



Note on the Question of Iran/North Korean Cooperation

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President Trump stated in his October 13, 2017 speech regarding Iranian cooperation with North Korea: "There are also many people who believe that Iran is dealing with North Korea. I am going to instruct our intelligence agencies to do a thorough analysis and report back their findings beyond what they have already reviewed." A thorough intelligence community review into that cooperation makes sense, including a hard look at possible nuclear cooperation.

Almost all of the publicly documented cases of cooperation between Iran and North Korea to date concern arms transfers and ballistic missiles. However, there has been on-going concern about Iran/North Korean nuclear cooperation. CIA Director Mike Pompeo [said](#) in an early September interview with Fox News, "The North Koreans have a long history of being proliferators and sharing their knowledge, their technology, their capacities around the world." He continued, "As North Korea continues to improve its ability to do longer-range missiles and to put nuclear weapons on those missiles, it is very unlikely if they get that capability that they wouldn't share it with lots of folks." He [listed](#) Iran as a likely customer.

We do not have solid evidence of any nuclear cooperation happening between Iran and North Korea today or in the recent past. We know of one unconfirmed case of cooperation involving nuclear weapons related data several years ago. But the on-going military and missile relationship and North Korea's growing nuclear weapons program have increased concern that significant nuclear cooperation is taking place or could develop. Moreover, missile cooperation has many potential crossovers to a nuclear program.

If you had asked us on September 6, 2007, when Israel attacked what turned out to be a nearly completed nuclear reactor site in Syria, whether we had concrete evidence of significant Syrian/North Korean nuclear cooperation, we would have said we did not. This type of cooperation is likely to be intensely secret with a great deal of effort put into hiding it from those outside the cooperation, as for example done by Syria and North Korea, which successfully hid the reactor site for years.

So, a thorough on-going intelligence community review makes sense. Moreover, any negotiation with North Korea will need to focus on verified bans of North Korean nuclear proliferation. The Iran nuclear deal also needs to be strengthened to reduce the chance of

nuclear and long-range nuclear-capable ballistic missile cooperation taking place with North Korea or other pariah states.