



Written by [Paul Dragu](#) on June 19, 2025

Is Iran a Legitimate Nuclear Threat?

The United States is close to getting embroiled in a full-on, offensive war against Iran — possibly over a nonexistent threat.

The Pentagon has been moving carrier strike groups into the Middle East, and President Donald Trump has been considering offensive military attacks on Iran. But recent news reports suggest that before Israel launched its attack on Iran last Thursday, U.S. intelligence didn't believe the Islamic autocracy was close to building nuclear weapons.

When the Israelis told American intel officials that Tehran “was conducting renewed research useful for a nuclear weapon,” the Americans “weren't convinced that the information pointed to a decision by Tehran to build a bomb,” [according](#) to a *Wall Street Journal* article published Tuesday.

The Israelis presented information about “a multi-point initiation system” and Iranian work on “neutron particles to generate a chain reaction — a critical part of nuclear fission — as well as on plastic explosives and on integration of fissile material in an explosive device,” according to the report. But the Americans, despite agreeing that Iran has made some progress in the ability to develop nuclear weapons, believed the intel “only showed Iran was still researching nuclear weapons, including revisiting work it had done before its nuclear weapons program shut down in 2003.” Moreover, “the consensus view among U.S. intelligence agencies is that Iran hasn't made a decision to move forward on building a bomb.”

U.S. Intel

The *Journal* report is based on conversations with senior intel officials, another U.S. official, and two congressional staffers familiar with the conversations. It corroborates a major point in the annual threat assessment that Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard delivered to the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence on March 26. “Iran is not building a nuclear weapon and Supreme leader Khamenei has not authorized the nuclear weapons program that he suspended in 2003,” the assessment [said](#).

However, American intel agencies did express concern over Iran's enrichment level. “Iran's enriched uranium stockpile is at its highest levels and is unprecedented for a state without nuclear weapons,” Gabbard told Congress.

Netanyahu's Arguments

Shortly after Israel's military began bombarding Iran, Fox News' Bret Baier asked Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu why he launched the attack when he did. Netanyahu [responded](#):



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Because we were facing an imminent threat, a dual existential threat. One, the threat of Iran rushing to weaponize or enrich uranium to make atomic bombs with the specific and declared intent to destroy us. Second, a rush to increase their ballistic-missile arsenal to the capacity that they would have 3,600 weapons a year, new weapons. Within three years, 10,000 ballistic missiles, each one weighing a ton, coming in at Mach 6, right into our cities, as you saw today, and then in six years, 20,000. No country can sustain that, and certainly not a country the size of Israel. So we had to act. It was the twelfth hour. We did act to save ourselves, but not only to protect ourselves, but protect the world from this incendiary regime. We can't have the world's most dangerous regime have the world's most dangerous weapons.

Then Baier repeated Gabbard's assessment that the Iranians hadn't restarted their nuclear program since it was shuttered in 2003 and asked if something changed. He wanted to know if American intel was wrong. Netanyahu responded:

The intel we got and we shared with the United States was absolutely clear. It was absolutely clear that they were working on a secret plan to weaponize the uranium. They were marching very quickly — they would achieve a test device and possibly an initial device within months, and certainly less than a year.... I think we have excellent intel in Iran. I think we've proven that.... Whether it would be six months, or 12 months, or 13 months, is immaterial. Once they go that route, it's too late — and we will not have a second Holocaust.

Netanyahu's answer was indirect but clear: American intel was wrong, Israeli intel was right.

Israeli Intel Failure?

Israeli intel prowess is beyond question. It is among the best, arguably *the* best. As Netanyahu proudly implied, Israel's ability to take out nearly a dozen top-ranking Iranian military officials in a matter of days proves once again that Mossad is a gold-standard intel agency.

But Mossad isn't infallible. One only has to go back to October 7, 2023, when Hamas broke through Israel's border with Gaza and carried out its most successful terrorist operation ever. The wild success of that attack is considered the worst intel failure in modern Israeli history.

One of the first questions on the minds of many, Jews and gentiles, after that attack was: How could a nation with one of the best intelligence agencies in the world, a nation that has learned to survive in a sea of enemies, a nation that has thwarted a series of attempts by its neighbors to destroy it — how could they have not known of such an elaborate plan that was years in the making?

As we documented in [earlier reporting](#), it's no secret that high-ranking Israeli officials ignored a series of internal warnings from the rank-and-file, cautions that would've prevented that tragedy. The *American Jewish Commentary* magazine published in May an [article](#) detailing a long list of specific warnings that were ignored.

Many believe October 7 was a false-flag attack designed as a ruse to permanently occupy Gaza. This was a theory long before Israel announced plans to permanently take over Gaza.

The divergence among U.S. and Israeli intel means one of three things: Israel was right and Iran was



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very close to nuclear proliferation; Israel was mistaken and U.S. intel was correct; or Israel was lying and U.S. intel was still correct. If the truth is anything but the first option, that means the United States may once again go to war in the Middle East on false premises. It means that we are simply changing the Q to N and Iran is about to become Iraq 2.0.

Not a Threat

David Stockman, formerly the budget director under President Ronald Reagan, believes that is exactly what is about to happen. He recently penned a scathing rebuke of the idea that Iran poses a threat to the United States of America. In a post republished at Ron Paul's website, titled "[America First — We Hardly Knew Ye](#)," Stockman says, "Iran's capacity to inflict military harm on the US homeland amounts to zero, nichts, nada, nugatory, nein and nyet."

First, he points out, Iran has no navy — no aircraft carriers, no world-scale cruisers, no destroyers, and no attack submarines. It also doesn't have any bombers with a range of more than 2,800 kilometers. And although it has as many as 2,700 short- and medium-range missiles, they can't cover the 10,000 kilometers needed to reach coastal Washington, D.C. "The only thing Iran can really threaten is a limited number of US bases, military personnel and naval ships that Washington has foolishly put in harm's way in the middle east, Persian Gulf, Red Sea and Mediterranean," Stockman wisely adds.

No Nuclear Weapons Program?

Secondly, Stockman bolsters American intel's assessment. He brings up the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) 2015 investigation based on full access to Iran's facilities and records, which proved Iran halted its nuclear program in 2003. He maintains that nothing has changed.

The IAEA did publish a [report](#) in December that raised alarms about Iranian enrichment activities, echoing the sentiment in Gabbard's report. This is the basis for the 60-percent enrichment claim. But it's still not the 90-plus percent needed for nuclear weapons.

It seems there is a strong consensus that the Israeli claim of Iran posing an imminent threat is not accurate — for whatever reason. And echoing the suspicion of many, Stockman surmises that Israel's surprise attack didn't happen merely hours before the next round of talks between the United States and Iran by coincidence. "The attack was 'preemptive' alright," he writes, "but what was being preempted was the slight possibility that the sixth negotiating session between the White House and Iran scheduled for this weekend might have led to a 'breakthrough' of another kind — that is, a pathway to a detente between Washington and Tehran."

Stockman finishes with a chart showing more than three decades of headlines warning the American people about an imminent Iranian nuclear threat. He posted a screenshot of a *New York Times* article published January 5, 1995, with the title "[Iran May Be Able to Build an Atomic Bomb in 5 Years, U.S. and Israeli Officials Fear](#)." The first line of the article reads, in part, "Iran is much closer to producing nuclear weapons than previously thought." A few paragraphs later, the reader is hit with another declaration that we've been hearing a lot: "The reassessment of Iran's nuclear potential is now described by Israeli officials as the most serious threat facing their country." The article goes on to say that Israeli officials may be forced to attack Iran's nuclear reactors soon.



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