Key Info Missing From UN Report On Iran’s Nuclear Program, Says Think Tank

May 31, 2016

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The Daily Caller

http://dailycaller.com/2016/05/31/key-info-missing-from-un-report-on-irans-nuclear-program-says-think-tank/

A recent compliance report on Iran’s nuclear program is missing several important pieces of information that could determine whether or not the Islamic Republic is abiding by the terms of last July’s nuclear agreement.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the United Nations’s nuclear watch dog, furnished its [second report](http://isis-online.org/uploads/isis-reports/documents/iaea-iranreport-05272016.pdf) on Iran’s nuclear program Friday. The Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS), not to be confused with Islamic State, claimed in a [report](https://mail-attachment.googleusercontent.com/attachment/u/0/?ui=2&ik=77c2e187c0&view=att&th=1550863f85a0ae61&attid=0.1&disp=inline&realattid=1535875071150653440-local0&safe=1&zw&saddbat=ANGjdJ8mpXJE7ZPkwcdSdoEsHkpgeOlYOiqry8Eeqp1e7cgivluEDmxvi0qgtq5dxisIys1-Ouf2OK9hgdjLon4lFx5YHRfJKebnV7t0DUJL3G9mvmr-RggaUuegZ_STeYzC4Egnyx6Q0tjoUzcjENottgepo1ZCoJ4QPip8Ssf0kSES3vOvpnq6JLvSIQ3Z9Sw8R2hoSBS0lELlWaT28Fj_cFnc7MlDtdPqqClF1aut09LnhoglCK2wH-KDV51HZSgELyWsacXjAVvnTxpKGIQllrgKUBOx4cHeJlHMItnZ-qQGvzuIyf9OBXbipJSLFUDiUg7GXg9ENee-hVd1I4HPBRQsebUDb8zYya9N3gD9mBU4Hx-D428ud7pqx13XqVN0INFneFfd6t3nYBuBZfmVfDmTrvYT-lZotB8IAZr52NlPPvs8XiEjM8BMvN5nDnRILgwwaZw75m3drNMN8BCr3WFUF_FAxEJEMvzBt0SUTm-0SX6mADZltXGHVm6zizEFwM2MV_Y1oyW67yHxY5vPkKCY25juCVtjYqHAXfJyfvCWUiqT0cZLx34uIw6fteFtCByDqgtVWUaOFnav6UayLahULF-iKVREds6vJAD23q5zYB_hew6QNWp6x_yz5A9oaDc8dA2hwZGNhQzJ) Tuesday there are at least eight key pieces of information missing from the report.

“Although Iran appears to be living up to most of its general commitments, the IAEA report continues to lack technical details about critical implementation issues,” said David Albright, Serena Kelleher-Vergantini and Andrew Stricker in the report. “Without this information, an independent determination of whether Iran is complying with the JCPOA is not possible.”

First, the authors say the amount of Low Enriched Uranium (LEU) in Iran’s possession is missing from the report, as well as how much has been sent out of Iran, diluted and produced. LEU can be further enriched to make weapons-grade uranium or enriched to 3 percent and used as fuel for certain nuclear reactors. Because of LEU’s potential to be converted to a weapon, it is crucial the international community knows how much of it Iran has. Per regulations of last year’s Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the technical term for the Iran nuclear deal, Iran may only possess 300 kilograms of LEU.

Second, the authors have serious concerns over an alleged “secret agreement” that requires Iran to irradiate its 20 percent LEU to an unknown level. The JCPOA requires Iran’s 20 percent LEU to be placed in the fuel assemblies of its reactor in the capital of Tehran, but the IAEA report includes no information on this issue.

Third, the authors noted the report provides no information as to how many centrifuges are operating in Iran’s Natanz nuclear facility. Centrifuges are a key [component](http://science.howstuffworks.com/uranium-centrifuge.htm) to a nuclear program, as they separate uranium 235 from uranium ore. Uranium 235 is the isotope used to make nuclear warheads.

Fourth, certain information on Iran’s Fordow facility is not included in the report. Per JCPOA provisions, all centrifuges at Fordow are supposed to be removed, while the facility is to be converted into a “research center.”

Fifth, ISIS alleges a shipment of Iranian heavy water is currently in the nearby Middle Eastern country of Oman. Heavy water is a key [component](http://fas.org/nuke/intro/nuke/heavy.htm) in the production of plutonium; plutonium can in turn be utilized in nuclear weapons. Under the JCPOA, Iran is permitted to have no more than 130 metric tons of heavy water. An IAEA report from May 9 says Iran currently holds 116.7 tons of the product. The state of ownership of the heavy water in Oman is crucial to ensuring Iran’s JCPOA compliance, say the authors.

The IAEA report noted Iran’s research into advanced centrifuges has been within compliance, but little information is provided as to which models or how many are in production. This information is crucial due to the fact that certain [models](http://isis-online.org/isis-reports/detail/technical-note-making-sense-out-of-the-ir-8-centrifuge/8) of Iranian centrifuges are orders of magnitude more powerful than older models, meaning Iran could make a significant leap forward in its nuclear development and give it a faster route to a weapon, should the country cheat the deal.

ISIS points out a lack of clarity in the IAEA report regarding Iran’s nuclear weaponization research, particularly at the Parchin facility which was believed to have been involved in explosive tests.

Finally, the authors of the ISIS report expressed serious concern over a lack of IAEA involvement in the Procurement Working Group (PWG), which is responsible for any nuclear related transfers of technology and resources that could be used for nuclear weapons. The IAEA is not [considered](http://www.un.org/en/sc/2231/pdf/PWG-Coordinator-presentation-Procurement-Channel.pdf) a participant in the PWG, according to the organization’s own documentation.