

ONCE AGAIN, IRAN PROTESTS IAEA LEAKS

Iran's Ambassador to the IAEA is not happy. Speaking to PressTV today, he protested a report yesterday that final plans are in the works for the next round of meetings between Iran and the IAEA to discuss long-standing issues on Iran's nuclear program:

A delegation from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) plans to visit the Iranian capital, Tehran, in the coming days to continue talks with Iranian officials.

Iran's Ambassador to the IAEA Reza Najafi said on Friday that Tero Varjoranta, the deputy director general and head of the Department of Safeguards of the nuclear monitoring body, will head the team.

The envoy also expressed concern about Iran's secret nuclear information obtained by the IAEA leaking out.

"It is regrettable that classified information in the agency has not been protected again, and while Iran and the agency were busy planning [the meeting], the news was published by a Western media outlet," he said.

"This issue once again confirms Iran's misgivings that spying exists in the agency," Najafi said.

But wait, you might say. Where is the harm in breaking the news that a meeting is planned? The first clue might come from the suspect report itself, a Reuters article by Fredrik Dahl:

The U.N. nuclear agency is expected to make a new attempt soon to advance its investigation into suspected atomic bomb research by Iran, diplomats said on

Thursday, more than a month after Tehran missed a deadline for cooperation.

They said experts of the International Atomic Energy Agency and Iran may meet early next week in Tehran, with the IAEA seeking to achieve progress in the slow-moving inquiry into the country's nuclear program.

There was no immediate comment from the IAEA, a Vienna-based U.N. agency which for years has been trying to investigate Western allegations that Iran has worked on designing a nuclear warhead. Iran says its nuclear program is entirely peaceful.

True to the usual path employed by Dahl and his fellow Vienna-based colleague from AP, George Jahn, Dahl relies on "diplomats" for his inside information. Note also that Dahl reports that the IAEA did not have a comment for him to include in the report. This suggests that the IAEA and Iran were still in the process of planning the next meeting and not ready to announce it publicly yet.

If meeting plans were the only leaks to come out of IAEA through "diplomats" in Vienna, then this would be a non-story. But there is much more. Here is PressTV in January of 2012 after an Iranian nuclear scientist had been assassinated:

Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesman says confidential information on the country's nuclear experts has been leaked to the terrorists by the so-called inspectors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

"Certain individuals who came to Iran under the pretext of inspecting the country's nuclear facilities have identified Iranian scientists and given their names to the terrorist groups," Ramin Mehmanparast said on Friday.

The Iranian official highlighted that Tehran would pursue the case in relevant international bodies.

The comments came in the wake of the assassination of Iranian scientist Mostafa Ahmadi Roshan on January 11 when an unknown motorcyclist attached a magnetic bomb to his car near a college of Allameh Tabatabaei University in Tehran.

He was killed immediately and his driver, who sustained injuries, died a few hours later in hospital.

Just who are the “diplomats” in Vienna who cause all this harm? Much attention focuses on Israelis:

Israel is suspected of carrying out a series of leaks implicating Iran in nuclear weapons experiments in an attempt to raise international pressure on Tehran and halt its programme.

/snip/

The leaks are part of an intensifying shadow war over Iran’s atomic programme being played out in Vienna, home to the IAEA’s headquarters.

The Israeli spy agency, the Mossad, is highly active in the Austrian capital, as is Iran and most of the world’s major intelligence agencies, leading to frequent comparisons with its earlier incarnation as a battleground for spies in the early years of the cold war.

The highlight of this pipeline from “diplomats” to Dahl and Jahn is the infamous Laptop of Death, which makes a veiled appearance at the end of Dahl’s Thursday report:

The IAEA published a report in 2011 with intelligence indicating Iran had a

nuclear weapons research program that was halted in 2003 when it came under increased international pressure, given the U.S.-led invasion of neighboring Iraq that same year and the exposure in 2002 by Iranian exiles of its underground enrichment plant at Natanz.

The intelligence suggested some activities may have resumed later. The report identified about 12 specific areas that it said needed clarification.

And it's not just Israel that is spreading secret information about Iran. Recall that the Justice Department is attempting to quash a lawsuit against United Against Nuclear Iran, suggesting that UANI has state secrets that could be divulged if the lawsuit is fully litigated.

Reuters acknowledges that Iran is upset about yesterday's story. From a story today:

Diplomats told Reuters on Thursday that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was expected to make a new attempt soon to advance its long-running investigation into Iran's nuclear program and that a meeting might be held in the Iranian capital early next week.

Reza Najafi, Iran's ambassador to the Vienna-based U.N. agency, said the IAEA delegation would be led by the head of its division dealing with nuclear safeguards issues, Deputy Director General Tero Varjoranta.

In an apparent reference to Thursday's Reuters article, Najafi was quoted as saying on the web site of Iran's Press TV television: "It is regrettable that classified information in the agency has not been protected again."

It may or may not mean anything, but the

Thursday article carries Dahl's byline, while today's article has no byline but credits only Dahl at the bottom for his reporting.