

IAEA chief warns of new nuclear states

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Washington, 15 May (WashingtonTV)—In an interview published Friday, the head of the United Nations' nuclear watchdog said that the number of potential nuclear weapons states could more than double in the next few years, unless major powers take steps to disarm.

International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA] chief, Mohamed ElBaradei, told the Guardian newspaper that the threat of proliferation was particularly great in the Middle East, a region which he described as a "ticking bomb".

He predicted that the next wave of proliferation would involve states which can produce plutonium or highly-enriched uranium and know how to make nuclear weapons. However, they would stop short of assembling a weapon, thus remaining technically compliant with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty [NPT].

"This is the phenomenon we see now and what people worry about in Iran. And this phenomenon goes much beyond Iran. Pretty soon ... you will have nine weapons states and probably another 10 or 20 virtual weapons states," he told the London-based daily.

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