

# No evidence Iran building nukes: UN watchdog chief

Posted 10 hours 7 minutes ago  
Updated 9 hours 22 minutes ago

**UN atomic watchdog chief Mohamed El Baradei said he had no evidence that Iran is building nuclear weapons and accused US leaders of adding "fuel to the fire" with recent bellicose rhetoric.**

"We haven't received any information there is a parallel, ongoing, active nuclear weapon program," the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) told CNN.

"Second, even if Iran were to be working on nuclear weapons... they are at least a few years away from having such weapon," he said, citing Washington's own intelligence assessments.

"My fear is that if we continue to escalate from both sides that we will end up into a precipice, we will end up into an abyss. The Middle East is in a total mess, to say the least. And we cannot add fuel to the fire."

The White House had earlier rejected any parallels between its Iran rhetoric and the run-up to the Iraq war, after fresh sanctions on Iran and escalating US warnings fuelled comparisons to the months before the 2003 invasion.

"We are absolutely committed to a diplomatic process," spokesman Tony Fratto told reporters.

"We would never take options off the table, but the diplomatic process is what we want to move forward with," he said, calling it "unwise" to rule out the use of force.

His comments came as US President George W Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney have been sharply ramping up their rhetoric about Iran, leading some critics to draw parallels with the late 2002 verbal escalation against Iraq.

In recent months, Mr Bush has predicted "nuclear holocaust" and "World War III" if Iran gets atomic weapons, while Mr Cheney has warned of "serious consequences" for Iran if it defies global demands to freeze uranium enrichment - echoing the UN resolution that the US says authorised war in Iraq.



*No evidence of nuclear weapons:  
Iranian President Mahmoud  
Ahmadinejad (Reuters: Caren Firouz)*

Iran insists that it is enriching uranium only for nuclear energy and denies US charges that it is seeking the bomb.

Mr El Baradei also accused Israeli of taking "the law into their own hands" with a mysterious raid on Syria last month, and demanded more information about what was hit.

Neither Israel nor the United States has furnished "any evidence at all" to prove that the Syrian site bombed in early September was a secret nuclear facility, he said.

"That to me is very distressful because we have a system: if countries have information that the country is working on a nuclear-related program, they should come to us. We have the authority to go out and investigate," he said.

"But to bomb first and then ask questions later, I think it undermines the system and it doesn't lead to any solution to any suspicion, because we are the eyes and ears of the international community."

-AFP

Tags: [nuclear-issues](#), [world-politics](#), [unrest-conflict-and-war](#), [iran](#), [united-states](#)

## Comments (29)

[Add your comment](#)

- **Neil:**

29 Oct 2007 12:09:11pm

Like Iraq, the coming war will be about Oil.

The US is trying to get Iraq to pass the Oil laws which means that US companies will be able to rape their country. The attack on Iran is more of the same. Politicians said that they would not invade the whole country. Just the part with most of the oil near Iraq. In reality, the world must stand up against the real terrorist in our midst and this is the US. I do not advocate violence but I do advocate economic boycotts. Done on an individual basis by each citizen who disagrees with US Hegemony.

[Reply Agree](#) (0) [Alert moderator](#)

- **Zoltar:**

29 Oct 2007 11:55:28am

Israel bombed nuclear installations in Iraq, and supposedly in Syria recently. Iran building its nuclear installations in deep underground bunkers should not be viewed with undue suspicion. Its a necessary move to counter the repeatedly demonstrated aggression of a nuclear armed, and nuclear denying Israel.

It is up to Iran as to whether it wishes to go down the nuclear weapon path, but given Iran's location, its enemies, and its oil wealth, going nuclear appears the right solution. I continue to believe that Saddams main crime was not getting nuclear weapons to defend Iraq's oil wealth from the greed of others. If Iraq had nukes there would have been no Iraq war.

It is utter hypocrisy for countries with nuclear weapons to deny them from other countries. Australia is in no position to insist that countries, like Iran, don't pursue nuclear weapons, when we, as a nation, supply uranium to countries with nuclear arsenals.

[Reply Agree](#) (0) [Alert moderator](#)

■ **Charles:**

29 Oct 2007 12:13:47pm

This argument shows exactly why, by scuttling the international non-proliferation treaties and insisting on unilateralism, Bush's America is without influence or credibility. I think Australia has currency in the debate still, even though we now export to countries that have not signed non-proliferation treaties, such as India and cannot guarantee Australian uranium will not end up in an Indian warhead. Australia must define it's principles on the issue, immediately and act accordingly. We could exert pressure on both Pakistan and India to control their nukes, but lack the leadership to carry it through...

[Reply Agree](#) (0) [Alert moderator](#)

■ **Zoltar:**

29 Oct 2007 12:57:19pm

Whether Australias uranium ends up or doesn't end up in a warhead isn't the issue. The nuclear fuel we supply means that other nuclear fuel can be diverted to non peaceful purposes, its like trying to maintain the argument that "none of the money I pay in tax goes to the department of defence".

America (like other nuclear weapon states), is in open defiance of the nuclear non proliferation treaty. The treaty requires that the nuclear weapon states disarm, there has been some reduction, but it is nowhere near a complete nuclear disarmament. Futhermore, the treaty requires the nuclear states to assist non nuclear states in embracing the peacefull use of nuclear energy. This hasn't really happened much either.

The US has passed its zenith and is now in decline. It still has influence, but its waning.

[Reply Agree](#) (0) [Alert moderator](#)

● **Robert:**

29 Oct 2007 11:43:08am

Peregrine.....so Syria and Iran have nuclear reactors because Israeli intelligence says they do. Does it for me. But even accepting this, it is somewhat ironic don't you think that nuclear reactors in Iran & Syria are by nature a bad thing, but nuclear weapons in neighbouring Israel is a good thing. It doesn't add up.

[Reply Agree](#) (0) [Alert moderator](#)

■ **Bertrand:**

29 Oct 2007 1:04:26pm

Well, for a start Israel is a multi party democracy that has enshrined the majority of values that Australia holds, and is politically aligned to us. Syria and Iran hold values that are inimical to our own, such as the oppression of women etc. Iran has also said, publicly to the world, that they will wipe Israel of the map. So it is not clear to me why Israel would a) be allowed to defend itself by taking out Iranian installations, and b) would not be encouraged to do so by us.

[Reply Agree](#) (0) [Alert moderator](#)

■ **Zoltar:**

29 Oct 2007 1:59:09pm

Israels bond with democracy is weak, its a charade in an apartheid regime.

Israel refused to recognise the result of the free democratic elections in Palestine. Not exactly a ringing endorsement of democratic values.

Demographics indicate that in the future Israel will become more of a muslim country than jewish. Israel will reject democracy before this happens to prevent muslims from gaining rightfull control.

[Reply Agree](#) (0) [Alert moderator](#)

• **spot:**

29 Oct 2007 11:17:55am

The 'military-industrial complex' may be a cliché these days, but nothing like a little more war to help stoke the fires of the US economy. The sad thing is that most of us accept it as the norm.

[Reply Agree](#) (0) [Alert moderator](#)

■ **Charles:**

29 Oct 2007 12:04:18pm

Absolutely agree, spot. This is why any move by the US can not be trusted. The military-industrial complex has the ear of the White House and will foment war so as to increase profit.

[Reply Agree](#) (0) [Alert moderator](#)

■ **Smaug:**

29 Oct 2007 12:28:38pm

Fully 1/3 of the US economy is based on selling weapons however this is true of a lot of western nations. Even Australia has quite a thriving defence industry.

The US is somewhat like Germany in world war two. They had the best weapons in the world (German Engineering was and still is excellent) which dominated the battle field when in the correct numbers and when used by competent commanders.

However the enormous cost and the ability of an economy to support the cost is what counts.

That, more than anything else, is what symied the US in Vietnam and probably Iraq as well.

A guy with a \$10 Kalishnikov and a couple of pounds of explosive can take out half a million dollars worth of Humvee.

[Reply Agree](#) (0) [Alert moderator](#)

● **Robert:**

29 Oct 2007 10:23:40am

UN watchdog says there is "no" evidence that Iran is building nuclear weapons. Does anyone get the feeling of deja vu?

[Reply Agree](#) (0) [Alert moderator](#)

■ **Peregrine:**

29 Oct 2007 10:57:51am

Yes Robert but how much power does a UN watchdog have? Israels intelligence on Nuclear reactors in Syria and Iran was not gained by tours led by those countries. They used the Mossad to find intelligence if it existed. Funnily enough it did exist.

[Reply Agree](#) (0) [Alert moderator](#)

- **Charles:**

29 Oct 2007 10:01:13am

Its just like the US case for the Iraq invasion that began with a game of brinksmanship, unsupported accusations, bogus dossiers and UN inspector's doubts as to the veracity of such claims. It does not bode well...

[Reply Agree](#) (0) [Alert moderator](#)

- **Peregrine:**

29 Oct 2007 10:24:17am

The key difference being that Iraq had a history of using WMD's during the Iraq Iran war and on the Kurds in the north of the country. But then again, what kind of moral responsibility do people who live in free countries have to remove tyrants from power?

[Reply Agree](#) (0) [Alert moderator](#)

- **Charles:**

29 Oct 2007 11:00:25am

I think the moral responsibility exists in the methods that are undertaken in removing the tyrant...Obviously warfare, such as in Iraq, is beyond the pale.

[Reply Agree](#) (0) [Alert moderator](#)

- **Puck:**

29 Oct 2007 11:11:44am

Hmmmm what about Hitler though? Where do we draw the line, or Mugabe...if someone is regularly slaughtering people don't we have a responsibility to do something then?

Not that Iran is in the same category, but the argument that war is out of the question in all circumstances doesn't really work.

[Reply Agree](#) (0) [Alert moderator](#)

- **Peregrine:**

29 Oct 2007 11:26:19am

Oh don't worry puck, I'm sure their victims will die with moral satisfaction that they were the bigger man for copping it on the chin.

[Reply Agree](#) (0) [Alert moderator](#)

■ **Cus :**

29 Oct 2007 12:18:01pm

The answer is usually somewhere in the middle. A place to begin would be to not sell/supply regimes with arms and to use diplomatic /trade pressure on those that do. Who deserves more criticism, Hicks to go adventuring with the Taliban or Saudi Arabia [US ally] for funding/equipping the Taliban?

Irony. USA supplies Iraq arms in the Iraq Iran war, and elements in the Afghan/USSR war. Aus pay bribes to Hussein Regime to aid in wheat exports. Aus then supplies soldiers in Iraq and Afghan theatres. USA still maintains ag subsidies that greatly impact on Aus ag exports. Makes on a bit dizzy.

[Reply Agree](#) (0) [Alert moderator](#)

■ **Bertrand:**

29 Oct 2007 1:08:49pm

I love this idea that the US supplies the weapons to these regimes. Does anyone know what percentage of Iraqi weapons were sold to them by the US? Rounding down to the nearest percentage it was 0 (according to human rights watch and journalist Nick Cohen, who actually wrote for the observer, a left wing paper). But apart from those statistics, does anyone watch what these insurgents fight with? Ak-47's, PKM's and RPG's, all Russian weapons or Russian designs made by the chinese. The US gave them a few out of date surface to air missiles 30 years ago, hardly enough, one would think, to justify putting the blame on the US for the Talibans actions.

[Reply Agree](#) (0) [Alert moderator](#)

■ **Charles:**

29 Oct 2007 1:30:50pm

But Bertrand, most accounts give the CIA full credit for supplying the arms and training that eventually put 400,000 guerillas into action... However, the US-made Stinger missile made the biggest difference in Afghanistan. Overnight, these state-of-the-art, shoulder-fired weapons transformed the battlefield. These are the same weapons that insurgents have recently used to fire at commercial carriers. Blaming the US is fully justified

[Reply Agree](#) (0) [Alert moderator](#)

■ **Peregrine:**

29 Oct 2007 11:18:05am

Hmmm yes a polite note has been shown to be very effective. But don't worry I'm sure the people who die in the meantime under tyrant like Saddam Hussein will die with a certain moral satisfaction that the toppling of that dictator won't occur by force.

[Reply Agree](#) (0) [Alert moderator](#)

■ **Smaug:**

29 Oct 2007 11:42:07am

Of course somewhere between 1/2 and 3/4 of a million people that have died since being "liberated" from the Tyrant Saddam are highly appreciative of the efforts of the US and it's allies.

It's easy for us to say they are better off because they are free but all the freedom in the world is nothing is you are dead.

[Reply Agree](#) (0) [Alert moderator](#)

■ **Puck:**

29 Oct 2007 11:52:09am

And because the world waited so long with Hitler, well over 6 million people died.

How many people does it take before intervention is a good idea?

I never actually said they were better off free, I was genuinely asking at what point we draw the line.

How many lives do we lose before we decide to act?

Look at Rwanda, another million people dead while the UN wrung its hands...what to do what to do!

Where was the concern for the lives of Iraqis before the invasion? I must've missed it.

[Reply Agree](#) (0) [Alert moderator](#)

■ **Charles:**

29 Oct 2007 12:29:10pm

Yes it's an interesting argument, Puck. From what I gather, the answer is different depending what country you come from i.e in the US it's about 2000, but in Iraq we're still counting.

If one were to support unilateral action though, who could guarantee that a debacle would not ensue (as has happened in Iraq)?

It is interesting you that mention Rwanda, you could mention Burma too, or for that matter Chechnya, Hitler is an interesting point to raise since the WWII experience was what turned the League of Nations into the United Nations

with it's extended powers and charters.

Seriously though, do you really believe the line that the US went in to depose a dictator, find WMD, spread democracy, get oil, stop picking on the Kurds etc etc...?

America's unilateral invasion of Iraq and subsequent destruction of infrastructure and bureaucracy and the creation of the biggest refugee situation in the Middle East today was not a result of some bleeding heart agenda, but was done for PROFIT.

[Reply Agree](#) (0) [Alert moderator](#)

■ **Zoltar:**

29 Oct 2007 1:34:54pm

I'm not sure when in history this WMD argument turned up.

For some reason it was fine for the US to rain dioxin laden agent orange over the people of Vietnam (condemning them to generations of genetic damage), to incinerate villages with napalm, to slaughter legions of children with unexploded cluster bombs (and land mines). It was acceptable for the British (and other allies) to use incendiaries to deliberately burn large sections of German cities, filled with civilians, and it was acceptable for the US to nuke Japan during WWII. Burning german civilians was fine, but burning german jews wasn't.

Iraq commits atrocities on civilians nowhere near this scale, and its suddenly bad.

Then years later in Iraq the Americans use napalm equivalents, phosphorous, and cluster bombs, on a population they are supposedly trying to free, and its all perfectly acceptable again.

During the Iran Iraq war the US armed both sides, how can anyone attempt to justify that.

[Reply Agree](#) (0) [Alert moderator](#)

• **Smaug:**

29 Oct 2007 9:58:02am

I wonder if we ever learn lessons from history. A country makes up stories and on the basis of those stories invades another country (Iraq 2003/Czechoslovakia 1938). Then xx many years/months later the same aggressive nation decides to start making up stories to justify it's next territorial demand.

The last time we saw this kind of behaviour was just prior to WWII. I don't think the US nation is as tolerant of their leaders playing this kind of game as the German people were in 1938/39 but I suppose it remains to be seen.

If the US does go into Iran then I suspect this time they'll be on their own.

[Reply Agree](#) (0) [Alert moderator](#)

■ **Peregrine:**

29 Oct 2007 10:06:44am

I'm fairly sure Israel would support them.

[Reply Agree](#) (0) [Alert moderator](#)

■ **Thoreau Dogood:**

29 Oct 2007 1:31:56pm

Smaug, what you are doing is twisting history to fit your needs. Hussein patterned his rule after the Nazi's, not the U.S. The Nazi's did not give Czech free elections after that either. What you are failing to point out is the the League of Nations failed to do anything to limit the attacks of Japan, Germany, and Italy on other nations. In the same way, the U.N. sat by and let Iraq do whatever they wanted including build a nuclear weapons program which was discovered in 1992 when the IAEA Chief Inspector Hans Blix kept saying their was no evidence of nuclear facilities, then the U.N. let Iraq kick out inspectors for four years and did nothing, sat by and let Saddam Hussein earn \$6 billion dollars in the Oil-for-Food program.

You cannot look back at history as though those living in the past have all the information you have now. Bush would not have invaded Iraq if he knew there were no WMD, that would have been political suicide. The problem was that we had no good insiders to know whether or not it was there and the CIA told him WMD was definitely there.

You are really stretching the truth when you try and say we are like the Nazi's in WWII and it is scary that you would even try and do that.

[Reply Agree](#) (0) [Alert moderator](#)

● **alex:**

29 Oct 2007 9:57:36am

And if the Command and Cief goes trodding off to Iran and Johnny gets re-elected watch him follow blindly like he did with Iraq based on bs intelligence

[Reply Agree](#) (0) [Alert moderator](#)