

have provided to the agency. The problem was noted in a May 2008 IAEA report (paras. 16, 21) and a call issued in Feb. 2009: 'The Director General, at the same time, urges Member States which have provided such documentation to the Agency to agree to the Agency's providing copies thereof to Iran.' (para. 21) This call was repeated in June 2009, (para. 23) and as late as November 2009 (para. 32).

No such call is made in the Feb. 2010 report.

CURRENT CONCERNS?

The Feb. 2010 report expresses concern 'about the possible existence in Iran of past or current undisclosed activities related to the development of a nuclear payload for a missile.' The IAEA also expresses the desire to clarify its concerns 'about these activities and those described above, which seem to have continued beyond 2004.' (paras. 41, 43)

A mainstream US foreign policy think tank, the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, commented: 'This report represents a marked shift in tone from previous reports, and for the first time the IAEA has raised concerns over the possibility of current work on a weapons program rather than simply the possibility of past efforts.' (22 Feb.)

This part of the report reflects a secret appendix to the Aug. 2009 IAEA report on Iran. According to the AP press agency, this secret annex suggested that Iranian scientists had engaged in 'probable testing' of explosives arranged in a hemisphere (as with an implosion-type nuclear warhead), and had worked on a chamber to carry a warhead on top of one of its missiles 'that is quite likely to be nuclear'. (*Guardian*, 18 Sept. 2009)

However, the evidence to support these assertions has not been produced, or even hinted at. Hence the conclusion of the editors of *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*: 'the report adds nothing new.... no new information has been revealed.... the report doesn't contain any evidence that the public hasn't already seen.'

All that is new is a harder tone from the new IAEA Director-General.

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THE IAEA VS. - IRAN -

UN Inspectors Harden Their Attitude Towards Iran

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THE NEW IAEA LEADERSHIP VS IRAN

There is a widespread perception that the new head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has tilted the UN agency decisively against Iran in the standoff over the Islamic Republic's nuclear activities.

The primary evidence against Yukiya Amano, Director-General since 1 December 2009, is the latest (18 February) IAEA report on Iran. (All IAEA Board reports on Iran are available from the IAEA website—web links for references are all on the JNV website.)

There's widespread agreement that the new IAEA report is strikingly different in tone and language to previous reports. The BBC described it as 'blunt' and 'unusually forthright'; the *Washington Post* said the IAEA report was 'unusually frank in scolding Iran'. The *Guardian* observed (also on 19 Feb.): 'The wording goes much further than reports by Amano's predecessor Mohamed ElBaradei, who refrained from explicitly spelling out the implications of evidence on weapons-building his inspectors had gathered.'

According to one observer quoted by the *Guardian*, the report reflected the views of inspectors in the IAEA who felt that the agency should be more forthright: 'This is the safeguards department unleashed.'

The *New York Times* quoted two highly-placed government sources: 'Mr. Amano's attitude toward Iran is being closely watched; some officials were concerned that he would be unwilling to confront the Iranians directly in his first months in office. But as one American official said Thursday, "It's been clear to us that he recognizes the severity of what's going on." ... A European diplomat who works with the nuclear agency praised the report as tough and more tightly written than some of the more equivocal assessments of the past, under the direction of Mohamed ElBaradei.' (19 Feb.)



The *Independent* commented: 'Under Mr Amano's predecessor at the IAEA, Mohamed ElBaradei, the agency was seen as downplaying worries that Iran was using the cover of civilian nuclear development to conceal much more dangerous goals. Mr ElBaradei, for a long time regarded with some suspicion by Washington and other western capitals, has since expressed an interest in running to be the President of Egypt.' (19 Feb.)

CONTINUITY?

The editors of *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* thought this topic important enough to justify an extra comment, in addition to their editorial on the distortion of the IAEA report by the media (*see JNV Briefing 121*). They write: 'Because of [sic] there is a large element of subjectivity, arguments about tone are difficult to defend and put us in the realm of literary analysis. However, we do not believe that the February report had a jarring difference in tone, especially when compared to ElBaradei's more detailed reports of 2008.' (Federation of American Scientists Strategic Studies Blog, 22 Mar.)

Ivanka Barzashka and Ivan Oelrich make the reasonable proposal: 'We invite you to lay out the latest report next to other IAEA reports, especially those from 2008, and consider differences in tone.'

THE "ALLEGED STUDIES"

The key differences in tone concern nuclear proliferation-related documents said to have been found on an Iranian government laptop by a foreign intelligence agency—and provided to the IAEA. While Iran has made several attempts to deal with these apparently damning documents, the IAEA continues to have concerns, partly because, since May 2008, Iran has refused to provide the access to documents and individuals that the IAEA believes is necessary to resolve the matter.

Some parts of the new report hark back to the ElBaradei period. For example para. 41 of the February report, which says there is 'extensive' 'consistent and credible' information 'collected from a variety of sources', is almost identical to para. 19 of the IAEA report of 28 August 2009.

However, other aspects are quite clearly different. There is a distinct shift hardening of the language used.

In the four reports of 2008, a total of six 'hard' phrases were used: 'possible military dimensions' (5) and 'studies' (as opposed to 'alleged studies') (1). In the Feb. 2010 report, twice as many 'hard' phrases are used

as in the whole of 2008, including three mentions of 'possible military dimensions' and one unqualified reference to 'military related dimensions' (the final words of the section on this topic).

During 2008, there were an average of 12 references in each IAEA report to the 'alleged studies' or the 'allegations'. In the Amano report, there are three. Instead, there are five blunt references to 'activities' (not 'studies') and an additional two references to 'undeclared' or 'undisclosed' activities.

The most powerful phrase in the 2010 report is the reference to Iran's possible 'development of a nuclear payload for a missile'. *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* editors commented: 'No matter the context, the phrase "nuclear payload for a missile", which was absent from previous reports and which the media have widely cited, will always sound disconcerting.'

When one includes the use of softer phrases such as 'issues', 'information' and 'documentation' to refer to the matters under suspicion, we find the ratio of 'soft' to 'hard' language during 2008 was 6 hard phrases to 96 soft: about 6% hard. In 2010, the ratio was 50:50, with 12 hard and 12 soft phrases.

OMINOUS OMISSIONS

When we undertake the comparison they suggest, it is difficult to agree with the *Bulletin* editors that 'any change in tone [in IAEA reports] is largely imagined'. Furthermore, there are elements of the ElBaradei reports that are missing from the 2010 report.

The most important difference between 2008 and 2010 is the missing caveat. Every single report in 2008 contained an emphatic finding along these lines: 'It should be noted that the Agency currently has no information—apart from the uranium metal document—on the actual design or manufacture by Iran of nuclear material components of a nuclear weapon or of certain other key components, such as initiators, or on related nuclear physics studies.... It should be emphasised... that the Agency has not detected the actual use of nuclear material in connection with the alleged studies.' (May 2008 IAEA report, paras. 24, 28; see also Feb., para. 54; Sept., para. 21; Nov. paras., 24, 28)

There is no such statement in the 2010 report (and at the same time no indication that this kind of evidence has recently been discovered).

One problem Iran has cited in dealing with the accusations against it has been the refusal of Western and Israeli intelligence agencies to allow the IAEA to give Iran full access to the allegedly incriminating documents they