

ALBRIGHT DROPS PRETENSE OF NEUTRALITY, GOES ALL IN WITH MEK TERRORISTS

I have long criticized David Albright for his behavior in helping those who have tried to fan the flames over the years for a war with Iran. His role usually consists of providing technical “analysis” that somehow always works to support the latest allegations from sources (most often identified as diplomats) who selectively feed information to either AP reporter George Jahn or Reuters reporter Fredrik Dahl. As the P5+1 group of countries and Iran have moved closer and closer to achieving a final deal on Iran’s nuclear program, the Iran war hawks are growing more and more desperate. That desperation this week has resulted in David Albright dropping all pretense of being a neutral technical analyst and joining forces with the terrorist group MEK in slinging new, unsubstantiated allegations about Iran’s nuclear program.

On Tuesday, Albright published a strange document (pdf) on Iran’s nuclear program at his Institute for Science and International Security website. Also on Tuesday, the Wall Street Journal published an editorial that included a quote from Albright.

The reason I say that Albright’s document at the ISIS website is strange is that the document is simply titled “Spin, Spin, Spin” and, after the author list (Andrea Stricker joins him in the byline), the document puts a very strange quotation right after the dateline:

■ “The bigger the lie...”

The “Spin, Spin, Spin” title could be excused as a clever pun if the article’s topic were the

centrifuges that Iran uses for enrichment of uranium. Instead, the topic is exploding bridge wire detonators. The title is a complete dismissal of everything that Iran has to say about the detonators, ascribing it to spin rather than fact. But then Albright and Stricker move beyond the mere spin accusation all the way to accusing Iran of lying—before they lay out a single bit evidence to support their allegation.

The document opens by attacking press coverage of Iran beginning to discuss EBW's with the IAEA:

Media reporting immediately following the release of the IAEA's safeguards report focused on Iran's willingness to discuss the exploding bridge wire (EBW) detonators. That is certainly good news, but did Iran resolve the IAEA's concern? The answer has to be no or probably not. This fact was only lightly covered in the media over the weekend. Some misinterpreted Iran's willingness to discuss the issue with making progress on it. One group at least even went so far as to declare that Iran had "halted nuclear activities in the areas of greatest proliferation concern and rolled back its program in other key areas." But if Iran continues to work on aspects of nuclear weapons, as the IAEA worries, then it is necessary to reserve judgment on that question.

After a while, the document moves on to the accusation that Iran is lying:

So, while it is significant that Iran has been willing to talk about this issue for the first time since 2008 when it unilaterally ended cooperation over the matter, the key consideration is whether Iran is actually addressing the IAEA's concerns. More plainly, is it telling the truth? The EBW issue must be taken in the context of the large amount

of evidence collected by Western intelligence agencies and the IAEA over many years, detailed in the annex to the November 2011 safeguards report, indicating EBWs were part of a nuclear weapon design effort and military nuclear program. From that perspective, Iran has not answered this issue adequately and appears to have simply elevated the level of its effort to dissemble.

Ah, so Albright is basing the accusation of lying on the “evidence...detailed in the annex to the November 2011 safeguards report”. Okay then. Never mind that the annex, based almost exclusively on the “laptop of death” has been pretty thoroughly debunked and seems likely to be a product of forgery. About seven and a half years ago, some dirty hippie figured out that the most likely source of this forgery was the MEK. One can only wonder how Albright has gone from being enough of a scientist to seeing the holes in the forgery to even be quoted by Gareth Porter in a 2010 debunking of the data to now throwing his entire weight (while apparently deciding to throw away his entire reputation) behind the allegations.

The full extent of Albright’s loss of intellectual honesty becomes clear when we look at the Wall Street Journal editorial. At least the Journal is open about its latest round of accusations coming directly from the MEK:

The International Atomic Energy Agency and Iran last week issued a joint statement in which Tehran pledged to apprise the Agency of “the initiation of high explosives, including the conduct of large scale high explosives experimentation in Iran.” In a word: weaponization, the most secretive dimension of the Iranian nuclear program. Tehran’s willingness to broach the topic will be hailed by supporters of the current talks as a sign that

they're yielding results.

Yet Iran has thus far dismissed as "fabrications" evidence of its weaponization work compiled by the IAEA. We'll believe honest disclosures of prior weaponization activity when we see them. More to the point, we've obtained a plausible new report from the Mujahedeen-e Khalq, an Iranian opposition group, suggesting that Tehran has kept active and intact its core team of weaponization researchers.

The editorial goes on to quote Albright (who appears to be relying on the MEK information; at any rate no evidence backing the assertion is offered):

But Mr. Fakhrizadeh and his scientists didn't stop their weaponization work. As former United Nations weapons inspector David Albright told us, "Fakhrizadeh continued to run the program in the military industry, where you could work on nuclear weapons." Much of the work, including theoretical explosive modeling, was shifted to Defense Ministry-linked universities, such as Malek Ashtar University of Technology in Tehran.

Albright has now taken the MEK position entirely on the issue of Iran continuing weapons-related work while offering documents that read more like propaganda pieces than technical analysis. He never gets around to mentioning that his position on these issues is completely aligned with that of the MEK or even that the information he cites originates with them. When a Wall Street Journal editorial shows more intellectual honesty by openly admitting its allegations come from the MEK, it appears that it is time to remove Albright's name from the fold of independent analysts.