

## Propaganda on Steroids: Iran Might have “Secret Nuclear Weapons in North Korea”?

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*It is unclear that a nuclear deal between the U. S. and Iran will take place. However, if there is a deal, it is guaranteed that those who opposed it from the start will try to sabotage it. The Republicans and several Democrats in Washington, the Likud government of Benjamin Netanyahu and special interest groups such as American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) do not want any deal that will benefit Iran's peaceful nuclear program because they say that Iran wants to build nuclear weapons. The main-stream media (MSM) will most certainly jump on board and launch a new propaganda campaign against Iran. In fact, it has already begun. A new story posted by the online magazine “The Daily Beast” makes accusations that Iran can possibly have a “secret nuclear program” in North Korea.*

These accusations are not new by any means, but before we get into the article, I want to highlight the most important principle to journalism, and that is telling the truth with fact-based evidence. The Pew Research Center's (PRC) ‘Principles of Journalism’ states that “Journalism does not pursue truth in an absolute or philosophical sense, but it can—and must—pursue it in a practical sense. This “journalistic truth” is a process that begins with the professional discipline of assembling and verifying facts.” When verifying the facts on any particular issue, it is also important to verify its sources as PRC accurately describes “Journalists should be as transparent as possible about sources and methods so audiences can make their own assessment of the information.” ‘The Daily Beast’ just released a story by Gordon C. Chang, a columnist who also writes for the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal and forbes.com titled ‘Does Iran Have Secret Nukes in North Korea?’ It is a serious claim to suggest that Iran might have a “Secret” nuclear weapons program hidden in North Korea. How did he come to this conclusion?

According to Chang, there was a “technical cooperation pact” between Iran and North Korea that took place in November 2014 according to the Washington, D.C. based National Bureau for Asian Research (NBR). NBR's report conveniently fits Chang's view that Iran and North Korea's has a secret nuclear program disregarding the fact that Iran and North Korea made a pact to strengthen their ties in the economic, trade, science and educational spheres which both sovereign nations are supposed to do. Chang believes that “the unconfirmed dispatches make sense in light of the two states announcing a technical cooperation pact the preceding month.” It is also important to mention that the NBR has several well-known members who have a significant influence in the circles of Washington, D.C. One of the members is former Democratic Senator Joseph Lieberman who declared in a 2013 Wall Street Journal article that Iran is “the most dangerous challenge to U.S. national security.” Another figure in the NBR is Sam Nunn who was also interviewed in 2013 by

Germany's Der Spiegel and said "Now, we have a nuclear standoff between Pakistan and India, an Iran that is on its way to building the bomb and a North Korea bent on developing intercontinental nuclear missiles." Well you get the picture.

Chang says that "the Mullahs may well have a secret program" and that

"In October 2012, Iran began stationing personnel at a military base in North Korea, in a mountainous area close to the Chinese border. The Iranians, from the Ministry of Defense and associated firms, reportedly are working on both missiles and nuclear weapons."

The former minister of defense, Ahmed Vahidi had "denied" the accusations calling it "just speculation" in 2012 according to the Tehran Times.

Here is an interesting statement made by Mr. Chang worth mentioning:

But no inspections of Iranian sites will solve a fundamental issue: As can be seen from the North Korean base housing Tehran's weapons specialists, Iran is only one part of a nuclear weapons effort spanning the Asian continent. North Korea, now the world's proliferation superstar, is a participant. China, once the mastermind, may still be a co-conspirator. Inspections inside the borders of Iran, therefore, will not give the international community the assurance it needs

Chang says that "The cross-border nuclear trade is substantial enough to be called a "program." Larry Niksch of the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C., estimates that the North's proceeds from this trade with Iran are "between \$1.5 billion and \$2.0 billion annually." The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) members include Cold War veterans Henry Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski. This story is clearly what I would call "knocking out two birds with one stone" or "three birds with one stone" if you add China. The Sunday Times based in London said that "Iran's leading nuclear scientist, Mohsen Fakhrizadeh Mahabadi, is believed to have travelled to North Korea to observe its third nuclear test last week, according to western intelligence sources." But the Daily Beast story declares that "Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, thought to be Tehran's chief nuclear scientist, was almost certainly in North Korea at Punggye-ri in February 2013 to witness Pyongyang's third atomic test." Western intelligence sources "believed" that Mr. Mahabadi travelled to North Korea is not a confirmation that it did actually happen because "believing" something without absolute proof does not mean it is a fact. But it does raise questions about the sources used in the story. Chang also said that North Korea had sold Iran "material for bomb cores, perhaps even weapons-grade uranium" according to The Telegraph because "a barrel of North Korean uranium cracked open and contaminated the tarmac of the new Tehran airport."

According to Chang's analysis, North Korea had assisted Iran in every way possible to develop a nuclear bomb. "In 2013, Meir Dagan, a former Mossad director, charged the North with providing assistance to Iran's plutonium reactor." Well here is what Mr. Dagan actually said according to a South Korean news source 'Maeil Business Newspaper' (MK) based in South Korea:

North Korea already possesses nuclear capability, and is using it to export weapons to Iran

and Syria to make money. However, North Korea is very unlikely to take a provocative action

There are even accusations that there are North Koreans that have worked at numerous nuclear and missile facilities throughout Iran who were at times relaxing at “their own coastal resort” according to a story written in the Wall Street Journal by Henry Sokolski in 2003. Chang said that “In March 2011, police in Port Klang seized two containers from a ship bound to Iran from China. Malaysian authorities discovered that goods passed off as “used for liquid mixing or storage” were actually components for potential atomic weapons.” Here is what the Associated Press published regarding the seized containers:

Malaysian International Shipping Corp. confirmed in a statement to the AP that police confiscated two containers from the MV Bunga Raya Satu on March 8. It said a freight forwarder had declared the contents as “goods used for liquid mixing or storage for pharmaceutical or chemical or food industry

Chang says that “there has been an apparent decline in Chinese shipments to Iran” but there is a possibility that “after decades of direct and indirect illicit transfers, China has already supplied most of what Iran needs to construct a weapon.” Chang also said that China will allow North Korea to lead a “proliferation role.” Ken Kato, director of the Tokyo-based Human Rights in Asia said that Mohsen Fakhrizadeh’s was in China “After all, the shadowy Fakhrizadeh was reported to have traveled through China on his way to North Korea to observe the North’s third nuclear test.”

He also claims that “In the past, China’s proxy for this deadly trade was Pakistan? Then it was China’s only formal ally, North Korea. In both cases, Chinese policymakers intended to benefit Iran.” These are serious accusations.

“In a theoretical sense, there is nothing wrong with an accommodation with the Islamic Republic over nukes, yet there is no point in signing a deal with just one arm of a multi-nation weapons effort. That’s why the P5+1 needs to know what is going on at that isolated military base in the mountains of North Korea” according to Chang’s analysis.

A 2014 Congressional Research Service report titled ‘Iran-North Korea-Syria Ballistic Missile and Nuclear Cooperation’ admitted that “there is no evidence that Iran and North Korea have engaged in nuclear-related trade or cooperation with each other.” The founder of the Daily Beast, Tina Brown once said “Journalism” is having a “Very, Very Pathetic Moment.” I am glad she admitted to something that those in the Alternative media already know. But will a new propaganda push that will paint Iran and North Korea as having a joint-secret nuclear weapons program if a new deal between the West and Iran were to take place? The U.S. government and Israel want a war with Iran. The psychopath, Neo-Con and former state department official John Bolton said in a recent New York Times opinion piece:

The inconvenient truth is that only military action like Israel’s 1981 attack on Saddam Hussein’s Osirak reactor in Iraq or its 2007 destruction of a Syrian reactor, designed and built by North Korea, can accomplish what is required. Time is terribly short, but a strike can still succeed

War with Iran is on the shelf, but for how long? Saudi Arabia launching air strikes on Yemen is a dangerous game played by the U.S. warmongers who gave the green light to start a

new front against Iran. Will the main-stream media create new accusations against the Iran linking it to North Korea? Will Iran's alleged "secret nuclear weapons program" become the new norm among media pundits in the U.S. and Europe? We shall soon see what the MSM has up its sleeves.

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