bio-treatment operations and would increase confidence to achieve the congressional mandate to complete destruction of the Pueblo chemical weapons stockpile by 2017. This would also maintain the continuity of U.S. chemical weapons destruction operations in a safe and environmentally sound manner."

The full article can be found at: http://www.pmacwa.army.mil/info/dl/ACWA_News_Release_%2026Feb10.pdf

[Return to Top](#)

PUEBLO CHEMICAL DEPOT - ARMY BRIEFS COUNCIL ON CHEM DEMIL WORK

By Peter Roper
The Pueblo Chieftain
March 02, 2010

"The Army and its contractors are on schedule to destroy the 780,000 mustard agent weapons stored at the Pueblo Chemical Depot and any weapons that leak are quickly contained, Army officials and civilian contractors told City Council at its work session Monday night.

Lt. Col. Robert Wittig, depot commander, was joined by Gary Anderson, of the Army's Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives program, and Paul Henry of Bechtel, Inc., in briefing council on the continuing work of building a chemical demilitarization plant at the depot."

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"Council questioned Wittig and the other officials about news reports of leaking weapons in the igloos at the depot. Wittig said that monitors at the depot identify any leaks quickly and those weapons are dealt with and contained.

Anderson said from the outset, planners believed that at least a thousand or so weapons would probably need to be destroyed by other processes. A portable system could be brought to the Pueblo depot for that purpose and could be used to destroy as many as 125,000 of the weapons. That process is evaluated in an environmental study that was released on Monday. Anderson and Henry said all of the destruction work would take place at the Pueblo depot and not shipped off site."

The full article can be found at:

<http://www.chieftain.com/articles/2010/03/02/news/local/doc4b8c9b9fe7241427286515.txt>

[Return to Top](#)

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