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## Internal IAEA information links the Supreme Leader to 1984 decision to seek a nuclear arsenal

Can we believe Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, when he says he opposes the construction of nuclear weapons on religious grounds? Information obtained by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) suggests the need to approach the statement with skepticism. IAEA verification can nonetheless overcome this skepticism if Iran cooperates with the inspectors in answering concerns about past and possibly on-going work on nuclear weapons and military nuclear fuel cycle.

In an internal 2009 IAEA document, most of which was published by ISIS, is a section titled "Statements made by Iranian officials."<sup>1</sup> It states:

"The Agency [IAEA] was informed that in April 1984 the then President of Iran, H.E. Ayatollah Khamenei declared, during a meeting of top-echelon political and security officials at the Presidential Palace in Tehran, that the spiritual leader Imam Khomeini had decided to reactivate the nuclear programme. According to Ayatollah Khamenei this was the only way to secure the very essence of the Islamic Revolution from the schemes of its enemies, especially the United States and Israel, and to prepare it for the emergence of Imam Mehdi. Ayatollah Khamenei further declared during the meeting, that a nuclear arsenal would serve Iran as a deterrent in the hands of God's soldiers."

The November 2011 IAEA [safeguards report](#) describes the growth of an Iranian nuclear weapons program that reached its peak in 2002 and 2003, at which point it was abruptly halted. The IAEA also presented in this report information from member states that some aspects of this program continued or restarted after 2003 and may be on-going. The evidence would imply that Khamenei supported that program since he controls national security decisions.

Khamenei's pledge against nuclear weapons is welcome. However, it is not prudent to take his recent commitment at face value. He must prove it.

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<sup>1</sup> This quote is not contained in the excerpts published by ISIS from the 2009 internal IAEA document. The statement appeared in the book *Peddling Peril* by Albright, 2010, p. 71. Almost all of the rest of the document was published on the ISIS web site and is available here: [http://isis-online.org/uploads/isis-reports/documents/IAEA\\_info\\_3October2009.pdf](http://isis-online.org/uploads/isis-reports/documents/IAEA_info_3October2009.pdf)