

## **Time for Reality Check on Iran**

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Startling new evidence of brazen Iranian deceit over the nuclear deal with Barack Obama should not be ignored by France, Germany and Britain. As cosignatories, they bear a responsibility in determining its future following Donald Trump's withdrawal of US backing. The European nations must factor in the disclosures emerging from analysis of 100,000 top secret Iranian documents seized in a raid by agents of Israel's Mossad intelligence service in Tehran earlier this year.

The documents demonstrate the extent to which the Iranians pulled the wool over Mr Obama's eyes. The Times, which has seen them, reports that the pivotal Iranian assertion on which the agreement was made — that Iran had never pursued a nuclear weapons program and needed to enrich uranium purely for peaceful purposes — was false. The documents prove the malign theocracy was pursuing a robust nuclear weapons program. It removed responsibility for uranium hexafluoride enrichment from civilian atomic energy authorities, placing it with the defence ministry, which raised enrichment levels from 3 per cent to 90 per cent — a clear indication of the intention to build weapons. The author of the changes is now military adviser to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

There is little doubt the regime has the ability to resume building nuclear weapons when the deal expires in a decade. No wonder Mr Trump labelled it the worst deal ever. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is in Europe discussing the material with Emmanuel Macron, Angela Merkel and Theresa May. They should join the US in abandoning the agreement or insist that it be improved.

The deal's boost to Iran, with \$US100 billion from the US in sanctions repayments, has done much to further Tehran's ambitions across the Middle East, propping up the Syrian regime and providing weapons and resources to Hezbollah and Hamas terrorists who want to destroy Israel. Whatever the commercial imperatives, European cosignatories cannot remain blind to the grave shortcomings of the Obama deal. They will be ill-serving the West's strategic interests in doing so.