

'Huge Explosion' at a Chemical Plant in Iran

by Hugh Fitzgerald



It is not only Iran's nuclear program that Israel has been steadily degrading. Hardly a month goes by without news of a mysterious explosion, somewhere in Iran – at a chemical plant, an oil refinery, a weapons factory, a liquified gas plant, a missile site. The media focus only on the most spectacular attacks, those directly connected to Iran's nuclear program, such as the three attacks on centrifuges at Natanz. In the 2010 Stuxnet cyber attack, Israel inserted a computer worm that directed the centrifuges to speed up so fast they destroyed themselves. Then there was the July 2020 explosion, apparently sabotage from within, that destroyed three-quarters of the centrifuges at the aboveground plant at Natanz. And

finally, there was the attack in April 2021, this time on the advanced centrifuge plant, just opened, that had been built 50 meters underground. This attack managed to destroy the plant's electrical power supply and its backup, which in turn caused as many as 5,800 centrifuges to be damaged or destroyed.

But all this time, as the world media's attention has focused on Natanz explosions, and the assassination of nuclear scientists, and Israel's managing to seize and make off with Iran's entire nuclear archive, there have been many other attacks having nothing to do with Iran's nuclear program. That series of "mysterious explosions" has done great and continuing damage to Iran's industrial base and to its production of conventional weapons. These attacks, unsurprisingly, do not receive the attention the attacks on nuclear sites receive; most receive only passing mention; others – though known to our governments – are never mentioned at all. So many attacks, at so many important targets, suggests that there is a network of Mossad agents spread throughout Iran, and the Islamic Republic has been powerless to stop them. Their repeated acts of derring-do have left the Iranians rattled.

The latest of such attacks, one of dozens that have taken place in Iran over the past decade, is reported on here: "Huge blaze reported at Iranian chemical factory near Qom; cause unclear," [Jerusalem Post](#), May 2, 2021:

The Natanz nuclear site has been hit by five explosions in recent years, the former head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization revealed on Saturday in an interview with the Iranian Fars News Agency.

Fereydoon Abbasi-Davani, also a candidate in Iran's upcoming presidential elections, added that Israel conducted the recent attack on Natanz based on experience gathered over at least 15 years.

"This is not the first time that destruction has taken place in Natanz, and in terms of major sabotage, we think this is the fifth time that a severe attack has been carried out on Natanz's facilities in the last 15 years," Davani told Fars. "Of course, we have neutralized them to some extent, but we have also been damaged."...

So only now do we learn, from a single comment by Fereydoon Abbasi-Davani, that there have been five, not three, "severe attacks" carried out on Natanz's facilities. This prompts a series of questions. Why is this being revealed to the world only now? Did those other two attacks do much damage? Did Iran ever try to retaliate for those two, hitherto unknown attacks at Natanz? At what nuclear facilities, other than Natanz, have the Israelis struck? Have they tried, for example, to hit the facilities that have been placed inside a mountain at Fordow, and if so, did they use on-site sabotage or, instead, MOP (Massive Ordnance Penetrator) bombs, known colloquially as bunker-buster bombs, of which the Israelis are believed to have only the 500-pound version, not the 30,000-pound bunker buster that the American Air Force possesses? Is there reason to believe that the American government will now provide Israel with the larger bunker-buster bombs in order to ensure that Israel's QME (Qualitative Military Edge) is maintained?

Davani is a civilian, who does not know the true state of military affairs between Iran and Israel: Israel is right now militarily stronger, and willing to take Iran on if need be; it might even wish for an excuse to do so.. The Iranian military knows better than to hit Israel hard; it's all the excuse Israel needs to launch massive bombing raids, and missile attacks, not just on Natanz, but on the whole archipelago of nuclear sites before they are all transferred underground.

The explosive used in the most recent attack on Natanz was "the size of a lentil," according to Davani, who stressed

that security protocols must be made stricter at nuclear sites and centrifuge production facilities.

If the Mossad has explosives that are “the size of a lentil” and only one such “lentil” was used to destroy the electric power supply at Natanz, so as to damage or destroy nearly 6,000 centrifuges, how can the Iranians possibly secure their sites, nuclear and non-nuclear, against such technological marvels that are so easy to hide, so difficult to find?

“The enemy uses almost all of its thinking on the planet to strike at the holy order of the Islamic Republic, but we have limitations and do not even use all of our internal thinking because the arrests and protections involve more of our own people,” Davani told Fars, adding that Iran “cannot completely block the enemy.”...

Davani is wrong. Israel is not spending all of its time “thinking” as to how to strike at Iran. The Israelis have enough brain power both to its clandestine war with Iraq, and to create the most dynamic and creative economy – the Start-Up Nation – in the world. Israel has more companies listed on the NASDAQ Exchange than any other foreign country save China; Israelis hold more American patents than any other foreign nationals except for the Japanese. Every fortnight brings news of a new Israeli “unicorn” – a company which according to its I.P.O. is valued at a billion dollars or more. And at the same time, Israel has enough brainpower left over to come up with new anti-missile defense systems: the Iron Dome; the Iron Beam, that uses lasers; the LAV anti-tank missile that can be used defensively and offensively; and so much more. Meanwhile, Israel’s Mossad has been running circles around the hapless Iranians in its acts of sabotage inside Iran. It is not Israel that devotes all of its time thinking about how to destroy Iran; Israel has no desire to destroy Iran, but only to keep the current regime from acquiring nuclear weapons, a very

different thing. It is the Iranians who appear to be spending all of their time thinking about how to destroy Israel, and so far, Iran's results have been singularly unimpressive.

The Iranians don't know how Mossad managed to smuggle in an explosive the size of a lentil. It was quite a feat, and that underground explosion must have been detonated from a distance, by agents of Mossad, likely to have been either Israelis whose parents had fled the Khomeini regime for Israel, and who could pass for Iranians, or non-Jewish Iranians who were recruited by Mossad to collaborate in undermining the regime they so detested.

Iran's state television identified Reza Karimi as the man it said was behind the attack on Natanz....

"Karimi" is the Iranian equivalent of Smith or Jones. Since the Iranians have never yet produced a single suspect for any of the many attacks on both nuclear and non-nuclear facilities, they may have felt the need to name at least one of the enemy agents they've supposedly managed to identify. Of course all they could offer was a name; Iran said he was nowhere to be found, but it is more likely that this "Reza Karimi" never existed, and was made up to show the Iranian public that its government had had some success in identifying Iranian "traitors" working for Israel.

The article refers to five attacks on Natanz over the last 15 years. The Western public knows of only three. When were the other two attacks on Natanz, what damage did they do, and why is it only now that Iran has decided to let that closely-guarded secret out? And if Israel could manage to destroy a site 50 meters underground, could Mossad agents get into the facility built even deeper than 50 meters, inside the mountain at Fordow? And if Israel needs the largest MOPs (Massive Ordnance Penetrator), or bunker-buster bombs, those weighing 30,000 pounds, instead of the 500-pound bombs it now

possesses, will the Biden Administration be willing to supply them, given how unsympathetic it has so far shown itself to be to Israel's concerns about a return to the 2015 nuclear deal? Or could Congress force the Administration to supply such bombs as the best way to preserve Israel's QME?

And how many "mysterious explosions" of non-nuclear sites have there been in Iran since the Israelis began their campaign to rattle the Iranians? We know of at least a dozen. Could there have been even more, that the Iranians won't talk about because of their intense embarrassment at failing to foil such attacks or to catch their perpetrators, and Israel won't talk about because it is the Jewish state's long-settled policy never to reveal, nor to boast about, nor to claim credit for, its attacks on Iran?

So many questions for study and discussion.

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