



## Iran: IAEA Shouldn't Inspect Universities

**OE Watch Commentary:** The 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was meant to resolve a more than decade-long dispute revolving around Iranian nuclear activities and goals, including the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which had referred problems regarding Iranian non-compliance with its Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Safeguards' Agreement, to the United Nations Security Council in 2005. In the accompanying excerpted article from the semi-official *Students News Network*, Fereidoun Abbasi, a nuclear scientist and former Atomic Energy Organization of Iran chief between 2011 and 2013, explains the JCPOA to an audience. He explains that Iranian negotiators were forced to admit violations that had occurred under the administrations of both Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani (1989-1997) and Mohammad Khatami (1997-2005) for the purpose of the JCPOA. Interestingly, Western observers and many Iranians considered Rafsanjani and Khatami as pragmatists and moderates, while Ali Khamenei, Rafsanjani's predecessor (1981-1989) and Khatami's successor Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (2005-2013) who were both more hardline, are not singled out for illicit nuclear activities. This raises questions about whether Western notions of reform in Iran can extend into the national security sphere.



University of Tehran.

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Despite Iran's public embrace of the JCPOA and against the backdrop of a reported IAEA inspection of the Iran University of Science and Technology and Sharif University of Technology earlier in July, Abbasi warned against offering inspectors free access to all nuclear sites, and called IAEA inspections of Iranian universities and offices "wrong and unacceptable." His defensiveness about Iranian universities and the implicit acknowledgment of their work in nuclear technologies may have ramifications upon debates about visas for, and presence of, Iranian graduate students and post-doctoral researchers studying in overseas universities before returning to Iran. While Abbasi questions the scope of inspections, he does get some details wrong: While he is correct that the Iran's parliament has not ratified the Additional Protocol of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, he is wrong that the Iranian government has not signed it. On 18 December 2003, Ambassador Ali Akbar Salehi of Iran signed the Additional Protocol in the presence of IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei. Hassan Rouhani, then Secretary-General of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, promised to abide by the Additional Protocol even without ratification, but subsequently walked away from his pledge. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**

*“The laboratories of our university professors will be inspected by the IAEA inspectors?”*

**Source:** “Beh Jaye Moghabeleh ba Amrika, Darb-e Daneshgah-ha ra baraye Bazrasan-e Azhens Baz Mikonand! (Instead of Confronting the US, they open the door of universities to Agency inspectors!),” *Student News Network*, 23 July 2018. <https://goo.gl/TBQuFM>

*One of the guests asked, “Have we come to the conclusion that laboratories of our university professors will be inspected by the IAEA inspectors while we have officially rejected the Additional Protocol?”*

*[Atomic Energy Organization of Iran director Fereidun] Abbas, in answer to the question, said, “No, this is not clear from the text, but our dear people know, the punishment for Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action [JCPOA] violations is based on guilt. From the point of view of the countries that tried us and according to the [International] Atomic [Energy] Agency, we have violated the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and are guilty, and that’s why all these restrictions have been imposed upon the country’s nuclear technology. I understand this. And in the discussions that were not public, cases have been discussed and resolved that we are guilty. In 2015, [IAEA Director-General Yukiya] Amano and the board of governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency issued a report, the basis for the JCPOA, [UN Security Council] Resolution 2231, and the statement of the European Union. The former head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran explained to the Board of Governors about Amano’s report. According to it, before 2003, the governments of Hashemi Rafsanjani [1989-1997] and Mohammad Khatami [1997-2005] were carrying out organized work on the construction of a nuclear weapon. In the negotiations, they relaxed a little, and they said that scientific and feasibility studies could occur. Go and see this report, for this comes from the text of Amano’s 2015 report on which the JCPOA is based...!”*

*With reference to the Additional Protocol, he said: “We have not accepted and signed it. The Additional Protocol should be brought before to the Islamic Consultative Assembly and be ratified. We have agreed to cooperate steadfastly with the IAEA beyond the Additional Protocol, however.” Abbasi explained but the IAEA inspectors are examining university professors, and behind-the-scenes, they seem to have accepted the IAEA Additional Protocol.*