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Freezing Iran as a Nuclear Threshold State: Chances, Costs and Consequences.

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Preface

Iranian spokesmen – particularly the former president Ahmadinejad – have spoken of Iran as a “nuclear power” or having “joined the nuclear club”. This terminology is generally construed as alluding to a military nuclear capacity and serves two ends: towards the domestic theatre, the leaders allude to Iran being on the verge of a military nuclear status; whereas towards the international community they maintain constructive ambiguity.

Some optimistic observers of Iran suggest that the Islamic Republic does not intend to actually break out as a nuclear power, but has in mind the Japanese or the German model, i.e. enrichment of fissile material to a level just below weapons grade material or amassing a quantity of weapons grade fissile material that would enable it to break out within a short period of two to three months. In this scenario, Iran would gain the “status” of a threshold nuclear state and would refrain from breakout.¹ This option is presented by some as a far better outcome than a military strike or a spiral of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East that would lead to a “poly-nuclear” Middle East. Another argument is that the Iranian motivation for acquiring nuclear weapons is its sense of insecurity, which can be allayed by creative Western security guarantees. Another theory with wide currency is that there exists no valid military option to pre-empt Iran’s nuclear program and that the consequences of military action are far worse than the consequences of a nuclear Iran. This latter assumption has its origins in the perception of Iran as a “rational actor” that is aware of the non-conventional superiority of Israel and the US and therefore would not dare reach confrontation that could threaten the very existence of Iran.

Iranian willingness to freeze its nuclear program at the threshold would however have to derive from a number of inter-related considerations:

- The goals of Iran’s nuclear strategy - how does the Iranian leadership define Iran’s strategic goals in attempting to acquire a military nuclear capability?
- The nuclear negotiations strategy - what is its cost-benefit assessment regarding whether it can achieve those goals through a political resolution?

What is the level of Iranian confidence in the viability of compensation that it will receive in return for not breaking out (in other words – its confidence in the world powers that will offer the compensation)?

- Assessment of the threat - what is the Iranian assessment regarding the probability of a military strike to take out its nuclear program? In this context, the Iranian assessment in the wake of the Syrian crisis is of prime importance.
- Possible nuclear posture - what is the most likely nuclear posture that a nuclear Iran will adopt: will it attempt to maintain a “bomb in the basement” (and is such a policy feasible under the circumstances) or will it break out?
- Command and Control paradigms that Iran will adopt to manage its nuclear assets.

This paper will endeavor to analyze these questions. Obviously, the opacity of the Iranian regime restricts access to information in the public domain regarding many of these questions. However, one may, through analysis of Iranian behavior to date, arrive at insights regarding possible future behavior.

The Goals of Iran’s Nuclear Strategy

What is the Iranian regime’s goal in acquiring nuclear weapons? Is it to make Iran into a threshold state poised a few months from a nuclear arsenal? Or are Iran’s strategic goals unachievable without a declared military nuclear capability? To what extent has Iran already drawn up a concept of nuclear posture?

The motivation of the Iranian regime for acquiring a military nuclear capability appears to be grounded in a mixture of drivers – some of them preceding the Islamic regime. While Israel’s purported nuclear capability has frequently been cited as a key motivation for Iran’s nuclear program (feeding calls for a “nuclear free zone” in the Middle East as a solution to the Iranian program), in its present stage, the program began during the Iraq-Iran war in response to Iraq’s WMD programs. Subsequently, the fact that the United States attacked Iraq despite, believing that it had chemical and biological weapons only strengthens the Iranian resolve to achieve a nuclear capability, which presumably is the only non-conventional capability which can effectively deter the United States. The alternative explanation for the American invasion of Iraq – that the administration and the US military

knew that Iraq had no WMD but used the claims of WMD to justify the invasion for wider strategic goals (including pressure on Iran and taking control of the oil in the region) also lends itself in Iran to the conclusion that Iran is in dire need of a strategic deterrent against the US. While the Syrian crisis is still developing at the time of this writing, the actions or inaction of the West in the Syrian case will certainly provide lessons to Iran regarding the necessity to maintain a non-conventional deterrence.

The debate over acquisition of nuclear weapons has occasionally slipped into the public realm, evidence of discussion within the regime regarding the pros and cons and the ramifications of “going nuclear”.² On the defensive side, it is argued that Iran lives in a dangerous neighbourhood and is surrounded by nuclear or potentially nuclear neighbours.³

Along with the argument that nuclear weapons are needed for deterrence, they are also seen as compensation for Iran’s humiliation at the hands of the West during the last centuries and as a “membership card” to an exclusive and respected club of nuclear powers, to which Iran feels it is worthy of belonging. The international acceptance of other nuclear states in Iran’s neighbourhood (India and Pakistan as declared nuclear powers and Israel as an undeclared power) exacerbates the Iranian sense of discrimination in the international demand for Iran to forego its own nuclear program. From this point of view, it is argued that nuclear weapons are necessary for Iran’s national honour and to enable Iran to achieve its manifest destiny in the region.⁴ Former Minister of Defense and current military advisor to the Supreme Leader, Admiral Ali Shamkhani, pointed out that threats to the national security of the Islamic Republic all point to a security imbalance, embodied in potential nuclear threats: Israel, India and Pakistan, Russia, NATO and the U.S. naval fleets deployed in the region that are carrying atomic weapons.”⁵

However, the strategic rationale for Iran’s drive for nuclear weapons has a proactive aspect as well. There are grounds to believe that Iran will see those weapons, once acquired, not only as weapons of deterrence and last resort but as an umbrella under which it can establish its hegemony at least in the Gulf, with enhanced influence in other parts of the region. This approach can be deduced from statements by radical clerics identified with the Haqqani school in Qom – which views such weapons as part of Iran’s arsenal for enhancement of its regional status.. Thus, Hossein Shariatmadari, the Supreme Leader’s representative in the Kayhan Institute, and Chief Editor of the Kayhan Daily wrote, “...Iran’s transformation into a nuclear power

contains a powerful and wide-ranging message... the Europeans and the Americans made various and diverse excuses ... they expected us to ... accept that they are a master cult and race, and that the rest of the world ...must ... enslave itself... Either we ...throw up our hands, and slaughter at their feet the ‘daring’ and the ‘will’ that are the foundations for building civilization, honor, and progress – or we do not give in to blackmail, and value and preserve the rare pearl for which we have labored greatly... If our country wants to attain glory in the world, it has no choice but to lay out a strategy in this direction, and to prepare the appropriate means for this strategy... We must make the enemies understand that it is inconceivable that instability, insecurity, and shock will be our lot, while theirs will be stability, security, and tranquillity.”⁶

Iran’s deterrent goals and hegemonic aspiration cannot be achieved by a mere appearance of being a threshold state. Such a threshold status would not satisfy Iran’s neighbours – all of which lag far behind Iran in achieving nuclear status and would not prevent attempts on their side to acquire nuclear weapons. Such a status would also be viewed by the regime as likely to encourage and not deter an attempt by its enemies (the US and Israel) to pre-empt breakout through military action. The American invasion of Iraq is seen as an indication of such a scenario.

A frequent argument that is brought up to counter the logic of Iran’s actually wanting to acquire nuclear weapons is that the founder of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Khomeini, and his successor, Ayatollah Khamenei’ have issued fatwas prohibiting nuclear weapons. Indeed, upon achieving power in 1979, Khomeini ordered the suspension of the Shah’s nuclear program and he has been quoted as having ruled, albeit orally, that “Atom(ic power/weapons) is a thing of the Satan”. However, there is no any text of the aforementioned fatwa despite the fact that all other fatwas by the founder of the Islamic Republic can be easily found. While the absence of proof is not proof of absence, in this context, it cannot be ignored.

Whether he did at some time issue a ruling against nuclear weapons, Khomeini’s position on this issue was short-lived. The fact that the nuclear program was revived while Khomeini was still alive is of cardinal significance not only for historic reasons. While there is no official record of a ruling by Khomeini on this matter, the power structure of Iran at the time of the renewal of the Iranian program precludes the possibility that the program was initiated without his legal and moral dispensation. Shiite jurisprudence is also relatively flexible in changing religious rulings in accordance with

political realities.⁷ If and when Iran achieves a military nuclear potential, Khomeini's unpublished rulings may emerge both as a key element in the internal debate within the regime and in order to provide Islamic justification of the highest level to whatever decision is made.

Khamene'i lacks his predecessor's status as an almost infallible religious scholar and came to power by collegial choice. Nevertheless he remains at the centre of the decision-making process on the issue of nuclear power. During the decade and a half of Khamene'i as Supreme Leader, there has also been no substantiated official ruling on nuclear weapons by him or by any other cleric associated with him and perceived as ruling on his direction. On the eve of the crucial discussion in the IAEA on Iran's military nuclear program, the spokesman of the Iranian Foreign Ministry Hamid Reza-Asafi released the "news" (10 August 2005) that the Supreme Leader had issued a fatwa declaring the use of nuclear weapons as "haram" – forbidden by Islamic law. Khamenei's purported fatwa however was not published by the Office of the Leader and its exact wording is nowhere to be found in the Iranian media or in official records of the Supreme Leader's religious edicts, which are assiduously updated and published. The closest declaration by Khamenei that can be interpreted as such as fatwa could be a statement he made (22 May 2005) that "We are not after producing the atomic bomb, because Islam does not even allow us to treat our enemy in such a manner." Such a statement does not amount to a fatwa. Recently, President Rouhani reiterated this position however, such a statement has no religious weight. The much-touted TV speech by the Supreme Leader, Khamenei against nuclear weapons was very clear: "We don't want nuclear weapons, not because of pressure from the U.S. or others but because of our belief that no one should have nuclear weapons. When we say no one should have nuclear weapons that means not for them and not for us either."⁸ It is clear from this statement that Iran's commitment not to acquire nuclear weapons is contingent on the implementation of a "zero option" nuclear policy on a global scale.

Nevertheless, Khomeini's original position remains in force among many of the traditional "quietist" clerics.⁹ On the other hand, there has been increasing support for acquisition of nuclear weapons and even justification of their use by radical 'Ulama. For example, Ayatollah Taqi Mesbah Yazdi, widely considered as the spiritual mentor of the IRGC elite, published a book called "The Islamic Revolution – Surges in Political Changes in History". According to Mesbah Yazdi: "We cannot know with certainty when the wolf-like elements in many countries which hold power will disappear and be wiped off the face of the earth, or when they will

Freezing Iran as a Nuclear Threshold State: Chances, Costs and Consequences.

change their murderous ways. Therefore, we should not be indifferent to defensive policy and must strengthen our internal forces... we must always strive to strengthen the country's military and defense systems. We have to produce the most advanced weapon inside the country, even if our enemies don't like it. There is no reason that they have the right to produce a certain special type of weapon, but that other countries not have that right... In seeking to acquire the [necessary] technology Iran must be patient and not be deterred by economic shortages: Divine, messianic support has been the determining factor in the success of the Iranian regime during the various trying periods which have plagued it since its foundation... We cannot be broken because of temporary difficulties, they will pass, and Muslims must be patient and not be deterred by material or economic shortages, because if they do, it may lead them to be separated from [Islam]." One of Mesbah Yazdi's prominent disciples, Hojjat al-Islam Mohsen Gharavian, a professor at the Imam Khomeini Institute in Qom, was quoted (April 2006) as having ruled that the use of nuclear weapons is legal in Islam as "One must say that when the entire world is armed with nuclear weapons, it is only natural that, as a counter-measure, it is necessary to be able to use these weapons. However, what is important is what goal they may be used for." Later, he denied having issued such a fatwa and claimed that he was misquoted. The incident itself is indicative of the high significance that the regime accords to statements by clerics – even middle ranking ones.

Whether there exist one or more fatwas dealing with nuclear weapons, it is important to take into account two more salient features of the religious ideology of the Iranian regime. The principle of *Taqiyya* (religious dissimulation) justifies strategic disinformation regarding intentions to produce or use nuclear weapons. It is considered legal in Shi'a in situations where there is danger of loss of life or property, on the condition that mental reservation is maintained.¹⁰ The concept of danger might be widened to the interests of the Islamic Republic and, thus holding and use of nuclear arms may be justified. The other principle that is relevant to this issue is that of *maslaha* (public/political interest). This principle is common to both Shi'a and Sunna but holds a much greater weight in Shiite jurisprudence. This principle permits actions - even if they contradict Islam – if they serve a higher goal for the greater interest of Islam. The public interest – unlike immutable dictates of God - change with circumstances and that which was forbidden yesterday can be permitted today.¹¹

The Nuclear Negotiations Strategy

Iran's right to what is referred to as "nuclear technology" enjoys wide consensus among all Iranian factions. In "right to nuclear technology" most Iranians would include the right to build nuclear power plants and to have total control over the fuel cycle for those plants as well as to maintain nuclear research. Iranians – like many other publics in the "third world" – seem to subscribe to the view that the monopoly of nuclear weapons by the great powers is discriminatory and colonialist in nature. Notwithstanding, the price that the Iranian public is willing to pay for the "right to nuclear technology" in general, and a military nuclear capability in particular, varies. While it is difficult to gauge Iranian public opinion in a reliable manner, there are indications that much of the Iranian public may be willing to suffer sanctions and international displeasure to ensure their right to civilian nuclear technology; however this may not be the case were it clear that the issue was Iran's right to develop nuclear weapons. This is one of the reasons that the regime has consistently downplayed the fact that the conflict with the West is not over Iran's right to nuclear technology as such but over the claim that Iran is clandestinely involved in developing nuclear weapons.

Iran's strategic imperative in the nuclear negotiations has been, first and foremost to buy time and to accustom the international community to a nuclear Iran, while its military nuclear option takes shape. There is much evidence that the Iranian leadership has been closely following the North Korean case study and – to a certain extent – drawing parallels from that case to its own. Like North Korea, Iran has consistently attempted to receive international recognition for its ostensibly civil nuclear program in return for short-term concessions on aspects of the program that have military applications, while refusing all demands for a roll-back of those aspects. The Iranian strategy seems to be to remain within the framework of the NPT, while implicitly threatening withdrawal from the NPT if the international community does not meet its demands. Such a route, if it succeeds would allow Iran –when the time is ripe – to announce terminating its adherence to the NPT (giving the three-month notice and the justification of extraordinary events that jeopardize the supreme interests of the country, as stipulated in the treaty, and thus not being in formal contravention of the treaty, even when withdrawing from it), and using the installations to prepare nuclear weapons.

Since his election, Rouhani has issued a number of statements indicating that he would revive the negotiations with the West and bring about lifting

of sanctions and promised “more transparency” in nuclear negotiations. However he did not elaborate what it would practically mean or what Iran is ready to give up. These statements have been rewarded by declarations on the American side that the US is willing to re-engage with the new administration in Teheran. Optimism in the West has been bolstered by the narrative (that Rouhani himself contributed to spreading) that during his tenure as chief nuclear negotiator, Iran suspended uranium enrichment and that he had proposed an Iranian initiative to suspend the nuclear program which was rejected by the Bush administration. In fact, Iran began to enrich uranium on an R&D scale in April 2006, after Rouhani was replaced by Jalili, and achieved full industrial production in February 2007; so obviously, enrichment could not have been suspended before it began.¹² Furthermore, Rouhani’s term as chief negotiator does not auger well for reaching enduring agreements. During his term, Iran conducted intensive negotiations with the EU3, culminating in the Brussels agreement of February 2004. The Brussels agreement was cancelled unilaterally by Iran a few months after its conclusion, and after further negotiations the Paris agreement of November 2004 was concluded in its stead. The main achievement of the Paris agreement was Iranian agreement not to launch operation of the newly completed Esfahan Uranium Conversion Facility (UCF) to produce UF₆; a month and a half after the agreement was signed the Iranians launched operation of the UCF as if they had never heard of any such undertaking, and began to produce UF₆. Furthermore, Rouhani negotiated with the EU3 the parameters of EU3 willingness to allow Iran to retain 20-centrifuge R&D cascades only; the Iranians continued thereafter to install full 164-centrifuge production scale cascades nevertheless.

Some lessons Rouhani’s strategy towards the negotiations may be deduced from his book, published in 2011: “National Security and Nuclear Diplomacy”. In that book, Rouhani elaborated on how he developed the negotiations strategy. His narrative of the negotiations focused on how Iran succeeded in stymieing the intentions of the West to impose sanctions on Iran while moving ahead with the nuclear program. Indeed, he criticized the Ahmadinejad administration’s belligerent attitude towards the West, complaining that “the US has been trying to drag Iran to the UNSC for decades and Ahmadinejad accomplished this within months...” It stands to reason that, as President, Rouhani will attempt to implement a similar strategy.

Recent international attention has been focused on a claim, highlighted by the former French ambassador to Teheran (2001-2005) François Nicoullaud that in 2003 Rouhani convinced Supreme Leader Khamenei

to shut down an IRGC led clandestine nuclear weapons weaponization program (AMAD).¹³ Nicoulland adds that this was later confirmed by the November 2007 US National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) – which reported that in 2003 the weaponization effort was halted. His narrative of the developments however was clearly selective. The same report he cites contradicts his claims¹⁴ and the 2007 NIE claim on this has been substantially revised, since it was issued.

Rouhani's appointments to senior relevant positions has also served the narrative that he has embarked on a conciliatory track that includes the nuclear file. On the one hand, he has appointed Javed Zarif, who is perceived as a moderate to the position of Foreign Minister, and possibly as Iran's chief nuclear negotiator, instead of Saeed Jalili and has replaced the Iranian Ambassador to the IAEA, Ali Ashar Soltaniyeh with Reza Najafi. On the other hand, he has appointed Ali Akbar Salehi, who was Ahmedinejad's Foreign Minister and formerly the highly active head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), who was largely responsible for Iran's military nuclear program to return to his previous post. Rouhani has also appointed Hossein Deghan, the former Deputy Commander of the IRGC who was involved in operation of Lebanon's Hezbollah, IRGC operations in Lebanon, terrorist actions against US targets and the occupation of the US Embassy in Teheran as Minister of Defense.

Needless to say, it is the Supreme Leader and not the President of Iran who defines Iranian foreign policy, including the nuclear issue. Rouhani will not be able to diverge from those lines. Therefore, it is safe to assume that Rouhani's new tone will be little more than a cover of the Iranian policy of procrastination and buying time while the nuclear program continues to make progress. The responses in Western capitals to Rouhani's election seem to indicate that the West – and the United States in particular – are willing to attempt a “re-set” of the relations with Iran on the basis of generous concessions in return for a suspension – and not a roll-back – of the nuclear program. Under the circumstances, Iran may acquiesce to such a temporary suspension, much as it did during the period when Rouhani led the negotiations. The very fact that negotiations will be pending will be seen as putting the military option in abeyance. This will certainly be true about the American military option, but one may also expect that Israel will be pressured not to take action or even create tension by raising the military option in order not to sabotage the negotiations. However, the removal of the military option from the table will also reduce any incentives on the part of the Iranians to continue to suspend activities.

The American response to the Iranian negotiation tactic has already been encapsulated in President Obama's address to the UN (24 September):

The United States and Iran have been isolated from one another since the Islamic Revolution of 1979. This mistrust has deep roots. Iranians have long complained of a history of U.S. interference in their affairs, and America's role in overthrowing an Iranian government during the Cold War. On the other hand, Americans see an Iranian government that has declared the United States an enemy, and directly – or through proxies – taken Americans hostage, killed U.S. troops and civilians, and threatened our ally Israel with destruction. ..We are not seeking regime change, and we respect the right of the Iranian people to access peaceful nuclear energy. Instead, we insist that the Iranian government meet its responsibilities under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and UN Security Council resolutions. ...Meanwhile, the Supreme Leader has issued a fatwa against the development of nuclear weapons, and President Rouhani has just recently reiterated that the Islamic Republic will never develop a nuclear weapon.¹⁵

Reading between the lines raises the following interpretation: The US will guarantee Iran (or try to) in the framework of negotiations “non-intervention”. That means criminalizing the Iranian opposition (MKO) by the US, preventing activities against the Iranian regime etc. The Iranian quid pro quo will be to refrain from encouraging terrorism against the US and to restrain itself from regularly threatening Israel with destruction. The former is a demand that can be met, since it is temporary and reversible. The latter would be perceived as impractical since it would call for a fundamental change in the ideology of the regime and inconsistent with the protestation that the US is not interested in regime change. Finally, President Obama did not include a demand that Iran and its proxies refrain from terrorist acts against Israel. On the basis of “argumentum e silentio”, one may conclude (and certainly the Iranians will have done such a textual analysis of Obama's words) that the US will not allow the continued support of terrorist organizations that target Israel but not the US to interfere with a US-Iranian détente.

Obama is willing to swallow the myth of a “fatwa” (that has never been issued) about the development of nuclear weapons. This serves his purpose. The US will acquiesce to a UN supported agreement that will allow Iran to retain the HEU on condition it commits not to go for weaponisation.

Iran's Threat Assessment

Iranian society – and the current regime in particular - is prone to belief in conspiracy theories. This has frequently been attributed to the legacy of the Manichean dichotomy of good and evil and the belief in convoluted ways that both God and Satan (and the latter's servants such as the West) operate. This Weltanschauung has two consequences that might exert large influence on deterrence doctrine:

1. Rejection of long-term compromise as there cannot be a win-win game with the Satan. Any compromise would be leveraged by the other party to weaken Iran and eventually overcome it.¹⁶
2. A lack of distinction between “defensive” and “offensive” measures. Iran insists on describing its actions as defensive. Iran only defends itself regardless of how its concrete action might be perceived by rivals. The latter contradicts the principle of aligning with mutually accepted red lines which both challengers or defenders accept in order to prevent an uncontrolled escalation

Iran's published threat assessment regarding the probability that the US or Israel will attack its nuclear program if no agreement is achieved is equivocal. On one hand, the regime likes to quote the words of the founder, Ayatollah Khomeini to the effect that “American can't do a damn thing”¹⁷ On the other hand, the US and Israel are presented as always on the verge of attacking Iran.

It seems however that the former assessment is the sober estimate of the regime. The preference of the Obama administration for a diplomatic solution and its tolerance of Iran's actions in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon reinforce this assessment. This assessment though even precedes the Obama administration. In a lecture in October 2005 Abbasi described the global balance of power as in a state of flux, wherein the Western powers, led by the “Anglo Saxons” and particularly the United States, still hold immense military and economic power but are in decline and are unable to use that power because their populations have become averse to risk and hostile towards their governments. Hence, the US intervention in Iraq was the last of its kind. In his opinion, even crippling economic sanctions against Iran will fail due to opposition from the Western public opinion and Iran would be able to bring the price of oil to \$110 per barrel and in case of a military attack, to over \$400 mark.¹⁸

Freezing Iran as a Nuclear Threshold State: Chances, Costs and Consequences.

A recent indication of this assessment can be found in an article by Amir Mohabbian that was posted on the website of the Supreme Leader, Khomeini that discussed the possibility of the United States and its allies waging war on Iran. Surveying “three probable scenarios” for war, it offers a survey of what the United States has done to counter Iran’s influence in the region, including presenting the Quds Force as a new al-Qaeda, supporting the Syrian opposition with the ultimate goal of weakening Iran’s ties with both Syria and Hezbollah, and imposing harsher sanctions on Iran. It then discusses the possibility of war with Iran, determining that the United States and Israel have failed in inciting ethnic tensions, supporting terrorist groups’ attacks inside Iran and building the reform movement. However, it rules out the military option. It determines that all military scenarios are unfeasible. The US will not dare attack Iran with ground forces as it has learned from the mistakes of the George W. Bush administration in Iraq and does not want to exacerbate the world economic situation by a rise in oil prices. At the same time, European countries may not be willing to pay the price for supporting the United States. As for extensive bombing of Iranian military sites, Mohebbian opines that in order to achieve any real goals, the attacks would have to be extensive, Iran will strike back with force against America’s allies, and the war will quickly spill over to become a regional war. The article was accompanied by a diagram that seems to have been drawn up by military analysts of the IRGC.

سناریوهای محتمل جنگ علیه ایران				
نوع سناریو	هدف اصلی	چگونگی حمله	اشکالات سناریو	بررسی واکنش و پاسخ ایران
جنگ تمام عیار فرسایشی	وارد آوردن ضربه‌ی سنگین از طریق یک جنگ تمام‌کننده	مداخله‌ی نیروهای زمینی پس از یک عملیات هوایی مغرب	عدم امکان توجیه کشورهای هم‌پیمان برای جنگ / برهم خوردن توازن قدرت در ساختار بین‌المللی / عدم اطمینان آمریکا به نوع واکنش ایران / فاصله گرفتن آمریکا از دوران رادیکالیسم بوش پسر / در پیش بودن انتخابات ریاست جمهوری آمریکا و نیاز دموکرات‌ها به مشخص شدن وضعیت جنگ احتمالی تا انتخابات / مشکلات اقتصادی، اجتماعی و سیاسی داخلی در آمریکا / وسعت سرزمینی و تنوع جغرافیایی ایران	1. توهمزدایی: نمی‌توان با اعمال فشار و ادبیات سخت از ایران امتیاز گرفت. ==== 2. محوریت رهبری در موضوع آمریکا: موضع صریح رهبری نشان داد که وحدت تصمیم با محوریت رهبری در این موضوع وجود دارد. ====
جنگ به عنوان مقدمه‌ی هدف سیاسی	ضربه زدن به اعصاب کنترل‌گر نظام برای برهم زدن قدرت تعادل نظام اسلامی یا هدف بروز آشوب داخلی یا نشان دادن ایران پای میز مذاکرات تسلیم	حمله به گونه‌ای خواهد بود که با ضربه‌ی اول، نظام از کار خواهد افتاد	عدم اطمینان به از کار افتادن نظام با ضربه‌ی اول / توانایی ایران در دفاع از خود و از بین بردن ضربه‌ی دشمن / امکان کشیده شدن ایران به رفتارهای رادیکال و سرایت جنگ به تمام منطقه / هزینه‌بر بودن جنگ برای اروپایی‌ها / عدم وجود جایگزین مطمئن برای آمریکا پس از سرنگونی نظام / امکان استفاده‌ی فرسایشی نظام از مذاکرات با استراتژی یک گام به عقب و دو گام به پیش / مقابله‌ی مردم با هر گونه موضع تسلیم‌مدارانه در برابر بیگانگان	3. عقلانی‌سازی نوع تعامل: ایران در پی تز «خصوصیت برای خصوصیت» نیست و اگر تغییری عقلانی در رفتار ایالات متحده دیده شود، ایران آن را مورد توجه قرار خواهد داد ====
جنگ کالونی یا نقطه‌ای	از کار انداختن ماشین تهاجمی نظام به‌ویژه علیه رژیم صهیونیستی	حمله‌ی نظامی به مراکز حساس نظام مانند مراکز هسته‌ای، سیاسی، اقتصادی یا نظامی	عدم تحقق شکاف حکومت و مردم با حمله به مراکز اقتصادی / عدم امکان حمله به تمام مراکز حساس نظامی در جنگ نقطه‌ای با توجه به تعداد و پراکندگی آنها / مقابله به مثل ایران و کشیده شدن جنگ به کل منطقه به ویژه در رژیم صهیونیستی / دوچندان شدن حمایت مردمی نظام در صورت حمله به مراکز سیاسی / تبعات خطرناک نشت آلودگی هسته‌ای برای منطقه با حمله به مراکز هسته‌ای / نانوایی در نابودی عقبه‌ی علمی هسته‌ای ایران / امکان پارتولید مراکز هسته‌ای در صورت تخریب آنها	4. اصلاح دیدگاه: رهبری ایران با ناگند بر این که «ما اهل تجاوز به هیچ ملتی و هیچ کشوری نیستیم» دیدگاهی را اصلاح کرده که می‌کوشد ایران را خطری برای منطقه و نمود کند. ====
5. ارائه‌ی مدل رفتاری: رهبری ایران با اظهار این که «ما در مقابل تهدید، تهدید می‌کنیم» عملاً نوع رفتار ایران را منوط به رفتار طرف مقابل کرده‌اند.				

The Syrian crisis will, undoubtedly, have a critical impact on the Iranian threat assessment. The Russians and Iranians are in a win-win situation. Having offered the Obama administration a ladder to climb down from the inevitable defeat in the Congress, Moscow and Tehran will perceive this as reducing the probability that the US will act against Iran if it crosses the nuclear red line. If the US does not strike, the same goal will have been achieved.

The Russian proposal to enter into negotiations with the aim of creating a mechanism for international supervision of Syria's chemical arsenal is very likely to turn out to be a tactic to tie the chemical disarmament of Syria to a new nuclear agenda aimed at linking any progress vis-à-vis Iran's nuclear program with nuclear disarmament of Israel. Iran will certainly have an interest in dragging the Syrian negotiations on and creating a linkage on the assumption that when the muses are singing, the cannons will remain silent.

Possible Iranian Nuclear Postures

There is no evidence to the effect that Iran has already crystallized its future nuclear doctrine. There are however four basic paradigms of nuclear posturing, which Iran may learn from and implement individually or successively:

- Nuclear Ambiguity – similar to the model that is attributed to Israel and to South Africa and Pakistan in the 1980s. This paradigm would be the optimal one from the point of view of traditional Iranian international relations and the ideological opposition among the clergy to nuclear weapons. It would allow for a level of deterrence and regional status based on the perception of Iran's nuclear power, without having to forego international legitimacy. The present stage of confrontation between Iran and the international community makes such a model difficult to implement.
- Premature Posturing – This model fits Iran's present stage of nuclear development and would be similar to the Iraqi model before the first Gulf War. Iran may attempt to create the impression that it already has a military nuclear capability, even when some of these capabilities are not operational yet. As the conflict with the West escalates, it seems that Iran is moving towards such a paradigm.
- Early Posturing – similar to India's detonation in 1974 of a nuclear device (i.e. not a bomb) even before it had real delivery capabilities. This model

seems to be more and more relevant. Nationalistic considerations and Ahmadinejad's propensity towards challenging the international community may push Iran towards exposing its nuclear capabilities. From the domestic point of view, it would be virtually impossible for the reformist camp to oppose such a step and the tension with the West that such a step would probably generate would play into the hands of the regime in its struggle against the reformists.

- Breakout once a credible nuclear strike capability with a reliable delivery system – this would be similar to the Pakistani model. Under the present circumstances, it would seem that Iran would find it difficult to bide its time until it achieves a credible nuclear weapon.

It appears that Iran has already crossed the Rubicon that precludes adoption of a model of nuclear ambiguity for any length of time (option 1). To announce a capability and to rely on disinformation to create the illusion of such a capability without actually achieving it (option 2) would be, under the circumstances, to invite attack. The Iranian behaviour until now and the lessons that Iran may have learned from the Pakistani and North Korean breakouts may encourage the regime to adopt the third option; to perform a test as early as possible without having enough fissile material for a credible arsenal. The assumption, in such a case may be that the West would not want to risk attack on a country that may have additional nuclear weapons and therefore would begin negotiations from the point of acceptance of the status quo and attempting to cap the future production and deployment of nuclear weapons.

It seems therefore that the preferred scenario for Iran would be the last, though it may be forced to adopt the third. An analysis of the goals of the Iranian nuclear program shows that they are not achievable by a mere "threshold" status. A threshold status or nuclear ambiguity would drive the Arab states to acquire their own capability. Nationalistic considerations and the regime's propensity towards challenging the international community will also be factors in adopting this course of action.

Once it acquires nuclear weapons, Iran would most probably tend to brandish them in order to promote its regional agendas and to coerce neighbouring states. The Iranian tendency to demonize the West, Israel and its Sunni Arab neighbours will surely exacerbate its already acute threat perception (some would say paranoia). Discovery of extreme threats to the very existence of the regime will encourage its decision makers to counter-balance the threats with a commensurate nuclear threat. American assurances of

“extended deterrence” to the Gulf States will surely exacerbate the Iranian threat perception and create a sense of a clear and imminent threat to the regime. If we judge by the responses of the Iranian regime to recent events that were interpreted as threats against it, the stock response is to threaten with disproportionate force, advanced weaponry and devastation. The brandishing of nuclear weapons would be in form with this behaviour.

It is also plausible that the future Iranian deterrence doctrine will understate the implications of threatening to use nuclear weapons, without a realistic assessment of how this menace might be understood by all potential rivals. It may not realize that a declared threat addressed to a rival (whilst challenger has already nuclear capacity) is sharply different from “usual” exchange of bellicose declarations.¹⁹ The risk of gradual escalation will increase if the Iranian regime resorts to its usual threats of retaliation while disposing of nuclear capacity. Any of Iran’s rivals, be it the US or Israel will not be able to discard such bellicose rhetoric because Iranian declarations of this kind will be fostered by existing nuclear weapons. The reaction of adversaries to the menacing rhetoric combined with nuclear capacity could usher in DEFCON1 declaration, which in its turn alerts Iran. Thus, the risk of an escalation gets higher.

Such a nuclear posture would preclude a doctrine based on downplaying the nuclear weapons or keeping them steps away from operational status. Demonstration of the capability will call for holding exercises in which the nuclear arsenal is part of the response to a threat scenario. This scenario would make highly sensitive and complex command and control structures indispensable.

Once Iran breaks out as a nuclear power, the question of the strategic nuclear posture will arise. There is no evidence that Iran has developed such a doctrine. However, one may explore the applicability of the “threshold state” option to different scenarios. In this framework, it is essential to analyse the compatibility with a threshold state status of three key concepts in nuclear deterrence: “minimum deterrence” “second strike capability” and “No First Strike” policy. As a threshold state, Iran will not enjoy any of these; without an existing arsenal, it cannot present either minimum deterrence or a second strike capability, and even a declaration of “no first strike” becomes irrelevant. However, were Iran to break out, it would have to adopt in the first stage a policy of minimum deterrence. This is the policy of the UK (though the UK enjoys the luxury of the US nuclear capability which was not based on minimum deterrence) and was, until recently the policy of Pakistan. The

Freezing Iran as a Nuclear Threshold State: Chances, Costs and Consequences.

latter – interestingly in the context of a prognosis of Iranian nuclear posture – seems to be moving, as it increases its nuclear arsenal, from that policy to one that threatens its adversary (India) with assured destruction.²⁰ Iran may also, as it develops its capabilities, move towards a “superpower” posture vis-à-vis its adversaries.

Command and Control

The form of command and control that Iran may adopt will differ according to the nature of its nuclear arsenal. In the scenario of Iran only have demonstrated a nuclear device and possessing a limited amount of fissile material, there is no need for a sophisticated structure of command and control. In any other model, a command and control structure will be necessary from the level of the decision makers down to issues of custody, safeguards, prevention of unauthorized use etc.

If Iran achieves nuclear weapons under the incumbency of the present Supreme Leader, it is reasonable to assume that he would be designated as the highest authority for authorization of deployment or use nuclear weapons. This immediately raises the question, to what extent Khamenei’s and his close advisors are acquainted with the range of issues related to handling nuclear weapons, such as command and control, safeguards, deterrence, operational use of the weapons, and the consequences of wielding nuclear threats, or of carrying them out? It stands to reason that once a nuclear capacity has been acquired, its control will pass on to the IRGC. The IRGC already has control over the R&D of these weapons and it is highly unlikely that it would relinquish control over such a prestigious and influential asset. The regular military has no access to the WMD program and is not trusted by the leadership.

There are two opposing views regarding the type of Iranian regime that may be more conducive to rational control of nuclear weapons. One argues that the Supreme Leader represents a more risk-averse worldview that would mitigate the risk of nuclear escalation and confrontation. The other actually views the conversion of Iran into a “praetorian state” ruled by the IRGC elite would bring about the integration of “cost-benefit” calculus of this elite.²¹ Insofar as the total control of the Supreme Leader is concerned, it should be noted that even in the past, during the Iran-Iraq War, there were indications that the IRGC occasionally acted in a way that appears to run against orders coming down from above (e.g. missile attacks against Kuwait, attempts to

Freezing Iran as a Nuclear Threshold State: Chances, Costs and Consequences.

oust the Kuwaiti regime, threatened attacks against the Saudis at a time when others in Tehran were trying to separate Saddam Hussein from Saudi Arabia, arrest of British seamen in the Gulf).

The identity of key figures in the specific command and control structure will most probably be based on criteria for loyalty of individuals and not primarily bureaucratic affiliation. The collective memory of the regime holds the images of military officers who crossed the lines as it became evident that the Shah was falling. There is cultural legitimization of pragmatism. Hence, the Iranian regime will probably take into account that even senior officers may not obey orders to launch weapons if the regime seems as if it is in danger of falling or that the use of those weapons may bring a catastrophe on them and their families.

The Iranian regime tends to centralism in strategic areas and an aversion towards delegation of authority in matters relating to strategic weapons and strategic interests. There is no reason not to assume that this feature will apply to nuclear issues as well. The centralist tendency derives not only from a “micro-management” tendency of the leadership but from a broad factionalism and deep lack of trust, which imbues Iranian society. The western system of delegation of authority (including but not only for strategic weapons) is based on an assumption of loyalty (based on a vetting system) according to which the individuals in the chain of command will obey orders (except for “illegal” orders). Such a system works as a “Gestalt” organism in which only a select few individuals are aware of all its parts and are authorized to override the chain of command. The ethnic, regional or family affiliation of the officers down the line of command who implement the orders of the political leadership is completely transparent to that leadership. In Iran it is not individual vetting but a variety of familial, regional, religious and political links which determines whether an individual may be trusted or not.

There are few indications of actual delegation of authority to forces in the field to act in absence of orders from above. In the mid 2000s, the regime gave orders to its military personnel in the Persian Gulf that if, during warfare, they are cut off from the center, they are instructed to use whatever they have to wreak havoc on in the Gulf – especially to blockade the Straits of Hormuz. The very issuing of such an order is out of form for the Iranian regime and runs counter to two basic features of Iranian culture. In any case, this order was not put to the test and it is questionable whether junior officers in the chain of command would continue to obey orders of a defunct regime – particularly if the consequence may endanger themselves and their

families (by provoking a nuclear retaliation as a result of having launched nuclear weapons). The regime is aware of this danger and will endeavor to install procedures to bypass such potential insubordination.

A classic Iranian solution is reliance on political commissars. These “commissars” existed in the regular military during the Shah’s era and today they are found both in the regular military and in the IRGC. These “commissars” have more authority in their units than do the military officers that often outrank them. During the Iran-Iraq war, for example, clerics, affiliated with the Supreme Leader (“representatives of the Supreme Leader”) were stationed at the front and often instructed the military in such matters as in which direction the troops should shoot. The religious leaders lacked military experience, yet it was their decisions – not those of the military leaders –, which were implemented.

Given all of the above, can those in the senior echelons of the Iranian government, -i.e., those who are responsible for the nuclear and other non-conventional weaponry - be sure that they and only they have the decision-making authority regarding these weapons? They may fear that the moment they appear to have lost control over the country, these weapons would no longer be theirs to control and while they may fall into the hands of “rational actors”, they could also fall into the hands of apocalyptic zealots.

A common argument against the possibility that Iran would transfer nuclear weapons to the hands of terrorists is that no nuclear power has ever taken such a step. This is a weak argument. The rationale for Iranian nuclear doctrine to include transfer of nuclear weapons to a non-state actor (Lebanese Hezbollah would be the prime candidate) could be: a desire to attain “plausible deniability” regarding Iranian responsibility for a nuclear explosion in another country in order to gain time before retaliation is launched; a means of preparing a ground based second strike capability outside of Iranian territory (and hence not vulnerable to an enemy first strike) based on a non-state actor in another country. In both cases, the weapons would have to be prepared for operation in advance, the non-state actor’s designated operators would have to be trained and command and control procedures would have to be worked out. An Iranian doctrine that includes a “second strike” capability based on a proxy organization would entail either actual physical deployment of the weapons outside of Iran (e.g. in Lebanon under complete control of Hezbollah, analogous to the US deployment in Europe) or contingency planning for such a deployment. In any case, the C2 issues that such a deployment would raise would be

manifold and the risks of accidental or unauthorized use or of loss of the weapons would be considerably greater.

Authentication Procedures

There exists a deep suspicion in the Iranian regime towards technological means that can conceivably be manipulated by an enemy with a much higher technological capability (the US, Israel) and there may be a certain reticence regarding use of technologies which originated in the West. It very unlikely that the Iranian regime would adopt human verification of the orders of the Head of State- particularly when that individual is ideologically perceived as the “vali faqih” and hence virtually infallible. A leader like Khamenei would probably not accept any restrictions on his authority to launch weapons – even authentication by a “trusted” deputy as restriction of his discretion by a lesser individual would be tantamount to imposing restrictions on the will of Allah. Even the argument that the verification is not meant for regular situations but for contingencies in which the leader may become mentally instable would be difficult to support.

Technical systems for coded authentication of the identities of those who give the orders may be instituted. However, the natural suspicion of the regime that the enemy may find a way to override orders by imposture of the leader in order to disable weapon systems would keep such systems at a relatively primitive level with a great deal of reliance on physical communication, and verbal codes for communication between the highest level and the operational units. Reliance on such means though would have an adverse effect on the regime’s ability to maintain flexible time-sensitive response mechanisms and hence would influence other elements of the nuclear doctrine. There is no indication that Iran has been active in attempting to acquire safeguard technology such as PAL’s. Once the weapons are in place, it is doubtful that Iran would allow itself to use foreign (particularly Western/American) technology that has the capacity to disable its weapons. The fear that any such technology would be vulnerable to foreign manipulation (if not pre-built with Trojan horses that would allow the designer to take control) would preclude their use. Another reason for the incompatibility of such safeguards with the Iranian program would be the ambiguity regarding the coupling of the warheads with a designated delivery system (as opposed to American or Russian ICBM’s which only carry nuclear warheads, the Iranian delivery systems (Shehab SSMS) also carry conventional warheads) and with a designated target. Since the Iranian military will not

know in advance who the target country will be, it will not be able to hard-wire this data into a PAL. Consequently, it appears that the trustworthiest of the technological safeguards would not be available for the Iranian program in its early stages.

Conclusions

Many in the international community view the fallout of a military attack on Iran as almost apocalyptic. It is claimed that an Israeli or American attack would bring about Iranian retaliation against oil production and export facilities in the Arab Gulf states, resulting in an intolerable rise in oil prices, waves of attacks by Islamic terrorists in the West, taking revenge for the attack on a Muslim country, the destabilization of conservative pro-Western regimes in the region and massive missile attacks against Israel that would draw the US into a multi-front regional war. This analysis is similar to the arguments raised in the debate on the Syrian crisis and it is tenuous at best and disingenuous at worst. The same analysts who claim that these would be the results of military action also argue that a nuclear Iran can be contained, that Iran is a rational country and hence, would not use nuclear weapons against any of its perceived enemies and that Iran's motivation for acquisition of nuclear weapons is primarily defensive and that these concerns can be allayed by positive security guarantees by the West to Iran.

A common argument, as pointed out above, is that the Iranian motivation to acquire nuclear weapons is defensive in nature and derives from a sense of insecurity. Therefore, a sincere offer on the part of the US of positive security guarantees for the regime could compensate the Iranian leadership for ceding its nuclear ambitions. The recent overtures on the part of the Rouhani administration (including in an article for the Washington Post, echoing Russian President Putin's successful New York Times article) that Iran "will never" attempt to acquire nuclear weapons and its efforts to leverage the Russian initiative vis-à-vis Syria to reach an agreement with the West on its nuclear program encourage those who take this position.²²

It should, however, take more than eloquent articles to create trust in Iran's intentions. It appears that the Iranian regime senses the weakness of the Obama administration after it failed in convincing the Congress to support military action in Syria and believes that the administration will be willing to take advantage of any ladder to climb down from its position on the Iranian nuclear file. In this context, it seems that Iran has close ties with North

Korea and there is much evidence that it has been learning lessons from the Korean case study and imitating that case: to attempt to gain security guarantees and international support for the civil nuclear program in return for ostensibly freezing an illicit military program, while stalling on demands for a roll-back of the military program. The logic behind this goal would seem to be to maintain international legitimacy as a signatory to the NPT, and at the same time to be able to blackmail the West with the threat of withdrawal from the NPT and renewal of the enrichment to military levels.²³ Such a route, if it succeeds would allow Iran –when the time is ripe – to announce terminating its adherence to the NPT (giving the three-month notice and the justification of extraordinary events that jeopardize the supreme interests of the country, as stipulated in the treaty, and thus not being in formal contravention of the treaty, even when withdrawing from it), and using the installations to prepare nuclear weapons.²⁴ A real political option would have to be based on a high level of mutual trust. The Iranian regime – almost across the board of its various factions – seems to assess that such trust is almost impossible to achieve. Putting aside the difficulty to achieve American trust in Iran, the Iranian leadership – including under Rouhani - projects a deep mistrust not only of the US but also of the Europeans and particularly of the British. Any western gesture therefore will probably be perceived by this group as part of a conspiracy to ultimately bring down the regime.

Another argument is that even if Iran acquires a nuclear weapon, its leadership is “rational”, is aware that Israel has a formidable second-strike capability that can destroy Iran and hence will be deterred from using such a weapon. This argument has three cardinal flaws:

1. It relies on the experience of the Cold War, which differed fundamentally from the situation in a potentially “poly-nuclear” Middle East.
2. It ignores the “low-probability/high risk” inherent in this situation. Even if the chances are less than a few percent that Iran will be drawn into nuclear escalation and use a nuclear weapon, the consequences of such a development would be devastating for Israel.
3. It ignores the possibility of escalation, unintentional use and miscalculation as potential sources of nuclear war.

Finally, in this context, we should recall the clarion warning of the former US Secretary of Defence, Robert McNamara who said:| “The early years of the Cold War were far less stable, though we tend to forget that. Former U.S. Defense Secretary Robert McNamara noted regarding the Cuban missile

Freezing Iran as a Nuclear Threshold State: Chances, Costs and Consequences.

crisis: “It was luck that prevented nuclear war. We came that close to nuclear war at the end. Rational individuals: Kennedy was rational; Khrushchev was rational; Castro was rational. Rational individuals came that close to total destruction of their societies. And that danger exists today.”²⁵ The volatile nature of the Middle East and the recorded behavior of the Iranian regime should give us pause when attempting to rely on Iranian diplomatic guarantees for the future of the region.

Notes

1. For example, an article in the Telegraph by David Blair: “The outlines of a deal between Iran and America are emerging... In other words, Iran comes close to the ability to build a nuclear weapon, but its leaders refrain from going the final mile and actually manufacturing a Bomb. America, for its part, lives with an Iran on the threshold of nuclear capability, provided that Tehran holds back and opts not to become a nuclear-armed state. Iran and America might feel their way towards an implicit arrangement along these lines”. <http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/davidblair/100177697/four-reasons-why-israel-probably-wont-attack-iran/>. A more academic suggestion in this direction came from Kenneth Waltz: “The second possible outcome is that Iran stops short of testing a nuclear weapon but develops a breakout capability, the capacity to build and test one quite quickly. Iran would not be the first country to acquire a sophisticated nuclear program without building an actual bomb. Japan, for instance, maintains a vast civilian nuclear infrastructure. Experts believe that it could produce a nuclear weapon on short notice.” Kenneth Waltz, “Why Iran Should Get the Bomb -

Nuclear Balancing Would Mean Stability” *Foreign Affairs*, July-August, 2012.

2. For example, reformist politician Mustafa Tajzadeh said, “It’s basically a matter of equilibrium. If I don’t have them, I don’t have security,” and conservative Amir Mohebian, “The Americans say, in order to preserve the peace for my children, I should have nuclear weapons and you shouldn’t have them.”

3. “Pasokh beh yek soal” (Answer to a question), *Farda* 101 1377/1999. Quoted in Farida Farhi, 47.

4. See Hossein Shariatmadari, quoted above, nt. 3.

5. *Jaam-e Jam*, 3.638 & 639 2002. See translation in: <http://www.netiran.com>. See also Ali Akbar Velayati to *Qods Daily*, 10-15 Feb. 1998: “[Iran’s] neighbors have all sorts of weapons, missiles, armored weapons, air, chemical and biological weapons. They have everything. From Israel to Iraq, from Pakistan to India, from Russia to China, and from Turkey to European countries. They have all sorts of weapons or some of the conventional weapons which form a part of the weapons of mass destruction.” <<http://www.netiran.com>>.

6. Kayhan, 12 Jun. 2004 (trans.: MEMRI, Inquiry and Analysis 181 2004).

7. The legal basis in Shiite jurisprudence for this is the principle of *maslahat* (public interest) or *darurat* (necessity) as one of the sources of law (along with the traditional sources of Koran, Sunnah, analogy, consensus, etc). The use of *maslahat* allows for decision-making based on assessment of the severe damage that would otherwise be incurred by the community.

8. <http://www.irna.ir/html/1392/13920626/80819809.htm>

9. For example, Ayatollah Ozma Yousef Saanei claims that “a consensus exists among the senior ‘ulama in Qom” that the prohibition on nuclear weapons (as well as chemical and biological weapons) is “self-evident in Islam” and an “eternal law” that cannot be reversed, since “the basic function” of these weapons is to kill innocent people. According to Saanei, this was the position behind the Iranian decision not to make use of chemical weapons against Iraq during the war. In September 2003 an additional fatwa was issued by the scholars of Qom stating that “Nuclear weapons are un-Islamic because they are inhumane.”

10. Moojan Moomen, *An Introduction to Shi’i Islam*, p.183, Yale University Press, 1985.

11. See: Fazal Mibudi, a cleric from Qum put clearly: “There is room for maneuver in Islam. Things can be haram (forbidden) one day and halal (acceptable) later on. But this takes time.”. Collier, Robert, “*Nuclear weapons unholy, Iran says Islam forbids use, clerics proclaim*”, San-Francisco Chronicle, 10/23/2003. <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2003/10/31/MNGHJ2NFRE1.DTL>
12. The NYT has already suggested before the elections that Rowhani is more moderate (vis: http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/10/world/middleeast/iran-candidates-toe-hard-line-for-nuclear-bid.html?pagewanted=2&r=0&nl=todaysheadlines&emc=edit_th_20130610)
13. http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/27/opinion/global/rouhani-and-the-iranian-bomb.html?_r=0
14. Nicoullaud quotes paragraph (23) which confirms his version but ignores paragraph (24) which describes the resumption of the activity under a different name in question by the same team and led by the same team leader, Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, that was active as late as February 2011. See the report on <http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Board/2011/gov2011-65.pdf>
15. <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/25/us/politics/text-of-obamas-speech-at-the-un.html?pagewanted=all>
16. An article by Maqsd Ranjabr entitled “the threats of Israel on the national security of the Islamic Republic of Iran” published in the Iranian journal “*Andishe-ye enghelab-e eslami*” (Thought of the Islamic Revolution) provides a window to the “zero sum game” that the regime subscribes to: “*The war between Iran and Israel is a war between two historical conflicting idealists. This war is about being or not being of each of the sides... On this basis, Israel predicates its existence on non-existence of the IRI. Iran also identifies its existence with the non-existence of Israel. In light of this one can conclude that Israel is the most essential foe of the Islamic Revolution and the Regime of the Islamic Republic.*” Houshang E. Chehabi , “The Paranoid Style in Iranian Historiography” pp.155-177 in *Touraj Atabaki (ed.), Iran in the 20th Century - Historiography and Political Culture*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2009, p.156.
17. □□□□□ □□□ □□□□ □□□□□□□□ □□□□ – this quote appears regularly on banners in regime organised demonstration. For example, when a US drone crashed in Iran.
18. <http://www.iranvajahan.net/cgi-bin/printarticle.pl?l=en&y=2005&m=10&d=08&a=4>.
19. “Iran’s Ambassador to Lebanon Ghazanfar Roknabadi has said that Iran has 11,000 rockets ready to fire at the USA and Israel, as well as at their facilities across the world”, Mehr News Agency (10 Mar. 2012) (via BBC Monitoring)
20. “The principle of minimum deterrence, since the UK’s entry into the nuclear club in 1952 under the title of an independent deterrent and minimum deterrence, is well suited to a state that does not have the resources, or nuclear wherewithal, to establish first strike or survivable assured destruction second strike capabilities against its adversary of reference. In the case of Pakistan this has meant India, much as Britain and France could not establish these against the Soviet Union, and India can not establish them vis a vis the PRC. In spite of lacking such assured destruction second strike assets, minimum deterrence still establishes the essential level of retaliatory capability sufficient to dissuade the potential adversary from considering striking first or creating an intolerable threat level, if the punishment expected, while not constituting assured destruction nevertheless more than nullifies any rational gain ventured... it is suggested here that Pakistan’s official minimum deterrence posture is undergoing transformation to a significantly more potent capability. Over the past decade, it appears possible, or in fact of deed probable, that Pakistan’s capabilities, as either already acquired or evolving into the future, reflect a significant shift away from minimum deterrence towards great-power-like, or superpower-like, nuclear postures.” See Oded Brosh “The Concept of Deterrence in Arab and Muslim Thought - Pakistan”, Herzliya Working Papers, Institute for Policy and Strategy, Herzliya, June 2012.
21. See: Elliot Hen-Tov and Nathan Gonzalez, ““The Militarization of Post-Khomeini Iran: Praetorianism 2.0.” *The Washington Quarterly*, Winter 2011; James Dobbins, Alireza Nader, Dalia Dassa Kaye, Frederic Wehrey, “*Coping with a nuclearizing Iran*” Rand National Security Research Division, 2011.
22. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2013/09/19/iranian-president-hassan-rouhanis-washington-post-op-ed-annotated/>
23. See Ali Larijani, Iranian TV, 20 Sept. 2005. “You have pressured North Korea for two years and consequently, it withdrew from the NPT and IAEA. What did you do after these two years? You accepted North Korea ‘s nuclear program. ... You could have achieved this from the start. ... Western countries should learn a lesson from the

experience of the North Korean nuclear dossier...” dossier.<http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=countries&Area=iran&ID=SP99405>. See Hossein Mussavian in : [“There is a belief that if we adopted the North Korean model, we could have stood much stronger against the excessive demands of America and Europe.] Musavian: “During these two years of negotiations, we managed to make far greater progress than North Korea. North Korea’s most important achievement had to do with security guarantees. We achieved the same thing a year ago in the negotiations with the Europeans. They agreed to give us international guarantees for Iran’s security, its national rule, its independence, [and] non-intervention in its internal affairs, [as well as] its national security, and for not invading it.” Iran also gave prominence to a study by the International Crisis Group that claimed that Iran was imitating North Korea, IRNA, 11 March, 2006, <http://www.irna.ir/en/news/view/line-17/0603118811180122.htm>

24. Ahmadinejad in his second press conference after being elected raised the question “what have thirty years of adherence to the NPT given us?”. <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory?id=1886557&page=2>

25. See The Fog of War: Eleven Lessons from the Life of Robert S. McNamara, transcript available at http://www.errolmorris.com/film/fow_transcript.html (this link accessed June 14).

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