

## Iran's Nuclear Gamble: Buying Time or Looming Threat?

Nathan Klabin / August 22, 2024

Iran is thought to have fissile material and technical knowledge to build a nuclear bomb, leading experts to suspect that the country will slowly continue to develop its weapon while trying to negotiate as many benefits as possible

[...]

**Dr. Raz Zimmt, a senior researcher at the Institute for National Security Studies at Tel Aviv University**, offered a slightly different perspective. Zimmt acknowledged Iran's significant, though gradual, progress in its nuclear program in the years since President Donald Trump withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal. But he said that Iran likely has not made a definitive decision to develop nuclear weapons.

He said that Iran could potentially develop a nuclear weapon within six months to two years, depending on the type of weapon.

"Iran is in a threshold position, meaning it could accumulate enough fissile material for a few nuclear devices within two weeks," he said. "However, possessing fissile material is not enough; Iran would still need to continue its weaponization process. Iran does have delivery methods, such as missiles, but these would need further adaptation to carry nuclear warheads. While it's technically feasible, additional work is required to make them fully operational for this purpose."

[...]

For Dr. Zimmt, Iran's endgame is about maintaining its position as a threshold nuclear state, which he describes as "insurance for the regime's stability." He argues that Iran's leadership likely sees the possession of nuclear capabilities as a deterrent against military threats, especially from the United States. "However, Iran's objective is not to reach this position as quickly as possible, but rather in a way that minimizes the risk of military confrontation," he explains.

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