

Iran and Nuclear Weapons

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PEJ News - Letter from Ace Hoffman - Two people wrote to say they don't believe Iran is heading towards testing a nuclear weapon. But Iran hardly needs nuclear-derived electricity! They have oil, wind, solar, geothermal, wave -- they have lots of cheaper, safer, energy. Some say they need nuclear power because they have oil, but no refineries. But then, wouldn't building a refinery make more sense, at far less cost and risk?

www.PEJ.org On the other hand, Iran undoubtedly feels threatened (rightly or wrongly) by the United States, and Iran probably believes (rightly or wrongly) that possession of a nuclear weapon would reduce the chances that the United States would attack them.

Iran has already demonstrated simultaneous launches of long-range missiles, which suggests that if / when they do test a nuclear weapon, they'll probably test more than one simultaneously (which will also make it very difficult to determine the yields very precisely).

If the world really doesn't want Iran to test a nuclear weapon, probably all it has to do is convince Iran that no one will attack it with one. Good luck on that.

The other choice is to let Iran admit they have one (or more) nuclear weapons without demanding that they test them for the world, to "prove" their existence. We could just simply agree to believe Iran really has such weapons (as is done with Israel). Or Iran could provide us with tangible proof which our scientists would accept. Wouldn't that be a novel way to prevent another "test" of these eco-maiming weapons of mass destruction?

Even underground tests produce radioactive fission waste products, which are invariably vented to the atmosphere, and contaminate ground water, soil, etc.. Still, if Iran tested a nuclear weapon just to prove they had one, life would probably go on without significant obvious changes -- except to those babies and other living things who would be poisoned by the fallout.

This writer believes the evidence suggests that Iran is going to "test" a nuclear weapon some day. But who can say what day Iran's leaders might think is a good day for such a test?

We would all be better off if we could convince Iran not to test a nuclear weapon even if they have built one.

Sincerely,

Ace Hoffman
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