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Iran's Nuclear 'Capability' Proof of Military Dimension, Says Israeli Official

By John Glaser

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After a prominent Iranian lawmaker claimed that Tehran has the knowledge and scientific capability to produce nuclear weapons, [an Israeli official said it was evidence of a military dimension to their nuclear program.](#)

The intelligence communities in the U.S., Europe, and Israel [all agree](#) that there is [no evidence of an Iranian nuclear weapons](#) program and that the leadership in Tehran has so far demonstrated no intention of starting one. Still, many hawks in the U.S. and Israel argue that a latent weapons program does exist.

Many analysts have characterized Iranian enrichment as a defensive policy meant to signal to adversaries like the U.S. and Israel that Iran could build nuclear weapons quickly if it were attacked. Essentially, it is [a deterrent strategy](#). As former head of the IAEA Mohamed ElBaradei [said](#), Iran is “absolutely determined to have the technology because they believe it brings you power, prestige and an insurance policy.”

Many attempts have been made to conflate the distinction between Iran getting nuclear weapons and having nuclear capability. In February, Congress [considered a bill](#) that would have made it the policy of the United States to prevent Iran “from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability” and it “rejects any United States policy that would rely on efforts to contain a nuclear weapons-capable Iran.”

An anonymous Israeli official on Saturday reiterated demands to the Associated Press that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu “issued last month: Iran must stop enriching uranium, remove all military-grade enriched material from the country, and dismantle its Fordo nuclear research site.”