

Iran Builds the Bomb

Ray Takeyh

As the debate regarding the vanishing Iraqi weapons of mass destruction continues, another proliferation crisis looms in the Middle East. Under the guise of a civilian research programme, Iran is gradually accumulating the technology and the expertise necessary for the construction of nuclear weapons. Iran's accelerated path to the bomb will confront the next US administration with another difficult challenge in the Persian Gulf.

Over the past few years, a series of revelations have confounded the international community, forcing intelligence agencies to revise their previous assessments. The first shock came in August 2002 with the discovery of the Natanz installation that demonstrated Iranian mastery of the complex process of enriching nearly weapon-grade uranium. Tehran has been similarly active in development of a plutonium route to nuclear capability. The heavy water facilities in Esfahan and nearly completed plants in Arak point to the fact that Iran's plutonium enrichment capabilities were much more advanced than initially anticipated. Although Iran's programme has benefited at various stages from external assistance, particularly from Russia and more ominously from the Abdul Qadeer Khan network, the sophisticated nature of these facilities reveal that Iran may have reached the point of self-sufficiency, whereby traditional counter-proliferation measures, such as more rigorous export controls and curtailment of external assistance, will not measurably impact its nuclear time-line. Iran's influential former president, Ayatollah Ali-Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani recently confirmed, 'That we are on the verge of nuclear breakout is true'.¹

Despite Iran's advances, an excessive focus on technological dimensions of the nuclear programme can offer a distorted time-line. Historically, as a state unleashes its nuclear programme, it creates political and bureaucratic constituencies and nationalistic pressures that generate their own proliferation momentum. As India and Pakistan demonstrated, once a nuclear programme matures, it attracts political patrons invoking national prestige, military officers attracted to weapons of awesome

Ray Takeyh is a Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations.

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power and a scientific establishment seeking to perpetuate a programme that generates profits and jobs. As such alliances and constituencies develop, a state can cross the point of political no return years before it can actually assemble a single nuclear bomb. This phenomenon is becoming all too evident in the case of Iran.

As the Islamic Republic rapidly crosses successive nuclear demarcations, Washington's prevailing strategy is to let the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) deal with the problem. The problem with this strategy is that it could ensure that Iran will be the next member of the nuclear weapons club. The IAEA focuses on the supply side, conducting inspections, limiting Iran's access to proscribed technologies and invoking the prospect of multilateral sanctions for documented transgressions. None of these procedures address the core of Iran's motivations to acquire the bomb, namely, its perception of insecurity and vulnerability against antagonists with greater military capabilities. In this context, the IAEA process is counterproductive: by threatening and cajoling a state already anxious about its security posture, it only empowers domestic actors invoking external threats as a justification for a nuclear arsenal.

Today, the Islamic Republic is immersed in an intense debate regarding the direction of its nuclear programme. What Iran will do is likely to depend on the type of relationship it has with the United States, the emerging security architecture in the Persian Gulf and the evolving nature of its domestic politics. As constituencies and alliances shift, and policies and positions alter within the corridors of clerical power, Washington has an opportunity to influence the direction of Iran's nuclear deliberations before it is too late. Through a bilateral arrangement involving mutual concessions from both sides, the US may still be able to empower those within the clerical estate calling for nuclear restraint. In dealing with Iran's nuclear crisis, US leadership and active engagement are indispensable.

Why does Iran want nuclear weapons?

Contrary to many Western assumptions, Iran's quest for nuclear weapons does not stem from irrational ideological postulations, but from a judicious attempt to craft a viable deterrent posture against a range of threats. It is often argued that Iran's dangerous and unpredictable neighbourhood grants it ample incentive for acquiring nuclear weapons. However, it is hard to see how persistent volatility on Iran's frontiers can be ameliorated by the possession of such weapons. Instability in Afghanistan and Central Asia may be sources of significant concern for Iran's defence planners, but nuclear weapons can scarcely defuse

such crises. A more careful examination reveals that Iran's nuclear programme has been conditioned by a narrower but more pronounced set of threats. The need to negate the American and Iraqi threats has been the primary motivation.

From the outset, it is important to place the question of Israel in its proper context. It is often assumed that the hostile relations between Iran and the nuclear-armed Israel inexorably propel Tehran toward the atomic option. To be sure, even a cursory examination of the clerical oligarchs' rhetoric reveals the continued invocation of the Israeli threat. Indeed, for a generation of Iranian clerics, Israel remains an illegitimate state, usurping Islamic lands and acting as an agent of US imperialism in the Middle East. Such ideological animus has led Iran to support terrorist organisations and Palestinian rejectionist forces plotting against the Jewish state. However, both Iran and Israel have been careful to regulate their low-intensity conflict and have assiduously avoided direct military confrontation. The alarmist Iranian rhetoric regarding the immediacy of the Israeli threat is more an attempt to mobilise domestic and regional constituencies behind an anti-Israel policy than a genuine reflection of concern. For the Islamic Republic, Israel may be an ideological affront and a civilisational challenge, but it is not an existential threat mandating provision of nuclear weapons.

While Israel may be peripheral to Iran's aspirations for unconventional weapons, developments in the Persian Gulf are of immense importance. From the Islamic Republic's perspective, the Gulf is its most important strategic arena, constituting its most reliable access to the international petroleum market. Saddam's Iraq not only sought hegemony over the Gulf, and indeed the larger Middle East, but also waged a merciless eight-year war against Iran. The narrative of the war is as familiar as it is tragic. Iraq's employment of chemical weapons against Iranian civilians and combatants led to an estimated 50,000 casualties and permanently scarred Iran's national psyche. Far from being a historical memory, the war and its legacy are debated daily in the pages of newspapers, in the halls of universities and the floor of the parliament. As the newspaper *Ya-Letharat* recently noted, 'One can still see the wounds on our war veterans that were inflicted by poison gas as used by Saddam Hussein that were made in Germany and France'.² The dramatic memories of the war have led to cries of 'never again' uniting a fractious public behind a desire to achieve not just a credible deterrent posture but potentially a convincing retaliatory capability.

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The overthrow of Saddam's regime has diminished but by no means eliminated the Iraqi challenge. The unpredictable nature of developments in Iraq has intensified Iran's anxieties and further enhanced the utility of the nuclear option. Should Iraq emerge as a close US ally policing the Gulf on the behest of its superpower benefactor, Iran will stand marginalised and isolated. Indeed, the long-standing ambition of successive Iraqi governments to assert predominance in the Gulf may finally be nurtured by a superpower seeking local allies to contain recalcitrant states such as Iran. A revival of the Nixon Doctrine, whereby the US sought to ensure the stability of the Persian Gulf by assisting its pliant Iranian ally, with Iraq now assuming that role, would seriously constrain Tehran's options. A presumptive nuclear capability would grant Iran a greater ability to assert its interests and press its claims. At any rate, the unforeseen conduct of the sovereign Iraqi government compels the theocratic leadership to formulate a range of contingencies, and one such option is to sustain a robust nuclear research programme.

Although Iraq may constitute a long-term source of concern, today the United States stands as Iran's foremost strategic challenge and the primary cause of its search for a nuclear deterrent. US-Iranian relations have become even more strained in recent years. Under the auspices of the Bush Doctrine, the United States arrogated to itself the right to employ pre-emptive military intervention as a tool of counter-proliferation and to effect regime change as a means of ensuring disarmament. The massive projection of American power on all of Iran's peripheries since 11 September has added credence to the Iranian claim of being encircled by the United States. The conservative newspaper *Mardom-Salari* captured Tehran's dilemma by noting, 'After the occupation of Iraq, the security ring around the Islamic Republic of Iran by enemy nations, enemy allies, or unfriendly nations is complete'.³ In a rare note of agreement, the leading liberal newspaper *Aftab-e Yazd* similarly stressed that, given the regional exigencies, 'In the near future Iran might be thinking of the military aspects of nuclear energy'.⁴

The remarkable success of *Operation Iraqi Freedom* in overthrowing Saddam cannot but have made a formidable impression on Iran's leadership. The fact remains that Iraq's anticipated chemical-weapons depositories did not deter Washington from military intervention. As an Iranian official confessed, 'the fact that Saddam was toppled in twenty-one days is something that should concern all the countries in the region'.⁵ Conversely, North Korea offers its own lessons and possibilities. Pyongyang's presumed nuclear capability has not only obviated a pre-emptive invasion, but actually generated potential security and economic benefits. President Bush may loathe Kim Jong Il, but far

from contemplating military action, the United States and its allies are considering an economic relief package and security guarantees to dissuade North Korea from its nuclear path. The contrasting fates of Iraq and North Korea certainly elevates the significance of nuclear weapons in the Iranian clerical cosmology.

Post-11 September developments in the Middle East have had a paradoxical impact on the Islamic Republic. Two of Iran's formidable foes, the Taliban and Saddam Hussein, have been overthrown by the United States. In the meantime, Iran's American nemesis is entangled in an Iraqi quagmire, draining its resources and tempering its ambitions. Nevertheless, the Iranian clerical elite expect a turbulent future, which accentuates their sense of insecurity. Iran remains in America's crosshairs, at a time when the US military presence in the region has never been greater. Moreover, Iraq's evolution under American auspices offers its own set of daunting challenges. Such uncertainties enhance the apparent strategic utility of nuclear weapons to Iran and validate the claim that Iran requires such a capability to ensure both regime survival and territorial integrity. However, even on such a central issue, there are voices of dissent within the clerical establishment that are sufficiently influential to have an impact on Iran's nuclear deliberation.

The nuclear debate

More than any other issue, the nuclear question has exposed the divisions within the clerical establishment over Iran's international orientation. To be sure, Iran's contending factions are united on the need to sustain a vibrant nuclear research programme that, in due course, will offer Tehran the option of assembling a bomb. However, the prospect of actually crossing the nuclear threshold in defiance of the international community and in violation of Iran's long-standing treaty commitments has generated a subtle yet robust debate. More effective US diplomacy could condition this debate in favour of the more pragmatic elements within the theocratic hierarchy.

The primary supporters of the nuclear breakout option are hardline clerics closely associated with the Supreme Religious Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Through command of key institutions such as the Revolutionary Guards, the judiciary and the Guardian Council, Iran's reactionary clerics have enormous influence on national security planning. A fundamental tenet of their ideology is the notion that the Islamic Republic is in constant danger from predatory external forces, necessitating military self-reliance. This perception was initially moulded by a revolution that sought not just to defy but refashion international norms. The passage of time and the failure of that mission have not

necessarily diminished the hardline clerics' suspicions of the international order and its primary guardian, the United States. The conservative newspaper and mouthpiece of Khamenei, *Jumhuri-ye Islamii*, sounded this theme by stressing, 'In the contemporary world, it is obvious that having access to advanced weapons shall cause deterrence and, therefore, security, and will neutralise the evil wish of arrogant powers'.⁶ Nor are Iran's hardliners necessarily afraid of sanctions and coercion when fundamental national interests are at stake. Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati, the head of the powerful Guardian Council, pointedly asked, 'What is wrong with considering this treaty [NPT] on nuclear energy and pulling out of it? North Korea withdrew'.⁷ Given its paranoia and suspicions, the Iranian right does not necessarily object to international isolation and confrontation with the West. Indeed, for many within this camp, such a conflict would be an effective means of rekindling popular support for the revolution's fading élan.

At the core, all disarmament agreements call upon a state to forgo a certain degree of sovereignty for enhanced security. Once a state renounces its weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programme, it can be assured of support from the international community should it be threatened by another state possessing such arms (although such support is not formally written into the NPT, it is fair to suggest that should a state fully adhering to the NPT be threatened by a state in violation of that agreement, that the international community will support the former). This implied trade-off has no value for Iran's hardliners. Once more, the prolonged war with Iraq conditions their worldview and behaviour. Iraq's use of chemical weapons against Iran with impunity if not the tacit acceptance of the Western powers has reinforced Iran's suspicions of the international order. As Rafsanjani noted, 'The war taught us that international laws are only scraps of paper'.⁸ *Jumhuri-ye Islami* similarly stipulated, 'As a rule, it is futile to enter any deal with the West over issues related to the country's independence and national security'.⁹ For many of the Islamic Republic's reactionary clerics, the only way to safeguard Iran's interests is to develop an independent nuclear deterrent.

In contrast to the hardliners, the pragmatic elements within the Islamic Republic's officialdom insist that Iran's on-going integration into the international order and the global economy mandates accepting certain restrictions on its nuclear programme. Although it is tempting to see this issue as a divide between reactionaries and reformers, the coalition pressing for reticence features both conservatives, such as Secretary to the Supreme Council on National Security Hassan Rowhani and officials within the Ministry of Defence, as well as reformers such as President

Muhammad Khatami and his allies in the Foreign Ministry. The proponents of this strategy do not call for the dismantling of Iran's nuclear edifice, but for the development of a breakout capacity within the flexible guidelines of the NPT. Given Iran's long-term commitment to the NPT and international scrutiny, a provocative policy could invite multilateral economic sanctions and lead Iran's valuable commercial partners, such as the EU, to embrace the US policy of isolating and pressuring Iran. Thus, for this constituency, a hedging strategy can sustain Iran's nuclear programme while maintaining its international ties.

Beyond fears of sanctions and isolation, some proponents of nuclear restraint argue that such weapons do not necessarily serve Iran's strategic interests. Should Iran cross the nuclear threshold, the Gulf states and the newly independent Iraq are likely to gravitate further towards the American security umbrella. Indeed, under the auspices of the US, a Persian Gulf security structure may evolve with the purpose of containing and isolating the Islamic Republic. Iran's Defence Minister Ali Shamkhani acknowledged this point, stressing, 'The existence of nuclear weapons will turn us into a threat that could be exploited in dangerous ways to harm our relations with the countries of the region'.¹⁰ In a similar vein, Iran's former representative to the IAEA, Ali Akbar Salehi, recently mused that 'We cannot buy security by having nuclear weapons which only invites more threats against ourselves'.¹¹

The economic dimension of this argument should not be discounted, given Iran's dismal macro-economic situation. The stagnation of Iran's command economy, with its double-digit inflation and unemployment rates, bloated bureaucracy, industrial decay and cumbersome subsidies is proving beyond the capabilities of the reigning mullahs. Even more pressing is Iran's youth bulge, which could confront the Islamic Republic with an explosive political problem. Today, Iran creates approximately 400,000 new jobs for the million job seekers that enter the market annually. Hovering over all this is the reluctance of the clerical leadership to institute structural economic reforms for fear of the dislocation and popular backlash that such measures may initially cause. The regime is hoping to ameliorate its problems by attracting foreign investment. Iran's Ministry of Economy and Finance predicts that Iran requires approximately \$17 billion dollars in annual international investments to address its manifold problems. The dire state of Iran's economy reinforces the need for caution in pursuing the nuclear option, as an Iranian state that requires substantial international

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Iran's pragmatists are increasingly been drawn to the North Korean model, as Pyongyang has adroitly managed to employ its nuclear defiance to extract economic and security concessions from the international community. Through a similar posture of restraint and defiance, threats and blandishments, perhaps Tehran can also utilise its nuclear card to renegotiate a more rational relationship with its leading nemesis, the United States. Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi alluded to this stratagem by claiming, 'We are ready for discussions and negotiations, but we need to know what benefits the Islamic Republic would get from them'.¹² The influential conservative politician Muhammad Javad Larijani echoed this theme by stressing, 'If our national interests dictate, we can go to the bowels of hell to negotiate with the devil'.¹³

Iran today stands at a crossroads. In the near future, it needs to make fundamental choices regarding the direction of its nuclear programmes. When assessing a state's nuclear path, it is important to note that its motivations cannot be exclusively examined within the context of national interests and security considerations. Whatever strategic benefits such weapons offer a state, they are certainly a source of national prestige and parochial benefits to various bureaucracies and politicians. As such constituencies emerge, a state can potentially cross the nuclear threshold even if the initial strategic factors that provoked the programme are no longer salient. The emergence of bureaucratic and nationalist pressures in Iran is generating its own proliferation momentum, empowering those seeking a nuclear breakout. As time passes, the pragmatic voices calling for hedging are likely to be marginalised and lose their influence within the regime. The notion that the United States has the luxury of time is belied by Iran's internal domestic alignments on the nuclear issue.

The politics of nuclear weapons

As Iran's nuclear programme matures and becomes subject of international scrutiny, another dynamic is entering the debate: public opinion. Far from being a source of restraint, the emerging popular sentiment is that, as a great civilisation with a long history, Iran has a right to acquire a nuclear capability. The recent disclosures of the sophisticated nature of Iran's nuclear programme have been a source of national pride for a citizenry accustomed to the revolution's failures and setbacks. Rafsanjani, one of the Islamic Republic's most astute politicians, noted this trend when he said, 'No official would dare allow himself to defy the people on such an issue'.¹⁴ Washington's incendiary rhetoric and

its designation of Iran as an 'axis of evil' state that should not have access to such weapons has only inflamed a highly nationalistic population. The nuclear issue is increasingly being subsumed in Iranian nationalism, with notions of sovereign rights and national dignity displacing calls for adherence to treaty commitments.

Iran's experience during the past quarter of a century with war, sanctions and estrangement from the international community has fostered a populace averse to external pressures. Among the themes consistently propounded in the popular press is the notion of American hypocrisy over the application of the NPT. The fact that Israel has escaped criticism from Washington has been cleverly exploited by conservative politicians to arouse nationalistic backing for Iran's acquisition of nuclear capabilities. Moreover, the attempt by the United States to restrict membership in the exclusive nuclear club has always irked Iranian leaders and masses alike. The selectivity of US condemnations and its presumption that the current nuclear states are the only ones capable of acting judiciously with such weapons is routinely condemned by Iranian writers, academics and politicians as arrogant and self-serving. The leading conservative thinker, Amir Mohebian, pointedly criticised the US posture: 'The Americans say in order to preserve the peace for their children, they should have nuclear weapons and we should not'. In a strange note of accord, one of the foremost reformist activist, Mostafa Tajzadeh noted, 'It's basically a matter of equilibrium, if I don't have a nuclear bomb, I don't have security'.¹⁵

Among the most vociferous critics of Iran's accommodation of the international community on the nuclear issue have been student organisations. Iranian students are seen by some analysts as a reliable barometer of public opinion, as they have historically played a vanguard political role in nearly every significant movement spearheaded by the universities. It is customary for the Western audience to identify Iranian students with progressive causes, as they have been the most vocal advocates of greater democratisation and reform of the Islamic Republic. However, on the nuclear issue, Iran's educated youth seemingly views disarmament agreements as an abridgement of national rights and have warned their elders against capitulating to external pressures. Upon Iran's acceptance of the Additional Protocols in October 2003, Iran's universities were rocked by demonstrations, this time not in favour of greater political reform. In the prestigious Sharif Technical University, students passed a resolution equating the accords with 'treason'. In a recent meeting of university students from across the country in Bushehr (the site of Iran's nuclear reactor) an easily passed resolution proclaimed, 'We, the Iranian students, consider access to the nuclear energy as the

legitimate right of the Iranian nation. We will never bow to oppression and hegemonic policies'.¹⁶ Ebrahim Shamschiri, the head of one of Iran's influential student organisation, the Student Islamic Association, went even further, plainly proclaiming that Iran requires nuclear weapons 'to deter the US from threatening or attacking us'.¹⁷ As public opinion becomes a factor in nuclear deliberations, it is likely to further pressure the clerical elite in the direction of the bomb.

Iran's nuclear programme rests in the hands of hardline elements

Alongside this popular sentiment is the emergence of a bureaucratic and scientific establishment with its own parochial considerations. Under the auspices of the Revolutionary Guards, an entire array of organisations such as the Defence Industries Organisation, university laboratories and a plethora of companies (many of them owned by hardline clerics) have provided the impetus for Iran's expanding and lucrative nuclear efforts. Once more, Tehran's recent acceptance of the Additional Protocols brought forth protest from these corners with Iran's leading 250 scientists signing an open letter warning, 'We the signers of this letter urge the government of the Islamic Republic to, under no circumstances, sign any letter which would create an impediment to our legitimate right to acquire knowledge and technology'.¹⁸ The Revolutionary Guards' leadership has long been dubious of the utility of treaties in terms of safeguarding Iran's security interests. In a remarkable outburst, the Commander of the Revolutionary Guards, Yahya Rahim Safavi, pointedly asked, 'Can we withstand America's threats and domineering attitude with a policy of detente? Will we be able to protect the Islamic Republic from international Zionism by signing conventions banning the proliferation of chemical and nuclear weapons?'¹⁹ Disturbingly, the management of Iran's nuclear programme rests in the hands of the hardline elements who have scant respect for international treaties and obligations. The prestige and profits generated by this mission reinforce the strategic arguments for the prolongation of the nuclear programme.

The surprising aspect of the nuclear debate in Iran is the extent to which it mirrors the discussion that took place in China, India and Pakistan before these states joined the nuclear club. National prestige, notions of sovereign independence, great-power hypocrisy and the need for a viable deterrence posture against both imagined and real enemies dominate Iranian newspapers and official discourse. Although Iran initiated its programme to address certain strategic challenges, as the programme matures, nationalistic sentiment and patronage politics are

emerging as rationales for sustaining it. As such, even if the original strategic calculus that provoked the search for nuclear weapons alters, the programme may actually continue.

What is to be done?

Given the centrality of the United States in Iran's strategic calculus, for the Islamic polity to accept nuclear restraint it has to be provided with incentives directly by Washington. The time for relying on the cumbersome IAEA process with its inspection regimes is rapidly expiring. Through adroit diplomacy and tempered rhetoric, Washington can still influence Iran's internal debate in favour of those seeking to remain within the confines of the NPT. By relaxing its economic sanctions and granting Iran a voice in post-Iraq war Persian Gulf security deliberations, the US can disarm clerical hardliners who require American belligerence for the perpetuation of the nuclear programme. In exchange for such a package, Iran must accept verifiable restraints on its weapons-grade material and capabilities.

Previous examples of nuclear reversals reinforce such a nuanced strategy. Iran's nuclear imbroglio is not the first such crisis confronted by the international community. In the past states such as Brazil, Argentina and South Africa eventually retreated from the nuclear precipice. Although each state is different and must be viewed in within the context of its national experiences, in all cases lessened external threats have been critical to the relinquishment of nuclear ambitions. In a similar vein, economic incentives such as favourable commercial ties and access to international lending institutions have been effective, as they provide palpable benefits to ruling elites. It is rare, however, for a state that views nuclear weapons as fundamental to its security interests to dispense with such weapons under relentless threats of military reprisal and economic coercion. Decades of pressure and economic sanctions ultimately did not dissuade Pakistan from pursuing a nuclear option that it felt was necessary for national survival. Similarly, it appears that China's tense relations with the United States ultimately pushed it towards an indigenous nuclear capability irrespective of the costs and burdens. In the end, it appears that a clever mixture of incentives and penalties can accomplish much more in the realm of counter-proliferation than can threats of military reprisal and economic strangulation.

It is important to note that, given the contending views within the ruling theocracy on the strategic necessity of the nuclear option, together with the extent to which this issue has been enmeshed in Iranian nationalism, the Libyan paradigm of disarmament – complete dismantlement of the nuclear infrastructure – is not viable. The

proponents of nuclear hedging maybe able to persuade their hard-line counterparts to embrace this option, but it is hard to see how any politician suggesting the complete dismantlement of Iran's nuclear infrastructure could survive. As such, the Libyan paradigm of disarmament has no applicability to Iran. In essence, the best that the international community can hope for at this late stage is for Iran to emulate the position of Japan, a country with an advanced nuclear capability that has not actually proceeded to build a bomb. A viable package of economic inducements and security assurances can better achieve this goal than either the IAEA process or military intervention. The IAEA would remain part of the process, but it would be an instrument of verification as opposed to a platform of negotiations. In essence, the IAEA would remain responsible for the technical verification of agreements crafted on bilateral, US–Iran basis.

Washington should eschew the temptations of a 'grand bargain' and avoid tying a nuclear deal to a range of US–Iranian grievances, such as the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Iran's domestic political landscape is simply too fractious and polarised for such grand visions. As an expanding number of issues become linked, the prospect of settling any one of them diminishes. A more targeted nuclear deal can establish diplomatic momentum leading to more concerted negotiations over issues such as the peace process and the future of Iraq. However, given the urgency and immediacy of this issue, it is important that it not be held hostage to the vexing Arab–Israeli conflict. An Iran that enjoys a stabilised strategic environment and expanding economic ties with the US is likely to be a constructive interlocutor on remaining topics of concern such as terrorism and human rights. In the end, a more limited deal can not only defuse another proliferation crisis in the Middle East, but also establish a framework for the incremental normalisation of US–Iranian relations.

Notes

- ¹ Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), 25 May 2004.
- ² *Ya Letharat*, 22 October 2003.
- ³ *Mardom-Salari*, 3 May 2004.
- ⁴ *Aftab-e Yazd*, 21 June 2004.
- ⁵ 'Iran's New Anxieties', Reuters, 19 April 2003.
- ⁶ *Jumhuri-ye Islami*, 8 November 2003.
- ⁷ 'Iranian Hardliners Wary of Nuclear Deal', *Washington Post*, 20 November 2003.
- ⁸ IRNA, 19 October 1988.
- ⁹ *Jumhuri-ye Islami*, 26 May 2004.
- ¹⁰ IRNA, 10 November 2000.
- ¹¹ 'Nuclear Armed Iran Would Be More Vulnerable', AFP, 9 June 2004.
- ¹² 'Iran Unveils its Nuclear Goals', AFP, 16 March 2003.
- ¹³ *Sharq*, 19 January 2004.
- ¹⁴ 'Former President Says Iran Won't Give in to Nuclear Blackmail', BBC Worldwide Monitoring, 11 June 2004.
- ¹⁵ Karl Vick, 'Iran asserts Right to Nuclear Weapons', *Washington Post*, 11 March 2003.
- ¹⁶ IRNA, 28 October 2003.
- ¹⁷ 'Iran faces pressure at home to hold the line', Associated Press, 31 October 2003.
- ¹⁸ IRNA, 30 October 2003.
- ¹⁹ *Jame'eh*, 27 April 1998.



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