EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On July 14, 2015, the United States, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United Kingdom concluded a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with Iran. Under this Plan, Iran will limit its nuclear program so as to maximize the warning time the international community would have if Iran decided to develop nuclear weapons. Iran also will accept enhanced IAEA monitoring so that the international community will be able to know whether or not Iran is living up to its agreements. Iran also has committed to respond promptly to the IAEA’s questions about past activities that suggest that Iran was exploring the development of nuclear weapons. Assuming the Director General reaches a favorable finding, the sanctions imposed on Iran will be phased out as Iran implements the terms of the agreement.

VERIFICATION BY THE IAEA

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will be responsible for verifying the new agreement with technical and intelligence support from its member countries. The IAEA will have access to Iran’s declared nuclear activities under the comprehensive safeguards agreement that all 186 non-nuclear weapon states parties to the NPT are required to conclude. Iran also has agreed to comply with the Additional Protocol, under which it will have to provide the IAEA with information on all of its nuclear-related activities and allow the IAEA access to check that those declarations are complete and correct. Finally, under the JCPOA, Iran has agreed to provide the IAEA with routine access to verify key nuclear activities that do not involve nuclear materials, including Iran’s production and storage of centrifuges.

In addition, to these on-site verification activities, the IAEA receives relevant intelligence from its member states, including the United States, is open to receiving information from non-governmental organizations and will acquire and analyze satellite images of sites of potential concern in Iran. If the IAEA becomes concerned about any activities in Iran, its inspectors will first seek clarification. If they are not satisfied by the response, they will refer the issue to higher level IAEA officials and ultimately to the Director General who can request a response from the highest government levels in Iran. Finally, if the Director General is not satisfied, he can refer the matter to the IAEA’s Board of Governors (BOG) and the BOG can refer it to UN Security Council as the IAEA did in 2006 when Iran decided to end its suspension of its enrichment program.

The IAEA will organize its verification strategy by considering the steps that Iran would likely take if it were to decide to pursue nuclear weapons.
The IAEA’s verification activities will:

1. Search for any clandestine installations or undeclared nuclear material that could support nuclear weapon related activities, including undeclared plants for producing fissile material and weaponization facilities.
2. Check that declared peaceful nuclear facilities are used solely for peaceful activities and that all operations in those facilities are declared to the IAEA.
3. Assure that nuclear materials subject to IAEA safeguards are not diverted for the manufacture of nuclear weapons, other nuclear explosives, or for any purpose unknown.
4. Verify that Iran does not import equipment or material except as provided in the agreement.
5. Verify that Iran is complying with the limitations on its nuclear program that it committed to under the terms of the JCPOA.

DETECTION OF CLANDESTINE FACILITIES
The most critical and challenging task for the IAEA will be the detection of clandestine facilities. Intelligence sharing by member states will amplify the Agency’s limited in-house capabilities. States share information with the IAEA because the agency can pursue evidence of clandestine activities on the ground, using its legal authorities.

The Additional Protocol provides a means for the IAEA to request “complementary access” when it has questions it needs to resolve about non-declared sites. The JCPOA dictates that the maximum time for Iran to agree to an IAEA request for access or satisfy the Agency’s concerns in some other way will not exceed 24 days. Even before contacting Iran, the IAEA would start by ordering satellite imagery, perhaps continuing throughout the investigation, and by seeking corroborating information, especially from states willing to share intelligence.

POSSIBLE MILITARY DIMENSIONS
The JCPOA also requires the Director General of the IAEA to make a conclusory report on the “possible military dimensions” of Iran’s past nuclear activities by the end of 2015. This step will enable the next phase of implementation to begin, in which most of the sanctions imposed on Iran will be lifted. The Director General will likely conclude that the IAEA has gained a full understanding of Iran’s past activities and supports full implementation of the JCPOA.

CONCLUSION
The IAEA has been preparing for its Iran verification role since it first opened for business in 1957, and it will be up to the task.

The IAEA’s capabilities have been extended, strengthened and refined over the years in response to real-world proliferation cases in Iraq and North Korea. Its current capacity reflects the international community’s decades-long investment in the organization, and the continuing commitment of states around the world to its mission. Unlike the pre-Iraqi nuclear watchdog, the IAEA is now more like a focused information hub, wired to a host of information generating nodes that regularly update what the IAEA knows.

The IAEA will be scrupulously precise, scientific, tactful and demanding in reaching its conclusions, as it is in all states. It will examine all information made available to it, promptly and fairly, and insist on the immediate resolution of any discrepancies or anomalies. Ever mindful of its immense responsibilities, the IAEA will inform the global community should it be convinced that Iran’s compliance with its obligations is in doubt, or if Iran hinders verification activities by failing to cooperate and assist the IAEA.

Assuming that the IAEA continues to receive the political, technical, financial and operational support from the international community necessary for its success, and that regional strife does not impede its ability to put its inspectors on the ground, the Agency can and will be able to accomplish the tasks it has been assigned under the JCPOA. It will be able to verify the agreed operational limits on Iran’s nuclear programs, and, if the need arises, the IAEA will sound the alarm in time for decisive action to be taken.