

# Iran : Fact Checking the Media

By Dennis Kucinich

February 03, 2012 "[Information Clearing House](#)" --- During an interview last month on CBS' Face the Nation, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta set the record straight on Iran: "Are they trying to develop a nuclear weapon? No." But if you read recent news reports lately, you'd think otherwise.

The media coverage on Iran is mirroring the coverage in the lead-up to the Iraq war: grand claims about a smoking gun that doesn't exist. For example, The New York Times incorrectly reported last month that the latest International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) report on Iran concluded that their nuclear program had a military objective. The paper's public editor, Arthur Brisbane, was forced to acknowledge their mistake and wrote: "Some readers, mindful of the faulty intelligence and reporting about Saddam Hussein's weapons program, are watching the Iran nuclear coverage very closely." Other media outlets such as National Public Radio, PBS and The Washington Post have been challenged on their coverage too.

A recent publication from the Center for Strategic and International Studies titled "The IAEA's Iran Report and Misplaced Paranoia," noted that "With few exceptions, these revelations are not exactly new. More importantly, neither is the thrust of the report: that Iran is developing some capabilities that can only be understood as preliminaries to the development of nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, early coverage of the report's release gives the opposite impression."

Many have recognized that the media failed to do its job in the lead-up to the Iraq war. The potential consequences of treading on that same path with Iran are grave. The U.S. has thus far spent over \$1.2 trillion of borrowed money on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Military action against Iran would be disastrous for the region and for U.S. moral standing. A serious diplomatic track based on mutual trust and respect is the only way to achieve increased transparency.