

After Iran: More Proliferation in the Middle East

Oded Brosh
Institute for Policy and Strategy
Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya
Ninth Herzliya Conference
February 2009

Background – the threat to the international non-proliferation regime

- The concept: since 1964, 45 years of general success of the international non-proliferation regime
- Fear of collapse of non-proliferation “firebreaks” in Far East and Mid-East

Impact of Iranian nuclearization on adversaries in Mid-East

- Due to the ideological content: concern about Iranian attempts to advance revolutionary / radical agenda; attempts / actions designed to undermine (“moderate”) regimes in region
- Concern regarding attempts to gain control of strategic / economic assets of region
- Danger of conventional altercations with escalatory potential; creation of confrontational atmosphere / “escalation dominance”

After Iran: added motives

- There were strong motives before too; after Iran, new motives are added to those existing before
- In most cases, the lead motive is regional dominance in a M.E. saturated with subjective values
- In other cases, the lead motive is compensation for weaknesses
- WMD previously viewed by regional players as a strategic asset: Libyan case reversed the trend, temporarily

Saudi Arabia

- In the past: involvement in Pakistani program in return for “umbrella”?
- Acquisition of Chinese strategic SSM brokered by Pakistan
- Lack of appropriate infrastructure – needs to acquire from outside (“turnkey”?), if still possible
- The how not yet clear, but the motive exists
- + Dangers of internal political frictions

Egypt

- Desires for an extensive nuclear program ongoing since 1960's
- Lead motives have been prestige (Arab lead, Indian example), int'l and regional standing, strategic considerations
- Ambitious nuclear program frustrated by persistent financing difficulties
- Scientific, technological, industrial infrastructure available
- Since 2006: increased renewed interest
- March 2007: statement regarding intent to establish network of 10 nuclear power stations

Libya

- Breakout potential, in view of disappointment with benefits of 2003 deal
- Danger of attempt to test a more “forgiving” atmosphere than in 2003
- Difficulty in resurrection of A.Q. Khan elements today; alternative Iranian option?

Algeria

- Until 1993 – probable weapons oriented program with Chinese HWRR
- 1993 –NPT pledge (deposit 1995) under int'l pressure, abandoning weapons oriented program?
- Potential for renewal if non-proliferation regime collapses

Iraq

- In the past – Arab leadership motive, “Babel”, domestic prestige, strategic considerations (Iran before and after Islamic revolution)
- Knowledge exists
- At present, doesn't appear imminently likely, but....
- After U.S. exit and internal reshuffle, Sunni-Shi'te rift, theoretically renewed quest for Arab leadership role?

Syria

- Domestic regime survival motives, alongside external ones – regional and security
- Instead of DPRK – Iranian option?

UAE and the rest

- UAE – interest and pursuit of nuclear power stations?
- Doesn't look dangerous, but can never tell – in the past hub of A.Q. Khan network
- Morocco, Jordan?
- Terror networks – Al-Qaeda, Hizbullah, “proxies” or not; legitimization?

Turkey

- Growing interest
- End of January '09: intentions to launch ambitious nuclear power station program, technical agreement with Russian supplier

Conclusion

- Iran's nuclearization, apart from the danger of use of nuclear weapons, will initiate "snowballing" effect of regional and global escalation in a myriad of fields
- In the proliferation arena, could bring about collapse of non-proliferation regime with extensive regional ramifications