

The Wall Street Journal has recently reported on new evidence of Iran's effort to avoid UN imposed sanctions by acquiring high-grade metals from China, suitable for the production of ballistic missiles. In its article titled, "Fresh Clues of Iranian Nuclear Intrigue," The Wall Street Journal indicates that Iranian companies such as ABAN Commercial and Industrial Ltd. has been using intermediary firms to attain specialized copper, aluminum and titanium from China.

The United Nations Security Council, which includes China, has placed sanctions on Iran designed to prohibit their acquisition of such refined metals, which play an integral role in the development of long-range missiles. Other purchases include tungsten copper, which is made to withstand ultrahigh temperatures, making it useful for guidance systems and fins for long-range missiles.

According to the article, Beijing maintains that China has been compliant with UN sanctions, however, it is widely recognized that the faulty sanctions provide for loopholes. For instance powdered tungsten copper is prohibited, yet tungsten copper ingots are not. Both can be used to make missiles.

As the WSJ article explains, proliferation experts acknowledge that the metals sought by Iran can also be used in industrial endeavors, thus it is difficult to prove that these imports are being used in weapon construction. However, Iranian rhetoric, coupled with their use of front companies intended to duck UN sanctions make their intentions fairly clear.

Experts at The Heritage Foundation advise the incoming President to learn from previous administration's dealings with Iran, and follow through with his promises to prevent at all costs, the formation of an Iranian nuclear power. A paper by Jim Phillips, entitled "Yes, a Nuclear Iran Is Unacceptable: A Memo to President-elect Obama" details a number of policy recommendations intended for the Obama administration to contain and deter Iran from acquiring nuclear strike capabilities.

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