

# NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL

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## IRAN'S SECRET AND THE 2009 UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Anna Turner  
Staff Writer

Details of Iran's nuclear facility have been released and negotiations are being made. Last month, U.S., Britain, and France announced that they had been keeping a close eye on Iran after making the discovery of a nuclear facility that Iran's government had kept secret.

According to CBSnews.com, U.S. intelligence has "known for some time" about this facility but has kept this information under wraps. It wasn't until Iranian officials found out their secret had been discovered that they announced to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that they had indeed been constructing a facility to generate nuclear power. This was a severely delayed reaction, the IAEA was supposed to be informed the moment the idea for a nuclear facility was conceived. CBS deemed the action as being "too little too late." In addition, the details that Iran initially released concerning the facility were far and few between.

This facility could have enormous effects on the world's nations. Iran's delayed announcement leads officials and citizens to doubt the innocence of this project even though Iraq claimed to only

be interested in harvesting nuclear energy, not making weapons of mass destruction.

A meeting with Iran has been held to discuss the issue of the nuclear facilities. This meeting was one of the first tests to show how well the new U.S. administration would handle international cases such as this. During this meeting, Iran made three promises to the IAEA. First, Iran will open the facility to IAEA inspectors. Secondly, Iran assured that it would release 75% of its known enriched uranium to France and Russia for re-inspection. Iran also set a date for a follow-up meeting with the IAEA. President Obama stressed the need for timeliness in this meeting, saying that the United States' patience is not "unlimited." Within two weeks, IAEA is expected to gain access to the facility.

At the UN General Assembly, President Obama made much progress concerning this issue. He successfully negotiated with Russia for more stringent concessions for Iran and secured the support of Moscow and Beijing in efforts to reduce the threat of nuclear attack. However, other aspects of the Assembly did not go so smoothly.

For sixty four years the UN General Assembly has met to peacefully discuss and attempt to

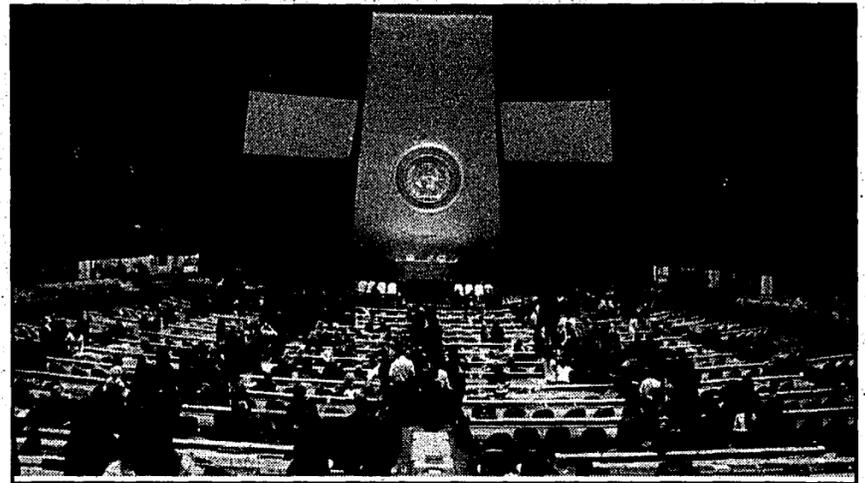


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resolve world issues. This year, however, Colonel Muammar al-Gaddafi caused quite a ruckus. Dressed in a traditional Libyan robe, he addressed the assembly in an unusual fashion. It took quite some time for him to get to the meat of his speech, but once he did, it was obvious that he meant business. He desires strongly for Africa to hold a seat on the Security Council. He also suggested that the General Assembly be moved to Libya, so world leaders would not have to be subjected to such intense jet lag. He made it clear that he thought New York City was too heavily secured because of threats of terrorist attacks. His speech jumped from suspecting swine flu as being a military weapon to

demanding that new investigations be made into the assassinations of Martin Luther King and John F. Kennedy. He also accused the Council of upholding a form of "political feudalism" by not allowing Africa a seat. A pivotal point in his speech was when he picked up the UN charter and appeared to tear it, swearing that he did not find the document as having any credit.

Needless to say, the past month has been filled with political and world news. World leaders have an added amount of stress on them at this time, which leaves tensions running high. Iran is going to have to come to terms with world leaders and find a way, hopefully a peaceful one, to absolve the controversy surrounding its nuclear facilities.

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Belt movement, Meredith students spent the week preceding the lecture planting more than 350 trees across campus. According to a Meredith ENews article by Melyssa Allen, Dr. Maathai herself contributed to the Meredith College Green Belt by planting a magnolia tree between Johnson Hall and Joyner Hall. During her lecture Maathai applauded the Meredith community for their first steps at turning the bus around by contributing to the Green Belt movement and the planet. She suggested that Meredith register the trees with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Billion Trees Campaign. According to the UNEP website (<http://www.unep.org/billiontreecampaign>), this campaign was inspired by Maathai's environmental efforts and has registered approximately

7.5 billion trees planted worldwide this year. The campaign allows individuals and organizations to pledge to plant trees, and the objective is to ensure that at least one billion trees are planted each year. If Meredith registers the 350 trees planted on the Meredith Green Belt, the college will bring the total number of registered trees planted in the United States up to 56,745,955 (as of October 4th).

During her lecture, Dr. Maathai was often light and exuberant, telling jokes and stories and truly engaging the audience. But she made many serious points for which she noted she held responsible Meredith College and the world community. Maathai argued that it was not enough to blame environmental problems on global warming but that people must learn to manage resources and empower communities to better the environment. She quoted

the well-known slogan "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle," calling it a motto that people should try to live by. Laura Fieselman, sustainability coordinator at Meredith, believes that Meredith students can follow this motto by "thinking critically about the stuff of our everyday lives. We must ask, 'Do I really need this?' 'Could I use something I already have?' 'What will I do with it when I'm done?'" By reflecting on these questions, Meredith students could help make a positive impact on the environment.

Erica Rogers, a freshman at Meredith, said, "One of my favorite parts from [Dr. Maathai's] lecture was her vision to have a tree planted for every person on the planet." Throughout her lecture, Maathai spoke not only about her life but also about shared goals for the future that she hopes will be an inspiration to the global population and spur better environmental

practices. Dr. Maathai finished her lecture with a story about a hummingbird that tried to put out a raging forest fire engulfing his home. The hummingbird struggled alone, using only tiny beakfuls of water. When asked by the larger animals what he was doing and why he bothered, the hummingbird replied, "I am doing the best I can." As Wangari Maathai so adeptly reminded us, regardless of how large the environmental problem may seem in comparison to the world population, we must do the best we can to fix it, because Earth is the only home we have.