

Iran Nuclear Brief: Assessing Iran's Nuclear Program Without Exaggeration or Complacency

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By [Greg Thielmann](#)

ACA
THE ARMS CONTROL
ASSOCIATION

Iran Nuclear Brief

Analysis from the "Solving the Iranian Nuclear Puzzle" Briefing Series

BY MARK FITZPATRICK
IISS
OCTOBER 3, 2011

Assessing Iran's Nuclear Program Without Exaggeration or Complacency

Shortly after the early September release of the International Atomic Energy Agency's report on Iran's nuclear program, the Arms Control Association assembled a panel of top experts to assess the status of Iran's nuclear effort and examine strategies to address it. The September 19 briefing for Congressional staffers was part of an ongoing series of briefings organized by ACA and its partners on "Solving the Iranian Nuclear Puzzle."

Along with nuclear terrorism, the potential acquisition of nuclear weapons by states not yet in possession of them is at the forefront of U.S. national security concerns. Iran dominates the field.

The following *Iran Nuclear Brief* by Mark Fitzpatrick, Director of the Nonproliferation and Disarmament Program at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) in London, is based on his presentation at the September 19 briefing. It provides a status report on Iran's nuclear and missile programs and an evaluation of their potential as a nuclear weapons threat. —ACA STAFF

HIGHLIGHTS

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We can have high confidence that Iran does not today have a nuclear weapon and that it won't have one tomorrow or next week or next month or a year from now. To claim otherwise on the basis of an amalgamation of worst-case assumptions borders on the irresponsible.• It would also be irresponsible to be complacent about Iran's nuclear program because in all the key aspects of what it takes to be able to have a nuclear weapon, Iran has | <ul style="list-style-type: none">made recent progress. I have no confidence that Iran won't have a nuclear weapon two years from now. If they wanted to go for it and if everything went right, maybe they could.• Clarity is needed when we talk about a "nuclear Iran." Iran is already nuclear-capable, but a nuclear-armed Iran is not inevitable. A combination of US policy tools can keep Iran from crossing the line from nuclear-capable to nuclear-armed. |
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Presentations from earlier briefings in the ACA "Solving the Iranian Nuclear Puzzle" series are available from the ACA [here](#).

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