

Q&A on the Qom Enrichment Facility

When did the US first learn about the Qom Enrichment Facility?

- The U.S. has been carefully observing and analyzing this facility for several years. I won't go into more detail regarding our intelligence information.

Why didn't you disclose this site sooner?

- We and several other countries have been watching this site very carefully for some time, in particular given Iran's past track record of building clandestine nuclear facilities.
- We always intended to disclose this site with the strongest possible case. It has taken time, working multilaterally with our partners, to develop a more definitive judgment that this site was clearly intended to be a uranium enrichment facility.
- Earlier this year, there was an accumulation of evidence that gave us high confidence that this was intended to be a uranium enrichment facility.
- We began consulting with our partners earlier this summer to coordinate the disclosure of the site. In fact, at that time in the summer, our leadership tasked that we have a finalized briefing by the third week of September so that we would be in a position to proceed at the appropriate time.

Was the timing intended to disrupt the Oct 1 meeting?

- To the contrary, we believe that the only way to have a serious and meaningful dialogue is to ensure that all of the facts are on the table.
- We intended to disclose our information early in any dialogue process.
- When we learned that Iran had sent this letter to the IAEA and that this letter provided no specific information about a new, undeclared enrichment facility, we concluded that it was critical to provide the IAEA with detailed information - detail not provided by Iran - to ensure that the IAEA could investigate the facility.

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Why talk to Iran if we know now that they are prepared to continue building secret nuclear facilities?

- We have always approach our diplomatic engagement with our eyes wide open, recognizing Iran's track record of deception.
- We have consistently said that we would pursue serious, meaningful diplomacy with Iran to determine directly whether Iran is prepared to address the world's concerns in a similar manner.
- Public disclosure of this site is actually an important component of testing if Iran is prepared to take the concrete, tangible steps needed to create confidence and transparency and demonstrate that Iran is committed to establishing its peaceful intentions.

Why are only the U.S., UK and French announcing the sites? Does this mean Russia and China disagree?

- The information belongs to the U.S., UK and France. It is only natural that we are bringing the information jointly.
- We have been consulting closely on this issue with Russia, China, Germany and others - including to provide them briefings of our information on the last few days - so they can understand the full magnitude of Iran's actions and come to their own conclusions.

Do you believe Iran intended to produce highly enriched uranium at this site?

- Most uranium enrichment facilities of this size would be capable of producing highly enriched uranium. I'm not going to discuss any further our intelligence information regarding this site.

Has Iran violated its IAEA safeguards obligations by constructing this site secretly?

- There are clear concerns about whether Iran has adhered to its IAEA safeguards obligations.
- Although Iran was obligated to inform the IAEA when it decided to build such a facility, it failed to do so.

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- We decided to provide information to the IAEA so that the IAEA can fully and immediately investigate the history and construction of this facility. A critical aspect of that investigation will be for the IAEA to determine whether any violations occurred.

So, what next? What will you seek that Iran do with this facility?

- First, the UN Security Council resolutions have demanded since 2006 that Iran suspend all enrichment-related activity. Construction of this site is a direct violation of these resolutions. Compliance with the resolution would require Iran to halt construction at this site.
- We will go to the October 1 meeting with Iran with an expectation that Iran will be prepared to take tangible and concrete steps to create confidence and transparency.
- How Iran addresses this secret enrichment site will be central to this discussion.

[IC-DRAFTED Q/As ARE BELOW]

When did the US Intelligence Community first inform the President about Qom?

- We constantly update the President on issues of national security, and we have kept him apprised of our most up-to-date analysis regarding Iran's nuclear aspirations.

Have you told Congress about Qom?

- We have briefed House and Senate oversight committee members, on our assessments of the facility.

Why did the Iranians decide to reveal this facility at this time?

- We do not know.

Where is the facility located?

- This facility is located near the city of Qom in Iran.

When could Iran begin enriching uranium at this facility?

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- Based on our understanding of the status of the facility, we assess that Iran will not be able to begin enriching uranium there before at least 2010. Iran is continuing construction of support buildings at the facility. Intelligence indicates Iran was installing the infrastructure required for centrifuges earlier this year.

How much enriched material could Iran process with 3000 centrifuges?

- That depends on Iran's centrifuge plans and performance. We assess Iran could not produce enough LEU for a civil nuclear power reactor with just 3000 centrifuges. The facility could be used for centrifuge R&D or it could be configured to produce weapons-grade uranium.

How many weapons can it make?

- The answer depend on the type and performance of the centrifuges installed at the facility, but we asses it would be capable of producing approximately one weapons worth of highly enriched uranium per year, if they chose to do so.

How many centrifuges would you need for a power reactor?

- It depends on the size of the reactor. For comparison, the Natanz enrichment facility in Iran is sized to provide regular fuel reloads to the Bushehr nuclear power plant and is designed to house 54,000 centrifuges.

Does this mean that the IC's judgments in the 2007 NIE were wrong?

- No, in and of itself the information on this facility does not contradict our 2007 assessment of Iran's nuclear program.

Does the IC still judge that Iran halted its nuclear weapons program?

- Yes, we still assess that Iran halted its nuclear weapons program in 2003. We obtain new information all the time and are constantly reassessing Iran's nuclear program.

Does the US Intelligence Community know about any other undeclared nuclear facilities?

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- We cannot provide specifics, but we are always looking for indications Iran is pursuing nuclear technologies.

Is the Qom Enrichment Facility affiliated with the Iranian military?

- We do not assess that it is run by the military. We assess the civilian Atomic Energy Organization of Iran is responsible for its development, although it is located on a military base.

Why do you think it is run by the AEOI if it is on a military base?

- Have multiple sources of intelligence indicating the AEOI is responsible for the development of the facility.

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