U.S. RESPONSE TO IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAMME, 2001-2008

Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
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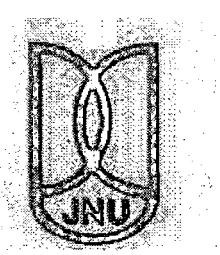
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

MONISH TOURANGBAM



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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled **"U.S. Response to Iran's Nuclear Programme, 2001-2008"** submitted by me in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

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CERTIFICATE

We recommend that the dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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In the end I take responsibility for any and all shortcomings.

Date: 20/7/09

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Preface

In recent times, the standoff between the United States and Iran concerning the latter's nuclear programme has caught the attention of academia, think-tanks and all forms of media. The revelation of hitherto unknown parts of Iran's nuclear progamme has ignited a torrent of responses from the US and taken the already tense relationship on a downward spiral. The present study essentially focuses on an analysis of US response to Iran's nuclear programme, particularly covering the two terms of George W. Bush Administration. The research on this contentious issue has been undertaken on the backdrop of the changes in the larger US-Iran relations and US response to the evolution of Iran's nuclear programme.

The American debate for an effective response to the Iranian question has seen divisive opinions making it all the more a challenge. If the liberals have been looking at ways to diplomatically handle the situation and in a more multilateral framework, the neoconservatives have backed a military solution to the problem. Thus, the discourse of 'Realism/Liberalism' can be employed to analyze this aspect of the study. A content analysis of newspaper and magazine articles and other such important commentaries on the US-Iran nuclear standoff has been part of this research effort. In addition, a deconstructionist approach has been employed to study the primary sources, including speeches and interviews, particularly of American political leaders, diplomats and others experts working on the subject.

The web pages of some important organizations relevant to the issue, specifically the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and that of influential American think tanks, such as Council on Foreign Relations, Brookings Institution, Heritage Foundation and Bipartisan Policy Centre have been an asset in tracking down the direction of the American debate on the issue.

The study is based on the following hypotheses:

1. Both the U.S. and Iran harboured a multitude of concerns over each other's foreign policy conduct, making political confrontation over the nuclear issue all the more intractable.

2. The misadventure of regime change policy in Iraq considerably weakened the argument of military action against Iran, making the liberal camp heard more seriously.

The US response to Iran's nuclear programme has been analyzed through four different chapters in addition to the introduction and the conclusion.

The introduction gives a broad brush of the issues to be discussed in the following chapters and gives an overview of the problems analyzed in the course of the research.

The first chapter titled **'US-Iran Relations: Rise and Fall of an Alliance'** is an attempt to historically locate the sources of the souring of relations between the US and Iran, analyzing some of the momentous events in the history of US-Iran relations. It critically examines their impact on the course of history and tests its relevance in understanding the present confrontation.

The second chapter **'US Perspective on Evolution of Iran's Nuclear Programme'** is an attempt to analyze the United States role in initiating Iran's civilian nuclear programme and the unfolding of events since 1979 that severely impeded the US support to Iran.

The third chapter titled **'Bush Administration's Response to the 2002 Expose'** tracks down the course of actions followed Washington after the NCRI disclosed hitherto unknown details about the Iranian nuclear programme. The chapter also looks at the roles played by the IAEA and the EU-3 in trying to diplomatically persuade the Iranian regime to reconsider their decision regarding pursuit of full cycle nuclear programme.

The fourth chapter titled **'US Debate on Iranian Proliferation'** more closely looks at the sources of the divisions within the American foreign policy community apt responses to the Iranian dilemma. The 'Realism/Liberalism' Debate has been employed

here to better understand the stands taken by American debaters on Iran's nuclear programme.

The conclusion reflects on main arguments put forward in the research and answers some important research questions and tests the hypotheses developed earlier.

Introduction

Introduction:

The worst enemies are often bred from the best of friends. The history of relations between the United States of America and modern Iran has fluctuated between periods of alliance and mistrust. But, a present day observer of the US-Iran relations would find it hard to believe that these two countries spitting venom to each other were ever friends and allies. America's encounter with Iran began with the visit of American missionaries in the 19th century. Diplomatic representation was initiated in 1833 and after the beginning of the constitutional government in 1911; Iran began to seek the help of Americans in reorganizing its finances. By World War II, the United States became more actively involved in Iran. Yet by 1953, a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) orchestrated coup overthrew the democratically elected Iranian Prime Minister, Mohammad Mossaddeq. It transformed the US-Iranian relationship from one of mutual trust to mutual suspicion, which was further accentuated by the close US relationship with the Pahlavi Monarchy. The success of the Islamic Revolution in Iran is testimony to the failed American policy toward Iran

Iran since the Islamic Revolution has denied concrete foreign policy success to any of the American presidents. Administrations after administration have fumbled in their efforts to come up with a coherent policy to tackle the question of Iran, an inevitable country on the way to America's larger West Asian policy. President Jimmy Carter bore the brunt in the heat of the Hostage Crisis, losing his presidency to the momentous event while his "illusionist" successor Ronald Reagan promising a stronger America got caught in the web of the Iran-Contra scandal. Despite success in the Gulf War of 1991, President George H.W.Bush could not let himself off the hook of allegations of further covert dealings with Iran. When Bill Clinton became the president, he thought it prudent to stay safe off Iran and followed a policy of 'Dual Containment,' which was essentially a policy of neglect and indifference. Moreover, the Democrats had returned to power in Congress on a domestic policy platform and the economy and other domestic issues were to take centre stage. But, Iran continued to demand attention, specifically with the election of President Khatami, seen as a moderating voice in Iranian politics. Iran also kept on

attracting America's attention, but Clinton's term came to an end without any significant improvement in US policy toward Iran.

The election of George W.Bush changed things for sure. The fateful events of 11 September 2001 and the revelations of alleged intent of Iranian nuclear weapon ambition sent the already tense US-Iran relations spiraling downwards. Differing interpretations of regional and international security and competing views of resource management and balance of power have put the two countries on the path of confrontation. Moreover, cultural differences and a deep mistrust built over the years made it all the more difficult for the two countries to adopt conciliatory positions. The rhetoric employed by both the sides failed to help matters, with America demonized as the "Great Satan" and Iran being called a nation of "Mad Mullahs".

Though the policy of neglect seemed to be history, the Bush Administration struggled hard to find a working policy toward Iran. There is no doubt that Iran is important and this importance holds despite its suspected nuclear ambitions and its controversial president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Iran has the second largest oil reserves in the world and its importance is conspicuous in the face of skyrocketing oil prices. Iran also has the second largest natural gas reserves in the world, which remains largely unexploited. Iran possesses huge mineral reserves and most importantly, the demographics necessary for industrial growth. Further, Iran as the abode of the Persian Civilization has a cultural influence that extends beyond its borders. It is seen as the seat of the Shia clout that has strategic relevance for American policy toward Afghanistan, Iraq and other parts of West Asia. The course of any relations has its own dynamics and the US-Iran relations during George W.Bush Administration waited for many dots to make the picture whole. But, it is an important era for American foreign policy and this knowledge is enough to demand a serious research.

As such, the aim of this study is not to draw general conclusions about U.S.-Iran relations but to locate the inevitability of this confrontation in understanding the complex relationship. In fact, this particular case is an important dot in the whole picture of

contemporary US-Iran relations. The torturous and often frustrating negotiations toward resolving this deadlock mirrors a lot about US-Iran relations that goes beyond the particularity of this case.

A study of the nuclear standoff between the United States and Iran and its impact on American decision-making would form the crux of the research. Nevertheless, the complexity of the issue will be justified only when it is placed in the backdrop of the evolution of the Iranian nuclear programme and the US policy towards Iran during the Bush Presidency, which characterized Iran under the "claustrophobic" rhetoric of the "Axis of Evil".

Iran's efforts to develop nuclear energy trace to 1957, in connection with a push from the Eisenhower administration to increase its military, economic, and civilian assistance to Iran. On 5 March of that year, the two countries announced a "proposed agreement for cooperation in research in peaceful uses of atomic energy" under the auspices of 'Eisenhower's Atoms for Peace programme'. Two years after the agreement was made public, Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi ordered the establishment of an institute at Tehran University-the Tehran Nuclear Research Centre- and negotiated with the United States to supply a five-megawatt reactor. Over the next decade the United States provided nuclear fuel and equipment that Iran used to start up its nuclear programme. On 1 July 1968, Iran signed the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) on the day it opened for signature. Six years later Iran completed its Safeguards Agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).By the 1970s, France and Germany joined the United States in providing assistance to the Iranian nuclear programme. In March 1974, the Shah established the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran. By the mid-1970s, Iran had signed contracts with Western firms—namely France's Framatome and Germany's Kraftwerk Union—for the purchase of nuclear reactors and supply of enriched uranium.

Despite the early and sustained flow of nuclear technology to Tehran, Western governmental support for Iran's nuclear programme began to erode ahead of the Islamic

Revolution of 1979. In August 1974, a US special National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) declared that while "Iran's much publicized nuclear power intentions entirely in the planning stage," the ambitions of the Shah could lead Iran to pursue nuclear weapons, especially in the shadow of India's successful nuclear test in May 1974. This concern led Western governments to withdraw support for Iran's nuclear programme. After the Islamic Revolution, the seizure of U.S. hostages, and break off of diplomatic relations in 1979, US opposition to Iran's nuclear efforts increased during the 1980s and 1990s. Washington blocked nuclear deals between Iran and Argentina, China, and Russia. Some Iranian officials opined that Washington's shift away from supporting Iran's nuclear energy programme left Tehran with little choice but to be discreet in its nuclear activities.

The withdrawal of Western support after the Islamic Revolution slowed Iran's nuclear progress. And a confluence of factors—opposition to nuclear technology by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the exodus of nuclear scientists, and the destruction of Iraq's nuclear facility by Israel in 1981, which removed an immediate threat—sent Iran's nuclear programme into a tailspin. But many nonproliferation experts believe that Iran became interested again in a nuclear programme by the mid-1980s and that Iran received assistance from Pakistani nuclear scientist AQ Khan as early as 1985 .Unlike his predecessor, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei held a more favourable view of nuclear energy and military technology, and set out to rebuild Tehran's programme. In a boost to the civilian nuclear effort, Russia in January 1995 picked up where Germany had left off, signing a contract with Iran to complete two 950-megawatt light-water reactors at Bushehr (with fuel supplied by Russia).

International skepticism of Iranian intentions was aroused in August 2002 when a dissident Iranian opposition group, the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) disclosed details about a secret heavy-water production plant at Arak, as well as the underground enrichment facility at Natanz. In May 2003, State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said the disclosure of Arak and Natanz raised serious questions about Iran's nuclear intentions. These revelations, coupled with subsequent admissions from Iran that it had concealed aspects of its programme, prompted the IAEA to intensify inspections. In a June 2003 report, IAEA inspectors reported that Iran had failed to meet

obligations under its Safeguards Agreement signed in 1974. Due to increased international pressure, Iran temporarily ceased its enrichment-related activities, and in late 2003 Tehran signed an Additional Protocol allowing IAEA greater access to nuclear sites. But on August 8, 2005, Iran announced it was resuming uranium conversion at Esfahan. By early 2006, IAEA inspectors confirmed that Iran had once again resumed its enrichment programme. Under the terms of the NPT, signatories have the "inalienable right" to produce fuel for civilian energy production, either by enriching uranium or separating plutonium. But the United States and other Western governments accuse Iran of failing to abide by NPT safeguards and of pursuing technology that could produce nuclear weapons. In February 2008, the IAEA presented Iran with intelligence collected by the United States that indicated that Tehran worked to develop nuclear weapons in the recent past. Iranian officials claimed the data was fake. But the November 2007 US National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) concluded that while Iran likely halted its weapons programme in fall 2003, "Tehran at a minimum is keeping open the option to develop nuclear weapons" in the future.

The United States had imposed unilateral economic sanctions on Iran for nearly three decades. But, international efforts to cripple Iran's nuclear programme coalesced only recently. In September 2005, the IAEA Board of Governors expressed an "absence of confidence that Iran's nuclear programme is exclusively for peaceful purposes." Further, UN Security Council resolutions like Resolution 1737 initiated a block on the sale or transfer of sensitive nuclear technology to Iran. In June 2008, the European Union targeted Bank Melli. Some experts, like former US ambassador to the UN John R. Bolton expressed doubt that Iran could be coerced through sanctions into halting its programme. But Bush Administration officials maintained that they remained committed to a bilateral dual-track approach: international sanctions on one hand, incentives on the other

When 9/11 came, defying stereotypes, Iran expressed empathy with the tragedy that struck America. The Khatami government offered unprecedented cooperation to the US and played a constructive role in subsequent negotiations in Bonn to work out Afghanistan's future. But Khatami's efforts to strike a détente with the Bush Administration failed. The opinions were divided in both the countries, among liberals

and the hawks. For the hardliners in both sides, any effort to engage was seen as an act of treachery. President Bush's State of the Union address in 2002 in which he described Iran, along with Iraq and North Korea, as part of an "Axis of Evil" did not ease matters. The debate became so intense and obsessive that by the summer of 2002, the head of the Tehran judiciary, taking its lead from a speech by the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei, issued a directive outlawing "discussions about discussions with the United States." It incited condemnation from reformist politicians and professors, but had little practical effect.

Years of political mistrust and diplomatic confrontation erected structures of estrangement and enmity in US-Iran relations. With the military juggernaut building up against Iraq since 2003, the importance of the Iranian dilemma faded from the American scene. The policy options during the Bush Presidency, however, remained divisive ranging from bombing to engaging diplomatically. When the Bush administration left office, the U.S.-Iran nuclear standoff was anything but over and the expectations to be had from the continuing struggle to prevent from Iran having nuclear weapons was as uncertain as ever.

Chapter 1: US-Iran Relations: Rise and the Fall of an Alliance

US-Iran Relations: Rise and the Fall of an Alliance:

In the last days before the culmination of the Iranian revolution, electricity workers who had joined the revolution turned off the lights in Tehran each evening. Then from rooftops throughout the city came the chant "God is great." But there was as well another chant, a counter theme, "Death to America." The same slogan could be read on virtually every wall in every city in Iran. (Cottam 1988:3)The Iranian revolution was one of the most popular uprisings in human history, and also an event that coupled with the fateful Hostage Crisis in the same year put an end to US –Iran alliance. It brought forth a deep-seated hatred for the United States in the Iranian populace not seen erstwhile. Howsoever, it may be perplexing to think as to why a revolution, to overthrow a monarchy, in a distant land would brew so much hatred for America; it is also true that the US was the only foreign country deeply involved then in Iranian politics via its support to the Pahlavi dynasty. But, what is worth explaining is the dramatic turn of events that brought the demise of an alliance once unprecedented in scale and intensity in the history of US engagement in West Asia. To understand the evolution of such disdain for the United States in Iran and the hiatus that has followed in US-Iran relations, it becomes imperative to understand the history of this relationship. As Kenneth Pollack says, "The only way to understand the twenty-five year confrontation between Iran and the United States is to know the history of the relationship. Contained in that history are all the elements of our current impasse. Most Iranians know that history- or some warped version of it-too well. Most Americans know it too little. To a certain extent, that is the first of many profound differences that lie at the heart of our belligerent stand-off." (Pollack 2004: XIX) The United States and Iran, Pollack continues to argue, "have relatively brief (as historians tend to measure things) but terribly involved history. Like former lovers who went through a messy divorce, we have a lot of "issues"."(Ibid: XXI)

At the advent of the Cold War, Iran, a traditional sphere of influence of the western powers became a key strategic area of concern. Due to its geographical proximity to the Soviet Union, it was on the verge of becoming an area of possible clash of interests. America as the embodiment of the western world after the end of World War II

naturally increased its intensity of engagement, to neutralize any advances from the Soviet Union. After the end of the Second World War, when it started its task in Iran, America distinguished its mission from the kind of "imperial overture" that was the norm with the activities of Russia and Britain in the 19th century. But, the sections of Iranians who had serious concerns over the imperial designs of the British, harboured mistrust for the American activities as well. The Iranian populace had experienced a series of foreign powers adventuring into their territory and exposing the country to the vagaries of imperial politics. For them, the task of nation-building was a euphemism for a "civilizing mission" of the "immature" Iran. And when the revolutionary fervour built up in the late 1970s, the US was only seen as the latest in a series of foreign powers that had been exploiting Iran. Somehow, all the mistrust that Iran harboured against Britain seemed to have been passed on to the US. After the end of World War II, when the United States began to assume the role of protector of the West, American policy began to follow patterns that closely resembled the patterns of imperialism with which Iranians were only too familiar.(Cottam 1988: 9)

This chapter looks into some of the significant aspects of the history of US-Iran relations which will help in better understanding the complex chain of factors that led to the rise of an alliance between the two countries and then the snapping of ties then. This can also better explain the current impasse between Iran and the United States.

Early Years of Co-operation: Successes and Failures

In 1830, Harrison Gray Otis Dwight and Eli Smith travelled into northwestern Iran to reconnoiter the area for future missionary purposes. They were the first Americans known to have set foot in Iran. Five American missionaries took up residence in Urumiyeh in the present-day north-western province of Azerbaijan[1] in 1835. During their first twenty-five years in Iran, the American missionaries made fundamental

[1] Also called Iranian Azerbaijan, Iranian Azarbaijan, and Persian Azerbaijan. It is a region in northwestern Iran compromising the provinces of Zanjan, East Azerbaijan, West Azerbaijan and Ardabil. It shares borders with the Republic of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkey, and Iraq.

contributions to the health, education, and overall social well-being of the Iranians they served. Despite these activities factored by humanitarian intent, the first contingent of Americans in Iran with their ethnocentric views had certain prejudices against the Iranians. Their interests were largely centred on their ultimate goal of proselytization. But naturally, they had to face rejection whenever they tried to carry their messages to the Shi'i Muslims.

Although diplomatic representation was initiated in 1883, it was not until the end of World War II that the United States became actively involved in Iran. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century, Iran was subjected to the competition between the Russians and the British. Thus, America's influence in the politics of Iran was minimal. America's own policy of isolation and non-entanglement also impacted this outcome. For the Iranians who had experienced the effects of the imperialist policies of Russia and Britain and wanted dearly to free themselves from the strangulation, America appeared to be a symbol of a power that saw the importance of Iran's independence and dignity without any sinister design to achieve its own interest. This trust for America and the hope among the Iranians did not come out of the blue. The sources can be located in the amount of goodwill that had been established during the pre-1940 period by the activities of individual Americans who lived and worked in Iran, including such missionary teachers as Howard Baskerville, Dr. Samuel Martin Jordan, W. Morgan Schuster, Peace Corp volunteers, scholars and such diplomatic-humanitarians as Louis G. Dreyfus, Jr. and his wife, Grace. (Millspaugh 1946)

Between 1925 and 1941, Iran was under the rule of Reza Shah Pahlavi, who thought it prudent to take advantage of the rivalry between Great Britain and the Soviet Union, by enlisting a third party. In this case, the third party was Germany, then under the rule of the Nazis. This arrangement greatly disturbed the allied powers because Iran was considered crucial from the geostrategic point of view, in the ensuing confrontation with Nazi Germany. Hence, Great Britain and the Soviet Union, the war time allies invaded and occupied Iran on 25 August 1941, driving the Shah into exile. Reza Shah was replaced as king by his twenty-two year old son, Muhammad Reza Shah at this tumultuous time. (Ramazani 1966) In January 1942, the Soviet Union and Great Britain

joined Iran in signing the Tripartite Treaty, which guaranteed the territorial sovereignty and political independence of Iran in line with the Atlantic Charter. In view of the fears of the new Shah and his advisers, the possibility of their country's dismemberment, the experienced Iranian aristocrats and statesmen decided to push for heavy American presence and influence in their country. (Bill 1988: 18)

By this time, the American foreign policy establishment had acquiesced to the logic of enlisting Iran as an ally in West Asia. On 10 March 1942, Iran was declared eligible for lend-lease aid, which was a crucial component of the allied victory in World War II. Throughout the war, Iran served as a supply bridge to the beleaguered Soviet Union which was being attacked by Germany from the west. In fact, by the end of the war, the Iranian route had accounted for 26 per cent of all lend-lease assistance to the USSR. (Pollack 2004: 40) In August 1943, Secretary of State Cordell Hull, summarizing the American interest in Iran even more pointedly in a communication to President Franklin D. Roosevelt stated: "... from a more directly selfish point of view, it is to our interest that no great power be established on the Persian Gulf opposite the important American petroleum development in Saudi Arabia."(Bill 1988: 19)

As a response to various requests from the Iranian government, and encouraged by the British, the United States began sending advisory missions to Iran in 1942. By 1943, six major American missions and centres of influence were located in Iran, the most important being the diplomatic legation headed by Louis Dreyfus, Jr., who held the rank of a minister. It was the coordinating centre of American activities with a direct line to the Department of State. Three other missions were noncombatant military-related teams. Another important mission was that of A.C. Millspaugh who arrived in Iran in January 1943 to head a financial advisory mission. But, Unlike Morgan Schuster who regarded himself strictly as an employee of the Iranian government, Millspaugh maintained his contacts with the British. He looked down upon the Iranians as immature and dealt with Iranian officials contemptuously. In 1927, his position was terminated; Reza Shah explaining to the American minister that he lacked respect for Iranian dignity. The Millspaugh episode slightly tarnished the lustre of the image of the United States established by Schuster. (Cottam 1988: 53-54)The forces inimical to the Millspaugh

mission centred on the personality of the nationalist aristocrat Mohammad Mossadeq, who was uncomfortable with increasing American influence in the country. He was not essentially anti-American, but he feared that the increasing presence of the Americans would reinforce the British influence and disturb the delicate balance that, he believed, existed between the Soviets and the British.

From the early 1940s when American influence began to expand in Iran, tensions erupted between the Department of State and the Department of War. This weakened the authority and credibility of US policy, the seriousness of which can be gauged from a February 1944 Office of Strategic Services (OSS) report: "The apparent clumsiness and lack of unified policy among the American group is leading an increasing number of thoughtful Iranians to believe that they eventually will have to look to the Soviet Union for aid." [2](Bill 1988: 23)

An issue in which Iranian domestic politics and international political rivalries intersected was the struggle for the Persian Oil. (Ramazani 1982) Its outcome presaged the dramatic events that were to occur in the early 1950s. Since oil as a resource was regarded as an important ingredient for sustaining any great power, the salience of West Asia, particularly Iran rose in international politics. While Britain had an upper hand with the Anglo-Persian Oil Company operating in Iran since 1909, other great powers, including the US, were fairly active. For instance, by the 1920s, American oil companies, including the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey (today's Exxon) and Standard-Vacuum Oil (today's Mobil) had begun to seek concessions in Iran. American companies failed to acquire concessions for about two decades in large part because of British opposition. Besides, the American companies did not have a concentrated effort but were in competition with one another. Majlis member Mossadeq criticized Iranian leaders for encouraging the Americans to demand concessions, which he believed in turn emboldened the Soviets to ask for their concessions. He argued, "When from the other side of the world the American government asks for a concession, why should the Soviet

[2] The OSS was a United States intelligence agency formed during World War II. It was the wartime intelligence agency, and it was the predecessor of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

government, which is our neighbour, not do so?" (Bill 1988: 29) On 8 October 1944, the Iranian cabinet voted to postpone all oil concessions.

On 2 December 1944, Mossadeq suddenly proposed an oil bill in the Majlis that forbid the government from granting any oil concessions without legislative approval. In effect, it guaranteed that no further oil concessions would be granted while Iran was an occupied country; when the occupation ended, the Majlis would determine the issue of concessions.

Different scholars have different perspectives on the nature of US involvement in Iran. While revisionist historians argue that the American interests were primarily economic in nature, experts like Richard Cottam considered the American engagement essentially anti-communist and anti-Soviet. On the other hand, scholars like James Bill argue that the economic interests was entwined with the complex US foreign policy making process toward Iran in the 1940s.[3] (Doenecke 1970: 23-33)

The economic competition among the United States, the Soviet Union and Great Britain entwined with the political rivalry marked the earliest manifestations of the Cold War and set stage for the kind of complex tussle in which Iran was to be embroiled. Towards the end of World War II, the primary concern of Iranian government was the independence of the country and the withdrawal of foreign troops. In five major Allied conferences that took place regarding this issue in early 1945, the British suggested a gradual withdrawal of troops from Iran but the Soviet Union was unenthusiastic. All the while, the United States remained passive. Eventually, the Allies finally agreed that all their forces were to be out of Iran by 2 March 1946, six months after the Japanese surrender. Ahmad Qavam, who served as the prime minister from 1946-47, played the central role in the dramatic events that marked the international crisis involving the Soviet refusal to withdraw its troops from northwestern Iran following World War II. (Ladjaverdi 1983: 225-239) Just as Mohammad Mossadeq had entered the scene to oppose external intervention by blocking oil concessions in 1944, so Qavam moved to centre stage in 1946-47. By the time Qavam became prime minister in early 1946, a radical

[3] Also see Cottam 1970: 2-22 and Bill 1988:30.

communist government was established in Azerbaijan under Ja'far Pishevari, with the support of occupying forces. Thus, the Soviet Union's indication in occupying northern Iran which greatly concerned Washington was accentuated when the Iranian statesman Hussein Ala arrived in Washington on 11 November 1945, and immediately began a vigorous campaign to gain American support against the Russian occupation. When this issue was presented at the newly formed United Nations, the US supported the Iranian position. The policy direction of Iran during this period was to entice the US as much as possible into Iranian politics. An Iranian politician of the time said, "Our policy then was to bring as many Americans as possible to Iran, to be witnesses to the Soviet political encroachments and by their presence act as a deterrent for the more open violations of our independence and interference in our internal affairs." (Bill 1988: 36)

By mid-May 1946, Soviet troops had withdrawn from Iran and on November 21, when Qavam announced the government's intention to send Iranian troops to free Azerbaijan from separatist forces, he found an ally in the United States. Ambassador George Allen made a strong statement of support. The Shah extended his support to Qavam and used his influence with the Iranian military to implement this drive. On 12 December 1946, the two communist separatist regimes in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan[4] collapsed in the face of internal disaffection and the military challenge from Tehran backed by the US. It is important to note that it was during the episode of the Soviet occupation that the United States began to develop a close personal and professional relationship with the Shah- primarily through the efforts of Ambassador George Allen, who nurtured close ties with him. The two played tennis together every Saturday afternoon, after which, in Allen's words, "the Shah usually asked me for a cup of tea or a whiskey, when he would discuss the local situation in an informal and, at times, intimate manner." (Bill 1988: 39) In addition, Allen dined with the Shah and his family on Mondays, when the two would share information on the domestic political situation. In this way the American ambassador began a long and special relationship with the Shah

[4] The province of Kurdistan is one of the thirty provinces of Iran, not to be confused with the greater geographical area of Iranian Kurdistan. The province of Kurdistan is 28,817 km² in area which encompasses just one-eighth of the Kurdish inhabited areas of Iran or Iranian Kurdistan. It is located in the west of Iran.

that consistently bypassed the formal governmental apparatus of Iran. As Ambassador Allen tightened his relationship with the Shah, American policy slowly moved in support of autocracy in Iran.

As the threat from the Soviet Union largely subsided, Qavam was forced to resign and the young Shah increasingly asserted himself. On 6 October 1947, General Ridley's small advisory mission was succeeded by a major US Army mission, thereafter known in Iran as ARMISH. The US Air Force became part of the ARMISH arrangement in 1949, as did the Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) in 1950. The ARMISH-MAAG mission was to be an important part of the Iran-American connection until the revolution in 1979. The Gendarmerie (rural police force) mission (GENMISH) was also extended three times between 1942 and 1948, and it continued to receive American advisory missions until the late 1970s. Although the United States failed to provide Iran with the often requested economic and financial assistance until the early 1950s, a number of influential American economic missions were already established in Iran in the late 1940s. Another early personal contact that was to bind Pahlavi Iran and America for many years was established when the Shah's twin sister, Princess Ashraf, made her first trip to the United States at the invitation of the American Red Cross in August-September 1947. While in the United States, she was given a stately welcome, meeting various important personalities. In November-December 1949, the Shah made his first ever visit to the United States. He was the guest of honour at numerous dinners given by such organizations of the American political and industrial elite as the National Press Club, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, General Motors, and Lockheed. He was given twenty-one gun salutes at both the US Naval Academy in Annapolis and the US Military Academy at West Point. And he visited universities like Princeton and Michigan. The Shah was disappointed at not receiving the financial aid that he sought, but he did manage to establish new ties while strengthening old relationships with influential Americans across the country. An important technical aid agreement was negotiated between Iran and America in October 1950 under the Point Four Programme. Although the sums of money involved were limited in the beginning, it was a significant agreement in keeping with Iran's "long-standing objective of deepening American involvement in Iran for ultimately political ends."(Bill 1988: 40)

During this period, American policymakers thought it prudent to strengthen the IS-Iran relationship around the power and personality of the Shah, primarily focused on ıilitary aid and advisers. In the words of John C.Wiley, US ambassador to Iran from 948 to 1950: "Iran needs an army capable primarily of maintaining order within the ountry, an army capable of putting down any insurrection-no matter where or by whom ıspired or abetted."(Department of State 1950: 1048) One of the principle drawbacks of ıe American policy toward Iran during this period was the inefficient knowledge of Iran ight from the highest echelons of policymaking in Washington to the grassroot epresentation in Iran. Americans ignored the role that Iranians themselves played, while veremphasizing the role of the Americans on the situation in that country. It was during his time that the United States elected to choose sides with the Shah and thus began a ong, intimate relationship with an absolute monarch whose career was marked by hallenges from his own people.

As already stated, tensions and unhealthy competition among different branches ıf American government unduly inhibited the evolution of a coherent US policy toward ran. Besides the mismatch between the military and diplomatic representation, the White House had its own agenda, typified by informal advisers and influential people, ıften representing consulting firms and business interests, well connected both in Washington and Tehran. The case of Patrick Hurley, who represented President Franklin Roosevelt, is mentionable. Though the United States began its active involvement in Iran vith a positive image, the perceptions began to change with the influx of more and more Americans into Iran and as the American influence in Iranian politics increased. Thirty-housand American soldiers, who were ill-prepared and had little knowledge of culture ınd people beyond their own, were suddenly injected into Iran. In June 1943, Dreyfus :abled Washington that "there is no doubt that the numerous accidents and the rather requent incidents of drunkenness and rowdyism have had an adverse effect on American ırestige in Iran." (Bill 1988: 47) Moreover, throughout World War II, the American roops in Iran enjoyed de facto extraterritorial rights and were immune from prosecution ınder Iranian law. This provision was resented by many Iranian leaders as an nfringement on Iran's sovereignty. These incidents clearly marred the image built up by nany scholars and missionaries who understood Iran with sensitivity.

When the American involvement commenced in Iran as a part of the Allied war effort, the Iranians saw the United States as the only great power which was sympathetic to Iranian independence based on the principles of self-determination and anti-colonialism. Despite the overriding factors of oil economics, geostrategy and the threat of Soviet Communism, the influence of these ideals in American policy toward Iran in the early years cannot be ruled out. In an important memorandum of 16 August 1943, to President Roosevelt, Secretary of State Cordell Hull wrote: "Since this country has a vital interest in the fulfillment of the Atlantic Charter and the establishment of the foundation for a lasting peace throughout the world, it is to the advantage of the United States to exert itself to see that Iran's integrity and independence are maintained and that she becomes prosperous and stable." But, it became increasingly difficult for the US to defend the relevance of these ideals in the face of its activities in Iran. The increasing involvement of the US in Iran came with increasing criticism on its policies that came to be perceived as imperialist.

Oil Politics and the 1953 Coup:

In a speech to the American-Iranian Council at Washington D.C. on 17 March 2000, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright had acknowledged:

> "In 1953 the United States played a significant role in orchestrating the overthrow of Iran's popular Prime Minister, Mohammed Mossadeq. The Eisenhower Administration believed its actions were justified for strategic reasons; but the coup was clearly a setback for Iran's political development. And it is easy to see now why many Iranians continue to resent this intervention by America in their internal affairs. Moreover, during the next quarter century, the United States and the West gave sustained backing to the Shah's regime. Although it did much to develop the country economically, the Shah's government also brutally repressed political dissent. As President Clinton has said, the United States must bear its fair share of responsibility for the problems that have arisen in US-Iranian relations. Even in more recent years, aspects of US policy towards Iraq, during its conflict with Iran appear now to have been regrettably shortsighted; especially in light our subsequent experiences with Saddam Hussein." (Albright 2000)

Giving a view of the grim possibility of a US-Iranian rapprochement, the response to such a long-awaited apology came through Ayatollah Khamenei, Iran's Supreme Leader, to an assembled mass at Mashhad:

> "Just a few days ago, an American minister delivered a speech. After half a century or over 40 years, the Americans have now confessed that they staged the 28th Mordad [August 19, 1953] coup. They confessed that they supported the suppressive, dictatorial, and corrupt Pahlavi Shah for twenty-five years. Please pay attention. We are in the year 1379 [by the Islamic calendar], more than forty years have elapsed since 1332 and the coup d'etat of the 28th Mordad. It is only now that they are admitting that they were behind the coup d'etat. They admitted that they supported and backed the dictatorial, oppressive, corrupt and subservient regime of the Shah for twenty-five years. And they are now saying that they supported Saddam Husayn in his war against Iran. What do you think the Iranian nation faced with this situation and these admissions, feels? ...In the course of those days, during the war, we repeatedly said in our speeches, that the Americans are helping Saddam Husayn. They denied this and claimed that they remained impartial. Now that twelve years have elapsed after the end of the war, in a centre [the American Iranian Council] this American Secretary of State is officially admitting that they helped Saddam Husayn. The question is, what good will this admission do us? ... What good does this admission-that you acted in that way then-do us now? ... An admission years after the crime was committed, while they might be committing similar crimes now, will not do the Iranian nation any good."(Khamenei 2000)

The chain of events that led to the overthrow of the popular Iranian leader, Mohammed Mossadeq was inextricably linked to the increasing nationalist discontent with the functioning of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC), Iran's largest industrial unit and employer. And, Mossadeq happened to be at the forefront of this dissent. During this tumultuous period, American policymakers were seriously concerned with the communist challenge form the Iranian Tudeh party. And when America supported the unpopular General Ali Razmara, Mossadeq came to the fore in opposition. The rise of Mossadeq's power in Iranian politics coincided with the period when the United States got entangled in the political quicksand of Iran.

After being banned from politics during Reza Shah's period, Mossadeq was released with the occupation of the Allied forces and the accession of Mohammad Reza Shah. He started his second innings with great vigour and gained repute as the force behind the National Front[5]. While most western media largely focussed on making fun of his physical characteristics, the US ambassador Henry F.Grady had said, "Mossadeq is not to be discounted. He's a man of unusual ability, well educated at European universities, and of great culture. He is a Persian gentleman." (Grady 1951: 14) All the major actions of Mossadeq during this period were guided by nationalism and disdain for foreign intervention. (Gasiorowski 2007) Since the primary means through which external influence was exerted in Iran involved oil and the exploration and exploitation thereof, the clash between Mossadeq and the foreign-controlled oil industry was inevitable. After successfully deflecting an American-Soviet drive for oil concession in 1944, Mossadeq next prepared himself to confront the powerful Anglo-Iranian Oil Company which had been in business in Iran for decades. The company, earlier known as the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (APOC) operating in Iran since 1909, soon began to play a critical role in serving British national interests. There were major differences between the British and the Iranian government. The Armitage-Smith Agreement of 1920, failed to resolve the issue.[6] Another agreement signed by Sir John Cadman (the chairman of APOC) and Reza Shah in 1933 seemed to calm things at the time, but it came under severe criticism when the nationalist drive gained momentum in the late 1940s.

Failing to understand the developing nationalist mood in Iran, the British were amazed when the Iranian society gave a thumbs down to the Gass-Golshayan Agreement or the Supplemental Agreement[7] of 1949 which actually increased the Iranian revenue. In

[5] The National Front of Iran or Jebhe Melli is a Democratic, political opposition group founded by Mohammad Mossadeq and other secular Iranian leaders of Nationalist, Liberal, and Social-Democratic political orientation who had been educated in France in the late 1940s. It held power in the Iranian parliament for several years prior to the 1953 Iranian coup d'état and continued as an opposition force thereafter.

[6] Iran was dissatisfied with the financial terms, while Britain argued that tribal lawlessness had damaged facilities and had cost the company large amounts of money. In fact, the agreement was never ratified.

[7] This agreement increased revenues to Iran by the raising the royalty from twenty-two cents to thirty-three cents per barrel.

fact, the question of national sovereignty overshadowed the concerns over financial returns. By the end of 1950, Mossadeq and other nationalist leaders started increasing their demands to nationalize AIOC. On the other hand, Prime Minister Haj Ali Razmara spoke before the Majlis on 3 March 1951, in support of the Supplemental Agreement and in opposition to the idea of nationalization. But his assassination four days later only hardened the respective positions. On 15 March the Iranian Majlis passed a bill to nationalize the oil industry. It was ratified by the Senate five days later. After a two month transitional premiership by Hussein Ala, Mohammad Mossadeq became the prime minister of Iran on April 29. Mossadeq's short but critical premiership saw an array of political forces maintaining pressure, including the Soviet-supported Tudeh Party on the far left and Mohammad Reza Shah and the Pahlavi court on the far right. Nevertheless, he managed to hold together a fragile coalition on the strength of his own personal charisma and the common disdain for the British interventionist politics and the autocratic rule by the Pahlavi Monarchy. However, there were major fault lines in the coalition: most groups which opposed Pahlavi authoritarianism were willing to manage a benevolent constitutional monarchy and, moreover, Mossadeq's ideological conformity with the liberal modern middle-class group raised the possibility of the religious traditional middle-class defecting. While he lost the crucial support of Ayatollah Abul Qasim Kashani and his supporters, his increasing resort to authoritarian tactics to stay in command incurred alienation from the liberal modern middle class supporters. The course of the events would have had a different culmination without manipulation from the Shah's court and the external actors.

During the torturous negotiations between Britain and Iran over the nationalization issue, the Truman administration's policy as developed by the Secretary of State Acheson was to attempt to placate the British while trying to convince Mossadeq to agree on a compromise. The Truman administration sent prominent envoys to resolve the issue. Even, Mossadeq paid a visit to United States between October 8 and 18 November 1951, during which he presented the case for nationalization before the UN Security Council and discussed the issue with President Truman and Secretary of State

Acheson. But the Truman administration was equally concerned about the contagious nature of the nationalization act in Iran, and its possible impact on the behaviour of other oil-producing countries in which America had a stake. As the oil crisis refused to die down and the British continued to apply diplomatic pressure, the Americans began shifting their position, finally coming to acquiesce to the British idea that the best recourse was to overthrow the Mossadeq regime and replace it with a new regime more amenable to compromise. Before Eisenhower took office in early 1953, there had been discussion in Washington (especially in the CIA) about planning a covert political intervention into Iran. In general, however, officials at higher-level policy positions did not entertain such ideas until 1953. (Gasiorowski 1987: 261-86) The American position was highly factored by the communist takeover in China in 1949, the reveres suffered by the Americans in the Korean War during 1950-1953 against Communist China and the rise of McCarthyism [8]back in the United States building euphoria over the communist threat. The nationalist government of Mossadeq was largely being seen as communist leaning by the American policymakers.

One of the major blows to Mossadeq was the economic crunch that Iran faced in 1953, in which the international boycott of Iranian oil that the AIOC helped bring about had a major role. In fact, Iran's oil export income dropped from more than $400 million in 1950 to less than $2 million in the two-year period from July 1951 to August 1953. (Blair 1978: 79) On 28 May 1953 Mossadeq wrote to President Eisenhower requesting American economic assistance. The president after quite a delay responded in negative. By mid-1953, Iran was embroiled in a series of political events that was to change the face of Iran and its relations with the United States. Mossadeq and his government were overthrown on 19 August 1953 in an operation, named Operation Ajax planned and carried out with the direct assistance of Britain and the United States. (Kinzer 2003) Previously, the Shah had fled Iran on 16 August, when Mossadeq refused to accept the Shah's order of his dismissal. The Shah went first to Baghdad, and then to Rome. But, the

[8] McCarthyism specifically refers to the period from late 1940s to the late 1950s in the United States when the fear of communist infiltration in American institutions reached an absurd level. It was a period when many Americans were accused of being Communists or communist sympathizers, thus being subjected to aggressive investigations. Many careers were jeopardized in mindless anti-communist pursuits. The term was originally coined to criticise the anti-communist pursuits of U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin. For details, see Parkes 1986.

CIA continued their operations against Mossadeq with the help of paid mobs and the royalist military officers led by General Fazlollah Zahedi, finally forcing Mossadeq to flee from his residence, only to be caught soon thereafter. On 22 August, the Shah returned to Iran and the Monarchy was reinstated. The new Iranian government of Gen. Fazlollah Zahedi approached the United States for economic aid on 26 August and ironically on 5 September, President Eisenhower announced that the United States was providing Iran with $45 million for immediate assistance on an emergency basis. (Ramazani 1982: 22)

The direct covert intervention of 1953 became a fateful event in the history of US-Iran relations that managed to leave its scar and accentuated the tensions between the US and the post-revolutionary Islamic Republic of Iran. After the fall of Mossadeq, the US came to be increasingly associated with an aggressive form of imperialism and interventionist politics. With the kind of experiences during the period of Mossadeq, Mohammad Reza Shah resolved to come down hard on all forms of opposition. Martial law was imposed and the centrepiece of his authoritarian regime came in the form of the intelligence and internal security organisation known as SAVAK (Sazeman-e Ettela'at va Amniyat-e Keshvar), best translated as the Intelligence and Security Organisation of the Country. This organisation came into being in 1957, with full assistance from the United States and major support from the Israeli intelligence.

The United States cemented its ties with an autocratic regime in Iran and following a policy of regime enforcement, the Eisenhower-Dulles administration poured economic and military aid into Iran, amounting to a combined total of more than $1 billion during 1953 to 1960. (Bill 1988: 114) But more attention was paid to the amount of aid rather than on the manner in which the aid was being put into use and reached those sections of the society where it was needed the most. As a result of the mismanagement and the deplorable state of bureaucratic corruption, the American aid programmes came in for sharp criticism in Iran. As the decade continued, the Iranians' dislike and contempt for the British began to be passed down to the Americans and the United States was blamed for being the primary external force intervening in the Iranian political landscape.

Cementing the Rising Alliance

The developing relationship between the United States and the Shah's Iran went through some hiccups during the presidency of John F. Kennedy, who intended to give more emphasis on economic aid rather than on military aid. The Shah was particularly resentful of the concerns expressed from Washington regarding possible instability of Iran under his rule. He was also skeptical that the Kennedy administration would support him in case of any eventuality. Speaking to an American interviewer in 1969, when he had considerably increased his influence in Washington, the Shah said, "your worst period was in 1961 and 1962. But even before that, there were your great American 'liberals' wanting to impose their ways of 'democracy' on others, thinking their way is wonderful." (US News and World Report 1969: 49)

When Mohammad Reza Shah visited the US in 1962, the tension between Kennedy's emphasis on economic and social development assistance and that of Iran on military aid was clearly visible. In a speech before the joint session of the Congress on 13 April, the Shah warned of the communist threat to his north while at the same time assuring the American administration that his government was attempting to "give a firm foundation to reform activity in Iran by evolving a government of the people, by the people." (The New York Times 13 April 1962:1-2)

Emphasizing the reform emphasis of the Kennedy's period, the Peace Corps programme started its services in Iran in September 1962 and helped in improving the tattered image of the Americans. The Shah started a series of reforms under the label 'the White Revolution' in early 1963. But the reform process was essentially intended to preserve the status-quo and the Shah's rule. Its major drawback was the fact that it was not socially cohesive. The Shah through this process sought to alienate the growing and challenging middle class by building an alliance with the Iranian peasantry. Moreover, one of Kennedy's primary policies to combat communism was to mix reform with repression, as envisioned for Latin America. If the former failed, governments were to resort to the use of 'counterinsurgency troops'. (Miroff 1976:131) In fact, there was even an Iranian equivalent for the Green Berets, called the Red Berets. Taking confidence from this policy, the Shah did not hesitate to oppressively crush the demonstrations at

Tehran University in January 1962 and in the streets of Tehran in June 1963. This policy of reform and repression did not go down very well with the influential Shi'i religious leaders. When on 3 June 1963, on the day commemorating the martyrdom of Imam Hussein at Karbala, Ayatollah Khomeini delivered a fiery speech denouncing the Shah and the corruption of his rule; he was arrested by the Shah's police and taken to Tehran, where he was placed in confinement. The next day the country broke into massive rebellion. In final analysis, the irony of the Kennedy's reform policy was that it entangled Americans more deeply than ever into Iranian internal affairs. By the time Kennedy's period came to an end with his unfortunate assassination, the balance between reform and repression in Iran surely tilted toward the latter.

During his visit to Iran as the vice-president in 1962, President Lyndon Johnson had developed a personal rapport with the Shah. He approved of the Shah's top-down reform programme and White Revolution. He was not even critical of the Shah's crackdown on the demonstrators of June 1963. But, the anti-Americanism developing in Iran reached a watershed when on 13 October 1964, the Majlis approved a law that provided American military personnel and their dependents stationed in Iran with full diplomatic immunity. The approved law came to be known in America as the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) and in Iran as the Capitulations Agreement. The law was passed with close margins and the negative response from the Iranian society was instantaneous. The issue of immunity and extraterritoriality had long been a sensitive issue for the Iranians, who considered their country the victim of capitulations to the British and the Russians. The secular and the religious intelligentsia of Iran bitterly opposed the immunity bill, with Khomeini publicly condemning the SOFA on 26 October 1964. The Shah's government was quick to respond. Khomeini, who was already under government surveillance after the June 1963 demonstrations, was this time picked up and exiled to Turkey on 4 November 1964. In the face of increasing secret police actions and the developing covert opposition activities in Iran, the Shah continued with his reform programme, but in way that did not promise any significant political change.

During the Johnson Administration, the US-Iran ties increased considerably, with the Shah making a number of official visits to the US. In 1965 and 1966, the Shah, using his informal powerful connections in America, began to lobby in the US for increased arms supplies. As a result, the volume of military sales increased considerably in the late 1960s. Compared to 1967-68 when the United States sold Iran on credit about $95 million worth of military equipment, the figure for such sales during 1969-70 was $289 million. (Bill 1988: 173) While, these military sales continued amidst an atmosphere of deliberate praise of the Shah's government by the Americans, the Iranian press with undeniable but tacit support from the Shah sowed the seeds of anti-Americanism in Iran. The Shah allowed this to occur for his own reasons of placating the dissenting middle class, to distance himself from the Americans in the face of educated criticism in Iran and to gain leverage in his drive for American arms and aid. But this policy had adverse consequences for US-Iran relationship. In 1970, when Mohammad Reza Sa'idi, one of Khomeini's students, spoke against the American investment group, including David Rockfeller, who gathered at the Tehran Investment Seminar (a six-day conference where American entrepreneurs were to discuss American opportunities in oil-rich Iran) , he was tortured to death by the Shah's police. Khomeini's exile coupled with Sa'idi's martyrdom destroyed the image of the United States beyond repair. By 1971, the Shah unleashed a reign of terror. Between 1972 and 1974, the Shah's security apparatus systematically began an all-out attack on the Shi'i religious establishment.

The US-Iran ties saw an upward trend during the period of the Nixon-Kissinger duo. On 30-31 May 1972, when President Richard Nixon and National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger visited Tehran on their way back from a summit meeting in Moscow, they promised the Pahlavi Monarch that he could purchase any conventional weapons he wanted from the American inventory, thus effectively exempting Iran from arms sales review processes in the State and Defense Departments. This blank cheque that had been given against the advice of the Department of Defense created a boon for arms merchants in the US Between 1972 and 1977; the value of US military sales to Iran amounted to $16.2 billion. (Senate Committee on Foreign Relations 1976: 5) It did not go without dissent in the US. A Senate Committee on Foreign Relations staff report of July 1976 questioned presence of increasing number of Americans in Iran and also contended that

Iran did not possess the expertise to absorb sophisticated US weapons. Nixon and Kissinger supported the military sales on the ground of perceived need of a trusted ally in the Persian Gulf. They viewed the American interests and Iranian interests as parallel and mutually reinforcing. Kissinger saw in the Shah a rare leader who had a better understanding of the international situation than the Americans themselves. (Kissinger 1979: 1261)

The political closeness between the Nixon Administration and the Shah regime was reflected in their joint support to the Kurdish uprising in Iraq and then deserting them when Iran signed the Algiers Agreement with Baghdad on 13 June 1975. In March 1975, an economic accord was signed between the US and Iran committing Iran to the expenditure of $15 billion on American goods and services over the next five years. This unprecedented agreement included the construction of eight large nuclear power plants which were to provide Iran with some eight thousand megawatts of electricity. (The New York Times, 5 March 1975:1) The "Nixon-Kissinger-Ford Policy" toward Iran had powerful support from major US arms, electronic, and telecommunication industries, which carried significant clout in American policymaking process. The official ties in this period were reinforced by a network of durable personal relationships, primarily the Nixon-Pahlavi relationship lasting till the Shah's exile to Egypt on 27 July 1980. Kissinger and President Ford also shared similar relationships with the Shah. Moreover, there were no dearth of Pahlavi admirers in both the Senate and the House of Representatives, cutting across liberal-conservative and Democratic-Republican divisions.

The Fall of the Alliance: The Islamic Revolution and the Hostage Crisis

During the Carter presidency, the American establishment and the American public watched in disbelief and surprise as America's foremost ally in West Asia collapsed like a house of cards, following the success of the Islamic Revolution in 1979. The establishment of a republican superstructure on an Islamic base was to have unprecedented repercussions for US-Iran relations. Iran underwent one of the most

popular revolutions in human history, overhauling the entire political system. The final days of Carter's presidency saw the culmination of grievances that the Iranians had toward the United States, in a way that the America could never really understand. During these tumultuous times, America bore the brunt of becoming the symbolic representative of the ills of imperialism that had plagued Iran over the years.

One of the drawbacks in American policy toward Iran was the lack of cohesion among policymakers and professional rivalry that affected inter-departmental cooperation. Differing perceptions among the American policymakers led to incoherence in America's policy toward Iran, hence resulting in a distorted knowledge of the changing dynamics in the society and politics of Iran. By the second half of the 1970s, the phenomenal growth rates of the Iranian economy halted as oil revenues leveled off between 1975 and 1978. There was a huge rural-urban income distribution gap. Foreign workforce increased in the face of reported lack of skilled labour in Iran. Moreover, there was a severe recession in the construction industry and the Iranian peasants could not compete with the imports being sold at subsidized prices. The same period also saw the rise of the influence of religion in Iranian politics, when hundreds of thousands of Iranians returned to the fundamentals of Shi'i activism. Despite the economic problems that continued to exist for the Iranian people, the absence of any significant political institution offering real participation increased the disaffection of the masses that turned to the fundamentals of Shi'ism. The religious revival was most visible in secondary schools and universities continually used as a symbol of protest against the Pahlavi monarchy. Men and women flocked to religious centres, where they discussed social and political matters in terms of the lives of the infallible religious leaders (Imams) of Shi'i Islam. Though, the surge of religious activism was not lost to the Americans, they still lacked a dispassionate understanding of the nature of the revolution brewing in the Iranian society. They would rather look at the secular left as the source of tension.

The year 1977 also called "the year of liberalization" saw the Shah announced new plans of reform, which was rather ornamental, with no signs of any fundamental change of political reality. In addition, to the Shah's concern with the election of Jimmy Carter as the president of the United States, the Shah cared to bring about the

liberalization programme in response to the failure of his repressive tactics and the co-option of younger voices in the ruling establishment. During this period, the Shah was becoming increasingly concerned with young Iranians bitterly opposed to his regime and the infiltration of dissident elements in the SAVAK. These kinds of radical challenges forced the Shah to consider taking up a programme of selective reform. Thus, it would be wrong to argue that the Shah decided to make changes in his style of functioning solely on the basis of Carter's human rights policy. Barry Rubin, editor of the Middle East Review of International Affairs Journal categorically contended, "complaints after the revolution by the Shah and his defenders that Washington forced him to become too soft, and thus encouraged the upheaval, seem, simply to have no basis in fact." (Rubin 1980: 193)

The American officials found it useful to argue in favour of the material progresses made during the Shah's period whenever they testified before congressional committees investigating human rights violations in Iran. An effort was also made to publicize the single Rastakhiz Party[9] as open to participation and containing both a conservative and a progressive wing. Besides, several measures were publicized by the Shah such as releasing political prisoners, loosening the tight system of censorship, and establishing various study groups and commissions to hear the complaints and grievances of the people. In fact, during the first ten months of 1977, the Pahlavi Monarchy invited three major international human rights groups-the International Red Cross, Amnesty International, and the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ)-into the country for a first hand examination of the social and political conditions. Along with these, the Shah shuffled the membership of his political elite, trying to bring in educated technocrat. However, the general verdict of the masses was negative regarding the reforms. There were a lot of contradictions in the Shah's reform programme. The Shah still viewed the Monarchy as essential and his role preeminent and disregarded all forms of dissent. In fact, the reform programme was largely seen as a palliative to prevent human rights

[9] Rastakhiz (Resurrection) party (also Hizb-i Rastakhiz) was founded on March 2, 1975 by Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the Shah of Iran, as a new single party holding a monopoly on political activity in Iran, and to which all Iranians were required to belong. It survives today in exile as an Iranian monarchist party opposing the Islamic Republic created when the Pahlavi dynasty was overthrown.

issues from influencing Carter's policy toward Iran. SAVAK was still influential and corruption was still rampant. As James Bill wrote, "In sum, he had opened the political door slightly, had sought to hold it there, and, when necessary, had instructed his police to slam it shut again." (Bill 1988: 226)

When the Democratic Administration of Jimmy Carter came to power in the US, it professed a particular concern for human rights in its foreign policy. But this issue was certainly not to take precedence over security and economic issues. Iran then accounted for over half of all American arms sales. Throughout the summer and the early fall of 1977, President Carter sent numerous signals of support to the Shah, the most important example being the administration's campaign to sell the shah the technologically advanced $1.23 billion worth of Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS). The stand by the Carter administration on this issue in the face of serious Congressional challenges contradicted the basic premise on which Jimmy Carter began his term, and contributed to his growing image of inconsistency and unpredictability. (Cottam 1988: 161) Moreover when Carter began his presidency, the flow of arms to Iran had acquired a life of its own and the bureaucracy was already embedded with people who supported the transfer of arms. The issue of human rights did not figure prominently in the political equation and occupied a lowly position in Carter's list of issues concerning the United States and Iran. When Carter came for a short visit to Tehran in January 1978, he only reinforced the pro-Pahlavi posture that he had adopted throughout 1977 and gave a positive response to the Shah's long term $10 billion military shopping list. During his visit, he remarked that Iran was an "island of stability" and the Shah was "beloved of his people". But, a few days before, in Warsaw, he had made stirring references to human rights, thus embarrassing the Polish government and its Soviet mentor. (Ibid: 163) Carter began to be continually looked at as a dangerous hypocrite by the opposition in Iran, questioning the inconsistencies in Carter's foreign policy that gave high sounding sermons on the importance of human rights but muted the issue whenever it came to Iran.

Carter's unquestioning support to the Shah emboldened the regime to continue its policy of alternating reform and repression, coming down violently on the demonstrations even in the holy city of Qum in early 1978. As the demonstrations spiraled in the

following days of this eventful year, around 10,000 to 12,000 persons were reported to have been killed and another 45,000 to 50,000 injured. Throughout 1978, the opposition including the secular professional class and the religious right, who had very little in common solidified in opposition to the repressive politics of the Monarchy. From the holy Shi'i city of Najaf in Iraq until 6 October 1978 and then from a small home near Paris, Khomeini became the focal point of the dissidence in Iran, speaking vocally against the infusion of western culture, the "unholy" alliance between the United States and the Shah, who according to him, had sold the soul of Iran to the West. Khomeini's network was backed by a large number of key religious and bazaar followers and students who had taken religious course from him. The rising upheaval was proving too much for the Shah to handle and his half-hearted, poorly implemented policies bore no result.

On 16 January 1979, the Shah and the Empress of Iran and a small entourage flew out of Iran never to return again, as masses of people rushed to the streets of the major cities and held frenzied celebrations. On February 1, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini arrived in Tehran amidst an unprecedented show of support and welcome. Hence, the Iranian (Islamic) Revolution became a reality. The revolutionaries fighting against the Shah regime turned against its primary patron, the United States of America. As a major ally in the Persian Gulf crumbled under the weight of a massive revolution, America watched in shock and alarm.

During one of the most tumultuous times in Iranian politics and in US-Iran relations, the bureaucratic divisions in the American establishment did not help matters, major foreign policy actors being tangled in policy and personal rivalry. The primary fault line was the institutional rivalry between the US Department of State headed by Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and the National Security Council, headed by National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski. Although, President Jimmy Carter wavered under the influence of conflicting advices, it is clear that he finally lent his ears to Brzezinski, effectively undercutting the Department of State and his ambassador in Tehran, William Sullivan who took time to believe in the vulnerability of the Shah. It is also true that the major foreign policy forces in Washington and several powerful American businessmen and Pahlavi supporters like Nelson Rockfeller and Henry Kissinger wanted the US to

support the Shah at any cost. (Bill 1988: 250-51) According to George Ball, prominent American diplomat and former US Ambassador to the United Nations, Brzezinski used to function in a free-wheeling manner, exceeding the restraints of his office. He called in foreign ambassadors, telephoned or sent telegrams outside State Department channels, and even hired a press adviser so as to compete with the Secretary of State as the enunciator of American foreign policy. (Ball 1982: 457-58)

President Jimmy Carter should bear maximum responsibility for the American foreign policy debacle in Iran. In preferring to listen to his National Security Adviser alone, President Carter silenced many voices that continually warned of the Shah's vincibility. In the eyes of the Iranian masses opposed to the Shah, one of Carter's most serious political miscalculations was the timing of his telephone call to the Shah after Black Friday. The Shah's troops had fired into unarmed crowds at Jalah Square; killing and wounding hundreds of men, women, and children, on 8 September 1978 and President Carter took time out from his important Camp David meetings to call the Shah early on a Sunday morning, 10 September. Carter told the monarch that he had his personal support and friendship. This publicly announced telephone message convinced the Iranian people that Carter approved of the Jalah massacre and that the United States was now determined to oppose the revolution at all costs. (Bill 1988: 258) Under the influence of Brzezinski, President Carter vetoed any advice to establish direct American contact with Ayatollah Khomeini, a move recommended by various American advisers.

On the night of 22 October 1979, a Gulfstream aircraft landed quietly at La Guardia airport in New York City. The jet carried the Shah and Empress of Iran and a small royal entourage. Probably yielding to the pressures of the Shah's powerful American friends, genuine humanitarian considerations and political calculations involving the forthcoming presidential elections, President Carter had given the approval for Mohammad Reza Shah to enter the United States for medical treatment. But this decision proved to be the final nail on the coffin of the US-Iran relations. The decision to give asylum to the unpopular Monarch left no doubt about America's sympathies and support to the unpopular Shah. This emboldened and gave fodder to the ultra-radical elements in Iran. On 4 November 1979, less than two weeks after the Shah was admitted

to the US, a group of nearly five hundred students attacked the US Embassy in Tehran and took sixty-two of the American officials hostage for 444 days, sinking the boat of the US-Iran relations. (Houghton 2004) The kind of media attention to the event increased the confidence of the Iranians and in pure bazaar style bargaining, the price for accommodation increased reciprocally with the pressure from the American side. Ayatollah Khomeini himself at first quietly expressed disapproval of the move but later became a strong supporter when he realized the overwhelming popularity of the event among the Iranian masses. This event brought down the influence of the moderate group in Iranian politics, ending any hope of an effective negotiation with the Americans.

The contours of US-Iran relations have been visibly shaped by two very politically volatile periods when the powers were changing hands in Tehran. If the events of 1953 were a foundational moment in the construction of US-Iran relations and transferred Iranian suspicions from the historic Anglo-Russian axis towards the Americans, the events of 1979 crystallized this tradition. For adherents to Iran's revolutionary ideology, the Islamic Revolution indicated a definitive break with the past, defined by the termination of relations with the United States. This termination is defined by the seizure of the US Embassy in November 1979. Similarly for the United States, the events brought forth an era of disassociation, enmity, suspicion and mutual demonization that endures to this day and shows no signs of waning any soon. Succeeding Americans administrations have failed to solve the Persian Puzzle as Kenneth Pollack calls it. Carter's successor Ronald Reagan promising a stronger America got caught in the web of the Iran-Contra scandal. (Ledeen 1988) Despite success in the Gulf War of 1991, President George H.W.Bush could not let himself off the hook of allegations of further covert dealings with Iran. When Bill Clinton became the president, he thought it prudent to stay safe off Iran and followed a policy of 'Dual Containment' which was essentially a policy of neglect and indifference. The fateful events of 11 September, 2001 and the revelations of suspicions over the intent of Iranian nuclear programme have sent the already tense US-Iran relations spiraling downwards. Differing interpretations of regional and international security and competing views of resource management and balance of power have put the countries on the path to confrontation. Moreover, cultural differences and a deep mistrust built over the years have made it all the more difficult for the two

countries to adopt more conciliatory positions. The rhetoric employed by both the sides has not helped matters, with America demonized as the "Great Satan" and Iran being called a nation of "Mad Mullahs". (Beaman 2005)

Chapter 2: US Perspective on Evolution of Iran's Nuclear Programme

US Perspective on Evolution of Iran's Nuclear Programme:

For some time now, particularly since 2002, the intent of Iran's nuclear programme has been under the scanner of the international community, with particular concern from the United States of America, an erstwhile ally of Tehran during the period of Mohammad Reza Shah. Iran has denied the charges of its nuclear programme being geared towards making a weapon. Iran maintains that the plan is meant purely for civilian purposes and that it is inevitable if Iran were to survive a future energy crunch looking at the rising population and the demand for energy that will follow as a result. On the other hand, this argument has been challenged by the US, questioning the veracity of such a claim by a country that virtually sits on a mine of huge oil and natural gas reserves. Despite the US National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) 2007 contradicting an earlier report of 2005 that asserted that Iran was determined to acquire nuclear weapon capability and said that Iran had halted its weapon programme in 2003, the important point to be noted is that both the reports do not disagree on the inherent ambition of the Iranian leadership to go for the nuclear bomb. (Mahapatra 2009:25) When George W. Bush grouped Iran along with Iraq and North Korea in what he called the "Axis of Evil", Iran began to consider the kind of treatment meted out by the United States to the other two "evils". The view that a non-nuclear Iraq was invaded with impunity and nuclear-powered North Korea has often been enticed with concessions and negotiations seemed to have emboldened the Iranians to harden their resolve to acquire the technology and link the nuclear programme to Iranian nationalism and patriotism. (Abedin 2006) Nonproliferation experts agree that the uranium enrichment capability of Iran continues to increase but disagree on how close Iran is to mastering capabilities to weaponize. To better understand the context of the stands taken by both the parties and the changing nature of US non-proliferation dictum with the change in US-Iran relations, it is imperative to study the evolution of Iran's nuclear programme and the US perspective on the same.

Iran's Nuclear Programme under the Shah:

Iran's quest for nuclear energy is not a new found endeavour of the Ahmadinejad regime but its genesis can be traced to the 1950s when the developing interest of Iran under Mohammad Reza Shah to acquire nuclear technology intersected with a corresponding interest in the American establishment to acquire a foothold in the international nuclear market, then largely under the clout of Britain and Canada. This was also the period when the United States intensified its assistance to Iran in economic, military and technical fields, also including nuclear science and technology. But, rules of its own making hindered the US in this ambition. In June 1946, the US Congress had adopted the Atomic Energy (or the MacMohan Act), which prevented the release of atomic technology to other powers, even to allies. (Atomic Energy Act, 1946) Thus the Act had to be amended and the first of such amendments took place in 1954. Atomic Energy Act of 1954 was an amendment to the Act of 1946 and substantially refined certain aspects of the law, including increased support for the possibility of a civilian nuclear industry. The 'Atoms for Peace' speech of President Dwight D. Eisenhower before the United Nations General Assembly on 8 December 1953 paved the way for such a development. (Schlesinger, Jr. 1973:138-142)

Maintaining acceleration of increased military, economic and civilian assistance to Iran, on 5 March 1957, the US and Iran signed the Agreement for Cooperation Concerning Civil Uses of Atoms after a period of negotiation of about two years. (Department of State Bulletin, 1957) The deal was intended to open doors for US investment in Iran's civilian nuclear industries, such as health care and medicine. The plan also called for the US Atomic Energy Commission to lease Iran up to 13.2 pounds of low-enriched uranium (LEU) for research purposes. Also, in 1957, The Institute of Nuclear Science, under the auspices of the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), moved from Baghdad to Tehran, and the Shah, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, took a personal interest in nuclear energy. (Nuclear Threat Initiative, Nuclear Chronology) Two years after the agreement was made public, Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi ordered the establishment of an institute at Tehran University-the Tehran Nuclear Research Centre-and negotiated with the United States to supply a five-megawatt reactor. Over the next

decade the United States provided nuclear fuel and equipment that Iran used to start up its research. Gary Samore, Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) Vice President and a senior arms control negotiator in the Clinton administration, said the cooperation was meant to assist Iran in developing nuclear energy while steering Tehran away from indigenous fuel-cycle research. (Bruno 2008)

In early stages, the nuclear research at Tehran University primarily concentrated on post-graduate education and research activities in basic nuclear science and techniques. Later on the Centre received a budget from the government and established some laboratories for radiation measurement and radiation chemistry. Eventually, American Machine and Foundry (AMF) supplied Iran a pool-type 5 MW (thermal) reactor and its fuel in September 1967. The US also supplied Iran some new laboratories of standard type, of which the most important was a radioisotope production unit. (Kibaroglu 2007:223-245) Around this time, the United States also supplied 5.545kg of enriched uranium, of which 5.165kg contained fissile isotopes, to Iran for fuel in a research reactor. The United States also supplied 112g of plutonium, of which 104g are fissile isotopes, for use as "start-up sources for research reactor." In November 1967, the 5MW pool-type, water-moderated research reactor supplied to Iran by General Atomic (GA) Technologies of the United States went critical[10] using 5.585kg of 93% enriched uranium supplied by the US firm United Nuclear Corporation. (Sahimi 2004: Part V) In addition, the US supplied Iran hot cells which are, "heavily shielded rooms with remotely operated arms used to chemically separate material irradiated in the research reactor, possibly including plutonium laden 'targets'." (Nuclear Threat Initiative, Nuclear Chronology)

Rise of the Non-proliferation Regime:

On 1 July 1968, Iran signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) on the day it opened for signature. Six years later Iran completed its Safeguards Agreement with

[10] The critical condition is what occurs when the arrangement of materials in a reactor allows, on the average, exactly one neutron of those liberated in one nuclear fission to cause one additional nuclear fission. If a reactor is critical, it will have fissions occurring in it at a steady rate

the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)[11].The Majlis ratified the NPT in February 1970 that entered into force in March 1970, bringing its programme under the inspection regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). On 13 March 1969, the Agreement between the US and Iran on Cooperation Concerning Civil Uses of Atom of 1957 was extended for another ten years. This was done amidst efforts that gave birth to a "non-proliferation regime",[12] with the original purpose to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons beyond the five countries that had them when the NPT came into force. Incidentally, the Nuclear-5 have been the same as P-5[13] countries that hold the veto power in the United Nations Security Council.

After much debate and torturous negotiations, the idea of an NPT was unanimously supported in a 1961 resolution at the UN General Assembly. (Bunn 2006:77) One of the most sticking points of the negotiations was that the non-nuclear states that signed the treaty would have to allow inspections of their peaceful nuclear facilities. These inspections were to be conducted by the IAEA to ensure that the nuclear facilities of such members were not used to make nuclear materials for use in weapons. Since its founding by the United Nations in 1957, the IAEA has promoted two, apparently contradictory, missions: on the one hand, the Agency seeks to promote and spread internationally the use of civilian nuclear energy; on the other hand, it seeks to prevent, or at least detect, the diversion of civilian nuclear energy to nuclear weapons, nuclear explosive devices or purposes unknown. The IAEA now operates a safeguards system as specified under Article III of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) of 1968, which aims to ensure that civil stocks of uranium, plutonium, as well as facilities and technologies associated with these nuclear materials, are used only for peaceful purposes and do not contribute in any way to proliferation of nuclear weapons. Regarding this concern, a lot of debates and negotiations revolve around the issue of the transfer of 'dual-use technology'.[14] The IAEA regularly inspects civil nuclear facilities to verify the

[11] Safeguards are used to verify compliance with the Treaty through inspections conducted by the IAEA.
[12] Stephen Krasner defines regimes as "institutions possessing norms, decision rules, and procedures which facilitate a convergence of expectations." See Krasner 1982: 185-205.
[13] The United States of America, the United Kingdom, China, Russia and France.
[14] Dual use technology refers to the possibility of military use of civilian nuclear power technology. The enriched uranium used in most nuclear reactors is not concentrated enough to build a bomb. However, the same plants and technology used to enrich uranium for power generation can be used to make the highly

accuracy of documentation supplied to it. The agency checks inventories, and samples and analyzes materials. Safeguards are designed to deter diversion of nuclear material by increasing the risk of early detection. They are complemented by controls on the export of sensitive technology from countries such as UK and USA through voluntary bodies such as the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG)[15] The main concern of the IAEA is that uranium not be enriched beyond what is necessary for commercial civil plants, and that plutonium which is produced by nuclear reactors not be processed into a form that would be suitable for bomb production

When the NPT was finally adopted, it secured the promise that the non-nuclear members will not acquire nuclear weapons "from any transfer whatsoever" and will not seek or receive assistance in making them. (NPT 1968:ART.II) As an effort toward keeping this commitment effective, the non-nuclear members accepted the provision that required their peaceful nuclear operations such as research and power reactors to be opened for inspections, so as to ensure that the nuclear materials and technology used by these reactors were also not used to make nuclear weapons. (Ibid: ARTIII) The NPT promises members who agree not to acquire nuclear weapons "the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy." In the language of the NPT, this agreement should not be interpreted "as affecting the inalienable right" of all its members to produce and use "nuclear energy for peaceful purposes," though conforming to the provisions against seeking or receiving assistance in making weapons. It promises that the parties will "pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control." (Ibid: Art I, II, and IV)

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enriched uranium needed to build a bomb. In addition, the plutonium produced in power reactors, if separated from spent fuel through chemical reprocessing (much less technically challenging than isotopic separation), can be used for a bomb. Fast breeder reactors require reprocessing, generate more plutonium than they consume and can produce weapons-grade plutonium.

[15] A multinational body concerned with reducing nuclear proliferation by controlling the export and re-transfer of materials that may be applicable to nuclear weapon development and by improving safeguards and protection on existing materials. It was founded in 1974, and presently consists of 45 members.

To countries not aligned with the United States or Russia, including Iran after the Islamic Revolution, this obligation has become one of the most important provisions of the treaty. Without further progress toward nuclear weapon disarmament (if not "general and complete disarmament"), these countries see the NPT as perpetuating an unequal world in which some countries have nuclear weapons and some do not and continuing to be silent on, if not support what is popularly termed as "vertical proliferation"[16] of nuclear weapons.

The non-proliferation regime relies on international organizations and conferences to change and enforce its policies. The most important of these are the IAEA, which is responsible for inspection, and the United Security Council, which has the authority to enforce IAEA inspection requests or to issue other orders requiring compliance with the NPT. A Security Council order prohibiting the acquisition of nuclear orders could be based on IAEA reports concerning NPT inspection results, reports by a separate inspector organization created by the Council, or information provided by members of the Council. The UN General Assembly also plays an important role in that it debates and adopts resolutions every year concerning recommended practices or negotiations toward preventing the further proliferation of nuclear weapons, reducing the stockpile of those weapons, and proceeding toward "nuclear disarmament". NPT members also hold formal, treaty-prescribed review conferences every five years, along with preparatory committee gatherings ("PrepComs") almost every year, to identify issues, recommendations, and procedures for the future. NPT review conferences seek consensus on what NPT members are willing to do to strengthen the nonproliferation regime. These agencies occupy important parts of the discourse of the US response to Iran's nuclear programme, especially after 2002 when the IAEA, bolstered by European support and particularly the American endeavour started systematic inspections of the alleged Iranian nuclear weapons programme sites.

[16] Vertical proliferation—the increase in numbers or dispersion of nuclear weapons by nuclear weapons states.

Momentum to the Shah's nuclear programme before the Islamic revolution:

By the 1970s, France and Germany joined the United States in providing assistance to the Iranian nuclear programme. In 1974, Iran signed agreements with Western firms, namely France's Framatome and Germany's Kraftwerk Union (KWU) for the purchase of nuclear reactors and enriched uranium. Regional wars and predictions of a looming energy shortfall prompted the Shah to explore alternative forms of power production. Aside from laying the technological ground throughout the 1960s, the scientific infrastructure of Iran was steadily growing with hundreds of Iranian students attending universities in Western European countries as well as the United States, and technicians mastering their skills in traineeship programmes abroad. As of the early 1970s there was a major influx of trained Iranian scientists and technologists back into Iran. (Etemad 1987:207) With other Iranian universities establishing nuclear research and technology related departments, by the time the Shah announced his ambitious nuclear power programme in 1974, there was a relatively good scientific base in the country. In March 1974, he established the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), and announced plans to "get, as soon as possible, 23,000 megawatts [of electricity] from nuclear power stations." (Sahimi 2004: Part V) He appointed Akbar Etemad, a Swiss-trained physicist, as its first chief, and announced that the AEOI, like everything else, would be run directly under his (the Shah's) command. The historic statement made by the Shah in March 1974 declaring the goal of establishing 23,000 MW (electric) nuclear power capacity to become operational within the following 20 years did not come as a surprise. It was indeed a culmination of a series of developments that had taken place in Iran as well as the rest of the world over the previous decade. The first announcement regarding Iran's intention to build nuclear reactors was made on 18 December 1972, when Iran's Ministry of Water and Power began a feasibility study on constructing a nuclear power plant in southern Iran. (Ibid) The AEOI negotiated extendable ten-year fuel contracts with Washington, Bonn and Paris by the mid-1970s thus ensuring long-term supplies of low-enriched uranium fuel. In 1975, Iran also purchased a 10 per cent share in an enrichment plant built in France by the EURODIF consortium of Belgium, France, Italy and Spain.

By the time Lyndon B. Johnson became the president of the United States, the Shah emboldened by the 'White Revolution'[17] conveyed that the military assistance given to Iran under the five-year Military Assistance Programme (approved in 1962) was inadequate. But President Johnson replied to the Shah stressing that 'the programme was practical and adequate and that a substantial Arab threat to Iran was unlikely. (Kibaroglu 2007:223-245) This also coincided with the Shah's insistence on finding alternative sources of military supplies, especially the Soviet Union. While the Shah preferred to buy this equipment from the US, he was prepared to go elsewhere in the absence of an early favourable response from Washington. (Ibid) During this time, the American Ambassador in Tehran Armin Meyer was in a constant effort to entice Washington toward increasing the support to the Shah. He observed that the Shah was tired of being lectured to by American officials on the priority of Iran's economic progress over the development of its military potential. (Ibid) As a result, the US and Iran began negotiating on a revision of the 1964 Memorandum of Understanding, and the US offered Iran sophisticated military equipment, contingent on measures to be taken to ensure it would not be compromised. A 'National Policy Paper' on Iran prepared by the US Department of State noted that 'the US strategy should be to respond as fully and as positively as it could, consistent with maintaining special US bilateral arrangements with Iran, to the Shah's thrust toward a fully independent national posture in the country's foreign relations. (Ibid)

The US-Iran cooperation in the nuclear field was given a major leap ahead with the historic visit of President Richard Nixon to Tehran in May 1972. The importance of this trip is to be understood in the light of a fundamental shift in power relations in the Persian Gulf and adoption of the 'Nixon Doctrine' which outlined the 'US intent to place greater emphasis on initiatives by regionally influential states to assure stability and security of their respective regions'. (Beinart 2007) This visit indicated significant shift in US foreign policy-thinking. By the 1970s, the Shah was exercising an influence in world affairs at a level far greater than Iran's national power seemed to warrant. As his internal position improved and his programme of equipping a large military force progressed, the

[17] The White Revolution was a series of reforms launched in early 1963 by the Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.

Shah came to be seen by American authorities as a major security asset in the area. (US Department of State 1967)

Iran soon came to be perceived as a major regional power. At the very least Iran could serve a "tripwire" role in the event of Soviet aggression. It could hold off Soviet forces long enough to grant Americans time to prepare a strategic faceoff. Thus Shah's Iran had to be given full and unequivocal American diplomatic support. (Ibid) This granted Iran great derivative bargaining strength, by which the Shah could credibly promise or threaten a negotiating partner with the tacit understanding that the United States would back him diplomatically. By 1972, the People's Republic of China (PRC) established diplomatic relations with the United States. The period also saw intensification in the Sino-Soviet conflict, and as a major power in the region of which Iran occupied the western limit, the PRC began to see Iran as a regional ally in its own containment strategy directed against the USSR. Thus, Shah's Iran was seen as a surrogate by both the Americans and the Chinese, and the bargaining power this granted Iran was enormous. When in January 1968 the British government announced that it would withdraw its forces from the Persian Gulf by the end of 1971, Iran sought a new assertive role in the region giving reasons to the Shah to again push for more US military equipment and to express Iran's need for increased oil revenues to finance the military development programme, thus hinting at an 'arms for oil' deal with the US. This was interpreted as a move to deny the area to the Soviet Union, and hence eminently acceptable to American policymaking circles. (Kissinger 1979:1262) Thus When compared to his predecessors, President Nixon seemed more inclined to satisfy the needs of the Shah as much as possible. Much of this strategic sight on the part of the Nixon administration also owed to the geopolitical changes in West Asia and Iran's increasing assertion under the Shah as a power to reckon with. In early 1970s, the Nixon Administration recognized that 'the US had strategic interests in both Iran and Saudi Arabia' and that stability in the Gulf 'would depend on their cooperation in the face of the growing threat of Arab radicalism encouraged by the Soviet Union'. This approach of the US would later be known as the 'Twin Pillar' policy for maintaining stability in the

Persian Gulf, according to which President Nixon also recognized the preponderance of Iranian power in the area. (Kibaroglu 2007:223-245)

During this period, the President was advised by his staff to 'assure the Shah that the US envisioned Iran carrying a large share of the responsibility for security of the Persian Gulf. The US wanted to enhance the Shah's strength in order to deter Soviet designs of the region. The President and the National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger visited Tehran on their way back from a summit meeting in Moscow. During these meetings with the Shah the Nixon Administration made the unprecedented promise that the Shah could purchase any conventional weapons he wanted from the American inventory. Among other military goods, this included the sophisticated F-14 and F-15 aircraft. "He'll buy anything that flies," stated one US official. (Newsweek 23 August 1976:52) According to a U.S. Senate staff report, this extraordinary executive decision:

> "effectively exempted Iran from arms sales review processes in the State and Defense Departments. This lack of policy review on individual sales inhibited any inclination in the Embassy, the US Military Mission in Iran (ARMISH-MAAG), or desk officers in State and DOD to assert control over day-to-day events; it created a bonanza for US weapons manufacturers, the procurement branches of three US services, and the Defense Security Assistance Agency. (Senate Committee on Foreign Relations 1976: viii-ix)

Between 1972 and 1978, the transfer of arms from America to Iran took place at levels never before known in international political history. Between 1972 and 1977 alone, the value of US military sales to Iran amounted to $ 16.2 billion. The Iranian defence budget increased from $1.4 billion in 1972 to $9.4 billion in 1977. By 1977 the military and security establishments in Iran were absorbing over 40 per cent of the Iranian budget. (Bill 1988: 202) Nixon and Kissinger gave the Shah this military blank cheque against the best advice of the Department of Defense. Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger informed the President of his concerns, expressed apprehension that the policy of supporting an apparently open-ended Iranian military build-up would continue to serve long-term US interest. Around this time, Iran had contracted to purchase $9.1 billion worth US weapons, equipment, and support and training services through the Foreign Military Sales Programme. Secretary Schlesinger was concerned that the

'extensive acquisition of military material, based on limited absorptive capacity might lead to failure and ultimate recriminations against the US, deserved or not'. (Kibaroglu 2007:223-245) Hence, he urged 'an early review of US defence and security interests in Iran' covering around a decade, which would result in cutting down the amount of arms and equipment that the Shah had wanted, such as the Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS). In a nutshell, the US had to strike a balance between the alternative options in its policy toward Iran. On the one hand, a policy of all-out support for the Shah without reservation was thought to leave the US without flexibility in a period of dynamic change. But, on the other hand, withdrawal of support would deprive the US of important political and strategic assets without any offsetting gains in Iran or elsewhere. Hence, such choices were thought to be unrealistic. (Ibid) Moreover, the Shah was seen to be less dependent on the US than before, and according to some analysts, his increasing independence could not militate against the interests of the US. Henry Kissinger took note of the reluctance of the Department of Defense dismissed this as objection of individuals who were jealous of American inventories. (Kissinger 1982:669) He failed to understand the central argument that the weaponry purchased served no clear strategic-tactical purpose and could not easily be absorbed in the Iranian weaponry system. In addition, he denied the claim that there was heavy pressure from US manufacturers to sell these weapons for profit. But the importance of arms sales to Iran during this period for the American arms industry was openly admitted by both industrial and governmental sources and widely reported in the press. (Cottam 1988:148-149)

The early 1970s witnessed dramatic events in world politics such as the Arab-Israeli conflict of 1973 (Yom Kippur) during which Israeli politicians reportedly discussed in the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) resorting to the 'nuclear option' in the face of combined surprise attack by Egypt and Syria. (United Press International, 16 September 2002) Israeli 'victory' in the Yom Kippur War, due to the timely intervention of the US, and the recapture of the territories that had been temporarily lost to the Egypt in the Sinai Peninsula and to Syria in the Golan Heights caused much anger and resentment among the Arab nations, including the oil-rich monarchies that protested at American support for Israel, and reduced their oil supplies to the US and other Western nations. Concerted action by the oil producing countries under the guidance of

Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) skyrocketed oil prices overnight. The influx of large sums of dollars into Iran due to exports of oil after the crisis is believed to have created incentives for the Shah to expand the scope of large-scale nuclear energy projects.(Kibaroglu 2002:33-48)

The Shah had originally envisioned Iran to have 10,000 MW (e) installed nuclear capacity by 1990. However, a 1974 study by the Stanford Research Institute concluded that Iran would need 20,000 MW (e) capacity by 1994. Hence, in March 1974, the Shah announced plans for establishing 23,000 MW (e) nuclear power capacity 'as soon as possible'. (Sahimi 2004: part V) To achieve this goal, he had established the AEOI in 1974. The decision to launch a nuclear power programme was simply made by the Shah. Prime Minister Amir Abbas Hoveida was consulted and his position was very favourable. The Government as such was not very much involved at the beginning. Nevertheless, its first move in this field was to prepare and introduce to Parliament a law on atomic energy, the AEOI, its governing bodies, and the control of the Government over nuclear activities. (Etemad 1987:212) The Shah had proposed to the US for many years the establishment of a Joint Economic Commission (JEC) for regulating and expanding commercial relations between the two countries. Up until 1974, the US had always turned down the Shah's suggestion on the ground that, having a free-market economy, the US government had no role to play in the commercial relations with Iran. However, after the severe increase in the price of oil during 1973-1974, the US was looking for a way to recoup billions of dollars that it was spending on importing oil and, therefore, it suddenly became very interested in establishing a JEC with Iran. (Sahimi 2004: Part V)

The boost in US-Iranian relations was quite substantial when President Ford took office in the aftermath of the 1973 Yom Kippur War and the ensuing oil crisis. On 3 March 1975, Iran and the United States signed a major economic agreement that committed Iran to spend about $15 billion on American goods and services. The agreement was signed by the US Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, and Iran's Finance Minister Hushang Ansari. At a joint news conference at the US Department of State, the two representatives said, "This is the largest agreement of this kind that has been signed between any two countries" (The New York Times, 5 March 1975:1). In

addition to the target figure of $15 billion, Iran also agreed in principle to spend about $ 7 billion more on as many as eight large nuclear power plants in ten years with total power of 8,000 electrical megawatts. (Ibid) The intensity of the Shah's nuclear programme and its acceptability can be gauged from the employment advertisements that appeared in the New York Times during this time calling for engineers and specialists in the nuclear field. (The New York Times 29 February 1976:117 & 28 March 1976:139)

In May 1974, the Chairman of the US Atomic Energy Commission D.L. Ray travelled to Tehran to talk to Iranian officials about the possibility of establishing multinational uranium enrichment and reprocessing facilities in Iran. The potential scope of cooperation was further expanded with the visit of the Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in November 1974. Aside from US investment in Iran's nuclear programme, Iran proposed to invest $ 2.75 billion in a uranium enrichment facility in the US. The Ford Administration agreed to the proposal and decided 'to set the fuel ceiling at a level reflecting the approximate number of nuclear reactor planned for purchase from the US suppliers to cover Iran's full nuclear reactor requirement under the proviso that the fuel would represent Iran's entitlement from their proposed investment in an enrichment facility in the US'.(National Security Council 1975) The US was equally willing to let Iranians invest in establishing a spent fuel reprocessing facility in Iran, preferably as a multinational facility, but this was not thought to be a condition. Prior to the visit of the Shah to the US in 1975, Secretary Kissinger wrote a briefing memo to the President in which he stated that their objectives should be 'to assure the Shah of the firm determination of the US to continue and expand the special relationship; to demonstrate their intentions to play a responsible and active role in world affairs which was responsive to the needs of the friends of the US'. (Kibaroglu 2007:223-245) In brief, the Ford Administration wanted 'to keep the Shah firmly, unreservedly, and confidently on the side of the US. (Ibid)

Around this time when Kissinger was briefing the President regarding the progress in negotiations for obtaining Iran's receptivity toward multinational participation in a reprocessing plant, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) signed a contract with Iran for providing training to Iranian nuclear engineers. By then,

the AEOI had a staff of about 150 nuclear physicists, about half of whom were from Argentina. In 1976, the Shah increased the budget of the AEOI from US $31 million to US$ 1 billion. (Sahimi 2004: Part V)

On 12 April 1977, Iran and the US signed an agreement to exchange nuclear technology and cooperate on nuclear safety. The training programme at MIT was to cost Iran $1.4 million. Fifty-four master's degree graduates were to be placed in the MIT nuclear engineering department. But not everyone was in agreement with the arrangement. Some students at the institute raised objections, arguing that it could lead to the proliferation of nuclear weapons and contending that the Shah of Iran was a despot. Some faculty members also expressed reservations, although they were less concerned with the political issues raised by the students. They were rather worried that such specially funded programmes might compromise the integrity of MIT and the worth of its degrees. The programme became the subject of various faculty meetings. But, Professor Kent Hansen, Chairman of the Nuclear Engineering Department at the institute, said that academic standards had been upheld during the selection process. In response to the complaint that the Shah's regime was "undemocratic", he replied that his department had about 44 students from what might be considered "undemocratic" countries. (Kifner, 27 April 1975:16) Dismissing worries about nuclear proliferation, he commented that disciplines like chemistry were more relevant to the production of weapons, that the types of reactors used in Iran were not as capable as others of producing convertible plutonium; that Iran was a signatory of the NPT, and that in any case; much of weapon technology was common knowledge. "Any technical education for intelligent people will be enough for them to make weapons using publicly available sources of information," he added (Ibid)

President Jimmy Carter pursued the same policy of civilian cooperation with Iran. In his visit to Tehran on 31 December 1977 and 1 January 1978, President Carter reached a new agreement according to which the US granted Iran 'most favoured nation' status for spent fuel reprocessing. The draft of the US-Iran Nuclear Agreement, which was supposed to facilitate cooperation in the field of nuclear energy as well as to govern the export and transfer of equipment and material to Iran, was signed on 10 July 1978 in

Tehran. One of the key issues in the negotiations involved the manner in which the US would exercise its approval rights over the disposition of spent fuel and the desire of Iran for non-discriminatory treatment in this regard. The US-Iran Agreement would be the first such bilateral agreement submitted to the Congress under the general framework of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act of 10 March 1978. (Kibaroglu 2007:223-245) But the revolution of February 1979 put everything in the area of nuclear cooperation between the US and Iran on hold.

Shah's Clandestine Designs:

Though an early signatory of the NPT, the Shah had reasons to want to proliferate and evidence suggests that the Shah was pursuing clandestine nuclear programmes. He feared the nuclearization of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Indo-Pakistan rivalry. While the Monarch was worried most that his archrival Ba'athist Iraq may attain the atomic bomb, India's explosion of a 'peaceful nuclear device' in 1974 was also disconcerting. He sought to transform Iran into an industrial power and to project Iran's hegemony over the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean regions, a secret nuclear weapons programme was, no doubt, consistent with the king's ambitions. As the Shah explained to Egyptian journalist Mohammed Husanein Heikal, "I tell you quite frankly that Iran will have to acquire atomic bombs if some upstart in the region gets them." (Singh 1980: 329-330) The Shah pursued four clandestine avenues of research and development. First, during 1976-77, the Tehran Nuclear Research Centre negotiated with American scientist Jeffrey Eerkens, who had designed a laser device to enrich uranium. Iran purchased four of the devices with the approval of the US Department of Energy. (Spector 1987:47-49)

The lasers were shipped to Iran in October 1978, just months before the downfall of the Shah. Second, the Monarch negotiated a secret contract to buy $700 million worth of natural uranium concentrate, known as 'yellowcake', from South Africa. This material probably would have been sent to France, West Germany, or the United States for enrichment to turn into fuel for Iran's nuclear power plants. Washington knew about the Iranian deal with South Africa which was documented in a confidential 1976 US

Department of State cable. (Vaziri 1998:312) Third, the Tehran Nuclear Research Centre was quietly working on reprocessing technology to obtain plutonium as an alternative to highly enriched uranium. Fourth, shortly before his downfall, the Shah had organized a secret research group to work on the nuclear weapons themselves. (Spector and Smith 1990:p.205-206) It is not known whether the scientists knew of each other's research. The Shah was known to have a penchant for compartmentalization of information. So, it is quit quite probable that the scientists were working unaware of each others' projects. When the Islamic revolution erupted in 1978-79, the Shah besides having the built the most extensive, overt nuclear infrastructure in West Asia, had also engaged in substantial, covert efforts to acquire atomic weapons with at least the tacit knowledge of the United States.

Past is Prologue to the Present:

Recently declassified documents have revealed certain parallels between the concerns of the Ford and Carter Administrations and the George W. Bush Administration with the Iranian nuclear programme. During the 1970s the Shah of Iran argued, like current Iranian leaders today, for a nuclear energy capability on the basis of national "rights," while the Ford and Carter administrations worried about nuclear weapons possibilities, according to newly declassified documents published by the National Security Archive in January 2009. Uranium enrichment capability is now the major point of controversy between Tehran and the world community, while during the 1970s Washington's greatest concern was that Iran sought a capability to produce plutonium, but in both instances the implication was that a nuclear weapons option might not be far away. The documents show that two US presidents dealing with the Shah of Iran, Ford and Carter, put concerns over proliferation and the Shah's possible desire to build a nuclear bomb front and center when they approved negotiating positions for a deal to sell nuclear reactors to Iran. (Burr 2009) While Iranian officials argued then, as they do today, that Iran had "rights" under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty to develop nuclear technology; the US government successfully sought an agreement that put nonproliferation controls over US-supplied nuclear material.

The 1979 Iranian Revolution derailed the agreement, but the approach that the Ford and Carter Administrations took shows significant continuity with contemporary US policy, which holds that Iran must not use its technological capabilities to produce nuclear weapons. The documents contradict the 2005 claim by former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger that non-proliferation was not an issue in the 1970s negotiations; this was a "commercial transaction," Kissinger told *The Washington Post.* (Linzer 2005:A15)

The 1970s nuclear negotiations have other parallels with the current situation. The Bush Administration has raised questions about Iranian claims that its interest in a nuclear energy program are peaceful, while the declassified record indicates that US policy-makers during the 1970s were also skeptical of, but ultimately willing to accept, the Shah's similar claims, as long as a nuclear agreement with Iran restricted its freedom of action in the nuclear field. Significantly, the Bush Administration also disparages Iran's assertion that it needs to develop alternative fuels in anticipation of the eventual decline in the country's extensive oil reserves. But the Shah and his government provided the same statements in the 1970s.

The record also shows that the Shah's regime and the current Iranian government have made the same claims that their pursuit of nuclear technology was an inherent national entitlement. No country "has a right to dictate nuclear policy to another," said the Shah's chief atomic energy official in 1977. (Burr 2009)

Among the disclosures in the new documents: (Ibid)

- In 1974 Department of State officials wrote that if the Shah's dictatorship collapsed and Iran became unstable, "domestic dissidents or foreign terrorists might easily be able to seize any special nuclear material stored in Iran for use in bombs." Moreover, "an aggressive successor to the Shah might consider nuclear weapons the final item needed to establish Iran's complete military dominance of the region."
- According to National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft, the Ford administration hoped that the Shah would commit himself to a "major act

of nuclear statesmanship: namely, to set a world example by foregoing national reprocessing."

- When officials from Oak Ridge National Laboratory received briefings on the planned Esfahan Nuclear Technology Center (ENTEC), they concluded that the "bears watching" because "unusually large" size of the facility "makes it theoretically possible to produce weapons-grade material (plutonium)" and the ENTEC plans included a "large hot lab," the first step toward reprocessing.
- Questioning US efforts to restrict Tehran's freedom of action, Iranian officials argued that "Iran should have full right to decide whether to reprocess" and the "right to effective control of the management and operation of reprocessing facilities."
- By the summer of 1978, Tehran and Washington had overcome differences and agreed to a nuclear pact that met US concerns and the Shah's interest in buying reactors, but the agreement closely restricted Iran's ability to produce plutonium or any other nuclear weapons fuel using US supplied material without Washington's "agreement."

Iran's Nuclear Quest since the Revolution:

Iran's science and technology transfer from the US and Europe came to a sudden halt with the Islamic Revolution of February 1979 sealed with the Hostage Crisis and the return of Ayatollah Khomeini from exile to Tehran. The immediate impact of the Revolution was the need to consolidate the new order in the country. Then almost immediately Iran was involved in a war against Iraqi forces under Saddam Hussein, who launched a large-scale offensive in September 1980. The Revolution caused a dramatic change in Iran's disposition in the world political arena vis-à-vis foreign and security policy matters; and after the 'Hostage Crisis' in the US Embassy in Tehran, Iran would no longer be seen as an ally of the US. On the contrary, 'hostility' would best characterize the nature of their bilateral relations. (Kibaroglu 2006:207-232) The US not

only stopped cooperating with Iran in the nuclear field, but also pursued a 'policy of denial' by putting pressure on other countries not to transfer nuclear technology to Iran. This radical shift in attitude indicates that, from the perspective of the US, especially in the nuclear field, what was good for the Shah was not good for the Imam.

The fundamental guiding principle of revolutionary Iran's foreign policy was Khomeini's slogan 'Na Sharq, Na Gharab, Faqat Jumhuri-ye Islami'- 'neither East, nor West, only the Islamic Republic of Iran'. (Ibid) In the early years of the Revolution, almost everything Western was rejected, and the nuclear projects were no exception.

According to Haleh Vaziri (Senior Global Media and Communications Analyst at the Intermedia Survey Institute in Washington D.C.),

> "Ayatollah Khomeini's return from exile to Tehran on 1 February 1979 ushered in a brief but intense *anti-modernisation* phase in Iran's domestic and foreign policies. The clerics rejected the Shah's plans to finance the rapid modernization of the civilian and military infrastructures with Iran's oil revenues. In fact, they reduced oil exports, allowed much of the American military hardware purchased by the Shah to fall into disrepair, purged the armed forces of suspected opponents and did not impede the flight of many scientists who had worked on Iran's nuclear projects." (Vaziri 1998: 314)

Vaziri noted that, during the 'Cultural Revolution' of spring 1980, the nascent nuclear infrastructure languished; the work on the Busheher nuclear reactors and at the Darkhovin nuclear reactor site was halted in 1979. (Ibid) On the same issue, the president of the AEOI under the Shah's regime, Dr. Akbar Etemad, noted, 'as regards the AEOI, there was a tendency to destroy everything within it, and many people-professional and otherwise-had a say in the matter. The destructive forces of the Revolution inside and outside the AEOI succeeded in bringing nearly all the projects to a halt; all the major projects were cancelled or left dormant. (Etemad 1987:214)

Efforts to resume the Nuclear Programme:

Once the revolutionary dust settled down, the Iranian clergy attempted to resume the nuclear projects. Some evidence suggests that even during the anti-modernization

phase, the clerics examined the possibility of acquiring a nuclear weapons capability. A March 1980 internal report of the US Defense Intelligence Agency cited a source in Iran who surmised that the revolutionary government was planning to use reactors smaller than those at Bushehr because of its interest in attaining nuclear weapons. Yet Iran apparently never pursued the smaller reactor option. (Vaziri 1998:314) There were a number of reasons why they started to take a more positive approach to the nuclear projects. One reason was the Iraqi offensive against Iran initiated on 22 September 1980; especially the massive air strikes on ports and oil refineries on the Persian Gulf. The initial trauma of Iraq's attack and the subsequent brutality of combat showed the clerics that modern military technology, especially weapons of mass destruction, could make a decisive difference in war.

According to Vaziri,

> "The first four or five years of the Iran-Iraq War shocked the clerics into realizing the value of modern military technology. The use of technology-and perhaps even nuclear weapons capability-would have deterred Iraq's initial aggression against the Islamic Republic and flouting of the international laws of war conduct. From the clerics' perspective, the Reagan administration not only had opposed their hegemonic aspirations but also allied with the Iraqi Ba'ath [in the effort] to defeat Iran. Had the Islamic republic possessed nuclear weapons capability, the US may have thought twice about interjecting its navy into the Persian Gulf and engaging Iranians." (Ibid: 316)

The severe energy crisis in the post-revolutionary period also prompted the top Iranian clergy to change their attitude to nuclear projects. The construction of power plants was given high priority. The clerics 'realized that they had killed the goose which laid the golden egg' by destroying the AEOI. (Etemad 1987:216) They decided to revive the organization with a new president who would resolve the issues with the German Kraftwerk Union in order to resume building the Bushehr nuclear power plant. Initially, Khomeini had strong reservations about the nuclear projects on the grounds that they would make Iran dependent on foreign technology. However, in the early 1980s, President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani finally got the blessing of Ayatollah Khomeini to go ahead with them. He asked the French and German companies to resume constructing nuclear power plants. The German firm KWU that had been building the

Bushehr plant refused, probably in response to pressure from the US. Nor did the French company, Framatome, agree on two 950 MW (e) reactors at Darkhovin, or on the construction of the Esfahan Nuclear Research Centre. President Rafsanjani recalled that at that point they realized that the West was not going to give sensitive technology to Iran. (Kibaroglu 2007:223-245)

Iran turned its face to other potential suppliers, such as Pakistan, Argentina, Spain, Czechoslovakia, China and the Soviet Union. In 1987, Iran signed a nuclear cooperation agreement with Pakistan according to which, 39 Iranian nuclear scientists and technicians would advance their skills in Pakistani nuclear facilities, reactors and laboratories. (Vaziri 1998:318) That same year, in May, Iran signed an agreement of US$5.5 million with Argentina for the supply of uranium enriched to 20 per cent and for the training of Iranian scientists at the Jose Balaserio Nuclear Institute. Building on an active economic relationship with Sweden, the Iranians approached Swedish firms about completing the Bushehr plant. Similarly, Iran had maintained active political and economic relations with India and asked its assistance in various fields, including the completion of the Busheher plant. (Etemad, 1987:216) Despite Iran's relentless efforts to resume work at the nuclear sites, none of them came to fruition. Then, China and Russia appeared as viable alternatives for nuclear assistance.

In 1984, in the midst of the war with Iraq, the Esfahan Nuclear Research Centre was opened demonstrating the Islamic regime's determination to pursue the nuclear aspirations inherited from the Shah's regime. With Chinese assistance, fuel fabrication and conversion facilities, which are crucial for uranium enrichment, were also built at Esfahan. In 1991, China and Iran announced an agreement to supply Iran with a 27 MW research reactor from China. (Nuclear Threat Initiative, Nuclear Chronology) In September 1992, President Rafsanjani during his Beijing visit negotiated for the purchase of one or two 330 MW (e) reactors; a tentative agreement to buy one such reactor was announced by the Iranian Defence Minister during the visit to Beijing. This announcement led to immediate US protests to China resulting in the deferral of the sale. (Kibaroglu 2007:223-245)

Prior to 1991, reports of China's nuclear cooperation with Iran were discarded as baseless and erroneous by Chinese authorities, arguing that China never struck deals with Iran. But eventually, China gave way in November 1991 with the Chinese Foreign Ministry admitting that China and Iran signed contracts for sale of a calutron[18] and a mini research reactor to Iran in 1989 and 1991 respectively. At the same breath, the Ministry argued that they were useful only for medical diagnosis and physics research and the facilities would be under IAEA safeguards. According to the Chinese authorities, the mini research reactor posed no proliferation threat. Obviously the US refused to buy this argument. (Gill 1998) After a decade-long effort to revitalize their long-stalled nuclear power projects and to expand the scope of scientific and technological infrastructure, Iran was left with Russia as the only major potential supplier. Iran had held earlier talks with Russia in the late 1980s and had even agreed in principle to cooperate in the nuclear field. But their agreement was delayed by dramatic changes that led to the collapse of the communist regime in the Soviet Union, and brought Boris Yeltsin to power as the President of the Russian Federation. President Rafsanjani recalled: 'Russia would support Iran to finish Bushehr in six years and they said they would start from scratch, and we said okay.' (Kibaroglu 2007:223-245)

When Viktor Mikhailov, the Russian Minister of Atomic Energy (Minatom) visited Iran at the request of Reza Amrollahi, the President of the AEOI, a Nuclear Cooperation Accord was signed with the Russian firm Zarubezhatomenergostroy on 8 January 1995 in Tehran. Russia and Iran agreed to cooperate in the completion of the construction of Block No.1 at the Bushehr nuclear power plant; Russia also agreed to train AEOI's scientific personnel as well as 10-20 graduate students and Ph.D.s annually at Russian academic institutions. (Ibid) The Russia-Iran nuclear deal would cost a little less than $1 billion. Iran's negotiations with potential nuclear suppliers indicated besides their scientists and technicians being trained in the scientifically and technologically more advanced countries; they also wanted uranium enrichment (highly enriched uranium production) and spent fuel reprocessing (plutonium separation) facilities. These are clear indications that Iran, under both the Shah and Ayatollah Khomeini, wanted to have a

[18] A small electromagnetic separator used in uranium enrichment.

complete nuclear fuel cycle that would elevate the country to the status of a nuclear weapon power.

It seems that Iran has managed largely to achieve its goals. Regarding Iran's nuclear facilities, Ambassador Ali Ashgar Soltanieh noted, "to a great extent, Iran's nuclear activities in uranium ore processing, uranium conversion and enrichment as well as heavy water production, research reactor designing and manufacturing centrifuge machines are the result of research and development and experience gradually gained during the period of sanctions and lack of cooperation by industrial countries in the area of peaceful uses of nuclear energy." (Ibid) Iran's scientific expertise in the nuclear field is striking. Over the last several decades, cadres of scientists, technicians and professionals have been developed, initially in Western countries, and later on in Russia, China and Pakistan. In the early 1990s, the US imposed sanctions when Iran intensified its efforts to expand the scope of its nuclear programme. The so-called 'dual containment' policy of the Clinton administration tried to prevent Iran (together with Iraq under the Saddam Hussein regime) from acquiring technological and scientific capabilities through imports of dual-use material; this policy had limited effect. One reason for this was the reluctance of the America's European allies to adopt a similar hardliner policy to 'contain' Iran. Europeans did not see eye-to-eye with the Americans on these matters (with the occasional exception of the United Kingdom) mainly because of the lack of evidence that would convince the European leaders of Iran's alleged plans to build nuclear weapons.

While the political climate in Iran is vastly different, the position of Iranian governments both pre- and post-Revolution concerning the country's need and inalienable right to nuclear technology has not changed. Iran has always maintained its need for nuclear power as an alternative source of energy to supply for its booming population (some 70 million) and rapid industrialization. It is estimated, at current rates of production, the country's oil reserves will be depleted within decades. From the times of the last Iranian Monarch to the present administration, Iran's position is that its valuable yet finite oil resources should be used for high-value products and not wasted on generating electricity. This is not a conveniently packaged reason offered by Iran. At the inception of the program, the Gerald Ford Administration gave credence to this claim.

The Ford strategy paper at the time stated that: "introduction of nuclear power will both provide for the growing needs of Iran's economy and free remaining oil reserves for export or conversion to petrochemicals"; an assessment later echoed by others, including the US National Academy of Sciences, and the Foreign Affairs Select Committee of the British Parliament. (Shoamanesh 2008)

Chapter 3: Bush Administration's Response to the 2002 Expose

Bush Administration's Response to the 2002 Expose

Iran's nuclear programme presents the United States with one of its greatest long term challenges. Since the revelation of the programme to the international community by the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), and the bracketing of Iran along with Iraq and North Korea under the 'Axis of Evil' in Bush's State of the Union Address, the already tense US-Iran relationship has seen a downward spiral. The conservative government of Mahmoud Ahmedinejad has been adamant on continuing Iran's nuclear programme. Given its geostrategic location in West Asia and the unsurpassed energy mine on which it sits, Iran presents a challenge and an opportunity to the United States in particular and the international community in general. There is evidence that Iran is pursuing uranium enrichment and plutonium production capabilities that make sense only if Iranian leaders wish to be able to build nuclear weapons. If other countries become as assured as the United States and Israel, then some dangerous instability can be conjectured. Some countries, perhaps including Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, will be tempted to match Iran at least by acquiring similar nuclear fuel production technologies. Some will be tempted to get tougher with Iran, and perhaps to strike militarily at it, unleashing a cycle of violent Iranian reaction. Some will be intimidated. A militant Iranian government that gains widespread popularity by threatening Israel and resisting the West may bolster the intensity and destructiveness of violent extremists in Lebanon, the Palestinian territories, Iraq, and elsewhere. As such, this chapter will try and inquire into the response that the expose in 2002 excited particularly from the United States. The chapter will also explore as sub-topics the role that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the EU-3[19] played in dealing with the Iranian nuclear programme.

[19] United Kingdom, Germany and France

Curtain Raised on Iran's Nuclear Ambition:

On 14 August 2002, at the Willard Hotel, just a few blocks away from Foggy Bottom[20], a US-educated Iranian citizen, Alireza Jafarzadeh, raised the curtains from Iran's nuclear programme, hitherto largely unknown to the world. Jafarzadeh was the chief congressional liaison and media spokesperson for the US representative office of the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI). On this day, he revealed to the international community the highly secretive Iranian nuclear activities by providing information about nuclear sites at Natanz (uranium enrichment) and Arak (heavy water production), started in 2000 and 1996 respectively. Delivering his speech, Jafarzadeh said that his information were the result of extensive research and investigation by the Committee of Defense and Strategic Studies of the NCRI, with the benefit of Command Headquarters inside Iran of the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran. This, of course, was not true. According to knowledgeable sources, Jafarzadeh's information came from Israeli intelligence. (Bruck 2006:56)

But this point was irrelevant. What is important is the kind of actions that his information would eventually provoke from the Bush administration and the IAEA. Jafarzadeh went on to provide details about suppliers, manufacturers, bureaucratic entities, and chronological details about the work he claimed was going on at the two facilities. The briefing was attended by reporters from the *Wall Street Journal, Associated Press, Fox News, the French News Agency, and Aljazeera.* (Ritter 2006: XXVI) At that very moment, the revelations made by him garnered little attention in the primetime American media, or elsewhere. The entire world at that time was solely focused on the issue of Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) programme. But in the months and years that followed his briefing, Jafarzadeh's short presentation would eventually steamroll into a confrontation that would heat up the latent animosity between the US and Iran to a point of no return and no compromise.

[20] The name Foggy Bottom is often used as a metonym for the United States Department of State, whose Harry S. Truman Building headquarters is in the neighbourhood.

The NCRI was traditionally recognized as the political wing of the Mohajideen-e-Khalq Organization (MKO/MEK)[21] (Cafarella 2005) which had been banned as a terrorist organization in several European countries and the United States. But these associations continued to enjoy good access to a number of lawmakers in the United States and Europe. They urged governments to recognize NCRI as the official opposition to the Islamic Republic, an ironic position given the anti-American pedigree of the organization (it began as an Islamic Marxist movement deeply antithetical to "American imperialism") and its involvement in the assassination of US personnel in Iran during the 1970s. (Ansari, 2006:198) The MKO remained the most organized of all Iranian opposition groups, with a highly effective public relations machinery, thus explaining their reach among legislators. Some legislators fully endorsed MKO/NCRI views. Other supported them only for the irritation that they would cause the Iranian leadership rather than for any practical change they might encourage in Iran. (Ibid: 199) But there was a contradiction in this periodic polemics of US allegiance to the NCRI, because while the US condemns Iran as the foremost sponsor of state terrorism, it was supporting a group they themselves classified as terrorists. It was in this general atmosphere that the revelations provided by the NCRI came to light. Nevertheless the revelations proved a double blow to the Islamic Republic by providing details of hitherto secret nuclear developments and dramatically enhancing the NCRI's international credibility.

Even before the revelations were made, the Bush administration had provided the 'crystal ball' to look at the future of US-Iran relations. In his first State of the Union Address delivered on 29 January 2002, President George W. Bush first publicly coined the phrase "Axis of Evil", when referring to Iran, North Korea and Iraq. "States like these," the President said, "and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger. They could provide these arms to terrorists, giving them the means to match their hatred. They could attack our allies or attempt to blackmail the United States. In any of these cases, the price of indifference would be catastrophic." (Dietrich, ed. 2005: 59-62) The President had reserved most of his rhetoric for Saddam

[21] For a history of the MKO, also see Abrahamian 1989.

Hussein and Iraq, the number one focus of his administration at the time and a nation for which his administration appeared busy making preparations for war. North Korea likewise received a great deal of attention in the speech. Surprisingly, Iran only rated a single line of criticism: "Iran aggressively pursues these weapons and exports terror, while an unelected few repress the Iranian people's hope for freedom." (Ibid) But Iran inevitably was made a charter member of George Bush's Axis of Evil. The critical aspect of this speech was the fact that Iran and Iraq had been clustered under a broader Bush administration national security strategy geared toward regional transformation in West Asia (read regime change). Preventive unilateral military operations was to, most probably, serve as the means to this end. According to a task force report from the Council on Foreign Relations, the reference to Iran in the "Axis of Evil" speech came in response to the discovery of a weapons cache reportedly supplied by Iran en route to the Palestinian Authority, but it undercut several months of tacit cooperation between Washington and Tehran on the war and the post-conflict stabilization of Afghanistan. (Council on Foreign Relations 2004: 39)

Responding to the Iranian Quandary:

With the two issues of Iraq and North Korea boiling over, it came as no surprise to most observers at the IAEA that the news of two suspect nuclear sites in Iran, put out by a relatively unknown Iranian opposition group, NCRI, which had been linked in the past to terrorist activity, was greeted with little more than a shrug. The allegations put forward by NCRI were not unknown to the IAEA. For years, Israeli intelligence had maintained a shadowy relationship with the IAEA, passing on intelligence information concerning nuclear non-proliferation activities through the Israeli Mission in Vienna (although not a signatory to the NPT, Israel has been a member of the IAEA since 1957, and permitted IAEA safeguard inspections of Israeli nuclear research reactors in Israel, although the Dimona nuclear weapons facility and related nuclear reactor remained off limits). (Ritter, 2006:48) The NCRI briefing somewhat changed the level of interest that the IAEA had toward the Iranian nuclear programme but in the context of the Iraq and

North Korea situations, the Iranian problem was not seen as representing the most pressing issue for the IAEA.

While the IAEA under the leadership of Mohammed El-Baradei was trying to figure out a way to deal with the rising suspicions against Iran, amidst the pressing concerns regarding the situation in Iraq and North Korea, in early December 2002, the IAEA received word that a private American nuclear watchdog organization, the Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS), headed by David Albright, a physicist who had enjoyed a brief stint as an IAEA inspector (he served on a single inspection mission to Iraq in June 1996), was going to go public with commercially-available satellite imagery of both the Natanz and Arak facilities. (Albright & Hinderstein 2002) Albright and a colleague had purchased the imagery on their own, and were prepared to provide pictures to back up the August claims of the NCRI. The IAEA tried to dissuade Albright from going public with the pictures, saying it might make the Iranians less likely to cooperate with the IAEA. El-Baradei believed that the timing was wrong; Iran had already agreed to a site visit to be conducted in December. The attention that would be brought to bear on the Iran issue brought on by the publication of the photographs of Natanz and Arak would only be a distraction, and perhaps undermine the IAEA's efforts to get into Iran. (Ritter 2006:55-56) Albright thought otherwise, and on December 12 aired the photographs and accompanying analysis on Cable News Network (CNN). (Ensor 2002) The Iranians were aware of the CNN–ISIS programme in advance, and had notified the IAEA that, given the irresponsible actions of the press, the visit to Natanz would not be on for December, and suggested that instead the trip be rescheduled for late February 2003, thus bringing El-Baradei's fears to fruition.

Following this, the US government immediately went public with a response to the CNN–ISIS report. A State Department spokesman, Richard Boucher, said during a 13 December State Department briefing that the Arak plant could support a reactor for producing weapons-grade plutonium and the Natanz plant could be used to produce highly enriched uranium for weapons. According to Boucher, Iran's nuclear program "is not peaceful and is certainly not transparent.... We have reached the conclusion that Iran is actively working to develop nuclear weapons capability." (Kerr 2003) Boucher added

that Tehran had been attempting to conceal nuclear activities at the sites in Arak and Natanz by hardening and burying portions of the facilities. He also rebutted Iran's claim that its nuclear program was for electricity generation, arguing that its fossil fuel reserves were such that there would be no economic benefit to a nuclear programme. Washington also criticized Iran's failure to disclose the existence of its nuclear facilities earlier. Boucher added further that "all other [IAEA] states," with the exception of Iran, "have accepted this obligation to provide complete design information on new facilities no later than 180 days before the start of construction." (Ibid)

Iran promptly dismissed the allegations. According to government spokesperson Abdollah Ramazanzadeh (13 December): "We don't have any hidden atomic activities. All our nuclear activities are for non-military fields..." (The Acronym Institute 2003) Ramazanzadeh expressed confidence that the planned IAEA inspections would clear his country of any wrongdoing. On 14 January, Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi remarked: "Within the next 20 years, Iran has to produce 6,000 megawatts of electricity from nuclear power... We have been in contact with the IAEA over the two centres, and basically there is no possibility of concealing such centres..." (Ibid) Dr. El-Baradei only commented: "This is not a surprise to us. Whether the programme is for peaceful purposes or not, this is obviously for us to verify... Iran [has] affirmed that all their activities are for a peaceful purpose." (Ibid) On 15 December, Russian Atomic Energy Minister Alexander Rumyantsev expressed confidence about the legitimacy of Iran's programme. "There is no proof they have violated anything. For such pressure [from Washington] to be justified, they've got to present evidence of abuse. So far there has been none, "he said. (Ibid)

The IAEA was, on the issue of Iran, being squeezed between those who portrayed Iran as an irresponsible state seeking to acquire nuclear weapons in violation of its obligations under the NPT, and the Iranians themselves, who held that all they wanted was a peaceful nuclear energy programme. In February 2003 a little less than three weeks before the scheduled IAEA visit to Iran, Iran's president, Mohammad Khatami, made a statement that the Islamic Republic of Iran had decided to utilize advanced technology, including those related to nuclear industry, for peaceful purposes. (Ansari, 2006:202)

Khatami's pronouncements sent shockwaves through Washington, D.C. Richard Boucher, the State Department's spokesperson, denounced the Iranian announcement, stating on 10 February that Iran's "plans for a complete fuel cycle clearly indicate Iran's intention to build the infrastructure for a nuclear weapons capability." Iran's stated intent to control the nuclear fuel cycle reinforced concerns in the US government that Iran might reprocess spent fuel it obtains from a nuclear reactor, thus enabling Iran to extract plutonium. This was what happened in the case of North Korea. The United States was determined to make sure it did not happen with Iran. Boucher noted that an Iranian decision to reprocess spent fuel "directly contradicted" an agreement between Iran and Russia concerning how nuclear fuel for the Bushehr nuclear reactor under construction would be handled. Under that agreement, Moscow would supply the fuel for the reactor, but Iran had to return the spent fuel to Russia. (The Acronym Institute 2003)

Walking a Tightrope:

The events regarding the question of the Iranian nuclear programme was progressing around the viewpoints of the three primary players, viz...Iran, the IAEA and the US. The Iranians held that significant progress was being made in the Iran-IAEA negotiation. The Iranians appeared receptive to new inspection modalities, but were adamant on their stand that they had the right under the NPT to carry out their work in nuclear enrichment. The IAEA was treading on sensitive turf. At that time El-Baradei had dealt with the Iranian issue in broad terms, but already information had leaked out about the Kalaye plant[22] and the stockpiles of undeclared nuclear material of Chinese origin. Any finding that Iran had breached its obligations under the NPT would warrant referral of the Iran case to the UN Security Council. Keeping in mind the military operations that had been launched in Iraq on the pretext of the existence of weapons of mass destruction, the IAEA had to be careful not to let any unnecessary overture ruin the prospect of solving the issue at hand. The US wanted action taken against Iran. According to the

[22] Kalaye belongs to the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI); its subsidiaries include Farayand Technique, located near Esfahan, and Pars Trash in Tehran. According to the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), Kalaye is a front company for procuring equipment for the initially secret Natanz nuclear plant in Iran.

information coming from Iran, the US believed that Iran already could be found to be in breach of its obligations under the NPT. US Ambassador to the IAEA, Kenneth Brill made a formal request during a 17 March 2003 Board of Governors meeting that IAEA Director-General Mohamed El Baradei submit a report on the issue of the Iranian nuclear programme. Brill, as well as other governments, including the European Union, also made this request during a 6 May IAEA meeting. (Kerr 2003) Safeguards agreements allow the IAEA to monitor the nuclear facilities belonging to an NPT member state. The US was looking for a referral to the Security Council, thereby opening the door for economic sanctions to be imposed on Iran, or even the authorization of military force to be brought to bear should Iran not comply with a growing consensus that it cease and desist with its nuclear programme as a whole, especially those aspects related to obtaining the entire nuclear fuel cycle.

A preview of the diplomatic struggles that the IAEA could expect during its June meeting of the Board of Governors was played out at the Second Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the 2005 Review Conference of the NPT Parties, which was held from 28 April 28 to 9 May, 2003 in Geneva, Switzerland. North Korea's dramatic withdrawal from the NPT took a back seat to the growing concern that existed in many Western nations about the scope and sophistication of Iran's nuclear program. The US delegation focused most of its attention during the PrepCom on Iran. It used its opening debate statement to start this campaign, accusing Iran of "conducting an alarming, clandestine programme to acquire sensitive nuclear capabilities that make sense only as part of a nuclear weapons programme." (Preez 2003) The United States, and a number of other States, most notably European Union members, repeatedly questioned the economic justification for Iran's advanced nuclear programme—which included pursuit of the entire nuclear fuel cycle. They called on Iran to demonstrate its peaceful intentions through increased cooperation with the IAEA, including the signing and bringing into force of an Additional Protocol, which would allow for more comprehensive verification measures. Iran rejected the suggestions that it was pursuing nuclear weapons, declaring that nuclear weapons had no place in Iran's defence doctrine. The PrepCom confrontation provided the first clear indication to many observers that the issue of Iran's nuclear programme was in danger of being hijacked by US–Iranian animosity.

The standoff between the United States and Iran—with the United States supported by about 40 other States (mostly the European Union and Australia)—threatened to cause a deadlock over the status of the Summary as an attachment to the official PrepCom report. Chairman Ambassador László Molnár after consultations with the US and Iranian delegations, presented a carefully worded paragraph linking the Iranian issue with the need for all member states, particularly those with advanced nuclear programmes, "to conclude, bring into force, and implement an Additional Protocol to their comprehensive safeguards agreement at the earliest opportunity." Reflecting US concerns, this paragraph also called on Iran "to sign an Additional Protocol and to ensure full and forthcoming cooperation with the IAEA." (Ibid) The chairman, furthermore, innovatively balanced the concerns over Iranian non-compliance with the legitimate right of all states to utilize the atom for peaceful purposes—while emphasizing that ownership of capabilities that could be utilized "to develop nuclear weapons places a special responsibility on the states concerned." He also included a reference to Iranian explanations by Iranian Vice-President Reza Aghazadeh, thereby linking the "inalienable right of all states parties in full compliance with the Treaty to develop the research, production, and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination, as well as the inviolability of nuclear facilities." (Ibid) This paragraph ultimately led to agreement among all delegations that the Summary could be attached to the official PrepCom report.

During its Meeting on 18 June 2003, the 35 member IAEA Board of Governors while welcoming Iran's reaffirmed commitment to full transparency found that Iran had "failed to meet its obligations under its Safeguards Agreement with respect to the reporting of nuclear material, the subsequent processing and use of that material and the declaration of facilities where the material was stored and processed." (Report by Director General, IAEA, 6 June 2003) In this the Board was referring to the nuclear material Iran had received from China, subsequently declared to the IAEA, and presented for inspection. The Board went on: "Although the quantities of nuclear material involved have not been large, and the material would need further processing before being suitable for use as the fissile material component of a nuclear explosive device, the number of failures by Iran to report the material, facilities and activities in question in a timely

manner as it is obliged to do pursuant to its Safeguards Agreement is a matter of concern." (Ibid)

In response to these allegations, Iranian Vice-President and Head of Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Reza Aghazadeh admitted on a state-run television programme a week prior to the Board meeting that Iran had, in fact, bought and imported the Chinese uranium. He said the purchase was not reported to the IAEA because Iran, at the time, thought safeguard requirements did not apply to it. In an effort to downplay the significance of the report, Vice-President Aghazadeh stated that there was no mention of the word 'violation.' The report only mentioned 'failure,' which was still debatable. He called them "normal differences." (Preez and Scheinman 2003) It is noteworthy that while the Iranian representative Ambassador Ali A. Salehi admitted his government's "negligence in delayed declaration of this small amount of nuclear material (referring to the 1.8 tons or 0.13 effective kilograms of uranium) that is far below the inspection threshold of the Agency" (i.e., 8 kg of plutonium; 8 kg of Uranium-233 and 25 kg of Uranium-235), but referred to a list of "essential failures" by 15 other states "to fully attain the quantity component of the inspection goal." He also questioned why the "transfer of nuclear shielded ammunition in hundreds of kilograms" had not been reported to the Agency, referring to the use of depleted uranium ammunition by the United States in the war in Iraq. (Ibid)

A few days prior to the IAEA Board meeting, US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld exercised his flair for rhetoric by publicly declaring the Iranian nuclear programme to be affiliated with manufacturing weapons. "The intelligence community in the United States and around the world currently assess that Iran does not have nuclear weapons," Mr. Rumsfeld said during a visit to Germany. "The assessment is that they do have a very active programme and are likely to have nuclear weapons in a relatively short period of time," he added. He called on the Atlantic alliance to find new ways of combating "the nexus of terror and weapons of mass destruction," which he called the biggest threat facing the countries of both "old" and "new" Europe. (Bernstein 2003)

Mutual Antagonism:

While the US was engaging the EU to maintain pressure on Iran, on 25 June 2003 ignoring the IAEA's request to halt all enrichment operations and undermining the diplomatic stance taken by the European Union, Tehran announced that it had introduced uranium hexafluoride gas into a single centrifuge at the Natanz facility as a test of the operability of the centrifuge. The gas was from the Chinese stockpile purchased in 1991, and now under IAEA safeguards. (Ritter 2006:85-86) Even though it was claimed that there was nothing illegal about the Iranian action, since it had been declared to the IAEA and subsequently monitored, it sent a strong signal that Iran was not going to back away from its proclaimed right to develop the full nuclear fuel cycle. The move also reinforced doubts that the Iranian programme was a weapons programme in disguise, and that the Iranians were using diplomacy as a means of buying time while they proceeded with a crash weapons programme.

During the 12 September 2003 IAEA Board of Governors Meeting, Iran walked out when the Agency's 35-member Board of Governors adopted a strongly worded resolution giving Iran 48 days - until 31 October- to provide complete information on its nuclear programme. In the words of IAEA Director General Mohammed El-Baradei, the resolution sent "a very powerful message to Iran that they need to cooperate fully and immediately and to show complete transparency. ... We are going to adopt a very vigorous approach, a very intensive approach to try to complete our work..." (Johnson 2003) While welcoming El-Baradei's detailed report on Iran the US Ambassador Kenneth Brill found it "less effectively organized and less clear in some respects in stating the results of its analysis than was the June 6 report". The 6 June 2003 Report was derestricted for the Board on June 19. Claiming that "the credibility of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime depends on the Agency [IAEA]", Brill argued that "the facts already established would fully justify an immediate finding of non-compliance by Iran with its safeguards obligations." To support the idea of giving Iran a last chance to stop its evasions, the US backed away from insisting that the resolution should declare Iran to be in non-compliance or violation of the NPT. (Ibid) Clearly, patience was running out on the US.

Despite the breakthrough achieved by the 21 October 2003 Tehran Declaration[23] (The International Atomic Energy Agency, 21 October 2003) tensions still ran high between the EU-3 and Iran, with Iran accusing Europe of being affected by American pressure. The United States was annoyed with the lack of information regarding traces of highly enriched uranium in Iran, and warned that it may lead to a declaration of a violation of the NPT if not cleared up by the 20 November IAEA Board of Governors meeting. On 31 October, the date of the deadline set by the IAEA Board of Directors in its September resolution, a senior Iranian cleric, Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati, stated that although Iran had accepted to sign the additional protocol, ". . . Our 'red lines' still exist," and that "If the European party fails to live up to its commitments, the commitments that we made should be in return regarded as canceled." (Jannati 2003) The IAEA had given Tehran an ultimatum to prove by 31 October that it had no secret arms programme, or be reported to the U.N. Security Council for possible sanctions.

Mohammed El-Baradei released his report on the status of the IAEA's investigations into Iran's nuclear programmes to the Board of Governors on 10 November. In the report he went into the details of the programme. The bottomline was that there was no evidence that Iran was engaged in making a nuclear weapon, but that the history of concealment by Iran warranted some more time to decide exactly on the nature of the Iranian programme. The US Undersecretary of State for Arms Control, John Bolton, dismissed the IAEA's report on Iran, saying that it was "impossible to believe." He declared that "the massive and covert Iranian effort to acquire sensitive nuclear capabilities makes sense only as part of a nuclear weapons programme." (Preez 2003) On 18 November the US Secretary of State Colin Powell met with the then twenty-five current and future EU members in Brussels to discuss whether Iran's nuclear programme should be declared in violation of the NPT. Powell failed to persuade his counterparts on this matter, and the next day, the E.U. foreign ministers reaffirmed the Europe's

[23] On 21 October 2003, in Tehran, the Iranian government and the EU-3 Foreign Ministers issued a statement known as the Tehran Declaration. According to the declaration, Iran agreed to co-operate with the IAEA to sign and implement an Additional Protocol as a voluntary, confidence-building measure. It also agreed to suspend its enrichment and re-processing activities during the course of the negotiations. The EU-3 in turn agreed to recognize Iran's nuclear rights, and to discuss ways in which Iran could provide "satisfactory assurances" regarding its nuclear programme, after which Iran would gain easier access to modern technology.

commitment to the 21 October Tehran Declaration, and looked forward to Iran's prompt and full implementation of that agreement. On 20-21 November the IAEA Board of Governors considered the latest IAEA report on Iran, and the E.U. draft resolution. The resolution came in for criticism from the US for its inadequate recognition of Iran's past breaches of its safeguards agreement. Secretary of State Colin Powell stated that no resolution was better than passage of a "totally inadequate" one and called for a trigger mechanism to be included in the resolution in the case of further breaches by Iran. (Ibid)

The IAEA's resolution of November seemed to have something in it for everyone. Europe, especially the EU-3, took the lion's share of the credit not only for drafting the resolution, but also facilitating the 21 October Tehran Declaration that made it all possible. The United States, while stymied in its effort to get Iran referred to the Security Council, also saw a silver lining. Secretary of State Colin Powell, pointed out that the IAEA resolution "notes that Iran has been in breach of obligations," and highlighted the fact that "there is one particular paragraph in the resolution which makes it very, very clear that if Iran does not now comply with obligations and the other agreements it's entered into, then this will be a matter that will be immediately referred to the IAEA Board of Governors for action, as appropriate under the various statutes."(Ibid) The United States had not given up on its campaign to get the Iranian case moved to the U.N. Security Council. Colin Powell had left no doubt that this was the ultimate end game for US policy regarding Iran.

The IAEA Board of Governor's had instructed El-Baradei to prepare a report by May 2004, so that the Board could consider the Iranian matter at its meeting in June. In order to help facilitate this process, El-Baradei and a team of senior IAEA officials, including Pierre Goldschmidt (the Deputy Director for Safeguards) and Olli Heinonen (the Chief of Operations B, responsible for the Iranian file in the IAEA), travelled to Tehran on 6 April for meetings with senior Iraqi officials, including President Khatami, A. Aghazadeh, the head of AEOI, Hassan Rohani, the Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, and K. Kharrazi, the Minister of Foreign Affairs. All parties agreed to accelerate the program of work so as to clear up the IAEA's outstanding issues in time for the June meeting of the Board of Governors. While Iran facilitated access to every

civilian-related site, there were three workshops that carried out sensitive research work on behalf of the Defense Industries Organization (DIO) for which the IAEA and Iran could not agree upon modalities for inspection. The initial Additional Protocol declarations were delivered almost one month ahead of schedule. The Iranians noted, in submitting the declaration, that although it was done within a shortened time period, nonetheless ". . . every reasonable effort has been made to provide the Agency with the information to the extent that it is relevant to and compatible with the provisions of the Protocol" and that the declarations were "open to further clarification and amplification if needed." (Ritter 2006: 121)

In a strongly worded resolution, the IAEA Board of Governors deplored that Iran's cooperation had not been "as full, timely and proactive as it should have been" and pointed out that Iran "postponed until mid-April visits originally scheduled for mid-March—including visits of Agency centrifuge experts to a number of locations involved in Iran's P-2 centrifuge enrichment[24] programme—resulting in some cases in a delay in the taking of environmental samples and their analysis." (Ibid: 124) The United States was quick to cite the IAEA resolution—which it helped draft—in condemning Iran for conducting a secret nuclear weapons programme. The US actions came on the heels of a meltdown of the security situation inside Iraq in April, with large-scale revolts taking place in Falluja, Najaf, and elsewhere. The United States and the United Kingdom were quick to blame Iran for interfering with the internal situation in Iraq. The animosity drawn from the Iraq situation easily spilled over into the nuclear question, as demonstrated by a speech made by President Bush at a NATO gathering in Istanbul at the end of June where he condemned Iran as a "terrorist state" seeking to acquire nuclear weapons. (Ibid)

The Bush Administration was considerably burdened with the problems that stemmed from the occupation of Iraq, preventing the administration from orchestrating

[24] It is an advanced form of uranium enrichment programme. The modified Iranian version of the P-2 was named IR-2. According to reports from the Institute of Science and International Security (ISIS), the P-2 Centrifuge deployed in Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme, is essentially the same design as the one developed by Germany in the early 1970s and stolen by Abdul Qadeer Khan from Urenco, the uranium consortium of Germany, Britain and the Netherlands. The P-2 can enrich uranium 2-3 times faster than the earlier model P-1.

ıny bold extension of its foreign policy. Thus, Iran had been put on the back burner for ;ome time. But, with a transition of sovereignty (on paper at least) taking place in Baghdad in June 2004, and elections scheduled for January 2005, many in the Bush ıdministration felt the time was ripe to push the Iranian agenda up to the front burner ;tatus. President Bush himself took the lead in an interview with Fox News' conservative talk show host, Bill O'Reilly in late September 2004. While acknowledging the importance of a diplomatic solution, the president mentioned that "All options are on the table, of course, in any situation." When further asked if it was conceivable that he would allow Iran to develop nuclear weapons, he had replied, "No, we've made it clear, our position is that they won't have a nuclear weapon." (Fox News, 28 September 2004) Key officials of the administration including John Bolton were quick to capitalize on this presidential assertion to come down hard on Iran.

In mid-October the White House called together its Iran policy team, and with the President presiding, a new roadmap was laid out. First, the United States would continue pressuring the IAEA to transfer the Iranian case to the Security Council. However, this was not seen as being likely to happen until at least the June 2005 IAEA Board of Governors Meeting. The goal of the US team in Vienna was to shape the debate in such a way as to facilitate a positive vote for transfer in June 2005. The decision was made to expand the focus of US concerns in Iran to be inclusive of human rights, democracy, and terrorism, not simply nuclear weapons. With Iranian presidential elections coming up in June 2005, the United States would dramatically increase its funding of pro-west democracy group so as to influence public opinion in Iran. On 1 December 2004, applauding passage of three amendments he authored in the Omnibus Appropriations bill , Senator Sam Brownback, an influential Republican from Kansas, a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee said, "we must take proactive steps to promote democracy and human rights abroad." "North Korea and Iran, the remaining members of the Axis of Evil, are focal points for anti-American, anti-democracy, anti-freedom, pro-terrorist efforts around the world. We will bring key leaders and stakeholders together to map out how we can bring freedom to the people of Iran and North Korea", he added. (Senate New Release, 1 December 2004) The amendments appropriated and directed pro-democracy and human rights funding in Iran,

North Korea and Egypt. It specifically directed $3 million for pro-democracy efforts in Iran. (Ibid) By broadening the scope of its campaign against Iran, the Bush Administration was probably trying to further isolate the Iranian regime and decrease its legitimacy in the international arena. Even the domestic scene in the United States was highly charged up against Iran. The White House could neither take for granted electoral victory in the November 2004 presidential race, nor congressional support for tougher action on Iran. In May 2004 the House of Representatives passed House Resolution 398, which expressed "the concern of Congress over Iran's development of the means to produce nuclear weapons." The resolution called on the President "to use all appropriate means to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons . . ." (GlobalSecurity.org, Target Iran) In July 2004 the Senate passed a watered-down version of the House resolution, Senate Resolution 81, which suggested the use of "appropriate means" to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. (Ibid)

By early 2005 the Iraqi election results were still unclear, and when the question of Iran was raised at the confirmation hearings of Condoleezza Rice, the former National Security Adviser put Congress on notice that she had no intention of softening the hard line toward Iran. "I would take as a first step that if the Iranians do not show that they're going to live up to their international obligations, that we refer them to the Security Council.," she stated. (The New York Times, 18 January 2005) President Bush surprised almost the entire world when, in March 2005, he nominated John Bolton, to be the next US Ambassador to the United Nations. Bush could not have sent a stronger signal about his ultimate intentions than sending to the UN a man whose disdain for the IAEA was not a secret. The goal was simple—to put in place a no-nonsense representative who would aggressively push the Bush agenda at the Security Council, up to and including forcing a showdown over Iran when that issue would finally be referred by the IAEA.

The nomination of John Bolton coincided with increasing US efforts to influence the June 2005 Iranian elections. In a shock result, the arch-conservative mayor of Tehran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, was elected President. Ahmadinejad immediately declared that his election marked a major victory for Islam, and the dawn of a new era. "Thanks to the blood of the martyrs, a new Islamic Revolution has arisen and the Islamic Revolution of

1384 [the current Iranian year] will, if God wills, cut off the roots of injustice in the world," he said. "The wave of the Islamic revolution will soon reach the entire world." (WorldTribune.com, 30 June 2005) Commenting on the verdict of the Iranian elections, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld dismissed as illegitimate the landslide presidential election victory in Iran by Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. "There were over 1,000 candidates that were disqualified -- that weren't even allowed to run," Rumsfeld told the Fox News television programme. (Iran News Watch, 26 June 2005)

The report of an independent task force sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations had this to say: "The US war on terrorism complicated the process of dealing with a country such as Iran, which was experiencing internal pressures and a slow evolution away from radicalism, and whose politics and predilections were ambiguous and opaque. Flawed assumptions about Iran's murky internal situation had weakened the effectiveness of U.S. policy toward the country in recent years. Persuaded that revolutionary change was imminent in Iran, the administration sought to influence Iran's internal order, relying on the model of the east European transition from communism. However, the neat totalitarian dichotomy between the regime and the people did not exist in the Islamic Republic, and, as a result, frequent, vocal appeals to the "Iranian people" only strengthened the cause of clerical reactionaries and left regime opponents vulnerable to charges of being Washington's "fifth column"." (Council on Foreign Relations 2004: 39-40)

Nuclear Politics under Ahmadinejad Regime:

The election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the former mayor of Tehran left no doubt as to the intended orientation of Iranian foreign policy, particularly regarding its nuclear programme. He made it clear from the outset that the good times were over and that Iranian national interests would be defined and defended on his own terms. Ahmadinejad's campaign issued a statement which described Iran's nuclear programme as "a flood which cannot be stopped by a match stick ... It's impossible to stop a nation's scientific progress with a bunch of irrelevant words ... We will hold talks from a rational

point of view and if they accept our legitimate right we'll cooperate ... The analysts say no country, no matter how powerful they are, can attack Iran. It would be suicidal for a country to attack Iran... so we must not bend to threats." (GlobalSecurity.org, Target Iran) For Ahmadinejad, the nuclear crisis was a means to a domestic political end, nothing more, nothing less, and he spent his first few months in office lambasting both the previous government and the West, while presenting himself as a latter-day- more devout-Mossadeq, a champion of Iran's national interests in the face of extraordinary odds, odds that his political will and revolutionary faith would overcome. Even for those Iranians who were bored of politics, Ahmadinejad was making life dangerously interesting. (Ansari 2007: 50-51)

The EU-3 and Iran had on 14 November 2004, signed the "Paris Agreement," committing Iran to suspend uranium enrichment (which it did as of 22 November, 2004) in exchange for renewed trade talks and other aid. (The International Atomic Energy Agency, 14 November 2004) The Paris Agreement broke down just after Ahmadinejad's election. EU-3 had offered to assist Iran with peaceful uses of nuclear energy and provide limited security guarantees in exchange for Iran's (1) permanently ending uranium enrichment; (2) dismantling the Arak heavy water reactor; (3) no-notice nuclear inspections; and (4) a pledge not to leave the NPT. Iran rejected these offers as insufficient.

On 8 August 8 2005, Iran broke the IAEA seals and began uranium "conversion" (one step before enrichment) at its Esfahan facility. On 24 September 2005, the IAEA Board voted to declare Iran in non-compliance with the NPT and to refer the issue to the Security Council[25], but no time frame was set for the referral. In January 2006, Iran resumed enrichment activities, and on 4 February 2006, the IAEA board again voted to report Iran to the U.N. Security Council.[26]

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[25] Voting in favor: United States, Australia, Britain, France, Germany, Canada, Argentina, Belgium, Ghana, Ecuador, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, Slovakia, Japan, Peru, Singapore, South Korea, India. Against: Venezuela. Abstaining: Pakistan, Algeria, Yemen, Brazil, China, Mexico, Nigeria, Russia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, and Vietnam, **Iran Watch, http://www.iramwatch.org/international/IAEA/iaea-boardofgovernors-votingtally-092405.htm**

[26] Voting in favour: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Britain, Canada, China, Colombia, Ecuador, Egypt, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, India, Japan, Norway, Portugal, Russia, Singapore, Slovakia,

Taking a multilateral approach, the Bush Administration offered on 31 May 2006, to join the nuclear talks with Iran if Iran first suspended its uranium enrichment. Such talks were to centre on a package of incentives and possible sanctions. The package was formally agreed to on 1 June 2006—by a newly formed group of negotiating nations, the so-called "Permanent Five Plus 1" (P5+1: United States, Russia, China, France, Britain, and Germany). EU representative Javier Solana formally presented the P5+1 offer to Iran on 6 June 2006. Iran responded to this proposal in a letter addressed to President Bush, in which it blamed US foreign policy for the chaos in the world. The letter made only brief reference to the nuclear issue and did not address the demands of the international community. (The James Martin Centre for Nonproliferation Studies, 16 June 2006)

As an aftermath, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) unanimously passed Resolution 1696 in July, which demanded that Iran suspended enrichment activities, international transfer of nuclear and missile technologies to Iran be banned and the foreign assets of twelve individuals and ten organizations involved with the Iranian nuclear programme to be frozen. The resolution gave Iran until 31 August 2006, to fulfill the longstanding IAEA nuclear demands (enrichment suspension, etc). Apparently in consideration of Russia's and China's stand, it was passed under Article 40 of the UN Charter, making compliance mandatory, but not under Article 41, which refers to economic sanctions, or Article 42, which would authorize military action. It called on UN member states not to sell Iran WMD-useful technology. (United Nations Security Council, 31 July 2006) President Ahmadinejad vowed to ignore the UNSC resolution and continue enrichment. (Fathi 2007) That same month, Iran inaugurated a heavy water production plant at Arak, prompting yet another UNSC resolution. Resolution 1737 was passed on 23 December 2006, under Chapter 7, Article 41 of the UN Charter. It prohibited sale to Iran—or financing of such sale—of technology that could contribute to Iran's uranium enrichment or heavy-water reprocessing activities. It also required UN member states to freeze the financial assets of 10 Iranian nuclear and missile firms and 12 persons related to those programmes. It did not mandate the banning of travel by these

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Slovenia, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Sweden, the United States and Yemen. Against: Cuba, Syria, Venezuela. Abstaining: Algeria, Belarus, Indonesia, Libya, South Africa, **Iran Watch ,http://www.iramwatch.org/international/IAEA/iaea-boardofgovernors-votingtally-020406.htm**

personalities, but called on member states not to admit them. It also provided an exemption, sought by Russia, for the Bushehr reactor.(UNSC, 23 December 2006) As it had with Resolution 1696, Iran also ignored Resolution 1737 and continued to operate its enrichment facility and to install 18 cascades at the FEP's (Fuel Enrichment Plant) 3000-machine hall. (Report by the Director General, International Atomic Energy Agency, 9 February 2007)

All these while, the domestic debate on the status of Iran's nuclear programme refused to die down. The House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence produced a staff report in August 2006 assessing the "Iranian Threat" and the importance of the American intelligence in this issue. The report came with the following list of concerns regarding the "Iranian Threat" as propounded by Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte and America's intelligence agencies. (House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence Subcommittee on Intelligence Policy 23 August 2006)

- Iran has conducted a clandestine uranium enrichment programme for nearly two decades in violation of its International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards agreement, and despite its claims to the contrary, Iran is seeking nuclear weapons. The US Intelligence Community believes that Tehran probably has not yet produced or acquired the fissile material (weapons-grade nuclear fuel) needed to produce a nuclear weapon. Director of Intelligence John Negroponte has stated that Iran will not be "in a position to have a nuclear weapon" until "sometime between the beginning of the next decade and the middle of the next decade."

- Iran likely has an offensive chemical weapons research and development capability.

- Iran probably has an offensive biological weapons programme.

- Iran has the largest inventory of ballistic missiles in the "Middle East". The US Intelligence Community has raised the concern that Tehran may integrate nuclear weapons into its ballistic missiles.

- Iran provides funding, training, weapons, rockets, and other material support to terrorist groups in Lebanon, the Palestinian Territories, and elsewhere.

- Elements of the Iranian national security apparatus are actively supporting the insurgency in Iraq.

The report further assessed the importance of the intelligence community in appraising the policymakers with reliability of the Iranian regime and provided a series of recommendations for the intelligence agencies in the US. Resolution 1737 demanded enrichment suspension by 21 February 2007. With no sign of Iran doing so, on 24 March 2007, after only three weeks of P5+1 negotiations, Resolution 1747 was adopted unanimously. Resolution 1747 demanded Iran suspend enrichment by 24 May 2007. (UNSC, 24 March 2007) Iran did not comply, but, suggesting it wanted to avoid further isolation, in August 2007, Iran agreed to sign with the IAEA an agreement to clear up outstanding questions on Iran's past nuclear activities by the end of 2007. On that basis, the P5+1 grouping—along with the EU itself—agreed to a joint statement on 28 September 2007 in which all the undersigned, including Russia and China, said they would negotiate another sanctions resolution if there is no progress reported by the IAEA in implementing the August 2007 agreement or in separate continued negotiations with EU representative Javier Solana. The IAEA report was circulated on 15 November 2007, saying that Iran had provided additional information on its past programmes, but Solana characterized a 30 November 2007, meeting with new Iranian negotiator Sayid Jallili as "disappointing," suggesting no progress. (Sciolino 2007) In November 2007, Iran also admitted to purchasing a complete set of P-2 centrifuge blueprints from the Abdul Qadeer Khan network[27] in 1996, which it used when it began constructing and testing P-2 centrifuges in 2002. However, Iran refused to answer the agency's outstanding questions about its Uranium Tetra fluoride (UF4) conversion activities ("The Green Salt Project"), high explosives testing, and re-entry vehicle design. (Report by the Director General, International Atomic Energy Agency, 15 November 2007)

[27] Also known as the founder of Pakistan's nuclear programme. In January 2004, Khan confessed that he had been been involved in a clandestine international network of nuclear weapons technology proliferation from Pakistan to Libya, Iran and North Korea. Evidences largely support the belief that Khan and his network are one of the worst proliferators of nuclear technology that can be used to develop nuclear weapons.

After several months of negotiations, Resolution 1803 was adopted by a vote of 14-0 (Indonesia abstaining) on 3 March 2008. (UNSC, 3 March 2008) It: (1) bans sales of dual use items to Iran; (2) authorizes, but does not require, inspections of cargo (carried by Iran Air Cargo and Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Line) suspected of shipping WMD-related goods; (3) imposes a firm travel ban on five Iranians named in Annex II to the Resolution and requires reports on international travel by 13 individuals named in Annex I; (4) calls for, but does not require, a prohibition on financial transactions with Iran's Bank Melli and Bank Saderat; and (5) adds 12 entities to those sanctioned under Resolution 1737. Although these provisions do not directly address civilian trade or investment, the Bush Administration hailed the Resolution as demonstrating that the international community remained unified on Iran. On 23 June 2008, the EU, acting under Resolution 1803, froze the assets of Bank Melli and several Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) entities and commanders. Resolution 1803 also stated that "China, France, Germany, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States are willing to take further concrete measures on exploring an overall strategy of resolving the Iranian nuclear issue through negotiation on the basis of their June 2006 proposals. Appearing to want to preserve a unified front, the Bush Administration agreed to expand the June 2006 incentive package to induce Iranian cooperation.

The P5+1 met on 16 April 2008, in Shanghai but it was not until a meeting in London on 2 May 2008, that the powers agreed on a "refreshed" package of incentives to augment those in the June 2006 package. According to press reports (the exact offer was not made public), the powers included, beyond that in the June 2006 proposal, an offer of political cooperation with Iran, and enhanced incentives on energy cooperation. EU envoy Solana presented the package on 14 June 2008, but Iran was non-committal. Perhaps sensing increasing international pressure, Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki indicated on 2 July 2008, that Iran might be ready to negotiate on the June 2008 incentive package by first accepting a proposed six week "freeze for freeze"—the P5+1 would freeze further sanctions efforts and Iran would freeze any further expansion of uranium enrichment (though not suspend outright). (Council on Foreign Relations, 2 October 2008) To try to take advantage of what seemed to be divisions within Iran on whether to negotiate a settlement, the Bush Administration decided to send

Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs William Burns to join Solana and the other P5+1 representatives at a meeting in Geneva on 19 July 2008 to receive Iran's response to the "freeze for freeze" idea. (Ibid) But, Iran failed to supply a direct answer and nothing changed as a result.

Speaking just days before the deadline set by world powers for Iran's reply, Ayatollah Khamenei said Iran would "continue with its path" of nuclear development. (Bowley 2008) The UN Security Council responded by adopting Resolution 1835 on 27 September 2008. (UNSC, 27 September 2008) It called on Iran to comply with previous resolutions, but it reaffirmed a willingness to continue to negotiate a solution with Iran and did not impose any new sanctions. With Iran still not complying, the P5+1 met again on 21 October 2008 and in Paris on 13 November 2008. However, with U.S. partner officials uncertain about what U.S. policy toward Iran might be under a new U.S. Administration, no P5+1 consensus was reached on imposing new sanctions on Iran.

Thus, the Iranian Nuclear Quandary despite continuous round of negotiations at the IAEA and the UN refused to show any semblance of successful conclusion. Both the Bush Administration and Ahmadinejad's Iran left no stones unturned to show their most aggressive side for each other. When President Bush administration completed his terms of office left, uncertainty is an understatement to describe the progress on the Iranian scene. In the post 9/11 era, the Iranian case remains one of the many foreign policy challenges that has been bequeathed to the new Obama administration. As President Barrack H. Obama will move forward in formulating its foreign policy, America's efforts to rein the Iranian nuclear programme will probably refuse to go off the radar of American foreign policy. According to the 2007 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE), "Iranian military entities were working under government direction to develop nuclear weapons" until fall 2003, but then halted its nuclear weapons program "primarily in response to international pressure." (National Intelligence Council 2007)The estimate, however, added that the intelligence community also assesses "with moderate-to-high confidence that Tehran at a minimum is keeping open the option to develop nuclear weapons." According to the NIE, "intelligence gaps" between the Department of Energy and the National Intelligence Council forced the estimate to "assess with only moderate

confidence that the halt to those activities represents a halt to Iran's entire nuclear weapons programme."(Ibid)

The international community for some time to come may have to live the risk of Iran developing nuclear weapons. According to the estimate, "only an Iranian political decision to abandon a nuclear weapons objective would plausibly keep Iran from eventually producing nuclear weapons — and such a decision is inherently reversible." The estimate also asserted that "Iran has the scientific, technical and industrial capacity eventually to produce nuclear weapons if it decides to do so, "adding that, "since fall 2003, Iran has been conducting research and development projects with commercial and conventional military applications — some of which would also be of limited use for nuclear weapons." (Ibid)This does not automatically point that Iran's nuclear weapons capability is inevitable. As noted above, Iran does not yet have such a capability. Nevertheless, if the international community were to have confidence in Tehran's statement that it is not pursuing a nuclear weapon capability, it is high time that Tehran accepted some constraints in its nuclear programme.

Chapter 4: US Debate on Iranian Proliferation

US Debate on Iranian Proliferation

The debate in the United States regarding US policy toward Iran, particularly its nuclear programme reflects the atmosphere and the orientations of larger Iranian and American influence in West Asia. The hardening and softening of tensions between the two countries often mirror issues, beyond bilateral to cover developing events contributing to peace or conflict in the region. The misadventure in Iraq and the "seeming" victory of the Iranian-backed Shia militia group Hezbollah in the Israel-Lebanon conflict in 2006 strengthened the Iranian defiance under its conservative leader Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. This gave more credence to voices opposing the policy of military strike against Iran as propagated by the neoconservative elements of the Bush administration. Further, the Iranian regime under Ahmadinejad seemed to be fairly successful in convincing a large part of the Iranian population that the nuclear programme was peaceful, developmental and civilian in its intent, thus raising the legitimacy of the anti-West voice. It was projected as a case where Iran was standing to the Western countries for something that was its sovereign right. Such a scenario prevented the compromising voices in Iran from having any effective force in the Iranian debate. Such developments in turn entailed complications in the American debate dividing the US not in terms of the intent of the Iranian nuclear programme but the contention among various experts and decision makers on how America should respond. The debaters have no doubt that Tehran has an unmistakable nuclear weapon ambition.

America's debate on Iran's nuclear programme has been among the hawks, doves and owls. (Mahapatra 2009:24) The hawks support direct military action against Iran's nuclear installations. The doves support diplomatic negotiations and peaceful resolutions of the issues and concerns. The owls on the other hand, are aware of the negative consequences of military action, ineffectiveness of negotiations and thus advocate a judicious combination of military threats, economic sanctions and hard bargaining. Significantly, all of them have the same goal: preventing the emergence of a nuclear weapon capable Iran. As such, this chapter will try and conglomerate the differing and competing voices in the American debate on the US response to Iran's nuclear

programme, at the same time bringing forth the American opinion on the status and direction of the Iran's nuclear programme.

Does Iran Have a Nuclear Weapon Programme?

Ray Takeyh, Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations introduced an article 'Iran Builds the Bomb' in the Winter 2004-05 issue of *Survival* by saying, "As the debate regarding the vanishing Iraqi weapons of mass destruction continues, another proliferation crisis looms in the Middle East. Under the guise of a civilian research programme, Iran is gradually accumulating the technology and the expertise necessary for the construction of nuclear weapons. Iran's accelerated path to the bomb will confront the next US administration with another difficult challenge in the Persian Gulf."(Takeyh 2004-05: 51-64) The nuclear weapons option is being primarily supported by hard-line clerics closely associated with the Supreme Religious Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. They have command over key institutions such as the Revolutionary Guards, the judiciary and the Guardian Council. As a consequence, Iran's reactionary clerics have enormous influence on national security planning. They professed a fundamental belief in the notion that the Islamic Republic is in constant danger from predatory external forces, necessitating military self-reliance. This perception was initially moulded by a revolution that sought not just to defy but refashion international norms. The passage of time and the failure of that mission have not necessarily diminished the hard line clerics' suspicions of the international order and its primary guardian, the United States. The conservative newspaper and mouthpiece of Khamenei, *Jumhuri-ye Islamii,* sounded this theme by stressing, "In the contemporary world, it is obvious that having access to advanced weapons shall cause deterrence and, therefore, security, and will neutralize the evil wish of arrogant powers." (Ibid)

Iran's hardliners were not necessarily afraid of sanctions and coercion when fundamental national interests were at stake. Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati, the head of the powerful Guardian Council, pointedly asked, "What is wrong with considering this treaty [NPT] on nuclear energy and pulling out of it? North Korea withdrew." (Ibid) If Jannati

considered the NPT a treaty on "nuclear energy", what was the need for withdrawing? North Korea withdrew from the NPT to develop nuclear bombs and not to produce nuclear energy. Jannati's emphasis was, of course, on the bomb and not on energy. For many within this camp, a confrontation with the West would be an effective means of rekindling popular support for the revolution's fading élan. At the core, all disarmament agreements call upon a state to forgo a certain degree of sovereignty for enhanced security. Once more, the prolonged war with Iraq conditioned Iranian worldview and behaviour. Iraq's use of chemical weapons against Iran with impunity had reinforced Iran's suspicions of the international order. As, Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, one of the Islamic Republic's most astute politicians and former president noted, "The war taught us that international laws are only scraps of paper." (Ibid) For many of the Islamic Republic's reactionary clerics, the only way to safeguard Iran's interests was to develop an independent nuclear deterrent.

While assessing a state's nuclear path, it is important to note that its motivations cannot be exclusively examined within the context of national interests and security considerations. Besides the strategic factors that drive a particular country to pursue such ambitions, several constituencies emerge that harbour parochial interests in favouring such an endeavour. The emergence of bureaucratic and nationalist pressures in Iran generated its own proliferation momentum, empowering those seeking a nuclear breakout. As time passes, the pragmatic and moderate voices are likely to be marginalized and lose their influence within the regime. The notion that the United States has the luxury of time is belied by Iran's internal domestic alignments on the nuclear issue. (Ibid)

As Iran's nuclear programme matured and became subject of international scrutiny, another dynamic entered the debate: public opinion. Far from being a source of restraint, the emerging popular sentiment was that, as a great civilization with a long history, Iran had a right to acquire a nuclear capability. The recent disclosures of the sophisticated nature of Iran's nuclear programme have been a source of national pride for a citizenry accustomed to the revolution's failures and setbacks. Rafsanjani, noted this

trend when he said, "No official would dare allow himself to defy the people on such an issue. The Islamic Republic of Iran will not yield to blackmail and will not make any concessions on that issue." (The Washington Times, 11 June 2004) Washington's incendiary rhetoric and its designation of Iran as part of an 'Axis of Evil' and statement that Iran should not have access to weapons of mass destruction (WMD) have inflamed a highly nationalistic population. The nuclear issue was increasingly being subsumed in Iranian nationalism, with notions of sovereign rights and national dignity displacing calls for adherence to treaty commitments. Iran's experience during the past quarter of a century with war, sanctions and estrangement from the international community fostered a populace averse to external pressures. Among the themes consistently propounded in the popular press was the notion of American hypocrisy over the application of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The fact that Israel escaped criticism from Washington was cleverly exploited by conservative politicians to arouse nationalistic backing for Iran's acquisition of nuclear capabilities. Moreover, the attempt by the United States to restrict membership in the exclusive nuclear club irked Iranian leaders and masses alike. The selectivity of US condemnations and its presumption that the current nuclear states were the only ones capable of acting judiciously with such weapons was routinely condemned by Iranian writers, academics and politicians as arrogant and self-serving. In a strange note of accord, one of the foremost reformist activists, Mostafa Tajzadeh noted, "It's basically a matter of equilibrium... On the one hand Israel says, 'If I don't have it, I don't have security.' And we say, 'As long as Israel has it, we don't have security'." (The Washington Post, 11 March 2003: A16) Iranians' support for the country's nuclear programme stemmed from the perceived status and deterrence benefits garnered from such programmes as well as the opinion of the United States. Negative beliefs about the United States appeared to predict this support. (Fair and Shellman 2008: 538-558)

An assessment by US intelligence agencies, released on 3 December 2007, that Iran halted its nuclear-weapons work in late 2003, profoundly shifted the dynamics of the international response to Iran's nuclear programme. The 2007 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE), which represented the analysis of all 16 US intelligence agencies,

seemed to contradict a 2005 NIE assessment that Iran was 'determined to build a nuclear weapon'. The 2007 version reaffirmed, however, that Iran did have a dedicated nuclear weapons programme up until 2003, including covert uranium-conversion and uranium-enrichment activity. The NIE judged, with 'moderate confidence', that Iran still coveted a future weapons capability, and that 'at a minimum [it] was keeping open the option to develop nuclear weapons'. Though the NIE assessed that Iran halted its programme in response to international scrutiny and pressure, it also assessed that convincing Tehran to forgo the eventual development of nuclear weapons altogether would be difficult.(Nicoll, ed. 2007) What was incontrovertible in both the reports is an inherent ambition of the Iranian leadership to go for the nuclear bomb. By stating that the Islamic Republic did have a nuclear programme before 2003, the 2007 NIE endorsed the 2005 report. The bottom-line was the unmistakable message that Iran could restart such a programme at a suitable time in the future. (Mahapatra 2009:25) US Ambassador Greg Schulte, permanent representative to International Organizations in Vienna, said: "What is particularly important is that the 2007 NIE notes with high confidence that Iran, did, indeed have a covert nuclear programme until fall 2003-a clear violation of Iran's Non Proliferation Treaty obligations... It also notes that Iran's leadership continues to keep open the option to pursue nuclear weapons." (Ibid: 26)

The NIE further estimated that the earliest possible date Iran would be technically capable of producing enough highly enriched uranium (HEU) for a weapon would be late 2009, but that 2010–15 would be a more realistic timeframe. It judged that Iran had the technical capacity to produce nuclear weapons if it wanted to, and that a decision to produce HEU for weapons would probably rely on covert facilities rather than the declared enrichment plant at Natanz. (Nicoll, ed. 2007) Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak acknowledged that Iran might have stopped pursuing a military nuclear programme for a time, but reaffirmed Israel's judgement that the programme was continuing and that a key source for the American assessment was no longer valid. French analysts similarly drew different conclusions based on the role of Natanz in giving Iran a future weapons option, and they argued that the NIE was too narrowly focused. (Ibid)

According to NIE 2007, Iran's nuclear-weapon programme is either working specifically on nuclear weapons, or covertly working on uranium conversion and enrichment. Iran has insisted throughout that its uranium enrichment work is purely for civilian purposes. But the distinction between civilian and military nuclear work could be artificial given the fact that fissile material has a dual use. This line is particularly unclear regarding Iran, which has had a history of safeguards violations and lack of transparency in its encounter with the IAEA. A credible nuclear weapon requires three things: a significant quantity of fissile material either enriched uranium or reprocessed plutonium; an ability to make a weapon from the fissile material; and a means of delivery. Iran has been reportedly working diligently on two out of three of these elements, including the hardest part, production of the fissile material. (Ibid)The work that was apparently halted in 2003 could be resumed at a future date if Iran changed its calculations. Meanwhile, mastering the uranium-enrichment process would enable it to build a bomb quickly if it ever so desired. It could produce a stockpile of low-enriched uranium, ostensibly as nuclear-reactor fuel, and further enrich it to weapons grade in a matter of weeks by re-running it through the centrifuge cascades. This break-out potential continued to be the most worrisome aspect of Iran's nuclear programme. As argued by Columbia University scholar Gary Sick, having the threat of a nuclear weapon, even without the weapon itself, would be just as useful for Iran in exerting influence over its neighbours. It would be even more empowering not to have an explicit weapons programme that would make Iran a military target. (Ibid) Iran's ballistic-missile programme heightened this concern. Tehran's 26 November 2007 announcement of a new 2,000km-range Ashura missile was further proof of a determination for a strategic reach well beyond its immediate neighbourhood. Given the inaccuracy of its ballistic missiles, the programme had little purpose except the delivery of nuclear or other unconventional warheads. (Ibid)

The Bush Administration's "National Security Strategy" document released 16 March 2006 said the United States "may face no greater challenge from a single country than from Iran." (US Government 2006) Many experts agree that Iran's core national security goals are to protect itself from foreign, primarily US, interference or attack, and

to exert regional influence that Iran believes is commensurate with its size and well developed concept of nationhood. Iranian leaders have asserted time and again that Iran's nuclear program was for electricity generation and that enrichment was its "right" as a party to the NPT. Iran has argued that its oil resources are finite and that enriching uranium to make nuclear fuel is allowed under the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, to which Iran is a party. (The New York Times, November 18 2005: A11) An analysis was published by the National Academy of Sciences challenging the US view that Iran is petroleum rich and therefore has no need for a nuclear power programme. According to the analysis, the relative lack of investment is causing a decline in Iranian oil exports to the point where Iran might have negligible exports of oil by 2015. (Roger 2006) US officials say that Iran's gas resources make nuclear energy unnecessary. Despite Iran's professions that WMD is inconsistent with its ideology Deputy Director of National Intelligence Donald Kerr and other officials testified in open session before the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence about intelligence consolidation and reorganization. Kerr told the committee that even though Iran froze weapons development in 2003, the country still retained key nuclear capabilities and also likely still wanted the ability to make nuclear weapons. (Gjelten 2007) Several Iranians appeared to agree on the utility of a nuclear weapons capability as a means of ending its perceived historic vulnerability to invasion and domination by great powers, and as a symbol of Iran as a major nation. Others believed a nuclear weapon represented the instrument with which Iran intended to intimidate its neighbors and dominate the Persian Gulf region. There were also fears Iran might transfer WMD to extremist groups or countries.

According to Martin Indyk, Director of Saban Centre for Middle East Policy at Brookings Institution, "Notwithstanding protestation to the contrary, the Iranian regime has a clear and intense interest in acquiring nuclear weapons. Nuclear powers are located to its North, East and West and the US military is positioned on all its land and sea borders. The lesson of the Iraqi and the North Korean experience is that countries that pursue antagonistic policies toward the US are much less likely to face military intervention if they possess nuclear weapons. Moreover, Iran's hegemonic ambitions in

the Persian Gulf and wider Middle East fuel a desire to possess the ultimate weapon. At a minimum, this leads the Iranian regime to want to keep the door open to a nuclear capability and maintain ambiguity about its nuclear programme. (Indyk 2006) The conservative regime in Tehran was largely seeing the conditions and terms of the Bush Administration as a trap to prevent Iran from continuing on a programme that was being billed as a sovereign right of a sovereign country by Iran. Indyk further added in his testimony, "The Bush Administration's declared policy of regime change and preventive war against state sponsor of terrorism... has exacerbated [Iranian] mistrust... parts of the leadership view negotiations as a trap designed at best to rob them of their minimum objective of nuclear ambiguity, at worst to justify sanctions or a military strike on Iran... Advocates of negotiations with the US within the highly fractionated Iranian power structure run the risk of being accused of jeopardizing the revolution or national interest." (Ibid)

The American foreign policy reverses in Iraq and Afghanistan gave a boost to the defiant nature of the Iranian regime and led a semblance of credence to the much quoted astrology of the American power being in decline. "Ahmadinejad in particular senses that the United States is out of the breadth in the Middle East while his message of defiance and "resistance" is met with growing support across a normally adversarial Arab world. This sense... coupled with the fact that the regime has paid no discernible price for proceeding with its nuclear programme... reduces its needs or interest in a compromise solution," said Indyk. (Ibid) Perhaps hoping to blow the final trumpet, former German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer in May 2006 declared, "There can no longer be any reasonable doubt that Iran's ambition is to obtain nuclear weapons capability." (Fischer 2006) A September 2008 Report of an Independent task Force, sponsored by Bipartisan Policy Centre, wrote: "Iranian officials state that their centrifuge enrichment plant will provide low-enriched uranium fuel for its nuclear reactor in Bushehr. The same plant and technology, however, could produce enough highly enriched uranium to fuel a nuclear bomb in a matter of weeks and, under certain circumstances, within the period between IAEA inspections." "In such scenarios, the Additional Protocol would not add safety because both the centrifuge plant at Natanz and the stockpile of enriched uranium are

permitted under current international arrangements," the report added.(Bipartisan Policy Centre 2008)

Arguing that the Iranian regime could actually take advantage of non-proliferation rules and regulations, George Perkovich, Vice President for studies and director of the Nonproliferation Programme at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in May 2005 and said, "if Iranian decision-makers are clever, they will bring their nuclear programme back into compliance with all international requirements, play by the rules and insist on outmoded "rights" to develop whatever nuclear technology they want under strict international monitoring and safeguards, and gradually acquire the know-how, technology and materiel necessary to produce nuclear weapons some day if a dire strategic threat should arise. This scenario, a variant of the Japanese model, is very difficult to counter, and could be a model for states beyond Iran." (Perkovich 2005)

Some analysts claimed that Iran's stop-and-go enrichment development efforts over the past two decades, and its willingness to accept International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspections (albeit never complete and, since February 2006, sharply curtailed), implied that Iran did not have a coordinated programme to seek a weapons option. Those who would give Iran the benefit of the doubt argued that it might only seek to be in the position of Japan, with fissile material production technologies it could use if it wanted a weapon. (Fitzpatrick 2006:5-26) Facing foes on several sides and several neighbours armed with nuclear weapons, Iran is presumed to have a security motivation for arming itself, particularly when it sees how American enemies that have nuclear weapons survived while Saddam Hussein's regime, which did not have them, no longer exists. A compelling need for national prestige and regional leadership added to the motivations.

Some analysts critical of the US policy toward Iran claimed that American foreign policy was actually to be blamed for Iran's nuclear ambitions. For instance, Trita Parsi, President, National Iranian American Council and author of *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Iran, Israel and the United States* said, "Iran has been able to play a

strong leadership role in the region for the last 3000 years more often than not because of its strategic conventional superiority. If Iran, however, as a large state goes for nuclear race in the region, cause smaller countries, such as Bahrain and Kuwait to either get one or buy one, then Iran will have put itself at strategic parity with these much smaller states and they would have eliminated this national conventional superiority. So the Iranians do have strong incentives not going for a nuclear weapon, but because of them living in a very tough environment, they definitely want to have the option. And I think that's what they're aiming for now. I don't think they have made a strategic decision to go for a weapon, but if tensions between the United States and Iran were to increase further, then that decision would probably be reassessed." (Council on Foreign Relations 2008)

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal, told the BBC that the West was partly to blame for the crisis by allowing Israel to develop nuclear weapons. In a separate interview to *The Times*, he said: "Nobody mentions that Israel has 100 nuclear weapons in stock even though it is an open secret." The Prince urged Iran not to join the nuclear race and said: "We are urging Iran to accept the position that we have taken to make the Gulf, as part of the Middle East [West Asia], nuclear-free and free of weapons of mass destruction. We hope that they will join us in this policy and assure us that no new threat of arms race happens in this region." (Saroor 2006)

The noted socio-political analyst Naom Chomsky in an interview published on the *Foreign Policy Journal* touched on the issue of the double standard approach adopted by the United States toward Iran and Israel's nuclear capacities. He said, "The basic point was explained very candidly by Henry Kissinger. He was asked by the *Washington Post* why he now claims that Iran does not need nuclear energy so it must be working on building a bomb, while in the 1970s he insisted forcefully that Iran needs nuclear energy and the US must provide the Shah with the means to develop it. His answer was pure Kissinger: "They were an allied country" so they needed nuclear energy. Now they are not an ally, so they do not need nuclear energy. As for Israel, it is an ally, more accurately a client state. So they inherit from the master the right to do as they please. The IAEA has the authority, but the US would never permit them to exercise it." (Ziabari 2009) Further, arguing that a large portion of American opinion on the Iranian issue was

subdued and never made to surface, he added, "Not only the non-aligned movement, but also the large majority of Americans believe that Iran has the right to develop nuclear energy. But almost no one in the US is aware of this. That includes those who are polled, and probably think they are the only ones who hold these beliefs. Nothing is ever published about it. What appears in the media, constantly, is that the "international community" demands that Iran stop uranium enrichment. Almost nowhere is it brought out that the term "international community" is used conventionally to refer to Washington and whoever happens to go along with it, not just on this issue, but quite generally." (Ibid)

The Case for Military Strike against Iran:

Hawks who profess a military strike against Iran as the solution to the Iranian Quandary have no faith in the effectiveness of negotiations and diplomacy. They are deeply suspicious of the Iranian regime and its willingness to deliver on what it promises. In his testimony to the Senate, Martin Indyk said, "Secretary of State Rice's offer to engage in direct negotiations with the government of Iran, if it suspends uranium enrichment, and recent hints from chief negotiator Ali Larijani that Iran might be prepared to do so, create a faint ray of hope for diplomacy. But I fear that it is an illusion." (Indyk 2006) At the same time, many analysts feel that the deep mistrust between the United States and Iran and the orientation of Bush Administration's policies would not result in any meaningful conclusion through negotiations. Rather, negotiations and diplomacy would be probably used by the Iranian regime to buy time to go further in its quest for the nuclear weapon. Indyk said, "Within the Bush Administration and among its more strident supporters, negotiation tend to be viewed with deep suspicion too. Many fear that the Iranians are engaged in a game of "rope-a-dope," absorbing our best efforts to stop their nuclear programme while buying time to get themselves over the nuclear know-how threshold. For these people, many of them in influential positions, the offer of negotiations is a necessary evil to demonstrate that the US has exhausted diplomacy before it resorts to a military strike on Iran's nuclear facilities" (Ibid) According to

analysts in the US, even though the risks and the challenges of a preventive military strike are often unpalatable and daunting, the risks associated with deterrence is even more so. Deterrence defers a crisis, but runs significant long-term risks. Some are incremental, such as more active Iranian support for terrorism, a resumption of efforts to export the revolution under the protection afforded by Iran's nuclear umbrella, or a more assertive foreign policy, increasing the risk of conflict with its neighbours or the United States through miscalculation or recklessness. The most worrisome involves the possibility of a catastrophic failure of nuclear deterrence, leading to the deaths of hundreds of thousands, if not millions. (Clawson and Eisenstadt 2008: 13-19)

According to them, deterring a nuclear-armed Iran is likely to prove much more difficult than deterring the Soviet Union was during the Cold War. The international community will probably lack the political will to build and sustain a broad coalition of states to deter a nuclear-armed Iran on a long-term basis. Factions within the regime could create uncertainties in policymaking making it complicated and unreliable to maintain a deterrent relationship with a nuclear-armed Iran. Such a scenario could create command-and-control problems. For instance, the same radical institution (the Revolutionary Guard) that funds, trains and supports terrorists also controls Iran's 'special weapons' (missiles and weapons of mass destruction) programmes, raising the risk of nuclear terrorism. And some radical regime elements are not particularly well informed about the outside world, believe that God is on their side, and might welcome confrontation as a means of reviving the spirit and values of the Islamic Revolution or of hastening the reappearance of the Mahdi – the Shia messiah. (Ibid)

Furthermore, pursuing a policy of deterrence runs the risk of an Iranian nuclear weapons programme spurring additional proliferation. Tehran has stated it will share its nuclear technology with other Muslim states, raising the possibility that Iran's programme will spawn others. And should Iran get the bomb, a number of other states in the region (Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Turkey) or elsewhere (Brazil, Argentina, Taiwan and Japan) may be tempted to do so as well, undermining global norms against the proliferation of nuclear weapons, complicating the challenge of deterrence in a

proliferated world, and increasing the eventual likelihood of a nuclear war.(Ibid) The possible acquisition of nuclear weapons by a volatile country like Iran raises questions about the long-term security of its nuclear stockpile. While Pakistan appeared relatively stable in the mid 1980s when Washington turned a blind eye to its efforts to acquire nuclear weapons to ensure Islamabad's support for the Afghan Mujahadeen, today, US policymakers worry about the impact of political instability on the security of Pakistan's nuclear stockpile. Over time, Iran could likewise face domestic instability due to unrest among its disaffected youth or minorities. For proliferation not to end in tragedy, a nuclear-weapons state must have responsible leaders and stable institutions of governance and control ever after. Iran provides ample cause for concern.

But these analysts also caution that a successful prevention should be a sustained policy and not a one-off affair. Force is much more likely to be effective if its legitimacy is widely acknowledged by the American people, key US allies, the international community, and even important political currents inside Iran. These key publics must believe that the Islamic Republic is refusing reasonable diplomatic proposals, that no good prospects exist for stopping Iran's nuclear programme short of military force, and that a nuclear Iran is an unacceptable threat to the peoples of Iran and the region, the global nonproliferation regime, and international peace and stability. Preventive action is more likely to be successful if done in a way that sets the conditions for post-strike diplomacy to pressure Iran not to rebuild its nuclear programme, or additional strikes to prevent it from doing so. Fulfilling these desiderata may prove difficult under current conditions, though fulfilling the requirements for a policy of deterrence vis-à-vis an increasingly assertive Iran may prove even more so. Precisely because the alternatives – prevention and deterrence – are so risky, the international community should redouble efforts invested in diplomacy. But the United States and its allies should also further strengthen the credibility of the military option to bolster the prospects for successful diplomacy while laying the groundwork for preventive military action, should it become necessary. (Ibid)

Can sanctions compel the Iranians forego their ambitions? The hawks in the American debate are not very optimistic. They are apprehensive about the effectiveness of sanctions in the face of withering unity among American allies and political opposition from Moscow and Beijing. They are rather pessimistic about the progress of the Europeans in terms of bringing unanimity in the favour of sanctions against the Iranian regime. At the same time, Iran is seen to have fared well in pursuing a tactic that enabled it to carry on its nuclear programme while evading sanctions. Indyk said, "European solidarity with the US has also been weakened by developments in Lebanon. Ironically, the insertion of French and Italian troops in a revamped UNIFIL force has rendered them vulnerable to attacks by Iran's Hezbollah proxy. This will make the Europeans hesitant to press Iran either through imposing sanctions or in the negotiations that EU High Representative Javier Solana is conducting with Iran's Larijani, for fear that Iran will retaliate by unleashing Hezbollah in southern Lebanon." (Indyk 2006)

Dingli Shen, professor and executive dean of the Institute of International Studies and director of the Centre for American Studies at Fudan University in Sanghai wrote, "The sanctions so far have been weak, with the "tailored" sanctions targeting only Tehran's nuclear and missile programmes. They are limited and focused in order to prevent Iran from quickly weaponizing its nuclear capabilities. Yet, given Iran's energy resources, the international community has been unwilling to impose any sanctions on Iran that would hurt energy trade between Tehran and many other capitals. Many countries will not embrace a comprehensive punitive package that undermines their overall economic partnership with Iran. The sanctions thus far do not threaten Iran's core interests and its more crucial and vulnerable sector: the export of petroleum and gas." (Shen 2008:89-100) Thus, punishing Iran has been a half-hearted mission, with some members of the international community professing paramount proliferation concerns, while others either sympathized with Iran or needed access to its energy resources. (Ibid)

When it comes to the question of negotiating directly with Iran, hawkish analysts do not show much optimism. They contend that years of isolation and lack of official contact have cemented mutual mistrust. The US has very limited understanding of Iran

and apparently even less knowledge of what is actually going on in its nuclear programme or its decision-making processes. In such a scenario, it will be hard to expect any real confidence between the negotiators that can produce credible results. (Indyk 2006)There is a strong recommendation for the US government from these elements to use military to put an end to the Iranian nuclear weapons programme. They are of the view that Iran has long had a policy of cleverly evading sanctions and punishments by offering token concessions, but sustaining its overall programme. For them, even a regime change would not be a credible step because the nuclear-standoff seen as struggle for national pride might survive any sort of regime change. Iran's considerable progress in its nuclear programme so far means that it could resume activities at an advanced level even if there is a hiatus today. Thus, the set of sticks used to threaten Iran must be ones that can be credible for years to come. The pressure should increase as Iran continues to be defiant, giving a clear message to the Iranian leaders about the risks associated with their aggressiveness. (Byman 15 March, 2007) According to the hawks, no better option exist than to surgically strike the nuclear sites by the US, Israel or even by a coalition of willing.

Arguing for a comprehensive military option, a 2008 report from an independent task force sponsored by the Bipartisan Policy Centre said, "Too often, the public, diplomats, and many policymakers equate military options with bombing or invasion, but these are only the last resort. A military component underlies both deterrence and containment. Indeed, both these options require robust planning and military presence. Non-military policies would be expected to buttress the military option through the "DIME" paradigm–Diplomatic, Military, Informational, and Economic. Such an integrated approach can reduce the potential need to employ actual military force by convincing Iran that any such confrontation would be counter-productive, and that it faces determined international and regional solidarity against Tehran. Diplomacy would come into play in paving the way for a credible deterrent and to build the capacity needed to actually carry out military action, if needed. (Bipartisan Policy Centre 2008)

Proponents of Diplomacy:

The doves are no different from the hawks in opposing the Iranian nuclear ambition. They, too, agree that a nuclear-armed Iran will destabilize the fragile balance in a volatile yet vital West Asian region. But, they are steadfast in opposing a military solution to the problem and warn against the consequences of a likely retaliation by Iran that will further take the security situation in the region in a downward spiral. Inspite of the fact that the Iranian conventional military power is miniscule vis-à-vis the United States, there possibly remain many routes through which Tehran can effectively damage US interests and security. For instance, Iran could disrupt the flow of oil from the region by trying to close the Strait of Hormuz and attack critical infrastructure in the Gulf, such as oil-processing facilities or water-desalination plants. It could use its small-boat swarming tactics to inflict painful losses on the US 5th Fleet in the Gulf. Iran could proclaim a propaganda victory by bloodying the US Navy. In the wake of a US military strike, Iran could go to the extent of providing insurgent and terrorist groups in Iraq and Afghanistan with which it is aligned with the most advanced weapons in its inventory. Iran could influence Hezbollah to launch rocket attacks against Israel, harming a key US ally and scoring points on the Arab street. Iran might also launch a missile strike on the Israeli nuclear reactor at Dimona, though its missiles may not be sufficiently accurate to hit the target. When confronted with a great power like the United States, Iran's capacity to launch a protracted terrorist war of attrition spanning several continents remains one of its most potent levers. Such a scenario could dramatically broaden the US "War on Terrorism" and burden the US military already overstretched with two unfinished wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. (Clawson and Eisenstadt 2008: 13-19)

The doves contended that the ineffective American intervention in Iraq had seriously curtailed the US influence in the region and that the US has to tread very carefully keeping the present conditions in mind when dealing with the Iranians. Regime change, bombing campaigns, and other high-profile and blunt forms of pressure are destined to fail in most likelihood and may even prove counter-productive. Such actions run the risk of further uniting the elite and the people in Iran's drive for the nuclear weapon. Since the motivations for Iran in going for the bomb option are quite strong:

including deterring the United States, extending Iran's regional influence, demonstrating Iran's status and gaining political capital at home, it will not be easy to persuade Iran to forego the programme. But, it is not impossible either, because for some Iranians-both the bulk of the people and important members of the regime-nuclear weapons are desirable, perhaps even important, but neither essential nor even their first priority. (Pollack 2006:365-370). It is worthwhile comparing it with the North Korean case to better illustrate this argument. The North Korean regime has a different view of its nuclear weapons compared to the Iranians. For Pyongyang, its nuclear weapons programme was its highest priority, and as a consequence, it was willing to tolerate hardships that few other countries (including Iran) would be willing to. Ultimately, North Korea accepted the devastation of its economy, the impoverishment of its citizenry, and the starvation death of 3 million of its people to hold on to its nuclear weapons programme. (Ibid)

Pollack wrote, "If the same could be said about Iran then it would probably be impossible to convince Tehran to give up its nuclear programme. However, there is no Iranian or Iran expert who believes that this is the case. There is absolutely no evidence that Tehran is willing to tolerate the extremes of sacrifice that North Korea did. Instead, the evidence suggests that Iran is more like Libya: difficult, but hardly impossible to convince." (Ibid)

Doves contend that talking to Iran would give a better access and serve as an opportunity to understand the various nuances of the Iranian decision-making process. Years of political isolation and lack of official contact has deprived the Americans of any in-depth knowledge of the intricacies of Iranian politics, particularly nuclear politics. Opening talks will help in communicating to the Iranians that America acknowledges the importance of Iran in the region and is ready to work diplomatically without any sort of intimidation. US policy has often tried to influence public opinion in Iran with the ultimate aim of bringing about a regime change. But, the doves are highly skeptical of these activities; because support for the regime is deeply-rooted in the Iranian society and its security services have infiltrated various opposition movements over the years with impunity. Moreover, Iranians are highly nationalistic and any sign of outside

manipulation run the risk of jeopardizing hopes of a regime change. As such, indigenous forms of opposition to the regime working within the system without American support can bring more credible results. (Byman 15 March, 2007) Undue interference from the United States would rather end up strengthening the hands of the radical elements that are ready to grasp any reason to discredit the voices that propagate better US-Iran relations. (Ibid)

According, to the doves, the US has to engage with Iran at some point of time, because the very idea of not engaging with the largest power in the region is not productive policy. As of now, Iran is a major power in the region. It is involved in the region from Afghanistan to Central Asia to the Persian Gulf to Iraq and it proves that it can even be far more influential and important in faraway places like Lebanon and Palestine, which were traditionally seen to be the backyard of the Arab government. Iran is also pursuing nuclear capabilities, which puts it on a completely different footing than most of its neighbours. In this scenario, it is for the US to decide how to deal with Iran. Given the circumstances of the Iraq war, the mood of the US Congress and the mood of the American people, a confrontation at this point in time does not look like a very viable policy for the US. (Nasr 2007:9-20)

"Engagement" according to Vali Nasr, professor of International Politics at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, "broadly means deepening contacts and connections between two countries with the aim of creating a vested interest in your adversary through those relations so that they will reach a point where they see advantages in maintaining those ties. The belief in those advantages will begin to influence their negative behavior... Right now Iran has no relationship with the United States and there is no benefit to them from a relationship with the United States. They have a cost-benefit analysis in Lebanon over the Palestinians, over the nuclear issue, over Iraq. As a result, engagement with the United States does not play any role in Iran's decision-making. So, a very successful engagement ultimately should result in normalization –not only of relations, but normalization of the behavior of a country like Iran, which is a long term process. But it has to start at some point." (Ibid)

Nasr along with Ray Takeyh, discrediting Bush Administration's Iran Policy said, "Iran does present serious problems for the United States. Its quest for a nuclear capability, its mischievous interventions in Iraq, its strident opposition to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process constitute a formidable list of grievances. But the bigger issue is the Bush Administration's fundamental belief that Iran cannot be a constructive actor in a stable Middle East and that its unsavoury behaviour cannot be changed through creative diplomacy. Iran is not, in fact, seeking to create disorder in order to fulfill some scriptural promise, nor is it an expansionist power with unquenchable ambitions. Not unlike Russia and China, Iran is a growing power seeking to become a pivotal state in its region." (Nasr and Takeyh 2008:85-94)

Thus for the doves, opening a direct dialogue with the Iranians is the best option to deal with the issue. Doves have challenged the attractiveness of military strikes by raising questions over its eventual success. It would make no sense to bomb Iran without accurate, detailed target intelligence and the ability to inflict significant damage on key nodes of Iran's nuclear infrastructure. Tremendous uncertainties surround these various issues and none can be answered definitively with publicly available information. Moreover, because different components of Iran's nuclear infrastructure may be at different stages of development, and because Iran may try to rebuild, such a policy could require successive strikes against a number of targets, in conjunction with sustained diplomatic efforts to pressure Iran not to rebuild. (Clawson and Eisenstadt 2008: 13-19) This is not the end. Any direct use of force would carry high political costs. Bombing nearly always causes a population to rally around its government. In the Iranian case, the millions of youth who are critical of the Islamist regime and are relatively pro-American, who provide the promise of a more liberal and internationalist Iran for the future, would swiftly turn and support the regime against America. Further, such an action would do serious damage to the already tainted American image in the Islamic world.

In order for diplomacy to work, some analysts caution that US officials must determine both what they expect from the Islamic Republic and what Iranian objectives they are prepared to meet. According to them, the US has a long list of concerns as far as Iranian activities and extreme Iranian demands are concerned and will be unacceptable to

any US government. Nevertheless, US officials will need to determine just what they are willing to offer the Islamic Republic for its forfeiture of its nuclear programme and the abandonment of its terrorist proxies. (Bipartisan Policy Centre 2008)

Carrots and Sticks- The Owls in the American Debate:

The owls are neither adamant peacenik nor do they profess all-out military strike against Iran. They believe in setting a pragmatic goal and trying to attain them through shrewd manoeuvres. They are not extraordinarily adventurous. They rather believe in making optimum use of the weaknesses of opponents and extract concessions. According to them, the paramount policy option is "tightening the noose" around Tehran through economic sanctions. (Mahapatra 2009:36) They are of the view that Iran needs foreign investment and the benefits of trade to keep its economy healthy. Despite the fact that it virtually sits on a mine of oil and gas reserves, Iran suffers from high employment and future is not so bright with large number of young Iranians entering the workforce. Inflation is high and the economic policies of Ahmadinejad have not been stellar either. Moreover, Iran is burdened with unbridled corruption and the oil infrastructure is rickety. Many Iranian leaders seem to be aware of the kind of problems that entails policies supporting a nuclear weapon programme.

For instance, in an interview in 2002, the Iranian Defence Minister, Ali Shamkhani, warned that the "existence of nuclear weapons will turn us into a threat to others that could be exploited in a dangerous way to harm our relations with the countries of the region." (Pollack 2006:365-370) Statements from other leaders also pointed to the fact that the nuclear weapons programme, despite the jingoism of the Ahmadinejad regime, does not hold top priority. Rafsanjani warned that "If there [are] domestic and foreign conflicts, foreign capital will not flow into the country. In fact, such conflicts will lead to the flight of capital from this country." (Ibid) According to analysts, it is quite discernible that the Iranian public elected Ahmadinejad as their president not because he was determined to acquire nuclear weapons, but because he promised to reform Iran's economy and curb the rampant corruption that remained the blight on Iran's economic

development. The Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and his allies have tried hard to steer clear of policy paths that would cause Iran's European and Japanese trading partners to impose economic sanctions on Tehran, even saying in 2003 that they were willing to agree to suspend Iran's nuclear programme to avoid such a fate. (Ibid)

Patrick Clawson, the deputy director of research, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, said, "For most ordinary Iranians and for an important part of the elite, especially in the business community, but also many technocrats... the interest is much more about economic prosperity and modernity. And their concern is much more about how the country can modernize itself. How can the country be accepted as an important part of the outside world? And so therefore, for them, the idea of sanctions and being cut off from the outside world grates. And if the sanctions were to be imposed in Iran in a way that hit the economy, it's quite possible that the West would be blamed. But I certainly think that the Ahmadinejad government and hard-liners would get a lot of blame, a sense that why did they bring us into this conflict? What happened?" (Council on Foreign Relations 5 April 2006)

Thus a well-calculated US-led multilateral strategy to "press Tehran economically and isolate it diplomatically", according to the owls, is the best option to put an end to the Iranian nuclear weapons programme. Such a strategy would have the effect of encouraging the moderate elements in Iran to stand up against the logic of a nuclear programme that runs the risks of further isolating Iran in the international community and erode the already rickety health of Iran's economy. (Mahapatra 2009:36) Though not really a panacea, sanctions are still a tool in leverage building. Back in the mid-1990s, the threat of multilateral sanctions did convince Iran to reduce its support for international terrorism. In the mid-1990s, a series of Iranian terrorist attacks in Europe and in the Middle East led to a rare degree of unity among Western powers—unity that had the potential to lead to comprehensive sanctions or support for US military strikes. As a consequence, the administration of Rafsanjani put to an end the assassination of dissidents in Europe and restored ties with the Gulf monarchies. The US in blocking IMF and World Bank funding to Iran did manage to make a deep wound in the Iranian

economy and thus extracted concessions from the Iranian regime. Such a comprehensive strategy of sanctions, today, might deliver in the nuclear issue. (Byman 15 March, 2007)

Some analysts have also contended that most effective sanctions might be comprehensive sanctions against Iranian oil sales. Iran is oil-rich, but also energy-dependent. This dynamic dictates the range of economic policy options by which the US might seek to influence Iranian behaviour. Available strategies include not only enacting tougher sanctions and closing loopholes in existing ones, but also targeting Iran's major source of revenue by blocking oil exports; exploiting its insufficient refining capacity and growing gasoline consumption by halting gasoline imports: or a combination of both actions. Accumulated sanctions on Iran and pressures on companies not to invest in the country's hydrocarbon sector have been one set of factors that have impeded efforts by Tehran to increase its oil and gas production capacities and its refining capacity, expansion of which is required if Iran is to meet its current and future gasoline requirements. In early 2008, for example, both Royal Dutch Shell and Spain's Repsol withdrew from participation in development of phase 13 of the South Pars gas field, one of the Islamic Republic's largest projects. In July 2008, the French oil giant Total announced its withdrawal from Iranian projects. (Bipartisan policy Centre 2008)

Oil revenues account for about 80 percent of Iran's export earnings and almost 50 percent of the government budget. While diplomats and analysts might also consider enhanced sanctions, the very tight energy market and the threat that higher petroleum prices might damage the international economy could undercut this strategy. The Iranian government may find its pre-existing trade relationships capable of mitigating such sanctions' bite. The Nordic countries[28] have already made it clear that, when it comes to sanctions, the EU-3 does not speak for them. The Russian government has repeatedly sought to delay or downgrade sanctions. Beijing is also reluctant to impose harsh

[28] The Nordic countries make up a region in Northern Europe and far northeastern North America, called the Nordic region, consisting of Denmark, Finland, Greenland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden and their associated territories which include the Faroe Islands and Åland.

sanctions or further Chapter VII resolutions[29] as forceful action against Iran might undercut its energy security. While they do not have veto power at the United Nations, the German and Japanese governments might also resist wide-ranging sanctions as they have, by some diplomats' estimates, extended more than $20 billion in loan guarantees to their own companies doing business in the Islamic Republic. (Ibid) But the owls have argued that Ahmadinejad's stubbornness in continually defying the international community has pushed the EU members, Russia and China to acknowledge, to some extent, American concerns and cooperate in formulating a responsible policy toward Iran.

To extract credible concession from a country like Iran, an American package should make it very clear that Iran has to give up its pursuit of nuclear weapons-not nuclear energy or nuclear technology-to reap the benefits promised. Both the carrots and the sticks to be used should be fairly big. Since Iran has strategic, ideological, and psychological reasons to pursue its nuclear weapons programme, the Iranians should be made to believe that a "pot of gold waits at the end of the rainbow, especially if they are going to be able to help Iran's more pragmatic leaders defeat Tehran's hard-liners in what is likely to be a tough internal political battle." (Pollack 2006:365-370) Moreover, such a package would not succeed if not accompanied with serious economic sanctions. The international community, or merely the West acting outside the United Nations in multilateral fashion, will have to impose strong sanctions on Iran and keep them in place for some time before Iran accedes. (Ibid)

All the analysts in the American debate seem to agree that a nuclear-armed Iran cannot be considered non-threatening. How it can be stopped from reaching that level is a matter of debate. It will always be difficult to convince a country like Iran to roll back its ambitions, given the fact that it has a wide range of rationales for continuing to pursue a nuclear capability. An Iran with a nuclear arsenal, given current political hostilities, would only be emboldened to continue on its current intransigent path. (Gonzalez 2007:133) But, most of the analysts also seem to believe that it is not impossible to

[29] Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter sets out the UN Security Council's powers to maintain peace. It allows the Council to "determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression" and to take military and nonmilitary action to "restore international peace and security".

dissuade Iran from walking down a road that will only harm the security balance in a volatile yet vital region. Iran does not exist for the accomplishment of the nuclear capability alone. It has a myriad range of pre-occupations and priorities as an important power in the West Asian region. The challenge for the US policymakers is to make the Iranian leaders believe that its nuclear ambition would only end up depriving the country most of the things that it deserves as a responsible member of the international community. In the final analysis, it would be stating the obvious to say that the US-Iran tussle regarding Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons will continue to be a policy migraine for successive US administrations for some time to come.

Conclusion

Conclusion:

Does the United States want Iran to have nuclear weapons? The answer is simply 'no'. A nuclear-armed Iran is seen to be highly detrimental to US interest in the West Asian region. Iran has the resources, the influence and the willingness to become a regional power. The quest for nuclear weapons by Iran has been seen by US policymakers as a zero-sum game whereby the acquisition of such an arsenal by a "rogue state" like Iran would have negative consequences for American influence and interest in the region. The Bush Administration has had serious concerns regarding Iran having such a technology in its kitty. Iran's nuclear programme has presented the United States with one of its most formidable foreign policy challenges.

Why would Iran want nuclear weapons? American analysts have contended that Iran had a number of reasons for going ahead with the weapon programme. Iran could use the nuclear weapons as deterrence against the threat of potential American attacks. Many Iranian leaders believe that the United States could destroy the Islamic Republic provided the opportunity and the right circumstances. They appear concerned with the presence of American forces in the Persian Gulf, in Afghanistan and in Iraq. The Iranians have been aware that the Iranian conventional military power was no match for the Americans. In such a case, only nuclear weapons seem to be the most desirable guarantee of Iran's security against the US. Moreover, the fact that America attacked a non-nuclear Iraq with impunity and enticed a nuclear North Korea with negotiations and concessions probably emboldened the Iranians to go ahead with the alleged nuclear weapon progamme. The possession of nuclear weapons could effectively help Iran in enlarging its influence in the region. Even the rhetoric employed by a nuclear power would be taken more seriously. Iran with nuclear weapons up its sleeves could talk more boldly against Israel and offset Israel's influence in the region. Iran apparently hoped to serve as the beacon of leadership for the Muslim world against the 'Judeo-Christian' alliance in the region.

In stark realist terms, nuclear weapons are ultimate security providers as well as status symbols for countries in an anarchic world, where self-help is the best recourse to survival in the international system. A nuclear-armed Iran would be emboldened to ask for the status that it deserved as a nuclear power and America would find it hard to swallow in a region where its influence has held sway for years. The nuclear programme has been cleverly used by the conservative leaders in Iran to gain domestic political mileage. The US-Iran nuclear standoff has been sold as an issue of Iranian pride and sovereignty. The heated debate on nuclear issue has helped the Ahmadinejad regime to overshadow its poor economic performance and mesmerize the people in believing that it is to preserve Iran's sovereign right and dignity in the face of a formidable foe, the United States. The nuclear weapon option was primarily supported by hard-line clerics closely associated with the Supreme Religious Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Commanding key institutions in the regime, these clerics have been the force behind Iran's foreign and national security planning. They profess a belief in the notion that the Islamic Republic is in constant danger from predatory external forces, necessitating military self-reliance. Iran's hardliners are not necessarily afraid of sanctions and coercion when fundamental national interests are believed to be at stake. For many within this camp, a confrontation with the West would be an effective means of rekindling popular support for the revolution's fading élan. Iran's drive toward the nuclear option was made more formidable by the fact that large sections of the Iranian populace were made to believe that as a great civilization with a long history, Iran had a right to acquire a nuclear capability. The recent disclosures of the sophisticated nature of Iran's nuclear programme have been a source of national pride for a citizenry accustomed to the revolution's failures and setbacks. Washington's incendiary rhetoric and its designation of Iran as an 'Axis of Evil' state, that should not have access to such weapons has only inflamed a highly nationalistic population.

Assuming that Iran does succeed in manufacturing its own nuclear bomb, what are the consequences of a nuclear-armed Iran? The American debate on Iranian nuclear proliferation was intense throughout the second half of the Bush Administration. It highlighted a number of concerns as to why a nuclear-Iran would be unacceptable to the United States. According to analysts in the US, a nuclear Iran would disturb the delicate

balance of security in the West Asian region. The states in the Persian Gulf, it was argued also have had their share of concerns with the preponderance of Iranian power in the region. The emergence of a nuclear Iran would seriously undermine their sense of security and increase their vulnerability. They also shared the fear that in the case of a confrontation between the United States and Iran over the nuclear issue, they would have to bear dire consequences. A nuclear armed Iran because of relative security from an attack from the United States and other powers would act more aggressively in the region and at international forums. Iran might be more emboldened to intimidate its neighbours and antagonize Israel. The debate in the United States also reflected the concern that Iran, due to its new found power, could become more intransigent and active in its support to terrorism limiting the US ability to coerce Iran not to do so. Given its geostrategic location in West Asia and the unsurpassed energy resources on which it sits, Iran presents a challenge and an opportunity to the United States in particular and the international community in general.

There is evidence that Iran was pursuing uranium enrichment and plutonium production capabilities that made sense only if Iranian leaders wished to be able to build nuclear weapons. If other countries become as assured as the United States and Israel, then some dangerous instability could be conjectured. Countries like Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, would be tempted to match Iran at least by acquiring similar nuclear fuel production technologies. Some other regional countries would be intimidated. A militant Iranian government that gains widespread popularity by threatening Israel and resisting the West may bolster the intensity and destructiveness of violent extremists in Lebanon, the Palestinian territories, Iraq, and elsewhere. Some analysts have also contended that the rise of a powerful Iran under the leadership of a conservative leader like Mahmoud Ahmadinejad would be bad news for the United States. Iran under an anti-American leader armed with nuclear weapons might harm US interest internationally by forming a league of states that saw the US as imperialist and interventionist.

What has been the official US response to Iran's nuclear programme? The United States had a substantial role in the initiation of Iran's nuclear programme during the Shah's period. But, the Islamic Revolution and the Hostage Crisis changed bilateral

political equations between the new Iranian regime and Washington. With the snapping of ties between the two countries, the US halted its support to Iran's nuclear programme and pressured other western countries to refrain from any kind of nuclear cooperation with Iran.

But, shortly before his downfall, the Shah had reportedly engaged in discreet activities to develop a secret nuclear weapon programme. When the Islamic revolution erupted in 1978-79, the Shah besides having built the most extensive, overt nuclear infrastructure in West Asia had also engaged in substantial, covert efforts to acquire atomic weapons with at least the tacit knowledge of the United States. US policymakers during 1970s were also skeptical of the Shah's claims that the programme was meant for civilian energy production. But they ultimately were willing to accept, the Shah's similar claims, as long as a nuclear agreement with Iran restricted its freedom of action in the nuclear field. Even thought the withdrawal of western support combined with other potent factors slowed down the Iranian programme, non-proliferation experts are of the view that the Islamic Republic had again become interested in a nuclear programme and tried to revive it by the mid-1980s. It was during this period that many of the clandestine nuclear purchases were made, including the P-2 centrifuge from the A.Q. Khan network.

In 2002 when the NCRI exposed the hitherto unknown details of Iran's nuclear programme, America's policy aimed to cap and roll back the programme. To achieve this goal, the US engaged the IAEA and the EU-3 to play major roles in trying to persuade the Iranian regime to give up its nuclear weapon ambition. In response to America's claim that Iran had carried on a clandestine nuclear weapon progamme in violation of its commitments to the NPT, Iran argued that the programme was entirely civilian in nature and that Iran had an inalienable right to nuclear energy according to the provisions of the NPT. It is worth remembering that Iran was one of the first countries to sign the NPT when it opened for signature.

Even though the Bush Administration engaged the IAEA and the EU-3 to resolve the Iranian nuclear question, Tehran suspected the US was interested only in a regime change in Iran. It was also believed that the role of the IAEA and the EU-3, according to the Americans, was confined to gathering conclusive evidences of Iran's clandestine

activities. When the EU-3 failed, the Bush Administration tried to build the case for referring Iran to the United Nations Security Council, whereby the US hoped to use its clout to finally persuade other countries to support the US, tacitly if not directly, in launching military strikes, if needed, against an intransigent Iran. Eventually, on the basis of votes at the IAEA, Iran was referred to the UN Security Council but other countries, especially China and Russia, did not rally around the US regarding military coercion against Iran. The American misadventure in Iraq had already discredited the Bush Administration in the international community. The kind of multilateral support that came its way when President Bush decided to attack the Al-Qaeda after 9/11 was simply absent when it came to the issue of attacking and ousting Saddam Hussein. The absence of any Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) falsified the basic premise on which the US decided to attack Saddam's Iraq. As stated earlier, the regime change in Iraq might have given a robust reason to the Iranian regime to go nuclear, for they saw that a non-nuclear Iraq was attacked with impunity and nuclear and a much more belligerent North Korea was being enticed. Thus, the possession of nuclear weapons was seen as the ultimate guarantee for security. In view of the ground realities in Iraq, where the overthrow of the Sunni regime under Saddam Hussein led to the formation of a Shia government, the US and Iran actually had common interest in the stability of Iraq. But, when the nuclear issue came onboard, the Iranian influence in its neighbouring country began to be seen as harmful to American interests. The intractability of the nuclear deadlock and the animosity between the Bush and Ahmadinejad Administrations spilled over into Iraq. The US and UK began to accuse Iran of undue interference in Iraq and of cementing anti-West sentiments in the streets of Iraq and thus fuelling the insurgency.

Mohammad El-Baradei, the Secretary General of the IAEA was extra cautious not to let Iran end like Iraq, where the US attacked without even a semblance of international support. Even though El-Baradei in his many reports to the IAEA Board of Governors accused Iran of delaying tactics and showed his dissatisfaction with the lack of transparency under the Ahmadinejad regime, he contended that there was no evidence that Iran was carrying on a nuclear weapon programme. He did have serious issues with the way Iran conducted itself during IAEA inspections regarding the reporting of nuclear material, their subsequent processing, and use of that material and the declaration of

facilities where the material was stored and processed. But at the same time, he wanted to play down the rhetoric of the "present and imminent" Iranian threat that was being employed the US. The IAEA was, on the issue of Iran, squeezed between those who portrayed Iran as an irresponsible state seeking to acquire nuclear weapons, and the Iranians themselves, who held that all they wanted was a peaceful nuclear energy programme.

How has the official response fared in terms of pressurizing the Iranian regime to forego its nuclear weapon programme? The US has largely failed to make any change in Iran's behaviour. The various means employed by American policymakers to coerce Iran did not succeed in forcing the regime to move even an inch toward foregoing its quest for nuclear capability. Despite the activism shown by the Bush Administration, the Ahmadinejad regime seemed to become more and more emboldened to defy American preponderance in the region. The official response of the Bush Administration toward the Iranian quandary revolved around three measures- diplomacy, economic sanctions and threat of use of force. The diplomatic efforts were waged through the EU-3 and the IAEA. Economic sanctions were largely applied through sanctions on Iranian banks accused of having links with the nuclear programme. Moreover, Washington also succeeded in blocking the World Bank and IMF funding to Iran. As far as the threat of the use of force was concerned, the bottom-line of the US policy was to refer Iranian nuclear issue to the UN Security Council and in case of further Iranian non-compliance, resort to military strike. But all these measures failed to produce the intended result and Iran was as non-compliant as ever when President Bush left office.

There was an active debate in the US among academia and think-tanks as to how to respond to the Iranian defiance. America's debate on Iran's nuclear programme was among the hawks, doves and owls. The hawks supported direct military action against Iran's nuclear installations. They were less optimistic about the prospect of diplomatic negotiations with a 'rogue state' like Iran and showed little support for economic sanctions as well in the face of dwindling support from allies and powerful countries like China and Russia. The doves supported diplomatic negotiations and peaceful resolutions of the issues and concerns. According to them, the US had to engage Iran at some point

or the other. They contended that Iran had diverse sections of population who did not give priority to the nuclear weapon programme and the US would only lose the opportunity of engaging those voices, if it shunned Iran. The owls on the other hand, were aware of the negative consequences of military action, ineffectiveness of negotiations and thus advocated a judicious combination of military threats, economic sanctions and hard bargaining. They contended that Iranians had enough economic problems and would not risk their economic well-being beyond a certain extent for an antagonist and confrontationist nuclear weapon programme. Significantly, all of them had the same goal: preventing the emergence of a nuclear weapon capable Iran.

Thus, the debate in America mirrored substantially the 'Realism/Liberalism Debate'. If the liberals looked at ways to diplomatically handle the situation and through a more multilateral approach, the neoconservatives supported military strike as the means to resolve the problem. Another notable debate was between American scholars Kenneth Waltz and Scott Sagan. Waltz, the doyen of realist theory argued that "more may be better," contending that new nuclear states will use their acquired nuclear capabilities to deter threats and preserve peace. Sagan, true to his credentials as an organizational theorist, made the counterpoint that "more will be worse." According to him, novice nuclear states lack adequate organizational controls over their new weapons, which make for a high risk of either deliberate or accidental nuclear war. According to analysts in the US, the possible acquisition of nuclear weapons by a volatile country like Iran raised questions about the long-term security of its nuclear stockpile. While Pakistan appeared relatively stable in the mid 1980s when Washington turned a blind eye to its efforts to acquire nuclear weapons to ensure Islamabad's support for the Afghan mujahedeen. Today, the situation is different. The US policymakers seriously worry about the impact of Pakistan's political instability on the security of its nuclear stockpile. Over time, Iran could likewise face domestic instability due to unrest among its disaffected youth or minorities. For proliferation not to end in tragedy, a nuclear-weapon state must have responsible leaders and stable institutions of governance and control ever after. Iran provided ample cause for concern.

This study was initiated with the two following hypotheses:

1. Both the U.S. and Iran harboured a multitude of concerns over each other's foreign policy conduct, making political confrontation over the nuclear issue all the more intractable.

2. The misadventure of regime change policy in Iraq considerably weakened the argument of military action against Iran, making the liberal camp heard more seriously.

The study clearly shows that the United States and Iran shared a checkered relationship since the Iranian Islamic Revolution. The animosity between the two countries resulted from many experiences and shaped perceptions that both the countries had of each other. The nuclear standoff is just one of the many issues they had that prevented the two countries from having any meaningful relationship. If the 1953 coup transferred the hatred for the Anglo-Soviet nexus to the Americans, the Islamic Revolution of 1979 coupled with the Hostage Crisis crystallized the period of enmity between the two. Years of diplomatic detachment and lack of representation between the two countries further fostered various myths. If Islamic Republic accused the US of undue interference in the region and of harbouring hegemonic ambitions, the US tried to isolate Iran from the international community accusing it of abusing the human rights of its own people, of curbing basic freedom of Iranians, intervening in the internal situation of Iraq and sponsoring terrorism in West Asia. Thus, a host of issues between the two countries made the nuclear issue more intractable vindicating the first hypothesis.

The US military misadventure in Iraq and the "seeming" victory of the Iranian-backed Shia militia group Hezbollah in the Israel-Lebanon conflict in 2006 strengthened the Iranian defiance of the Bush Presidency. No other Iranian leader since Ayatollah Khomeini was as defiant as Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. This in turn gave more credence to voices opposing the policy of military strike against Iran as propagated by the neoconservative elements of the Bush Administration. As the American forces suffered reverses in the face of the insurgency and prospect for a respectable and a successful pull-out from Iraq appeared more difficulty, the American public became more restive about

the continuation of the US presence in Iraq. People began to question the policy of using taxpayers' money to fight a war initiated on the false pretext of the presence of WMD. Ordinary Americans became increasingly concerned over the rising death of American soldiers in Iraq. The US public opinion was against American soldiers fighting another war in Iran. This development had an impact on the Bush Administration's sabre-rattling against Iranian nuclear programme. The spread of anti-war voices in the US apparently was not lost to the liberals. They had always cautioned against a military strike against Iran which, unlike, Iraq had the resources, influence and willingness to become a regional power and would, no doubt, try to retaliate against any US attack by trying to inflict harm on the American Navy in the Persian Gulf and increasing its attacks against US interests elsewhere by backing anti-US non-state actors. Thus, the second hypothesis which states that the misadventure of regime change policy in Iraq had considerably weakened the argument of military action against Iran, making the liberal camp heard more seriously also stands fairly proved.

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