

Negotiating Iran's Nuclear Populism

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Introduction

No doubt, “Iran wants to join the Nuclear Club”, as stated by an Iranian diplomat and a scholar.¹ But, how? Either, as a de facto nuclear-weapons state, or as a major supplier of civilian nuclear fuel cycles. The decision is “yet to be taken by the Iranian leadership”, which “will greatly depend on the outcome of the negotiations between the European Union (EU) and Iran, and more importantly, on how the United States (US) will deal with Iran”.² Given the mounting determinism of almost the entire Iranian society “to exploit to the most Iran’s rights stemming from the Non-Proliferation Treaty” (NPT, 1968), the existing, and yet to be expanded nuclear capabilities of Iran may very well enable the clerical leadership to go for either option, or even for both, depending on the circumstances.

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The chances of putting a cap on the burning desire of the Iranian population for “going nuclear”, fueled even more with the threats of military strikes against “their” nuclear facilities, are still not lost, thanks to the ongoing process of negotiations with the EU. If a viable solution can be reached, Iran may soon emerge as an alternative supplier of, inter alia, nuclear fuel for light water reactors, or a constructor of complete heavy water reactors, especially for the Muslim countries as well as the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) countries, who are also keen to invest in the nuclear field.

In case of failure, however, due to the incommensurable demands of both the US, requesting Iran to agree to shut down its uranium enrichment facilities once and for all, and Iran, who pursues an ambitious uranium enrichment target of installing some 54,000 centrifuges over the long term (currently Iran has 1,000 centrifuges of which some 260 were operational until voluntary suspension), the likelihood of a military confrontation may increase. Should the most unwanted occur (i.e., a military strike to Iran’s facilities by the US and/or Israel, and Iran retaliating back in various ways and means) the Middle East may never be the same place again.

Bearing these contingencies in mind, the aim of this paper is two-fold: First, to analyze the current positions of the major players in the nuclear puzzle, namely Iran, the United States, the European Union, as well as Russia and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in order to see what exactly the nature of the problem is; what are the initiatives taken by the players; and what, if any, has been achieved so far. Secondly, having seen the background picture, the paper will aim to offer a solution to the current impasse that would ensure that Iran would remain a civilian nuclear power and hence mitigate the fears of Iranian proliferation.

Views from Iran: Perceptions and Perspectives

The changing security environment of Iran influences the threat assessment of Iranian authorities. The continuing role of nuclear weapons, despite the end of the

Cold War; and the US, European, Russian doctrines that stress the value of nuclear weapons in national and collective defense strategies are matters of grave concern for Iranian analysts. Today's international system is perceived as being characterized by the American preeminence and unilateralism, and by the increased role of nuclear weapon as means of political blackmail. These policies that are believed to foment nuclear arms race, are seen as dramatically increasing the insecurity and vulnerability of non-nuclear weapons states. Moreover, the 480 nuclear weapons that America still keeps in Europe in six countries, including Iran's neighbor Turkey, are seen as irritants. Another factor that irritates Iranian security analysts is the "good cop, bad cop routine" of Europe and the US in their attitude toward Iran, as well as the double standard in their relations with Iran and other nuclear-capable states. In this context, Iranian analysts stress the fact that the US continues to appease North Korea's nuclear weapons ambitions, and that it is doing nothing about Brazil who is now defying the IAEA regarding questions over its nuclear program.

With respect to weapons development and nuclear program, there are basically four views in Iran. The first group consists of those who believe Iran does not need at all nuclear weapons or the capability, but their number is very small. The second group consists of those who maintain that Iran is entitled to have peaceful nuclear technology and it should not give up its right to exploit the merits of peaceful applications of nuclear energy. The third group consists of those who believe that Iran needs to develop nuclear weapons capability, but not the weapons right away. They say Iran cannot trust in international community, and refer to the chemical weapons area and remind that they thought the threshold would not be crossed, but when Iraq used chemical weapons against Iran, the West just watched, and did nothing to stop them. The fourth group consists of hardliners who strongly argue and push for withdrawing from the NPT and developing nuclear weapons as soon as possible

In Iran, the degree of public support to the nuclear program, which is very much associated with national pride, is very high. Most Iranians consider nuclear technology to be the most advanced technology and see Iran's nuclear capabilities as an indication of its place in the world. It is also seen as a means of equating Iran with the most powerful countries in the international arena. Hence, in their negotiations with the Europeans, Iranian policy-makers are under the pressure of both the West and the Iranian public in exactly opposite directions, of which the latter is impossible to stand.

The Nature of the Problem with Iran's Nuclear Program

By all indications, tackling the issue of Iran's alleged proliferation of nuclear weapons has increasingly turned into a litmus test of diplomacy of Bush administration, the European Union, as well as the entire non-proliferation regime. Notwithstanding the likelihood of tilting the balance of "rights and obligations" enshrined in the NPT in favor of the latter, during the May 2005 Review Conference, by enhancing the scope of safeguard and verification standards,³ the vexing question of how to stop Iran's incremental march toward nuclear weapons⁴ is nowadays often couched within the larger context of how to strengthen the non-proliferation regime so that certain NPT member states considered "rogue" in the West would not exploit the NPT's license to develop peaceful nuclear technology for "dual use" purposes.

In his recent interview, Dr. Muhammad El Baradei, Director General of the IAEA, has stated that Iran is "symptomatic of a larger problem that we need to address,"⁵ namely, how to ensure that the NPT-sanctioned uranium enrichment programs are not channeled toward weaponization? Increasingly, a favored option of the Western countries, as well as the UN leadership, is for the creation of a consortium of states and companies under the aegis of the IAEA providing low-enriched nuclear fuel for world's reactors "at market values."⁶

With this option still being debated, the related debate on Iran's nuclear program continues to bedevil the European negotiators who ended their third round of nuclear talks with Iran in March 2005 without any concrete results. What lies ahead is uncertain. At present, Iran is involved in a two-track negotiations with the IAEA on the one hand, and the so-called EU3 (i.e., the trio of Germany, France, and the United Kingdom), on the other, complying with the IAEA's demand for a temporary cessation of its nuclear enrichment program as a "confidence-building measure," and yet threatening to resume the program at the end of the promised period. In turn, the Bush administration has upped the ante by promising United Nations Security Council (UNSC) backlashes against Tehran in case it refuses to bargain its enrichment program with economic incentives -- consisting of Iran's entry to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and spare parts for Iran's civil aviation.⁷

The negotiation climate has been marred by incendiary news of Israel's plans to attack Iran's nuclear facilities,⁸ Washington's refusal to rule out the military option, and of Ukraine's sale to Iran of Russian-made cruise missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads, piling on top of earlier news that Iran has been one of the beneficiaries of Pakistan's Abdul Qadir Khan's global network of wholesaling sensitive nuclear technology.⁹ Meanwhile, Russia has continued its nuclear cooperation with Iran, with hundreds of Russian technicians putting the final touches in the construction of Bushehr power plant. In February 2005, Moscow and Tehran signed an agreement on the return of 'spent fuel' from the Bushehr reactor to Russia; per this agreement, Iran shoulders the financial responsibility of spent fuel's storage and re-processing, much to the chagrin of some Iranian parliamentarians who complain of "overcharging" by Russia, this despite the fact that Russia at present is Iran's sole nuclear partner, about to sign lucrative deals with Tehran for more -possibly three to five more- power plants, when President Vladimir Putin visits Iran in the near future.¹⁰

With Russia not sharing the Western alarm about Iran's imminent capability to reach the "nuclear weapon threshold," the Western options on how to deal with Iran's nuclear program appear to be rather limited, particularly since the various inspections of Iran's facilities by the IAEA have so far found no 'smoking gun'.¹¹ In the light of Iran's adherence to the IAEA's intrusive Additional Protocol since December 2003, the latest report by the IAEA actually cites "important progress" in Iran's cooperation with the Agency, warranting the normalization of Iran's dossier, this despite lingering concerns about Iran's long concealment of its nuclear activities and the sources of highly-enriched uranium found at Iran's facilities (largely attributed to the equipment sold by Qadir Khan).¹² The Iran-IAEA cooperation has, in turn, smoothed the talks between Iran and the EU3, culminating in a historic "Paris Agreement" in November, 2004 according to which Iran agreed to cease all enrichment activities including the "testing and operation of centrifuges" and "all tests or production at any uranium conversion installation" pending "negotiations on a long-term agreement."

Paris Agreement Revisited

Lauded by the EU foreign policy chief, Javier Solana, as a "landmark," the Paris Agreement followed intense negotiations between the foreign ministers of the EU3 and Iranian officials, beginning in October 2003, in Tehran, when Iran agreed to adhere to the Additional Protocol as a clear sign of its more flexible approach. One year later, after several intrusive IAEA inspections and the continuing concerns of the Board of Governors of the IAEA over Iran's nuclear program, Iran agreed to a "verified" suspension of its uranium enrichment program and the EU3 in return agreed to "recognize Iran's rights under the NPT exercised in conformity with its obligations under the Treaty, without discrimination."

From Iran's vantage point, the Paris Agreement potentially widened the rift between the US and Europe. Because in contrast to the desire of the US to dismantle

Iran's nuclear program, the EU acknowledged Iran's NPT rights to peaceful technology, and also recognized that Iran's enrichment suspension "is not a legal obligation". According to Iran's top negotiator, Ayetollah Hassan Rowhani, the Agreement reflected a European departure from their earlier insistence on "indefinite suspension" championed by the United States.¹³ That said, the EU3 still pursues the goal of making Iran's voluntary suspension permanent, though not as forcefully as the US, in the anticipation of a hot confrontation between that country and Iran just because of this issue.

In addition, the Paris Agreement called for cooperation between Iran and the EU against international terrorism "irrespective of progress on the nuclear issue" while clearly establishing a direct linkage between the nuclear issue and any future progress on Iran-EU trade talks and EU's support for Iran's bid to join the WTO. Also, the EU3 promised to provide "firm guarantees on nuclear, technological and economic cooperation and firm commitments on security issues" should the differences over enrichment are resolved. Subsequently, through December 2004 to March 2005, three "working committees" on nuclear, economic-technical, and security matters negotiated in Brussels, submitting their final products to a joint "steering committee" that would set the next course of action.

In a certain sense, the Paris Agreement, viewed by the signatory parties as a "temporary agreement," was as much a leap forward as a leap toward a paradoxical dead end. It followed the war-weary Europe's quest for a diplomatic resolution of the nuclear "proto-crisis," but one that was more effective as a timely "stop gap measure" to obviate this from exploding into a full-scale crisis, yet desperately falling short of the necessary ingredients for a mutually satisfying resolution of this crisis. What is more, it also sowed the seeds of a future US-EU schism over Iran, given the consistent opposition of the US to anything short of Iran's full cessation of its enrichment program.

For the moment, however, the opposite appears to be the case, notwithstanding President Bush's recent claim to have the European backing for Security Council action against Iran if the Iranian regime rejected the package of economic incentives in exchange for scrapping the uranium enrichment program. This may turn out to be less than full proof, however, in the light of Paris Agreement underscoring Iran's right to peaceful nuclear technology, which by definition encompasses the right to produce the nuclear fuel for its reactor(s).¹⁴ Widely interpreted as "deeply flawed" by US commentators, the Paris Agreement was nonetheless an important benchmark setting the European standards for dealing with Iran, that is, a comprehensive, multilevel approach following the prescriptions of a "linkage diplomacy" whereby the future of the long-standing negotiations between Iran and the EU on a 'Trade and Cooperation Agreement' was fated to the net result of the nuclear talks, raising concerns about a nuclear reductionism. That is, the whole sum of Iran-EU relations may be reduced to naught should the nuclear talks fail.¹⁵ After all, compared with the nominal economic relations of the US with Iran due to the sanctions, Europe is Iran's largest trading partner and has much to lose if the present "linkage diplomacy" translates in the future into a EU trade embargo on Iran.¹⁶

Weighing the Options with Iran

There is much talk these days of the "military option" vis-à-vis Iran's nuclear facilities, particularly by Israel. Yet, contrary to recent media reports of an impending Israeli strike on Iran, the so-called "Osirak option," named after Israel's successful demolition of Iraq's nuclear reactor in 1981, is nearly impossible, primarily because of Israel's "tyranny of distance," to quote an Israeli general, and the unwillingness of any of Iran's neighbors to allow Israel their use of their air space or territory against Iran due to the combined fear of backlashes and long-term harms to their economic and other ties with Tehran. Already, leaders of Turkey,

Pakistan, and Azerbaijan have reassured Iran that this will not happen. Nor is the Shiite-dominated Iraqi government any different.¹⁷

In contrast to (the barely constructed) Osirak, Iran's power plant in Bushehr is nearly completed. Several hundred Russian technicians, whose lives would be put at risk in an aerial bombardment, likely to ignite a harsh reaction by Moscow, on whom Israel depends for much of its oil imports. There are also operational difficulties of hitting the multiple nuclear facilities in central and other parts of Iran, in Isfahan, Natanz, Arak, and Tehran,¹⁸ and the "collateral damage" on nearby population centers, sure to cause a tidal wave of angry responses and re-radicalizing the Islamic regime more than ever determined to build a nuclear arsenal by exiting the NPT almost immediately. Instead of such negative scenarios, the world may be better off by pursuing the positive track of diplomatic and political solutions. Let's see what are the options first.

Pitfalls in the 'Carrot and Stick' Approach

Recently, a number of Iran experts have maintained that due to its economic vulnerabilities Tehran's theocratic regime may be persuaded to relinquish its nuclear ambition if faced with "big rewards" or "big sanctions." This argument is often derived from an analysis of Iran's fragmented polity dominated by hard-line ideologues versus pragmatists for whom "fixing Iran's failing economy must top all else."¹⁹

There are several problems with this analysis, however. First, within Iran, the nuclear issue may be divisive, but it is so less on factional lines and more in terms of competing policy options vis-à-vis the outside world's pressure on Iran over the nuclear issue. Besides, such analysis overlook the 'bureaucratization' of nuclear decision-making in Iran: in addition to the Supreme National Security Council, representing all branches of government, nuclear decision-making in Iran is also a function of Technical High Committee, which also includes members from all the

key civil and military branches. This Committee, led by the Office of Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, was initially set up in 1997 as a way of streamlining nuclear decisions via a consensual process; during the first two years of its existence, the Foreign Ministry, now a leading player in Iran-EU nuclear talks, was not even represented in the Nuclear Technical High Committee.²⁰

Second, Iran's nuclear program is fueled mainly by Iran's petro-dollars, and the country's economic situation is not as desperate as portrayed in the West, notwithstanding the recent reports, e.g., by IMF, that last year Iran topped the Middle East in annual economic growth (with a rate of over 6 percent), thanks to relatively high energy prices, a positive balance of trade "higher than ten other Middle East states," budget reforms, unification of foreign exchange rate, downsizing the public sector, reducing non-tariff trade barriers, and establishing private commercial banks. A 2004 World Bank report similarly states, "the country's health and education indicators are among the best in the region." Iran's foreign debt is about \$9.2 billion, compared with \$28 billion for Egypt, constituting only a mere 8 percent of the GDP, confirming a healthy economy. Neither the inflation rate of 15.9 percent nor the unemployment rate of 15 percent, tabulated by Iran's Central Bank recently, are particularly alarming, given the fact that out of a population of 67 millions, some 21.6 millions are actively employed. Meanwhile, youth unemployment has dropped from 21 percent to 18.7 and female unemployment is down to 17.9 percent. At the same time, in 2004, "Iran witnessed almost 100 percent growth in the country's non-oil exports and a total amount of \$7 billion foreign investment in manufacturing activities and infrastructure projects."

Third, another pitfall of the economic argument is its selectiveness such as by merely pointing out the huge capital needed to refurbish its "ailing" oil industry, yet without bothering with the relevant fact that Iran, despite the U.S. sanctions, has recently done well in luring foreign capital, notwithstanding the mere presence of over 440 foreign firms in Iran's oil and gas fair in April 2005, as well as the recent

\$100 billion “deal of the century” (liquefied natural) gas with China, which is likely to increase to another \$50 billion to \$100 billion when a similar oil agreement, currently being negotiated, is inked. India too is on the verge of entering a huge gas deal with Iran approximating \$40 billion.

A prudent US policy on Iran based on a caricature of Iran’s realities is obviously self-disserving. Even in the absence of positive economic indicators, as the examples of North Korean and Pakistani proliferation clearly demonstrate, the security considerations can hardly be influenced by mere economic factors. In fact, recalling how the Clinton Administration’s carrot approach, trading North Korea’s heavy water reactors for economic incentives, ultimately failed to derail Pyongyang’s nuclear ambition, one must wonder why a similar approach could prove more effective with Tehran?

Nor does it help to resort to a caricature of Tehran’s theocratic regime as purely subversive. A glance at Iran’s regional diplomacy, and it becomes immediately evident that Tehran has improved relations with nearly all its neighbors including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Qatar, which have signed “low security cooperation” agreements with Iran in 2000 and 2001.²¹ Tehran today prides itself for spearheading regional cooperation through the multilateral organization, ECO (Economic Cooperation Organization) which includes Turkey, Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, and the Central Asian republics (swapping oil with Iran).²²

Lest we forget, to draw on North Korea analogy, the Clinton Administration gave economic incentives in exchange for their dismantling their two heavy water reactors and, yet, this did not prevent North Korea’s ‘break-out’ scenario. Naively, the West is about to commit a similar error with Iran, this while consistently ignoring the profound dissimilarities of Iran and North Korea: in addition to being two vastly different political systems, they also have different security and military needs and postures.²³ For one thing, Seoul is within range of North Korea’s artillery and the latter has little need for diversification of means of its delivery.²⁴ Another

major difference is that unlike North Korea, which exited the NPT without more than a statement of regret by the Security Council, Iran is an NPT member and, what is more, has signed the intrusive Additional Protocol (although the hard-line controlled Parliament has yet to approve it).

Nor Iran should be expected to follow Libya's example of dismantling its nuclear program. Aside from the issue of national pride and Iran's more complex polity militating against such a scenario, compared with Libya's import of all its nuclear technology, Iran has managed to produce many components of its nuclear program, including the various parts of its uranium enrichment facilities, at home.²⁵ Hence, objectively speaking, given the depth of nuclear know-how, a cessation of nuclear activities will not give any guarantee that a 'reverse engineering' will not occur at some point in the future. In other words, whether the outside world likes it or not, Iran has become permanently proliferation-prone.

Instead of ignoring critical facts mentioned above, and thus assuming that Europe is joining the American bandwagon on Iran's nuclear threat, as most Iran experts in the US do, a prudent alternative is to critically examine the state of nuclear talks between Iran and the European Union, and the various options proposed by both sides.

Iran's Proposal for Monitored Enrichment

Perhaps, and we state this with a tinge of tentativeness, in order to ensure against a nightmare 'break-out' scenario, an option worthy of considering is a contained, monitored enrichment program combined with Iran's economic, security, and political integration with the West; indeed, as repeatedly stated by Iranian negotiators, in the absence of such a program, what need is there for the Additional Protocol and all the related concerns with safeguard standards?

Already, the EU has expressed satisfaction with Russia's deal with Iran, signed in February, for the return of spent fuel from the Bushehr reactor.²⁶ Of

course, to quote the IAEA's chief, Mohammad El Baradei, in his latest CNN interview, "Iran obviously would like to have their own independent enrichment." Unless and until the NPT provisions are revised, such as by creating an international consortium of states and companies under the IAEA aegis to distribute nuclear fuel at market prices, Iran remains entitled to its legal right to produce nuclear fuel for its reactor(s). At the moment, Iran has not expressed any official position for or against such a consortium, to which it has been invited to join by the IAEA chief and the Paris Agreement. This brings us to a consideration of Iran's present negotiation position: an offer of objective guarantees that the enrichment cycle will be contained to low (i.e., 3.5 to 8.0 percent) levels, and that henceforth no re-enrichment, feared by the West, would take place. In making this offer, Iran has followed the advice of various IAEA scientists and other experts to provide the guarantee that all the low-enriched uranium would be put to immediate conversion to fuel rod, under full outside monitoring.

Iran's offer, presently contemplated by EU, is categorical and, contrary to some media reports; there is no request by Tehran to exclude the operation of some 500 centrifuges. Such disinformation serves to poison the negotiation climate and potential for a major breakthrough. Considered a middle of the road, compromised solution, Iran's proposal goes beyond the Additional Protocol to provide technical and objective guarantees that no diversion of nuclear activity for weaponization occurs; it provides a more expanded role for IAEA inspectors, who have already spent more than 1,000 inspection hours in Iran over the past few years, up to the level of their constant presence in Iran, together with extensive use of surveillance cameras and tamper-proof seals. This proposal has a greater chance of putting the genie of Iran's nuclear weapon potential in the bottle than the token incentives offered by the Bush Administration described by Iran's top nuclear negotiator as "peanuts."²⁷ This approach, initially brainstormed by Schroeder and Chirac, is flatly rejected by Iran as "unequal exchange," given the hundreds of millions invested in

the facilities, which the West demands to be dismantled. Iran-EU negotiations have now reached a fork in the road. After succeeding in enlisting Washington's consent to its diplomatic track, Europe and America can harvest much in the path of non-proliferation by giving serious consideration to Iran's proposal.²⁸

Conclusion: The Question of Security Guarantees

In May, 2005, in their latest round of talks as of this writing, Iran and EU-3 agreed to maintain the status quo until the end of Summer 2005, both to allow the untangling of the nuclear issue with Iran's presidential elections and also to give EU time to advance a concrete proposal detailing the various economic, nuclear, and security incentives offered Iran.²⁹ In the same month, Iran successfully fended off the US and European attempts at the NPT Review conference to close the "loopholes" allowing transfer of nuclear technology,³⁰ thus weakening future Western cause against Iran at the Security Council. Increasingly, the Iran-EU talks have focused on the security question, which undoubtedly requires full US input.

In exploring this question it is important to factor in Iran's national security calculus, above all an emerging "nuclear paradigm," according to which Iran's "break out" capability alone can potentially act as a deterrent vis-à-vis the encircling US power. Widely popular in Iran, invoking the idea of a "nuclear populism,"³¹ this paradigm discursively operates along the lines of Iran national security discourse still fragile by the memories of Iraq's invasion of the 1980's. While there is no consensus on this paradigm-in-the-making, and certain officials question its feasibility in the absence of a "second strike capability,"³² nonetheless there is a strong argument in favor of a future Iranian "nuclear shield" in light of the Iraq lesson, i.e., the perception that the rhetoric aside, it was the US-led coalition's correct estimate of Iraq's military weakness and lack of WMD that led to the unilateral invasion by the "unrestrained superpower."³³

Notwithstanding the above, a US-EU guarantee of non-invasion and non-interference in Iran's national sovereignty has the best chance of rupturing the discourse on necessity of a nuclear deterrence, which had earlier surfaced in reaction to Iraq's nuclear build up. As the US invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, destroying two major national security worries of Iran, have been rightly interpreted as "boons for Iran,"³⁴ the overall strategic environment of Iran has, in fact, improved considerably, enhancing the Iranian national security confidence.

Hence, in addition to an explicit security pledge by the US and Europe, the following steps are recommended: An Iran-NATO dialogue, notwithstanding Iran's participation in the recent NATO summits in 2002 and 2003, focusing on Persian Gulf security, and an Iran-OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe), in light of Iran's recent attendance at OSCE's conferences in the Caspian Sea basin on "environmental security." Like Russia, Iran has strong misgivings about NATO and, yet, may be receptive toward the idea of a "NATO-Iran Council," notwithstanding NATO's recent Istanbul Cooperation Initiative aimed at Iran's Arab neighbors in Persian Gulf. Simultaneously, aware of a degree of organizational competition between NATO and OSCE, Iran may be inclined to allow OSCE a greater input in Persian Gulf security calculus by prioritising its dialogue with OSCE and, perhaps, even entertaining becoming an OSCE member state in the future, following the footsteps of its Caspian neighboring states.

In conclusion, while there is no guarantee that any of the security guarantees offered by the West will suffice to put the genie of Iranian nuclear menace in the bottle, the mere absence of such initiatives as of now must be counted as a serious impediment in the current efforts to re-track Iran's nuclear programs on completely peaceful footing.

Notes

¹ Interview with a career diplomat from the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tehran, Iran, who wouldn't like to be cited by name.

² Ibid.,

³ For more on this see, Rebecca Johnson, "Is the NPT up to the challenge of proliferation?" *Disarmament Forum* (2004).

⁴ There is a "groupthink" in the US about Iran's nuclear build up, e.g., John Bolton, the designated new U.S. Envoy to the UN, has repeatedly stated that "Iran is continuing its pursuit of weapons of mass destruction." See John Bolton's testimony to the House International Relations Committee, June 24, 2004. See http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmo/library/congress/2004_h/040624-bolton.htm. For similar views see, Arnaud de Borchgrave, "Iran in bombsights?" *Washington Times*, January 12, 2005.

⁵ Interview of Mr. El Baradei with CNN, available on CNN website, March 17, 2005. Mr. El Baradei stated that "I think they [the Iranians] insist we should not be treated differently from any other country."

⁶ In his report on UN reform, UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, has stated: "On non-proliferation, the International Atomic Energy Agency's verification authority must be strengthened through universal adoption of the Model Additional Protocol, and states should commit themselves to complete, sign and implement a fissile material cut-off treaty." Quoted in "In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights For All," Report of the Secretary General to the General Assembly, March 21, 2005 (GA/59/2005).

⁷ In his 2004 State of the Union Address, President Bush demanded that "the Iranian regime must give up its uranium enrichment program and plutonium re-processing, end its support for terror." Quoted from *The New York Times*, February 3, 2005.

⁸ See "Taking Aim at Iran," *London Times*, March 13, 2005.

⁹ *The New York Times*, March 17, 2005.

¹⁰ Sergei Blagov, "Russia steadfast on Iran," *Asia Times*, March 30, 2005.

¹¹ "Turning Iran Away From Nuclear Weapons," *Arms Control Association* (July/August, 2003).

¹² For more on the IAEA's reports, see Miriam Rajkumar and Joseh Cirincione, "The IAEA's Report on Iran, No Slam Dunk," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* (September, 2004).

¹³ Quoted in *IRNA*, November 6, 2004.

¹⁴ After the so-called Tehran Declaration in October 2003, The British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw stated: "We all believe in the rights of any sovereign nation to develop a civilian nuclear program." Quoted in "Iran agrees to inspections after EU talks," *Deutsche Welle Website*, October 21, 2003.

¹⁵ See, for example, Johannes Reissner, "Nuclear Issue Instead of Iran Policy?" *SWP Comment 11*, German Institute for International and Security Affairs (March 2005).

¹⁶ For a discussion of Iran-EU relations, see Julie Scandella, "The "Linkage Policy": Economic and Political Negotiations between EU and Iran," *Iran Review*, Vol. 1 (August 2004), p. 39-51.

¹⁷ For more on this, see Kaveh Afrasiabi, "The myth of an Israeli strike on Iran," *Asia Times*, April 8, 2005.

¹⁸ On Iran's nuclear facilities, see Andrew Koch and Jeanette Wolf, "Iran's nuclear-related facilities: A Profile," *Center for Nonproliferation Studies Database* (Monterey Institute of International Studies, 1998). Also see Mustafa Kibaroglu, "An Assessment of Iran's Nuclear Program", *The Review of International and Strategic Affairs* (Spring 2002), Vol. 1. No. 3, pp. 33-48.

¹⁹ See Kenneth Pollock and Ray Takyeh, "Taking on Tehran," *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 2005). The authors present a flawed analysis of Iran's factionalism, e.g, portray Larijani, a nuclear hard-liner opposed to the Paris Agreement as a "sell-out," as a pragmatist on the nuclear issue. Also, these

authors, disregarding Iran's official denials to the contrary, claim, without the slightest evidence, that "the Iranian government has insisted that it would never give up its nuclear weapon program."

²⁰ This information is based on interview of the authors with key nuclear decision-making officials in Iran in Fall, 2004.

²¹ For more on this, see Kaveh Afrasiabi and Abbas Maleki, "Iran's foreign policy since September 11", *Brown's Journal of World Affairs* (Summer, 2003).

²² For more on the ECO, see Kaveh Afrasiabi and Jalli Pour, "Regionalization in a competitive context: the case of Economic Cooperation Organization," *Mediterranean Affairs* (Fall, 2003).

²³ For a typical article that overlooks such important distinctions between Iran and North Korea, see David E. Sanger, "What can and can't be done about North Korea and Iran," *The New York Times*, September 26, 2004.

²⁴ See Bruce Bennett, *North Korea's Threat to South Korea* (Rand Corporation, March, 2003).

²⁵ According to Mohammad Saidi, the Deputy Director of Iran's Atomic Energy Agency, "all the components and design of the centrifuge system has been done by internal technicians and domestic producers." Quoted in *Tehran Daily*, April 3, 2005.

²⁶ "EU appreciates Russian support on dialogue with Iran," quoted in *IRNA*, April 2, 2005.

²⁷ Interview of authors with Iran's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Mohammad Javad Zarif, April 11, 2005.

²⁸ See Kaveh Afrasiabi, "Den Geist in der Flasche halten: Iran bietet Europa die Überwachung seiner Atomtechnik" (Putting the Genie Back to the Bottle), *Tagespiegel*, April 26, 2005.

²⁹ This agreement was the result of both an Iran "brinkmanship" threatening to resume the centrifuge activities and stern European warning of bandwagoning with the US on sanctions. See "EU Diplomats: Iran Risks Sanctions for Nuclear Activity," *Voice of America*, May 11, 2005.

³⁰ For more on this see Dilip Hiro, "Iran, the West and the NPT," *Middle East International*, May 11, 2005. Given the absence of any 'smoking gun' on Iran's nuclear program, the legal right of Iran to produce low-grade nuclear fuel militated against any future Western complaint against Iran to the UN Security Council.

³¹ The elements of this nuclear populism can be discerned in a recent New York Times report on Iranian "national pride" concerning their nuclear program. See Neil MacFarquhar, "Across Iran, Nuclear Power Is a Matter of Pride," *The New York Times*, May 29, 2005.

³² Speech by Dr. Mostafa Zahrani, Director of Iranian Foreign Ministry's think tank, Institute for Political and International Studies (IPIS) at a German-Iran Roundtable, Berlin, May 3, 2005. The strategic vulnerability of thousands of US military personnel in Iran's vicinity, viewed from the prism of Iranian nuclear deterrence, lessens the gravity of absence of a second strike capability however.

³³ This sentiment is shared by a number of high ranking Iranian policy-makers, including Dr. Mahmoud Vaezi, Deputy Director of Center For Strategic Studies, in his conversations with the authors in Fall, 2004. An Iranian "group-think" is that Iraq's pre-invasion destruction of its WMD played a big role in the US's decision to invade it in 2003.

³⁴ There is a growing consensus among Western experts that Iran is a net winner of the post-9/11 US actions in the Middle East. See "US Gulf Actions Seen As Boons For Iran," *Baltimore Sun*, May 29, 2005.