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# Iran-The Days After a Deal: Regional and Global Implications

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# Iran Nuclear Deal Unlikely to Halt Regional Proliferation

Alan J. Kuperman, LBJ, University of Texas at Austin

Optimists contend that a prospective nuclear deal with Iran, being negotiated by the permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany (P5+1), would not only prevent Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons, but avert contagious proliferation in the Middle East. That happy outcome is unlikely, however, because any deal acceptable to Iran would leave it several plausible paths to the bomb, thereby compelling regional rivals to pursue their own nuclear programs for deterrent purposes. In theory, such contagious proliferation could be prevented by military and diplomatic options, but none appears politically viable. Thus, unless Iran's program is stopped by military action or regime change, regional nuclear proliferation may be inevitable – even if the P5+1 reach a deal with Tehran.

Terms of the prospective deal are still being negotiated, but media reports and statements by U.S. and Iranian officials suggest at least five key features. The duration of the agreement would be temporary, about 10 to 15 years. Uranium enrichment capacity would be capped, but a few thousand first- or second-generation centrifuges would continue to operate. Research and development of more advanced centrifuges would be permitted. The proposed Arak research reactor would be redesigned to reduce its proliferation risk, but the facility still would produce plutonium capable of being used in nuclear weapons. After expiration of the deal, its restrictions would be lifted, so Iran could engage in all nuclear activities permitted to signatories of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Such a prospective deal would leave Iran three paths to the bomb. The first is "overt breakout," whereby Iran would kick out international inspectors and then race to produce one or more nuclear weapons. Using only the centrifuges permitted under the deal, Iran could produce sufficient highly enriched uranium (HEU) for a bomb in a few months. Alternatively, Iran could wait until the Arak reactor is operating, then kick out inspectors and reprocess the spent fuel to separate plutonium for weapons, likewise requiring only a few months. In either

case, the fissile material could be inserted into a prefabricated weapons package, overnight establishing a nuclear deterrent to fend off further international enforcement. Facing overt breakout, the international community's only hope to stop Iran would be decisive military action during the narrow window of a few months between Iran kicking out inspectors and producing its first nuclear weapon.

Iran's second path to the bomb would be "covert breakout." Under this scenario, Iran initially would openly develop more efficient centrifuges, as permitted under the proposed P5+1 deal, either indigenously or with benefit of international technological assistance. Once successful, Iran would divert the advanced technology to a clandestine enrichment facility. Based on greater efficiency, the hidden plant would require only hundreds, not thousands, of centrifuges to produce enough HEU for a bomb in a few weeks or months. This miniature enterprise would thus have a much smaller "signature," hindering detection by international inspectors and foreign intelligence services. Iran would aim to enrich enough uranium for a bomb before the facility was even discovered. To prevent covert breakout, the international community first would have to detect the facility before it produced sufficient HEU, and then take rapid action to halt its operation.

The third path to proliferation would come following expiration of the proposed agreement. At that point, Iran legally could expand its enrichment capacity without limit. Tehran has announced plans for more than a hundred-thousand centrifuges, ostensibly to produce fuel for its nuclear power program currently supplied by Russia. Given such expansion, Iran could produce enough HEU for a nuclear weapon in just a few days. Post-agreement proliferation could take at least two routes combining overt and covert aspects. Iran might announce publicly that it was producing HEU for non-weapons purposes permitted under the NPT, such as fueling research reactors or submarine propulsion reactors, then later divert the HEU to weapons. Detecting such diversion could take years, especially if the HEU were declared for naval propulsion, which under the NPT is immune from international inspection. Alternatively, during the approximately two weeks between international inspections of its enrichment facilities, Iran could reconfigure centrifuge cascades and produce enough HEU for at least one bomb. When inspectors arrived, they would detect this malfeasance but could not reverse the fait accompli. Under either scenario, the international community would be unable to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon after expiration of the proposed P5+1 deal.

Neighboring rivals of Iran will feel compelled to pursue their own nuclear weapons programs for deterrent purposes unless they are confident that all three of Iran's potential paths to the bomb are blocked. Unfortunately, these neighbors are unlikely to be reassured about any of these risks. First, they know covert breakout will become easier over time. The longer Iran is permitted to conduct R&D on advanced centrifuges, the smaller a clandestine enrichment facility will need be, thus lowering the probability of detection. In light of the lead time neighbors require to develop their own nuclear weapons, they will start well in advance if they fear Iran eventually could break out quickly and covertly.

Second, in the event of detected breakout (overt or covert) by Iran, neighbors doubt the United States or Israel would take military action to stop it. Washington failed to launch such preventive strikes when it detected nuclear programs in Syria and North Korea, even under George W. Bush, who was far more hawkish than Barack Obama. Israel has threatened – but refrained – from strikes against Iran so many times that it has lost credibility. Of course, Israel or the United States might eventually use military force to roll back Iran’s nuclear program, but meanwhile skepticism about that outcome will drive neighbors to pursue their own nuclear options.

The third concern of neighbors is that following expiration of the proposed deal the only hope of preventing Iranian proliferation would be if Tehran itself chose not to acquire nuclear weapons due to fear of international sanctions. Such self-restraint is unlikely, however, because Iran knows that two previous proliferators – India and Pakistan – easily survived such sanctions. Indeed, in both cases the United States eventually rewarded the proliferators: India with a civilian nuclear deal, and Pakistan with military aid.

Several of Iran’s neighbors, aware the P5+1 deal would leave Iran plausible paths to the bomb, are accelerating pursuit of their own nuclear-weapon options under cover of civilian energy programs. This includes Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Algeria, and Egypt. Three more Arab states – Morocco, Tunisia, and United Arab Emirates – also have nuclear energy programs that eventually could provide the technology and expertise necessary for proliferation. The region also has an ample uranium supply in Jordan.

To prevent Arab states and Turkey from acquiring nuclear weapons, the international community could try three approaches, yet none offers much hope in the long run. First, traditional nonproliferation efforts could impose delay, but they could not prevent eventual weapons acquisition via at least two pathways. Overtly, these countries could build nuclear fuel-cycle facilities permitted under the NPT – enrichment or reprocessing plants – to produce HEU or plutonium under international inspection. Later, at the time of their choosing, they could withdraw from the NPT and divert the fissile material to weapons. This would resemble North Korea’s successful route to the bomb. Alternatively, these countries could pursue clandestine weapons programs, imitating Pakistan’s successful proliferation path.

The second way to stop the contagious spread of nuclear weapons in the Middle East would be preventive military action. Such “counter-proliferation” is technically feasible, as Israel demonstrated against Iraq in 1981 and Syria in 2007. However, it is politically implausible against countries that have cooperative relations with the United States. If Washington and Israel lack the political will to launch preventive strikes against Iran – a pernicious enemy – they are even less likely to attack allies.

The third method to avert contagious proliferation would be for Washington to provide extended deterrence to these neighboring states, expanding the U.S. nuclear umbrella to dissuade them from pursuing their own nuclear programs, an approach that has long worked in Europe and East Asia. However, Arab countries and Turkey would doubt the credibility of such an offer, questioning whether in a

crisis the United States really would be willing to “trade New York for Riyadh.” This is not a new challenge. Cold War allies initially were skeptical of U.S. extended deterrence in Berlin and Asia. In those cases, however, Washington deployed thousands of ground troops to serve as “tripwires,” so a potential Soviet attack would kill Americans, making it more credible that Washington would fulfill its pledge to retaliate. By contrast, in most Middle East countries, it is implausible that the United States would want, or be permitted, to station large numbers of troops – for domestic political reasons on both sides. Thus, extended deterrence lacks credibility for most of Iran’s neighbors, who accordingly will want their own nuclear forces.

For all these reasons, if the proposed P5+1 agreement is finalized under expected terms, both Iran and its neighboring rivals likely still will pursue and eventually acquire nuclear arsenals. Such proliferation in the Middle East would greatly increase the chances of nuclear weapons being used – due to miscalculation, accident, extremism, or terrorism. Obviously, that raises grave risks, including to U.S. personnel, interests, and allies.

The best hope of averting such a dangerous scenario is favorable political change in Iran prior to its acquiring nuclear weapons. Anything that delayed Iran’s nuclear program could help by providing time for regime change. For that reason, the expected P5+1 deal would be beneficial, but only if accompanied by sustained international efforts to promote political change in Iran.

The final question is whether any other strategy could offer a better expected outcome than the combination of a P5+1 deal and promoting regime change? The only obvious alternative is military coercion. Under such a strategy, one or more states would demand that Iran halt or greatly constrain its enrichment and reactor programs under rigorous international inspection. If Iran refused, a military air campaign would be conducted, and repeated as many times as necessary, to prevent Iranian production of sufficient fissile material for a nuclear weapon. Based on published studies, the United States has the military capability to accomplish this mission with high confidence, and Israel might do so with lower confidence. Neither country, however, appears to have the political will for such preventive military action in the absence of a detected breakout, due to fears of Iranian retaliation and negative international public opinion.

The above analysis suggests that ongoing diplomatic efforts are unlikely to prevent proliferation by either Iran or its neighborhood rivals. Yet, there is no politically viable alternative strategy at the moment. The potential benefit of the prospective P5+1 deal is that it could delay Iran’s acquisition of nuclear weapons. That extra time should be put to maximum effect by bolstering international efforts to promote regime change in Iran, so that by the time Iran could produce nuclear weapons, its leaders will have decided not to. However, if Iran refuses to sign the proposed P5+1 deal, or signs and then is detected breaking out, the international community – led by the United States and Israel – must quickly revisit military options.

# Chapter 2

## What Do Iranians Think about the Nuclear Talks, Sanctions, the U.S. and Israel?

### The IPS' Iran Public Opinion Survey

Alex Mintz and Eli Mograbi, Institute for Policy and Strategy (IPS), IDC Herzliya

In Summer 2014, the Institute for Policy and Strategy (IPS), conducted a public opinion poll of Iranian opinions. The purpose of the study was to learn what the Iranian public thinks about Iran's nuclear talks with the P5+1, the effect of the international sanctions on Iran, a potential recognition by Iran of Israel, the relations of Iran with the United States, and Iran's allies and adversaries in the region and in the world.

The rationale for the study was: we hear a lot about the Iranian leadership's views and opinions about these issues, but know very little about what the Iranian people think about these key topics.

#### Sample

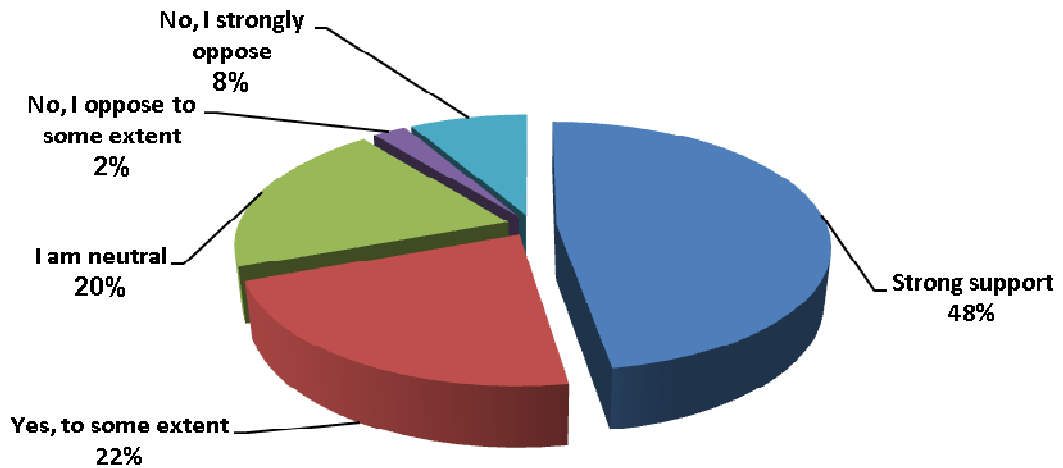
The poll was conducted in May-June 2014. It included eight questions, and 529 respondents. The sample consisted of:

- 50 percent male; 50 percent female.
- The response rate of 27 percent was surprisingly high.
- The survey included both landline and cell phones.

## Key Findings

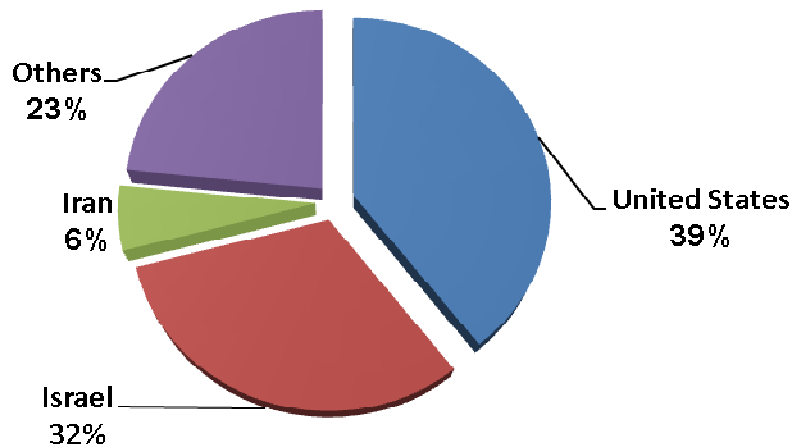
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### 01. Do You Support the Current Talks with the West on the Nuclear Program?



- > 70 percent of Iranians strongly support, or support to some extent the current talks with the West on the nuclear program. Only 11 percent oppose it.

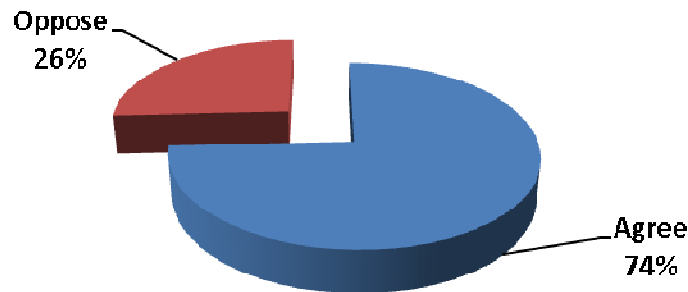
### 02. Who is Iran's Greatest Enemy?



- > The biggest enemy of Iran in the world is the US (40 percent), followed by Israel (32 percent). This reflects the big Satan, little Satan argument of the Iranian leadership in reference to the US and Israel. Five percent say that Iran has no enemies; Six percent refer to Iran as the enemy of itself.

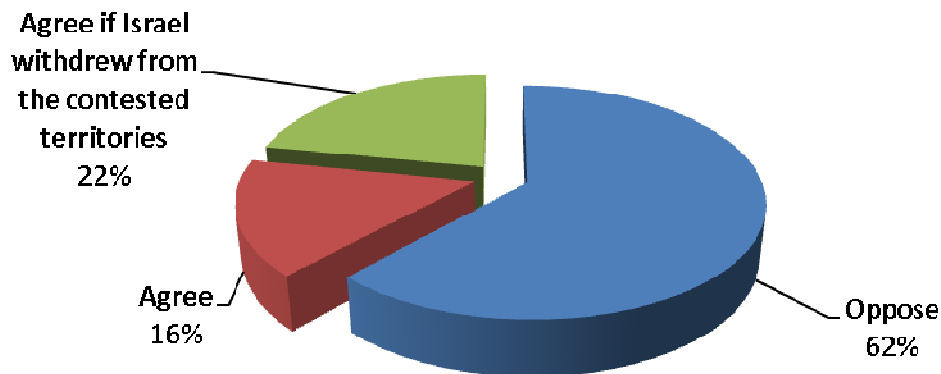


### 03. Do You Agree That Iran Should Establish Trade and Diplomatic Relations with the United States?



- > Whereas the US is still perceived as the number 1 enemy of Iran in the world (Israel is a distant second), there is a very strong support among the Iranian public for establishing diplomatic and trade relations with the U.S. 74 percent of Iranian support this.

### 04. Do You Agree That Iran Should Recognize Israel if Israel Reaches a Peace Accord with the Palestinians?

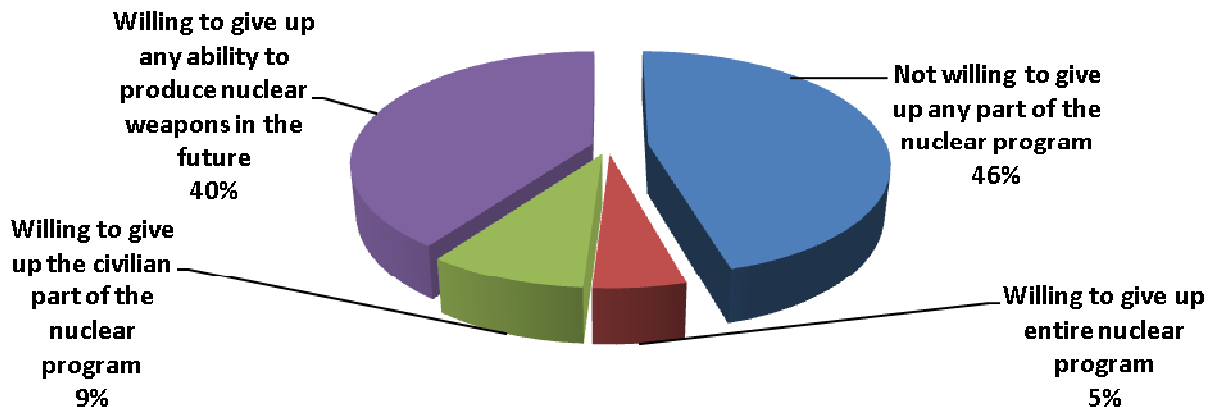


- > Almost 40 percent of the Iranian public agrees that their country should recognize Israel, if Israel signs a peace treaty with the Palestinian and withdraws from Palestinian areas. This finding is counter intuitive, given the Iranian leadership's position and rhetoric on Israel during Ahmadinejad's regime.

## The most important finding:

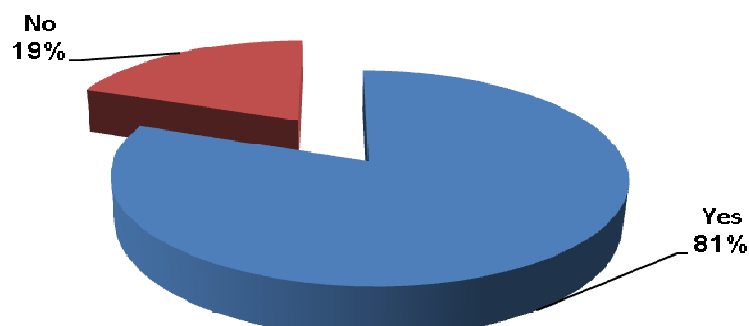
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### 05. Are You Willing to Give Up the Nuclear Program for the Removal of the Economic Sanctions?



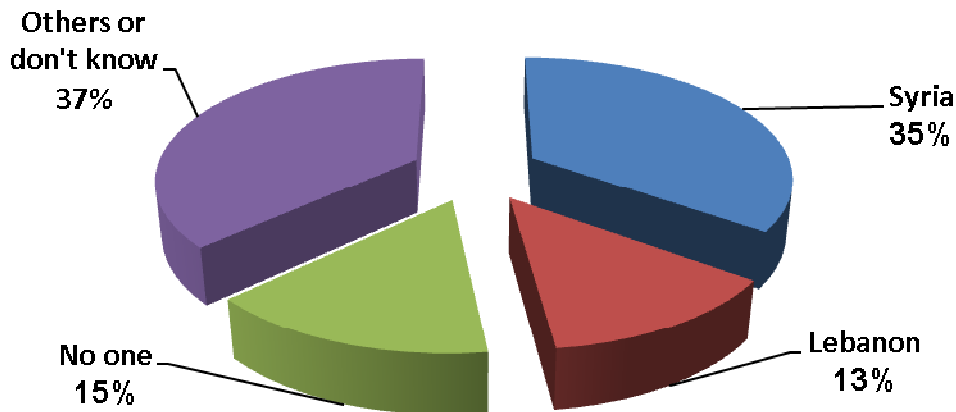
- > In return for the full removal of sanctions, 40 percent of Iranians are willing to give up the ability of Iran to produce nuclear weapons in the future, in addition to 9 percent who agree to give up the civilian component of the nuclear program, and 5 percent who are willing to give up the entire nuclear program. In other words, more than 45 percent are now willing to give up their nuclear program for the full removal of sanctions plus 9 percent who are willing to give up the civilian program.
- > Little support is provided by the Iranian public to give up the civilian part of this program. Less than 1 in 10 supports such a move.

### 06. Will the Removal of the Economic Sanctions Improve Your Life?



- > A very large number of Iranians (81 percent), state that the removal of the sanctions on Iran will make their life easier.

## 07. Who is the biggest Ally of Iran in the Middle East?



Syria is perceived as the most important ally of Iran in the Middle East (by 35 percent of respondents). Lebanon is second (14 percent). This reflects the Iranian-Syrian-Hezbollah coalition, and the Iranian leadership's geo-strategic position on the region. The Palestinians are not mentioned by the respondents as a top ally of Iran.

### Key Insights

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The survey showed that Iranian leaders' hostility towards Israel and the West, is not widely shared in the opinion of the Iranian public.

Iranians are eager to establish diplomatic and trade relations with the US, recognize Israel (although not the majority of Iranians), and greatly support the current talks with the P5+1 on the nuclear program.

In contrast, there is convergence between the leadership of Iran and the public on such issues as Iran's key allies, its biggest enemies, and the talks on the nuclear program

Given the domestic political power struggle in Iran, where Conservatives push for one direction and Moderates for cooperation, these results, which largely support the moderates' position, are not trivial and somewhat encouraging.

# Chapter 3

## Prospects for the Iran Nuclear Negotiations<sup>1</sup>

Gary Samore, The Kennedy School, Harvard University

I would like to brief you on the state of play in the P5+1 nuclear negotiations with Iran. What are the main issues that need to be resolved to achieve a comprehensive agreement and how far apart are the two sides? Keep in mind that the details of the negotiations have not been made public – which is a good sign that the two sides are making a genuine effort to reach agreement – so I’m giving you an assessment as an outside observer.

The good news is that the interim agreement, or Joint Plan of Action, which went into effect on January 20, 2014, is performing as expected. Under the agreement, Iran has frozen or capped key elements of its nuclear program, which has limited further development of Iran’s capacity to produce fissile materials for nuclear weapons. According to the most recent report by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Iran has diluted or converted most of its stockpile of 20% enriched uranium, ceased any additional enrichment above 5%, halted installation of additional centrifuges, and suspended major construction at the Arak heavy water research reactor. A new facility is near completion to covert low enriched uranium from hexafluoride to oxide, which cannot be further enriched unless it is converted back to hexafluoride. It’s true that Iran is allowed to continue centrifuge research and development under the Joint Plan of Action, but this is unlikely to significantly improve Iran’s capabilities unless more powerful machines are actually installed and begin enriching in large numbers, which is currently frozen under the Joint Plan of Action.

In exchange for Iran’s nuclear constraints, the U.S. and EU have eased some trade sanctions and released some frozen funds from Iran’s oil exports. Despite concerns from critics of the interim agreement, however, the overall sanctions regime has remained intact, mainly because the Washington and the EU governments have actively warned companies and other governments not to take actions that would

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<sup>1</sup> Presented at the Herzliya Conference, June 7-9, 2014

erode sanctions. To reinforce the message, Washington has continued to impose sanctions against companies that have violated the existing sanctions even while the interim agreement is in effect. It's true that Iranian oil exports have averaged about 1.2 million barrels per day (MB/D) since January – slightly higher than the 1 MB/D that U.S. officials estimated when the Joint Plan of Action was negotiated – but not enough to make a huge difference to the Iranian economy, especially because financial sanctions restricting Iranian access to its oil revenues remain in place. In short, the U.S. and the EU have demonstrated that they can manipulate and fine tune sanctions relief as a powerful bargaining tool.

So, on balance, the decision by the P5+1 to pursue an interim agreement as a first step towards a comprehensive agreement has been successful. In fact, the status quo is probably more acceptable to the P5+1 than it is to Iran because they are essentially freezing Iran's nuclear program without giving up very much in sanctions leverage. The question now is whether conditions are ripe to complete a comprehensive agreement by July 20, 2014, the near term deadline set by the Joint Plan of Action.

On one hand, the P5+1 and Iran seem to have agreed – at least in principle - to modify the 40 MW Arak heavy water research reactor (which is still under construction) to reduce the power level and alter the reactor core and fuel type so that it cannot produce a significant amount of plutonium. The details of these modifications still need to be determined – in particular how extensive and how reversible the changes will be – but this seems to be a bridgeable set of issues. In fact, Iran is more willing to trade away Arak because its pathway to produce plutonium for nuclear weapons is much more challenging and distant than its uranium enrichment program.

On the other hand, the negotiators seem far apart on at least two crucial issues. The first issue is physical constraints on Iran's enrichment program. Currently, Iran has installed about 19,000 IR-1 (first generation) centrifuge machines of which about 10,000 are actually enriching. In addition, Iran has installed about 1,000 more powerful IR-2 (second generation) centrifuges that are not yet operational. The P5+1 are demanding that Iran significantly scale back the numbers and types of centrifuges, reduce its stockpile of low enriched uranium, halt further enrichment above 5%, limit research and development of more advanced centrifuges, and close or convert the Fordow enrichment facility. Presumably, the P5+1 want surplus centrifuges to be removed, disassembled and stored under IAEA supervision. Excess low enriched uranium could be converted to oxide and exported for fabrication into fuel elements for the Bushehr nuclear power plant. The Fordow enrichment facility could be closed or converted to non-nuclear uses. Finally, P5+1 are demanding that these restrictions on Iran's enrichment program remain in place for more than a decade.

These constraints on Iran's enrichment program are designed to increase so-called "break out time" – the time required for Iran to produce enough weapons grade uranium for a single bomb from its known enrichment sites under IAEA inspections. I think break out time is somewhat artificial and arbitrary way to measure a nuclear deal because Iran is very unlikely to dash towards nuclear weapons from its declared facilities. The IAEA would quickly detect such an attempt, and the facilities

would be highly vulnerable to military attack before break out could be completed. Much more likely, Iran will try again (as it has twice before) to build a covert enrichment plant and produce a small arsenal of nuclear weapons in secret before revealing its capability.

Nonetheless, as a political fact of life, any nuclear agreement with Iran will be measured in terms of break out time. No matter how artificial, this is a relatively concrete and simple yard stick which both opponents and proponents of any deal can cite in the inevitable political debates that will follow an agreement. On paper, Iran's current break out time – if it used all of its available centrifuges and stock pile of low enriched uranium - is about two to three months. Based on conversations I've had with knowledgeable Congressional staffers, a deal which pushes break out time back to a year or more and remains in place for a decade or more is politically defensible. In this case, Iran would not have a "threshold capacity" to produce nuclear weapons.

As far as I can tell, however, this is far more than Iran is willing to concede at this point. President Rouhani has publicly rejected any dismantlement of its current enrichment program and any long term constraints on the size of enrichment program. Instead, I understand that Iran is willing to consider short term constraints on the size of its enrichment program, such as freezing at the current level of operating IR-1s for a few years before gradually expanding to an industrial scale of as many as 150,000 IR-1 centrifuge machines or an equivalent number of more advanced machines as they become available.

Iran claims it needs an industrial scale enrichment plant to produce low enriched uranium to fuel the Bushehr nuclear power plant if Russia reneges on its commitment to provide fresh fuel. However, such a facility would also give Iran a more credible break out option to quickly produce high enriched uranium for nuclear weapons in a matter of weeks not months. In addition, an industrial scale enrichment infrastructure would also make it easier for Iran to divert manpower and material to a smaller covert enrichment facility.

The second big sticking point is the pace and scope of sanctions relief. In my conversations with Iranians, they insist that the existing nuclear-related sanctions be repealed – not just waived by Presidential authority – because they don't want to accept long term nuclear restraints without more confidence that sanctions relief will be permanent. Of course, repealing sanctions would require a positive act by a majority of both houses in Congress, which seems implausible in today's political climate in Washington, especially if the nuclear deal allows Iran to retain even a limited enrichment capacity. In addition, U.S. sanctions against Iran are a thicket of many different laws, which mix nuclear-related sanctions with sanctions imposed on Iran for terrorism or human rights reasons, and it would be extremely difficult and contentious to craft legislation that would lift some sanctions and retain others in place.

Given the big differences on these two related issues, I assume the P5+1 negotiators will propose some kind of phased resolution: a staged draw down of Iran's enrichment program in exchange for a staged removal of sanctions leading ultimately to the repeal of international and national nuclear-related sanctions

once Iran has reduced its enrichment program to a new baseline. The problem with this approach is that Iran wants large scale sanctions relief upfront in exchange for a gradual buildup of centrifuges while the P5+1 are offering large scale sanctions relief down the road in exchange for a gradual build down of centrifuges.

In addition to these twin central issues of enrichment and sanctions, a final agreement will also need to address several other important issues, such as monitoring and verification arrangements beyond the Additional Protocol, resolution of questions about Iran's previous weaponization program, and restrictions on Iran's ballistic missile program. Iran seems relatively open to accepting additional monitoring arrangements as part of an overall deal, but it will probably not agree to intrusive challenge inspections like those imposed on Iraq after the Gulf War. Iran also refuses to admit that it was conducting a program to design nuclear weapons before 2003 (which the IAEA euphemistically calls the "Possible Military Dimension" of Iran's nuclear program).

Given all of these complex and contentious issues, I think it will be very difficult to reach a comprehensive deal by July. Nonetheless, both sides have a strong interest to keep the diplomatic process alive because neither wants to return to previous cycle of escalation of increased sanctions and increased nuclear activities with an increased risk of war. And, both sides will be able to make a good case that sufficient progress is being made in the negotiations even a final agreement has not been reached. Therefore, if a comprehensive agreement is not reached, I expected that the two sides will agree to implement the provision of the Joint Plan of Action to extend the interim agreement for an additional six months until January 2015.

Whether a comprehensive deal can be reached by January 2015 – or another interim deal - I can't say at this point. The critical factor is whether the Supreme Leader judges that the economic pressure poses a sufficient threat to political stability to require significant nuclear concessions. In this case, Tehran might be willing to reduce its enrichment program in order to lift sanctions and restore the economy, while still preserving its option in the future to cheat or renege on the deal if decides to resume its nuclear weapons program. I think everybody understands that such an agreement would represent a tactical retreat rather than a strategic shift away from nuclear weapons. As a result, even if a comprehensive agreement is achieved, the U.S. and its allies will need to maintain a high priority on intelligence efforts to detect cheating as well as contingency plans to re-impose sanctions or use military force in the event that the deal break down.

To conclude, I think the dual track strategy of diplomacy and sanctions that President Bush began in his second term and President Obama then intensified and expanded is paying off - at least in terms of slowing down Iran's nuclear clock in exchange for limited sanctions relief. Whether Iran will agree to substantial long term constraints on its nuclear program in exchange for more comprehensive sanctions relief is less certain, but I could imagine a series of interim or partial agreements that continues to slow down Iran's nuclear activities, without sacrificing our main sanctions leverage. In other words, we can still buy time – and that may be the best that diplomacy can achieve while the current Iranian leadership remains in power.

# Chapter 4

## The Days After a Deal With Iran<sup>2</sup>

Alireza Nader, The RAND Corporation

This paper begins with the assumption that a final nuclear agreement will be reached between the P5+1 (United States, United Kingdom, France, China, Russia, and Germany) and Iran. Both Iran and the P5+1 have sufficient incentives to achieve such a deal, as the Iranian government is eager to lift sanctions that have devastated the Iranian economy, and the P5+1 is anxious to halt Iran's development of a nuclear weapons capability. The author makes this assumption knowing that the prospects of reaching a final deal are far from certain. But the possibility of reaching an agreement is great enough to warrant thinking about Iran's post-deal foreign policy. This paper is part of a series of RAND perspectives that explore the implications that would follow the "days after a deal."<sup>3</sup>

Iran's leadership, especially Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, is likely to approve a final deal that, at least implicitly, recognizes Iran's self-declared right to enrich uranium, preserves most of its nuclear infrastructure, and enables Tehran to conduct future nuclear research.<sup>4</sup> For the purposes of the following analysis, this means that Iran would be able to continue to enrich uranium (albeit under strict safeguards) and its remaining infrastructure would leave it with the ability to develop nuclear weapons, although it would give the international community, including the United States, ample time to respond if Iran chose to weaponize its program.

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<sup>2</sup> Reprinted with permission of the author from the RAND Corporation, <http://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE124.html>

<sup>3</sup> See Dalia Dassa Kaye and Jeffrey Martini, "The Days After a Deal with Iran: Regional Responses to a Final Nuclear Agreement," Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, PE-122-RC, 2014. As of May 15, 2014: <http://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE122.html>

<sup>4</sup> George Perkovich, "No Endgame in Sight: Demanding Zero Enrichment from Iran Makes Zero Sense," Foreign Affairs, January 15, 2014. As of February 12, 2014: <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/140650/george-perkovich/no-endgame-in-sight>

See also Colin Kahl and Alireza Nader, "Zero-Sum Enrichment," Foreign Policy, October 14, 2013. As of February 12, 2014: [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/10/14/zero\\_sum\\_enrichment\\_iran\\_us\\_nuclear\\_deal](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/10/14/zero_sum_enrichment_iran_us_nuclear_deal)



A final nuclear agreement between Iran and the P5+1 has the potential not only to decrease a decade of rising tensions between Iran and the United States, but also to help moderate Iran's foreign policy under President Hassan Rouhani, a relatively pragmatic politician. A final nuclear deal can empower Rouhani at home and provide him more room on foreign policy issues.

However, a nuclear deal alone will not allow Rouhani to change Tehran's foreign policy dramatically. The Islamic Republic's top leadership, including the Supreme Leader and his allies within the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, will still have the final say on crucial policies, and can therefore be expected to pursue Iran's rivalry with the United States, oppose Israel, and compete with Saudi Arabia.

Iranian foreign policy after a nuclear deal will likely reflect core positions that have endured since the 1979 revolution. U.S.- Iran relations may lack the tensions seen during Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's presidency, but are still likely to remain complicated and problematic.

This paper will examine Rouhani's likely hopes for a post-deal foreign policy, the domestic constraints on his goals, and how a final deal might affect Iran's relations with Saudi Arabia, Israel, Turkey, and, finally, the United States.<sup>5</sup>

## Iran's Post-Deal Policies: A Competition Between Rouhani and the Conservatives

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Rouhani's goal is to diminish, if not erase, the Islamic Republic's state of crisis caused by the 2009 disputed presidential election and Iran's political and economic isolation,<sup>6</sup> much of which was caused by Ahmadinejad's provocative rhetoric and Iran's nuclear advances. Rouhani and his allies, especially the still influential former President Ayatollah Hashemi Rafsanjani, perceive the regime to be undergoing a period of great crisis that can only be resolved by a shift of Iran's foreign policy, and perhaps some domestic policies as well. Since taking power last year, Rouhani has indicated a preference for a centrist and more cooperative Iranian policy. His government of "prudence and moderation" is keen to improve the economy by taking actions that will lift sanctions, attract foreign investments, and improve ties with some neighboring countries and the United States. These are important reasons why Rouhani is likely to attempt a readjustment of some key approaches in both policy realms after a final nuclear deal.

Rouhani and his government appear to be in charge of specific foreign policy portfolios, including nuclear negotiations and improving relations with neighboring states such as Saudi Arabia and Turkey. Other key foreign policy issues, such as relations with Israel, are likely to remain under the control of the Supreme Leader and the Revolutionary Guards. But the Rouhani government can be expected to

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<sup>5</sup> Early signs of change in Iranian foreign policy are most likely to be apparent in relations with neighbors such as Saudi Arabia and Turkey because of the immediate relevance for Iran's security and economy, although the Rouhani government also will pay close attention to the United States as both a bilateral interlocutor and a major factor in regional affairs.

<sup>6</sup> Suzanne Maloney, "Saved by the Deal: How Rouhani Won the Negotiations and Rescued His Regime," *Foreign Affairs*, November 27, 2013.

adopt a more moderate tone regarding Israel, and maybe even flirt with changing Iran's position toward the Jewish state. Most important, Rouhani will likely engage the United States after a nuclear deal. Rouhani's primary motivation in these efforts would be to attract foreign investments for Iran's energy industry and to generally improve the Iranian economy and the lot of the average Iranian. His government is also keen to relax restrictions on cultural issues, although there are no indications of a desire for significant political reforms.

The new president's actions up to this point, including the negotiation of the November 2013 Geneva interim deal regarding Iran's nuclear program, are indicative of what he seeks from Iran's post-deal policies. Rouhani has worked with the United States on the nuclear issue to the point of making a personal call to President Barack Obama while visiting the UN headquarters in New York in September 2013. The Rouhani government has also courted European and Asian powers since the Geneva deal.

Tehran has reestablished diplomatic ties with the United Kingdom, received European foreign ministers in Tehran, and expanded diplomatic and economic contacts with Turkey, Russia, and China. Iran has already witnessed a thaw in relations with major powers since the Geneva accord, a trend that can be expected to continue with a final nuclear deal. Rouhani's achievement of a final nuclear agreement and the ensuing easing of sanctions may very well give him a boost, and provide space for him to enact his foreign and domestic policy agendas.

But Rouhani's likely post-deal approach will face real limits due to key power centers, especially Khamenei, conservatives within the Revolutionary Guards, and other hard-line associations and opinion makers. Khamenei has asked Iranians to support the current negotiations, but some conservatives have been critical of Rouhani's policies, and are likely to constrain his domestic and foreign policy agenda if Iran achieves a final deal.

While Iranian conservatives seek a resolution of the nuclear crisis and the lifting of sanctions, they also have articulated certain "principles." Specifically, they are unlikely to change their views regarding the United States, Israel, or Saudi Arabia. For example, Revolutionary Guards chief General Mohammad Ali Jafari has repeatedly expressed doubts about nuclear negotiations, stating that "one cannot be optimistic about America,"<sup>7</sup> and imploring Rouhani not to give away Iran's interests, although Jafari acknowledged the pain of sanctions and vowed to stay "silent" for "now." The Guards have acted provocatively in other ways. After the Geneva accord, they tested "new" ballistic missiles and used strong language against the United States, despite being warned by Rouhani to show restraint.<sup>8</sup>

Khamenei, for his part, has delineated a foreign policy of "heroic flexibility" that allows for tactical shifts to alleviate economic pressure. But he is unlikely to surrender what he sees as the regime's "principles." Moreover, conservatives—

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<sup>7</sup> Mehr News, "Pishbini as Mozakreta Felli Nadaram (I Have No Predictions Regarding Negotiations)," February 19, 2014. As of March 2014: <http://www.mehrnews.com/detail/News/2239631>

<sup>8</sup> Scott Lucas, "Rouhani Tells Revolutionary Guards 'Back Off Anti-US Tough Talk'," EA Worldview, March 2, 2014. As of March 4, 2014: <http://eaworldview.com/2014/03/iran-rouhani-tells-revolutionary-guards-back-anti-us-tough-talk/>

including Khamenei—may make sure that Rouhani does not derive too much power and popularity from a diplomatic breakthrough by blocking some of his domestic goals, such as achieving a more open social and political atmosphere. Mohammad Khatami, the last Iranian president to attempt reforms and change Iranian foreign policy, was effectively impeded by the conservative camp.

Thus, after a deal, the Iranian president will have the freedom to court Europe, Russia, China, and Turkey to attract foreign investments for Iran's declining energy sector. After all, this was Tehran's policy during the presidencies of Ayatollah Hashemi Rafsanjani (1989–1997) and Khatami (1997–2005). A final nuclear deal should hinder Iran's nuclear breakout capability and could decrease the chances of a regional military conflict, both of which would be beneficial to overall American interests. But it is unlikely to produce a final breakthrough in issues driving regional instability, or a sudden and dramatic improvement in U.S.-Iran relations. Rouhani may be Iran's president but at end of the day, Khamenei and his allies will still maintain a tight grip over the economy, the military, and the security forces, allowing them to control the state's direction and decisions.

## The Rivalry with Saudi Arabia: Can Rouhani Achieve a Rapprochement?

The easing of tensions with Saudi Arabia is likely to be a key post-deal goal for Rouhani. But Saudi suspicions of Iran and Iranian domestic politics are likely to present major obstacles. Iran has reached out to the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, and Oman since Rouhani's election, and Iranian foreign minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has been invited to visit Saudi Arabia. But Riyadh is likely to remain deeply suspicious of Tehran, despite new efforts at engagement.

Riyadh appears to be deeply suspicious of Tehran and publicly reluctant to engage the new Rouhani government. This is due to a long-running Saudi-Iranian rivalry, which has intensified in the last decade. Iran's support of the Bashar al-Assad regime in Syria is deeply troubling to the Saudis, and both Tehran and Riyadh appear to view the conflict as an intractable and zero-sum competition.

However, Rouhani's goal of decreasing Iran's global isolation and improving relations with neighboring countries could prove difficult without engaging Riyadh. And some level of engagement is on Rouhani's list of priorities. He and other centrists appear to see Saudi Arabia as a rival, but also as a power that should be engaged and enticed, rather than opposed through undermining the Saudi government. To some extent, this viewpoint defined Iran's policy toward Saudi Arabia after Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's 1989 death until Ahmadinejad's election in 2005. Ahmadinejad's predecessors, Rafsanjani (1989–1997) and Khatami (1997–2005), did much to improve Iranian-Saudi relations, including expanding economic relations and even exploring joint security cooperation. Rafsanjani has accused Ahmadinejad of "ruining" Tehran's relations with Riyadh.

In his first post-inauguration speech, Rouhani boasted of being the first Iranian official to sign a security cooperation agreement on counternarcotics with Riyadh as Iran's national security advisor. In the event of a final deal, Rouhani will seek to

reintroduce some of the comity between Tehran and Riyadh that existed under the Rafsanjani and Khatami presidencies. But the enmity between the Islamic Republic and Saudi Arabia is deeply rooted and goes well beyond Iran's nuclear ambitions. It is unlikely to end completely after a final nuclear deal.

The rivalry is based on each state's aspiration to lead the global Muslim community. Velayat-e faghih (rule of the supreme jurist), the theoretical foundation of the Islamic Republic, views the Supreme Leader as God's representative on Earth and leader of the Shia (and in essence all Muslims) in the absence of the Hidden Imam. This directly counters the Saudi dynasty's leadership claim, especially as Islam's two holiest sites are located in Saudi Arabia. In addition, the Wahhabi strain of Sunni Islam predominant in Saudi Arabia considers the Shia to be heretics rather than true Muslims. Therefore, many Saudi political and religious elite view the Islamic Republic as an apostate power bent on Shia "hegemony" in the Middle East.<sup>9</sup>

Iran's conservatives, especially within the Guards, are deeply suspicious of Saudi intentions.<sup>10</sup> They see Saudi Arabia as playing a crucial role in abetting the international sanctions regime that has battered Iran's economy and resulted in a 50-percent decrease in Iranian oil exports. Iran's major oil customers—including China, Japan, and India—agreed to reduce oil purchases from Iran in return for increased Saudi oil exports to them.<sup>11</sup> Increased Saudi oil production allowed the United States and its partners to take half of Iran's oil off the global market without a steep rise in oil prices.<sup>12</sup>

In addition, Iranian conservatives see Riyadh as obstructing Iran's regional influence. For example, Saudi Arabia backs Sunni insurgents fighting the pro-Iranian and Alawite-dominated Syrian regime. Saudi Arabia is also active against Iranian interests in Lebanon. Hezbollah, Lebanon's most powerful political and military actor, is closely supported by Iran, whereas Riyadh backs the rival Sunni-dominated March 14th movement, once led by the son of assassinated Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, a close Saudi ally.<sup>13</sup> The civil war in Syria has spilled into Lebanon, threatening to carry the "proxy" war between Iran and Saudi Arabia into a fragile state struggling to preserve its ethno-religious balance and prevent a return to the civil war that tore the country from 1975 to 1990.

The Iranian government also views Riyadh as having a hand in undermining its Iraqi allies. The current Iraqi government, led by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki and dominated by Shia parties closely aligned with Iran, is in the midst of a military

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<sup>9</sup> Frederic Wehrey, Theodore W. Karasik, Alireza Nader, Jeremy J. Ghez, Lydia Hansell, and Robert A. Guffey, *Saudi-Iranian Relations Since the Fall of Saddam: Rivalry, Cooperation, and Implications for U.S. Policy*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-840-SRF, 2009. As of April 29, 2013: <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG840.html>

<sup>10</sup> Wehrey et al., 2009.

<sup>11</sup> Saudi-Iranian differences regarding oil have gone beyond the short-term stepping in by the Saudis to meet shortfalls caused by sanctions on Iran. They also have included longer-term differences in optimal prices that reflect things such as the different sizes of their respective reserves.

<sup>12</sup> Scott Harold and Alireza Nader, *China and Iran: Economic, Political, and Military Relations*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, OP-351-CMEPP, 2012. As of May 16, 2014: [http://www.rand.org/pubs/occasional\\_papers/OP351.html](http://www.rand.org/pubs/occasional_papers/OP351.html)

<sup>13</sup> The al-Assad regime and perhaps Hezbollah are widely believed to have orchestrated Hariri's car bomb assassination.

campaign against Sunni insurgents who captured much of al Anbar province in early 2014. Saudi Arabia perceives Maliki's government to be a "pawn" of Iran and the region-wide Shia agenda, and has refused to reestablish diplomatic ties with Baghdad.<sup>14</sup> Iran suspects Saudi involvement in the current Sunni insurgency against Maliki.

Finally, the Iranian regime perceives Saudi Arabia as stirring internal unrest in Iran by supporting ethnic insurgents and terrorist groups, including Iranian Baluchi secessionists and the Mujaheddin Khalq Organization. Iran has also accused Saudi Arabia of sabotaging its nuclear program. Iranian professor Nasser Hadian has described Riyadh as the main architect of an anti-Iranian insurgent "infrastructure" within Iran's own borders. Clearly, the Islamic Republic views Saudi Arabia as a critical threat to its interests at home and abroad.<sup>15</sup>

Syria is likely to stand as the greatest obstacle to Iranian-Saudi détente in the wake of a final nuclear agreement. The Revolutionary Guards have committed great resources (and even their lives) to preserving the Assad regime, and are likely to disapprove of a more conciliatory approach toward Riyadh.

But the differences between Iran and Saudi Arabia regarding Syria are not insurmountable. It is conceivable that all sides of the conflict will grow tired of the war's destruction and agree to some political settlement acceptable to both Tehran and Riyadh. Like Russia, Iran may not be vested in the person of Assad, but rather seek a Syrian government that serves as a conduit of Iranian weapons to Hezbollah. And it is conceivable for Iran and Saudi Arabia to each maintain a zone of influence in Syria while recognizing each other's interests. Furthermore, the profusion of extremist al Qaeda-linked groups is a threat to both nations. Iran and Saudi Arabia would therefore benefit in general from rapprochement. Before seeking a common ground in Syria, Iran and Saudi Arabia could begin joint cooperation in Lebanon, a country in which both Riyadh and Tehran maintain influence, and in some ways tolerate the other power's respective interests. According to reports, Saudi Arabia and Iran may have discussed facilitating the appointment of a Lebanese president acceptable to both sides.<sup>16</sup>

The rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia far transcends the dynamics surrounding Iran's nuclear capability and is unlikely to go away after a nuclear deal. But the Rouhani government is likely to at least attempt greater engagement with Riyadh in order to lower tensions and perhaps get each side to respect the other's interests. However, Rouhani's ability to achieve success could be stymied by

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<sup>14</sup> Frederic Wehrey, Dalia Dassa Kaye, Jessica Watkins, Jeffrey Martini, and Robert A. Guffey, *The Iraq Effect: The Middle East After the Iraq War*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-892-AF, 2010. As of August 16, 2011: <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG892.html>

<sup>15</sup> United States Institute of Peace, "Nasser Hadian on Why Iran is Ready," *The Iran Primer*, web page, September 20, 2013. As of May 30, 2014: <http://iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2013/sep/20/nasser-hadian-why-iran-ready> Saudi Arabia fears Iran's manipulation of its own minority Shia population, most of whom inhabit the oil-rich Eastern Province. The Shia-led rebellion against Bahrain's Sunni-dominated monarchy has further exacerbated Saudi fears of Iranian "hegemony." However, although Iran has interfered in Bahraini affairs in the past, there is little evidence that Tehran is behind the Bahraini uprising, which is driven by the inherent inequality of Bahraini society and widespread discrimination against the Shia. Nevertheless, the Saudis see an Iranian hand behind most of their regional troubles, or at least pretend to.

<sup>16</sup> Abdulmajeed Al-Buluwi, "Saudi Invitation a First Step with Iran," *Al Monitor*, May 16, 2014

Riyadh's continuing suspicions of Iran regardless of a final agreement, and Iranian conservatives' distaste for Saudi policies.

## Iranian Hostility Toward Israel: A Steadfast Position?

Rouhani and his government have adopted a more moderate rhetoric on Israel, and will likely continue a less provocative tone toward the Jewish state after a final nuclear deal. However, beyond a change in rhetoric, there is not much to indicate that Rouhani and Foreign Minister Zarif have the will or authority to reshape Tehran's policy on Israel, especially its support for anti-Israeli groups such as Hezbollah. The Islamic Republic's opposition toward Israel, especially among Iranian conservatives, is not merely due to a sense of geopolitical competition; rather, it is defined at the most basic level by an ideological and religious hostility toward the Jewish state. Iranian conservatives may tolerate a toning down of rhetoric on Israel, but they are unlikely to change Iran's policies toward Israel after a final nuclear deal.

In order to decrease Iran's isolation, Rouhani may seek to defuse Israel's hostility toward Iran after a nuclear deal. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been the foremost opponent of the Geneva nuclear agreement, and is likely to criticize a final deal. His strident denunciation of the Geneva agreement may be motivated by a genuine concern that it is a "bad deal," but there should be little doubt that Israeli hostility toward Iran, and by extension the Geneva deal, is partially shaped by Iran's steadfast opposition to Israel's existence as a Jewish state, which is manifested in Tehran's support for anti-Israeli groups, such as Hezbollah.<sup>17</sup> Israel's aggressive opposition to Geneva and its possible rejection of a final deal could complicate Iran's attempts to improve ties with the United States and European powers.

An insightful and astute strategic thinker, Rouhani is surely aware that much of America's hostility toward the Islamic Republic, especially within the U.S. Congress, is motivated by Tehran's anti-Israeli policies. It is therefore reasonable that he has thought about a less confrontational stance toward Tel Aviv and has adopted a more moderate tone toward Israel. Rouhani's speeches, while not conciliatory, do not contain the usual bluster and threats in more hard-line speeches, including that of Khamenei. And unlike many Iranian officials, Rouhani has used the term "Israel" rather than the "Zionist entity."

In addition, Rouhani and Zarif have both condemned the Holocaust, a significant departure from Ahmadinejad's regular Holocaust denial. Rouhani has described the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a "wound" in the Middle East, instead of describing Israel itself as a "cancer," a common expression among conservatives such as Khamenei and Ahmadinejad. Zarif wished Jews a happy Rosh Hashanah, and the

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<sup>17</sup> Some seasoned analysts say Netanyahu's position toward Iran is primarily shaped by his own personal political interests. See Paul Pillar, "Netanyahu's Anti-Iranian Rant," *National Interest*, March 4, 2014. As of April 2014: <http://nationalinterest.org/blog/paul-pillar/netanyahus-anti-iranian-rant-10004>. See also Kaye and Martini, 2014.<sup>15</sup>

Rouhani government has provided funding to the only Jewish hospital remaining in Iran. Zarif has even gone as far as indicating in a German television interview Tehran's willingness to recognize Israel as a legitimate state if it were to achieve peace with the Palestinians.<sup>18</sup>

It is also possible that Rouhani and Zarif may want more than a mere change in rhetoric, but a truly different Israel policy. Some have argued that Rouhani may seek the adoption of the "Malaysia" option, in which Iran, like Muslim Malaysia, does not recognize Israel but also refrains from actively countering the Jewish state.<sup>19</sup> This could theoretically follow a possible peace agreement between the Palestinians and Israelis. This approach was also discussed during the Rafsanjani and Khatami presidencies, as both men seem inclined to at least consider a less hostile approach toward Tel Aviv. However, their presidencies did not lead to a significant change in policy toward Israel.

Both Rafsanjani and Khatami faced what Rouhani is likely to encounter if he attempts a shift: Khamenei and the conservative security establishment remain fundamentally hostile toward Israel. Khamenei's speeches are still characterized by deep enmity; a final nuclear deal between Iran and P5+1 will not change his mindset or rhetoric.

In his March 21, 2014, Persian New Year address to Iran, Khamenei again reiterated his thinking on the issue by criticizing the West for "suppressing" those who question the Holocaust. "Expressing opinion about the Holocaust, or casting doubt on it, is one of the greatest sins in the West," Khamenei stated. "They prevent this, arrest the doubters, try them while claiming to be a free country."<sup>20</sup>

Iranian conservatives see Israel as an outpost of Western "colonialism" and oppose what they view as Israeli occupation of Muslim lands, including the holy city of Jerusalem. Tehran also believes Israel to be a "proxy" for American interests in the Middle East, while claiming the "Zionists" to be in charge of America's Middle East policy. Iran also derives geopolitical value from its unrelenting "resistance" to Tel Aviv. Much of the Arab public appears to appreciate Iran standing up to Israel by championing the Palestinians, possibly lessening Shia Iran's isolation in the Sunni-dominated Middle East.<sup>21</sup>

A final nuclear agreement is unlikely to lead Iran's abandonment of policies that are of greatest concern to Israeli and American decision makers, including the arming of Hezbollah. If anything, Hezbollah is reported to be receiving even more advanced missiles (through Syria) that can reach targets anywhere in Israel. Many Israelis, and even Hezbollah supporters, expect a replay of the 2006 war between

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<sup>18</sup> Muhammad Javad Zarif interview with Phoenix television, February 2, 2014. As of February 14, 2014: [http://www.phoenix.de/content/phoenix/die\\_sendungen/diskussionen/802368](http://www.phoenix.de/content/phoenix/die_sendungen/diskussionen/802368)

<sup>19</sup> Trita Parsi, "Why Iranian Leader Hassan Rouhani May Not Be Ahmadinejad II," Jewish Daily Forward, August 9, 2013. As of February 2014: <http://forward.com/articles/182013/why-iranian-leader-hassan-rowhani-may-not-be-ahmad/?p=all>

<sup>20</sup> Laura Rozen, "In Iran New Year's Address, Khamenei Questions Holocaust," al Monitor, March 21, 2014. As of March 2014: <http://backchannel.al-monitor.com/index.php/2014/03/8006/in-iran-new-years-address-khamenei-questions-holocaust/>

<sup>21</sup> Colin Kahl, Melissa Dalton, and Matthew Irvine, Risk and Rivalry: Iran, Israel and the Bomb, Washington, D.C.: Center for a New American Security, June 2012. As of February 24, 2013: [http://www.cnas.org/files/documents/publications/CNAS\\_RiskandRivalry\\_Kahl\\_0.pdf](http://www.cnas.org/files/documents/publications/CNAS_RiskandRivalry_Kahl_0.pdf)

the Lebanese group and Israeli Defense Forces that devastated much of southern Lebanon and caused significant Israeli military and civilian casualties.

Thus, Rouhani may attempt to dial down the rhetoric against Israel after a final nuclear agreement. But an entirely different sort of policy toward Israel is unlikely to happen unless Iran witnesses major changes, including in its top leadership.<sup>22</sup> The Islamic Republic is likely to maintain its hostile stance toward Israel as long as Khamenei and the Guards maintain their grip on the country.

At the same time, a rhetorical change from Tehran, coupled with constraints on Iran's ability to weaponize the program due to a final deal, may defuse some tensions between Tehran and Tel Aviv. Israel is less likely to take military action against Iran if a final deal is broadly accepted within the United States and international community. And Iran, traditionally reluctant to combat Israel directly, is likely to keep supporting Hezbollah with advanced missiles, not necessarily with the intent to go to war against Israel, but to enhance its position regionally as a force of "resistance" while deterring an Israeli military attack against Iran's post-deal nuclear infrastructure. The rivalry between the two countries will continue, but a final deal may substantially decrease the chances of a direct military conflict.

## Relations with Turkey Easier to Improve Than Others

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Rouhani will have a much easier task in improving Tehran's ties with Ankara than with other countries after a final nuclear agreement. Iran and Turkey, while competitors in the Middle East, are not as ideologically opposed to each other as are Iran and Saudi Arabia, and have a history of cooperation. Secular Turkey and Iran's theocracy have looked upon each other with suspicion since the 1979 revolution, but ties between the two improved significantly after Turkey's Islamist-rooted Justice and Development Party (or AKP) assumed power in 2002. But the Syrian civil war has divided Ankara and Tehran. International sanctions against Iran have also weakened economic ties that were once the driving force behind bilateral cooperation. However, Turkey and Iran may reach a point of convergence on Syria in the future. And a final nuclear deal and lifting of sanctions on Iran is likely to lead to reenergized economic ties, thus improving the overall relationship.

Rouhani will likely attempt a return to more cordial relations with Turkey that existed from 2002 to 2011. And he is likely to find a partner in Ankara. The AKP sees greater Turkish-Iranian cooperation as beneficial to Turkish interests. It was Turkey's thirst for energy that led to an improvement of ties beginning in 2002. Soon after, the Erdogan government adopted a policy of "zero problems" with neighbors to expand Turkey's economy and increase its role in the Middle East. Turkey viewed closer ties with Iran and Syria as being a critical part of its new approach.<sup>23</sup> Finally, Turkey's dissatisfaction with the U.S. invasion and occupation

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<sup>22</sup> Parsi, 2013.

<sup>23</sup> Turkey and Iran have rivaled each other for centuries. The Turkish Ottoman and Safavid Persian empires fought for power in the Middle East for much of the 16th and 17th centuries. Iran's Pahlavi monarchs (1925–



of Iraq created a greater point of convergence between Turkey and Iran. Ahmadinejad was warmly greeted during his August 2008 trip to Istanbul, and Turkish-Iranian economic ties have grown at a relatively rapid pace. Turkey also attempted to mediate the nuclear crisis between Iran and the P5+1, to Washington's chagrin.<sup>24</sup>

The Arab Spring and the Syrian civil war have led to tense Turkish-Iranian relations in the last three years. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, once close to the Syria regime, is now a strong backer of Sunni insurgents trying to overthrow Assad. Iran sees Turkey's opposition to the Syrian regime as a direct threat to its core national security interests. Conservative Iranian officials have described Turkey as pursuing a "liberal" Islam that suits America's agenda.

A final nuclear agreement could lead to a resetting of Turkish-Iranian relations, however. The outlines of Iran's post-deal Turkey policy emerged soon after Rouhani's election and the Geneva accord. Zarif visited Turkey to discuss bilateral ties; his trip was reciprocated by Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu. More importantly, Erdogan made a trip to Tehran in January 2014 and met with Rouhani and Khamenei. The discussions focused not only on regional issues, but also on expanding Turkish-Iranian economic ties. A final nuclear deal and the lifting of sanctions against Iran are likely to lead to closer economic relations between Ankara and Tehran.

Closer economic ties could, in turn, help the two reevaluate their respective positions in Syria, and ease Iranian conservatives' misgivings about Turkey. The current stalemate in Syria is widely criticized in Turkey and has undermined Erdogan's standing as Assad remains in power while Syrian refugees continue to flood into Turkey. Moreover, the ascendance of Syrian Jihadi organizations, such as the Nusra Front and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), has given Turkish officials pause and may even lead them to reconsider Turkey's strong support for the Sunni insurgents. The Iranian government is similarly concerned about the growing power of anti-Shia and anti-Iranian groups such as ISIS. It is possible that at some point, Turkey may accept some level of Iranian influence in Syria, especially if it means better Turkish-Iranian relations.

Rouhani's election and a potential final nuclear deal will not lead to a Turkey-Iran alliance. The two countries will continue to compete in the Levant, Iraq, and beyond. However, a reenergized economic partnership and the dangers presented by Sunni extremist groups could pave the way to warmer Turkish-Iranian ties similar to those in the beginning of the last decade. This is a goal that may be amenable to both Rouhani and his conservative opponents.

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1979) may have admired Kemal Ataturk's secularization and modernization of Turkey, but the Islamic Republic was suspicious of Turkey's secular system and close ties to America and Israel.

<sup>24</sup> Parsi, 2013.

## U.S.-Iran Relations: Strategic Competition, “Heroic” Flexibility

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The Rouhani government will likely use a final nuclear agreement as a springboard for better U.S.-Iran relations. And even if Rouhani does not see a fully normalized relationship as possible, he may at the minimum seek more open communications on issues beyond the nuclear program. But it is less certain that Iranian conservatives, especially Khamenei, will be amenable to more normal ties. The Supreme Leader views the United States as the chief threat to his regime. In post-Geneva speeches, he has described the United States as Iran’s main rival. According to Khamenei, “nobody should believe that the enemies of the Islamic revolution have given up their enmity.”<sup>25</sup> He has supported nuclear negotiations in order to ease sanctions and economic pressure, but is unlikely to see a final deal as leading to diplomatic ties or even greater U.S.-Iran engagement.

Rouhani’s phone call with Obama on September 27, 2013, was the most significant direct public communication between senior Iranian and American officials since the 1979 revolution. Rouhani and Zarif, along with other figures such as Rafsanjani, have indicated a desire for improved ties with the United States and are likely to seek greater engagement after a final nuclear agreement. They appear to believe that Iran and the United States can engage on a number of issues beyond the nuclear program, especially regarding Afghanistan, but perhaps Syria as well.

There is precedent for the sort of U.S.-Iran cooperation that the Rouhani regime may seek. The 1979 revolution did not end U.S.-Iran ties completely. Rouhani was among the Iranian officials who greeted President Ronald Reagan’s envoys when they secretly visited Tehran in May 1986 in the hope of engaging and empowering more moderate Iranian figures.

There have been other explicit instances of U.S.-Iran cooperation in recent years. The Khatami government helped the United States establish the 2002 post-Taliban government in Kabul. Zarif, Iran’s envoy to the Bonn Conference at the time, persuaded the Northern Alliance to drop its opposition to Hamid Karzai as Afghanistan’s new leader. Khatami’s policy may have been blessed by Khamenei; at the minimum, the Supreme Leader gave Khatami some leeway to pursue his engagement strategy, which was ultimately met with Iran being branded as a member of the “Axis of Evil” by the George W. Bush administration.

The achievement of a final nuclear agreement may lead to some modest opportunities for engagement. The two countries face common threats, including Sunni extremism in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and beyond.<sup>26</sup> Tehran and Washington may be able to renew their engagement in Afghanistan in the event of a final and lasting nuclear deal, especially as U.S. troops draw down and Afghanistan faces

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<sup>25</sup> Fars News, “Ashkar shodan doshmani America ba Iran va Islam dar mozakerat e akhir (The Revelation of America’s Enmity with Iran and Islam in the Latest Negotiations),” January 4, 2014. As of February 2014: <http://www.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=13921019000241>

<sup>26</sup> Both Iran and the United States also may want to maintain stability in the Persian Gulf, but they are pursuing opposite goals here as well: Tehran wants to remove foreign military forces and become the premier security actor in the region, while Washington is likely to maintain sizable forces in the region to contain Iranian power and reassure Arab allies.

greater instability. The shared interests that led to cooperation in 2001–2002 still exist today; both Tehran and Washington fear a Taliban victory.

The Syrian conflict could also emerge as common ground between Tehran and Washington, but the differences between the two are wide. The United States has called for Assad to step down from power and has provided limited support for the insurgents. Iran is (arguably) the Syrian regime's biggest supporter. But the United States also maintains that the Syrian civil war should be resolved through a negotiated settlement. It is difficult to imagine such a settlement without Iran's active role in negotiations.

The U.S. government has indicated a possible Iranian role in negotiations, but only if it agrees to the Geneva I communique that calls for a transitional government to replace the current Syrian regime. Tehran has refused to sign the communique, which called for Assad's departure and was excluded from the Geneva II negotiations between the Syrian regime and the opposition coalition. However, it is not inconceivable that Iran could be included in future discussions; Tehran may not be as wedded to Assad leading Syria as it is to a Syrian regime that can maintain its interests in the future. But in order to engage the United States, Tehran may ultimately want recognition of its interests in Syria by the United States and other regional powers, such as Saudi Arabia.

Regardless, common interests in Afghanistan and perhaps Syria are unlikely to lead to full U.S.-Iran engagement or normalized diplomatic relations. Rouhani appears to want a more normalized relationship with Washington, but the decision is not his to make. The Supreme Leader and Iranian conservatives appear uninterested in a strategic shift. Past experiences with the United States, including Iran being branded as a member of the "Axis of Evil" may have reinforced their suspicions. Khamenei believes that the United States seeks to undermine, if not overthrow, his regime, irrespective of the nuclear issue. A final nuclear agreement between the United States and Iran may not diminish his view that the contest between America and Iran is ideologically driven. Khamenei sees the United States not only as a political, military, and economic competitor, but also as the source of a perceived cultural onslaught against the Islamic revolution.

Khamenei has supported a policy of "heroic flexibility" since Rouhani's election; comparing the U.S.-Iran relationship to a wrestling match, he believes Iran could adopt "flexible" tactics to win the overall competition.<sup>27</sup> This is why he has supported nuclear negotiations. But if Iran reaches a final deal, Khamenei's "heroic" flexibility will not necessarily mean normalized U.S.-Iran relations.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Arash Karami, "Ayatollah Khamenei's Heroic Flexibility," *al Monitor*. September 19, 2013. As of February 11, 2014: <http://iranpulse.al-monitor.com/index.php/2013/09/2854/khameneis-heroic-flexibility/>. See also Alireza Nader, "The U.S. Iran Wrestling Match," *Inter Press Service*, September 27, 2014. As of February 12, 2014: [http://www.international.to/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=9666:the-us-iran-wrestling-match&catid=268:inter-press-service&Itemid=377](http://www.international.to/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9666:the-us-iran-wrestling-match&catid=268:inter-press-service&Itemid=377)

<sup>28</sup> Khamenei and the Guards may also be motivated by a different economic incentive than Rouhani, who wants greater international investment and privatization. A more open and privatized economy could create competition for Khamenei and the Guards' vast business empires, and perhaps diminish their political power as well. Khamenei's business interests appear to be centered around the Setad Ejraiye Farmane Hazrate Emam (Headquarters for Executing the Order of the Imam), a \$95 billion organization responsible for administering private property seized by the Iranian regime since the revolution. It is reported to be accountable to no one

The Islamic Republic needs the United States as an enemy. Normalized diplomatic relations and the end of Iran's enmity with the United States would undermine Khamenei's authority. At the same time, the Supreme Leader does not want an overt and costly conflict with Washington. A contained and manageable rivalry with the United States may suit his agenda. A final nuclear deal is likely to lead to a continuation of the U.S.-Iran rivalry, albeit with the possibility of engagement on some regional issues, such as Afghanistan. Khamenei has stated that "the Islamic Republic will negotiate with the Satan on specific issues that are of interest."<sup>29</sup> Iranian conservatives hold rigid positions toward the United States, Saudi Arabia, and Israel, but may be more amenable to U.S.-Iran cooperation in Afghanistan if it serves the regime's interests.

## Conclusion and Policy Implications

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A final nuclear agreement between Iran and the P5+1 is likely to reduce tensions between Iran and some of its neighboring states. Iranian-Turkish relations are likely to improve, while Iran may attempt more diplomatic engagement and even dialogue with Saudi Arabia on issues such as Syria. However, the Saudi-Iranian rivalry is unlikely to end any time soon. And Iran's hostility toward Israel will continue, although the Rouhani government may tone down its rhetoric toward the Jewish state. The Netanyahu government is unlikely to change its views of the Islamic Republic and will likely portray Iran as an "existential" threat.

A nuclear deal is also likely to defuse some U.S.-Iran tensions and reduce the possibility of armed conflict between the two, as Iran's nuclear quest has served as the primary motivation for a U.S. military option against Iran. The United States and the Rouhani government may be more eager to normalize relations, and could explore cooperation on some regional issues where Iranian and American interests largely converge. But a final nuclear deal is unlikely to lead to full U.S.-Iran rapprochement. The Supreme Leader and the conservative establishment will oppose it for ideological, political, and even economic reasons. And Iranian policies of greatest U.S. concern are unlikely to change; Iran will continue to seek regional influence and support groups such as Hezbollah.

Thus, Washington's post-deal policy toward Iran should continue to counter Iranian ambitions that contradict U.S. interests in the region. A nuclear deal with Iran does not mean that the United States will "retreat" from the Middle East or abandon its decades-long alliance structure. The United States may decrease forces in the Persian Gulf due to the drawdown from Afghanistan, but it should be prepared to maintain significant forces in the region.

Nevertheless, a final nuclear agreement and Rouhani's presidency may provide the United States with some opportunities. Therefore, the United States should:

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but the Supreme Leader. The Revolutionary Guards are also believed to be one of the most powerful commercial players in Iran, with a major stake in almost every economic sector. Khamenei and the Guards have thrived from a monopolistic economic environment largely closed to internal and external competition. Khamenei's financial control has helped him create a loyal patronage network used to bypass competing power centers, including Iran's elected institutions.

<sup>29</sup> Fars News, 2014. [www.rand.org](http://www.rand.org)

- > **Explore modest opportunities for engagement with Iran**, especially in Afghanistan, but also on other issues, such as Syria. Afghanistan may present the best opportunity for U.S.- Iran engagement after a nuclear deal, as both powers fear the resurgence of the Taliban and Sunni jihadi forces. Although the United States and Iran may have different objectives in Syria, the participation of Iran in a negotiated settlement is crucial to its success, although this may cause more anxiety for American partners, such as Saudi Arabia.
- > **Encourage better relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia.** The Syrian conflict and the increasing sectarian nature of conflict in the Middle East are driven by the historic rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Washington may not be able or willing to fully resolve the rivalry, but an easing of tensions between Riyadh and Tehran may lead to bilateral discussions on Syria and other regional conflicts, boosting U.S. diplomatic efforts.
- > **Seek a normalized relationship with Iran, but don't expect much.** The United States does not have a formal diplomatic presence in Iran, which prevents better communication not only with the political elite, but with the Iranian people as well. Some have argued that it may be time to again explore diplomatic relations with Tehran, especially with the more moderate Rouhani in power. However, there are no indications that Khamenei and the conservative establishment would be open to normalized relations; their political interests and ideologies would suggest that an American embassy in Tehran would actually weaken the Supreme Leader's basis of power. Khamenei leads a state that bases its legitimacy on the revolution that overthrew the pro-American shah. Anti-Americanism is a core principle of Iran's most conservative revolutionaries, and to accept normalized relations with Washington is to admit that anti-Americanism, and Khamenei's belief system, are no longer core principles of the Islamic Republic.

A final nuclear agreement cannot be expected to greatly diminish the U.S.-Iran rivalry, but it can reduce the chances of a U.S.-Iran military conflict and a potential war encompassing the entire region. Saudi Arabia and Israel, while still suspicious of Iran, may nevertheless face a foe with a much diminished nuclear weapons capability. Iran's economy is likely to continue to suffer under the perennial mismanagement, corruption, and dysfunction evident even before the imposition of sanctions. And the Islamic Republic is likely to experience broad public dissatisfaction with continued social and political restrictions. Iran is unlikely to emerge from a nuclear deal as a greater power, although its will still present a challenge to interests of the United States and its allies in the Middle East, especially as long as Khamenei and the Revolutionary Guards maintain their dominant position.

A nuclear deal with Iran will buy the United States the necessary time and space to counter Iranian policies that challenge U.S. interests. And the eventual passing of Khamenei may lead to a more open Iran, one willing to engage the international community. None of this is guaranteed, however. The best result of a final nuclear deal that constrains and rolls back Iran's nuclear program could be the prevention of a nuclear armed Iran, and the end of a decade-long crisis.

# Chapter

# 5

## The 2014 IPS' Herzliya Simulation Game- The Days After a Deal with Iran: Regional & Global implications

Shaul Shay, Institute for Policy and Strategy (IPS),  
IDC Herzliya

### Background

Iran has been engaged in efforts to acquire the capability to build nuclear weapons for more than two decades. Although it remains uncertain whether Tehran will make the final decision to build nuclear weapons, it has developed a range of technologies, including uranium enrichment, warhead design, and delivery systems, that would give it this option in a relatively short time frame. Tehran maintains that its nuclear activities are entirely peaceful. Various efforts have been made over the years to negotiate a settlement with Iran that limits its nuclear program.

The rationality is a key factor in all deterrence logic. More precisely, in order to be sustained in world politics, any system of deterrence must be premised on a plausible assumption of rationality. Specifically, by definition, this means that each side must consistently believe that the other side will value its continued national survival more highly than any other preference, or combination of preferences.<sup>30</sup>

Addressing the potential for Iranian nuclear breakout has topped the international agenda for the past decade. The main reason for this has been the recognition that deterrence and containment of a nuclear armed Iran cannot be guaranteed to a sufficiently satisfactory degree and that therefore priority must be awarded to preventing Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons in the first place.

**In a simulation conducted at the Herzliya Conference, June 8-10, 2014, Iran and the P5+1, announce in "September 2014" that they have concluded a**

<sup>30</sup> Oded Brosh, *Deterrence Issues after an Agreement: Continuity and Change in Addressing Iranian Nuclear Breakout*. 2014. In this volume.

**Comprehensive Plan of Action (CPA) and sign it in Vienna.** The details of the agreement were not presented in the simulation but it assumed that Iran will be able to continue to enrich uranium (at reduced levels and under strict safeguards) and maintain an infrastructure that would leave it with the ability to break out and develop nuclear weapons should it decide to do so in the future.

The main benefit of the prospective P5+1 deal is that it could delay Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons. The supporters of the agreement contend that a prospective nuclear deal with Iran, would contribute to the stability of the region and not only prevent Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons, but avert contagious proliferation in the Middle East. This outcome is unlikely, however, because the deal acceptable to Iran left it several plausible paths to the bomb and the need to be on the alert in case the agreement is violated by Iran.<sup>31</sup>

There are several likely effects that the nuclear deal being reached with Iran could have on the Middle East and they were discussed in the simulation.

## The Simulation Game Format & Structure

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The purpose of the simulation is to assess the regional and global consequences of reaching a final agreement on Iran's nuclear program (currently known as the Comprehensive Plan of Action) through the P5+1 process in Vienna. The game offers a platform for analyzing the possible moves and measures of global and regional actors in the aftermath of an agreement and the derivative geopolitical and energy security implications.

## The Methodology

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Unlike classical war games, participants will not be asked to emulate actors (i.e. leaders and states). Rather, the game will be conducted as a moderated analytical exercise in which participants will maintain their professional position and offer an assessment of respective national interests, policy alternatives, possible international measures, and outcomes.

The two-and-half hour game will be divided into two segments. The first segment will discuss the opening scenario. After a short break and in consultation with the Control Group, the game will start at a new point and also examine an intervening crisis.

## Opening scenario

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**In September 2014**, Iran and the six world powers, known as the P5+1, announce that they have concluded a Comprehensive Plan of Action (CPA) and sign it in Vienna.

At the signing ceremony, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said that the agreement lays out the goal of reaching a "mutually-agreed long-term comprehensive solution

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<sup>31</sup> Alan J. Kuperman, Iran Nuclear Deal Unlikely to Halt Regional Proliferation. 2014. In this volume.

that would ensure Iran's nuclear program will be exclusively peaceful and includes practical limits, safeguards, and transparency". Secretary Kerry also stated that the resolution of the nuclear file opens the door to exploring a regional security framework and hope that Iran could contribute to Middle East security.

In his comments at the ceremony, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif underscored that the agreement "recognizes Iran's right to enrichment and nuclear technology". Minister Zarif welcomed Secretary Kerry's comments concerning regional security.

On its part, the Government of Israel issued statement harshly criticizing the agreement. An Israel official spokesperson stated: "This is a bad agreement that allows Iran to maintain its scientific, technical, and industrial capacity to produce nuclear weapons if it were to choose to do so."

Following several positive reports of the IAEA monitors in Iran, the UN Security Council unanimously moved on **December 1, 2014** to gradually remove the sanctions imposed upon Iran. Separately, United States and the European Union also removed their unilateral sanctions and Iran was readmitted into the global banking system (SWIFT), based in Brussels. The European Union also lifted its embargo on the import of oil from Iran. European diplomats meet with Iranian counterparts to discuss regional security issues.

**On January 8, 2015**, the Iranian president made a historical visit to Saudi Arabia. President Rouhani met with ailing King Abdulla and discussed regional issues, the ongoing civil war in Syria and political and security instability in Iraq. At the end of the visit, the leaders called for a peaceful solution to the conflicts in the Middle East.

**On February 25, 2015**, Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei spoke to 50,000 Iranian paramilitary militia Basij commanders in Tehran's Grand Prayer site. The speech was broadcast live by Iranian TV and radio:

"It is heard sometimes, [from] the enemies of the Iranian nation that Iran is a threat to the entire world. No. The threat to the entire world are those forces of evil and evil-creators who have shown of themselves nothing but evil, such as the great Satan (the U.S) and this fake regime of Israel and some of its supporters. Our enemies do not know the great Iranian nation. They think their imposed sanctions forced Iran to enter negotiation and a deal. No, it is wrong. Iran is stronger than its enemies and will support its allies against all kinds of evil forces in Syria and Palestine."

In March 2015, Iran and Syria issue a joint statement on a roadmap to resolve the Syrian civil war and to demolish the terrorist infrastructure across Syria. The roadmap calls for an Iranian "peace enforcement" contingent to be stationed in Syria. A flotilla of four Iranian Navy frigates and a supply vessel dock at the port of Latakia; an infantry division of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) arrives in Syria along with a contingent of the al-Quds forces. The commander of the Iranian navy told IRNA that the Iranian flotilla will remain in Syria for unlimited time and will support the Iranian peace mission and not allow the Zionists to take advantage of situation in Syria and Lebanon. The commander of the IRGC, General



Mohammad Ali Jafari, told the Iranian television that the IRGC forces in Syria will take part in the war against the anti-Islamic forces and the Zionist agents.

Meantime, the Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif told the press that Iran will support the government of Iraq to fight the Al Qaeda terrorists and will dispatch IRGC forces to support the Iraqi military in Faluja and the Anbar Province.

In April 2015, the Daily Telegraph reports that Israeli intelligence has revealed that the IRGC have deployed some of their Surface-to-Surface missiles in Syria.

## Second Phase

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Violent demonstrations break out in Bahrain in June 2015. After three days of violent demonstrations, the ruling al Khalifa family slammed Iran and accused it of meddling in the internal affairs of Bahrain and order a harsh crackdown on the opposition with the support of the Saudi-backed GCC forces.

In response, Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati condemned during a Friday sermon in Tehran the crackdown by Bahrain's ruling al Khalifa family and Saudi Arabia saying that: "All Islamic intellectuals are now called upon to act. All Islamic countries and believers, as long as they are not themselves involved in the crime, bear responsibility to support the Bahrainis in their fight."

The "Committee for the Defense of Human Rights in the Arabian Peninsula," (an organization with known ties to Saudi Shiites and Iran) issued a statement condemning the deployment of Saudi security forces to Bahrain and called upon the Shiite communities in the Eastern Provinces to go on strike and take to the streets and protest in support of the Bahraini freedom fighters. Thousands of Shiites took the streets in Eastern provinces and most of the Shiite employees of the Saudi oil industry did not show up for work. Demonstrations were also set at Saudi Arabia's main oil ports in Ras Tanura and al Juaymah.

Subsequent reports have indicated that leading Shiite imams and clerics in the Eastern Provinces were detained as well, many of whom are known to have past involvement with Hizbullah al-Hijaz (the Saudi-Shiite/Iranian sponsored terrorist organization responsible for the 2006 Khobar bombings). The Saudi Minister of Interior, Prince Muhammad bin Nayef, accused Iran of being responsible for the events and the consequent turmoil. In an official statement, the Iranian government refuted those accusations, but added an opaque threat that it will consider its options if Saudi security forces continue their brutality aimed at the innocent Shiite population.

The security deterioration in Saudi Arabia's Eastern provinces comes at a time during which the International Energy Agency continues to report that the global oil markets remain excessively tight and that in order to balance out forecast demand in the second half of 2015, oil exporters, particularly OPEC countries, must hike their production. The situation in the Arab Peninsula puts into question a production hike. Oil prices have risen from USD100 to USD140 a barrel. Traders claim that the price could even climb higher if the situation and unrest continues.

# The IPS' Herzliya Conference Simulation, June 2014: Participants

## United States



The Honorable **James B. Steinberg**, Former U.S. Deputy Secretary of State; Dean of the Maxwell School and University Professor of Social Science, International Affairs and Law, Syracuse University

Dr. **Gary Samore**, Former White House Coordinator for Arms Control and Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD); Executive Director for Research, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard

## Russia



Prof. **Sergey A. Karaganov**, Honorary Chairman, Presidium of the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy of Russia; Dean, School of World Economics and World Politics, National Research University–Higher School of Economics, Moscow

Dr. **Jennifer Shkabatur**, The World Bank; Lecturer, Lauder School of Government

## European Union/NATO



Mr. **Rafael L. Bardají**, Former Spanish National Security Advisor to Prime Minister Aznar; Director, Friends of Israel Initiative

## China



Prof. **WANG Suolao**, Director, Center for Middle East Studies, School of International Studies, Peking University

## Israel

Amb. **Zalman Shoval**, Former Ambassador of Israel to the US

Dr. **Ariel (Eli) Levite**, Nonresident Senior Associate, Nuclear Policy Program, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; Former Principal Deputy Director General for Policy of the Israel Atomic Energy Commission

Dr. **Ronen Bergman**, *Yedioth Ahronoth*

## Iran



Mr. **Meir Javedanfar**, IDC Herzliya

Mr. **Alireza Nader**, Senior International Policy Analyst, RAND Corporation

## Saudi Arabia and GCC



Dr. **Jon B. Alterman**, Zbigniew Brzezinski Chair in Global Security and Geo-strategy and Director of the Middle East Program, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)

## Control Group

Chair: Dr. **Shaul Shay**, Director of Research, Institute for Policy and Strategy (IPS), IDC Herzliya

Dr. **Anthony H. Cordesman**, Arleigh A. Burke Chair in Strategy, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)

Mr. **Yossie Hollander**, Chairman, Israeli Institute for Economic Planning

Dr. **Oded Brosh**, Senior Research Fellow, Institute for Policy and Strategy (IPS), IDC Herzliya

**Moderator:** Mr. **Tommy Steiner**, Senior Research Fellow, Institute for Policy and Strategy (IPS), IDC Herzliya<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> The Herzliya Conference simulation was organized by Alex Mintz, Tommy Steiner and Shaul Shay of the IPS.

## The Day After a Deal with Iran: Insights from the IPS' 2014 Simulation Game

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According to the simulation, Iran and the P5+1, announced that they have concluded a Comprehensive Plan of Action (CPA) and signed it in Vienna. There are several likely effects that such a deal with Iran could have on the Middle East.

### Iran

The nuclear deal itself is a clear victory for Iran because it irreversibly enshrines Tehran's right to enrich uranium. Ever since the secret Iranian uranium enrichment plant at Natanz was revealed in 2002, Western powers led by Washington had been arguing that Iran has to shutter these facilities because they violate the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to which Iran is a signatory. But Iran argued that uranium enrichment was a peaceful activity and a legitimate right under the NPT.<sup>33</sup>

Like any other state in the international system, Iran aspires to boost its power and influence in the region in order to protect its national security.<sup>34</sup> Iran is likely to use its nuclear capability to deter the United States from attempting regime change and Israel from employing military action against its nuclear facilities. Iran would employ its nuclear power to expand its regional influence, empower terrorist proxies, and decisively alter the regional correlation of strategic forces.<sup>35</sup>

President Rouhani is serious in pursuing enhanced relations with Iran's neighbors. However, the success of this policy is dependent on Arab states being willing to refrain from exerting pressure on Iran and putting aside old rivalries with regional states in hopes of reaching a diplomatic breakthrough.<sup>36</sup>

Following several positive reports of the IAEA monitors in Iran, the UN Security Council unanimously moved on **December 1, 2014** to gradually remove the sanctions imposed upon Iran. Separately, United States and the European Union also removed their unilateral sanctions and Iran was readmitted into the global banking system (SWIFT), based in Brussels. The European Union also lifted its embargo on the import of oil from Iran. European diplomats meet with Iranian counterparts to discuss regional security issues.

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<sup>33</sup> Rajesh Rajagopalan, "Iran Nuclear Deal: Short-Term Benefits and Long-Term Consequences," *The Economic Times [India]*, November 28, 2013 [http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2013-11-28/news/44547198\\_1\\_enrichment-iran-nuclear-deal-uranium](http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2013-11-28/news/44547198_1_enrichment-iran-nuclear-deal-uranium) [retrieved: November 3, 2014].

<sup>34</sup> Shahin Dadkhah, "How a Nuclear Agreement with Iran may Change the Region," *Al Arabiya News*, November 1, 2013 <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/views/news/middle-east/2013/11/01/How-a-nuclear-agreement-with-iran-may-change-the-region.html> [retrieved: November 3, 2014].

<sup>35</sup> Ilan Berman, "Iran with Nuclear Weapons," *Middle East Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 4, 2010 <http://www.meforum.org/2805/iran-with-nuclear-weapons> [retrieved: November 3, 2014].

<sup>36</sup> Dadkhah, op. cit.

The removal of the sanctions will be the main benefit for Iran and will support the Islamic regime to gain more internal legitimacy and popular support. But any relaxation of the restrictions on Iran may help the government's bottom line, but they will do little to resolve the fundamental problems of the Iranian economy.<sup>37</sup>

Tehran must contend with an economy battered by decades of disruption due first to revolution, then to a long and costly war, corruption, mismanagement, and botched state interventions. The Iranian economy over its first post-revolutionary decade and more recently squandered the epic oil boom of the 2000s.<sup>38</sup>

Rouhani has yet to deliver on the high expectations set by his own rhetoric and by the optimism spurred by the nuclear deal. Iranians want a tangible 'peace dividend' in the form of jobs, growth, stable prices, and an economy and society that interact normally with the rest of the world. A comprehensive deal will help considerably, but even then Tehran will continue to confront formidable challenges in restructuring its economy if it is to fulfill its citizens' expectations.<sup>39</sup>

The alleviation of sanctions puts Iran in a position that it has more money to channel to proxies such as Hezbollah, PIJ and Hamas.

Finally, in the event of an unstable Iran - one buffeted by protracted regime instability - control of Iran's nuclear capabilities is likely to emerge as a key domestic contest between competing political factions.<sup>40</sup>

## The U.S

For the US, the Middle East has lost the appeal it once had. With its domestic shale gas production, the US is now able to meet its natural gas demand; it may even export gas in the near future. The US imports oil mostly from Mexico and Canada. Thus, Washington's main problem in the upcoming period will be China.<sup>41</sup>

The security deterioration in Saudi Arabia's Eastern provinces comes at a time during which the International Energy Agency continues to report that the global oil markets remain excessively tight and that in order to balance out forecast demand in the second half of 2015, oil exporters, particularly OPEC countries, must hike their production. The situation in the Arab Peninsula puts into question a production hike. Oil prices have risen from USD100 to USD140 a barrel. Traders claim that the price could even climb higher if the situation and unrest continues.

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<sup>37</sup> Suzanne Maloney, "Six Myths About Iran Sanctions," Brookings Institution, January 13, 2014 <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/iran-at-saban/posts/2014/01/7-iran-sanctions-nuclear-deal-myths> [retrieved: November 3, 2014].

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Berman, op. cit.

<sup>41</sup> Emin Akhundzada, "Iran's Nuclear Deal with the West and its Regional Impacts," Hazar Strategic Institute, Turkey, February 7, 2014 [http://www.hazar.org/blogdetail/blog/iran%E2%80%99s\\_nuclear\\_deal\\_with\\_the\\_west\\_and\\_its\\_regional\\_impacts\\_575.aspx](http://www.hazar.org/blogdetail/blog/iran%E2%80%99s_nuclear_deal_with_the_west_and_its_regional_impacts_575.aspx) [retrieved: November 3, 2014].

As a result the U.S economy was less affected by the oil price crises than the EU or China.

In this case, if the US disregards the Middle East, Iran will have more influence in the region and Iran has increased its presence in areas from which the US has withdrawn.<sup>42</sup>

The tension between the West and Iran reached its peak during Ahmadinejad's presidency. With harsh statements against the US and Israel, Ahmadinejad at various points brought the parties to the brink of war. Bilateral tensions were reduced and harsh statements were replaced with mutual goodwill gestures when Hasan Rouhani was elected as the new president in August 2013.<sup>43</sup>

The U.S has paid for seeming quiet on the nuclear front. The US in the Middle East has lost the appeal it once had. It is price in prestige. Whether he realizes it, President Obama has announced that the United States cannot be relied upon to stand up to Iran. That, in sum, is the true price.<sup>44</sup>

## Iran – U.S relations

In the simulation, at the signing ceremony, U.S. Secretary of State, John Kerry said that the resolution of the nuclear file opens the door to exploring a regional security framework and hope that Iran could contribute to Middle East security. Iran has implemented an aggressive foreign policy to promote its strategic interests but as a result, the U.S has a positive incentive to ignore all Iranian subversion and intimidation in the region.

In fact there are parallel interests that the United States and Iran share in the region. The parallel interests are most apparent in the countries immediately adjacent to Iran, to its east and its west. The United States and Iran share an interest in a stable Afghanistan in which extremists such as the Taliban do not rule, religious and ethnic minorities have their rights respected and share in political power, violence is not exported, and the drug trade is curtailed.<sup>45</sup>

To the west in Iraq, the principal Iranian objective is never again to see a regime that would, as did Saddam Hussein in 1980, launch a war of aggression. The Iranians do not want endless instability on their western border. They want Iraqi Shiites to have power commensurate with their majority numbers. They definitely oppose the rise of Sunni fanatics as indicated by the very active support that Iran is giving to the Iraqi government. All of these objectives are consistent with and even

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Michael Doran, "The Hidden Cost Of The Iranian Nuclear Deal," Brookings Institution, November 24, 2013 <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/iran-at-saban/posts/2013/11/24-doran-hidden-cost-iran-nuclear-deal> [retrieved: November 3, 2014].

<sup>45</sup> Paul Piral, "Good Regional Vibrations from a Nuclear Deal with Iran," *The National Interest*, September 18, 2014 <http://nationalinterest.org/blog/paul-pillar/good-regional-vibrations-nuclear-deal-iran-11315> [retrieved: November 3, 2014].

supportive of U.S. interests. Iran has increased its presence in areas from which the US has withdrawn.<sup>46</sup>

The potential for—and the need for—greater coordination and communication between the United States and Iran should be obvious, and the nuclear agreement opened the door to more such coordination and communication.<sup>47</sup>

## Israel

Israel is the most concerned state regarding Iran's nuclear developments.<sup>48</sup> Even before the deal with Iran in September 2014 ( according the scenario), Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been fierce in his mistrust of Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and skeptic about a genuine shift in Iranian policies. The Israeli assessment maintains that because Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei plays a key role in determining Iran's nuclear policy there is a little substantive difference in the Iranian policy and President Rouhani is continuing Iran's drive to attain nuclear weapon and Tehran's hostile positions toward Israel. Israel firmly feels that continuing the sanctions could “force more meaningful Iranian concessions.”

On its part, the Government of Israel issued statement harshly criticizing the agreement. An Israel official spokesperson stated: “This is a bad agreement that allows Iran to maintain its scientific, technical, and industrial capacity to produce nuclear weapons if it were to choose to do so.”

It is highly unlikely that Israel would launch an attack against the Iranian nuclear facilities, on its own in the aftermath of a nuclear deal that is broadly accepted by the United States and the international community. The agreement removed the option of Israeli military strike on Iran's nuclear facilities at least in the short term and forced Israeli policymakers to reevaluate the consequences of the nuclear agreement with Iran.

In March 2015, Iran and Syria issue a joint statement on a roadmap to resolve the Syrian civil war and to demolish the terrorist infrastructure across Syria. The roadmap calls for an Iranian “peace enforcement” contingent to be stationed in Syria. A flotilla of four Iranian Navy frigates and a supply vessel dock at the port of Latakia; an infantry division of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) arrives in Syria along with a contingent of the al-Quds forces. The commander of the Iranian navy told IRNA that the Iranian flotilla will remain in Syria for unlimited time and will support the Iranian peace mission and not allow the Zionists to take advantage of situation in Syria and Lebanon. The commander of the IRGC, General Mohammad Ali Jafari, told the Iranian television that the IRGC forces in Syria will take part in the war against the anti-Islamic forces and the Zionist agents.

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Dadkhah, *op. cit.*

Meantime, the Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif told the press that Iran will support the government of Iraq to fight the Al Qaeda terrorists and will dispatch IRGC forces to support the Iraqi military in Faluja and the Anbar Province.

In April 2015, the Daily Telegraph reports that Israeli intelligence has revealed that the IRGC have deployed some of their Surface-to-Surface missiles in Syria.

The Iranian strategic maneuver in Syria was a direct outcome of the agreement and a challenge to Israel and the international community. Israel found itself isolated politically and with tough international constraints to prevent regional escalation in spite of the Iranian "provocation".

In sum, it would not be likely to pursue that Israel will use military force against the Iranian deployment in Syria in an environment where there is broad American and international acceptance of a final deal and the reconciliation with Iran.

### The Sunni States

The Sunni-Shiite rift in the Muslim world comes into play regarding Iran's nuclear program and the new agreement. Given the regional sectarian divide, Sunni Arab powers share fears about a shift in the regional balance of power towards Iran and its allies, such as the Iraqi government, the Assad regime in Syria, the Lebanese movement Hezbollah, and Muslim Shia communities throughout the Gulf.<sup>49</sup>

Sentiments of betrayal, deception, and distrust of the U.S. seem to have taken hold in Saudi Arabia and in other allies of Washington. Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries believe that Iran has worked out a comprehensive deal with the U.S. that would empower it to become more of a regional power. Beyond the threat of WMD capabilities, Sunni Arab countries fear that the deal will allow Iran to expand its regional influence.<sup>50</sup>

Saudi Arabia, a central Sunni power, has several critical concerns about this deal with Iran. Saudi Arabia is especially aware of the economic threat posed by Iran, as an end to oil sanctions would mean more competition for Saudi petroleum exports. The alleviation of sanctions puts Iran in a position to "weaken Saudi authority by reasserting itself as a top OPEC force."<sup>51</sup>

Saudi Arabia strives to deter Iran from increasing its influence by increasing cooperation with the secular Shiites in the Arab world. Saudi Arabia is competing with Iran in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon and is exaggerating Iran's nuclear threat in

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<sup>49</sup> Carly West, "Regional Implications in the Iranian Nuclear Deal," *Brown Political Review*, December 5, 2013 <http://www.brownpoliticalreview.org/2013/12/an-iranian-deal-with-regional-implications/> [retrieved: November 2, 2014].

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

hopes of boosting its leadership in the Arab world.<sup>52</sup> But some actors, will simply hedge and will make a beeline to Tehran.<sup>53</sup>

Despite the range of tensions between these powers, relations with Iran are officially cordial. The diplomatic rhetoric of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States is cautiously optimistic about the deal, and Iran has reiterated its willingness to forge stronger ties with its neighbors.<sup>54</sup> The historical visit of President Rouhani to Saudi Arabia on January 8, 2015, reflected the new Iranian policy. At the end of the visit, the leaders called for a peaceful solution to the conflicts in the Middle East but shortly after the visit Iran extended its support to the Shia'a insurgency against Saudi Arabiya and Bahrain.

Violent demonstrations break out in Bahrain in June 2015. After three days of violent demonstrations, the ruling al Khalifa family slammed Iran and accused it of meddling in the internal affairs of Bahrain and order a harsh crackdown on the opposition with the support of the Saudi-backed GCC forces.

In response, Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati condemned during a Friday sermon in Tehran the crackdown by Bahrain's ruling al Khalifa family and Saudi Arabia saying that: "All Islamic intellectuals are now called upon to act. All Islamic countries and believers, as long as they are not themselves involved in the crime, bear responsibility to support the Bahrainis in their fight."

The "Committee for the Defense of Human Rights in the Arabian Peninsula," (an organization with known ties to Saudi Shiites and Iran) issued a statement condemning the deployment of Saudi security forces to Bahrain and called upon the Shiite communities in the Eastern Provinces to go on strike and take to the streets and protest in support of the Bahraini freedom fighters. Thousands of Shiites took the streets in Eastern provinces and most of the Shiite employees of the Saudi oil industry did not show up for work. Demonstrations were also set at Saudi Arabia's main oil ports in Ras Tanura and al Juaymah.

Subsequent reports have indicated that leading Shiite imams and clerics in the Eastern Provinces were detained as well, many of whom are known to have past involvement with Hizbullah al-Hijaz (the Saudi-Shiite/Iranian sponsored terrorist organization responsible for the 2006 Khobar bombings). The Saudi Minister of Interior, Prince Muhammad bin Nayef, accused Iran of being responsible for the events and the consequent turmoil. In an official statement, the Iranian government refuted those accusations, but added an opaque threat that it will consider its options if Saudi security forces continue their brutality aimed at the innocent Shiite population.

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<sup>52</sup> Dadkhah, *op. cit.*

<sup>53</sup> Doran, *op. cit.*

<sup>54</sup> West, *op. cit.*



## The Syrian and Iraqi crisis

Syria is certainly an indispensable part of Iran's regional policy. Iran's long term interest in Syria is to sustain its influence. In the Syrian theater Iran has to deter Israel, to support the Assad regime and Hezbollah, and to compete with Saudi Arabia and to a lesser extent Turkey. Iran has a strategic interest to see an end to the Syrian crisis.<sup>55</sup>

In March 2015, Iran and Syria issue a joint statement on a roadmap to resolve the Syrian civil war and to demolish the terrorist infrastructure across Syria. The roadmap calls for an Iranian "peace enforcement" contingent to be stationed in Syria. A flotilla of four Iranian Navy frigates and a supply vessel dock at the port of Latakia; an infantry division of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) arrives in Syria along with a contingent of the al-Quds forces. The commander of the Iranian navy told IRNA that the Iranian flotilla will remain in Syria for unlimited time and will support the Iranian peace mission and not allow the Zionists to take advantage of situation in Syria and Lebanon. The commander of the IRGC, General Mohammad Ali Jafari, told the Iranian television that the IRGC forces in Syria will take part in the war against the anti-Islamic forces and the Zionist agents.

Meantime, the Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif told the press that Iran will support the government of Iraq to fight the Al Qaeda terrorists and will dispatch IRGC forces to support the Iraqi military in Faluja and the Anbar Province.

## Iranian-Turkish relations

The Syrian crisis increased the mistrust between Turkey and Iran . Turkey sees Iran's nuclear issue from the perspective of balance of power in the region. Iran gaining nuclear capabilities would change this balance. In response Turkey would seek a nuclear umbrella from NATO or pursue its own nuclear program.<sup>56</sup>

Turkey is amongst the main trading partners of Iran and solving Iran's nuclear crisis helps both sides increase trade and cooperation. However the differences over the Syrian crisis may overshadow the improvement of bilateral relations in the years to come.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Dadkhah, op. cit.

<sup>56</sup> Dadkhah, op. cit.

<sup>57</sup> Dadkhah, op. cit.

## Russia

Russia does not consider Iran even with nuclear capabilities as a threat to Russia. After the agreement, Russia and Iran already appeared to be drawing closer to one another. Notwithstanding mutual suspicions, they share a variety of interests in Central Asia and the Middle East, especially in Syria. They also share profound reservations about American foreign policy and are prepared at times to oppose it. Both Russia and Iran are highly motivated to expand their commercial ties.<sup>58</sup>

The post agreement era will create a combination of a Russia-Iran interaction contingent on many factors with the complicated and evolving processes of international politics in the Middle East and beyond.<sup>59</sup>

## China

China has a strategic interest to reduce the tension in the Middle East. Iran and other Middle Eastern countries are among the main energy suppliers of China and shortly after the lift of the sanctions China will extend investments and commercial relations with Iran.

## The regional nuclear arms race

The nuclear deal is only likely to encourage further proliferation in the region. Saudi Arabiya and the Sunni Gulf states, locked in what they see as a deadly struggle with Shia Iran, will see this as a sell-out.<sup>60</sup>

Several of Iran's neighbors, aware the P5+1 deal would leave Iran plausible paths to the bomb, are pursuing their own nuclear weapons options under cover of civilian energy programs. This includes Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Algeria, and Egypt, possibly assisted by Jordan's substantial uranium supplies. Three additional Arab states – Morocco, Tunisia, and United Arab Emirates – also have nuclear energy programs that could provide the expertise, materials, and equipment necessary for proliferation.

Saudi Arabian leaders had been explicitly threatening to exercise their own nuclear option. The standing assumption is that they would ask Pakistan for a nuclear deterrent since they bankrolled a good part of Islamabad's nuclear program.<sup>61</sup>

In conclusion, unless Iran's program is stopped by military action or regime change, regional nuclear proliferation is likely.

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<sup>58</sup> Paul J. Saunders, "Russia-Iran Ties Getting Better, but Not at Expense of Nuclear Talks," *Al-Monitor*, May 1, 2014  
<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/05/russia-iran-ties-better-nuclear-talks-no-threat.html#>  
[retrieved: November 2, 2014].

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Rajagopalan, op. cit.

<sup>61</sup> Rajagopalan, op. cit.

## Recommendations

The historical record indicates that a country bent on acquiring nuclear weapons can rarely be dissuaded from doing so. If Tehran determines that its security depends on possessing nuclear weapons, sanctions or agreements are unlikely to change its position.<sup>62</sup>

Understanding and addressing the likely concerns and reactions of key U.S. partners is essential for the successful implementation of a nuclear agreement, as well as for the promotion of broader regional stability in the years ahead.

The United States will have to assure its allies that Iranian noncompliance would be met with a strong response, committing the United States to build a broad international coalition to again pressure and isolate Iran should it violates any aspect of the final agreement.<sup>63</sup>

Because a final nuclear agreement will not entirely remove concerns about Iran's nuclear program and broader regional ambitions, Israel should maintain all the options to respond to the Iranian challenge, including the military option.

The nuclear deal could increase the tacit strategic cooperation between the Sunni Arab states and Israel since Iran is a threat to both.

The benefit of the prospective P5+1 deal is that it could delay Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons. That extra time should be put to maximum effect by bolstering international efforts to promote regime change in Iran, so that by the time Iran could produce nuclear weapons, its leaders will decide not to do so.

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<sup>62</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, "Why Iran Should Get the Bomb," *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2012, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137731/kenneth-n-waltz/why-iran-should-get-the-bomb> [retrieved: November 2, 2014].

<sup>63</sup> Dalia Dassa Kaye and Jeffrey Martini, *The Days After a Deal with Iran: Regional Responses to a Final Nuclear Agreement*, RAND Perspectives 122, 2014, p.17. [http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/perspectives/PE100/PE122/RAND\\_PE122.pdf](http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/perspectives/PE100/PE122/RAND_PE122.pdf) [retrieved: November 2, 2014].

# Chapter 6

## Deterrence Issues after an Agreement: Continuity and Change in Addressing Iranian Nuclear Breakout

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The international debate about the dangers involved in an Iranian breakout to nuclear weapons has been marked by a wide range of observations regarding deterrence issues. At the one end of the spectrum, Iran's potential acquisition of a nuclear weapons arsenal is welcomed, and expected to impose stability in a volatile regional conflict environment – distinctly a minority view. At the other end of the spectrum, is the belief that Iran should not be allowed any uranium enrichment capability, or a plutonium production capability, at all, because they are not required for an Iranian peaceful nuclear program – and are purely the result of Iran's nuclear weapons drive; they indeed have no other plausible legitimate justification, because nuclear fuel can be easily acquired from elsewhere. The assumption implicit in the refusal to allow Iran any kind of potentially military nuclear capability, or “breakout” capacity, is that a nuclear armed Iran would pose a serious threat to stability as a whole. More poignantly, it raises the specter that deterrence cannot be guaranteed sufficiently to ensure that Iran would never actually use nuclear weapons, if it ever had them. In fact, there are good reasons to believe that “deterrence stability” would be precarious, and perhaps unattainable for a myriad of reasons worthy of attention and assessment. In between, there are diverse degrees of concern about Iran's nuclear activities, and especially a mainstream sober assessment that Iran's prior clandestine nuclear weapons work – what the IAEA calls “Possible Military Dimensions” – is foreboding, and needs to be addressed and challenged.

It is in this vein that the current negotiations between the P5+1 and Iran are subject to a rollercoaster of cautious optimism at the zenith, and skepticism, “realism” and pessimism in the troughs, regarding the prospects for a successful conclusion of a comprehensive agreement to resolve the crisis. This way or that,

the six virtually unanimously adopted UN Security Council resolutions requiring Iran to desist entirely, immediately and without condition from any uranium enrichment activity, and construction of the Arak heavy water reactor – have been set aside, and a compromise solution allowing Iran some modest enrichment capability is being forged. This compromise is driven by the perceived need to allow the Rouhani government to be able to "sell" a deal to the Supreme Leader, and to the conservative regime extremists, as retaining Iran's breakout capability in principle for later use, while salvaging Iran's "honor" too. The alternative would be a collapse of the diplomatic effort to resolve the crisis, and a return to the relentless expansion of Iran's breakout potential, with possible dire results. Even after such an agreement is concluded, if it is concluded within a foreseeable time range, the elementary components of deterrence issues will remain salient in the debate about Iran and its nuclear activities – whether explicitly, implicitly, or by intuitive application to the context of a potentially nuclear capable Iran. This will be true even if it is subject to an unprecedented degree of transparency, quite different from previous cases of covert proliferation efforts over the past decades.

World leaders have realized overall that deterring a nuclear armed Iran is a dubious proposition. It is not that one can say that a nuclear armed Iran definitely cannot be deterred – it may be; but one cannot state the other side of the argument with confidence, i.e. that Iran definitely will be deterred: the truth lies somewhere in between such assertions, and as such involves risks that decision makers are loath to take. They do take similar levels of risk in policy making in any other field – transportation, health, education, and even in conventional defense, where there is always a certain propensity for things to go wrong, with consequential costs to those who made bad decisions. But when it comes to nuclear war, such risks are out of the question, and steps are mandated to pre-empt even the marginal probabilities, however remote, of deterrence going awry with catastrophic results (“low-probability-high-consequence”, or “low-probability-catastrophic-consequence” scenarios).

## The Legacy of Deterrence

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Many of the observers of the deterrence scene, with regard to a nuclear armed Iran, make reference to the lessons to be gleaned from deterrence theory, and from the legacy of deterrence as it is believed to have functioned during the Cold War – especially, one might be justified in noting, during the latter half of the Cold War, after the Soviet Union acquired an equality, “parity”, with the United States. The assumptions inherent in deterrence theory, and the legacy of the latter half of the Cold War, involved a conflict of ideas between two antagonists, marked by a series of fundamental principles:

- a. There was no substantial territorial contiguity between the two protagonists, and no territorial grievances or claims one against the other;
- b. Between the peoples of the two nations there did not exist a fundamental cultural inherent hatred harbored towards the other, but only an attempt

- by the leadership of one to prove the superiority of one economic ideology over the other's, and its inevitable eventual demise;
- c. Thus, there was no strong desire, or motive, of one people to wipe the existence of the other's state off the face of the earth, or to bring about the subjugation, or physical extermination of the other's population;
  - d. Both ideologies were essentially economic, or material, emphasizing material values as a scale by which to measure their respective successes and failures. This, in contrast with ideologies, in the history of the past century, which have emphasized non-material values, and supremacy over a putatively morally inferior other – deterministically doomed to defeat, humiliation, enslavement, or even extermination. In today's clash, where religion plays a dominant role, it is – again, perhaps – secular Western democratic populations which are portrayed as being valueless, hopelessly material, critically devoid of the necessary resolve to persevere over the long term, and therefore inevitably doomed to retreat, and to defeat in the face of a morally “superior” idea which puts non-material rewards at the forefront, and is driven by fierce ideological passion and ferocious resolve;
  - e. Both sides, as of the mid-1960s, were in possession of arsenals of almost a hundred thousand nuclear weapons (50 thousand deployed by the Soviet Union, and 30 thousand deployed by the United States), and *guaranteed secure and survivable assured destruction second strike retaliatory capabilities; ipso facto, neither side possessed first strike capability* (by its definition of being able to eliminate the other's retaliatory capability – its above described second strike capability); *and the leaderships of both states were in full awareness of this condition*. Therefore war was eliminated as an option, and there was no conceivable goal which could justify the specter of assured destruction of the aggressor's country (the indexes of what constituted “assured destruction” were fluid, but in all cases they involved damage of unimaginable extent);
  - f. Other states with independent deterrents, namely the UK and France, adopted postures of “minimum deterrence”, with survivable retaliatory capabilities of a magnitude which although not comparable to second strike assured destruction, nevertheless established a level of punishment believed to satisfy the requirements of deterrence, i.e. with the specter of punishment to a degree that an aggressor would not want to incur, and could find no plausible justification for. Later, India and Pakistan adopted “minimum deterrence” postures, versus the People's Republic of China and India respectively, where the specter of assured destruction second strike, or of first strike, would not appear credible (recent developments call into question this long standing posture in South Asia, particularly where Pakistan is concerned, and very recently as regards India too);
  - g. Thus were established the fundamental building blocks of what deterrence theory termed its central theme – “deterrence stability”, ruling out the dangers, among others, of “escalation dominance”, or of “use them or lose

them” syndrome in an escalating crisis (which we may want to revisit later in other cases).

The application of these fundamental principles to contexts in which they are, in fact, absent – reduces their relevance, when such environments move further and further away from the essentials of successful deterrence, and of “deterrence stability”. First of all, perhaps most obviously, when these principles are applied to states which are neither the United States nor the Soviet Union, the cultural and political essentials undergo transformation. When the dominant ideologies move away from the mostly material competition which characterized the altercation between the liberal idea and socialism – again the principles in question are changed. When the idea of supremacy over an inferior other involves moral values, and moral judgments and assertions, then the application of rational choice model decision making becomes subject to biases and deliberate dissonances which deterrence theory may not have sufficiently incorporated.

Even today, with all of this being in some ways “old news”, many observers – in academia, the media and the public debate – still cling to the fundamental assumption, or simplistic presumption, in the view of the skeptics, that no leadership, of any state, be it eccentric as it may (DPRK; Iran under Ahmadinejad; Saddam Hussein’s Iraq; and others) would be willing to risk nuclear retaliation for having launched a nuclear attack; or the survivability of the state, or especially of its regime, and the ensuing voiding of its ideological agenda and *raison d’être*; and that therefore it would never, ever, absolutely and as an ironclad statement, actually use nuclear weapons, if faced with the possibility of nuclear retaliation. But today’s core relevant policy makers have not subscribed to these assertions because they remain unconvinced that they can be confident beyond any shadow of doubt that this is actually so. When detached observers state that the leadership of such a state would “probably”, or “very probably” never use nuclear weapons – this validates the essence of the international effort to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons: because “probably”, or even “very probably”, are not good enough, if the possibility can be avoided altogether. In fact, there are alarming reasons to believe that deterrence stability might turn out to be fundamentally unstable, and volatile.

First of all, Iran will never have a guaranteed secure and survivable assured destruction second strike capability, which is an essential building block of deterrence stability. It will always be vulnerable to an adversary’s conventional first strike, whether in the early stages by Israel, or when it has a more extensive arsenal – by the United States. Given today’s intelligence assets and conventional armaments technologies – which were futuristic science fiction decades ago when deterrence theory was shaped, but are now empirical and plentiful – a disarming conventional first strike by Israel or the United States becomes a salient possibility, irrespective of what deterrence theory implied regarding a nuclear first strike in the Cold War superpower context. The impossibility of Iran being able to establish such a secure survivable second strike capability – inevitably leads to “use them or lose them” syndrome in the eventuality of an escalating crisis.

Thus in the Iranian context deterrence stability is threatened, where an environment is created which could contain the seeds of a scenario, wherein not only that it does not heed the assumptions and presumptions of deterrence theory or the legacy of the Cold War – but it actually imposes conditions which are the exact *opposite* of what is required for deterrence stability. Instead of both sides perceived as possessing secure second strike capabilities, and thus neither side possessing first strike capability, a subjective perception may well evolve that the *reverse* is true: neither side is perceived to possess credible guaranteed secure and survivable assured destruction retaliatory second strike capability, or the necessary resolve to use it even if the technical capability is believed to exist *per se*; and that both sides have *only* first strike capabilities. And in case it hasn't been stated before, what matters are subjective perceptions, not the objective truth: in this sense the adversaries' subjective truths *become* the operative objective truth.<sup>64</sup>

In this sense, deterrence and containment of a nuclear armed Iran is off the agenda, for the time being, and it is a given that Iran will not be allowed, if possible, to acquire nuclear weapons. To this end the currently negotiated comprehensive agreement will pre-empt an unnoticed Iranian breakout, as unprecedentedly intrusive verification and transparency to the IAEA will give good warning of such an intention. So will, probably, the unprecedented focus on Iran by the leading intelligence agencies – especially with respect to undeclared clandestine facilities where the IAEA may be absent, if and when and where they may exist. At least for now, it may be assessed that Iran is unlikely to move suddenly to breakout, because it is completely out of character for the Iranian regime to act in a manner which invites a cataclysmic confrontation: Iran will continue, as it has for several decades now, to tread a middle path – distancing itself from any image of capitulation at the one side, and avoiding cataclysmic confrontation with the international community on the other. But breakout remains a possibility, however marginal or remote, which cannot be absolutely ruled out.

## Continuity and Change in the Post-Agreement Environment

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Assuming that the parameters of a comprehensive resolution will leave Iran with a number of centrifuges in the thousands, or perhaps even more than that, breakout capability will not have been eliminated. The somewhat artificial creation called “breakout warning time” – because Iran can execute breakout now, with the capabilities that it currently possesses – will be projected as having been extended, giving the international community good warning of any gross violation, and therefore sufficient time to act to foil Iran's moves towards breakout. If “breakout warning time” is long enough for sanctions to be applied first, military action will

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<sup>64</sup> Some evidence of the reluctance to automatically launch a second strike may be indicated by the wording of the US Department of Defense 2010 Nuclear Posture Review report, from which it may be understood that the United States would not necessarily respond to a nuclear attack by launching a nuclear retaliation, and might well prefer a surgical conventional response directed at those responsible; the decision would be up to the Commander in Chief, i.e. the President. This would be a revolutionary concept, and apparently reflected the Obama administration's fundamental revision of past (conservative) strategic theory and practice.



not be immediately mandated, but if “warning time” is short – it will. Continuity will prevail in the sense that international community leaders – meaning the decision-makers of the crucial states of relevance – will continue to understand that the risks of a nuclear armed Iran are unacceptable, because deterrence stability cannot be reliably and fully established, as well as, secondarily, because of a host of other detrimental fallout effects on regional and global stability.

Yes, if the effort to prevent Iran from going nuclear fails, for whatever reasons, the world may still want to rely on some fundamentals of deterrence which might predict that Iran will “probably”, or “very probably”, never actually use its nuclear weapons, but a certain margin of doubt cannot be entirely removed. Some characteristics of the ideology of elements within the Islamic Revolution’s regime give rise to concern that the perils of escalation dominance, cognitive choice decision making, biases, poor information search and processing, information screening (there is information which ideologically extremist authoritarian regimes *do not want to have*), and pure human tendency towards miscalculation, and error, particularly in authoritarian regimes with extremist ideologies which contain mystical and mythical elements of superiority over an inferior other – could lead to catastrophe. This could be amplified in a crisis, if the elements of the regime favoring caution and calculus are marginalized by the ideologically more ferociously passionate, and more powerful, or brutal, ones.

Thus, even after a comprehensive agreement is concluded, reducing the hazard posed by the IR-40 Arak reactor, and imposing a ceiling of x thousand centrifuges and y tons of LEU stored as either UF6 or as oxide – the driving force mandating the circumspect monitoring of Iran’s nuclear activities will be one of continuity. The deterrence aspects of potential breakout – not having been eliminated, but rather “contained”, perhaps only temporarily – will remain unchanged: a serious concern that a nuclear armed Iran will not warrant a sufficiently reliable application of deterrence theory, or of Cold War assumptions, not to say presumptions – if they ever were justified in the first place – regarding deterrence stability, or of “containment” as a code phrase, in fact meaning deterrence.<sup>65</sup>

The change will be in the degree of anxiety about the need to constantly argue the point, previously driven by Iran’s heretofore relentless expansion of its potential breakout capacity, prior to the freeze evident since the June 2013 elections (even before the November 2013 Geneva interim agreement, and the January 2014 Joint Plan of Action – JPA – implementation). If an agreement is successfully concluded, the dangers of breakout will be contained both in scope and in imminence, and the need to constantly alert the international community about the significance of breakout – will move into a more disciplined, perhaps more relaxed routine. Only if

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<sup>65</sup> President Obama’s frequent public repudiation of the notion of “containment” of a nuclear armed Iran immediately conjures up the implication that what he means is, in fact, deterrence: he means, in fact, that he opposes a strategy of deterring a nuclear armed Iran, and therefore seeks to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons in the first place, not that he rejects “containment” of Iran after it already has them. Obama appears to prefer to use the word “containment”, rather than “deterrence”, because it is less loaded with razor sharp implications, it’s more “rounded” and diplomatic, less hysterical, if you will; but what is meant is a repudiation of the notion of deterrence of a nuclear armed Iran, so “containment” is, in fact, being used as a code-phrase to replace – perhaps artificially – “deterrence”.

Iran significantly violates the agreement, or abrogates it, will the deterrence issues outlined above once again move to center stage; this is the importance of the agreement.

If there is no agreement, then what happens next depends on what Iran will do: it may continue to by and large comply with the terms of the JPA, pending a renewal of negotiations; or it could go back to doing what it was doing before June 2013, namely the relentless expansion of breakout potential, including the installation and operation of an ever increasing number of centrifuges, including of the more advanced IR-2m type, or resume the installation of major systems at the IR-40 Arak reactor, or renew enrichment to the 20 percent level, or even to 60 percent as some in Iran were threatening to do on the eve of the interim agreement. This would inevitably resuscitate the heated arguments about the intrinsic implications for deterrence issues of Iran's nuclear intentions. In the remote possibility of breakout – as explained above, this is unlikely but cannot be ruled out – the conclusions would be of even greater dramatic significance.

# Chapter 7

## Iran's Impending Nuclear Weapons and Posture: What it All Means?

Louis René Beres, Purdue University

Still unimpeded, except by the embarrassingly minor annoyances of pretend diplomacy, Tehran now marches triumphantly toward final nuclear weapons status. Soon, when this exceptionally threatening development is confirmed in Tehran, Israel and the United States will try desperately to compensate for their original joint failures to preempt - that is, failures to undertake a preventive military action that could once have been operationally successful, and also been compliant with pertinent legal expectations of "anticipatory self-defense." In essence, this compensatory or default position will center on instituting a stable and thoroughly dependable system of *nuclear deterrence*.

To be sure, any such residual effort by Washington and Jerusalem will be both well-intentioned and indispensable. After all, to avoid a future of potentially measureless regrets and lamentations, these two starkly asymmetrical allies will need to reconstruct certain core elements of "mutual assured destruction." MAD, of course, was the original nuclear threat-based scheme that successfully preserved superpower peace during the U.S.-Soviet Cold War. Moreover, back in 1995, General David Ivry, then Director-General of the Israeli Ministry of Defense, and later Ambassador to Washington, had openly referred to MAD "as a model for Israel."

Ironically, perhaps, any such joint US-Israeli reconstruction, based loosely upon MAD, is apt to take place at the same time that the United States and Russia could embark upon a second Cold War, a "second-generation" protracted conflict characterized (assorted treaties of limitation notwithstanding) by yet another "superpower" nuclear arms race.

Will such an eleventh-hour reconstruction effort work? Admittedly, it would seem odd to wax nostalgic about the first or original Cold War, but, in retrospect, that

earlier standoff between "two scorpions in a bottle" (Manhattan Project physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer's famous metaphor) may soon look relatively benign. At that time, after all, the two dominant national players did share an unambiguous and overriding commitment to stay "alive." Then, neither side was animated by primal or atavistic religious sentiments, and both sides were prudentially disposed to "coexistence."

Most importantly, both the Americans and the Soviets, from the 1950s until the early 1990s, when the Soviet Union rapidly imploded, were predictably "rational."

Today, in the Middle East and elsewhere, rationality remains a key factor in all deterrence logic. More precisely, in order to be sustained in world politics, any system of deterrence must be premised on a plausible assumption of rationality. Specifically, by definition, this means that each side must consistently believe that the other side will value its continued national survival more highly than any other preference, or combination of preferences.

In the first Cold War era, rationality proved to be an indisputably reasonable and correct assumption. Now, however, we may have good reason to doubt that MAD could work as well in the chaotic Middle East, as it did during that Cold War. Conceivably, at least in certain singular cases, a nuclear-endowed *Jihadist* regime in Tehran might not be willing to unerringly maintain the same stable hierarchy of national preferences. Even though Iran's president Hassan Rouhani sounds substantially less inflammatory than did his predecessor, it is still the Grand Ayatollah who will be authorizing the most critical or existential national decisions.

Will the Grand Ayatollah and his clerical retinues be consistently rational?

Over time, the principal decision-makers in Tehran could well turn out to be just as rational as were the Soviets. Still, there is certainly no way of knowing this for sure, or, for that matter, of predicting Iranian rationality with any previously-tested bases of reliable judgment. Mathematically, of course, there is simply no acceptable way to ascertain the probability of unique events, and an Iranian leadership that could deliberately slouch toward a nuclear apocalypse is plainly not discoverable in any history.

This brings up the most sobering question of all. What if there should be no preemption against Iran, a forfeiture decision which now seems irreversible, and if consequent nuclear deterrence postures in Washington and Jerusalem should somehow fail to prevent an Iranian nuclear attack? What, exactly, would actually happen, if all "containment" strategies were to fail vis-à-vis Iran, and that government were to launch a nuclear *Jihad* against Israel, whether as an atomic "bolt from the blue," or, instead, as the result of escalation, either deliberate, or inadvertent?

In considering this most basic question, it must first be kept in mind that even a fully rational Iranian adversary could sometime decide to launch against Israel, owing to (1) incorrect information used in its vital decisional calculations; (2) mechanical, electronic, or computer malfunctions; (3) unauthorized decisions to fire in the national decisional command authority; and/or (4) *coup d'état*.

Almost thirty-five years ago, I published the first of many subsequent books that contained informed descriptions of the physical and medical consequences of a nuclear war. These descriptions were focused generically on *any* nuclear exchange, and were extracted primarily from a respected and comprehensive 1975 report issued by the National Academy of Sciences. Although they were not generated with any particular reference to the Middle East, their core calculations of physics and biology were universally applicable, and were not in any way geographically limited.

These calculations included the following significant and still probable outcomes: large temperature changes; contamination of food and water; disease epidemics in crops, domesticated animals, and humans due to ionizing radiation; shortening of growing seasons; irreversible injuries to aquatic species; widespread and long-term cancers due to inhalation of plutonium particles; radiation-induced abnormalities in persons *in utero* at the time of detonations; a vast growth in the number of skin cancers, and increasing genetic disease.

We may currently predict, surely without controversy, that overwhelming health problems would afflict the survivors of any Iranian nuclear attack upon Israel. These "insults," to use proper medical parlance, would extend beyond prompt burn injuries. Retinal burns, for example, could occur in the eyes of many persons located far from the actual explosions.

Arguably, Israel, as a state, would not physically disappear. In a strict technical or literal sense, therefore, the attack outcomes would not be genuinely "existential." Still, tens of thousands of Israelis, Arabs as well as Jews, could be crushed by collapsing structures, and torn to pieces by flying glass.

Many others could fall victim to raging firestorms. Fallout injuries would include whole-body radiation injury, produced by penetrating, hard gamma radiations; superficial radiation burns, produced by soft radiations; and assorted injuries produced by deposits of radioactive substances within the body.

After an Iranian nuclear attack, even a "small" one, those few medical facilities that might still exist in Israel would be taxed beyond capacity. Water supplies could become unusable. Housing and shelter could be unavailable for hundreds of thousands (in principle, at least, perhaps even *millions*) of survivors. Transportation would break down to rudimentary levels. Food shortages would be crippling, critical, and foreseeably, long-term.

By definition, standard economic theories, based on verifiable historical data, would no longer be meaningful. Israel's normally complex network of exchange systems would be shattered. Virtually everyone would be deprived of the most rudimentary means of livelihood.

Emergency police and fire services would be decimated. Systems dependent upon electrical power could stop functioning, perhaps for months. Severe trauma would occasion widespread disorientation and psychiatric disorders, for which there would be no conceivably reliable therapeutic services.

Mimicking the fictional *Lord of the Flies*, a prophetic book by author William Golding, normal human society would abruptly cease. Following Hurricane Katrina, a far less catastrophic assault on a major American city, basic mechanisms of civil order were torn away in less than 24 hours. Recalling assorted human effects of the savage New Orleans storm, we may expect, after an Iranian nuclear attack on Israel, eruptions of murder and banditry. These would add substantially to the extant harms of plague, and assorted other disease epidemics.

Today, with the emerging worldwide Ebola crisis, we can readily observe that deadly pathogens may pose grave personal and communal risks even when the larger society remains fully capable and intact. Imagine, therefore, how much more dangerous these pathogens could become in a society already leveled by an enemy nuclear attack.

After any Iranian nuclear attack, many Israeli survivors could expect a marked increase in serious degenerative pathologies. They could also expect premature death, impaired vision, and sterility. Based also upon what we know about 1945 atomic bomb effects in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, an increased incidence of leukemia and cancers of the lung, stomach, breast, ovary and uterine cervix would be indicated.

Undoubtedly, extensive fallout would leave its uniquely corrosive mark upon Israel. Over time, it could upset many ordinary and delicately balanced relationships in nature. For example, those Israelis who had survived the actual nuclear attack would still have to deal with greatly enlarged insect populations. Like the locusts of biblical times, these mushrooming insect hordes could spread widely beyond the radiation-damaged areas in which they first arose.

Significantly, insects are generally more resistant to radiation than humans. This fact, coupled with the prevalence of unburied corpses, uncontrolled waste, and untreated sewage, would likely generate *tens of trillions* of flies and mosquitoes. Breeding in the dead bodies, these insects would make it effectively impossible to control typhus, malaria, dengue fever, and encephalitis. Perhaps, also, Ebola.

Throughout Israel, tens or perhaps hundreds of thousands of rotting human corpses would pose the single largest health threat. Simply to bury the bodies would prove to be a staggering and conceivably impossible task. Here, unceremonious mass cremations could prove to be the only viable "solution." In this connection, an insufferably Holocaust-related imagery of Jewish annihilation could become indelible.

Reciprocally, these same catastrophic effects, possibly even more expansive and destructive, would be wreaked upon Iran by Israel. An immediate and massive Israeli nuclear retaliation for any Iranian nuclear aggression would be inevitable. More than likely, in both Israel and Iran, legions of battered survivors would scavenge widely for whatever is needed to simply stay alive.

None of this nightmarish scenario would ever need to be contemplated if Iran could still be kept from fashioning nuclear weapons. Barring the highly unlikely prospect of any eleventh-hour preemption against Iranian hard targets, however, it

will become absolutely necessary to implement a purposeful and conspicuous program of regional nuclear deterrence. With this refined threat program in place, Israel - at least in principle - could identify any still-remaining options for deterring both rational and irrational decision-makers in Tehran.

Although, by definition, irrational Iranian adversaries would not value their own national survival most highly, they could still maintain a determinable, transitive, and potentially manipulable ordering of preferences. It follows that Washington and Jerusalem should promptly undertake a consciously joint effort to accurately anticipate this expected hierarchy of wants, and then to fashion all corollary deterrent threats accordingly. It should also be borne in mind that Iranian preference-orderings would not be created in a vacuum. In this connection, assorted strategic developments in both Pakistan and (eventually) "Palestine" could significantly impact such orderings, either as consequential "synergies," or - in more expressly military language - as menacing "force multipliers."

In the best of all possible worlds, Israel and the United States would never have permitted Iran to reach these penultimate stages of nuclear weapons development. But, as French Enlightenment philosopher Voltaire had already recognized back in the 18th Century, this is not the best of all possible worlds. It is, therefore, immediately incumbent upon both Jerusalem and Washington to set the necessary foundations for reliable nuclear deterrence in the Middle East. Israel and the United States, both singly, and in unique collaboration with one another, should now focus upon implementing appropriately urgent final security measures.

These measures would intend to ensure that Iran's leaders could never calculate any nuclear aggression against Israel to be gainful or cost-effective. Among other things, including suitable refinements of Israel's *Arrow-3* ballistic missile defense (BMD) program<sup>66</sup>, and also its apparent expansions of nuclear sea-basing (submarines)<sup>67</sup>, this would mean a partial and selective end to the country's longstanding policy of "deliberate nuclear ambiguity." Soon, in order to enhance the critical persuasiveness of its indispensable nuclear deterrent, Israel will have to partially and selectively remove its "bomb from the basement." Precisely how best to carry out this daunting obligation will represent an intellectual task of the highest possible difficulty.

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<sup>66</sup> See, on this issue: Louis René Beres and Major-General Res. Isaac Ben-Israel, "Think Anticipatory Self-Defense," *The Jerusalem Post*, October 22, 2007; Professor Beres and MG Ben-Israel, "The Limits of Deterrence," *Washington Times*, November 21, 2007; Professor Beres and MG Ben-Israel, "Deterring Iran," *Washington Times*, June 10, 2007; Professor Beres and MG Ben-Israel, "Deterring Iranian Nuclear Attack," *Washington Times*, January 27, 2009; and Professor Beres and MG Ben-Israel, "Defending Israel from Iranian Nuclear Attack," *The Jewish Press*, March 13, 2013. See also: Louis René Beres and (General/USAF/ret.) John T. Chain, "Living With Iran," BESA Center for Strategic Studies, Israel, May 2014; and Louis Rene Beres and (Lt.General/USAF/ret.) Thomas McInerney, "Obama's Inconceivable, Undesirable, Nuclear-Free Dream," *U.S. News & World Report*, August 29, 2013.

<sup>67</sup> See, on this aspect: Louis René Beres and (Admiral/USN/ret.) Leon "Bud" Edney, "Israel's Nuclear Strategy: A Larger Role for Submarine-Basing," *The Jerusalem Post*, August 17, 2014; and Professor Beres and Admiral Edney, "A Sea-Based Nuclear Deterrent for Israel," *Washington Times*, September 5, 2014.

The point here, of course, would not be to reveal the obvious - that is, that Israel merely *has* the bomb - but rather, to communicate to all prospective adversaries, especially Iran, that its existing nuclear forces are (1) *usable* (not too destructive); (2) *well-protected*; and (3) *capable of penetrating* any nuclear aggressor's active defenses.

Now that an Iranian military nuclear capability is pretty much a *fait accompli*, such critically nuanced communication could become the mainstay of Israel's physical survival as a state.



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