

NBC's Iran Bomb: Shocking Nuclear News Wasn't News At All

By [FAIR](#)

Global Research, September 30, 2013

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NBC Nightly News anchor Brian Williams told viewers on September 27 that Iran was “suddenly claiming they don’t want nuclear weapons.” But that is incorrect: Iran has said the same thing for years, sometimes directly to Williams himself.

The report was about the phone call between Barack Obama and Iranian president Hassan Rouhani:

This is all part of a new leadership effort by Iran, suddenly claiming they don’t want nuclear weapons. What they want now is talks and transparency and goodwill.

This is similar to the line that NBC Nightly News took last week, when correspondent Ann Curry interviewed Rouhani on the September 18 newscast (FAIR Blog, [9/19/13](#)). Williams said the interview included “big revelations about nuclear weapons.” That was presumably referring to the fact that Rouhani said Iran was not interested in developing a nuclear weapon:

We have time and again said that under no circumstances would we seek any weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, nor will we ever.

But NBC should know that this isn’t a “sudden” change at all; Iran has sent the same message for years—and it has been reported on NBC Nightly News.

Like on the September 19, 2006, newscast, when Williams interviewed Iran’s then-President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad:

WILLIAMS: And the American president says, “It’s OK, keep your nuclear program to keep your homes warm. Stop enriching uranium toward weapons.” How do you react?

AHMADINEJAD: Who is the right judge for that? Any entity except for the IAEA? All IAEA reports indicate that Iran has had no deviation. We have said on numerous occasions that our activities are for peaceful purposes. The agency’s cameras videotape all activities that we have. Did Iran build the atomic bomb and use it? You must know that because of our beliefs in our religion, we are against such acts. We are against the atomic bomb. We believe bombs are used only to kill people.

Almost two years later, Williams interviewed Ahmadinejad again (NBC Nightly News, 7/28/08), who said this:

We are not working to manufacture a bomb. We don't believe in a nuclear bomb. We also think that it will not affect political relations.... Nuclear bombs belong to the 20th century. We are living in a new century. We think that when it came to the nuclear issue, an inappropriate measure or action was taken. Nuclear energy must not be equaled to a nuclear bomb. This is a disservice to the—to the society of man.

NBC Nightly News (9/17/09) aired another Ahmadinejad interview where he said the same thing. And Williams (12/3/07) in 2007 reported the US government's own assessment that Iran is not working on a nuclear weapon:"Out of nowhere the US said today it has intelligence that Iran stopped trying to develop atomic weapons four years ago."

On the September 27 newscast, Williams said of Rouhani: "It's tempting for peace-loving people to get excited about all this. And it comes down to the question, can we trust the guy?"

But can US television viewers trust Williams to remember his own network's reporting on Iran? Apparently not. US politicians' frequent unsubstantiated claims about Iran making nuclear weapons must be more memorable.

ACTION:

Tell NBC Nightly News to correct the record: Iran's insistence that it does not seek nuclear weapons is not a "sudden" shift.

CONTACT:

NBC Nightly News

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Or send them a message on Twitter: [@nbcnightlynews](https://twitter.com/nbcnightlynews)

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