Iran in the World:
The Nuclear Crisis in Context

Edited by
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Vancouver, BC, Canada

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Cover design by Industry Images, Vancouver

Acknowledgements

This publication presents the revised contributions to the namesake conference convened by the Simons Centre for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Research in Vancouver on 11-13 March 2007.

The conference and the publication were made possible by the financial and logistical support of the International Security Research and Outreach Programme (ISROP) of the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), the Security and Defense Forum (SDF) of the Canadian Department of National Defense, and the Liu Institute for Global Issues at the University of British Columbia. The venue and conference hosting assistance was generously provided by the Liu Institute for Global Issues at the University of British Columbia.

The conference discussions benefited greatly from the participation, in addition to the invited presenters, of selected senior academics with experience in the area, and of representatives from the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the Canadian Department of National Defense.

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Introduction

The Context of Iranian Nuclear Aims

Wade L. Huntley

Global concern over Iran's nuclear ambitions continues to mount. Iran's concealment of its uranium enrichment activity until its exposure by a dissident group in August 2002 was a significant breach of compliance with Iran's NPT commitments and IAEA safeguards obligations. Iran's leadership assiduously maintains its commitment to developing only peaceful nuclear technologies, and developing uranium enrichment capabilities to fuel nuclear power facilities does not *per se* breach Iran's NPT responsibilities. But technical assessments that Iran's technological ambitions go beyond requirements for a peaceful nuclear energy program render Iran's stated intentions suspect. The IAEA has accounted for all known nuclear materials in Iran, but is as yet unsatisfied that Iran does not possess undeclared nuclear materials or has not undertaken other surreptitious activities aimed at obtaining nuclear weapons capabilities. At the end of 2007, the IAEA-Iran agreement on a "workplan" to resolve remaining questions on Iran's past activities continues to progress, while the US National Intelligence Estimate on Iran issued in November has dampened prospects for US-led military action to deny Iran potential fissile material fabrication capabilities. But peaceful resolutions of current disputes remain far from certain.

The complex sources of this conflict remain inadequately appreciated. Iran's nuclear aims, and international resistance to them, emerge from the convergence of several unique historical and contemporary forces. In particular, despite the tremendous attention now being paid to the prospect of Iran developing nuclear weapons, the indigenous sources of Iran's nuclear ambitions remain poorly understood. The reason for this lacuna is simple: nuclear proliferation specialists tend to regard states suspected of seeking to acquire nuclear weapons by what they have in common – the ambitions themselves and the potential global proliferation consequences flowing from them. In other words, the proliferation problem is defined from the outside in.

Yet even a cursory comparison of Iran to North Korea, another country of proliferation concern, reveals wide differences in government, society, economy, nationality conceptions and other factors.[1] In Iran's case, these factors combine to produce vibrant but opaque internal dynamics, at both elite and society-wide levels, that are particularly salient in understanding the sources of the country's nuclear ambitions. Single nation-state level suppositions of Iranian intentions – such as that it desires nuclear weapons to deter US aggression, balance Israeli nuclear weapons possession or project influence in the Middle East – overlook how Iran's nuclear program serves competing functions within its internal political milieu. A peaceful resolution of the current crisis depends on taking these circumstances fully into account. There is a need, in short, to look at the case of potential Iran nuclear weapons proliferation from the inside out.

Beyond geopolitical factors, Iran's interest in a nuclear program functions more amorphously as a rallying point of Iranian nationalism and internal symbol of Iran's position as an important power in the region and the world. Many in Iran see its nuclear power program as a flagship of the nation's technological and commercial achievement. These functions reflect the complexity of Iranian politics and society more generally. Iran is far from being a free country by Western standards, but its domestic openness and international engagement distinguish it sharply from prototypical autarchic regimes as well. Today's Iran evinces genuine (though carefully constrained) political pluralism and an irrepressible (though partly hidden) civil society. Harder-line elements have reasserted greater control over Iran in recent years, and decision-making on nuclear matters is especially secretive and tightly controlled. Nevertheless, the regime is not monolithic – there are reformists, even among the Islamic clerical elite, advocating human rights and democracy – and Iran's internal political evolution has created myriad linkages to the international community, both politically and economically. Within this complex internal political milieu, control over decision-making on the nuclear program, as well as the policy directions themselves, may function as assets of competition and control.

This convoluted partial pluralism creates both obstacles and opportunities for the rest of the world. A principal danger is the prospect that international pressure to suppress Iran's nuclear activities will induce increased popular support for the ruling regime's resistance to

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[1] For one fuller comparison, see Wade L. Huntley, "Rebels without a Cause? North Korea, Iran and the Future of the NPT," *International Affairs* 82:3 (July 2006).

international pressure – the "rally-round-the-flag" effect. This risk is not confined to the possible repercussions of military strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities; it also entails potential reactions to coercive styles of diplomacy, such as economic sanctions. Support for Iran's nuclear technology development efforts is widespread, as the popularity of President Ahmadinejad's spirited defences of those efforts evinces. Consequently, international strategies aimed at bolstering Iranian pluralism while maintaining pressure on the nuclear issue may end up simply fomenting and unleashing pro-nuclear nationalism. Most critically, this potential creates incentives for factions competing for power within Iran to aggravate the current confrontation to bolster their domestic support and leverage. Many of President Ahmadinejad's most provocative pronouncements on Iran's nuclear program and other international issues may represent a concerted effort to define and control the national agenda.

But Iran's relative pluralism also opens possibilities for addressing the underlying circumstances driving Iran's nuclear ambitions. Many factions in Iran still value engagement with the global community and are sensitive to both the benefits of global political integration and the costs of political isolation. This provides a wider range of incentives for Iran to enter into and abide by agreements, and a wider range of potential avenues to dissuade Iran from breaching agreements. Some strategies could entail relieving Iran's regional tensions and not provoking nationalistic reactions, to help promote more moderate domestic forces less dependent on threat-based nationalism for support. Other strategies could ensure that coercive tactics, such as sanctions, are carefully targeted toward specific pressure points within Iran, rather than bluntly impacting the country as a whole. Above all, the attentiveness of many Iranians to Western mores necessitates strategies that do more than offer a belittlingly simple combination of "carrots and sticks."

The range of obstacles and opportunities evinces how the need for a better understanding of the complex domestic context of Iranian nuclear ambitions is independent of policy and outcome preferences. While most observers conclude that Iran obtaining nuclear weapons is undesirable, opinions vary on which dangers of such a development are most pressing, and also on which postures for interacting with the Tehran regime are most likely to prevent it. Transcending these differences, all policies seek to elicit certain outcomes that depend on how Iran responds. Those responses, in turn, depend largely on Iran's internal characteristics, especially regarding its nuclear ambitions. Therefore, regardless of policy and outcome preferences, achieving desired outcomes depends on being able to accurately tailor actions to likely reactions.

In 2006, the Simons Centre initiated its program on Iran's nuclear activities to help fill just such needs. The specific goals of this program are to:

- Illuminate the particular and unique circumstances of Iran's nuclear ambitions, highlighting distinctions from other states of proliferation concern that are relevant to shaping effective global responses.
- Provide depth and breadth to ongoing policy discussions in Canada and elsewhere in the world, helping policy-making respond as the challenges evolve in the course of ongoing events.
- Increase public knowledge through systematic dissemination of program research and conclusions through events, publications, and internet-based resources.

The centerpiece of the program's first year activities was a workshop-style conference aiming to explore the particular historical, regional, social and political contexts of Iranian motivations for pursuing nuclear technologies. The conference gathered leading experts on a wide range of subject areas, including both nuclear expertise and broader Iranian knowledge, from Canada, the United States and Europe.

Working through a structured agenda, conference participants first identified and considered the range of historical and contemporary circumstances most relevant to shaping the domestic context of Iran's current nuclear policies. This discussion focused on identifying the more influential factors, emergent tensions and likely trends for the future. Conference participants then worked to delineate and evaluate the current international conflict over Iran's nuclear ambitions in this particular context. This effort focused on assessing the potential effectiveness of current policy alternatives in light of Iran's particular circumstances and the contradictions among multiple objectives.

This publication presents invited presentations and discussion summaries from that conference.[2] In order to facilitate open and frank engagement of contentious issues, the conference operated under "Chatham House" rules of non-attribution. I am therefore particularly grateful to those participants who subsequently allowed their prepared remarks to be collected in this volume. Vigorous discussions followed each session's presentations; to present those discussions as inclusively as possible, the summaries herein omit attributions for specific remarks.

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[2] The meeting agenda and biographical descriptions of the participants are provided in the appendix to this publication.

Following are selected impressions of the conference presentations and discussions, reflecting my own particular observations and reactions. As such, these reflections are not a summary of the proceedings and do not necessarily represent the viewpoints of any other conference participants.

The introductory session on the historical and regional roots of Iranian political culture illuminated the many cross-cutting cleavages of national identity and orientation that define contemporary Iran. At a society-wide level, emerging Iranian nationalism is colored by not only the Sunni-Shi'a divisions of recent notoriety but also by enduring anti-Arab sentiment, keen memories of past US intervention in Iran, and other historical legacies. Worth noting is the primarily political nature of these divisions; even those defined principally in ethnic or religious terms serve mainly political motivations.

Striking in this session's discussions was the emphasis on leadership; particularly the perceived need for, and absence of, charismatic leadership. Observations that Iran has become a "modern" state begged the question of whether Iran's institutions of leadership have kept up with the country's non-governmental development and international imperatives. Depictions that the initial autocracy of the 1979 revolution has given way to an ad-hoc pluralism lacking organized institutions to moderate political competition portray a political system in a chaotic and unstable transition phase. If the Iranian clerical elite no longer controls the system as such, but rather has become a core agent in a larger system, then an important inflection point has been passed.

The diagnosis that a deficit of leadership leaves Iran incapable of acting decisively or proactively on the international stage does not answer whether this deficit represents the happenstance absence of a charismatic character or a more fundamental structural malady. Either way, the dilemma this diagnosis presents for Western engagement of Iran is a trenchant unpredictability. In such conditions, similar external actions might precipitate very different Iranian reactions at different points in time or context, underscoring the importance of careful attention in policy-making to Iran's internal dynamics even while limiting the effectiveness of this attention.

This problem bears directly on efforts to better understand the sources of Iranian nuclear ambitions. Already it is clear that these motivations are multi-faceted and interactive, entailing strategic and non-strategic elements whose dividing line is increasingly blurred – "national survival" can have both territorial and cultural meaning. Leadership incapacity and chaotic pluralism add a second dimension to this complexity by suggesting that nuclear motivations are dynamically evolving over time, subject to the

changing role of the nuclear program within Iranian national self-conception. To the extent that the success or failure internationally of Iranian actions or postures is also a factor in the domestic milieu, there emerges an interactive two-level process in which international reactions influence internal dynamics in ways difficult to trace, potentially exacerbating unpredictability. International agents concerned to elicit more "responsible" behavior from Iran on its nuclear program should accordingly be concerned with promoting improvement in Iranian governmental decision-making capacities as such – an intention conceptually distinct from concern for more value-based regime reform.

The discussion of current implications of these broader contexts led smoothly into the second session of the conference, which focused on contemporary issues and trends. Reflections on current social and cultural trends brought questions of human rights conditions and regime reform in Iran to the forefront. Observations concerning the peculiarly de-politicized nature of youth restlessness in today's Iran colored the pivotal question of how pursuit of a nuclear program functions to help sustain the legitimacy of the existing regime. Clearly there is a potential for external pressure on Iran over its nuclear practices to more closely bind the nuclear program to broader nationalist passions, which could induce Iranian leaders to resist external pressure in order to rally nationalism in the cause of bolstering regime legitimacy. But these linkages are complex, with unexpected consequences likely.

A less obvious but more perverse dynamic could also emerge. To the extent that decision-making on Iran's nuclear program is subject to the fractured pluralism infusing Iranian governmental decision-making more generally, an ignited nationalism on the nuclear issue could become an independent constraint on policy change, particularly in the direction of acquiescence to Western demands. Factions within Iran competing for power more broadly can seize on nuclear nationalism to enhance their positions. In this context, control over policy-making, as well as the nature of the policies, would become an object of internal struggle. The more important the nuclear issue is to Iran's international engagements, the more control over that policy can become a source of power internally.

Increased Western attention to the nuclear issue may unfortunately exacerbate this dynamic. From this perspective, President Ahmadinejad's uncompromising stances on Iran's nuclear policy may be not only an appeal to nationalist sentiment as a means to enhance popular regime support, but also an attempt to exert greater control over nuclear decision-making by inflaming Western sentiments and thereby blocking paths to accommodation that others might otherwise explore.

The counterpart to the Iranian nuclear program's influences on regime legitimacy and internal politics is the question of how regime reform might influence nuclear policy. The simple anticipation that greater liberalization and institutionalized democracy would produce more moderated Iranian foreign policy generally, and abandonment of any nuclear weapons ambitions specifically, may eventually prove true but must seriously be questioned as a policy postulate. The discussions of this issue in the conference produced significant differences of opinion as to how freer democratic processes might influence Iranian nuclear ambitions.

This issue touches a wider subject of contemporary global politics. While liberal-democratic states do tend not to fight wars with one another and to resolve their conflicts amicably, there is little evidence that democracy dampens nuclear weapons acquisition desires. Five of the eight states known to possess nuclear arms were democracies when they acquired these capabilities. In Russia, a sixth nuclear power, the erratic process of democratization has coincided with increased embrace of nuclear armament (for example, Russia has dropped the Soviet Union's "no first-use" policy). This Russian experience reflects the more recent finding that states in the middle of liberal-democratic transition can become even more conflict- and violence-prone than autocratic states, until reform processes reach a point of consolidation sufficient for more peace-promoting dynamics to set in. Hence, even if reform of the Iranian regime were to proceed tangibly in the near-term, we should not expect more moderated nuclear policies to result linearly or automatically. Conversely, we also should not expect the absence of reform to be an immutable obstacle to a nuclear accord.

Specifics of Iran's situation reinforce these inductive expectations. A more liberal regime in Tehran might unleash empathies to Western engagement currently repressed in broader civil society, but would do little to dampen associations of technological development with national progress. Like in other democratic countries expressing this tendency (India may be a good example), fully articulated public debate in Iran could galvanize popular support behind development of a broader nuclear power industry and preservation of at least a latent nuclear weapons option. An entrenched nuclear nationalism, serving as a defining consensus point anchoring other domestic debate, could become a harder obstacle to international accommodation than an autocratic regime independent of public sentiments. Already, any Iranian leadership is likely to be more constrained domestically from nuclear compromise than, for example, Kim Jong-il in North Korea and Muammar Qadhafi in Libya have proven to be.

The implications for international efforts to curb Iran's nuclear weapons ambitions are daunting. On the one hand, the extreme of military action could cement popular support for even a nuclear weapons option as well as quash any hopes for regime reform in the near term. Yet, at the other end of the spectrum, there is no guarantee that restraint and positive inducements would promote regime reform or accommodation on nuclear aims. Active promotion of regime transition may produce no less an extreme reaction than military action. Policies of patient diplomacy may hold the most promise of eventual Iranian moderation and engagement; but the progress of Iran's nuclear program and the dynamics of regional relations may not permit a posture of patience and hope. The best approach may be to simply establish clear and reasonable long-term goals, adjust tactics dynamically in close appreciation of ongoing domestic Iranian developments, and focus on building trust.

The third session of the conference extended these considerations of contemporary forces to the regional level. Here, the cross-cutting influences of religious and cultural affinities with current state-based political cleavages came to the fore. Presentations and discussion particularly highlighted the influences of Iran's closer neighbors in the Middle East and South Asia independent of Iran's relationship with the United States. In this setting, the distinction between Shia-Sunni tensions and Persian-Arab tensions is crucial; these distinct dynamics both influence each other and provide the mechanisms for regional power competition.

From this regional perspective, the tension between Islamic ideology and pragmatic imperatives, deeply informed by the experience of the long war with Iraq in the 1980s, functions as a core driver of Iranian outlooks. As expressed in Iranian foreign policy behavior, this dynamic emerges as a transition in goals and orientation, with more pan-Islamic concerns giving way to more strictly Iranian national interest viewpoints. This depiction of Iranian foreign policy dispositions as in transition from ideological to pragmatic parallels the depiction, raised earlier in the conference, of the process of Iranian foreign policy as in transition from charismatic autocracy to institutionalized pluralism.

These parallel transitions indicate gradual consolidation of an Iranian nation-state as such in the wake of the early post-1979 revolutionary government. All else being equal, such trends should promote improvement in Iranian regional relationships – or at least more prudent and well-managed Iranian regional behavior. The experiences of the Soviet Union after Stalin, and especially China after Mao, are illustrative. From this perspective, the contentiousness of many of President

Ahmadinejad's pronouncements are less important than the fact that an Iranian leader is now engaging in international dialog directly.

How these forces shape nuclear geopolitics was the focus of the conference's fourth session. The preceding attention to the roles of Shi'a-Sunni and Persian-Arab tensions informed consideration specifically of how Israel's nuclear weapons capabilities influence Iranian nuclear ambitions. On the one hand, these factors, combined with the domestic influences discussed earlier in the conference, reinforce arguments that Israeli nuclear capabilities are not by themselves an overriding and determinative incentive. This viewpoint skews away from the concern of many nonproliferation regime supporters that the mere existence of "have" states is an acquisition incentive to the "have not" states. On the other hand, the relative peace developed in recent years between Israel and many Arab states, under the auspices of the overarching U.S. role in the region, connects the factor of Israel's nuclear capabilities to the Persian-Arab cleavages animating current Iranian regional outlooks. From this viewpoint, other regional factors amplify, rather than militate, the relevance of Israel's nuclear arms to Iranian nuclear ambitions. In either case, the influence of Israel's nuclear weapons capabilities on Iran can be fully evaluated only in a broader regional context that brings to bear other military, political and societal factors.

Consideration of the regional implications of a nuclear-armed Iran triggered a broader discussion of the implications of Iranian national strength more generally. The conventional wisdom that a weak Iran is generally better for regional stability has a long pedigree. Some conference participants challenged this conclusion, suggesting instead that historically a strong Iranian state has contributed to regional stability while Iranian weakness has often spilled turmoil beyond its borders.

This debate, useful on its own terms for improving understanding of regional dynamics, also suggests two new questions. The first question, relating back to the role of Israeli nuclear capabilities, is whether Middle East regional state-power dynamics function similarly to or differently from the past as nuclear weapons are added to the equations. A second, related question is how the relative strength or weakness of the Iranian state vis-à-vis its region relates to the internal dynamics of regime reform – i.e., is a strong or weak Iran more conducive to liberalization and democratization? Answers to these questions are not as self-evident as they might at first appear; and each bears directly on both the ends and means of global reaction to Iranian nuclear ambitions.

Consideration of the technological side of Iran's nuclear program was introduced to the conference at this juncture. The context of the

preceding topics directed attention to technology aspects beyond directly weapons-related concerns. Among these was the question of the safety of Iran's nuclear power program – a topic receiving relatively little attention in debate over Iranian nuclear weapons ambitions, yet heavily influenced by those concerns through the effect of international sanctions on safety provisions. The specter of Chernobyl suggests a global safety imperative for international support that conflicts with efforts to suppress Iranian nuclear weapons ambitions through sanctions and other blockages of nuclear cooperation with Iran.

The dilemma is similar to one that has long confronted global policy-makers on North Korea: how to address the imperative to provide food and energy aid to the country's innocent population without abetting the nuclear weapons ambitions of its regime. The main difference is that the humanitarian necessity to feed the starving is always palpable and immediate, whereas the necessity to avoid a cataclysmic nuclear accident – like the imperative to avoid nuclear war – is abstract and contingent. But whereas nuclear war avoidance mechanisms can always be improved, nuclear power safety provisions are often irreversibly built into the infrastructure, fixing consequences that last decades.

Accordingly, the implications of actions such as the recent termination of IAEA cooperation with Iran on a range of nuclear safety-related projects need to be reckoned in the long-term and with regard to consequences beyond Iran's nuclear weapons potential. Global efforts to promote nuclear safety in Iran can never be completely "independent of politics" – so little trust exists between Iran and its interlocutors that such a pretense might instead exacerbate suspicions. But herein also lays an opportunity: calibrated collaboration on nuclear safety issues could develop into a significant confidence-building mechanism reinforcing engagement on more contentious elements of Iran's nuclear program, particularly at times when that latter engagement is most stressed.

With these several contextual dimensions in place, conference participants in the sixth session confronted directly the core question of the political implications of Iranian nuclear ambitions. Contributions exploring the mixture of authoritarian and liberal elements in contemporary Iranian political culture and parsing the details of how these varying domestic factors influence Iranian nuclear policy decision-making refined the precision of understandings developed in earlier, more contextual sessions.

Particularly illuminating were the obvious similarities to decision-making maladies on international policy experienced in other countries, including the United States. These similarities raise the questions of not only how

domestic factors shape policy-making in both Iran and the Western countries most concerned with Iran's nuclear ambitions, but also how these two sets of domestic milieus may interact with one another. At the same time, because Iran is not an established liberal democracy, but at best a partially pluralistic state in transition, differences in the domestic milieus are as important as the similarities, making their interaction all the more complex: although domestic contexts shape policy-making on both sides, each side can little use its own experience to better understand the other's.

Once again, the question of reform comes to the forefront. This session's discussions of the multiple domestic factors that have shaped past reform efforts in Iran, exemplified in the rise and fall of the Khatami government, underscore the risks of simplistic assumptions concerning the relationship of regime reform to nuclear policy decision-making. Whether substantive evolution of the Iranian regime toward greater domestic freedom and democratic practice is feasible in the foreseeable future, and whether such reform would produce more moderate nuclear policies anyway, are both critical issues.

From a Western policy-making perspective, these realities raise two sets of questions. The first, more familiar questions concern whether, and how, international agents can effectively promote reform of the Iranian regime. The U.S. experience in Iraq is only one of many cautionary tales of the travails of democracy promotion. The best answers to these questions must lie between the extremes of ambivalence and intervention, tailored by careful understanding of the unique elements of each case and of the importance of self-determination as an integral element of any successful liberalization exercise.

The second, less comfortable questions concern how, if reform might not lead easily to more moderate nuclear policies, concerned states can balance their interests in supporting expansion of the benefits of freedom, on the one hand, and preserving their own security, on the other. Historically, the United States and other powers have often been willing to undermine emergent democratic regimes whose policies threatened particular interests. In many cases, this disposition proved to be cynical and short-sighted, serving narrow parochial interests rather than longer-term national interests. The 1953 U.S.-engineered coup deposing Iran's Mosaddeq government and bringing the Shah to power is an illustrative example. But if progress toward democracy in Iran were accompanied by emergence of galvanizing popular support for pursuing nuclear weapons, the United States and its allies would confront this dilemma in a much more ethically difficult form. Reconciling a tangible conflict between the

causes of democratization and nonproliferation would be no mean feat; decisions of the moment could have deep and lasting impact on the course of global political society.

Such concerns set the stage for the final substantive session of the conference, focusing on Canadian policy toward Iran. Featuring presentations by two Canadian government officials clearly articulating the principal Iranian developments and Canadian objectives animating current policy-making, the session offered direct evidence of the challenges posed by the complexities and opacities of current Iranian governmental processes, particularly the vagaries of leadership and the reticence for serious engagement.

Canada has its own particular priorities and bottom lines in its relationship to Iran, some tied to concerns it shares with many governments and others informed by Canada's own direct experiences, among which the recent Zahra Kazemi episode looms largely. The current Canadian government's prioritization of protecting its citizens abroad and promoting human rights draws on fundamental foreign policy postulates, not merely Iran-specific circumstances. The resulting Controlled Engagement Policy accordingly – and by design – limits Canada's latitude for initiative in its relationship with Iran. But even in the context of these constraints, there remains room for maneuver on tactics and style, and herein lays the sustained importance of careful attention to ongoing evolution of Iran's complex domestic dynamics.

One set of questions concerns the modalities of Canada's prioritization of human rights. To insist that human rights be a topic of direct diplomatic engagement is one thing. At the same time, cognizance of consequences compels attention to the actual impact of Canada's position on current Iranian human rights conditions. Prioritization of human rights only at the level of international principle runs the risk of producing counter-productive effects on the ground; for example, if ostentatious public displays undercut lower-key efforts by actors inside Iran to obtain tangible if marginal progress. The parameters of Canada's current policy posture still allow room to be attentive to such concerns, which may also offer positive opportunities to engage Iran's current regime.

A second set of questions concerns the practical role of Iran on regional issues of central Canadian concern; namely, developments in Afghanistan. Here a more applied dilemma emerges, as Iranian behavior that exacerbates the challenges Canada faces in Afghanistan could be attenuated by a productive working level engagement with Iran similar to what the United States has established with respect to Iraq. In the event

that conflict over Iran's nuclear ambitions escalates to the point of military conflict – at this writing still unlikely but certainly not unimaginable – the consequences of potential Iranian reactions for the Canadian presence in Afghanistan are mighty. Policy foresight and the protection of Canadian personnel would be served by at least fostering modest non-governmental contacts to reduce misunderstandings on questions of mutual concern. Such "Track Two" interaction can also serve to prepare both Canada and Iran to seize opportunities to improve inter-governmental relations in the future.

For the rich array of issues and perspectives considered at this conference, participants developed a number of new insights but reached few definitive conclusions. The strongest point of consensus, emerging from the final session's evaluation of the workshop itself, was the need for deeper inquiry into the myriad domestic and regional factors constituting Iran's nuclear posture. Accordingly, this volume ends not with a conclusion but with one of the questions posed in the penultimate discussion. This publication aims to stimulate attention to such questions, as well as advance the search for answers to them.

Historical and Regional Roots

Iran and Its Sunni Neighbours

Maurice Copithorne

It is important to address issues of Iranian nationalism, as well as ethnic and religious tensions in both Iran and the region during the modern historical period, to see how they might bear on relations today.

Iran has natural boundaries in the south and the north, but the majority of its boundaries had to be negotiated, usually leaving bitter legacies. As a result, even today, many ethnic groups straddle boundaries and this creates problems. The Kurds live in coterminous areas of Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Syria. The Kurdish community – about 26 million people – is larger than half the members of the United Nations, yet it has never enjoyed the right of self-determination. Nevertheless, the relative autonomy of the Iraqi Kurds is leading to a resuscitation of the idea that Kurds could form an effective community if given the opportunity. Currently, Iranian Kurds believe that their time is coming, and they talk openly about a Kurdish autonomous entity in Iran.

Adding to this dynamic is a strong anti-Arab sentiment among Iranians, which often comes to the surface. Iranians emphasize their separate language and history. Additionally, Iranian authorities have a hard time suppressing the public commemoration of Iran's pre-Islamic culture. Iranians have been holding on to their ancient culture through the public readings of famous poems like the Shahnameh, and Iranians resisted government efforts to ban non-Islamic holidays and non-Islamic names. Nativism can also be seen as a rejection of Western enlightenment values and "Westoxication" (*gharbzadeghi*). Having said this, one can then ask the question: What is nationalism in Iran? Is it a matter of shared language, shared religion, culture or territory?

With regard to the regional setting, religion is clearly an important element. Iran is a Shi'a state, yet in neighbouring countries Shi'as often have second-class status. However, political developments in Iraq are opening up the prospect of relative equality for the Shi'a of Iraq. There has been a great deal of speculation that events in Iraq are leading to an escalating Sunni-Shi'a confrontation, including growing competition between Saudi

Arabia and Iran. Currently, Saudi Arabia is the de facto leader of the Sunnis and is becoming increasingly active, for example, through its support of Sunni insurgents in Iraq, its support for the issuing of relevant fatwas, and its efforts in keeping Iran out of international Muslim gatherings. In Iran, Sunnis are treated like second-class citizens and have no constitutional rights. They find themselves in much the same position as the Baha'is and the evangelical Christians. Sunnis have few mosques and Sunni Kurds complain that government funds only go to Kurdish Shi'a for the construction of their religious institutions.

These religious and ethnic rivalries are clearly international in impact. In fact, these are challenging times, where tensions are rising and long-harboured resentment is being given a new voice. A Shi'a/Iranian bomb would only exacerbate these tensions.

Discussion Summary[3]

In this first discussion session, the topics discussed fell into three broad categories: first, contemporary Iranian leadership and the decision-making process; second, Iran's national security concerns and its desire for the bomb; and third, ethnic, religious and cultural differences and divisions in Iran.

Iranian leadership and the decision-making process:

One participant began by observing that despite Iran's tradition of charismatic authority, things have changed significantly in recent times. Iran has become more institutionalized and has a larger civil society; these recent changes have altered societal needs towards its leadership. This participant argued that a new kind of leader is needed today.

A second participant added that the current decision-making has evolved toward consensus-building as opposed to a one-man show per se. However, having said this, perhaps now there is an absence of consensus with regard to the nuclear program, especially when considering questions such as how far it should go and what ends it should serve. If this is the case, this lack of consensus results in a lack of clear policy. Given this lack of consensus, some have argued that the Revolutionary Guard is taking charge of nuclear policy because it wields the most power within the system. This could be very problematic if it is the case.

A third participant added that the Iranian state has evolved into a modern one in recent times; hence its leadership and decision-making process has also evolved accordingly. Evidence of this evolution is the existence of factional politics, different interest groups and varied interests within the homogeneously appearing political system. In short, presently in Iran

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[3] Editors' note: All discussion summaries comprehensively convey the main points articulated in each discussion period. They are not verbatim transcripts. Conference panelists have been given the opportunity to review these summaries to ensure accurate renditions of the commentaries.

there is a modern political system – not necessarily a democracy, but not a homogeneous dictatorship. We should understand Iranian politics from this modern perspective.

A fourth participant added that Iran's charismatic leadership, and the prevalence and importance of leadership for the decision-making process, remains a fundamental question and concern for policy-makers. Currently, it strikes policy-makers as distressing that Iran has not yet developed an institutional framework to deal with current issues, especially the nuclear issues. Consequently, it is in the best interests of the global community to work harder to ensure Iran doesn't develop nuclear weapons capabilities, because if the decision-making structure is so weak that it cannot be engaged and negotiated with, it limits the options of dealing with Iran to that of military force.

In light of this, the participant put forth a series of questions that policy-makers should consider:

- What would be the role of the Western nations in terms of policy creation? In addressing policy, it is imperative to know how central the nuclear issue is to the Iranian people.
- Can the Western nations create a deal that can satisfy both sides: alleviate the West's concerns while addressing the Iranian government's desire for nuclear power and prestige?
- Should we give them a deal that they can take back to the people and say, "We have won," to save face?

This participant further observed that the popular world view sides with Iran's interests in that any deal struck should be something that the Iranian government could sell to its own people. However, the concern is that perhaps this issue has been so politicized and made so central that the West can't take into account such rational incentives when creating policies of engagement. Furthermore, it is unclear whether the Canadian government is satisfied that Iran's intentions are exclusively focused on attaining nuclear power, and this has further complicated the policy-making process.

Several participants echoed these sentiments, and a fifth participant observed that if Khomeini were still alive and in power, he would have established good relations with the Americans at such an important time because he had the charisma and legitimacy as a leader to do so. Indeed, decision-making has evolved and has focused more recently on consensus-building and become a more collective process; in Iran, power is really diffused. Moreover, the participant stated that there is no

institution that can function in the same manner as large institutions in the West, such as the Prime Minister's office, for example, to develop and implement policy.

A sixth participant added that it appears as though the decision-making process in Iran is currently frozen and can't function properly. If a strong leader were still alive, there would be a different dynamic because a strong leader would and could pull the system in one particular direction.

A seventh participant raised a slightly different concern, posing the question of whether the Islamic Republic is able to compromise. In 2003, Iran put forward a compromise, which shows that there is an element of pragmatism in the Iranian foreign policy, and also that regime survival is the central element in its motivations. Currently, Iran is asking for security guarantees, and the government is flexible; it is looking for a way to attain those guarantees, yet not lose face. Moreover, despite what policy-makers may ponder about ethnic divisions and exacerbating social instabilities with the implementation of certain policies, the majority of Iranian citizens have a very strong sense of nationalism and are very supportive of the government's nuclear ambitions. Having said this, if the government could be given a deal whereby it obtains the security guarantees it seeks, it may be able to compromise on the issue of nuclear energy, but the two paths must go hand in hand. There is a strong sense of pragmatism and rationalism in terms of the regime's desire for survival, and this should be taken into consideration when negotiating with or forming policies towards Iran.

An eighth participant added that because so many institutions are involved in the decision-making process and because the process is so convoluted and complex, perhaps the element of charisma in a leader is not even a consideration because there is no single person who is capable of making decisions.

A ninth participant observed that in order to better appreciate and understand Iran's present nuclear strategy, the concept of political authority must be explored. In ancient Persia, legitimation of the authority of rulers and kings stemmed from the charismatic quality of "divine grace" (*fahr*). If one lost that divine grace, one subsequently lost their divine position. Inheritance was less important than *fahr* in gaining and holding power and authority. This charisma was originally non-political authority, but over time developed into political authority. Thus, the leader with religious authority and legitimacy over time acquired political authority and legitimacy.

At times of political crisis, the role of charisma proved to be very important. In 1941, when Iran came under attack by Western powers that demanded more autonomy and control from Reza Shah, he lacked the particular charisma needed to rally the country to resist encroachment and retain its independence. A good example of a leader who used charisma to manage a national crisis was Khomeini in 1988, when he accepted the UN resolution to end the Iran-Iraq war. By drinking "the poisoned chalice," he became the latest example of a leader who had the authority, courage and charisma to make the U-turn to avoid further crisis and demise for Iran.

Today, Iran lacks a leader who has the kind of charisma and authority Khomeini had, who would be followed no matter what he said or how he acted. There isn't a single person in the regime that has the authority to carry out a U-turn in policy. The situation today resembles the 1941 episode – the West is asking Iran to change its policy on an important security issue, but Iran does not have a leader with enough popular legitimacy to alter its current trajectory. It looks like we may be fated to repeat the mistake of 1941, though for different reasons.

The participant also urged viewing Iran as a tribal state masquerading as a modern republic. In this sense, the term "tribal state" has the same connotation as "*fief,*" which means "geographic lordship." In contemporary Iran, the idea of lordship is not geographic, but rather institutional; people are given institutional "turfs" because of the loyalty they have to the government. The heads of the universities, the chambers of commerce, and the ministry of oil have been at these positions for 20–27 years, for example. Given this understanding, it is crucial to observe that the nuclear policy in Iran most probably falls under the institutional turf and jurisdiction of the Revolutionary Guards, the *pasdarans*. President Ahmadinejad cannot push a particular policy too far because it does not fall under his jurisdiction. It is unfortunate that this issue would be under the *pasdarans'* turf because they are the most radical group within the political structure of Iran.

The participant concluded that the convergence of these points explains why the Islamic Republic is unable to compromise on the nuclear issues. The inability to compromise is not rooted in a lack of will but rather a lack of capability. Consequently, negotiating with the Islamic Republic may not produce any substantive results because there are too many self-interested forces jockeying for power. Iran lacks a leader with the kind of authority today to single-handedly manage this crisis, as it could have in the past. Iran will not do what Libya did, because in Libya there is one man who has the last word. In Iran, no man has the last word, which

makes it impossible to "stop the train." There are no brakes at this point; Iran's nuclear policy is a runaway train. If Khomeini were alive today, he could make the much-needed U-turn, but the current leaders would not survive politically if they tried to make that U-turn.

National security concerns and Iran's desire for the bomb:

Regarding Iran's national security concerns and its desire to acquire nuclear weapons, three topics were brought up: Persian nationalism, Iran's nuclear motivations, and Iran's desire to save face.

Regarding the first two points, one participant suggested that an Iranian nuclear weapon would not be a "Shi'a bomb" but rather a "Persian bomb," and should be seen in this manner. Furthermore, the regime is nowhere near the bomb, and the prospect is only political for Iranian leaders. If we look at their attitude toward the Indian bomb, they were siding with the West against it. Additionally, Iran has signed the NPT and this leadership hasn't pulled out, as in the case with North Korea. An Iranian bomb would be strategic – to deter an Israeli bomb. Americans have failed to understand the Iranian bomb in the same way they failed to understand the North Korean bomb.

A second participant debated whether Iran really wants the bomb. The participant observed that the Iranians are no angels, but the bomb doesn't have any place in Iran. In fact, even the most extreme elements of the regime are not talking about the need for the bomb. Regarding the European nuclear package presented to Iran – the most important element lacking was the security of the regime. The Europeans can't assure that to Iran; only the Americans can. The important thing to the Iranian regime is its survival, and in this light the same applies for North Korea.

A third participant added that Iran's desire for the bomb may not be very practical in addressing their security concerns. The recent Israeli-Lebanese conflict proved that having the bomb isn't very useful in such circumstances.

Another participant observed that the core answer in resolving the nuclear issue lies within the issue of saving face – perhaps creating a balanced, face-saving policy where enrichment activities could be maintained and the industrial provision of nuclear energy usage is allowed.

A second participant concurred, adding that the language used in the Paris agreement was preposterous in what it offered Iran. In fact, there were no real security guarantees; if Iran were to be attacked, European countries promised merely to convene to address the issue. The biggest element

that was missing in these agreements and other agreements so far has consistently been security guarantees by the U.S., not by the European countries.

Ethnic, cultural and religious diversity and divisions in Iran:

Regarding cultural diversity and divisions, one participant stated that in Iran there are three layers of culture – old Persia, the Islamic overlay, and a modern Western culture. Each layer has its corresponding layer of values. Consequently, their constant interaction in today's Iran results in what we see as modern Iranian culture.

Second, religious divisions in Iran and in the region, specifically the Shi'a-Sunni conflict, are not religious but politically motivated. The root of this conflict is about who will lead the Islamic world and region. The political nature of this conflict has to be understood.

Third, regarding ethnic diversity, the participant claimed that Iran is a multinational state, but not an empire. When speaking about ethnic conflicts in the country, this nuance needs to be considered. Iran is multinational but simultaneously has a dominant culture, as well as tremendous sub-cultures built into that dominant culture. One has to understand the various nuances of ethnicity to understand modern-day Iran.

Contemporary Issues and Trends

Politics, Human Rights and Secular Reform

Payam Akhavan

It is important to distinguish between the real issues and those that are imaginary, and subsequently highlight the most important issues in our media. With regard to Iran's nuclear ambitions, there are good reasons for suspicion. There are legitimate questions about the lengths to which Iran is going to develop nuclear capability. However, there is a broader context within which this question has to be situated. We are so preoccupied with how to step back from the precipice that we lose sight of how to transform Iran from an authoritarian into a democratic system. The issue is not nuclear capabilities; it is an issue of the type of regime in Iran. Solving this issue would solve the nuclear issue.

The real problem in the case of Iran is the regime's preoccupation with self-preservation. It is clear that American "cowboy" diplomacy has backfired in the sense that it has strengthened the hand of hard-liners in Iran. But the bellicose polemics of Iran may be better understood as the dying convulsions of a regime that is losing its legitimacy. The biggest threat to the regime is not the U.S. or Israel but the Iranian people. We have to fully understand and appreciate this point in order to craft an appropriate response.

Last summer, a fellow Canadian-Iranian, Dr. Ramin Jahanbegloo, was put in jail and confessed to being part of a conspiracy. What is intriguing about this case is that, for the first time, an Iranian official accused him of wanting to foment a Velvet Revolution in Iran. Accusing someone of this is merely admitting that this is the biggest threat to the regime in power in Iran – the mass mobilization of a thriving civil society.

While serving as a war crimes prosecutor for the Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, I experienced that it was people power that brought down that regime; one million people in front of the Serbian parliament forced the invincible man to step down. Moreover, it was the war crimes tribunal and the economic sanctions that helped inspire civil society to mobilize. Accountability mechanisms and civil society brought down Milosevic, not NATO hard power. We need to be cautious with approaching traditional

Orientalism in Iran. Milosevic manufactured an imaginary past for the Serbian people. Milosevic took the past and distorted it in order to buttress his power and as a means of homogenizing the masses. This is no different in the case of Iran and in other ethno-nationalist religious conflicts. These are the profane temptations of absolute power.

The Iranian search for identity has taken this particular form. It is more appropriate to understand the transition from tradition to modernity. Currently, the state is modern. It uses modern means of repression for suppressing descent. These are the same instruments of repression used in South Africa, Argentina, and the former Yugoslavia. It is nothing new, aside from the particular socio-cultural context.

One may ask: What is the relevance of this to the nuclear quest? The answer is regime legitimacy. Authoritarian regimes manufacture enemies to create political homogeneity. Every political dissident is stigmatized as being anti-Islamic, a Zionist spy, and an agent of U.S. imperialism. External posture is linked to internal dissidence. There are certain elements in the regime that have an interest in maintaining a confrontational culture, as fighting the West legitimizes their existence since they cannot offer anything on the problem of drug addiction, unemployment, or corruption. The nuclear question needs to be looked at in this light. Does Iran need to spend this money on nuclear development and incur the wrath of the U.S. when we have all these other problems? The Western media does not pay much attention to these domestic problems. There is a very different face of Iran being portrayed, often dismissed by political realists who interpret power through the instrumentality of political elites. The problems begin when people start to ask questions about "bread and butter" issues rather than utopia.

It is only a matter of time before Iran will have nuclear capabilities. Therefore, the only viable long-term solution is to hasten and facilitate the political transformation of Iran into a regime where people are dealing with ordinary issues of governance rather than confrontation. Why would the president speak of "wiping Israel off the map"? This has to do with provoking a clash of civilizations. The West's mistake is in condemning rather than ridiculing these statements, these provocations. Soft power is hard power. Here there is a convergence between the best interests of the Iranian people and the interests of the West in achieving stability. It means that power can be conceived of in different terms. We need to move beyond this sort of reactionary, Iranian nationalist paradigm of "we must defend Iran at all costs of external encroachment." Look at the anti-apartheid movement – help was given to internal actors to precipitate

political transformation. This is what we in the West should be doing in Iran – looking at concrete policies to do this.

In addition, there is a need for targeted sanctions against specific leaders who have been responsible for crimes against humanity in order to isolate those elements that stand in the way of the will of the majority. We should be genuinely engaging people and using methods of "Track Two" diplomacy – supporting labour unions, for example. In the case of the former Yugoslavia, we see how this nuanced position is far more effective. Had there not been civil society and a war crimes tribunal, there would have been a far worse situation there. Having said this, once the regime is responsive to the popular will, then the nuclear question will solve itself because it is clearly not a national interest of Iran.

Taking the Pulse of 21st Century Iran

Deborah Campbell

There are many Irans for the many different Iranians who inhabit it. Iran is not only Tehran, though unfortunately, journalists are confined only to Tehran and to writing about the nuclear issue when they do visit. There are approximately only 12 year-round foreign journalists based in Tehran and they are preoccupied with press conferences about the nuclear issue. So we are not getting a comprehensive image of the real Iran in our media.

In order to have a more holistic understanding of Iran, one should acquaint oneself with the social and political cultures. There are obvious ethnic divides (which make their way into the news stories), but there is also an important demographic divide that is often neglected: Iran is one of the youngest countries in the world, with 70 per cent of population under 30. Young people have very different values; they are often very disillusioned with revolutionary ideals and are more interested in visiting malls than mosques. The rise of consumerism is very evident, as is social liberalization. The government can no longer fully control the young people. They allow a limited amount of social freedom – in terms of what can be worn, for example – so that people don't organize politically. In summary, disillusionment with the political processes, a greater focus on personal life, and self-involvement as opposed to communitarianism are all characteristic of this generation.

In developing a more comprehensive understanding of Iran, we must pay particular attention to a series of phenomena. First, we need to appreciate the role of the media and technology – One in four homes in Iran has a satellite dish; these viewers have access to many of the channels that we in the West have access to. People also have access to dissident media – such as the Los Angeles stations broadcasting anti-regime material.

Also, technology is becoming more incorporated into everyday life. For example, there are approximately 15 million cellular phones in a country with a population of 70 million, and roughly 1500 Internet cafes. There is an unprecedented degree of communication. Moreover, Iran has a highly literate population and a huge university population, 63 per cent of which

is made up of women. The youth are using technology to their advantages and communicating through technology; using chat rooms, for example, is increasingly popular. In such cyber spaces they can escape cultural and government restrictions. The old isolation of the past is changing. There are still billboards that depict clerical leaders and anti-American sentiment, but these are now alongside Nokia and Calvin Klein billboards.

In the media, a big phenomenon is the blogosphere and this is where the free press is situated now. Blogs are largely social, yet by its nature the social is political – on the blogs people are talking about popular culture, relationships, and questioning religion, for instance. Blogs are part of the change in social and political values. They also bypass traditional cultural restrictions and allow access to the Iranian diaspora. In a number of cases, bloggers have been arrested, beaten, and forced to sign confessions. Such government backlash appears mainly intended to inspire fear. However, the interesting issue is that there is a constant cat-and-mouse game between government Internet censors and Internet filter jumpers. The government could shut this down if it wanted to, but it doesn't choose to do so. It allows the Internet to continue and the Internet cafes to operate. The government is also using the Internet for its own purposes. Even the president has his own blog.

Iran has a cultural inclination toward technology. This partially explains the infatuation with nuclear technology. Widespread access to technology also has to do with the government's decision to placate the people rather than poke a stick at them. In their view, hypothetically, it is better to make certain concessions than to have them on the streets protesting.

Furthermore, there is a mirror-like relationship between the state media and the foreign media. In the state media, women are covered, traditional, and religious. This is not what you see on the street in the urban centers, yet the foreign media paints a similar picture. Their narrow, specific view of Iran does not reveal the complexities of modern Iran. Local fixers often complain of foreign media arriving and wanting to find a woman in a chador holding a Kalashnikov. They complain that there is a kind of collusion between state and foreign media: both are presenting the same view when, in fact, there is a rather hedonistic underground culture that is widespread, yet is not captured.

Iranians are extreme cynics; they believe that "whatever the government says, we believe the opposite." Despite what our media portrays, there is a strong pro-Western sentiment, by and large more than we think. However, U.S. support of dissident media is a dangerous phenomenon – the Islamic Republic is accusing those domestic NGOs that have ties to the international community of being "agents of imperialism." The money

they receive from the West places them under suspicion. The government targets people/organizations that take this money to send a wider message – that these NGOs are using "dirty money." This continued sponsorship is not an effective way of achieving greater openness or "democracy" in Iran and may have the opposite effect; that is, hurting the kind of people who are working toward such goals in Iran.

In addition, there exists another divide in the social realm: the rural/urban divide, which is very much like the red state/blue state divide in the U.S. Seventy-five to eighty per cent of the population in Iran is more conservative, more traditional, often rural. However, this is changing. Young people are going to cities for university and are bringing cosmopolitan ideas back with them to their villages. There are Internet cafes in the smallest villages, but they are much more concentrated in larger cities.

The technological gap is narrowing, but the economic gap is not. In fact, in some areas, it is growing, as is consciousness of the economic divides. When someone in a rural village watches TV from Tehran, they see lifestyles they can't hope to emulate. Economic factors elected the current president because he promised to share oil wealth. Now he's losing popularity because he is not delivering on these promises. Economics is at the core of many political issues in Iran. The very important point to remember is that economics is underpinning it all. If one follows the money, we begin to understand the primary motivations and factors that influence decisions. For example, most people's voting preferences are very much linked to the question of the economy. And very often, political decisions are related to economic factors.

In conclusion, the population is divided but Iranian nationalism transcends those social divisions and is a cohesive element. There is a sense of a shared history – a Persian history – and a shared desire for engaging the international community, stemming from the feeling that Iran deserves a place on the world stage and deserves respect.

This is how the government consolidated popular approval for their nuclear ambitions. This is one area where they have managed to engineer consent by playing the nationalist card and by using arguments such as, "Look at India, Pakistan, and Israel. They have weapons. They haven't signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The U.S. sold them the technology in the first place. Why should we not have this technology? We are wealthy; we should be on the same level…" Iranians feel that these are double standards and that they are being persecuted for following the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which allows signatories to develop civilian nuclear power.

The main goal for Iranians is respect within the world community. If they achieved that, it would diminish and perhaps eliminate support for any nuclear program. Taking this into consideration, the one act that could change an ingrained Iranian cynicism toward their own government would be for the West, particularly the United States or Israel, to attack Iran. In such a case, the government could gain more legitimacy, and every deficiency and problem that the people would want to hold them accountable for would in turn lose relevance. The regime could mobilize the population and label dissidents as national security threats, as they appear to be doing already. Hence an attack would be extremely counter-productive for any prospects of greater democratization or a regime change that could in turn address Iran's defiance of the international community with regard to its nuclear ambitions.

Discussion Summary

The issues discussed in this session focused on three broad categories: first, the reality and present state of Iran; second, democratization and the nuclear threat; and third, the necessity of normalization of Iran-U.S. relations.

The Iranian reality:

Regarding the Iranian reality, one participant began by addressing the point made in Deborah Campbell's presentation about the technological gap narrowing while the economic gap widens: he stated that this phenomenon occurs because Iran is increasingly consuming technology but not producing it. All technology currently used in Iran is coming from the outside, so there is little effect on job creation.

Second, with regard to nationalism, this participant noted that the concept has changed over time. It used to be isolationist, top-down, and elite. Now, over the last 20 years, it has become bottom-up, grassroots, popular, young and globalist/integrationist. In other words, nationalism is looking forward, upward, and outside, and this needs to be taken into consideration when considering policy and the Iranian nation's possible response to it.

A second participant added that Deborah Campbell's presentation spoke of the reality of Iran being post-utopian, post-ideological. The people of Iran want jobs, better futures, and stability. The participant observed that in order to provoke a transition to attain such goals, the policies we in the West create have to engage and isolate those elements of the regime that are agitating for conflict with the West.

Democratization and the nuclear threat:

Regarding democratization and the use of nuclear threats, the discussion revealed opposing opinions. One participant disagreed with Payam Akhavan's assumption that democracy in Iran will reduce the threat of it using nuclear weapons, noting that the only nation on earth that has ever used a nuclear weapon has been the most democratic nation in the world.

Hence, the idea that democracy leads to a lower likelihood of using nuclear weapons is perhaps spurious. In fact, there is nothing to suggest that a democratic Iran will be less likely to use nuclear weapons than an Iran ruled by a dictatorship. Iran's use of weapons or the increased threat of use only depends on national interests.

This participant also disagreed with Akhavan's notion that a socio-political phenomenon like the Velvet Revolution was possible in Iran. The participant argued that Iran will never experience a similar transition because the Velvet Revolution took place under a completely different set of circumstances. It is first necessary for Iran and the U.S. to have diplomatic ties and to normalize relations before Iran can become a democracy; Iran will not democratize without this pre-condition. Furthermore, in the path towards democratization, there are three basic problems to be addressed: first, the oil economy has to be diversified; second, the political culture needs reform; and third, religion needs to be reformed.

This participant questioned whether targeted sanctions could be one of the elements used to facilitate the democratization process, contending instead that they would only stop the normalization of relations, which would be a pre-condition for Iran to democratize. He argued that such policies go against the interests of the Iranian people, no matter how targeted they are. In light of this, there are only two positions to take: normalization of relations and engagement in peaceful negotiations, or preparation for war. He also noted that for the last 10 years there has been a discourse of democracy versus dictatorship; however, this has disappeared. The new discourse is normalization versus war, and Iran must make the right decisions.

A second participant disagreed with the first participant by citing Brazil and Argentina as examples of countries that tried to acquire nuclear capabilities under military regimes. Despite their earlier efforts, however, we are no longer worried about these countries because the nature of their regimes (now modern democracies) compels them to be responsive to real issues of government and not to revolutionary polemics. Similarly, a democratic Iran would be far less obsessed with nuclear capabilities. In other words, under a democracy, the regime would not feel so threatened and it would not be so concerned about preserving dominance at all costs.

Would Iran give up its ambitions under democratic rule? No, but it would be less obsessed. Alternatively, if the West were to engage Iran in a military bombardment they would only be hastening the creation of the bomb by playing into the hands of the survivalist regime. By rejecting the utility of targeted sanctions we are saying that there are only two options:

appeasement or confrontation. Instead of this, we have to learn to isolate those corrupt elements. In this instance, soft power (that is, targeted sanctions) is hard power, whereas military confrontation is going to backfire. Our interests are in line with the long-term interests of the Iranian people. This is what will make targeted sanctions successful. Without such approaches articulated, warmongers benefit from the dualist perspective – war or appeasement.

Imagine if Iran followed Libya's path. Nobody is in favour of seeing an Iran in which an anti-Western tyranny is replaced with a pro-Western tyranny. That is not what is going to bring about genuine transformation. A military confrontation would only undermine reformists. We need a nuanced policy that understands that there are two Irans: the corrupt hard-liners versus the vast majority of the emerging leadership. The short-term appeasement of hard-liners is a bad long-term investment. We need to broaden the parameters of the debate beyond dualism.

During this debate, a number of participants agreed that dictators need enemies in order to legitimize their survival. The Islamic Republic's regime evinces this tendency. This has been a driving force in halting the normalization of relations between the U.S. and Iran for decades.

A third participant observed that change is happening within Iran. Despite the fact that Iran is not entirely democratic, it is not entirely undemocratic. The regime does allow certain social freedoms; it allows people to talk about politics and dress in modern ways. These facts are not conveyed in the media very often. Moreover, free and open political rallies are happening more often there, which is a relatively new phenomenon. Surprisingly, people are more politically passionate than we are here in Canada. There are particular developments happening in Iran, but notwithstanding these developments, they don't appear to be moving towards a Western liberal democracy. One possible reason may be that democracy requires civil society institutions and in Iran there are no legitimate institutions that come between family and government. The people don't have respect for the rule of law because the law forbids almost everything.

The necessity to normalize relations between Iran and the U.S.:

Regarding normalizing relations between Iran and the U.S., the discussion revolved around two contrary opinions: those who believed strongly that normalization is a necessity, and those who maintained it is of lesser importance.

One participant began by stating that there has never been a country in the world that has become a democracy in the absence of diplomatic ties

with the U.S. In fact, Eastern and Southeastern European cases all had that condition of the U.S. being physically there and having diplomatic ties. Regarding the case of Iran and its prospects for democratization, the argument is not whether there is any ability to develop civil society and democracy in Iran. Indeed, it was the U.S. who overthrew Mossadeq in 1953; otherwise Iran would have had a democracy. In fact, the U.S. does not favour a democratic Iran that might be anti-American. It is important to remember that nations have no friends or enemies but, rather, interests. If democracy would not serve the U.S. in Iran, then the U.S. would surely not help facilitate it. In light of this, the U.S. is a major cause of the failure of the Iranian democratization and reform movement. A good example of this is U.S. overt support ($85 million worth) to dissident Diaspora associations who have little or no legitimacy in the eyes of the Iranian people.

A second participant responded that one must refrain from giving too much credit to U.S. power. There is no master controller in the U.S. pulling strings. In fact, during the Velvet Revolution, the U.S. ambassador withdrew from Belgrade. Should the U.S. have attempted to normalize relations and engaged Iran earlier? Yes; there were missed opportunities. However, is normalization with the U.S. an essential element for civil society to develop and for democratization to occur in Iran? No. The enormous weight Iranians give the U.S. goes back to the fixation in the Iranian mindset against the external aggressor, where Iranians focus on external self-determination rather than internal. Instead, Iranians need to assume responsibility for their future. The question now should be whether Iranians are going to intelligently pursue national interest or play into the hands of those outside aggressors.

In the case of Yugoslavia, the idea that diplomatic engagement brought about the fall of Milosevic is not correct. Socio-economic conditions mobilized people whose interests were at stake, which is the same as in the case of the bus drivers and their strike in Iran. Iranians are exaggerating the role of the U.S. to their detriment.

A Velvet Revolution is possible in Iran. Consider Tiananmen Square, Gandhi, and the anti-Apartheid movement – the idea that Iranians are exempt from this tide of history because of an Islamic shield undermines their potential to self-betterment. The transition to modernity took 400 years for Europe. In the Middle East it is taking two generations. Iran is not so unique that it can't have civil society. In 1999, had Khatami stood with the students, there would have been a revolution. The situation today is merely a temporary setback.

Regional Relations

Iranian Thinking on Their Regional Role

Houchang Hassan-Yari

When attempting to understand Iran's current foreign policy, it is important to review its foundations at the outset of the revolution in order to see its evolution from ideology to pragmatism.

According to the government, there are currently three stated principles for foreign policy: first, *Ezzat* – respect of Iran's independence in its relations with others; second, *Hekmat* – the use of science, knowledge, new techniques, and strategy in conducting foreign policy; and third, *Maslahat* – flexibility and imagination in order to never be cornered into a particular position and to always have an exit strategy when forming policy. However, Iran's foreign policy has not always been based on these three principles; rather, it has been influenced by both geostrategic constraints and Islam. So, one way to better understand Iranian foreign policy is to pay close attention to what the different leaders say about Iran's regional role.

Regarding Islam, it has greatly influenced the formulation of Iran's foreign policy. The idea of the Islamic community was considered the goal of any policy formulated by the Iranian rulers. Islam was and continues to be (to a great extent) the centre of all preoccupations. However, despite the prevalence of Islam, foreign policy is sometimes formed as a result of a pressing national necessity (war, sanctions, and economic decline), and so there may appear to be contradictions between it and Islam. In fact, because of the importance of Islam and the fact that it is used as any policy's justification, there is no real contradiction even if foreign policy is not always in line with Islam.

This has been the dominating paradigm towards foreign policy creation since the advent of the Islamic Revolution, up to the moment that Ayatollah Khomeini accepted Resolution 598 to suspend the conflict with Iraq and sign a ceasefire. For example, if we look at Iran's foreign policy during the first republic, from 1979-89, we can see three crucial dates that reflect this perspective towards foreign policy creation. The first is the acceptance of the resolution by Khomeini in July 1988. The second date is

November 4, 1979, better known as the start of the hostage crisis (each year Iranians have celebrated this day as the day of the "struggle against the arrogance" – U.S. and its Western allies). The third date is the start of the Iran-Iraq war in September 1980, which created a new dynamic in Iran and its relationship with the region.

Khomeini believed in the idea of overall Islamic unity and placed considerable importance on the effects that policies would have on the Muslim community, *Umma,* even despite the political tensions between Iran and its Arab neighbours that resulted from the Islamic Revolution. The fact is that Khomeini remained a kind of romantic believer in the idea that the invasion of Iran by the Iraqis was an abnormal situation, that Muslims should never attack other Muslims.

Furthermore, Khomeini totally rejected the conception of taking into account purely national interests when forming foreign policies. In fact, the nation defined as a territorial state was a foreign concept to Islam. According to Khomeini, the concept was defined as a Western plot to confine and divide the region. All existing corruptions and problems came from – and were the products of – nationalism. Moreover, Khomeini had defined the Shi'a-Sunni divide as a Western conspiracy to keep both groups weak and vulnerable. Twenty-five years later, Iran continues to denounce the Western plot against the Muslims of the region. Neither Ayatollah Khomeini nor his successor, Ayatollah Khamenei, could realize the centrality of the nation-state system, and both were forced, through circumstances, to show some flexibility with regard to policy creation. They constantly denied adhering to "the Western plot" of recognizing the importance of the nation-state over the *community,* but the reality was that they were forced to adjust their views accordingly to suit the situation. An example of this shift from ideology to pragmatism was in 1985-86 during the Iran-Iraq war, when Western sanctions pushed the Iranians to re-establish relations with Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and its other neighbours. The reality is that, at some point, Iranians became much more estranged with the West and less so with Turkey and some other regional neighbours (despite ideological differences), as they had been important trade partners for Iran. The reality of war coupled with the declining economic situation forced them to retreat in their ideological stance to some extent and resulted in Iran taking a more pragmatic approach to foreign policy. Also, Khomeini's acceptance of the United Nations Security Council ceasefire that ended the Iran-Iraq war highlights the moment in time when realism and the acceptance of regime (and national) interests when forming foreign policies were finally prioritized above those of the Islamic ideology and the *Umma.*

As a result of this shift in approach to foreign policy creation, new opportunities were created. The Islamic regime had some success bettering relations with Lebanon and managed to successfully implement a strategic alliance between Iran and Syria. During the Iran-Iraq war, Syria remained an ally of the Iranians, and now the Iranians ally with Syria concerning their Israel/U.S. situation. These relations were not contingent on specific leaders, and continue to exist in the absence of such leadership.

This is not to say that relations with all neighbours have been fruitful after the shift in approach, as there are still tensions with certain countries. With Egypt, for example, the Iranians have opposed the Egyptian-Israeli peace agreement, and after the revolution there were no normal relations between the two countries. Only as a mere formality did the two maintain diplomatic offices in each other's capitals. With Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf States, tensions have more or less stabilized in recent times, but have gone through periods of intense crisis. The Iranian constitution provides the framework for foreign policy; however, it contradicts itself by stating the necessity of protecting oppressed people all over the world, while maintaining that Iran should not interfere with the internal affairs of countries – as they should not with Iran's. This has been a source of tensions with the Arab world.

Referring back to foreign policy, despite all the rhetoric President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad uses, the reality on the ground is that Iranians do not really confront the U.S. It is merely populist rhetoric. No president before Ahmadinejad has openly communicated with the U.S. (Through letters, etc.) or gone to the United Nations Security Council to defend the nuclear program of the country. It couldn't have happened under former President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei or Khatami. Despite what people may believe, foreign policy under Ahmadinejad and those who protect and defend him is much more pragmatic than ever before. He is concerned with Iranians' public opinion and what they think their place in the region should be. He tries to form policies that reflect popular sentiments and are more nationalistically oriented. Although Iran had played a significant role in the region during the past Persian empires, the reality is that Iranians continue to see a grander role for themselves in the region (that is, a religious leadership), and under Ahmadinejad, such aspirations can materialize into reality. To that end, Ahmadinejad boasts that Iran is the regional superpower. All of these points indicate that Iran is presently looking to become a greater power in the region. Given the recent embarrassing Iranian absence at the Pakistani summit of some Muslim foreign ministers, we can see a gap between how the Iranian leadership sees its role in the region and the way its neighbours view them.

Conversely, despite the increased pragmatism and more recent loose incorporation of national interests in foreign policy, Iran's nuclear program is not helping its rehabilitation in the region as it has created more fear and tension than sympathy. Arab regimes are openly talking about the necessity to gain nuclear capabilities as a result of Iran's program. This is creating more regional friction, even with the Pakistanis, the real nuclear proliferators.

Gradually, the foreign policy that we see coming out of Tehran is a disconnection with the realities of the region, where Iran is not really the player it used to be. In fact, as a result of recent shifts in positions, Iran is becoming more isolated in the region. With security issues in Iraq, Iran is a player, but it undermines itself in the eyes of its Arab neighbours with its constant rhetorical references to Islam.

Iranian foreign policy in the region is becoming more reactionary, whereby Iran is reacting to others' initiatives, which is inconsistent with the revolution of 1979 and the foundations of Iranian foreign policy that resulted from it. One good explanation of this recent phenomenon is that Iran has lost the momentum it had at the time of former President Khatami. In fact, this isolation is further segregating the region, and this divide will only deepen. Some worry that, as a result, the Shi'a/Sunni divide will gain some roots in the region. The massive American military presence in the region exacerbates this divide. Additionally, such a divide will put a lot of stress on Shi'a minorities in other countries, especially the Arab states of the Persian Gulf, and will make it much easier for the American administration to increase pressure on Iran.

A South Asian Perspective

R.R. Subramanian

When considering Iran's nuclear ambitions, it is important to consider the regional implications of their intentions, specifically with regard to surrounding nuclear states. In this light, Indian relations with Iran become of importance. In fact, the two countries have very historic and deep-rooted foundational relations, something many in the world are not aware of. The two are very similar, yet have many differences as well. The only time there has been friction between the two countries has been when India detonated its nuclear bomb. When considering the differences between the two countries, one can state that there is a level of pragmatism in India that does not exist in Iran, which stems from the Nehruvian ideology of non-alignment.

Despite their differences, Iran remains a trusted neighbour to India. Indians will always mention Iran in the discussion of nuclear policy; however, Iran may perhaps not mention India. This may be because India did not help facilitate Iran's rapprochement with the West when they could have, nor help develop their nuclear program when they could have by easily transferring technology to Iran. On the other hand, Iran never supported India regarding the Kashmir issue nor with India's intentions to have the bomb. Simply put, there are millennia of interactions between the two countries. Iran is beginning to realize that the friction with India is, in fact, incorrectly oriented and should be directed towards Pakistan. Pakistani-Iranian relations are not as good as those with India due to the Baluchestan problems and the mess in Afghanistan.

Understanding the state of relations between the two countries, it becomes important to consider the region's strategic powers, aside from India and Iran, such as Russia and China. India doesn't supply arms to Iran due to the fact that relations were soured as a result of India's nuclear ambitions. Simply put, the nuclear bomb put too much pressure on relations with Iran. As a result of a vacuum opening up, we see bigger players like Russia and China moving in to accommodate Iran, while

ensuring they have bargaining tools in their grand negotiations with the United States and Western European countries.

Discussion Summary

This discussion session focused on two broad topics: Iran's foreign policy, and the Sunni/Shi'a divide as a factor in Arab-Iranian regional relations.

Iranian foreign policy:

Many participants agreed that Iranian foreign policy should be taken out of the revolutionary lens in order to be accurately assessed. One participant observed that Iran's foreign policy currently makes two troubling distinctions internationally. First, it divides the world into three categories of countries: friends, enemies, and countries that it remains ambivalent towards. The big powers are often enemies and the smaller ones are friends. Second, Iran makes distinctions between Islamic nations, neighbours, regional states, and the rest of the world – in that order – and ranks them according to their importance for Iran. Interestingly, every nation in Iran's territory that is a friend is non-Muslim (for example, Russia, Ukraine, India, and Georgia), while every potential enemy is Muslim, which is a disturbing posture. The Islamic Republic, at its advent, did not know whose foreign policy to promote: Islam's or Iran's. In fact, shortly after the revolution, Iranian foreign policy was oriented to fulfill the interests of Islam. Now, however, foreign policy has shifted to becoming less Islam-centred and more Iran-centred.

A second participant added the example of Iranians saying that the country needs to stop giving money to the Palestinians, Afghans, etc. and start giving back to their own people. Moreover, Ahmadinejad is using much more Iranian-oriented rhetoric than former president Khatami did by referring to Iran and not the Islamic Republic of Iran in his national addresses.

A third participant added a footnote about Iranian foreign policy, pointing out the role of Turkey in bringing Pakistani and Israeli foreign ministers together, which was met by a stunned silence from Tehran. This participant also pointed out how politics are increasingly being played out in terms of religion; for example, the Lebanese/Israeli conflict can be argued to have been a Shi'a/Sunni conflict.

The Sunni/Shi'a divide, and Arab-Iranian regional relations

Regarding the Sunni/Shi'a divide and Arab-Iranian regional relations, one participant observed that what we are apparently seeing currently – a Sunni/Shi'a conflict purportedly driven by an existing Iranian/Arab conflict and triggered by Iran's nuclear ambitions – is merely a concocted illusion and far from the truth. The Shi'a/Sunni divide is becoming a greater problem than it really is because people are self-defining it in such a way, especially among the Arabs. Wahhabists see Shi'as as problems, because they believe Shi'as are not real Muslims. The Saudis have more of an anti-Shi'a tendency than their other neighbours and are said to be spearheading the majority of anti-Shi'a sentiments. Iran's nuclear ambitions are merely a pretext for the anxieties being created; we can see this in Iraq where people are so preoccupied with the Iranians and a Shi'a government that they are not looking after their national interests and challenges. Furthermore, Iraq is being pushed towards Iran's sphere of influence only because there is no Arab collective will to find a solution to Iraq's problems. The current exacerbation of the schism is an Arab-initiated problem and not necessarily one of Iranian origins; the Arabs are the ones creating and fuelling the sectarian conflict.

A second participant concurred that it is more of an Arab problem. The Arabs did not have such troubles when Saddam was in power, but now that there is a majority Shi'a government in Iraq, there are problems. We must be cognizant that the Iraqi Shi'as are ethnically Arab and have been provoked and irritated for some time because of their minority status. Moreover, there is a deep-seated fear of the Shi'as amongst the Sunni majority. In light of this, instead of addressing the grievances of the minorities and reconciling the problems of their own people, the Arab governments shift blame entirely onto Iran and accuse it of playing a hand in exacerbating the internal problems of their countries. In reality, in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, the core problems are domestic and are motivated by minority repression and a lack of openness. If these countries address these domestic concerns, their problems with Shi'as and Iran will be minimized.

A third participant raised a question regarding reports that after Germany pulled out from the Iranian nuclear program and Russia went back to help, Khomeini was quite upset about the outcome, but decided to continue to finish the project. The participant wanted to know if Iran had asked India for help at that point, and whether the Indian government wanted to help despite U.S. pressures discouraging cooperation with Iran.

A fourth participant replied that India wanted to build in Bushehr, and they had a formal agreement with Iran to help, but it was Russia who discouraged them and not the U.S.

A fifth participant raised a question about the extent to which private industries influence Iranian foreign policy and the decision-making of the regime.

A sixth participant replied that in Iran there is no such thing as independent businessmen. They are part of the establishment and, by definition, they cannot go against the wishes of the "masters." There is no equivalent to business lobbying the government, as we see here in the West. In Iran everything is political.

Context of Iranian Nuclear Ambitions

Nuclear Geopolitics in the Middle East

Hooshang Amirahmadi

Iran is often said to live in a "dangerous neighbourhood," and that particular position of Iran is then used to argue that the country intends to build nuclear bombs for security purposes. Yet, a more productive application of the "dangerous neighbourhood" concept would be to use it for a deeper appreciation of Iran's security concerns. Indeed, it is critical that Iran's nuclear ambition be considered in the context of the regional nuclear geopolitical situation. Nuclear geopolitics is a new concept, and I believe that placing Iran's nuclear programs in that context can help with a more realistic assessment of its purpose and future direction. Geopolitics refers to the political significance of places and spaces in international relations. Thus, nuclear geopolitics would mean the spatial distribution of nuclear facilities, the significance and the problems it creates, or solutions it offers, for international relations.

In analyzing the nuclear geopolitics of the Middle East, we can arrive at several conclusions. To begin with, in the Middle East proper, there is only one country that is a nuclear power – indeed has tens of nuclear bombs – and that country is Israel. Iran is the next candidate for becoming a nuclear power even if it insists on intending to use the technology for energy production and other peaceful purposes only. We can reasonably extend the Middle East nuclear geopolitics to include Pakistan and India, as well as Russia and China, because they have nuclear bombs and are connected in multiple ways to this particular geopolitical space. Of the five with nuclear bombs, Russia and China developed their bombs before the Non-Proliferation Treaty was in place. The remaining three, Israel, India and Pakistan, never joined the NPT and built their bombs by defying the international community. If Iran were to develop nuclear bombs, it would be the first NPT signatory to do so in the Middle East.

Whether these nations went nuclear for offensive or defensive (deterrent) purposes is irrelevant to their nuclear position. The same would apply to Iran if it were to also weaponize. Indeed, it is possible to identify a

domino effect in the nuclearization of the Middle East. Russia built its bombs to counter the American bombs; China built its bombs to counter the Russian bombs; India built its bombs to counter the Chinese bombs; and Pakistan built its bombs to counter the Indian bombs. The chain breaks when it comes to the reason for Israeli bombs. They were built proactively rather than reactively. Israel's traditional enemy, the Arabs, have never had atomic bombs, and the so-called "Islamic bombs" by Pakistan were developed years after. Israel is solely responsible for the nuclearization of the Middle East proper, as the U.S. is responsible for global nuclearization. If Iran were to build bombs, it would do so to counter Israel and other nuclear states; it would be a reactive undertaking rather than a proactive one.

Furthermore, when considering the usage of nuclear technology in the greater Middle East, it is important to observe that nuclear power is not predominantly used for energy production but for producing nuclear weapons. Of those in the region who possess the technology, Iran is the only country that does not as yet have a bomb. Yet it is almost certain that the regional contagion with nuclear weapons will push Iran to also consider the same weaponization option as the other five nations, particularly given that the U.S. and Israel are considered immediate threats to Iran's national security. It is no wonder that, for decades, Iran has championed the cause of denuclearization of the Middle East, meaning de-weaponization of the nuclear undertakings in the region.

When considering the nuclear ambitions of Iran, we must also account for the relationship that exists between its ambition and its regional stature. In the greater Middle East, the five countries that have nuclear bombs are also the countries with the most powerful conventional armies. With the exception of Israel, they are also the largest and most populated nations. Iran is a comparable country and sees itself in league with those in the nuclear camp. All six play critical regional roles, while Russia and China are also playing important global roles, with India looking for global stature as it improves its economic and political position. Israel and Iran do not have global ambitions but consider themselves regional magnets and strategic rivals. Both are also determined to maintain their regional positions, and neither can allow itself to become subordinated to the other. This rivalry is based on fact and fiction, and on mutual security threats, and as such it is a dangerous game of spiral conflict.

As Iran is a more powerful conventional power than Israel, the only option available for Israel to preserve its dominant regional position is to maintain its strategic power edge based on its nuclear weapons. This requires that Israel prevent Iran from developing nuclear technology of

any sort, not just the technology to build nuclear bombs. No wonder that Israel is adamantly against any level of uranium enrichment on Iranian soils. Israel has decided that Iran cannot be its equal in the region and has said it will take appropriate measures if necessary in order to ensure a subordinate fate for Iran. Because Israel is not in a position to singularly prevent Iran from taking the nuclear route, it has cleverly brought the U.S. into its dangerous game with Iran. Israel played a similar game with a less powerful Iraq under Saddam Hussein and eventually made the U.S. invade that country. The result has been what I call the Israelization of America in the Middle East. A war between Iran and the U.S. will complete that Israelization plan.

In order to better understand these emerging confrontations in the context of the nuclear geopolitics in the Middle East, we have to understand some other developments as well. We need to be cognizant of the emergence of a new fault line between Israel and Iran since the now-aborted Oslo Accord between Israelis and Arabs in 1992. That accord was itself a response to a new threat that was considered emanating from Iran after its Islamic revolution in 1979. Until that date, the primary fault line of conflict in the Middle East was between Arabs and Israelis, which I believe no longer exists at the level of its past intensity. In fact, there will never be another war between the two peoples because the conflict has been reduced to that between Israelis and Palestinians, specifically Hamas, which does not have unconditional support from the conventional Arab states, including Syria. It is important to understand that the conflict between Arabs and Israelis is no longer as bad as before, even if it will not easily go away for years to come.

In the last 20 or so years, there has been a significant shift in Arab societies in favour of economic development and global integration. Before the Iranian revolution, Arabs were militant and rejectionist, whereas Iran in those days was more in favour of economic development and fostering friendly relations with the West. In the last two decades or so, there has been a 180-degree turn; Iran today has taken on a more militant and rejectionist position, whereas Arabs have taken on economic development and integration with the West. Indeed, we can observe tremendous integration of Western and Jewish investments with Arab investments in the Persian Gulf region and beyond in the Arab world. This phenomenon, on a higher note, reflects the integration of Jewish interests and Arab interests while, unfortunately, Iranian and Jewish/U.S. interests no longer coincide.

Additionally, our world has become more issue-oriented than nation-oriented. For instance, the focus is not just on Iraq and Iran, but also and

increasingly on nuclear proliferation, terrorism, drug trafficking, democracy, human rights and the growing emergence of informal street armies. Most of these global issues have become crystallized in the Middle East, and as the primary fault line has shifted to U.S.-Iran relations, many of the global issues have also become issues in the U.S.-Iran spiral conflict. The dominance of global issues in international relations has been detrimental to Israeli national security. It was easier for Israel to defeat an Arab army than now to fight terrorism, defeat street people, or prevent proliferation. As Israel's vulnerability has increased, it has sought direct U.S. military involvement in the region. This strategy has in turn led to the Israelization of the U.S. in the Middle East.

As Israel faces the global issues against itself, it feels increasingly more vulnerable, particularly in relation to Iran, and from their perspective, the nuclear geopolitics in the Middle East must remain clear of Iran. Looking into the future, Israel sees its monopoly over nuclear technology – nuclear bombs in particular – as the only option left for longer-term survival in a rapidly changing and hostile Middle East. This conclusion is also drawn from the fact that the Israelization of the U.S. has been ineffective and the Americans may one day decide to withdraw from the region, as Great Britain did in the 1970s.

Iran's nuclear crisis is the product of yet another even more troubling old geopolitical concept of the country as a "dangerous nation." When Great Britain had India as its most prized colony and wished to safeguard that possession for as long as possible, it saw in Iran a possible rival (Iran had conquered India before Britain had) and decided that Iran should remain weak. The British propagated the idea that a strong Iran was a dangerous Iran, and a weaker Iran was best for the region. This policy has been carried out ever since, first by Britain and Russia, then by America, and now by the UN Security Council. Indeed, the idea constitutes the conceptual foundation of sanctions against Iran by the U.S. and the UNSC. The fact that Iran has not initiated any conflict against its neighbours in the last 200 or so years is conveniently ignored.

Indeed, the contemporary Iranian history is witness to an opposite experience: anytime Iran has been weak, its region has been more unstable, while a strong Iran has often been a catalyst of stability. The fact that a strong Iran was a better Iran for the region was successfully tested by the Nixon Doctrine. However, the Shah's mismanagement of domestic politics brought that short-lived experience to a halt by the 1979 revolution. The post-revolutionary weak Iran encouraged Saddam to invade the country, and that episode led to Saddam's invasion of Kuwait and then to two U.S. wars against Iraq. Iraq today is, in a sense, the

product of a weak Iran. We should not ignore the fact that the Iranian leaders are also a cause for the wrong perception about a strong Iran. They often speak in words that are threatening to rivals and make claims that are often unreal or simply inflated. The present Government is a master of such false and dangerous propagandist approaches. Iran's past imperial culture also feeds into these rather naïve power-projectionist proclamations.

A similarly troubling misperception is that Iran's power is currently on the rise. Coupled with the misperception that a strong Iran is a dangerous Iran, the rising power argument has given fuel to the nation's enemies to further isolate it politically and cripple it economically to contain the Iranian threat. The argument is based on the disappearance of Iraq as a regional balancer of Iran and on Iran's progress in the development of nuclear technology. The facts that Iran has a weak economy, is technologically still a consumer rather than an innovator, and has no solid military foundation are conveniently ignored. There are two groups that are making the rising power argument: one group would like to see the U.S. and Iran in a military conflict as they believe a powerful Iran is a dangerous Iran. Israel and its lobby are in this camp. The other group, which includes some of Iran's friends, would like to see the U.S. negotiate with Iran.

However, the Bush White House is not interested in talking with a strong Iran, even if it selectively has engaged Iran in dialogue over matters of direct concern to Washington, thus narrowing its options to reducing Iran's power or changing its regime through economic sanctions and military confrontation. The hawks in the administration argue that policies designed to change Tehran's behaviour have not produced desired results. They also realize that sanctions and policies designed to change the regime in Tehran have been counterproductive. Thus, the Israeli nationalists in Tel Aviv and Washington, against the apparent will of the American nationalists, are pressing the Bush Administration to take military action against Iran's nuclear facilities and conventional forces. What the hawks conveniently ignore, despite lessons from the case of Iraq, is that while American militarism will lead to further Israelization of the U.S., it will not enhance the national security of Israel, even if Iran is heavily damaged.

As things stand, there is only one way off of the dangerous road that the U.S. and Israel have taken toward Iran: the parties to Iran's nuclear crisis must make a compromise for a mid-point between zero and industrial enrichment options by Iran, as well as reach agreement for a mid-point between zero and total enrichment on the Iranian soils. Given the nuclear

geopolitics of the Middle East, Iran's disadvantaged position, the Israeli predicament with its national security, and American Israelization, such compromises are becoming strategically imperative for these key players involved. Despite the fact that they have conflicting interests and are strategic rivals at this time, Israel and the U.S. have many common interests with Iran in the region and beyond. The rising powers of China and Russia and the growing gap between supply and demand for world oil are only two examples of such common concerns. History has repeatedly proven that nations have no permanent enemies, only permanent interests.

In conclusion, when considering Iran's nuclear crisis, we must be mindful of the domestic scene in Iran, the U.S. and Israel. Both the realists and pragmatists in Tehran, Tel Aviv and Washington realize the need for making a compromise and taking a long view of international relations. At the same time, the hawks in the three capitals ignore that very need for compromise. The division between the two camps is particularly pronounced in Iran. I have explained this division between those I have called the "normalizers" and others I have identified as "brinkmen" in a recent article available on my website at www.amirahmadi.com. While both groups insist on Iran's inalienable right to uranium enrichment within the framework of NPT, the normalizers are not prepared to exercise that right at all costs, while the brinkmen wish to move forward no matter the cost. This division was not originally as pronounced as it is today.

Originally, there were four positions on the nuclear debate in Iran: first, to reject both nuclear energy and capabilities; second, to pursue nuclear energy but not military capabilities; third, to pursue energy and possibly military capabilities; and fourth, to go all the way with the bomb. This debate was ignored by Iran's nuclear nemesis, Israel, which insisted on the zero enrichment option. As a result, the debate inside Iran has now been reduced to positions two and four. However, given the geopolitics of nuclear ambitions in the region, Iran will inevitably be forced into the fourth position unless the parties involved reach a compromise solution. The Iranian brinkmen are determined to take the country to the nuclear route unless they lose the domestic struggle to the normalizers. However, with the U.S. and Israel insisting on a zero enrichment option, the chance of normalizers winning over the brinkmen is almost zero, an eventuality that will spell disaster for all involved.

Nuclear Energy Interests in Iran

Nader Barzin

When considering a potential military strike on Iran, it is important to question what the cost of such action will be for the U.S. and the rest of the world. Even if these costs are conservatively weighed, after a simple analysis, they outweigh the benefits and should prevent the U.S. from taking military action.

To understand Iran's nuclear energy interests from the inception of this industry in Iran to today, one must consider three guiding dynamics: first, the regional and international context between 1945-2007; second, the bilateral Iran-American relations from 1953 to present; and finally, the United States' manipulation of the international nuclear markets and regimes, during the same period.

Regarding U.S.-Iran relations prior to the revolution of 1979, three broad issues have been dominating themes. First, the U.S.'s interests in Iranian petroleum, as well as its profits, and ensuring access to and controlling oil production in the Persian Gulf; second, selling arms to Iran (the most important client of U.S. arms in history); and finally, blocking Russian influence in the region and socialism in Iran.

In 1945, the U.S. had primacy in the nuclear sector, though shortly afterwards, the U.S.S.R. achieved nuclear capabilities (1949), followed by the British (1952). That is the major reason behind the introduction of the Atoms for Peace program by the U.S., as a means of controlling access to nuclear fissile material and technology throughout the world. Through this program, nuclear energy was introduced to Iran by the U.S. in 1957. Only three years earlier, a CIA coup had reestablished the Shah and the developing country, coming out of two years of heavy sanctions on its oil exports, had no need for nuclear technology. In 1960, Iran received a research reactor from the U.S. through the Atoms for Peace Program. The reactor would, however, not be functional until 1967.

Subsequently, other nations began to develop nuclear military capabilities after the U.S., starting with France (1960), followed by China (1964), and

Israel (1967). In an effort to exercise more control over access to nuclear technology, and in an effort to curtail the proliferation of nuclear military capabilities, the U.S. helped lead completion of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1968. Iran became a signatory immediately and ratified the treaty in 1970.

After the monarchy was re-established in 1953, for the next 20 years 40 per cent of the benefits of the Iranian oil industry went to U.S. firms. The Shah used a good part of the remaining revenues to purchase U.S.-built arms in order to maintain good relations with the U.S. and be perceived as a strong regional power. This, as well as the presence of U.S. military advisors in Iran with privileged status and immunities, created disenchantment amongst a majority of population.

Another interest of the Shah's regime for the U.S. at the time was to resist socialism (prior to the re-establishment of the Shah, there was the nationalist Prime Minister, Mossadeq, who was perceived by the U.S. to lead a leftward-leaning parliamentary democracy). Such policies were especially appealing to the U.S. and attracted its assistance due to the fact that they actively explored ways of undermining the Soviet Union's access to and influence over the region, especially access to the warm waters of the Persian Gulf.

However, with the decline of U.S. power during the Vietnam era, the departure of British forces from the Persian Gulf, and the increased strength of European powers, the Shah tried to fill the power vacuum in the Gulf and consolidate more power and independence from outside players. In fact, he felt that as the role of the U.S. declined, Europe was gaining more prominence and influence, and so he believed he could play the European card in his relationship with the U.S. Moreover, with the departure of British forces from the Gulf, coupled with the rapprochement between Iraq and the U.S.S.R., and America's dependence on Iranian oil, the Shah felt it was the right time for Iran to play a security role in the region and that this would be accepted by the U.S. due to their preoccupation with the Vietnam war. In return for filling an apparent vacuum and increasing the country's influence, the Shah felt that he could capture more benefits from the national oil production, so he unilaterally put an end to the U.S. contracts in 1973 – the equivalent of a nationalization of the industry, what Mossadeq had done in 1953 and what had caused his fall. These contracts were signed in 1954 for a 25-year term and were due to expire in 1979 (the year of the Islamic revolution).

At first, it appeared the Shah had strategized accurately; Kissinger accepted the unilateral decisions of the Shah regarding U.S.-Iranian oil

contracts. However, Kissinger warned the Shah to stop meddling in OPEC because a heavy increase in international oil prices was going to shake the foundations of the Western economies. Conversely, the Shah, believing himself to be in a position of power, did not adhere to these demands and instead helped spearhead the consensus reached at OPEC to limit oil production, leading to the first global oil shock.

This oil shock led the U.S. to develop two sets of policies: first, to undercut Iran's regional power and weaken OPEC; and second, to search for alternative oil sources (in the U.K. and Norway, for example). The only remaining U.S. interest in Iran was therefore to curtail the spread of communism and to keep the U.S.S.R. from accessing the Persian Gulf.

With the increase in oil revenues since 1973 and especially the price increases of 1974, the Shah had greater purchasing power and so began conserving oil and using additional revenues to transform and diversify the economy. One component of this strategy was to invest in nuclear energy. The accelerated development of the nuclear program between 1974-78 can be partially attributed to the increased revenues resulting from the oil shock and greater purchasing power. Another reason for this accelerated program was India's detonation of a nuclear bomb in 1974, which appeared to threaten the Shah's regional military stature, as well as Israel's mounting of a dozen nuclear missiles in 1973. In an effort to maintain his country's dominant position, the Shah had lobbied to create a nuclear-free zone in the region under a UN mandate, but failed.

The failure of the nuclear-free zone motivated the Shah to further accelerate the development of Iran's nuclear program. He believed that even a civilian program would provide him with the required prestige. However, in doing so, the Shah experienced internal and external challenges when trying to implement the nuclear program. The internal difficulties included Iran having a very low rate of development and an absence of preparation, coordination and direction for the nuclear program—components that went beyond the construction of power plants, such as transmission and distribution of power. Furthermore, the Shah had become ill, alone and isolated in his decision-making. Additionally, there were social and political constraints on the overall decision-making process resulting from the absence of participation and representation mechanisms in society. The external difficulties included the American human rights movement giving rise to opposition groups to the Shah's regime, as well as America linking arms sales to Iran to human rights conditions in Iran since 1973. Despite all these difficulties, the Shah was able to persevere and develop two of the reactors to 80 per cent capacity within three years.

So, the efforts to destroy Iran's military power and weaken OPEC led to the revolution.

The experience of the Iraq war, where the adversary was openly using arms of massive destruction while the international community was looking the other way, made the Islamic Republic understand the need for a homemade dissuasion power. They were under embargo for obtaining arms. This dissuasion, which can be called virtual dissuasion, means that you do not need to develop a bomb but can have the prestige and capability that allow you to benefit from its advantages. Demonstrating military capability was also a means of unblocking the civilian activities, which had been blocked illegally for the past 30 years. These reactors have existed for the past 30 years and Iran cannot make them function, principally because they cannot have access to fuel, even though Iran is a member of the NPT a 10 per cent shareholder in Eurodif, and the Russian contracts include the delivery of fuel.

The Middle East holds about 60 per cent of the world's oil reserves. There will be difficulties for the economy of Western democracies if that region is in upheaval. Most of Europe has a growth projection of 1–2½ per cent per annum, and the U.S. has been close to a recession. In this light, one needs to consider what the impacts of increased oil prices would be for the world economy? An upheaval in the Gulf will hurt the world economy and sink it into a pretty long recession for many years.

The increasing global competition is giving a yet more important place to oil resources that have become highly strategic resources. Securing these resources has been a component of U.S. foreign policy for years and is ever more so now than before, except that with China as a new industrial giant, the implementation of this policy will be tougher than before.

Discussion Summary

This discussion session focused on two broad topics: a potential U.S.-Iran military confrontation and Iran's retaliation through an oil cutoff, and the regional implications of a nuclear Iran.

A looming U.S.-Iran military confrontation and Iran's use of oil as a weapon:

One participant began by stating that oil is *the* reason why Iran has become the centre of attention. China recently signed the biggest oil and gas deal with Iran in history. Perhaps this is a motivation for its nuclear confrontation; if the U.S. controls it, then China and its strategic interests are kept out. Therefore, perhaps the nuclear confrontation should be seen through this global power perspective.

A second participant voiced doubt about the Iranian-Chinese deal, because China's track record of implementing agreements does not instill confidence. In fact, the Chinese are promising $100-billion deals and seeking contracts in other countries, but when it comes time to transfer funds and implement the deals, they are not upholding some of their promises. Furthermore, the participant stated that the "oil weapon" might have a more serious consequence for oil-producing countries than for net-importers.

A third participant stated that economic interdependence is a factor that could prevent Iran's use of oil as a weapon.

A fourth participant offered an alternative perspective, stating that people are making it sound like oil is a weapon for Iran, but one should consider that oil is more important for Iran than Iran is for the global oil market. In fact, Iran is dependent on its oil production; it imports gasoline and is dependent on outside sources for refining and re-importing for its domestic consumption. On a different note, the participant stated that instead of relying so much on the Russians and Chinese, Iran should have more contact with the U.S.

A fifth participant remarked that Iran's closer relations with such regimes (Russia and China) are merely the consequence of an impending attack (by the U.S.).

A sixth participant maintained that the Americans will not make a U-turn, and since the Iranians will not make the turn, then a confrontation might be a reality. Furthermore, the participant stated that the thesis that the U.S. and Britain don't want to see a strong Iran is merely an excuse for the absence of growth in Iran.

A seventh participant raised a series of questions on these issues for the group to ponder: Why has the U.S. targeted Iran, and why now? Is Israel pushing for it? Is the U.S. attempting to save face in Iraq by blaming Iran? Is this a game of chicken, or shear Islamophobia? The participant maintained that a U.S. military confrontation with Iran would be very costly for the U.S., as one must take into consideration the potential backlash on troops in Iraq, the absence of international and national support, as well as the resulting diplomatic fall-out with certain strategic allies.

Regional implications of a nuclear Iran:

Regarding the regional implications of a nuclear Iran, one participant stated that it is important to first consider Iran's relationship with other Persian Gulf states. In doing so, one will find that the Saudis and the UAE are fearful. Furthermore, there is a great deal of mistrust amongst the Arab nations about Iran and its intentions. Moreover, the regional interactions are important in the global strategic context, and the manner in which Iran has been interacting with its neighbours has sent signals to the U.S. and the West that it is indeed a dangerous country.

A second participant expressed a contrasting view, stating that history has shown the opposite: a weaker Iran has always been the dangerous Iran. Instead, anytime Iran has been weak, it has been the subject of invasion and external trouble. Iran has not instigated a conflict in the region for a long time, since the revolution in '79, in fact; but the region has been a mess anyway. Iranians themselves are partly responsible for these outcomes as they are big talkers and not doers. Hence, a quarrelsome yet steadfast stance may bring greater regional stability than previously experienced.

A third participant suggested that the political consequences of Israel's relative defeat in Lebanon, coupled with its indecisiveness about how to act towards the progression of Iran's nuclear program, has resulted in the loss of a window of opportunity to decelerate Iran's development of nuclear technologies and its rising regional prominence. Perhaps this

apparent lost opportunity is, in reality, a sign of Israel's decline and regression from its position as the regional hegemon, a vacuum that Iran is slowly filling.

A fifth participant responded that, first, the Israelis weren't defeated in their military confrontation with Lebanon. Second, given Israel's survivalist strategy, they would calculate that if Iran gets the bomb, Israel is finished, and so they would take actions to ensure such a reality never materializes. Despite what others may believe, it is only a matter of time before something happens to Iran. The U.S. is only waiting to consolidate more international support to further isolate Iran. Military action might occur in the next six months unless Iran makes a drastic U-turn in terms of policy. As it stands, the U.S. is taking its time and the Israelis don't want to directly confront Iran, but if their regional prominence and survival were threatened, we would see direct confrontation.

Iran's Nuclear Technology

Viewpoints of Iranian Nuclear Scientists

Ali Nayeri

When considering Iran's nuclear ambitions it is important to present an alternative point of view – a physicist's point of view- in order to gain a different perspective. To better understand this perspective, we need to first briefly review the history and assess the state of modern education and physics in Iran.

Modern science came to Iran rather late, starting in 1851 at Dar-ol-fonoon Polytechnic, and the first modern textbook was later introduced in 1856. In 1928, physics was added to the curriculum at Dar ol Moallemin University. In 1934, the Tehran University Physics Group was established. Amir-Kabir University of Technology was established in 1958 and now plays an important role in nuclear technology. Sharif University of Technology was established in 1966, the Isfahan Nuclear Technology Center in 1971, the Iranian Atomic Organization in 1975, and the Islamic Azad University in 1985. The Islamic Azad University now claims to be spearheading the current nuclear research. The Institute for Theoretical Physics and Mathematics (IPM) was established in 1990, and was the first institute to introduce the Internet to Iran. The Institute for Advanced Studies in Basic Sciences (Zanjan) was established in 1992 and is recognized by the Third World Academia of Sciences as a centre of excellence in Iran. Sharif University, Isfahan Nuclear Technology Center, Iran Atomic Organization, and the Islamic Azad University all play important roles in today's nuclear research. In short, quantum physics (the second pillar of nuclear physics, along with special relativity) began being taught well after the introduction of the science to Iran in 1922.

Physics in Iran began to gain momentum after the revolution. In 1988, after a visit by the Pakistani Nobel physicist, Abdus Salam, physics was introduced at the PhD level. This was particularly important because, with the exception of Reza Shah the Great University, there were no real graduate schools or programs offered prior to the revolution. Secondly, many Iranian physicists studying and working abroad returned to Iran

after the revolution to contribute to the advancement of science in the country. They now play important roles in nuclear policy-making.

Despite the nascent nature of science in Iran, the Shah was compelled to develop a nuclear program, largely due to pressing energy concerns. A Stanford research institute advised the Shah that Iran would soon face an energy shortage crisis, and therefore should create a number of power plants by 1990 in order to address the nation's energy concerns and to ensure a sustainable and constant source of energy. The Shah was receptive to these recommendations and began to implement a plan to build 36-37 nuclear plants by 1990. With energy concerns driving his actions, the Shah signed the NPT on July 1, 1968, and with the help of the Germans, Iran began the construction of the Bushehr plant in 1974. Presently, Iran is faced with an immense challenge in trying to maintain the only two reactors they have.

In the fall of 1977, in an effort to accelerate the nuclear program, the Shah initiated agreements with major universities in the United States and the UK. As far as we know, MIT and Penn State were to train Iranian students in nuclear technology. This program's implementation at MIT alone cost Iran over $100 million and was intended to run until 2025 and to remain as classified information until that date. However, the majority of students who participated in this program were revolutionaries and returned to Iran once the revolution began. Thus, most of them did not finish the program. Nevertheless, the participants in this program hold high-level positions in the regime and are amongst the decision-makers for nuclear policy. For example, one of these students–who did not finish his program–is the former director of the Iran Atomic Organization and another is a former nuclear negotiator and president of Sharif University.

After the revolution and the ousting of the Shah, Iranian revolutionary students captured the American embassy, leading to the Iranian Hostage Crisis of 1979. At this point, the US government instructed the universities who had made prior educational exchange arrangements with Iran to keep the $100 million and terminate all such programs (see "Iran's nuclear vision first glimpsed at MIT", Boston Globe, March 11th, 2007).

At this point, Iran's nuclear program was put aside and in fact was perceived to be unpopular and un-Islamic in the eyes of the new leader, Ayatollah Khomeini. This belief was soon abandoned in the face of national security issues (namely the Iran-Iraq war) and the reality of regional political tensions. In consulting the Revolutionary Corps generals, Khomeini was advised that in order to be militarily superior to Iraq, Iran needed to possess either laser guided or nuclear weapons, neither of which were currently in the regime's possession.

In the face of both energy and security concerns Iran began efforts to develop a nuclear program, and in 1989, at the close of the Iran-Iraq war, former president Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani officially reinitiated the nuclear program. This effort lasted until 1997, at which point Iran's nuclear program went underground, a status that was maintained until recently. On February 9, 2003, Iran's nuclear ambitions were brought to public light when a member of the opposition group, MEK, exposed the government's clandestine activities after observing that the government was conducting nuclear research and had failed to inform the IAEA. This came as a surprise to most if not all countries.

In light of Iran's nuclear history and the delayed development of modern science within the country, some pertinent concerns arise. Due to the country's late introduction to and experience with the natural sciences, and considering the circumstances that drove the development of the nuclear program, it is important to question whether Iran has the intellectual capacity to safely manage such a program. Furthermore, does Iran really need nuclear energy - assuming there is no intention of building nuclear weapons - to address apparent energy shortages? Lastly, is it in Iran's national interests to develop such a program?

Iran currently contains deposits of uranium; however, based on contemporary research there is only 1400 tons of low-grade uranium, which translates to approximately a 3-5 year supply of nuclear fuel. Even if Iran wants to go nuclear, it would have to rely on a steady supply of fuel from an outside partner. Traditionally, that outside partner has been (for better or worse) Russia, due largely to sanctions that have limited the development of nuclear trade relations with other international partners. Given the actions taken by Russia against the Ukraine last year at the height of winter (blocking natural gas pipelines and Ukraine's supply of the resource due to political differences, resulting in the country shutting down), Iran should be extremely wary of a plan that would increase Iran's reliance on Russia to ensure a sustainable supply of fuel. In other words, an over-dependence on Russia could potentially be disastrous and may lead the Iranians to make concessions that otherwise they wouldn't, all in an effort to ensure their supply of energy.

Furthermore, given the current tensions within the international community regarding Iran's nuclear ambitions, it is clearly not in the best interest of the country's diplomatic relations to develop nuclear weapons. The sanctions that accompany such action will only serve to slow the economy, ultimately proving detrimental to national interests. The industrial scale heavy water reactor in Arak is only exacerbating these tensions. This facility has become a major source of tension because the

reactor is capable of extracting plutonium, and without the need for further enrichment it is a short path to developing weapons technology.

Other major concerns surrounding Iran's nuclear program have been voiced by Iranian academics and scientists, namely the Physics Society of Iran. The members of this group profess that the manifestations of Iran's nuclear ambitions are a bluff. They maintain that Iran does not have the required capabilities and standards to develop and maintain such a program. Furthermore, they argue that none of Iran's prominent scientists are involved in the purported nuclear program; thus if such a program does exist, without the expertise of national experts, both Iranians and the international community should be concerned with who is actually involved. Based on the testimony of a former reformist Iranian parliamentarian who visited the nuclear facilities, the facilities were being operated by young Iranian scientists who had received their education in nuclear physics in Russia. This individual believed that these scientists had essentially received their degrees in Russia and had returned home to spearhead nuclear research in Iran. If this holds true, it indicates that the program may not have the brightest minds behind it, is not intellectually sound, and perhaps is merely a political bluff.

A common criticism of Iran's nuclear program is that the Ministry of Defense supervises it; however, one must take into consideration that almost any country that has developed nuclear technology has done so through the auspices of their national military's supervision. This however is not the greatest concern surrounding the program. Based on the findings of the Physics Society of Iran, the greater concern should be whether Iran has the resources and intellectual capabilities to be developing such a program. The international community needs to consider and address this latter issue. Assuming that Iran's progress continues and the Islamic Republic develops, or is in a position to be capable of developing, nuclear weapons, how will the international community react? There is sound evidence that the Iranian regime is not as experienced with nuclear energy as it would like the international community to believe. Although there are many people in Iran who dislike the current regime, the majority of people nevertheless believe in their right to develop and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. It has in fact become an issue of national pride. In light of all these issues, how will the international community react?

Safety Issues and Status of the Iranian Nuclear Program

Najmedin Meshkati

My interdisciplinary research, for your information, is concerned primarily with the risk reduction and reliability enhancement of complex and large-scale technological systems. They include such systems as nuclear power and chemical processing plants.

A characteristic common to these high-risk systems is the large amount of potentially hazardous materials concentrated in single sites under the centralized control of a few human operators. The effects of human error in these systems are often neither observable nor reversible; therefore, error recovery is either too late or impossible. Potential catastrophic breakdowns of these systems, which often are characterized as "low-probability, high-consequence," pose serious threats for workers in the plant, the local public, and possibly the neighbouring region and parts of the whole country. For the foreseeable future, despite increasing levels of computerization and automation, human operators will remain in charge of the day-to-day controlling and monitoring of these systems. Thus, the safe and efficient operation of these technological systems is a function of the interactions among their human (that is, personnel and organizational) and engineered subsystems.

Therefore, my research focuses directly on the prevention of low-probability, high-consequence accidents such as the 1979 nuclear accident at Three Mile Island in the U.S., the 1984 chemical plant in India, and the 1986 meltdown in Chernobyl.

When considering Iran's nuclear ambitions, it is important to consider nuclear safety to see its importance. Unfortunately, in the media, we hear only a lot about enrichment, centrifuges, etc. Lost in the discussion, in my judgment, is the most important factor: safety. An article from the *Guardian* newspaper (November 10, 2003) titled "Accidents may be Iran's greatest nuclear threat," by Dan De Luce, articulates very well this concern for a potential catastrophe. Iran's international isolation could

result in significant safety risks for Iran's nuclear industry and, in turn, result in another nuclear disaster. Such an event would be detrimental not only for Iran and the region, but for the world in general because of the uncontrollable effects of nuclear debris. As the saying goes, "A nuclear accident anywhere is a nuclear accident everywhere." Having said this, in order to prevent future accidents from occurring, we must consider the importance of secrecy towards nuclear development and its implications on safety precautions.

Secrecy is the biggest enemy of nuclear safety; secrecy is the biggest enemy of any kind of safety, but it is the worst in the nuclear industry. By its dual nature (weapons and energy), nuclear energy is mired in secrecy. Even nuclear facilities in the U.S. are born and raised with it. Transparency and openness are not emphasized even though they should be. The biggest problem regarding Iran's nuclear ambitions is the level of secrecy surrounding some of its nuclear programs.

Nuclear accidents do not merely stem from an absence of transparency, however. Deficiencies in hardware, safety inspections, human factors, operational elements and the overall safety culture can all equally and potentially contribute to a potential disaster.

Similarly, human-machine interaction and human system integrations are extremely important, as the nature of the system is unkind and unforgiving. If you do something wrong, the window of opportunity to reverse your mistake is very small and fast moving. You cannot reverse it, as errors are often neither observable nor reversible. Thus, we need to work on the prevention of the errors, which forces us to address the core of nuclear safety issues.

The personnel in charge of accident prevention are often the nuclear plant operators; they are our "first layer of defense." However, their jobs have often been described as "weeks of sheer boredom punctuated by moments of sheer terror." Accidents happen when non-routine things happen, and then one is at the mercy of the operators.

Consider the Chernobyl accident, it was one of the biggest disasters in the world; death tolls range from a minimum of 32 to 300,000 (including people currently dying from its after-effects). Interestingly enough, the root cause of the Chernobyl accident, it has been concluded, was found in the so-called human element. According to many studies, including several by the Independent Nuclear Safety Advisory Group (INSAG) of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Chernobyl accident illustrated the critical contribution of the human factor and the importance of sound human engineering and man-to-machine interaction.

The Chernobyl plant was constructed based upon old Soviet (now Russian) technology, and unfortunately the Iranians are currently using the same technical and safety culture as in Chernobyl. The Russians' control room design and technology are outdated and not up to the advanced standards. In an emergency, the control room gives critical information that operators need to read, absorb and make a decision upon.

Also, a control room should be well managed and staffed accordingly. The control room is both the brain and the heart of a nuclear plant; it is where accidents happen and are prevented. During Three Mile Island within minutes of the accident the control room went crazy… the control board looked like Christmas lights. A control room in the U.S. has mostly three operators, in Japan there are four or more operators, but a Russian control room does not have a strictly enforced number of operators, and people come and go as they please.

The lessons of Chernobyl relate to Iran presently in that the international community must acknowledge that a nuclear accident anywhere is an accident everywhere. In this light, the IAEA and the international community need to cooperate and ensure that the safety culture and sound man-machine interactions integration is being properly implemented and respected in the nuclear power plants and enrichment facilities of Iran. As it stands, there are not enough domestic resources in Iran for such a safety-significant undertaking. Only two people in the country are trained on human factors and safety culture, and both were my doctoral students. This is utterly insufficient. Iran must be able and has to be allowed to hire qualified experts and Western companies to help ensure its nuclear safety.

The IAEA and its Director General, Dr. Mohamed El-Baradei, were awarded the Nobel Prize in 2005, partly because of their efforts to ensure that nuclear energy intended for peaceful purposes is used in the safest possible way. This year, the same IAEA cancelled 22 (out of 55) technical co-operation projects with Iran. These safety-related technical co-operation projects were intended to strengthen safe and reliable nuclear power generation capabilities.

As it stands, having been cut off from most of the West, Iran has to rely entirely and almost exclusively on Russian technology and assistance when building its nuclear facilities. What's more tragic is that the Russians then inspect the plants and also inspect the inspections, which is a travesty. This situation is similar to hiring foxes to guard the henhouse. Unfortunately, despite Russian hardware being of acceptable quality, the design of the control room, human factors, and the safety culture are among the worst in the world. When the IAEA cancelled the 22 projects

with Iran, it can be said that it committed a crime against humanity in light of its overall mission to ensure safety.

Currently, Iran is building the Bushehr plant (with the assistance of the Russians) and is in a stage of risk. There is no question that Iran will, despite pressure from the U.S., make Bushehr operational for many reasons, including national pride and prestige. If we do not do a proper job now in terms of inspection and quality control, it is only a matter of time before we will again encounter a serious nuclear accident, possibly in the form of a Steam Generator Tube Rupture, for example. In my view, this neglect and apathy is a crime against humanity.

With the U.S. sanctions and IAEA cancellations of assistance, Iran has no credible and external support. This is not a totally new phenomenon. In fact, the IAEA has done this once before, of course not to this scale and magnitude. Under pressure from the U.S., IAEA cancelled co-operation with Iran in 1998.

In order to reconcile this hazardous and risky situation, I present the following observations, conclusions and recommendations for the international community:

1. A nuclear accident anywhere is a nuclear accident everywhere.
2. A nuclear accident is a low-probability, high-consequence event. The best thing we can do is try to prevent it.
3. The only sensible solution to Iran's nuclear program is a systematic multilateral engagement strategy. The genie is out of the bottle; Iran is developing its facilities.
4. In such a porous world, sanctions are largely ineffective and cannot turn back the clock or reverse the learning curve. We cannot roll back technological progress (for example, Iraq and South Africa).
5. Nuclear safety is too serious a matter to ignore or to entrust solely to statesmen, politicians, diplomats, or international civil servants. Instead, qualified experts such as scientists and engineers should be included in the decision-making process.
6. Nuclear safety-related considerations and know-how (for the Bushehr nuclear power plant in Iran) should be decoupled from other contentious issues. Also, such considerations should be exempted from the U.S. sanctions.
7. As a confidence-building measure, the U.S. ought to unilaterally start *removing sanctions* on benign safety- and environmental-related technologies, the transfer of which could only directly benefit the

Iranian people and American companies. Sanctions should be removed from physicists, engineers, and safety technicians.

8. The Temelin nuclear plant model should be tried and utilized for Bushehr.

If we as the international community would like to prevent an accident, we need to work hard and push for the removal of the U.S. and IAEA sanctions affecting nuclear (and aviation) safety in Iran. Should an accident result from the adverse effect of current sanctions, the environment, the region and the U.S.'s regional allies in the Persian Gulf will all badly pay the price.

Tragically, such a vital issue as nuclear safety, with such a potentially long-lasting disastrous impact on the lives of so many millions of people in the Persian Gulf region, is not even on the agenda when politicians and diplomats (from both sides) are discussing Iran's nuclear program and its future. And in light (or in the midst) of this nightmare, I can only use forums like this and warn the international community, by paraphrasing the French statesman George Clemenceau, and declare that:

Nuclear safety is too serious a matter to entrust to diplomats and politicians.

Discussion Summary

The issues discussed in this session focused on three broad categories: Iran's choice of nuclear technology and processes, Iran's responsibility over the International Atomic Enery Agencies (IAEA) cancellation of 22 safety-related technical cooperation agreements, and the effect of sanctions on the development of Iran's nuclear program.

Iran's choice of nuclear technology and processes:

One participant began by stating that impurities in Iran's uranium can cause damage to the centrifuges, but asked about the extent of this problem, and about the radioactivity of the water used in the enrichment cycle.

A second participant replied that if there were lots of impurities in the uranium, the container would corrode. This is important because if the uranium is contaminated, two or three more cycles are needed to create cascades. Also, the water is very radioactive, and one of the accidents that must be prevented is flushing the hard water, which would make whatever is in its path very brittle.

A third participant added that Iran's choice of technologies says a lot about its intentions. In fact, choosing to use heavy-water instead of light-water reactors, for example, suggests that Iran is looking to pursue enrichment for a weaponization program.

Some participants echoed these sentiments, and one participant added that this is the reason the reactor in Arak is so contentious; the heavy-water debris includes plutonium, which could be used for the development of a weapon. This participant added that if the Iranians wanted to show that they are honest and don't want nuclear weapons, then they wouldn't use this industrial-scale technology.

A fifth participant asked about how Russian nuclear technology compared to other countries. A sixth participant responded that, unfortunately, when it comes to control-room design combined with human factors and

their safety culture, Russian nuclear technology is among the worst in the world.

Cancellation of 22 safety-related technical cooperation agreements:

One participant stated that Iran tried everything in its power to meet the IAEA guidelines and avoid cancellation of the 22 safety-related technical cooperation agreements with the IAEA. Under these circumstances, the IAEA cancellation of safety assistance and inspections is a "rape" of Iran and its Atomic Organization.

A second participant countered that perhaps Iran's responsibility lies in its disrespect for the UN resolution, which has resulted in the country's isolation.

Many participants echoed these statements but a third participant added that if one looks carefully, nowhere in the IAEA relations and Technical Cooperation program does it state that one needs to abide by the creeds of the United Nations Security Council resolutions in order to benefit from technical cooperation on safety. In this light, the problem with the IAEA is that it has a dual personality, one being concerned with safety and the other sensitive to politics.

A fourth participant agreed that decisions regarding nuclear safety should not be left solely to the hands of politicians, but argued that in the real world, this is very idealistic thinking. Furthermore, this would not work with Iran because the real world of Iran is even more different from the rest of the world. The example of Iran's waste disposal problems illustrates that the Iranian government has a large responsibility in the current mess. To some degree, we in the international community can blame the Americans, but we also need to attribute responsibility to those who create situations such as this one.

A fifth participant echoed these sentiments and added that nuclear technology has to be treated with respect because of its irreversible character. These are not tractors they are working with but reactors, and one must do everything to ensure they operate safely. An accident is highly likely and would be very detrimental for the region and the world. These systems are unkind and unforgiving; one must never forget that.

The effect of sanctions on the development of Iran's nuclear program:

One participant observed that sanctions, in fact, did work in the cases of Iraq and South Africa – and worked marvelously.

A second participant stated that, in the case of both countries, it was only when government changed that enrichment was disbanded. In fact, South Africa developed its bomb directly through centrifuges and voluntarily disbanded its program. Iran is pursuing a similar program.

Political Implications of Iranian Nuclear Ambitions

Iranian Nuclear Motivations: Domestic and International Interactions

James Devine

There are a number of complicating factors in the current U.S.-Iranian nuclear dispute, which can be likened to a game of chicken. Domestic politics, in particular, can influence the dispute in a number of ways, and in fact there are a number of parallels in the ways that domestic politics impact the behaviour of both states. This is important because the "chicken" scenario is difficult and dangerous enough without back-seat drivers creating distractions and constraints.

There are four major ways in which domestic politics can affect Iranian policy in this situation. The first is "externalization." There has been a tendency in Iran to externalize an internal crisis to provide a distraction and mobilize internal support. The hostage crisis is a good example, as is the Salman Rushdie fatwa and the provocative anti-Western rhetoric of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. It is an open question as to what extent he is provoking a crisis to tip the balance of power away from reformers and toward hard-liners.

Second, there seems to be an inability to come to a decision regarding the nuclear program. This may be the result of the phenomenon of "fiefdoms" (previously mentioned in Sadeghi's presentation), or it may be because the Iranians don't know how far they want to go with the nuclear program. Iran certainly wants the capacity to enrich uranium, but does the regime want to take the final step and develop a bomb? That remains an open question and there appears to be differences within the regime.

Third, there are factional politics. Particularly in the 1980s, factional politics had an important impact on the way foreign policy was implemented. This was the case, for instance, when the Iran-Contra deal was leaked to the media by sources close to one faction within the Iranian government. This is a phenomenon that affects the current crisis, though perhaps not as drastically. Earlier, when there appeared to be an opportunity for talks with the United States, we saw that there was a

question not about *if* Iran should talk to the U.S. but *who* in Iran would be the person to do the talking. Additionally, there continue to be people within the regime that have been promoted and occupy positions of authority because of ideological credentials rather than their merit. They stand to lose a great deal if Iran were to lose its ideological nemesis and if ideology were to lose its importance in the country.

Fourth, is the importance of the nuclear issue as a nationalist symbol within Iranian domestic politics. This has created a significant constraint on negotiations because whether the population likes the regime or not, nuclear energy and its development have become important symbols of national pride. With the government currently facing a problem of legitimacy, this restricts its ability to make concessions. Should the government compromise, they may face serious problems because of the way public opinion has rallied around the issue. In fact, by building the issue up themselves, as a symbol of government legitimacy, the Iranian leadership could be setting themselves up for failure if it has to back down from its defiant position.

To a large extent, this situation is mirrored in the U.S. "Externalization" does not really translate well to the U.S. case because of the nature of the political system. However, the other factors – the inability to make a clear decision, factional/partisan politics and the impact of domestic politics and public opinion – all play similar roles in constraining U.S. policy-making. Regarding the decision-making process in the U.S., there are differences in opinion among key decision-makers (outside the Neo-cons). Whether it is the institutions or just personalities, the Americans' inability to decide how to deal with Iran is just as much a problem as Iran's inability to decide how to deal with the U.S. Instead of factional politics, you have Republican-Democratic partisan politics in the U.S., but it mirrors the factional dynamic in the Iranian case.

In fact, after the blunder in Iraq, the Democrats were quick to criticize Bush, arguing he "went after the wrong country; the real threat was Iran." This type of opportunistic rhetoric creates similar constraints to those in Iran. No American president can step back or compromise without looking weak and leaving himself vulnerable to the opposition. In terms of domestic politics and public opinion, again they play essentially the same role in the U.S. as they do in Iran. Iran is considered an enemy for a variety of reasons (sponsoring terrorist groups, meddling in the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations, U.S. hostage crisis, etc.). To compromise on Iran after everything that has happened in the past will be difficult for any government to justify domestically.

The fact that these domestic factors are at play on both sides creates an interaction effect, making the situation more complicated than if only one side was struggling with the problem. Most importantly, in this atmosphere of mistrust, it makes it extremely difficult for the two sides to signal to each other in the negotiation process. Both countries have to appease their domestic audiences at the same time that they are trying to maintain some level of bilateral relations. This can produce a rather unfortunate situation whereby messages intended for the domestic audience are perceived by the other country as the most reliable indicator of what their real intentions and negotiating position are. For example, if the U.S., in an attempt to appease domestic public sentiments, claims that it will not compromise with Iran, the Iranians will be aware of this as well. The result will be that Iran, which already mistrusts the U.S., will be even more suspicious. To make matters worse, these messages are also often picked up by the domestic audience in the other country as well. This further complicates the process.

Domestic constraints therefore make it hard for the parties to compromise or extract themselves from the hard-line positions in which they are currently entrenched. This situation also makes the negotiating process more vulnerable to spoilers. Hard-liners on both sides can undermine talks by exacerbating tensions. If, for example, Iran and the U.S. started talking and dealing with their issues and grievances, all it would take for such talks to cease would be one more speech by Ahmadinejad about wiping Israel off the map. That would make it impossible for the U.S. government to continue negotiating.

Another factor to consider is both actors' indecisiveness about this issue. The fact that neither side can make a decision means that negotiating signals are mixed, and it is not clear if the countries are intent on going one way or the other. Consequently, both sides are wary about initiating any kind of contact, and even if there is some type of diplomatic contact, both are quick to back away at the first sign of trouble.

The power of the negotiators is also an important question in this situation. Who has the power to negotiate a compromise? Will negotiators be able to back up their promises domestically? Will they actually be able to follow through and deliver? Obviously, these are difficult questions in the Iranian case, where informal political power plays such an important role. However, they are also important questions on the American side because of the democratic process and regular changes in government.

Domestic politics, of course, is not the entire story in this crisis. The two sides have a number of conflicting security and economic interests that they have to deal with. The point being made here is that domestic

politics adds an extra level of complexity to the situation and constrains both sides' ability to make prudent, rational choices.

Finally, it is important to keep in mind that there are complicating factors that do not involve domestic politics. First of all, the Iranian situation has to be placed within the context of the U.S.'s larger policy on nuclear proliferation. Specifically, to what extent is the Iranian situation complicated by the current situation with North Korea? Second, we need to consider whether it is possible for Iran and the U.S. to deal with the current nuclear crisis by themselves, or do other international/regional actors, such as the Europeans, need to be involved? And finally, there are a number of disputes between Iran and the U.S. Will the current crisis require a grand compromise as there was in the case of Libya? Or, can the nuclear question be addressed as a discrete issue, with the other problems being put aside?

Iranian Nuclear Ambitions and Political Reform

Mojtaba Mahdavi

What is the relationship between Iran's nuclear ambitions and the prospects of political reform in Iran? To answer this question, I would like to emphasize two central points. First, the current nuclear issue is an Iranian problem, and it needs an "Iranian solution." The "Iranian solution" implies that the solution must come from "within"; any kind of intervention from the U.S. – military or economic – will be a disaster for Iran's socio-political reform. Second, the "Iranian solution" or the solution from "within" could be a political reform or social movement. There is absolutely no military solution to this problem. The solution is democracy at home and diplomacy abroad – that's the basic formula. My argument is that some domestic and international actors have undermined such a basic formula.

In order to put the nuclear crisis in context, we need to address why and how the current administration under President Ahmadinejad replaced Khatami's reformist government. What structural and agential factors contributed to this change? A dialectical approach provides us with a useful theoretical tool in understanding how the complex relations between structural and agential factors contributed to the rise of the current Iranian administration with a new nuclear policy.

The fall of the reformist government was, on the one hand, a result of strategic misjudgments and unmade decisions (agential factors). But the reformists were also bound by certain political, social, transnational, and cultural content (structural factors). For the purpose of this talk, I suggest an operational definition of agency and structure. The agential factors are examined here in terms of the leadership capability (individual level), the organizational arrangements (institutional level), and the intellectual discourse (cultural/ideological level). The structural factors are measured by three power structures of *state*, *class*, and *transnational power*: the nature of the Iranian state (political level), the extent of societal development (socio-economic level), and the global structure of power (international level).

Regarding individual miscalculations (the agential factors), three issues must be addressed: Khatami's leadership, the organizations of the reformists, and the reformists' intellectual discourse at the time.

First, when considering the leadership capability we must observe Khatami's personality – he was a charismatic and relatively honest man, but he was a weak politician, a footman of the state unable to challenge the conservative hard-liners. There were problems in terms of Khatami's leadership style, as he had hard time choosing between leading the country (the president) and leading the reform movement (reformist leader).

Second, the reformists suffered from their elitist organizational strategy. They organized neither reform's social forces nor its political organizations. They had more than one candidate in the 2005 election and this divided the reformist vote. This tactical mistake, combined with other relevant factors, led to the victory of Ahmadinejad.

The reformists made no attempt at grassroots party organization. They neither mobilized social forces nor politicized their social demands. The reformists were both unable and unwilling to organize social forces in Iran. The conservatives, on the contrary, have been very organized and well funded by the state *rents* in order to address the interests of their social base.

Third, the reformists' intellectual discourse suffered from conceptual confusion about the meaning and nature of the rule of law, Islamic civil society and Islamic democracy under the rule of the *valiy-e faqih*. Moreover, some reformists continued to use the insider/outsider (*khodi/gheire khodi*) dichotomy, which excluded independent reformists/democrats from the political process. The conservative hard-liners were quick to exploit these mistakes. Conceptual confusions brought about political exploitation.

When considering the difference in intellectual discourse between the reformists and conservatives, we see how this difference spelled out success for the latter and sure defeat for the former. Ahmadinejad was a populist, a pragmatic "man of the people." A vote for him was, to some extent, a protest vote, a vote for an unknown popular man. The biggest mistake of the reformists was thinking of Iran only in terms of Tehran and its demographics, and then only catering their agenda towards the more affluent northern Tehran, while neglecting the poorer south. The reformists neglected to engage the lower classes and establish lines of communication with them. Consequently, they were not speaking their language when the reformists were forming policies. They neglected to take into consideration the interests of the lower classes. The reformists

talked about abstract concepts and ideas, such as human rights and democracy, without addressing more pertinent social and economic issues (decline in youth marriage rates or increased youth unemployment, for example). Simply put, they did not fully understand the Iranian reality.

Let me now examine the structural factors, which contributed to the rise of the current administration in Iran. Regarding *structural constraints*, three factors must be addressed: the nature of the state, the level of socio-economic development, and the global structure of power.

First, the Iranian state is not a traditional theocracy and therefore Islam is not the major obstacle to democracy in Iran. The Iranian government is a modern polity. Furthermore, Iran's government is not a totalitarian one because the nature of politics is more pragmatic and less ideological. The Iranian polity enjoys "factional politics"; it is not a one-man show (referring to the post-Khomeini era). There are diffused and deteriorating political institutions. Iran is a mishmash of democracy and authoritarianism. It is a post-totalitarian state that has not yet matured enough for a successful democratic transition. This is precisely why neither the reformists/soft-liners in power (referring to Khatami's era) nor moderate/democratic opposition were strong enough to challenge the power of the conservative hard-liners.

Additionally, Iran is often identified as and displays characteristics of a *rentier state* where a new rentier class (*agha zadeh ha*/the sons of noble politicians) enjoys special socio-political rents. This class has been the backbone of the conservative hard-liners and the counter-reform movement. We need to be aware of this oil economy and its social and political implications when examining the nature of the state.

Second, the complex nature of social and economic development in Iran contributed to the fall of the reformist government. The reformist socio-economic policy overlooked the socio-political weight of the urban poor/lower classes. Furthermore, President Khatami was not able to challenge the new class of *rentiers*, or *agha zadeh ha*/the sons of noble politicians who continued to use the state rents. Additionally, the reformists were not able to address the socio-economic needs of the youth (over 70 per cent of the population is under 30 years old), nor the immediate concerns of the youth (rapidly rising inflation and huge youth unemployment rate).

The urban poor became a major part of counter-reform activists because the reformists never tried to engage and interact with them. Reformist policies and aspirations were too abstract and ideological, while the camp of the counter-reform bought its loyalty through manipulation and false

rhetoric of hope for the future. Similarly, the reformists ignored the working class, never tried to address their social demands, and therefore were unable to penetrate this important demographic.

The reformists also failed to mobilize and penetrate into the upper-middle and upper-modern class (reformist policies, although somewhat appreciated by this class for their intellectual and moral valor, did not adequately deal with more important and pressing concerns such as the vast corruption, growing public sector and economic constraints of the country).

The third and final structural factor was the global structure of politics. The external shift had internal implications for political reform. After the tragedy of Sept. 11, Iran supported anti-Taliban activities and was cooperative at the Afghanistan rebuilding conference. However, despite such co-operation, President Bush made his infamous "Axis of Evil" speech, which in turn inspired the consolidation of an anti-American united front within Iran. Not all the reformists were strong enough to counter the anti-American rhetoric: some practised "self-censorship" and put the political reform next to the national security. Only a few continued to fight for both democracy and national integrity.

The speech had very negative connotations and, in fact, was very abrasive in tone, merely buttressing the Iranian conservative argument. Bush's "Axis of Evil" speech raised much speculation about the U.S. plan for regime change in Iran. Washington began to repeat its charges that Iran was opposing the Arab-Israeli peace process, engaging in international terrorism, violating democratic and human rights, and developing nuclear weapons. Of these four charges, the last has remained the most significant one, raising the level of tension and hostility between the two states. From the American point of view, the issues of democracy and human rights are more polemical and peripheral in nature. The United States' priority lies in security of the American interest, not in democracy in Iran. American policy-makers have no patience for democratization and political reform in Iran if there is tension between the U.S. security/stability and Iran's democracy. Consider the following case in which America's reaction to Iran's violations of human rights began in post-1997, when Iran's behaviour had dramatically improved, thanks to the election of President Mohammad Khatami.

Iran's nuclear program, begun under the Shah's regime in the early 1970s, was interrupted by the revolution and the war and was revived some years afterward. The structure of international power itself contributed much to the revival of Iran's nuclear plan in a number of ways. First, the eight-year Iraq-Iran war was started by Iraq and orchestrated by a number of

Western and neighbouring countries. Since war and peace were imposed on the Iranian state, the authorities planned to ensure the very survival of the state, pushing for the revival of the nuclear program. Second, Iran is surrounded by a number of nuclear powers including Russia, Pakistan, India, China, and Israel, not to mention the U.S. itself, given the existence of American bases in almost all neighbouring countries. Third, for the top-ranking authorities, a powerful nuclear Iran would contribute to national prestige and public pride, postponing and preventing popular protests against Iran's economic, political, and socio-cultural crises. Fourth, Bush's "Axis of Evil" speech, the quick American invasion of non-nuclear Iraq, and the American hesitancy to invade a nuclear North Korea influenced Iran's decisions about what stance it should take regarding its nuclear program.

In conclusion, post-September 11, international politics put an end to Iran's efforts to normalize foreign relations. Khatami's discourse of "dialogue between civilizations" was lost in the situation that followed President Bush's "Axis of Evil" speech, which placed Iran among rogue states. It then became obvious that, contrary to the hopes raised by reformists, Khatami's discourse and foreign policies could not provide the Islamic Republic with national security and stability against foreign threats. Likewise, for the hard-liners, Khatami's discourse no longer acted as a safety valve for protecting the entire regime from international pressures. The strategy of regime change and its practice in Iran's eastern and western neighbouring countries, Afghanistan and Iraq, together with escalating tensions over Iran's nuclear program, created a national-security concern that helped the hard-liners consolidate their power, splitting the reformists and marginalizing their agenda for democratic transition.

The revival of Iran's nuclear plan is mostly a counter to America's threats. International politics in general has been destructive for the reformists and political reform in Iran.

The strategy of "regime change" in general, and the American policy against Iran's nuclear program in particular must be confronted with democracy at home and diplomacy abroad. Security and democracy are interconnected, and democratization will ensure the security and survival of the Iranian state. The American and Iranian hard-liners may use the nuclear issue to exploit their political agenda. One must, however, bear in mind the following triple points:

Iran has a legitimate right to enjoy its nuclear energy.

The nuclear issue is an Iranian problem; it needs an Iranian solution. American intervention, military or economic, will destroy political reform and democratic movement in Iran.

Discussion Summary

In this discussion period, nine general topics were discussed:

- the road to political reform and democratization in Iran
- the nature of the Iranian state
- the absence of decision-making in Iran
- Iran's rights versus its obligations regarding nuclear enrichment
- involving other regional actors in the overall negotiations
- the role of oil revenues to the Iranian state
- decoupling safety concerns from the nuclear disagreement
- language ambiguities in relations with Iran
- the technological capabilities of the Iranian state and its nuclear program

The road to political reform and democratization in Iran:

One participant began by stating that both presenters spoke to the relationship between reform and the nuclear issue, though each touched on it with different perspectives. James Devine's presentation made the point that there is the potential for the regime to trap and undermine itself on the issue of nuclear power without the use of military action. The participant believed this to be an important point that should be considered in more depth.

A second participant added that democracy means different things in different places. It has to be homegrown out of the country's own social experience; it can't be imported.

A third participant added that democracy has a very thin meaning in Iran. In some respects, one could argue that Iran is a democracy. Reform was about democracy with a particular quality. Had it been pursued, it would have taken Iran down a different road and would be a counterforce to

nationalism. However, at present, the regime is shifting from Islamic ideology to a nationalist paradigm, and so the future and quality of democracy will depend on how democratic forces will interact with nationalistic forces.

A fourth participant added that the worst thing that happened for Iran wasn't the Islamic revolution, but rather the failure of the constitutional revolution. If that had been successful at its time, it would have begun a process through which the system would have matured by now.

A fifth participant added that former President Khatami's reform movement failed for two reasons. First, he misunderstood the nature of the U.S.-Iranian conflict. His successors will continue to fail as long as that conflict exists. Second, Khatami's reform movement was a middle-class movement. This is an extremely important element in its failure. The middle and higher classes have always been competing with one another, and both have traditionally used the poorer class for their own gain. The allegiance of the poor goes back and forth between these two upper classes. Whoever gets the poor on their side usually wins in elections and rises to power. After its success, the ruling class eventually forgets about the poor, and the poor move back to the competing side. It is important to understand those dynamics.

A sixth participant added that classes have always been dynamic in Iran. Different classes have played different roles in Iran's history, and there haven't been natural roles for any social class over time. This needs to be taken into consideration when addressing Iran's socio-political context and the potential for democratization and reform.

Finally, a seventh participant shared a proposition from a French academic in the early '90s who stated that the Iranian revolution was a failure because the lower classes, who were intended to reap the most benefits, were worse off after the revolution than before.

The nature of the Iranian state:

One participant observed that the nature of the Iranian state is a combination of democracy and authoritarianism.

A second participant maintained that, in fact, Iran is a national security state. It is not a normal state like Sweden or Canada. It has been a revolutionary state since its advent in 1979. It has had to deal with wars, revolutions, and internal and external threats. It is beyond totalitarian/authoritarian, but has yet to reach the status of other normal states, as it has always been fighting for its survival.

The absence of decision-making in Iran:

One participant stated that Iran has made a decision about what to do with its nuclear ambitions – Iran wants to enrich and it is publicly committed to it. They've made a decision, and now it's the international community that has to determine its response to the position Iran has taken. Simply put, Iran has made a decision; we have yet to accept it.

A second participant agreed that it is apparent Iran wants to enrich, but judged that, beyond this point, there is very little consensus in Iran about how far to take it. There are differences over the program's goals (to obtain weapons, to create a latent option for security and deterrence, or to focus solely on technology and energy) as well as methodological approaches.

Iran's rights versus its obligations regarding nuclear enrichment:

One participant stated that Iran has recently been careful in distinguishing between rights and action and has increasingly moved towards saying, "It's our (national) right" to enrich uranium and have nuclear technology.

A second participant observed that Iran may very well have a right to the technology, but they also have an obligation to live up to safety requirements and responsibilities that the IAEA has imposed. The apparent lack of safe technology and an equally important safety culture are real concerns. These kinds of obligations and responsibilities must be considered when discussing rights. Iran needs to build back the international trust it has forfeited as a result of its belligerent behaviour over the last 20-odd years. Currently, there are several things that Iran has to come clean on in order to begin regaining the trust of the international community, such as:

- Where did the design for their uranium casement come from?
- What is happening with their P2 centrifuges?
- What has been the nature of their interactions with AQ Khan network?

Until Iran candidly provides answers to some of these concerns, there remains a fear that the regime is hiding some really negative things. Should they answer some of these pertinent concerns, they will slowly begin regaining our trust.

Furthermore, this idea of responsibility ties back into the domestic political structures. As it stands, Iran has not convinced many observers that it has or is committed to developing the domestic structure and capacity to safely implement and manage nuclear technology. The

participant concluded that we should all remember that rights should be balanced by obligations.

A third participant maintained that in the discourse of rights versus obligations, actors are not obligated to acknowledge and engage one another. In other words, they can agree to disagree, which appears to be the case with Iran and the U.S.

Involving other regional actors in U.S.-Iran nuclear negotiations:

One participant stated that one would misconstrue the interests and the bigger picture of U.S.-Iran relations if Israel's interests were not factored into the equation. There is nothing between the U.S. and Iran alone that can't be negotiated; every issue that is contentious and unapproachable is related to Israel's concerns. Israel's key concerns are its safety, the preservation of its state, and the exacerbation of terrorist activities through the support of Hamas and Hezbollah. In order for negotiations to be fruitful, Israel needs to be brought to the table. A grand bargain has to incorporate Israel's interests. Unless that is on the table, relations will stay as they are.

A second participant added that it is important, then, to also include Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states when negotiating with Iran.

A third participant added that there may be a good way to draw Israel to the negotiating table. In the coming months, there will be an International Scientific Olympiads competition held in Tehran, and Iran has invited both U.S. and Israeli delegations. Neither has committed attendance, but if they do, it could start the thawing of relations.

Oil revenues and the Iranian state:

One participant stated that Iran is indeed an oil state but decreasingly so. It used to be a major oil state. Iranians used to pay 3–4 per cent tax; now they pay around 15 per cent. Oil only contributes about 20 per cent of the country's GDP. Presently, more GDP is coming from agriculture and services than from oil. Oil remains an important element in the domestic economy, but Iran's situation differs greatly from those of its Persian Gulf neighbours, like Saudi Arabia.

A second participant added that very few petro states have been successful, except for Norway. Norway is running out of oil but seems to have diversified its economy well and established an emergency safety "heritage fund." If one looks at the more typical experiences of oil states in the Middle East and Africa, their economies and states don't function nearly in the same fashion, and many are close to failure.

A third participant observed that oil may be more important to Iran than it appears. Eighty per cent of Iran's foreign exchange reserves are derived from oil exports. Despite the fact that there is no accountability for the way this money is used, the fact that such a large percentage comes from oil is essentially the logic of a *rentier state,* and this in turn helps define Iran.

Decoupling safety concerns from the nuclear disagreement:

One participant expressed the need to decouple the present safety concerns of Bushehr nuclear power plant from political sanctions; the Bushehr case needs to be exempt from these issues. The participant supported previous comments that Iran needs to come clean and regain the trust of the international community. However, in the meantime, engineers and architects are pouring the concrete and cannot wait for the diplomats to resolve their differences. They will continue with the development of that site, whether in a safe or unsafe manner. Iran needs to have quality-assurance people inspecting the progress before they cover the steam generator at Bushehr. This needs to be taken into consideration purely for general environmental and safety reasons. Several participants endorsed these sentiments.

Language ambiguities in relations with Iran:

One participant noted the importance of the language used in determining the success of bilateral and multilateral relations. The participant maintained that there are a number of issues with language. Different words have different connotations. Simple language issues can add unnecessary constraints to the improvement of relations and the overall progress of dialogue.

For example, the word "suspension," which the international community has used in reference to Iranian enrichment activities, has a very negative connotation in Farsi. The Iranian regime is in such a state that even if it wanted to concede and accept terms that used such language, it couldn't because it needs to appear strong and accountable to its people; it needs to save face. Instead of a word like "suspension," perhaps it would serve the larger purpose better to use "standby," because standby has a more positive connotation and is less threatening.

The absence of intellectual and technological knowledge in the Iranian nuclear program:

One participant noted that, given Iran's late introduction to and experience with natural sciences, some pertinent concerns arise concerning the know-how behind their nuclear program, such as whether it has the intellectual capabilities to safely manage such a program, and

whether it even needs nuclear energy (assuming there is no intention of building nuclear weapons) to address apparent energy shortages.

The major concerns surrounding the intellectual and technical capabilities to safely manage Iran's nuclear program come from Iranian academics and scientists, namely the Physics Society of Iran. The members of this group profess that the manifestation of Iran's nuclear ambitions are a bluff and that Iran does not have the required capabilities and standards to develop and maintain such a program. Furthermore, they argue that none of Iran's prominent scientists are involved in the nuclear program and so Iranians, as well as the international community, should be concerned about who *is* involved. Based on the testimony of a former reformist Iranian parliamentarian who visited the nuclear sites, the facilities were being operated by young Iranian scientists who had been sent to Russia for education on nuclear physics right after finishing high school. If these scientists are now spearheading nuclear research in Iran, the program may not be intellectually sound and perhaps is merely a political bluff.

Concerning whether Iran needs nuclear energy to address apparent energy shortages and whether it is in Iran's national interest to pursue this nuclear program, the first thing to note is that Iran possesses only 1400 tons of low-grade uranium, which translates to approximately three to five years of supply of nuclear fuel. Even if Iran wants to go nuclear, they would have to rely on a steady supply of fuel from an outside partner. Currently, that outside partner (for better or worse) has been and will probably continue to be Russia, because sanctions have limited the development of nuclear trade relations with other international partners. Given what Russia did to Ukraine last year (blocking Ukraine's supply of oil at the height of winter due to political differences), Iran should be very wary of becoming overly dependent on such a partner for a sustainable supply of nuclear fuel.

The participant concluded by asking: If Iran's progress in the nuclear realm continues, despite the lack of fuel and technical nuclear know-how, and the Islamic Republic develops or is in a position to be capable of developing nuclear weapons, how will the international community react? There are many people in Iran who hate the regime, but nevertheless the majority believes in the country's right to develop nuclear energy, and the question has become an issue of national pride. The international community's reaction must take this into account.

Canadian and Global Responses

Iran and the Problems of Strategic Analysis

Thomas Juneau

This presentation reflects the personal views of the author, and not those of the Department of National Defence or the Government of Canada.

Thinking about Iran is often more art than science. The domestic political scene is excessively opaque and complex, the decision-making mechanisms are poorly understood by outsiders (let alone by insiders), and a fractured, dynamic political culture often impedes a clear reading of current events. For the strategic analysis community in government, this makes for a highly challenging environment in which to answer the questions that are of interest to policy- and decision-makers. Many questions remain only partially answered, the role of key individuals is difficult to precisely define, and the country's foreign and security policies remain the subject of much debate.

In this context, this presentation is an attempt to share personal thoughts on some of the difficult questions with which Iran analysts may grapple. It is structured around key questions and answers – or, more often that not, because of the reality of studying Iran, partial answers. It is divided into three sections: the nuclear program, domestic politics, and regional politics.

The nuclear program

Does Iran want to indigenously develop a nuclear weapon? My personal view is that no decision has been made at the strategic level, in part because no consensus has been reached among the regime's myriad competing factions as to how far the country should go. The outcome of this absence of consensus may be a muddling along to reach the "Japan" stage, which implies that most factions agree on the lowest common denominator that much would be gained by mastering the enrichment cycle – or at least, being perceived as seeking to master it. If that stage is

reached, the decision to go all the way could, in theory, be rapidly taken. In the meantime, the objectives of the main factions are more or less satisfied. But this is an assessment; like most other conclusions presented here, it is not based on hard evidence.

How far is Iran from having a nuclear weapon? Public assessments range from three to 10 years. But analysts have been wrong on similar predictions many times before, as was the case with Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. The precise state of Iran's nuclear program is poorly understood, and in any case something could happen that would throw off current projections, such as the unveiling of a previously unknown secret installation or the disclosure of new co-operation from another country. Or, surprises could come that would have the opposite effect of delaying success, such as more technical setbacks (similar to those thought to be currently experienced with the centrifuge cascades).

What would Iran do with a nuclear weapon, should it get one? Would it be strictly for deterrent, defensive purposes? I tend to accept the proposition that Iran would be unlikely to attack another country. But, in addition to gaining a significant deterrent, a nuclear-armed Iran would be emboldened to behave more assertively, and perhaps so would some of its allies, such as Syria or Hezbollah. The latter, in particular, could feel emboldened by what it would perceive as the increased power of its main backer. Hezbollah could then engage in more assertive behaviour, believing that its opponents on the Lebanese or Israeli political scene would be more reluctant to confront it.

Finally, working on the assumption that a nuclear-armed Iran would be detrimental to regional and international security, why don't some key members of the international community more actively oppose Iran's nuclear plans, or its more assertive ambitions generally? Why does it seem that some, who I would argue would not gain from a nuclear Iran, are resisting the U.S. at the same time as they are resisting the Islamic Republic? All these questions have important policy implications.

The key is to remember that with a few marginal exceptions (such as Venezuela and Cuba), most countries, especially those in the Middle East region, do not want Iran to acquire a nuclear weapon; yet at the same time, most do not want to provide the U.S. with a blank cheque in playing the role of regional arbiter. To varying degrees, they are therefore playing a delicate balancing act of trying to restrain both countries. As Iran has grown particularly assertive recently, many have tilted their strategies, increasing somewhat their support for U.S. initiatives, and decreasing their support for the Islamic Republic. This would explain the rapidity with which the UN Security Council agreed to Resolution 1747 in late March

2007. Russia, in particular, seems to have grown somewhat irritated at Iran's behaviour, and did not object much to the U.S.'s (albeit limited) new sanctions package. However, this should not be interpreted in any way as implying that Russia and China are dropping completely their diplomatic support for Iran: they may be willing to tighten the screws to send a message to Tehran, but they are as unwilling as before to cease trying to restrain the exercise of U.S. power.

Domestic politics

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad seems to have lost standing in the regime's pecking order in the wake of the December 2006 elections. Is he a "has-been," as some media reports have suggested, or has he only been temporarily weakened? I would argue for the latter; the President is still a useful element in Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's game of balancing competing factions within the establishment. We saw last year, for example, rumors of Ahmadinejad's possible impeachment; this is unlikely, however, as his elimination would remove one of the strongest counterweights to other powerful factions, especially that led by former President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and his pragmatic conservative allies. Khamenei can still find Ahmadinejad useful, though probably annoying – the President makes him and some of his close allies look more moderate than they really are. In any case, it is doubtful that the Leader would be strong enough to unseat the President completely; the younger generation of radicals or hard-liners around the President (sometimes known as Iran's own neo-conservatives) have reached many positions of influence in recent years, and will wield significant power for the foreseeable future. It should be noted, however, with regard to the President's rhetoric and threats to wipe Israel off the map, that if Iran does succeed in building nuclear weapons, in all likelihood Ahmadinejad will not be around by then. Indeed, as things currently stand, his re-election prospects in the 2009 presidential election appear, at best, bleak.

In general, what are the implications for the country's foreign policy in light of this recent shift in the internal balance of power – in favour of the more pragmatic or moderate conservative elements of the establishment? My view is that there is likely to be a shift, but a tactical one only, which could consist of more moderation in the tone (as advocated by Rafsanjani), some openness to negotiate on the nuclear issue, and less harsh rhetoric (for example, Ali Akbar Velayati, a former foreign minister and now a close advisor to the Leader, recently recognized the genocide as an "accepted historical fact"). But at the strategic level, under current circumstances, I do not anticipate a significant shift.

Does this imply that there is now an opening to engage those more pragmatic elements within the regime, with the goal of driving a wedge between them and the hard-liners? I think that this may be the case, and that if the West refuses to do so, there could be a repeat of the aftermath of the "Axis of Evil" speech, when, in the face of a confrontationist U.S. stance, the hard-liners were strengthened, whereas the more moderate voices, who had been favouring engagement, were weakened. Yet even if this assessment is correct, it is highly unlikely that, even in the best of all worlds, Iran would simply open the door wide to frank negotiations with the West.

Should the more pragmatic factions favouring negotiations emerge victorious from this debate, it would only be after a painful, protracted tug-of-war. In the meantime, the country can be expected to resort to its usual stalling and posturing tactics which, in most cases, will serve the useful purpose of diverting attention from the nuclear issue, improving its bargaining position, and reminding its adversaries of its capabilities. The late March seizure of 15 U.K. troops may well be a case in point, though at the time of writing, it was still unclear how things would unfold. This incident probably highlights another important trend. Iran has watched with some concern as many Sunni Arab countries have aligned themselves closer to the U.S. and against the Islamic Republic in recent months. Tehran will therefore be anxious to remind the likes of Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan that it is more closely aligned with the "Arab street" than they are, and that they attempt any significant rapprochement with Washington and the West only at the risk of further alienating their already prickly populations.

Finally, who will succeed Supreme Leader Khamenei? Reports of his supposedly terminal illness late last year seem to have faded away, but there nonetheless appears to be talk of transition simmering beneath the surface. Can we imagine Rafsanjani as the next Leader? Other names that occasionally surface include, among others, Ayatollah Shahroudi (the head of the judiciary) and Ayatollah Mesbah-Yazdi (a hard-line conservative cleric, and the President's "spiritual mentor"). At this stage, a number of scenarios are possible. In recent months there have been rumours, fuelled by Rafsanjani himself in public speeches, of a Leadership Council taking over once Khamenei exits the scene. Perhaps Khamenei wishes to seal his place in the history of the Islamic Republic as its only Supreme Leader alongside the father of the 1979 revolution, the still-revered Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. If this is the case, Khamenei may want a form of council to succeed him, with the implicit message that there is no one individual now capable of fulfilling the Leader's responsibilities. This body could plausibly include members of the leading factions of the

establishment, such as Rafsanjani (representing the pragmatists), former President Khatami (from the reformist camp), and a representative from hard-line factions. Of interest to analysts on this matter is the question of the consequences for the country's foreign policy and for regional security of the eventual succession.

Regional politics

What does Iran want in Iraq? Certainly a friendly, Shi'a regime, but there are limits to the extent that this can be achieved. Tehran does not want a vibrant, pro-U.S. democracy, but this also seems unlikely to come about, for now at least. Iran has wider objectives: it appreciates seeing the U.S. bogged down, which helps to discredit a policy that it much fears – regime change. In addition, along with Afghanistan under the Taliban, Saddam's Iraq acted to contain the spread of Iranian influence; the removal of the Iraqi "counter-balance" is also much appreciated in Tehran, and there is little wish for a new version. On the other hand, too much instability is definitely not in Iran's interest. Managed chaos, then, may be the preferred outcome, though perhaps not official policy.

Between these competing objectives, where is this middle ground that Iran seeks? Tehran has to be careful to avoid an escalation. A big attack in Iraq, for example, that would be linked by the U.S. to Iran – rightly or wrongly – could serve as a pretext for the U.S. to increase the pressure on the Islamic Republic. It seems that Iran wants to avoid this – witness, for example, its muted reactions to the seizure by the U.S. of Iranian personnel in Iraq in late 2006 and early 2007.

Is Iran leading a rising Shi'a bloc, as the King of Jordan and others would have us believe? I prefer to see it as a political, and not an ideological or religious, phenomenon, a grouping that includes both Shi'a and non-Shi'a actors such as Iran, Syria and Hezbollah, as well as Hamas and other Palestinian groups. It is based on a tactical convergence of interests, and on a rejectionist view of the U.S.-dominated order, not on any common, constructive ideology. This marriage of convenience (or perhaps of habit, in the case of Iran and Syria) does not form the basis of any solid, long-standing alliance between these countries and groups. Nonetheless, should we worry? Perhaps the way the situation is portrayed itself aggravates tensions. Perhaps this is also an elite-driven more than a mass-driven phenomenon, propped in part by fears in pro-U.S. Arab capitals of Iranian revisionism.

On a related matter, Iran's regional standing and influence is also an issue that deserves careful attention. Overall, I would argue that it is easy to

overestimate "Iran's rise," as has often been alleged in the past three to four years. To be sure, Iran has gained a lot in this period – if anything, the overthrow of the Saddam and Taliban regimes removed two counterweights to its influence, which had acted to box in or contain the Islamic Republic. But I would argue that other factors play against the rise of Tehran's regional influence, and that they tend to have more of a long-term impact. These include, among others, a structurally weak economy, a looming demographic crisis, and a shortage of true allies and friends, combined with the fact that there is no shortage of states ready to oppose its ambitions. My assessment is, therefore, that there is a "ceiling" of sorts to Iran's power, and that it cannot develop into *the* regional hegemon, though it certainly can – and does – play the role of *a* regional power.

One test of this assessment would be to question whether Iran has been weakened or strengthened by last summer's war between Israel and Hezbollah. Many observers have said or written that Hezbollah won and that its status as a deterrent tool for Iran has been enhanced. But upon closer inspection, that may not be the case. Hezbollah has evolved into a deeply entrenched, powerful actor on the Lebanese scene, and an increasingly independent one.

In this context, what if – hypothetically – the U.S. attacks Iran at some point in the future (for example, with air strikes on key nuclear installations and military sites), and Tehran then expects Hezbollah to retaliate against Israel? Obviously, should Hezbollah oblige, Israel would in turn retaliate very harshly, something that the exhausted Lebanese population – non-Shi'a, but Shi'a also – would not appreciate. Hezbollah's power, and hence its independence from Iran, depends on its popularity with the Lebanese population. It would therefore be reluctant to enter into a new war, at Iran's behest, because if it did, it could stand to lose some (and probably a lot of) popular support, and therefore political power, on the Lebanese scene. This suggests the limits of the convergence of interests of Hezbollah and Iran, and is perhaps a loss for the Islamic Republic.

Finally – a key question – will the U.S. attack Iran? Obviously, there are important implications: on oil prices; on maritime security in the Gulf; on stability in Afghanistan; on anti-Western feelings in the Muslim world; and, specifically for Canada, the possibility that the U.S. could ask our country for support, whether political or military. I still assess that an attack is unlikely to happen, that domestic, regional and international political factors, as well as technical and military ones, militate against this outcome, and outweigh the perceived benefits for both Washington and Tehran. But the threat of force is a useful and, I would say, quite efficient tool in

Washington's negotiating kit. The unveiling in March of a new hyper bunker-busting bomb or the dispatch to the Gulf of a second carrier strike group would underline the threat.

To justify this assessment, I would argue that cost-benefit analyses for both Iran and the U.S. are likely to lead both actors to refrain from attacking (in the case of the U.S.), and to refrain from provoking actions that would lead to a U.S. attack (in the case of Iran). For the U.S., the potential costs are striking: the spectre of all-out Iranian retaliation, possibly through proxies or allies (in Iraq, Lebanon, Afghanistan, elsewhere in the region, including in the waters of the Persian Gulf); the impact on oil prices; the huge diplomatic costs (especially within NATO and the Muslim world); and the lack of domestic support, including in Congress. In addition, militarily and technically, this would be a highly complex and prolonged operation, and not a repeat of Israel's straightforward 1981 strike on Iraq's Osirak reactor. These costs outweigh the benefits, which themselves can be overrated: in all likelihood, such an attack would not lead to regime collapse, may even lead to a rallying of the population around the regime, and would probably only delay the completion of the program by, at best, a few years.

It also helps to look at things from Iran's perspective. The regime feels emboldened by recent events, and it is all too aware of the significant factors playing against an eventual U.S. attack. Tehran therefore assesses that it can maintain its current course for a while yet. But as tensions rise, as Iran's growing international isolation pinches its pride and as sanctions start taking a greater toll, the regime is likely to grow increasingly cautious – while it recognizes the costs for the U.S. of an eventual military confrontation, it is nonetheless an outcome it wants to avoid. While it is unlikely that the regime would collapse, it remains the case that an attack would undoubtedly open a period of economic, social and political upheavals in the country. For a regime that is all too aware of its brittle legitimacy and popular support, such a concern acts as a source of restraint. Furthermore, the current regime of sanctions, both UN-imposed and unilateral U.S.-led, is beginning to hurt, and is leading to more and more voices calling for moderation and negotiations.

In sum, it is assessed that the stalemate is likely to continue for the short and mid-term. Iran is still years away from actually possessing a functional nuclear weapon (assuming that this is what it eventually wants), neither country really wants all-out confrontation, and both are, for now, too far apart to agree to a diplomatic solution.

Challenges for Canadian Foreign Policy

Jeffrey McLaren

This presentation reflects the personal views of the author, and not those of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade or the Government of Canada.

Regarding Canadian-Iranian relations, before we can discuss where we are going in the future and why, it is important to review how relations have developed over time. Canadian relations with Iran resumed in 1988 with the reopening of the Canadian Embassy in Tehran, which had been closed during the U.S. hostage crisis; however, despite the resumption of diplomatic relations, there have been limitations on contacts as a result of Canada's Controlled Engagement Policy. This policy has limited relations because of Canadian concerns about Iran's policies, such as Iran's pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, its human rights record, its rejection of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, and its support for international terrorism.

The Controlled Engagement Policy entails that Canada would not permit Iran to open consulates, would prevent bilateral air agreements, would not enter into formal agreements with the Iranian regime, and would limit the level of bilateral consultations. There were no ministerial contacts between 1988 and 2000.

In the Khatami period, Canada actively tried to expand relations. In 2000, Canada's Deputy Minister of Agriculture visited Iran as the first high-level official visit. This led to a visit by the Iranian Minister of Natural Resources to Canada, and Foreign Minister Manley visiting Iran. Then the Zahra Kazemi situation happened in 2001. What has transpired since the Kazemi situation all relates back to Iran's management of this case and the Canadian response. Canada waited for a legitimate juridical process and the return of the body for burial, but none of this ever happened. In May 2005, no juridical process had been initiated, and instead, someone was charged for the murder even though it was believed that the

individual charged was not responsible for the crime. These actions led Foreign Minister Pettigrew to tighten the Controlled Engagement Policy, which meant that Canada would only talk to Iran on three subjects: the Kazemi situation, their human rights record, and the nuclear program. Interestingly enough, those are the very issues that Iran does not wish to discuss with any other country. Since the implementation of this policy, and the election of Ahmadinejad as president, there has been a downward spiral in relations.

Why Kazemi?

Simply put, consular issues are central to Canadian foreign policy. It was a sensitive issue because it had to do with the protection of a Canadian outside of the country. Canadians have an expectation that the Foreign Ministry will do everything it can to protect them when they are abroad. As a result, Canada, more than most other countries, prioritizes the protection of Canadians' consular rights in its foreign policy.

In addition to responding to the demands of the public, another reason these issues get so much attention in foreign policy is because the Foreign Minister can take a beating from the press if and when they occur. For example, if Canada fails to deliver and protect its citizens abroad, in Mexico perhaps, it is on the front page of every newspaper. The abducted Canadian in China who was brought to court last month is another example. With this case, the Chinese refuse to deal with Canada because he is a dual citizen (they do not recognize dual citizenship like Iran in the Kazemi case).

There is an expectation level at home that Canadians who are overseas must have protection, but realistically speaking, there are limits to what the Canadian Government can do. When you go to a foreign country, and especially if you are a dual citizen, you must abide by the rules and regulations of the country receiving you, not those upheld in Canada. This is the context of the Kazemi case. We still have not had a desirable and acceptable resolution in this case, and no such solution appears likely in the near future.

Presently, the Canadian government has no real desire to have a close relationship with Iran unless it first addresses the markers of the Tightened Controlled Engagement Policy. In turn, Iran has no desire to meet those markers, and so we are stuck.

With the nuclear issue, Canada's position is solidly lined up with the Western countries, with the Security Council and with the IAEA. It is up

to Iran to address the demands of the IAEA and the UN Security Council. As such, Canada cannot be a broker, as we have a clear policy principle we are seeking to enforce. There has been no action on the Kazemi case and no action on the nuclear issue on the part of Iran. With human rights, Canada has led the UN general assembly in drafting the resolution calling on Iran to improve on human rights; Iran is rejecting that.

With the three issues that Canada is committed to addressing, we are facing a stonewall. With this, it is not likely that Canadian-Iranian relations will get better any time soon. Canada cannot be an honest broker between the U.S. and Iran because Canada does not think Iran has a reasonable case. Canada solidly supports the international consensus that Iran is wrong on the nuclear issue and on its dealings with human rights in general, and Canada cannot afford to concede on these issues. Canada has principles that we are attempting to uphold. Looking at this from Iran's perspective, for Canada to be an honest broker in their relations with the international community and the U.S. regarding their nuclear program, Iran would have to engage Canada with trust. They do not, and so Canada cannot be an honest broker in the view of Iran.

From Canada's perspective, the way it perceives Iran is not much different than how Iran perceives Canada. Iran ranks poorly on Canada's list of reputable countries. Moreover, there is no desire on Canada's part to expend political capital on improving relations with Iran as we have received no signal that it is interested in addressing our concerns, and because Iran is not a priority country in the way that Afghanistan, Haiti and Sudan are.

Discussion Summary

In this discussion session, three main topics were discussed: international responses to and engagement with Iran; the Zahra Kazemi issue; and, finally, better relations between Canada and Iran.

International responses and engagement with Iran:

One participant stated that, should Iran be attacked, the forces in the region would react in favour of Iran. The international community and the U.S. must break out of the logic of confrontation in order to come up with a better solution, and dialogue is the best route. The U.S. should engage with the regime if it wants a change; however, this is not easy for politicians because of the tremendous pressures they have domestically. Nevertheless, something must be done.

A second participant maintained that if the U.S. were to attack Iran, the threat of regional retaliation (vis-à-vis Hezbollah) is not a deterrent tool for Iran to use because Hezbollah has domestic constraints that limit the level of its responsiveness to Iran.

Finally, a third participant expressed doubt that Canada supports a military intervention against Iran and suggested that the U.S. does not want to attack Iran either. Both countries have been working with a number of other countries to construct a unified, consensus-based diplomatic solution.

Zahra Kazemi issue:

Regarding the Kazemi issue, one participant began by asking whether Kazemi entered Iran with a Canadian or an Iranian passport, and if she had entered with an Iranian passport, would she then be considered Canadian in Iran, diplomatically speaking.

A second participant responded that she had entered Iran with an Iranian passport and that Iran does not recognize dual citizenship. Canada, on the other hand, does not have first- or second-class citizenship. So if you are Canadian, it does not matter what passport you travel on, you are a

Canadian citizen. But individual countries determine their own rules, and so what Canada believes does not matter in Iran.

A third participant added that it is important to consider that we are talking about the life of only one person. If Canada is concerned about saving lives, why does it not consider safety issues in Iran, such as reducing the risk of flying by helping abolish sanctions on importing aircrafts and parts to Iran? Iran has the highest rate of aircraft accidents. Canada could help save the lives of thousands. A fourth participant responded that lifting sanctions on aircraft parts is a concern for the U.S. and not Canada. Unfortunately, the Controlled Engagement Policy does not incorporate this important element into one of the three issues that Canada will engage Iran on.

A fifth participant observed that the Kazemi case is a symbol of what is happening more generally in Iran. Even if standing up for human rights will not influence the Iranian government, it can support the people who were working for change within the country and may encourage certain activities to sprout in Iran.

A sixth participant stated that in diplomacy sometimes a point is reached where one side needs to have a marker on the table, and for Canada that marker has been the Kazemi issue. Canada has 250,000 Iranian-Canadians, many of whom travel back to Iran on a regular basis. The policy taken by Canada and the attention devoted to the Kazemi case has increased Iranian-Canadians' confidence that they will be safe when returning home. In fact, Iranian-Canadians will feel safer and perhaps be better treated because Iranians know that the Canadians will react to issues like the Kazemi case. Such policies are beneficial as well as symbolic.

Improving relations between Canada and Iran:

One participant began by asking why it isn't a priority for Canada to be cultivating better relations with Iran, especially given the very large Iranian diaspora that resides in Canada. It seems counterintuitive for relations to remain tangled while international tensions continue to rise and Iran's influence in the region continues to grow. If Canada were to better its relations, it could play a very constructive role in defusing these current tensions.

A second participant maintained that the position Canada has taken regarding the normalizing of relations with Iran is not completely irrational as a response to Iran's behaviour, and there are good reasons for it. Furthermore, if Iran wants to be a leader on the global stage, it has to meet certain standards and thresholds that it is not currently meeting.

A third participant noted that politicians believe Iran is not a priority to Canada, and that the large Iranian community in Canada could help change that. Where is this group on the issue of Canada's normalization of relations with Iran? Also, there are connections between Canadian universities and Iranian universities; why is the Canadian government not exploiting these resources? Where are they in the equation for normalizing relations?

A fourth participant maintained that the Iranian-Canadian diaspora community is very politically heterogeneous and perhaps could not lend as much assistance to the process as may be hoped. In fact, there is no national Iranian community in Canada because they are very fragmented, with different interests. The most politically active group is the MEK, which lacks credibility with the government.[4]

A fifth participant expressed doubt about whether Canada can achieve its principled goals by pressing for human rights against Iran. Even within the Iranian government, there are people who are very sympathetic towards Canada's stance on the Kazemi issue. However, by linking Iran's domestic human rights issues to foreign powers, it merely discredits the local actors and groups and makes them appear to be foreign pawns. There is little incentive for the Iranians to respond. Canada can keep playing this game or perhaps could move forward on something tangible and then bring up other contentious issues.

A sixth participant expressed confusion over what incentives Canada could offer Iran. Iran wants a security guarantee; however, Iran is not fighting for the nuclear program for security. Nowhere in the dialogue has Iran said that it will exchange the program for security; rather Iran claims that it needs the program for legitimate energy concerns. Hence, we in the international community cannot reject the European offer because it did not provide a security guarantee, when that was not the agenda. In this light, do the Iranians really need a carrot from Canada? Probably not.

A seventh participant maintained that Canada is taking a hard-line approach towards Iran, but neglects to realize that there are many factions

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[4] *****Editors note: The acronym MEK stands for the Mujahedin e Khalq. The Canadian government considers the group to be an Iranian terrorist organization. Based in Iraq until recently, MEK subscribes to an eclectic ideology that combines its own interpretation of Shiite Islamism with Marxist principles. The group aspires to destroy the current regime in Iran and to establish a democratic socialist Islamic republic, attained through the total elimination of Western influence, described as "Westoxication." To achieve this Islamic-socialist ideology, the use of physical force, armed struggle or jihad is necessary.

within Iran. However, if Canada continues to deal with Iran in such a monotone fashion, it shall lose even these allies. We need dialogue between these two countries, because this could build better relations with those in Iran who support Canada's claims and who can do the behind-the-scenes work to come up with a resolution. What Canada has to keep in mind is that it has traditionally been a soft-power country, and we are losing our edge on the international stage by taking such rigid stances. There are people within the Iranian establishment who would be interested to see Canada assert a positive role in changing the situation for Iran on the world stage in a positive, non-aggressive way. Canada should be taking advantage of such elements, not ignoring them.

An eighth participant maintained that Canada has not been a balancer in wars and has never followed a policy of balancing or mediating. Rather, Canada balances between positions that are in the interest of Canada. In this light, sometimes Canada aligns itself with friends and sometimes it aligns itself with those it does not consider friends, depending on the issues. Regarding mediating between the Iranian and American positions, other countries have tried to be the mediators, and this is probably better because those countries can have a greater role than Canada can in this matter.

A ninth participant observed that in the tapestry of all these pros and cons, if Canada does not play the role of the mediator, who will? Canada has, in the past, done a wonderful job of playing this role; however, that has not been the case for a while. Why is the Canadian government focusing on the weaknesses of the relationship and not utilizing its strong points, such as the country's reputation as a diplomatic arbiter or the vast community resources they have at their disposal?

Appendix

Conference Participants

Payam Akhavan

Dr. Payam Akhavan is a professor of international law at Mcgill University in Canada. Dr. Akhavan is the President and co-Founder of the Iran Human Rights Documentation Centre in New Haven, Connecticut. He has served as the Legal Advisor to the Prosecutor's Office of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia at The Hague (1994-2000). He also served as Special Advisor to the United Nations in Cambodia, Guatemala, East Timor, and Rwanda, and represented sovereigns before international courts and tribunals.

Hooshang Amirahmadi

Dr. Hooshang Amirahmadi holds a Ph.D. in planning and international development from Cornell University and is the director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES) at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. Professor Amirahmadi is the founder and president of the American Iranian Council (http://www.american-iranian.org), a research and policy think-tank devoted to improving dialogue and understanding between the peoples of Iran and the United States. He is also a founder of the Center for Iranian Research and Analysis and served as its director for many years. He was a candidate for President in the Ninth Presidential Election in Iran in June 2005, but the conservative and religious Guardian Council disqualified him for his American citizenship and democratic platform. Dr. Amirahmadi's pioneering work on dialogue, understanding and better relations between the United States and Iran is widely acknowledged in the United States, Iran and beyond.

Nader Barzin

Dr. Barzin is an author and renowned European scholar and expert on Iran's nuclear activities. His recent book, *Nuclear Iran,* documents Iranian nuclear activities from the 1950s to today, analyzes developments in light

of regional geopolitical evolution and the international nuclear sector, and offers three scenarios of possible future outcomes of this crisis. Dr. Barzin holds a PhD in International Political Economy (Harvard, EHESS France), and was the administrator in charge of industrial development at the UN in the 1990s. He teaches Strategy at the HEC School of Management in Paris and is advisor to various governments and multinationals.

Deborah Campbell

Ms. Deborah Campbell is an author, journalist, and adjunct professor of literary non-fiction writing at the University of British Columbia. Her writing on international affairs has appeared in numerous publication including the Guardian, The Walrus, Asia Times, Ms. Magazine, and in anthologies and essay collections in North America, Europe and Asia. Her radio documentaries have broadcast on NPR and CBC. In 2005, she spent six months traveling throughout Iran, exploring the socio-political and cultural Iranian views of the nuclear issue and going places few Western journalists have gone, including Iranian Kurdistan and inside the Bushehr nuclear plan compound. She has guest lectured at Harvard's Center for Middle Eastern Studies and most recently at Zayed University in Dubai.

Maurice Copithorne

Dr. Maurice Copithorne was born and educated in Vancouver. He graduated from the University of British Columbia in 1955 with a B.A. - L.L.B. He was called to the Bar of British Columbia in 1956 and then joined the Canadian Foreign Service. During his 30 years with the Department of External Affairs, he served in a wide variety of positions both in Ottawa and abroad. Among those were Legal Advisor and Director General of Legal Affairs 1975-1979, Canadian Ambassador to Austria and UN Agencies in Vienna 1979-1982 (including the Chairmanship of the International Atomic Energy Board of Governors 1980-81), Assistant Under Secretary of State for Asia and the Pacific 1982-1983 and Canadian Commissioner to Hong Kong 1983-1986. He was a Fellow of the Weatherhead Centre of International Affairs, Harvard University 1974-1975. In 1986, he retired from the Foreign Service to take up a visiting professorship at the Faculty of Law at the University of British Columbia. He continues to teach international law there on a part-time basis. He has held a variety of external appointments including, particularly, that of United Nations Special Representative on the Human Rights Situation in Iran, 1995 -2002.

James Devine

Mr. James Devine is a lecturer at Concordia University in Montreal and a doctoral candidate at McGill University as well as a member of the directorial board for the Inter-University Consortium for Arab and Middle East Studies (ICAMES). His research focuses on accommodation within Middle Eastern strategic rivalries, and his main interests include the politics and foreign policy of Iran, international relations of the Persian Gulf, and foreign policy in the Arab world.

Hoochang Hassan-Yari

Dr. Houchang Hassan-Yari is the Head of the Politics and Economics Department and a Professor of international relations (military and strategic issues) at the Royal Military College of Canada (since 1994). Furthermore, Dr. Hassan-Yari is an adjunct Professor at the Department of History at Queen's University as well as a Senior Fellow at the Queen's Centre for International Relations. He was formerly a sessional lecturer at Université du Québec à Montréal (1985-2001) and a guest Professor at Shahid Beheshti (National) University, Tehran, 1993-94. He is widely published in both French and English.

Mojtaba Mahdavi

Mr. Mojtaba Mahdavi is Assistant Professor at the Department of Political Science at the University of Alberta. His research specializes in Politics and Culture of the Muslim World, Politics in the Middle East, Islam: Modernity and Democracy, Contemporary Islamic Movements and Global Politics, Religion and Politics, Comparative Politics of the Global South, and Theories of Democratization and Democracy. He has published widely in English.

Jeffrey McLaren

In 1992, Mr. Jeffrey McLaren joined the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and worked as a Peacekeeping Desk Officer soon after. From 1995 to 1997 he was posted to the Embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and worked as a Desk Officer for Iraq and Iran from 1997 to 2001. He was recently the Head of the Political Economic Section of the

Canadian High Commission in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. He is currently the Deputy Director for Iraq and Iran.

Thomas Juneau

Mr. Thomas Juneau is a strategic analyst with the Directorate of Strategic Analysis at the Government of Canada's Department of National Defence, where he covers Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asia. His research focuses on Iran's foreign policy and regional security issues. His previous assignments in the department have included a stint as the special assistant to the Deputy Minister and a brief posting in Defence intelligence. Mr Juneau is the first author of a book on security in Central Asia and the Caucasus, published in 2004 by Laval University Press. He holds a Masters in International Relations from Laval University.

Najmedin Meshkati

Dr. Najmedin (Najm) Meshkati is an Associate Professor of Civil/Environmental Engineering and Associate Professor of Industrial and Systems Engineering at the University of Southern California (USC). He is a Fellow of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society, and AT&T Faculty Fellow in Industrial Ecology, and a Certified Professional Ergonomist. Dr. Meshkati's research and practice are concerned with the human, organizational, and regulatory factors affecting the safety and operation of large-scale, complex technological systems (e.g., nuclear power plants, chemical processing plants, and aviation systems) around the world. He has been either the Principal Investigator or co-investigator for several funded research projects by the National Science Foundation and by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Meshkati simultaneously received a B.S. in Industrial Engineering and a B.A. in Political Science in 1976, from Sharif (Arya-Meher) University of Technology and Shahid Beheshti University (National University of Iran), respectively; a M.S. in Engineering Management in 1978; and a Ph.D. in Industrial and Systems Engineering in 1983 from USC.

Ali Nayeri

Dr. Ali Nayeri holds a PhD in Theoretical Physics from MIT and is among the top 100 Iranian-American Scientists. Dr. Nayeri has published numerous papers in various scientific journals in the US, UK, Netherlands

and Russia. He is the co-founder and current member of the Board of Directors of the Iranian Studies Group at MIT, and co-founder of Iranian Research Group at University of Florida. Dr. Nayeri has lectured extensively on topics surrounding Iran's nuclear ambitions and potential policy suggestions.

Ali Sadeghi

Dr. Ali Sadeghi received his Ph.D. in international relations from the London School of Economics in 1988. He started his academic career in the University of Isfahan where he set up the department of political science and taught there for twelve years before moving to Canada. He is currently teaching in the Department of Political Science, Simon Fraser University. Dr. Sadeghi has published two books in Persian and a number of articles in English covering various aspects of Iran's political culture.

R.R. Subramanian

Dr. R R Subramanian, an expert in Indo-US relations, specifically non-proliferation issues and technology transfer, joined the Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses in New Delhi as a specialist in nuclear studies. A Fulbright scholar at Harvard's Centre for Science and International Affairs, Dr Subramanian acquired his doctorate from Brandeis University in the United States before moving to Stanford to specialize in arms control and disarmament issues. He subsequently went to Freiburg University in Germany and was associated with its Institute of Science and Politics.

Conference Agenda

Day 1: Monday, March 12th

8:00: Shuttle bus pick up from hotel, transport to UBC

8:30: Breakfast

9:00: Conference Introduction

- Brian Job and Wade Huntley

9:30: Historical and Regional Roots

Presentations:

- Ali Sadeghi, *Persian History and Heritage*
- Maurice Copithorne, *Iran and its Sunni Neighbors*

11:00: Coffee Break

11:15: Contemporary Issues and Trends

Presentations:

- Payam Akhavan, *Politics, Human Rights and Secular Reform*
- Deborah Campbell, *Taking the Pulse of 21st Century Iran*

12:45: Lunch

13:45: Regional Relations

Presentations:

- Houchang Hassan-Yari, *Iranian Thinking of Their Regional Role*
- R.R. Subramanian, *A South Asian perspective*

15:15: Coffee Break

15:30: Context of Iranian Nuclear Ambitions

Presentations:

- Hooshang Amirahmadi, *Nuclear geopolitics in the Middle East*
- Nader Barzin, *Nuclear Energy Interests in Iran*

Day 2: Tuesday, March 13th

8:00: Shuttle bus pick up from hotel, transport UBC

8:30: Breakfast

9:00: Iran's Nuclear Technology

Presentations:

- Ali Nayeri, *Viewpoints of Iranian Nuclear Scientists*
- Najmedin Meshkati, *Current status of the Iranian nuclear program*

10:30: Coffee Break

10:45: Political Implications of Iranian Nuclear Ambitions

Presentations:

- James Devine, *Nuclear Weapons Motivations: Security and Prestige*
- Mojtaba Mahdavi, *Nuclear Ambitions and Political Reform*.

12:15: Lunch

13:15: Canadian and Global Responses

Presentations:

- Thomas Juneau, *Iran and the Problems of Strategic Analysis*
- Jeffrey McLaren, *Policy Challenges: A Canadian Perspective*

14:45: Coffee Break

15:00: Future Prospects

Presentation:

- Wade Huntley, *Issue Needs and Project Opportunities*

16:00: Conference Conclusion

16:15: End of Day 2

17:00-19:00: Public Symposium