

EU-US Denuclear Diplomacy and the Future of Global Security in Post-Cold War International Relations: Iran Revisited

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Abstract

The US, in full of her hegemonic outreach, courts the European Union into a diplomatic alliance, so as to dement the Iranian nuclear thirst and its nuclear reproductive potentialities. To concretize this motive, the US lobbied, coveted and achieved EU frown on Iran, especially to water down Russia indispensable friendly (or) parental safeguards over Iran. Hence, this piece adopts a collective security theory and a qualitative analytical bias to explore the diplomatic contents of a medley of EU-US containment agenda over Iranian nuclear aggrandizement exercise. This work worries fervently, that as the success of the EU-US disarmament diplomacy in Iran remains inconclusive, the global security regime is deeply questioned. US should therefore intervene militarily under the provisions of UN article (iv) for collective security.

Keywords: Democracy, Nuclear Program, Security, Diplomacy, Collective Security, Sanctions, International Atomic Energy Agency.

Introduction

The conclusion of the Cold War in 1989 did not only saw to the consolidation of US liberal democracy and globalization. On the obverse, it provided an organic linkage and explanation towards the upsurge in global terrorism and nuclear proliferation among the Arab nations. And they are still ideologically incompatible and offensively averse to the US global re-imagination and recasting. Hence, contemporary analysis of international violence and conflicts has ideologically shifted from the competition between the West and the East to that between the West and the Islamic countries, particularly, the Middle East. In fact, since the incidence of 9/11, after which Iran was disparagingly categorized by the Bush administration as part of the “axis of evil”, the Iranian suspicions vis-à-vis the US deepened and further stimulated (and still stimulates) Iran in its quest for nuclear weapons.

Unmistakingly, there is a clear revelation that a senior Pakistani nuclear scientist, Abdul Qadeer Khan, had sold uranium enrichment equipment and nuclear weapon design to Iran, Libya, and North Korea and possibly to other Arab nations. In this trend, the recent nuclear enrichment program embarked by Iran has attracted concerns from the European Union and the US government, who has placed intense commitment in pursuant of global security regime via the adoption of nuclear diplomacy in containing the ongoing Iranian nuclear program.

Particularly and very important too, the U.S. has a vehement aversion and enduring hostility to Iranian nuclear weapons muscles. This was, among other things, informed by its claims that a nuclear Iran will threaten the peace and security of the United States, its friends and allies, the stability of the entire Middle East region and global security. Iran on its side has obstinately demonstrated track record of nuclear deception and concealment. In fact, Iran has a lasting 18-year history of sheathing its nuclear enrichment schemes from the palpation of the nuclear-allergic international brotherhood, i.e. from the close sights of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) (IAEA, 2003).

Beyond that, the record illustrates traits and chronicles of Iranian nuclear indiscipline. Iran failed to report the irradiation of uranium targets and subsequent processing of those targets to separate plutonium; Iran failed to report the use of imported natural UF₆ for the testing of centrifuges at the Kalaye Electric company; Iran failed to declare the pilot enrichment facility at Kalaye Electric, the

laser enrichment plant at the Tehran Nuclear Research Center, and the pilot uranium laser enrichment plant at Lashkar Ab'ad (Sauer, 2007). Hence, R.B Nicholas, a former US Under-Secretary of Political Affairs, succinctly captured the essence and justification of US nonnegotiable stance on Iranian nuclear fantasy, thus:

We have repeatedly made clear our grave concerns regarding the Iranian government's pursuit of weapons of mass destruction and long-range delivery systems; its sponsorship of terrorism including its direct support to Hizbollah and Palestinian rejectionist groups; its appalling human rights and democracy record; its support for violent opposition to efforts to achieve peace in the Middle East; and its interference in the affairs of its neighbours-especially Afghanistan and Iraq. Each of these issues is of vital concern to the United States and, in each and every case; Iran has a position inimical to that of the United States and the international community (Nicholas, 2005).

Therefore, to achieve this deterrent feat, the U.S needs an overriding support, howbeit tacit, in order to firmly assert and preserve its interest. Though, U.S faced a hard way as it has been constrained by robust Russian- Iranian relations. The Russian headlamp, Vladimir Putin had inherited a vibrant Russian-Iranian relationship from his predecessor, Boris Yeltsin. Russia made major arms agreements with Iran under Yeltsin, selling Tehran jet planes, tanks, and submarines, and also began building a nuclear reactor for Iran at Bushehr. A conservative Putin clothed and fed this relationship further, beginning his rule by abrogating the Gore-Chenonymdin agreement under which Russia was to cease selling arms to Iran by 2000 (Freedman, 2006). Hence, Iran ingloriously became Putin's most important ally in the Middle East, as Russia sought to reemerge as a major power, there. Thus, Moscow by implication assumed Iran's security shield against the sanctions and woos that the U.S and the coveted European Union might drown them into (Freedman, 2006). And never in any way had the glaring Iranian unethical nuclear behaviours in gross violation of sacred international agreements caused Russia to grow cold feet. And they never wanted to.

In mindful of this constancy, the Bush Administration strategically instituted a confrontational and unilateral defense policy of stationing a missile defence system in Eastern Europe in order to water down Russia's support for Iran. This, rather than achieving its desired objective, pitched the US against Russia. On his part, President Obama's Administration shares the goals of intents of Bush to contain Iran's strategic capabilities and regional influence. Thus, Iran remains a "profound threat to U.S. national security interests," a perception generated not only by Iran's nuclear programme but aggravated by its selfish military assistance to armed groups in Iraq and Afghanistan, to the Palestinian group Hamas, and to Lebanese Hezbollah (Kenneth, 2010).

Conversely though, the Obama Administration has radically shifted from Bush's strategic containment blueprint for Iran by expanding direct diplomatic engagement with Iran's government and by downplaying discussion of potential U.S. military action against Iranian nuclear facilities. The thrust of this new diplomacy is intimately built on the stylish scrapping of the US anti-Missile Defense Shield in Eastern Europe, perhaps and indeed, to rally round, a Russian confidence, or a sort of backing; and also consistent EU play-along, if not big hammer, in order to place Iran on certain nuclear duress. All these and more, resolve around the issue of complex diplomacy.

For proper clarifications, diplomacy is the main instrument through which states interact with each other. Particularly, Ernest 1922 cited in Onouha, 2008, defines diplomacy as "the application of intelligence and tact to the conduct of official relations between the governments of independent states. It involves resolving of international conflict by every other means short of war. Thus far, the US adoption of a vibrant policy of high diplomatic content has consistently attracted the utmost co-operation of the EU; while Russia's commitment remains undiscernibly fledging, intermittently blowing hot and cold in a most uncharacteristic mannerism.

In all, this work explores the content and variety of EU/US diplomatic styles, applications and approaches so far in the pursuit of a nuclear-free Iran in a post cold war regime; such as consultations, warnings, use of military threats and severe economic sanctions. Importantly, since mouth talks alone do not help; or at least has being summarily disobeyed out of brevity. The employment of harder approaches coined "coercive diplomacy" has now appeared as a tacit or "cold war" between the super power US and its accomplice, EU. However, this work worries fervently, that as the success of the

EU-US disarmament diplomacy in Iran remains hanging and inconclusive, the global security regime is deeply questioned.

Theoretical Framework

The study draws its analysis from the propositions of the collective security theory. Collective security may be defined as a plan for maintaining peace through an organization of sovereign states, whose members pledge by themselves to defend each other against attack. Collective security is one type of coalition building strategy in which a group of nations agree not to attack each other and to defend each other against an attack from one of the others, if such an attack is made. The principle is that “an attack against one is an attack against all.” It differs from "collective defense" which is a coalition of nations which agree to defend its own group against outside attacks. Cardinal Richelieu proposed a scheme for collective security in 1629, which was partially reflected in the 1648 Peace of Westphalia (www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/Kant).

Organski noted that Collective security can be understood as a security arrangement, regional or global, in which each state in the system accepts that the security of one is the concern of all, and agrees to join in a collective response to threats to, and breaches of, the peace (Organski, 1958). The collective security theory will therefore guide this work in appraisal the nature and effectiveness of the diplomatic collaborations of the European Union (EU) and the US in other to ensure that Iran is stopped in its nuclear aggrandizement which potentially threatens the collective peace and security of the world. More so, as Morgenthau suggested that collective security system must be able to assemble military force, in strength greatly in excess to that assembled by the aggressor(s), thereby deterring the aggressor(s) from attempting to change the world order defended by the collective security system (Morgenthau, 1973). We seek, hereupon, the justification or morality of adopting a military action over Iran, if it still insists on its nuclear disobedience, which in any way, will endanger global peace and security.

The EU-US Nuclear Diplomacy in Iran

The discovery of Iran’s nuclear enrichment programme and its provocative failure to comply fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency’s (IAEA) Safeguards Agreements has pushed Iran to the center of international attention and criticism (Mohammed, 2004). Astoundingly, while Iran is a signatory of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) of 1968, and is therefore legally bound not to acquire unlawful nuclear weapons, information reportedly came in the summer of 2002, from the National Council of Resistance (NCR), an Iranian opposition movement, that Iran has started its nuclear enrichment programme. This claim was later confirmed by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), who visited Iran in the second half of February 2003. Since then, the Iranian nuclear programme is a regular global news item (Sauer, 2007).

The problem was that Iran had not declared everything that should have been declared to the IAEA. Teheran, the Iranian capital, for instance, admitted in the summer of 2003 to have experimented in the past, uranium conversion, which was the first step towards uranium enrichment. However, “an inherent difficulty in preventing the spread of nuclear weapons is that the technology which is used for fabricating civilian reactors can also be used for military purposes” (Sauer, 2007). Thus, both programmes have the potency for multiplicity of nuclear reactors for futuristic nuclear weapons race ad infinitum.

Customarily, the EU in the past would have reacted in the form of a non-binding statement or would not have reacted at all because of internal divisions, but the EU reacted promptly in the Iranian case. In fact, a couple of weeks after the IAEA Director-General, Mohammed El Baradei, visited Iran and confirmed the existing information in February 2003, the Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs, the late Anna Lindh, proposed in the EU General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) in March, to come up with a new EU non-proliferation policy. Whilst most observers link this initiative, which later on was complemented with the European Security Strategy, to the conflict about Iraq, and more in particular, the divisions within the EU and the absence of a constructive alternative to the belligerent plans of the neo-conservative administration in the US, it cannot be denied that the Iranian and North Korean nuclear programmes also played a crucial role. Incidentally, the same day that the Iraqi war started, the EU Political and Security Committee (PSC) held a seminar about weapons of

mass destruction in cooperation with the Swedish International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) (Sauer, 2006).

However, in mid-April 2003, the GAERC formally launched the Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction initiative. The draft text of this first EU Non-Proliferation Strategy was already approved at the Thessaloniki Summit in June 2003, while the final draft was agreed upon on December 2003, in parallel with the overall EU Security Strategy. In the meantime, Iran had secretly proposed a deal with the US in May 2003. While the State Department showed some interest, neo-conservatives inside the White House immediately rejected the proposal (Asia Times Online, 2006).

In fact, since the Iranian revolution and the subsequent US embassy attack and hostage crisis in 1979, the US had refused to have concrete diplomatic contacts, let alone negotiations with the Iranian government but had adopted coercive diplomacy over Iran in order to dissuade its clandestine nuclear enrichment. On May 6, 1995, the US government under President Bill Clinton had issued Executive Order 12959 banning U.S. trade and investment in Iran under Iran Sanctions Act (ISA). This followed an earlier March 1995 executive order barring U.S. investment in Iran's energy sector. The trade ban was intended to blunt criticism that U.S. trade with Iran made U.S. appeals for multilateral containment of Iran less credible.

It should be noted, however, that each March since 1995 (and most recently on March 11, 2009), the U.S. Administration has renewed a declaration of a state of emergency that triggered the investment ban. As stated, in the 111th Congress, H.R. 1208 would reimpose many of the trade restrictions (Washington Post, October 29, 2007). In fact, several U.S. sanctions are in effect as a result of Iran's presence on the U.S. "terrorist list". The list was established by Section 6(j) of the Export Administration Act (EAA) of 1979, sanctioning countries determined to have provided repeated support for acts of international terrorism.

Over period, the US was still not ready to change its headsman policy. As a result, the EU had a clear opportunity to step in as the main negotiator with Iran. The EU was already negotiating with Iran on other issues. Thus, in December 2002, the EU had initiated negotiations with Iran for a Trade and Association Agreement (TAA). Because of the nuclear program, there were voices raised in the EU to halt these negotiations (http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_east/HC30Ak01.html). At the same time, states like France (and earlier the US) asked Iran to sign the Additional Protocol of the IAEA. The latter, which had been introduced in the 1990's on a voluntary basis, provides the IAEA with more rights in finding undeclared materials and possible violations. Iran, however, declined the offer to sign the Additional Protocol, and the EU (despite some protests inside the European Commission) took action against Iran by suspending the bilateral negotiations for a Trade and Association Agreement (TAA) in June 2003.

The IAEA Board Statement of 19 June 2003 confirmed that Iran failed to report certain nuclear materials and activities, but did not declare that Iran was in non-compliance with the IAEA Statute or the NPT. Two weeks later, the UK put more pressure on Iran by setting the end of September 2003 as a deadline for signing the Protocol. In August, and in contrast with earlier statements from Iran, it admitted of having received technological support from abroad. The IAEA Board Resolution of 12 September 2003 set another compelling ultimatum: Iran had to provide full information about its program before the end of October 2003.

Also, on October 21, 2003, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the EU-3, made up of– France, the UK and Germany; namely, Dominique de Villepin, Jack Straw and Joschka Fisher, flew to Teheran to negotiate directly with the regime in Teheran, and in the end succeeded in signing an agreement with Iran. In exchange for further negotiations, Iran agreed to suspend its enrichment program, to sign the Additional Protocol and to adhere to the Protocol in the meantime. This was perceived as a major breakthrough. Not only did the EU-3 acted united (in contrast with the Iraq crisis), their action was at least publicly backed by the other EU member states. Most fundamentally, the EU-3 succeeded in signing an agreement with Teheran. A couple of days later, Iran submitted a "full" declaration about its nuclear program to the IAEA. As a result, the IAEA resolution of 26 November 2003, although it strongly deplored Iran's past failures and breaches, did not declare that Iran was "in non-compliance"

(<http://www.iaea.org>). This outcome was basically the result of European diplomacy, which had to launch a compromise between the positions of Iran and the US. This bridge-building exercise was to be repeated over and over again in the coming years.

Hence, in December 2003, the High Representative for CFSP Javier Solana was added to the European negotiating team. The other EU member states felt to a certain extent out of the loop and had asked Solana to play the role of go-between. Hereafter, the first backlash for the EU happened in the beginning of 2004. After the US had made clear that Iran was violating the October 2003 agreement, also an IAEA report warned in March 2004 that there were missing parts in the Iranian declarations. Iran on its turn felt unhappy with the “carrots” obtained from the EU and threatened to resume conversion and to build a heavy water plant. El-Baradei visited Teheran in the beginning of April and could convince the Iranians to hand over a second “full” declaration on 20 May 2004. Another IAEA report a couple of weeks later, however, talked again about contradictory information provided by Iran. The IAEA Board Resolution deplored ‘that Iran’s cooperation has not been as full, timely and proactive as it should have been’.

In reaction to these developments, Iran rather announced that it would start to produce centrifuges again. In the beginning of September 2004, Iran started to convert uranium into uranium gas. The EU raised the stakes: Iran had to cooperate with the IAEA before the end of October 2004. It appears that this ultimatum had effect. Four days later, Iran agreed to continue the suspension for a couple of months. It would not be the last time that Iran tried to please the IAEA right before the Board of Governors meeting. The Board agreed that Iran had to provide all the necessary information before the next meeting at the end of November 2004, but without automatic trigger to send the file to the UN Security Council in case of non-compliance. The EU-3 proposed a new overall deal with Iran on 21 October 2004, which would include the start of broader negotiations, economic benefits and the delivery of light water reactors. This second EU-Iran agreement was formally signed in Paris on 14 November 2004, and included a renewal of the suspension of the Iranian program. Under pressure from Russia and China, the IAEA Board, ten days later even agreed that Iran’s suspension was voluntarily instead of legally binding (<http://www.iaea.org>).

Notably, in December 2004, three EU-Iran working groups were established for negotiating the following items: (1) the transfer of nuclear technology (2) trade and cooperation; and (3) security. Already in January 2005, surprisingly, differences popped up with respect to the timing. While Iran expected the conclusion of the negotiations within weeks or months, the EU did not expect the talks to be finished in one or two year’s time. Teheran even warned in February that the talks had to be concluded by mid-March 2005. At the end of February, the EU succeeded in convincing the US to come up with new “carrots”: membership of the World Trade Organization and spare parts for airplanes. But it failed to convince the US to offer security guarantees. In the meantime Iran launched different proposals in the working groups. Iran on its turn got frustrated because of lack of cooperation on behalf of the EU. Consequently, Iran threatened to halt its suspension again. In response, the EU threatened to halt the negotiation process in case Iran would start again with conversion.

The shadow of the Iranian presidential elections in June had also a major influence on the negotiations before. The EU and the US expected that former President Rafsjanjani, who was regarded as a stronger figure than President Khatami, would win the elections and be able to take a more moderate view on the nuclear issue. The EU promised to launch a new proposal in the beginning of August 2005. Instead of Rafsjanjani, and to the surprise of the rest of the world, it was the conservative Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who won the elections. Right from the beginning, Ahmadinejad obstinately made it blunt and clear that Iran had the right to have its own nuclear fuel cycle, including enrichment and reprocessing. It was therefore not surprising that Iran rejected the European proposal of 5 August 2004 (Sauer, 2007). Consequent upon this idealism, Iran also started to convert uranium. The EU consequently broke off the negotiations. They had to.

More importantly, the uranium conversion was regarded by the EU as a transgression of the “red line”. For the first time ever, the EU succeeded to convince Russia and China not to use their vetoes against an IAEA resolution, which would formally state that Iran was in non-compliance with the IAEA Statute. The 24th September 2005 IAEA Board Resolution was supported by the EU, the US and most

other members; Russia and China abstained; only Venezuela voted against. The resolution also warned Iran that if it would not comply before the next meeting, its file would be sent to the UN Security Council. The EU made clear that it would only negotiate again if Iran suspended its enrichment program. This meant an implicit acceptance of the uranium conversion that was taking place, while the EU had always included a ban on conversion before. Now, not minding the new documents provided by Iran to the IAEA in October 2005 and despite the extremist declarations of President Ahmadinejad with respect to Israel around the same time, the IAEA Board of Governors did not yet send the Iranian file to the Security Council in November 2005. Again, the EU member states found a compromise between the American position on the one hand and the Russian and Chinese views on the other. In December 2005, a new round of negotiations between the EU-3 and Iran went nowhere. Iran even threatened with uranium enrichment. When Iran actually carried out its threat on 9 January 2006, a new “red line” was crossed in the eyes of the EU and the US. This time, they were determined to send the Iranian file to the UN Security Council. In reaction, Iran threatened to halt its voluntary cooperation with the IAEA and to accelerate its program from the level of R&D to an industrial scale. After three years, the IAEA sent the Iran file to the UN Security Council during a special meeting of the Board on 2-3 February 2006. It was again the EU that had drafted the resolution. This time not only Venezuela, but also Syria and Cuba voted against. Russia and China voted in favor. The actual discussions inside the Security Council would only start in the beginning of March 2006. Nevertheless, Iran executed what it had threatened to do: it suspended its voluntarily cooperation with the IAEA and it accelerated its enrichment programme. In the meantime, Germany was prepared to consider a Russian proposal that included limited enrichment in Iran (Beundermann, 2006). The latter led to public frictions with the UK and France. On 29 March 2006, after weeks of negotiations, the Security Council adopted a so-called Declaration of the Chairman, which is not legally binding. This unanimously adopted document gave Iran another month to come clean (The Washington Post, 12 September 2006). But Iran seemed again not impressed. On the contrary, on 11 April 2006 Iran proudly announced that it had succeeded in enriching uranium up to 3.5 %, equating to a cascade of 164 centrifuges.

Troublesomely, on 8 May 2006, President Ahmadinejad made a special move by writing a letter to President Bush, which was later on published in the media. While its content could be easily criticized, the lack of a direct response by the US further encouraged internal frictions inside the EU. This criticism, however, faded away because of two successes of the EU-3. First, by the end of May, the EU-3 succeeded in convincing the US to negotiate with Iran, something it had always refused since 1979. The US, however, set as a condition for multilateral talks that Iran must first, suspend its enrichment programme. Second, the EU-3 also succeeded in convincing the US, Russia and China to agree on a new common package for Iran, which was offered by Solana to the decision-makers in Teheran on 5 June 2006.

On 22 August, Iran also sent a 21-page answer to the proposal made by Solana at the beginning of June. One week later, the non-EU-3 members complained at the “Gymnich” in Finland that they had not yet seen that document.

Particularly, Italy, Spain, Greece and the Netherlands were mentioned in the press of being dissatisfied with the EU-3 approach (Albright and Shire, 2006). As everybody had expected, Iran did not comply with the UN Security Council Resolution’s deadline. While the US immediately wanted to draft a new UN Security Council resolution that included sanctions, it became clear that not only Russia and China, but also the EU were not yet ready. Even former US Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice signaled that a temporary suspension could pave the way for direct negotiations with the US (Katzman, 2009).

The Impact of ISA and Other US Sanctions on Iran’s Economy

In fact, among the various sanctions implemented so far on Iran, the Iran Sanctions Act (ISA) is the most outstanding. And the US thinks it as the most compelling on Iran. But nevertheless, it has not yielded as much result as anticipated. The ISA, however, consists of a number of “triggers”—activity which, if carried out, would be considered violations of the ISA agreement itself and could cause a firm or entity to be sanctioned in accordance with ISA’s provisions. ISA provides a number of

different sanctions that the President could impose that would harm a foreign firm's business opportunities in the United States. ISA does not, and probably could not legally or practically, compel any foreign government to take any specific action against one of its firms. Particularly, ISA requires the President to sanction companies (entities, persons) that make an "investment" of more than \$20 million in one year in Iran's energy sector or that sell to Iran weapons of mass destruction (WMD) technology or "destabilizing numbers and types" of advanced conventional weapons (Katzman, 2009). ISA primarily targeted foreign firms because American firms are already prohibited from investing in Iran under the 1995 trade and investment ban discussed earlier. In this sense, once a firm is determined to be a violator, ISA requires the imposition of two of a menu of six sanctions on that firm (Federal News Service, 2009).

In all, the Iranian oil sector is the worst hit but that has not made it to think twice on its obstinate illegitimate nuclear desires. Some investors, such as major European firms- Repsol, Royal Dutch Shell, and Total, have all announced pullouts, declined further investment, or resold their investments to other companies. On July 12, 2008, Total and Petronas, the original South Pars investors, pulled out of a deal to develop a liquefied natural gas (LNG) export capability at Phase 11 of South Pars, saying that investing in Iran at a time of growing international pressure over its nuclear program is 'too risky.' Also in 2008, Japan significantly reduced its participation in the development of Iran's large Azadegan field. Some of the void has been filled, at least partly, by Asian firms such as those of China and Malaysia. However, some of those agreements are being implemented only slowly and these companies are perceived as not being as technically capable as those that have withdrawn from Iran. As a result of sanctions and the overall climate of international isolation of Iran, its oil production has not grown—it remains at about 4.1 million barrels per day (mbd).

Fiscally wise, the office of Undersecretary of the US Treasury, Stuart Levey (who has remained in the Obama Administration), has been able to convince individual foreign banks that dealing with Iran entails financial risk and furthers terrorism and proliferation. Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner has described Levey as having "led the design of a remarkably successful program with regard to targeting Iran's proliferation networks (Glenn, 2006). In 2004, the Treasury Department fined UBS \$100 million for the unauthorized movement of U.S. dollars to Iran and other sanctioned countries, and in December 2005, the Treasury Department fined Dutch bank ABN Amro \$80 million for failing to fully report the processing of financial transactions involving Iran's Bank Melli (and another bank partially owned by Libya).

More so, in an action intended to cut Iran off from the U.S. banking system, on September 6, 2006, the U.S. Treasury Department barred U.S. banks from handling any indirect transactions ("U-turn transactions, i.e. transactions with non-Iranian foreign banks that are handling businesses on behalf of an Iranian bank) with Iran's Bank Saderat, which the Administration accuses of providing funds to Hezbollah (www.themeriblog.org). Bank Sepah is subject to asset freezes and transactions limitations as a result of Resolution 1737 and 1747. The Treasury Department extended that U-Turn restriction to all Iranian banks on November 6, 2008.

More directly, a Senate bill- S.3445 in the 110th Congress, and a counterpart passed by the House on September 26, 2008, H.R. 7112, call for this sanction. The FY2010 National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 2647), as passed by the Senate, expresses the sense of the Senate, that the Administration sanction Iran's Central Bank, if Iran does not negotiate in good faith to curb its nuclear program.

The Iranian Nuclear Programme and the Future of Global Peace and Security

Factually, the hard line posture of Iran towards the enrichment of its nuclear programme, despite a plethora of compelling economic sanctions, poses a magnitude threat to the entire international community. Grievously, Iran had insisted in acquiring two more nuclear power reactors in April 2007, and its statements in reaction to both the new Security Council sanctions passed in early 2007 and the announcement in April 2007 that it was scaling up its centrifuge program, provide at least some indication of how deep Iran's commitment may be (IRNA, Kenyan, April 10, 2007). The following quotes, all come from Iranian statements, made on Iran's Nuclear Day on April 10, 2007, and show little sign of giving way to international pressure:

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, speaking on Iran's Nuclear Day, April 10, 2007: —

I declare today, in all pride, that from this day, Iran is among the countries producing nuclear fuel on an [industrial] scale... Today, Iran's enemies are embarrassed by Iran's progress in various areas... According to a pre-set program, the Iranian government is determined to produce at least 20,000 megawatts of nuclear electricity according to a specific timetable... We warmly shake the hands of all governments interested in holding talks with us and in cooperating with us in this area... I address the governments that have so far refused to come to terms with today's reality and with the Iranian people's right to develop nuclear technology, and demand that they stop acting aggressively, illogically, hostilely, and in violation of the law towards Iran. They had better know that every member of the Iranian people stands fast behind its leaders, out of knowledge, faith, and absolute unity, and [that the Iranian people] will defend its right to the end... The Western countries should know that the path of the progress of the Iranian people is irreversible... They must pay attention, and do nothing to cause this brave and brave people to reconsider the way it deals with them. Western countries have tried this [hostile] approach several times, and have seen that the Iranian people are capable of reconsidering its approach towards them... (IRNA (Iran) April 10, 2007).

Ali Larijani, Iran's Chief Nuclear Negotiator, April 10, 2007: —

The Western countries must in any event accept a nuclear Iran... We are moving vigorously along the path of obtaining... 54,000 centrifuges... The sanctions against us [UN Resolution 1747] have had no effect, and will have no effect, on our government towards this goal [in the future]... The number of centrifuges doesn't matter. But we have a work output of 3,000 centrifuges. This level and above is considered industrial... (IRNA (Iran) and Kenyan, April 10, 2007).

Gholam Reza Aghazadeh, Vice President for Atomic Energy of the Islamic Republic of Iran and President of the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran, April 10, 2007: —

Our declaration that we have entered the stage [of producing nuclear fuel] on an industrial scale means that there is no turning back... In the past year, our young scientists have managed to produce 270 tons of UF₆. Not long ago, producing this important substance was far from the imagination of our country's nuclear researchers and scientists. But finally, we managed to attain enrichment of uranium, at a level of 3.5% to 5%... Now, as we enter mass production of centrifuges and begin to produce [nuclear fuel] on an industrial scale, we are taking one more step towards the flowering of Iran... Now that Iran has entered into production of nuclear fuel on an industrial scale, there will be no limit on the production of nuclear fuel in Iran... This is the accomplishment of some 3,000 expert scientists and the best of the forces that worked in the best year night and day at the Natanz facility (AFP, June 25, 2006).

As it stands, the EU-US nuclear diplomacy seems to have hit a logjam, as it is very likely that Iran is afraid that once it agrees with the demands of the EU and the US that other demands with respect to other domains will follow, including human rights, alleged support of terrorist groups, the recognition of Israel, and possibly regime change. This fear has really brought a negative effect on the negotiations with regards to the nuclear programme. Calculably, Iran will try to postpone possible concessions in the nuclear domain as long as possible. President Ahmadinejad had warned its public opinion: 'If you give in on nuclear weapons program, they'll ask about human rights. If you give in on human rights, they'll ask about animal rights' (Roger, 2006). The only solution, perhaps, to prevent this logic to dominate inside Iran is to start negotiations on all these topics, except of course on regime change. The latter will also have to include some sort of security guarantees on behalf of the US. This may be helpful.

The problem, however, is that the threat that will impress the Iranian decision-makers most is a military strike by the US. At the same time, though, such attacks are generally regarded as disproportional and perhaps not credible because the underlying objective is not regarded as legitimate by most people in the Middle East. In this sense, a military action by the US against Iran will provoke violent reactions by Iran and Muslims in the Middle East. But Iran can retaliate in different ways. Come to think of it, Iran possesses intermediate ballistic missiles, possibly laden with chemical weapons, which can be seamlessly fired against Israel. Again, Iran can further destabilize the situation in Iraq. It can even subtly ask organizations like Hamas and Hezbollah to react. Iran can also destabilize the export of oil from the Persian Gulf towards the rest of the world by trying to close the

Street of Hormuz, as it occupies a strategic position atop the Strait of Hormuz (Krauthammer, 2006). Of course, Muslim terrorists around the world may disorderly and waywardly react as well. These risks, or only a couple of them, anyway, do not seem in proportion to the possible threat of a nuclear Iran. The major point, however, is that Iranian decision-makers also make this gainful calculation and therefore seem not to be afraid of such a joint attack. The end result is a self-confident Iran that will not make (big) concessions at the negotiating table.

Another threat that will be regarded as rather effective by the Iranian decision-makers would be large-scale economic sanctions. The problem, however, with large-scale economic sanctions is not so much that they will be regarded as disproportional by world public opinion, but as not being credible because of the simple fact that large-scale economic sanctions will hurt the rest of the world as well. As Iran produces 4.2 million barrels oil per day (out of 84 million worldwide), it is abundantly clear that the oil price in the world will further increase, much more than already is the case today. This may have substantial negative effects on the world economy. In addition, some regional powers like China depends a lot on oil and gas imports from Iran. China imports 14 % of its oil from Iran; Italy 9 %, France 6 %, etc (Sauer, 2006). Most major states, except the US, also have substantial non-energy trade relations with Iran. Exporters in states like Italy, Germany, and Austria will be substantially hurt too.

Russia, on the other hand, has been promised a lot of money by Iran for constructing nuclear power reactors (like Busher) and sells a lot of conventional weapons to Teheran. In short, public opinion in the developed world is not eager to see their governments impose large-scale economic sanctions vis-à-vis Iran. As the Iranian decision-makers are very much aware of that, this threat is therefore not very credible, either. The result is the same as mentioned before, that is, a self confident Iran that will not make 'big' concessions at the negotiating table. Advocates of large-scale economic sanctions have argued that there is a chance that the benefits outweigh the costs, in the sense that the Iranian people will start to grumble before public opinion in the rest of the world and will be fed up with the negative consequences of sanctions. Confusedly, both large-scale economic sanctions and military action appeared not to serve as credible threats in Teheran. Small-scale economic sanctions, in contrast, are neither effective. In short, it is unclear how one can threaten Iran in both an effective and credible way (Obama, 2009).

This being the case, it is apparent that Iran is trying to acquire nuclear weapons in secret, or at least is trying to build up the capabilities that are needed to build nuclear weapons. While Iran may suspend its enrichment program for another (short) period, the most likely scenario therefore consists of 'muddling through' until Iran reaches its technological objectives. Iran may have toed the paths of North Korea who maintained nuclear ambiguity for two decades, and finally gave up the pretense of having a 'virtual nuclear weapons program' in October 2006. As Iran continues on the path of nuclear brinkmanship, it is visible that it will cross the nuclear Rubicon as it has the requisite technologies and the political will to cross the nuclear threshold. This is a doom scenario for the entire world. For one thing, if Iran cannot be diplomatized or persuaded to abstain unequivocally from a nuclear weapons option, it could trigger a nuclear arms race in the Middle East, this could lead the region and the world down a hugely dangerous path (<http://www.iranfocus.com>).

Other countries in the region, such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, North Korea, India or Turkey may be threatened by the Iranian moves and might use their civilian energy projects to engage in military options of their own. Singularly, the Israeli nation could be in serious peril. Iran might deliberately choose to retaliate against Israel for thwarting their earlier nuclear projects. Significantly too, the Iranian nuclear aggrandizement may drastically frozen and downgrade US influence in the region. In this direction, the US peace talks between the Israeli and Palestinian could be undermined, as Iran remains obstinately averse to such peace initiatives. On the global scale, there is a growing concern about high risks of nuclear trafficking and smuggling in the Arab nations, as well as fears of terrorists' acquisition of weapons of mass destruction.

Certainly, a nuclear Iran means more acts of international terrorism, safe haven for terrorist, more support for Hezbollah, Hamas, Taliban and Al Qaeda networks. Much more, Iran can harm the international community through indiscriminate nuclear test. This could have far reaching

environmental hazards. Overwhelming evidence shows Iran's effort to weaponize its nuclear research. A U.S. intelligence assessment, leaked to the Washington Post has confirmed that Iran's nuclear researchers have completed the drawing of a deep subterranean shaft, which outlined the plans for a 400-meter underground tunnel with remote-controlled sensors, to measure pressures and temperatures. U.S. experts believed that the tunnel was being prepared for an underground nuclear test to validate many aspects of the test system, including venting, without exploding a bomb until it is ready for the international community to know it has actually tested a weapon (<http://www.iranfocus.com>).

Conclusion

Faced with these challenges, Middle East stability and global security will be vastly hanging on the EU-US adoption of more coercive and hyperactive diplomatic strategies in dealing with hardliner Iran. If however, as it were, Iran chooses nuclear obstinacy to the endangerment of global security regime, US should have no option than to intervene militarily under the provisions of UN article (iv) for collective security. And they have to do so. As it stands, after Iraq, Iran is most likely the US port of call. The question then becomes; how quick will Obama be in establishing a vehement military footage in Iran.

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