

## IAEA: Accelerated Iranian, Syrian enrichment out of control

DEBKAFfile Special Analysis

June 12, 2009, 12:59 PM (GMT+02:00)



Iran's enrichment plant at Natanz

According to the calculations of the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency in its new report, Iran will be able to produce one nuclear bomb by the end of this year, doubling that figure in 2010. **DEBKAFfile's** military sources note that these estimates only apply to uranium enrichment at Natanz. They do not factor in the product of Iran's clandestine enrichment plants.

Friday night, June 5, officials in Vienna disclosed that Iran was found to have accumulated quantities of low-enriched uranium (1,339 kilos produced since November 2008 plus 839 kilos in stock) - enough to convert into the amount of high-enriched uranium needed for making a single nuclear bomb.

(On June 1, Brig. Gen. Yossi Baidatz, director of Israeli military intelligence (AMAN) research division estimated that Iran will have accumulated enough fissile material to build its first nuclear bomb by the end of this year. Iran's nuclear clock, he said, is ticking away faster than international diplomacy.)

More than 7,000 uranium-enriching centrifuges were installed at Natanz, adding an extra 2,000 from February, the agency has found.

At this rate, 10,000 centrifuges will be spinning at Natanz with a capacity to enrich enough uranium for 2 bombs by the end of the year, double the IAEA's modest estimate by its own figures.

From January, when US president Barack Obama took office, Tehran has won a year's grace for developing its nuclear program. Direct dialogue on which he insists will not begin before July. Progress will be evaluated at year's end, a six-month deadline accepted by Israeli prime minister Binyamin Netanyahu. Iran has therefore been granted plenty of time to make hay i.e. make nukes - free of diplomatic or military constraints.

The IAEA admits its investigations are stalled both in Iran and Syria, where its inspectors also reported Friday the discovery of new traces of man-made uranium near Damascus.

Iranian officials insist their nuclear program is peaceful and refuse to answer questions or cooperate in any way with UN inspectors. At one point in its new report, the IAEA asked for cameras with different wide-range angles for Natanz, indicating that even there, the Iranians are playing cat and mouse to conceal the real scale of their activities from view.

Damascus is similarly stonewalling on the international inspectors' inquiries about the new traces of man-made uranium particles. **DEBKAFfile's** military sources note that these particles could come from only two sources:

One is a new enrichment site. This site has reported repeatedly in the past year that Syria had secretly restarted its banned nuclear activities at three concealed locations which were constructed after Israel destroyed its unfinished plutonium reactor on Sept. 6, 2007.

Alternatively, Syria may be importing enriched uranium smuggled out of Iran, North Korea or Kazakhstan.