

THE IRANIAN NUCLEAR DILEMMA: HOW DOES THE U.S. RESPOND?

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(ABSTRACT)

Since the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, Iran has visibly increased its work towards developing a nuclear program. This is alarming to many because Iran's ambitions for its nuclear program are unclear and whether it is on a quest for nuclear weapons is unknown. The Iranian government is largely anti-West, anti-Israel, and now, with the downfall of Iraq, is in a position to spread its influence throughout the Middle East. This thesis examines the evolution of the Iranian nuclear program, the relationship between the United States and Iran and how this relationship will likely have a significant influence on the ability of Iran to develop a nuclear program. The goal is to assess the current status of the situation and examine the possible policies the United States could implement towards Iran and its nuclear program.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Table of Contents	iii
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Literature Review	13
Chapter Two: The Iranian Nuclear Program	25
Iranian Nuclear Program: 1953-2002	26
Iranian Nuclear Program: 2003-Present	36
Chapter Three: What Can Be Done?	42
Nuclear Program of North Korea	42
Nuclear Program of Libya	46
Military Action Against Iran?	50
Diplomacy with Economic Sanctions?	55
Containment?	59
Conclusion	65
Afterword	72
Bibliography	77

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

An adversarial nation with the ability to develop nuclear weapons is one of the most frightening, but important, things to consider when developing foreign policy towards that nation. In this thesis I plan to examine the nuclear program of Iran and the current policy of the United States in regards to Iran's nuclear program. The United Nations has made repeated efforts to halt Iranian nuclear development to include imposing sanctions; nonetheless the country continues its endeavors. The principal concern about Iran's nuclear program is that the country may develop nuclear weapons which will undoubtedly lead to significant complications for United States interests in the Middle East. By investigating the situation I hope to develop a plan as to how the United States should formulate its foreign policy towards Iran in regards to its nuclear activities, and what actions the United States could partake in, working in conjunction with the United Nations, to curb Iran's possible aspirations.

The ability of one nation to keep another from achieving its national goals has long been a key component in the foreign policy strategies of many countries, especially when that nation is a threat. The desire to prevent one's rival from achieving its goals is often brought about by fear of being attacked and conquered by that rival. Therefore, as a matter of survival, it is sometimes necessary for one nation, or group of nations, to prevent another from surpassing them militarily or economically. One of the key events that instills fear in a country is when its rival achieves a nuclear weapon capability and

for the last sixty years, the nuclear powers of the world have attempted to prevent other nations from doing just that.

When nuclear power was thrust onto the world stage, the world, its people, its nations and their politics would forever be altered. The United States dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan on August 6th, 1945 followed just three days later by another atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki, Japan. The people of this planet no longer lived in a time when it would take thousands of troops, tanks, and planes to destroy a city. On those two days in 1945 it took only two planes and two bombs to obliterate two entire cities. Today it does not even take a plane, and in some cases not even a bomb. Just the fear of simply thinking that your enemy may possess a nuclear weapon is enough to keep nations on constant alert. The destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the deaths numbering well above 100,000 (some reports cite the number to be over 200,000) have shown the world the gruesome and devastating effects of nuclear warfare.¹ However, the decision to forever change the world and how wars are fought was not made overnight. With the war in Europe over and Hitler dead, Japan remained the last roadblock to achieving peace throughout the world. During the Potsdam Conference in the summer of 1945, which was being held to determine how to administer Germany, U.S. President Harry S Truman and Chiang Kai-shek issued the Potsdam Declaration which outlined the terms of surrender for Japan. However, the government of Japan rejected these terms and the Japanese would not surrender their homeland to anyone, they would fight to the death. President Truman, hoping to swiftly end World War II, made the decision to drop the atomic bombs on Japan and he hoped these actions would instill great fear into the

¹ --. "The Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki." *atomicarchive.com*.
<http://www.atomicarchive.com/Docs/MED/med_chp10.shtml>

people of Japan and bring a quick and decisive end to the war in the Pacific. The United States justified these bombings by declaring that an all-out invasion of mainland Japan may end the war, but would also result in the needless deaths of countless American troops. The bombings of these two cities may have saved innumerable American lives during a time when the world was fighting to survive; however, these events also paved the way for many international tensions and conflicts since then, most notably the Cold War and the current nuclear crisis with Iran.

Shortly after the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki came the discovery that nuclear power could be used as an alternate source of energy. Since then, a number of countries have desired, developed or obtained the ability to create nuclear energy. For some countries, the reason for wanting nuclear energy is fairly simple and justifiable; however, for other countries the reasons may be much more deadly. Many countries desire a peaceful nuclear program to provide an alternative source of energy, which in some cases may be much more economical. “The relative costs of generating electricity from coal, gas and nuclear plants vary considerably depending on location” and when direct access to fossil fuels is limited “nuclear power is cost-competitive.”² In the United States there is likely to be a flood of applications to build nuclear power plants because “plant owners have been able to reduce operating costs, while the costs of producing electricity from both coal and natural gas have risen.”³ An example of how much energy that can be produced by nuclear power plants can be seen with the Tennessee Valley Authority, which is a federally-owned electric utility corporation in the southeast United

² --. “The Economics of Nuclear Power.” *World Nuclear Association*.
<<http://www.world-nuclear.org/info/inf02.html>>.

³ Hebert, H. Josef. “Tennessee applies for 2 nuclear reactors.” *Yahoo News* (30 October 2007).
<http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20071030/ap_on_go_ot/new_reactors_4>.

States that operates three nuclear power plants. According to the Tennessee Valley Authority's website these three plants contribute 6,900 megawatts of electricity to seven neighboring states, which is enough electricity to power more than three million homes.⁴ This is an enormous feat that could certainly help many developing countries provide its citizens with not just electricity but all the benefits that come with having electricity. There are downfalls, however, and one of the most significant and terrifying downfalls with nuclear reactors is the possibility that a nuclear nation will use the technology to develop nuclear weapons.

As history has shown, countries have normally built or acquired nuclear weapons for one of three reasons: "to protect themselves against an external security threat, to satisfy the parochial interests of domestic actors, or to acquire an important status symbol."⁵ Currently, there are over 30 countries with active nuclear power plants and of these, only the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, as well as India, Pakistan, and probably North Korea and Israel, possess nuclear weapons. In the past there have been a few other nations that have possessed nuclear weapons but have since disassembled their weapons or, in the case of former Soviet Republics, returned them to Russia. History provides us with a few examples where attempts have been made to keep countries from developing nuclear weapons. However, these undertakings have presented great difficulties and there has been little or no success.

The most current situation regarding nuclear weapon programs that presents a cause for concern is that of Iran attempting to continue its development of a nuclear program, disregarding repeated orders by the United Nations to abandon its program.

⁴ --. "Nuclear Energy." *Tennessee Valley Authority Website*.
<<http://www.tva.com/power/nuclear/index.htm>>.

⁵ Sagan, Scott. "How to Keep the Bomb From Iran." *Foreign Affairs* 85.5 (Sept/Oct 2006): 47.

Scott Sagan argues that Iran is a “classic case of a state that wants nuclear weapons to dissuade an attack” from its enemy, whether it is the United States, Israel, or Iraq before its downfall.⁶ This may be the case, but in addition to protecting themselves, it appears as though Iran wants a nuclear weapon as a status symbol and with that symbol it may view itself as the prominent power in the Middle East. It is not known if Iran has developed or will ever develop a nuclear weapon, but it is certainly an issue that cannot be ignored, because if Iran does develop nuclear weapons it could certainly cause many problems throughout the Middle East and probably the world. It is not necessarily only the threat of attack that leads to the United States’ (and other nations’) desire to prevent Iran from obtaining the bomb; it is also the concern of how other Middle East nations will respond and whether or not an Iranian bomb would find its way into the hands of terrorist organizations. It is also possible that other countries in the vicinity of Iran would develop their own nuclear programs to counter an Iranian bomb. A nuclear Iran could also implicate the United States and other countries by “weakening their ability to intervene to avoid conflict in dangerous regions.”⁷ An Iran with nuclear weapons could significantly impede the actions of the U.S. currently being taken in Iraq and any other future actions in the Middle East.

Iran is one of a few countries currently suspected by the international community to be making progress in the development of nuclear weapons. Presently, Iran is openly attempting to develop a civilian nuclear program under its right granted to them by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, of which it is a signatory. However, due to numerous news reports the country has repeatedly disregarded the International Atomic Energy

⁶ Ibid. 47.

⁷ Cirincione, Joseph, Jon B. Wolfsthal and Miriam Rajkumar. *Deadly Arsenals*. Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005: 16.

Agency's and United Nation's orders to cease nuclear-related developments.⁸

Concurrently, there are reports that indicate Iran is also covertly developing a nuclear program with the intentions of developing a nuclear weapon.⁹ Since Iran is a member of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, any actions toward developing a nuclear weapons program is against the regulations delineated by the treaty and could result in diplomatic or military action by the United Nations. It is important to consider why, in just the last few years, has Iran stepped up its nuclear development and what actions could the United States, working with the United Nations, possibly take to prevent Iran from going any further in its supposed quest for the bomb? To answer these questions it will be necessary to examine the recent history between the United States and Iran and how the war in Iraq has possibly had an impact on Iran's national security decisions. In implementing a policy, it will be important to not expand the rift that divides these two countries because if Iran does eventually become the leading power in the Middle East, it could obtain control of all U.S. interests in the region making it even more difficult for the U.S. and other Middle East countries to collaborate on any level. Previous actions directed towards preventing a country from developing nuclear weapons must also be examined because these actions will serve as models of what stance the United States should take in its policy towards Iran as well as what actions the UN and the International Atomic Energy Agency could take to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons. As we will see throughout this study, the International Atomic Energy Agency faces an extremely difficult task when attempting to determine whether or not a country is developing a nuclear program strictly for peaceful purposes.

⁸ Wright, Robin. "U.S., Britain Drafting Stricter Iran Sanctions." *Washington Post* (23 June 2007): 13.

⁹ Jafarzadeh, Alireza. *The Iran Threat*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007: 156.

When determining what United States policy should be in regards to Iran, it is imperative that the United States does not try formulating policy towards Iran in the same manner as it did with the Soviet Union during the Cold War. This is because it was considerably easier for the United States to keep watch over and protect itself from the Soviet Union as opposed to the more fanatical threats of today, such as Iran. The Cold War era was much more of a simplistic time as opposed to the world we know today because it was a bipolar world with two superpowers, each with its own sphere of influence and each able to keep the other in line, for the most part. Although the Soviet Union had a mighty military and a vast supply of nuclear weapons capable of destroying the United States, the U.S. government had immeasurable defenses in place to ensure it knew immediately if the Soviet Union were to attack and to aid in defending the country. The fall of communism ushered in a new era of a much more complex world in regards to international politics and foreign policy. Some claim that we now live in a multipolar world based on the idea of “the preference for many different, competing power centers rather than the ‘unipolarity’ of the U.S. as a single hyper-power. Multipolarity is no longer simply a strategic goal. It is an emerging reality.”¹⁰ This refers to the idea that the United States may be a mighty country but it relies on numerous foreign nations in order to supplement its economic and strategic endeavors. As compared to the Soviet Union, Iran does not have a powerful military capable of annihilating the United States and, oftentimes, it is difficult to know what is happening in that country and in the minds of its leaders. This leads to questions such as: Do they have a bomb? If they do develop a bomb, will it end up in the hands of a terrorist organization capable of detonating it on

¹⁰ Johnson, Chalmers. “No Longer the ‘Lone’ Superpower.” *Global Policy Forum* (15 March 2005) <<http://www.globalpolicy.org/empire/challenges/competitors/2005/0315chinapower.htm>>.

U.S. soil? Does Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad really want to destroy Israel? Does he want to destroy the United States? These are all questions that must be considered when studying this dilemma and, if answered, could help develop a more significant foreign policy for the United States when working with issues concerning Iran and the rest of the Middle East.

The study of this crisis is significant due to three primary reasons. The first is Iran's position in the Middle East region. With the ongoing war in neighboring Iraq, Iran continues to make headlines and headway with its nuclear program. It has seen firsthand what has happened as a result of the suspicions of Iraq possessing nuclear weapons, but still continues to defy the international community and UN orders to halt its nuclear activities. The events in Iraq will likely prove to be a key factor when determining why Iran has recently stepped up its nuclear production and it is imperative that this situation is closely monitored because the repercussions in the Middle East could prove disastrous if Iran does develop nuclear weapons. The outcome could be one where an arms race begins in the Middle East with countries vying to counter an Iranian nuclear threat. Iran desires to be the preeminent power in the Middle East region and if this were to happen, it can certainly be argued that a regional instability will emerge from this situation. Many will contend that there is already instability in this region; however, a nuclear Iran will alarm other countries in the area which may bring about military action, especially as anxieties in Israel intensify. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has denied that the holocaust of World War II occurred and has stated that Israel should be wiped off the map and because of this statement, Israel likely lives in a greater fear, more than other Middle East countries, of a nuclear-armed Iran. Israel likely anticipates, with trepidation,

that it will be the first to feel the effects of an Iranian nuclear weapon and therefore would be the first to act against Iran as they did against an Iraqi nuclear plant in the 1980s, which will be discussed further in the final chapter.

Secondly, Iran's relationship with the West, particularly the United States, is a significant point of interest for both sides. Neither the United States nor Iran is subtle when it comes to proclaiming their feelings about one another. This troubled relationship goes back to the 1950s when the United States deposed democratically-elected Prime Minister of Iran, Mohammed Mossadeq, in favor of the exiled Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. The deposing of Mossadeq caused a chain of events that eventually led to the current rift seen in U.S.-Iranian relations and presently, the relationship is probably the worst that it has been since the Iran Hostage Crisis that took place from 1979 to 1981. The United States also has a great deal of time, energy and money currently invested in the region and if it was decided that military strikes were the only means available in halting the Iranian nuclear program, the United States would likely be the primary player.

The issues of the United States having an investment in the region and that it would be one of the primary players in dealing with Iran raises two main concerns. First, there are thousands of troops currently stationed in Iraq and there are signs indicating that Iranian forces are operating in Iraq attempting to undermine the U.S. mission. If the United States were to launch attacks on Iran, the U.S. forces in neighboring Iraq could feel greater repercussions such as more frequent and larger attacks from insurgents due to the possibility of being re-supplied by Iranian forces, as well as the possibility of backlash from all Muslims in Iraq who are tired of the Americans being in their country. Second, U.S. military strikes also bring up the concern of who else would become

involved in this dilemma if the United States were to attack Iran. U.S.-led strikes on Iran would certainly bring in more regional players, but the question is: whose side would they take? The world has seen firsthand the effects of the United States' actions in Iraq. Countries have witnessed not only the successes but also the failures that have occurred throughout the current war in Iraq. Any military action in Iran would need support from a number of nations and it is likely that countries would be hesitant to join the United States in this endeavor because of what has transpired over the past few years. These regional neighbors, at one time fearful of a nuclear Iran, could become enraged at the idea of the U.S. conducting military action in Iran. These actions could paint the United States as having a realist or even imperialist agenda. With the possible exception of Israel, Middle East countries could rise up against the United States out of fear that they may be next on the list. This hatred towards the U.S. could ultimately translate to hatred toward all Western nations and develop into not just a regional instability, but a worldwide instability.

The final reason U.S. foreign policy regarding Iran's nuclear activity needs to be examined involves Iran's relationship with terrorist organizations. The U.S. State Department has branded Iran as "one of the most active sponsors of terrorism" and the Council on Foreign Relations states that Iran typically supports Islamic terrorist organizations including such groups as Hezbollah and Hamas.¹¹ This support often comes by way of arms and money. Iran has also been accused of carrying out operations in Iraq to disrupt coalition actions currently taking place to root out insurgents and bring stability to the country. Some scholars, such as Barry Posen in his article "We Can Live

¹¹ --. "Background Note: Iran." *Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs U.S. Department of State* (June 2007). <<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5314.htm>>.

With A Nuclear Iran,” argue against this idea, but with the fact that Iran has provided weapons to terrorist groups in the past, there is no evidence to prove they will not provide nuclear weapons as well.¹² If nuclear weapons were to fall into the hands of terrorists, there is no telling how or when the terrorists would use them.

As described above, the Iranian nuclear dilemma is an issue of utmost importance and urgency. The purpose of this study is threefold: 1) to determine how the United States should develop its foreign policy in regards to Iran’s nuclear program and whether or not the United States, working in conjunction with the United Nations, should act to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons; 2) to determine what actions could be taken by the U.S. and the UN to provide a solution for this problem; and 3) to determine if it is possible for the world to live with a nuclear-armed Iran who may provide these weapons to terrorist organizations. The results of this study could be used as a baseline for future strategies in dealing with other nations attempting to produce nuclear weapons. In the second part of this chapter I examine various works by scholars and experts on Iran, its nuclear program, and U.S. foreign policy strategies. The purpose here is to develop a better understanding of how the United States and Iran came to be in this situation and understand what experts in the field are recommending on how the United States could develop a better rapport with Iran. In chapter two I examine the history of the Iranian nuclear program, what led the country to develop this program and how recent events have encouraged Iran to continue its development of a nuclear program despite repeated efforts by the United Nations to halt Iran’s activities. Here, my primary objectives are to convey why Iran has sought nuclear weapons and how the current war in

¹² Posen, Barry R. “We Can Live With a Nuclear Iran.” *MIT Center for International Study Audit of Conventional Wisdom* (March 2006): 2. <http://web.mit.edu/cis/pdf/Audit_03_06_Posen.pdf>.

Iraq has led Iran to revamp its security strategies. Through various reports, it is shown that the war in Iraq actually strengthened Iran in the region. The goal of my final chapter is to determine how the U.S. could formulate its foreign policy towards Iran in regards to its nuclear program. I examine the efforts taken toward North Korea and Libya which persuaded them from abandoning their nuclear weapons aspirations and then I explore three possibilities for U.S. foreign policy towards Iran which include: military action; containment; and diplomatic action with increased sanctions. My primary objective is to show that no matter how the U.S. devises its foreign policy towards Iran, this perilous situation cannot be ignored.

Without understanding the history, reasons, and ideas behind the ambitions of Iran and its nuclear program, significant problems could arise for world security such as the possibility of nuclear weapons finding their way into the hands of terrorist organizations. Since terrorist organizations and other non-state actors do not usually fall under the purview of a typical nation, it is possible they would be more likely to use a nuclear weapon if they had one and this scenario would decidedly produce a world completely different from what we know today. The questions concerning U.S. foreign policy in regards to Iran's nuclear activities, the international community possibly allowing Iran to continue its pursuit of a nuclear energy program and the actions that could theoretically have an affect on Iran must be examined from a number of angles. We must understand why the prospect of a nuclear Iran is important not only to the United States but also to the world. When a country decides to build a nuclear reactor, one cannot just assume that country has no other goal except to power itself with nuclear energy as there is always the concern that the particular country will use this plant to

develop nuclear weapons. When the discussion of building a nuclear reactor focuses on Iran, the concern of nuclear weapon development is likely greater given Iran's track record in the international community. Will Iran develop nuclear weapons? Being that the United States is one of the Iranian government's most hated enemies, this question must be answered and the topic of Iran and nuclear weapons must not be ignored.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There exists an abundance of information relating to the Iranian nuclear dilemma and the proliferation of nuclear weapons in general. This literature review should provide enough knowledge and information in order to address my research on what the foreign policy of the United States should be regarding the nuclear program of Iran.

Understandably, some of the literature regarding this subject will be biased because while there are scholars who strongly believe that the United States should act as the world's police and prevent countries from achieving goals that impede the spread of democracy throughout the world, there are others who argue the opposite. Therefore, it is important to examine all aspects of the possible policies that could be implemented by the U.S. government in order to have a better understanding of the situation.

Below I discuss a few works in particular that should give valid insight to the Iranian nuclear situation and perhaps suggest a viable course of action to implementing an effective U.S. policy towards Iran. The first few works examined discuss different policies the United States could implement and direct towards Iran; however, these works do not necessarily examine Iran in particular but more the nuclear weapons issue and U.S. foreign policy in general. Following those works I examine others that deal with

Iran, U.S. foreign policy with Iran and, more specifically, the possibility of Iranian nuclear weapons.

In “The Spread of Nuclear Weapons,” we are offered an insightful debate between Scott D. Sagan and Kenneth N. Waltz who are contemplating the crucial question of “What will the spread of nuclear weapons do to the world?”¹³ Waltz’s primary argument is that more states with nuclear weapons may be better for the world. He contends that the gradual spread of nuclear weapons to other countries may be better than no spread or rapid spread. He believes the deterrence and the rational actor model would work, thereby limiting the chances of war. Waltz claims that “the presence of nuclear weapons makes states exceedingly cautious.”¹⁴

Waltz further discusses the idea of an arms race between new nuclear states. With the three reasons he provides, outlined below, he opposes the notion that new nuclear states will continue to acquire nuclear and conventional weapons and are more “likely to decrease, rather than to increase, their military spending.”¹⁵ His first reason is that arms races function differently when nuclear weapons are involved, therefore countries will build deterrent forces which are cheaper. Second, it is easier to maintain a deterrent balance rather than an overall military balance. And third, because smaller nuclear states will have learned from the mistakes of the United States and Soviet Union, they will realize that “large conventional forces neither add to nor subtract from the credibility of second-strike nuclear forces.”¹⁶ Waltz’s conclusion concerning arms races is that if nations have deterrent nuclear forces “the fighting of offensive wars designed to

¹³ Sagan, Scott and Kenneth N. Waltz. *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2003:3.

¹⁴ Ibid. 7.

¹⁵ Ibid. 29.

¹⁶ Ibid. 32.

increase national security” is meaningless.¹⁷ Waltz concludes by stating that “countries have to take care of their own security.”¹⁸ He argues the fact that the U.S. opposes the spread of nuclear weapons is not enough to halt their proliferation. If a country feels safer with a nuclear weapon, the only way for the U.S. to affect this is to guarantee that state will be secure.¹⁹ He makes a valid argument in that the U.S. will not, or cannot, provide security to every country; therefore, countries will have to provide their own security, even if it means acquiring nuclear weapons. Waltz’s final argument is that a gradual spread of nuclear weapons will be welcome and make the world a safer place because “nuclear weapons reduced the chances of war between the United States and the Soviet Union and between the Soviet Union and China. One must expect them to have similar effects elsewhere.”²⁰

Where Waltz is arguing essentially that the spread of nuclear weapons could be acceptable, Sagan claims the opposite. By pointing out three major operational requirements that must exist in order for the rational deterrence theory to be effective, Sagan shows how this theory is “problematic.”²¹ His three requirements are:

- (1) there must not be a preventive war during the transition period when one state had nuclear weapons and the other state is building, but has not yet achieved, a nuclear capability;
- (2) both states must develop, not just the ability to inflict some level of unacceptable damage to the other side, but also a sufficient degree of “second-strike” survivability so that its forces could retaliate if attacked first; and
- (3) the nuclear arsenals must not be prone to accidental or unauthorized use.²²

¹⁷ Ibid. 33.

¹⁸ Ibid. 42.

¹⁹ Ibid. 42.

²⁰ Ibid. 44.

²¹ Ibid. 50.

²² Ibid. 50.

These requirements are necessary to support deterrence; however, they would likely be very difficult to achieve.

A large part of Sagan's argument points towards the fact that a country with newly-acquired nuclear weapons will be more likely to have significant security problems because they lack the ability to implement the necessary safeguards against thefts and accidents. He is concerned that many of the states that may acquire or develop nuclear weapons are directly run by the military or indirectly by the military through a weak civilian-led government.²³ This, he claims, raises the threat of proliferation to other countries or terrorist organizations.

Sagan also depicts the Waltz claim that nations will imitate the U.S. and the Soviet Union during the Cold War as unlikely. He does not believe that new nuclear states will be as cautious as the U.S. and Soviet Union and will not have the safeguards in place to help prevent accidental nuclear war or weapons proliferation. Sagan claims that while these two superpowers avoided nuclear war in the past, it does not mean other states will avoid it in the future. He concludes his argument by stating that Waltz's claims are merely what rational states "should do" as opposed to what real states "will do."²⁴ Sagan contends that the United States and the Soviet Union were able to refrain from using their massive nuclear arsenals during the Cold War, but this should not be a reason to allow just any country to acquire or develop nuclear weapons.

Some scholars have focused their studies on possible scenarios to deal with countries that are a possible threat to free democratic nations such as the United States. In his book "Containment: Rebuilding a Strategy Against Global Terror," Ian Shapiro

²³ Ibid. 48.

²⁴ Ibid. 83.

brings back the Cold War strategy of containment as the answer for protecting Americans and democracy. By exploring this work, I hope to be able to apply the issue of containment to the current nuclear crises in Iran and determine if this would be an appropriate policy for the United States to follow.

Shapiro declares that containment is the best policy for the U.S. to use in dealing with foreign threats. Although this work focuses more on the security of the United States from foreign threats in general, it can be examined and possibly applied to the Iranian nuclear dilemma. He does, however, state that a containment policy today would obviously be different than during the Cold War and significantly more difficult to implement today. This is because the threats faced by the United States today are “less predictable, more fluid and open-ended challenges than we faced in the Cold War.”²⁵ Shapiro’s argument is that countries in which Islamic fundamentalists have come to power have proven to be economically unsuccessful, therefore pose little threat to democratic capitalism in the near future. And because of this, containing these countries should have a significant affect, at least for a while. As shown above, Shapiro’s idea of containment is somewhat reminiscent of George Kennan’s original idea, but there are some complications that need to be addressed. In addition to facing less predictable challenges, Shapiro goes against Kennan in stating that “defensive arrangements like NATO” could be helpful in implementing a containment policy, so long as it works in the interest of the national security of the United States.²⁶

Shapiro’s argument against the Bush Doctrine is that regime change will not work for countries such as Iran. He quotes John Lewis Gaddis by stating that the reason for

²⁵ Shapiro, Ian. *Containment*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007: 7.

²⁶ *Ibid.* 7.

containment was “what was required was not to remake the world in the image of the United States, but simply to preserve its diversity against attempts to remake it in the image of others.”²⁷ He is arguing that the goal of the U.S. should not be to try and change countries such as Iran, but rather keep Iran from changing other countries. Shapiro contends that the U.S. does not want to be cast as an imperialist but rather as a promoter of democracy around the world. Here, Shapiro’s views differ from Kennan’s as well. “Kennan argued for containment on purely strategic grounds, [Shapiro’s] case is buttressed by the claim that containment flows naturally out of the democratic understanding of nondomination.”²⁸ He is arguing that implementing a containment policy bids the U.S. to “support indigenous democratic movements without fighting their battles for them” because everything that flows from containment calls for supporting democratic movements.²⁹

Shapiro does touch on the Iranian nuclear crisis and using a containment policy to head off the situation. By becoming involved in Iraq, the military option was off the table leading the U.S. to turn to the United Nations for support through the International Atomic Energy Agency and by implementing sanctions. However, he states, this implementation was much more difficult “owing to the damage wrought by the Bush Doctrine.”³⁰ Shapiro claims that “Iran does not and cannot threaten the United States with nuclear weapons” and “we need to keep our guard up to ensure that this remains the case.”³¹

²⁷ Ibid. 33.

²⁸ Ibid. 102.

²⁹ Ibid. 114.

³⁰ Ibid. 101.

³¹ Ibid. 117.

To examine more specific works on the Iranian nuclear dilemma, we can turn to Colin Dueck and Ray Takeyh's article "Iran's Nuclear Challenge." The authors begin this article with a brief overview of Iran's nuclear program since 1979 and describe how it has not only been a challenge for Iran to get to this point, but it has also been a challenge for the world to understand Iran's ambitions behind its desire for a nuclear program. The authors claim that "a combination of fears and opportunities, concerns and ambitions are propelling the recalcitrant theocracy toward the option of assembling the bomb."³² The authors appear to be suggesting that Iran realizes what an opportunity they have now that Iraq is essentially a non-player in Middle East affairs. The war in Iraq has turned the tide for Iran, giving the country more power in the region. They state that "Tehran's drive for the bomb transcends mere deterrence and is rooted in opportunism and a quest for hegemony."³³ Throughout the article the authors provide reasons opposing some critics' concerns of Iran acquiring the bomb. For example, many believe that Iran is a "rogue state" and that an Iranian nuclear weapon would make its way into the hands of terrorists. The authors refute this claim stating that "this is a weapon of deterrence and power projection" and that "Iran has long possessed chemical weapons, and has yet to transfer such arms to its terrorist allies."³⁴ The authors provide a legitimate argument here; however, the outcome still remains to be determined. Finally the authors present four strategic alternatives for handling the Iranian nuclear dilemma and provide discussions on each. The four alternatives are containment, rollback, non-entanglement,

³² Dueck, Colin and Ray Takeyh. "Iran's Nuclear Challenge." *Political Science Quarterly* 122.2 (Summer 2007): 192.

³³ Ibid. 194.

³⁴ Ibid. 195.

and engagement. Some of these alternatives will be discussed further throughout this paper.

Another work that gives more insight into the current situation regarding U.S. foreign policy on the Iranian nuclear threat is “Time for Detente With Iran,” by Ray Takeyh. In this article Takeyh presents an idea that there are some in Iran who are prepared to work out a situation that would appease both Iran and the United States. Takeyh argues that the United States has certainly altered the regional affairs of the Middle East and states that “Iran now lies at the center of the Middle East’s major problems – from the civil wars unfolding in Iraq and Lebanon to the security challenge of the Persian Gulf – and it is hard to imagine any of them being resolved without Tehran’s cooperation.”³⁵ With that being said, Takeyh begins to delve into the current strategy of the U.S. government and why it does not appear to be working. Takeyh argues that the U.S. government is moving towards implementing a containment policy on Iran. However, he states that “containment never worked – and it has even less of a chance of working in the future.”³⁶ Takeyh bases his reasoning on the idea that sanctions on Iran, regarding its nuclear program, are failing and the new leaders of Iraq are not likely to confront Iran on any level. Takeyh believes that because of Iran’s newfound power in the Middle East, due to the downfall of Iraq, Tehran will be forced to either coexist with or confront the United States. The main problem with this idea is that in Iran, there are two groups divided on this issue and the ones who probably lean towards confrontation are also the ones who rule the country.

³⁵ Takeyh, Ray. “Time for Détente with Iran.” *Foreign Affairs* 86.2 (Mar/Apr 2007): 8.

³⁶ *Ibid.* 8.

Throughout this research I plan to reference a few articles by Seymour Hersh. One in particular that I will discuss is “The Redirection.” Throughout this article Hersh describes how the Bush administration has been changing its policy in the Middle East, largely due to the war in Iraq, which is leading the U.S. down a path to confrontation with Iran. Hersh claims the U.S. is coordinating actions in Syria and Lebanon which is weakening the Iran-backed Hezbollah organization. In a similar idea discussed by Takeyh in the previous paragraph, Hersh quotes U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice who stated that there is “‘a new strategic alignment in the Middle East,’ separating ‘reformers’ and ‘extremists.’”³⁷ As in the Takeyh article, Hersh also contends that the containment policy is not only failing with Iran, but it is also affecting the war in Iraq because Iran continues to give support to Iraqi insurgents. Hersh continues his article giving insight into the effect this crisis with Iran is having on other nations in the region, such as Saudi Arabia, and concludes by recommending that the U.S. keep a careful watch on Hezbollah because that organization views itself as “‘Tehran’s partner.’”³⁸

Where many experts will agree that Iran should not be permitted to develop or acquire nuclear weapons capability, there are a few scholars who choose to go against the norm and argue that the world could live with a nuclear-capable Iran. One of those scholars is a Political Science professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Barry R. Posen. In his article, “We Can Live With A Nuclear Iran,” Posen explains why it would not be impossible to tolerate and control an Iran with nuclear weapons. Posen argues against the idea of a Middle Eastern nuclear arms race. He provides reasons as to why the primary candidates for developing nuclear weapons in response to Iran would

³⁷ Hersh, Seymour. “The Redirection.” *The New Yorker* 83.2 (5 March 2007): 54.

³⁸ *Ibid.* 54.

lack the international support which would be necessary to undertake this strategy. One of the primary concerns of the international community is that Iranian nuclear weapons would find their way into the hands of terrorist organizations. Posen is quick to rebut this argument by stating that Iran will not provide an “uncontrolled entity” with a nuclear weapon and risk its own annihilation if that weapon was used and its origin determined.³⁹ What Posen is proposing here is that Iran could behave as a rational actor. Iran, like every other country, would not want to suffer nuclear annihilation. He seems to suggest that Iran may simply use nuclear weapons as a deterrent or leverage.

Finally, an in-depth work which gives insight to the history of the Iranian nuclear program and Iran’s President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, is entitled “The Iran Threat” by Alireza Jafarzadeh. Jafarzadeh is an Iranian-American who, in 2002, revealed to the world that Iran was operating two nuclear programs: one, a legitimate nuclear program operated by the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, the other, a secret program operated by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps for the development of nuclear weapons. Throughout his book, Jafarzadeh recounts how Iran’s nuclear program took off in the early 1980s. According to Jafarzadeh, Iran militarized its nuclear program in “1983 with the creation of a strategic research and nuclear technology section within the IRGC.”⁴⁰ Jafarzadeh’s book explicitly details Iran’s nuclear program, their terrorist connections, and their involvement in Iraq. Jafarzadeh explains how Iran had continuously deceived the international community and will continue to do so in the future. He also shows how far Iran has come in developing a nuclear weapon and that much of the world agrees that

³⁹ Posen 2.

⁴⁰ Jafarzadeh 126.

this must not be permitted to happen. Jafarzadeh concludes his book by describing the outcomes of various scenarios presented for dealing with Iran.

The specific works examined above and others that will be referenced throughout this thesis should give a thorough understanding and a basis to make a decision on how the United States should formulate its foreign policy in regards to the Iranian nuclear dilemma. By studying the Sagan & Waltz and Shapiro works we can see what may or may not work in this scenario. Sagan and Waltz give pros and cons on whether or not countries should be permitted to develop nuclear weapons. Shapiro focuses more on how a specific policy, containment, could prove to be a key player in dealing with foreign threats, and one could argue Iran would be a more prominent threat to the security of the United States if it possessed nuclear weapons. He not only is calling for a revitalization of the Cold War policy of containment but also offers a critique of current U.S. foreign policy. This work provides a basis of what could, or should, the U.S. change in its interactions with foreign threats.

The works by Dueck, Takeyh, Hersh, and Posen give a more specific investigation on the Iranian nuclear dilemma itself. Posen grounds his argument on the basis that the world could live with a nuclear Iran. This work is necessary to examine in order to not have a bias towards the notion that Iran should not be allowed to develop a nuclear weapons program. To contrast this work, I examine the works by Dueck, Takeyh and Hersh. These works examine the current U.S. policies in regards to Iran and it is important to understand these policies before jumping into determining how a new policy with Iran should look. Dueck and Takeyh's article not only provides different solutions for the Iranian nuclear dilemma but also offers the reader rebuttals to, what they believe,

are wrong suppositions for Iran's reasons behind its quest for the bomb. Not only is it important to hear reasons why it would be acceptable for Iran to have the bomb, as suggested by Posen, it is also important to understand Iran's true intentions.

Finally the work by Jafarzadeh has given a thorough understanding of Iran's nuclear program from its inception. It is important to understand the program in detail in order to understand how to formulate a policy towards the program. All of the works above offer a broad range of concepts which are imperative to understanding how the United States could formulate a policy toward Iran and its possible nuclear intentions. These works have helped me to understand this situation more clearly and how U.S. foreign policy will likely play a major factor in determining the outcome of whether or not Iran will be permitted to develop nuclear weapons. All of these authors would probably agree on one thing and that is the world is constantly changing therefore policies need to be constantly updated.

CHAPTER TWO

THE IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM

The economic and military power of the United States has given shape to a country that can, and does, project a significant influence in the outcome of world affairs. Because of this, it seems only logical that the United States will be one of the primary actors in influencing the outcome of the Iranian nuclear crisis. With this being said, we must consider how the rift in the relationship between the United States and Iran has expanded in the last few years, as it will have a major impact on how this particular situation develops and how the U.S. formulates its foreign policy towards Iran. The actions that have transpired between the United States and Iran have helped to fuse “the nuclear program and Iran’s national identity” in the “imagination of the hard-liners.”⁴¹ The U.S. State Department lists four issues they consider to be objectionable behavior from Iran: 1) Iran’s efforts to acquire nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction; 2) Its support for and involvement in international terrorism; 3) Its support for violent opposition to the Middle East peace process; and 4) Its dismal human rights record.⁴² It is true that all of these issues can stand alone as a single crucial concern; however when issues two, three and four are combined with Iran’s effort to develop nuclear weapons, the results may be devastating. Iran has repeatedly caused problems in the international community and will continue to do so at an even greater level if they develop nuclear weapons. In addition to the four issues laid out by the State Department, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Center for International Studies lists three

⁴¹ Dueck et al. 197.

⁴² --. “Background Note: Iran.”

explanations as to why the United States is apprehensive about Iran acquiring nuclear weapons. The first concern is “a nuclear exchange arms race between Iran and Israel; *second*, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and/or Syria subsequently pushing to acquire nuclear weapons, and *third*, Iran passing or threatening to pass nuclear technology or weapons on to other nations and/or terrorist groups.”⁴³ All of the issues listed above, some of which will be examined in later chapters, show that there is great concern about Iran within the U.S. government and that it is necessary to keep a close eye on the country.

The nuclear dilemma is an important crisis that will be difficult to solve as will deciding how the U.S government will respond to the situation. By looking at the recent history between the two countries we should be able to see how the U.S. invasion of Iraq has possibly helped fuel the nuclear crisis in Iran. We should also be able to determine what course of action the U.S. could take in developing a foreign policy for Iran in regards to its nuclear program.

IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM: 1953-2002

By examining the interactions between the United States and Iran from the time immediately preceding Iran’s reception of its first nuclear reactor, we can see how the once cooperative relationship between the two countries backfired and has continued on a downward spiral ever since. This will allow us to understand the difficulties that arise in developing U.S. foreign policy with the country. To begin, we turn to the end of World War II where American troops stationed in Iran as part of the Lend-Lease Program to provide aid to the Soviet Union had been evacuated; however, Soviet troops remained in the country. During this time, Iran, suffering from somewhat of an identity crisis, was

⁴³ --. “Iran.” *MIT Center for International Studies*. <http://web.mit.edu/cis/fpi_iran.html>.

“on the verge of disintegration and being reduced to the status of Soviet satellite, if not worse,” therefore it was important to maintain a U.S. presence in the country and expel the Soviets.⁴⁴ The American presence was recognized as a necessity by U.S. officials who understood that “strategic decisions of sometimes immense import (and not a few sometimes startling unintended consequences) are arrived at and implemented in the rough and tumble of the political process where variegated interests and opinions clash.”⁴⁵ The U.S. government determined that domestic consumerism should not be affected by foreign entanglements. Therefore, “social order in the United States should remain stable” and “there should be a continuous expansion of domestic capital accumulation and consumption to ensure domestic peace, prosperity, and tranquility.”⁴⁶ Recognizing the abundance of Iran’s oil, the U.S. government knew that Iran could not fall to the Soviets. “Iran thus had the honor of becoming the arena for the first crisis of the Cold War, and it fell to the United States to solve the problem.”⁴⁷ The United States, well aware of the Soviet’s desire to stake their claim in Iran, continued to do whatever it took to keep the Shah and Iran in their grasps, including staging a coup in 1953 to overthrow the democratically-elected Prime Minister of Iran, Mohammed Mossadeq. These events and the methods used by the United States to continually appease the Shah over the next twenty-five years ultimately helped weaken U.S.-Iranian relations and lay the foundation for today’s dilemma of a nuclear Iran.

Iran’s ambitions for a nuclear program began in the 1950s when the United States provided the newly installed, U.S.-backed Shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, with nuclear

⁴⁴ Lenczowski, George. “United States’ Support for Iran’s Independence and Integrity, 1945-1959.” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 401 (May 1972): 46.

⁴⁵ Harvey, David. *The New Imperialism*. New York: Oxford UP, 2003: 51.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 52.

⁴⁷ Pollack, Kenneth M. *The Persian Puzzle*. New York: Random House, 2004: 45.

technology. The equipment, provided by the United States, included a “five-megawatt (MW) light-water research reactor and laboratory equipment, all of which was installed at the Tehran Nuclear Research Center (TNRC) at Tehran University.”⁴⁸ As we will see later in this thesis, the transfer of this equipment to the Shah’s government by the United States eventually backfired as it is now one of Ahmadinejad’s justifications for why his country should be allowed to continue the development of its nuclear program. The support of the Shah and the transfer of this nuclear equipment occurred during a time when the two main concerns in the Middle East were the spread of communism and oil. It was determined the only way to keep communism at bay and retain access to Iran’s oil was to overthrow Mossadeq and reinstall the Shah to his throne. Although the United States has taken part in the overthrow of “fourteen governments that displeased it for various ideological, political, and economic reasons,”⁴⁹ many of these were solely for economical reasons. The United States government longed for a world where Americans could do business without any obstructions and the inciting of a coup in Iran in 1953 was going to benefit that ideology.⁵⁰ Not wanting to lose Iran and its resources to the Soviets, the U.S. State Department was under the impression that ousting Mossadeq would quell any Communist endeavors happening in the country; however, this would ultimately caused the demise of U.S.-Iranian relations and lead us to where we are today. Historian James A. Bill describes this situation:

There is little doubt that petroleum considerations were involved in the American decision to assist in the overthrow of the Mossadegh [sic] government....Although many have argued for America’s disinterest in Iranian oil, given the conditions of glut that prevailed, Middle Eastern history demonstrates that the United States had always sought such access,

⁴⁸ Jafarzadeh 129.

⁴⁹ Kinzer, Stephen. *Overthrow*. New York: Henry Holt, 2006: 1.

⁵⁰ Ibid. 3.

glut or no glut....Concerns about communism and the availability of petroleum were interlocked. Together, they drove America to a policy of direct intervention.⁵¹

In some ways this statement could be applied to the present crises in the Middle East because of the continued concerns about oil. Although the concerns about communism do not factor into the current situation, it can be argued that the fear of a nuclear Iran attempting to project its fanatical Islamic, anti-Western influence on the other oil-producing countries of the Middle East, leaving the U.S. with a possible oil crisis, is of similar concern to the fear of communism.

The motivation behind providing Iran with a nuclear reactor was based on the ideas outlined by President Eisenhower in the “Atoms for Peace” speech, which called for a method to provide countries with the means to develop a peaceful nuclear program. President Eisenhower delivered this speech before the UN General Assembly on December 8th, 1953 and in it he summarizes the short, but destructive, history of nuclear power and atomic warfare. He wants the world to be aware that it is not just the United States that holds this nuclear secret, but also Canada, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union. The following excerpt from the speech is a warning to the world that if anyone launches a nuclear attack against the United States, that entity will be destroyed.

“Should such an atomic attack be launched against the United States, our reactions would be swift and resolute. But for me to say that the defense capabilities of the United States are such that they could inflict terrible losses upon an aggressor, for me to say that the retaliation capabilities of the United States are so great that such an aggressor’s land would be laid waste, all this, while fact, is not the true expression of the purpose and the hopes of the United States.”⁵²

⁵¹ Ibid. 122.

⁵² --. “Atoms for Peace.” *International Atomic Energy Agency Website*.
<http://www.iaea.org/About/history_speech.html>.

This stark reality of nuclear retaliation was likely true for the other nuclear powers in existence at that time and probably pertained to any other countries that would eventually gain the capability. This idea prompted the President to propose his plan, which called for the establishment of an international atomic energy organization that would serve under the auspices of the United Nations. The plan called for this particular organization, which ultimately came to be known as the International Atomic Energy Agency, to develop and monitor ways for countries to integrate peaceful nuclear energy programs into their respective infrastructures.⁵³ The International Atomic Energy Agency's website describes the agency as being "the world's center of cooperation in the nuclear field. It was set up as the world's 'Atoms for Peace' organization in 1957 within the United Nations family. The agency works with its Member States and multiple partners worldwide to promote safe, secure and peaceful nuclear technologies."⁵⁴

As the Shah continued his reign he transformed into "an autocratic ruler, who was intent on Westernizing the country even at the expense of its Shiite traditions, and on maintaining close political and military ties to successive American administrations."⁵⁵ This caused a long-lasting problem for the United States in that "Iran's strategic position and its oil wealth would serve as binding forces, tying America tightly to Mohammad Reza Shah's fortunes, our own popularity [with Iranians] rising and falling with his until his fall took us down with him."⁵⁶

⁵³ --. "The 'Atoms for Peace' Agency." *International Atomic Energy Agency Website*. <<http://www.iaea.org/About/>>.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Sciolino, Elaine. *Persian Mirrors: The Elusive Face of Iran*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000: 337.

⁵⁶ Pollack 73.

The Shah began his development of a nuclear program in earnest during the 1970s and “approximately \$40 billion was earmarked for this ambitious project.”⁵⁷ “Suspicion lingered that behind the Shah’s declared desire for nuclear energy lay a determination to construct nuclear weapons.”⁵⁸ This suspicion was all but confirmed when the Shah’s former foreign minister, Ardeshir Zahedi, stated:

The Iranian strategy at that time was aimed at creating what is known as surge capacity, that is to say...the know-how, the infrastructure and the personnel needed to develop a nuclear military capacity within a short time without actually doing so. But the assumption within the policymaking elite was that Iran should be in a position to develop and test a nuclear device within 18 months.⁵⁹

The Shah’s ambitious plan, which called for the original five-megawatt reactor supplied by the United States to be joined by 22 more nuclear power reactors, would never come to fruition because by 1979 the country, enraged by the Shah’s antics, was ripe for revolution. This revolution had been in the making for some time; however, “American policy makers often claimed after the fact that because they were largely blinded to developments inside Iran by the Shah’s deliberate policies toward the United States, they were unable to see [the] warning signs.”⁶⁰ These warning signs were of a country that was “slipping ever deeper into the kind of state that is most conducive to germinating a full-blown revolution.”⁶¹ The U.S. was intent on remaining by the Shah’s side through everything in order to not risk alienating one of the largest oil exporters in the world. The Shah’s problems became the United States’ problems. Even though there is little to suggest that “the vast range of problems Iran experienced in the early 1970s had little to

⁵⁷ Dueck et al. 189.

⁵⁸ Ibid. 189.

⁵⁹ Ibid. 189.

⁶⁰ Pollack 136.

⁶¹ Ibid. 135.

do with the United States,” the U.S. is not completely blameless.⁶² However, on the issue of human rights, the United States overlooked the atrocities being carried out by Iran’s secret police. The Iranian people, aware of the relationship between the Shah and the United States, blamed the U.S. for their country’s misfortunes and whether they believed the Shah was a puppet of the U.S. or that the U.S. should put a stop to the Shah, they rose up and revolted in January of 1979. As the revolution continued “fears of American intervention” began to surface and in November of 1979 a group of university students stormed the U.S. embassy in Tehran taking the entire staff hostage forever altering U.S. and Iranian relations. The Iranian people saw the embassy takeover as revenge for the 1953 coup and as this event played out in the media around the world, it also transformed American sentiment about Iranians.⁶³ It presented Americans with an image that all Iranians are full of malevolence, thus damaging even further the already fragile U.S.-Iranian relationship and breaking of diplomatic ties with the country.

When Ayatollah Khomeini became the Supreme Leader of Iran in 1979 he inherited from the Shah a nuclear program that was “by far the most ambitious in the Middle East.”⁶⁴ This nuclear program included two partially completed plants at Bushehr, one of which was 85 percent completed, two partially constructed plants at Ahwaz, and letters of intent to purchase 18 nuclear reactors from the United States, Germany, and France. In 1978 the United States also supplied Iran with four special lasers capable of separating weapons-grade uranium from natural uranium.⁶⁵ Not only did Khomeini inherit this equipment, but also during this time, “thousands of Iranians

⁶² Pollack 138.

⁶³ Ibid. 155.

⁶⁴ Jafarzadeh 130.

⁶⁵ Ibid. 130.

were studying nuclear technology in Iran, Germany, France, India, the United Kingdom, and the United States.”⁶⁶ In his book, “The Iran Threat,” Alireza Jafarzadeh points out that Khomeini “viewed the Shah’s nuclear program as a remnant of evil western influence. As a result, the regime canceled the German and French contracts, and work on the Bushehr and Ahwaz plants came to a halt.”⁶⁷

As quickly as Khomeini halted construction on the nuclear plants, he would start them up again and, by the mid-1980s, Iran’s nuclear program recommenced and work began to accelerate. This was probably because Iran, well into its war with Iraq, concluded that nuclear weapons may be needed to win. In 1974 the Shah signed an agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency which was “to allow full inspections of all of Iran’s nuclear material,” in order to continue development of the country’s nuclear program; however, the Ayatollah had other plans in mind. According to Jafarzadeh, Iran militarized its nuclear program in “1983 with the creation of a strategic research and nuclear technology section within the IRGC.”⁶⁸ The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, which was established by and reports directly to the Ayatollah, was the perfect entity to use in the creation of a secret militarized nuclear program.⁶⁹ Along with its own scientists, Iran relied heavily on the support of China and the Soviet Union for research and training information and on A. Q. Kahn for nuclear parts and equipment. Kahn, a Pakistani scientist and the founder of Pakistan’s nuclear program, “operated a clandestine international nuclear weapons supply network that provided nuclear technology and materials to nuclear weapons programs in his home

⁶⁶ Ibid. 130.

⁶⁷ Ibid. 131.

⁶⁸ Ibid. 126.

⁶⁹ Pollack 151.

country of Pakistan, as well as in Iran, Libya, and North Korea.”⁷⁰ A.Q. Kahn was responsible for a large portion of Iran’s nuclear program.

By the 1990s Iran began to significantly expand its nuclear program, again turning to China and Russia for assistance with the program. This large-scale escalation of Iran’s nuclear program led to an expanding of the schism between Iran and the West. The Iranian regime’s “ambitious nuclear deals of the 1990s, both in the public eye and underground, bled the country of much-needed funds and further isolated the regime from the United States and other western nations.”⁷¹ Throughout the 1990’s the U.S. became more concerned about the threat of intercontinental ballistic missiles which could be used to deliver a nuclear payload to the United States. In 1995 a National Intelligence Estimate concluded that “in the next 15 years no country other than the major declared nuclear powers will develop a ballistic missile that could threaten the 48 contiguous states or Canada.”⁷² However in 1997, the Rumsfeld Commission, set up to reevaluate the ICBM threat, challenged the 1995 report and stated that “North Korea, Iran, and Iraq ‘would be able to inflict major destruction on the U.S. within about five years of a decision to acquire such as capability (10 years in the case of Iraq).’”⁷³ According to Charles L. Glasser and Steve Fetter, the authors of “National Missile Defense and the Future of U.S. Nuclear Weapons Policy,” the Rumsfeld Commission report focused more on “what a *state* could do...rather than on what it was *known* to have done or was judged *likely* to do.”⁷⁴ This is likely the reason that the next National Intelligence Estimate,

⁷⁰ Jafarzadeh 133.

⁷¹ Ibid. 138.

⁷² Glasser, Charles L., and Steve Fetter. “National Missile Defense and the Future of U.S. Nuclear Weapons Policy.” *International Security* (Summer 2001): 40.

⁷³ Ibid. 40.

⁷⁴ Ibid. 40.

released in 1997, concluded that facing an ICBM within the next 15 years from Iran was only probable and from Iraq was possible. For the development of an ICBM to be justifiable and its use to be destructive, it would likely need to be fitted with a nuclear warhead, rather than a conventional one. According to Glasser and Fetter in their 2001 article, “Iran and Iraq also have nuclear weapons programs, but unless they acquire significant amounts of plutonium or highly enriched uranium from abroad, Iran probably at least a decade away from producing a usable nuclear weapon and an Iraqi weapon is an even more distant prospect.”⁷⁵ The authors base the Iran claim on the belief that Iran has only a small nuclear program.

Up until 2002, it was thought that Iran only operated one nuclear program. However, at that time, Alireza Jafarzadeh revealed that the Iranian regime operated two nuclear programs. One, a legitimate nuclear program operated by the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, the other, a secret program operated by the IRGC for the development of nuclear weapons. This is certainly a noteworthy issue that must be considered when determining how the U.S. should implement a policy towards Iran. Although the regime claims that Iran’s nuclear program is for peaceful purposes, it is certainly possible that the country could simultaneously be secretly developing a nuclear program in order to produce nuclear weapons to deter foreign aggressors such as the U.S. This possible development of nuclear weapons could be to strengthen its pre-Operation Iraqi Freedom policy in which Iran practices “active neutrality” and “opposes U.S. preemptive action without a United Nations mandate.”⁷⁶ Prior to the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the Iranians appeared more concerned about being surrounded by the U.S. and feared

⁷⁵ Ibid. 40.

⁷⁶ Amuzegar, Jahangir. “Iran’s Crumbling Revolution.” *Foreign Affairs* (January/February 2003): 44.

that “Iraqi Kurds may incite their counterparts in Iran to rise up and agitate for an independent state.”⁷⁷ However, as I will examine in the next section the opposite happened and Iran may have actually had a resurgence in regional power.

IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM: 2003-PRESENT

By early 2003 it appeared as though the security and stability of the Iranian regime was beginning to deteriorate and the regime’s days were numbered because of “ongoing political impasse, economic distress, and social turmoil” in Iran.⁷⁸ Enter Operation Iraqi Freedom. With the U.S. invasion of Iraq in March of 2003, Iran inherited a large-scale U.S. military force operating in its backyard. The United States launched a pre-emptive attack on Iraq, justifying the attack on the grounds that Iraq was developing nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. This attack made the Iranians, who “came to see nuclear weapons as the only viable deterrent to U.S. military action,” increase in its endeavor to develop a nuclear program.⁷⁹ From late 2003 to mid-2004, Iran prepared to commence large-scale uranium enrichment and then-President Mohammad Khatami asserted that the Iranian government will not abandon its nuclear energy program. This was because Iran saw it necessary to reinforce its security stance in the region for fear of being invaded by the United States, which leads to the primary reason for Iran to desire nuclear weapons.⁸⁰ It can be argued that before the invasion of Iraq the United States had a better opportunity to normalize relations with Iran. Both the United States and Iran had common enemies in the Afghan Taliban and Saddam Hussein. According to Steven E. Miller, director of the International Security Program at

⁷⁷ Ibid. 44.

⁷⁸ Ibid. 44.

⁷⁹ Pollack, Kenneth and Ray Takeyh. “Taking On Tehran.” *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 2005): 20.

⁸⁰ Ibid. 20.

Harvard's Belfer Center, these "common enemies coupled with mutual interest in regional stability and the oil market could have presented an opportunity to improve relations with Tehran before the invasion with Iraq."⁸¹ The normalizing of relations between the U.S. and Iran was certainly a possibility, but it is unknown how Tehran would have actually responded to a request to cooperate with the United States. What is now known, however, is how Iran is refocusing its security strategy since the U.S. invasion of Iraq. According to Barry Posen, "the great preponderance of U.S. power makes direct opposition to the United States difficult and dangerous, but other states are doing what they can to put themselves in a better position."⁸² This idea is no exception for Iran who "has developed a conventional capability to inflict costs on U.S. forces in the Gulf and has been implicated in inflicting such costs in Iraq."⁸³ This has been seen first hand in Iraq where Iranian weapons and operatives have made their way into the country and are disrupting and attacking U.S. forces.

Since Ahmadinejad was elected President of Iran in 2005, the festering relationship between the U.S. and Iran has begun to intensify. The war in Iraq is one of the leading factors in the disintegration of this relationship, which is ultimately a factor in the Iranian nuclear dilemma. The toppling of Saddam Hussein and the weakened stability in Iraq has opened the doors for Iran to carry out its desires to spread its Islamic fundamentalism throughout the rest of the Middle East and reports indicate that Iranians are carrying out actions in Iraq which undermine U.S. as well as Iraqi goals. Not only did

⁸¹ --. "Summary: A Symposium on Iraq's Impact on the Future of U.S. Foreign and Defense Policy." *Council on Foreign Relations* Website (6 October 2006) < http://www.cfr.org/content/meetings/Iraq_Symposium_10-6-06.pdf>.

⁸² Posen, Barry. "The Case For Restraint." *The American Interest* Website 3.2 (November/December 2007) < <http://www.the-american-interest.com/ai2/article.cfm?Id=331&Mid=16>>.

⁸³ Ibid.

the U.S. invasion of Iraq alarm Iran, but it also “disrupted the regional balance of power,” because prior to the invasion, Iraq and Iran were essentially put in check by each other. Since then, Arab power is on the decline and Iranian power is on the rise.⁸⁴ In his article “The Redirection,” Seymour Hersh writes that “the most profound – and unintended – strategic consequence of the Iraq war is the empowerment of Iran.”⁸⁵ Iraq acted as somewhat of a buffer between Iran and the rest of the Middle East. Now that Iraq is essentially a non-player, that balance of power has now shifted towards Iran which, in turn, causes the rest of the Middle East to be even less stable than it was in the past. Now with the Iraqi Army out of commission, “there is no military bulwark in the Persian Gulf to contain Iran’s expansionist ambitions.”⁸⁶ This not only concerns the United States, who will find it increasingly difficult to operate in the Middle East, but also other Middle East nations who now worry about a greater Iranian threat and possibly an Iranian bomb.

By the end of 2005, newly-elected President Ahmadinejad, ignoring United Nations and IAEA threats, vowed to resume uranium enrichment. After removing IAEA inspection seals, Iran began its enrichment process and during this time the IAEA was unable to determine if Iran had produced enough fuel for a nuclear weapon. Since his election, Ahmadinejad has created a number of controversies regarding the domestic and foreign policy of Iran. He is an outspoken critic of the United States and Israel and has reportedly stated that he would like to see Israel erased from existence. Equally as frightening, Ahmadinejad has continued to pursue a nuclear program, after repeated

⁸⁴ --. “Summary: A Symposium.”

⁸⁵ Hersh, Seymour. “The Redirection.”

⁸⁶ Nasr, Vali. “Who Wins in Iraq?” *Foreign Policy* 159 (March/April 2007): 38.

orders to stop from the United Nations, and whether that is a “peaceful” program or a “weaponized” program has yet to be determined.

The display of hatred toward the West by Ahmadinejad and the ruling elite of Iran is one of the primary underlying reasons that many nations would prefer to prevent Iran from continuing its development of a nuclear program. Ahmadinejad claims his rationale for developing nuclear power is: 1) he wants nuclear plants to provide energy to his people in order to preserve the country’s oil supply for exports, and 2) he claims that nuclear power will instill national pride in the people of Iran.⁸⁷ These are both justifiable reasons; however, a number of countries do not want to see Iran develop a nuclear energy program which could eventually be used to produce nuclear weapons. This situation of Iran developing a nuclear program is causing significant friction between Iran and the West. Ahmadinejad is adamantly anti-West in his views and refuses to concede to any sanctions imposed by the U.N. and backed by Western countries. However, his rule could weaken in the long run due to the fact that much of the younger generation in Iran is pro-West and adamantly opposes the regime.

The exact goal and status of the Iranian nuclear program is unknown. It is unclear if Iran has developed a bomb or how far along in the process the country is to developing a bomb if they have not done so already. According to the IAEA, “Iran has manufactured 110 tons of uranium hexafluoride, the feedstock for enrichment and enough to manufacture 20 nuclear bombs.”⁸⁸ Currently, the Russians appear to be aiding, or at least siding with, Iran and its quest to develop a nuclear program. An article by Seymour Hersh quotes Flynt Leverett, a former National Security Council aide, stating:

⁸⁷ MacLeod, Scott. “A Date With a Dangerous Mind.” *Time* (25 Sept 2006): 34.

⁸⁸ Schweizer, Peter. “Don’t Punt on Iran.” *USA Today* (26 June 2007): 13.

“Russia sees Iran as a beachhead against American interests in the Middle East, and they're playing a very sophisticated game,” he said. “Russia is quite comfortable with Iran having nuclear fuel cycles that would be monitored, and they'll support the Iranian position”—in part, because it gives them the opportunity to sell billions of dollars' worth of nuclear fuel and materials to Tehran. “They believe they can manage their long- and short-term interests with Iran, and still manage the security interests.”⁸⁹

By taking Iran's side, Russia continues to strain the already tense relationship between itself and the United States. It is unknown if Russia is providing Iran with nuclear materials, but the idea of such a scenario certainly raises warning flags. And because the same material used to make nuclear fuel can also be used to make nuclear weapons, it certainly raises the question of what exactly the Iranians are trying to achieve under Ahmadinejad's claim that it is Iran's inalienable right to develop nuclear energy.

The Bush Administration finds itself in a predicament on how to formulate a foreign policy towards Iran, while at the same time fighting a war with Iraq. According to Vali Nasr, an adjunct senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations and professor at the Naval Postgraduate School, the outcome of the war in Iraq was supposed to create a new Iraq that would “be a model for the Middle East and a threat to Iran's theocracy. Instead, Iran has emerged as the biggest winner of the United States' war.”⁹⁰ The fall of Iraq has created a “political vacuum” in the region and because of this:

Iranian influence quickly spread into southern Iraq on the back of commercial connections—driven by a growing volume of trade and a massive flow of Iranian pilgrims into shrine cities of Iraq—and burgeoning intelligence and political ties. Iran's influence quickly extended to every level of Iraq's bureaucracy, Shiite clerical and tribal establishments, and security and political apparatuses. The war turned a large part of Iraq into an Iranian sphere of influence, and equally important, paved the way for Iranian hegemony in the Persian Gulf.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Hersh, Seymour M. “Last Stand.” *The New Yorker* 82.21 (10 July 2006).

⁹⁰ Nasr 38.

⁹¹ Ibid. 38.

This influence, coupled with the possibility of nuclear weapons, makes Iran a truly dangerous entity with unknown ambitions. It now has no power to hold it back and its desire to continue its development of a nuclear program produces great concern for the United States, as well as many other countries around the world, because it is possible that Iran could develop nuclear weapons and threaten the safety of millions of people. However, Iran's ambitions behind developing a nuclear program are largely unknown and it is possible it may desire a nuclear program strictly as a source of energy. There are numerous answers as to why Iran may be building nuclear weapons, to include: as a deterrent to provide security from foreign aggressors; providing the country with a status symbol to show the world that, they too, are a powerful country; or to provide the means to threaten other regional countries and influence regional affairs. The U.S. is not the only country that is worried about Iran's intentions in Iraq and its nuclear program. Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Israel are just a few Middle East countries who have voiced their concern over Iran. These concerns "could trigger a strategic-arms race throughout the Middle East,"⁹² and this, coupled with a U.S.-Iranian relationship that continues to break down, will eventually lead to greater instability in the region, and probably the world.

⁹² Hersh, Seymour. "The Next Act: Is a damaged Administration less likely to attack Iran, or more?" *The New Yorker* 82.39 (Nov 27 2006): 94.

CHAPTER THREE

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Since the inception of nuclear power a number of countries have either developed or desired a nuclear weapon. Many of these countries were, and continue to be, unfriendly towards the United States. With that being said, it is a difficult task for the United States to formulate an effective foreign policy towards those countries in regards to their nuclear programs; however, the United States and the international community have made repeated attempts to dissuade nuclear aspirants from developing nuclear weapons. By examining some recent attempts to dissuade countries from developing nuclear weapons we can compare them to the present situation with Iran and it may help to determine how the U.S. should prepare its future policies with Iran. Below is an analysis of actions taken against the nuclear programs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (from here on referred as North Korea and Libya, respectively). The intent here is to examine these two countries in order to understand what actions may or may not work when deciding policies towards Iran's nuclear program. Following these two examples I will explore the possible scenarios that could play out against Iran.

NUCLEAR PROGRAM OF NORTH KOREA

North Korea, a relatively closed and secretive society led by the eccentric Kim Jong-Il, began its quest for nuclear weapons over fifty years ago. During the Korean War Presidents Truman and Eisenhower, fearing that there was no end in the foreseeable future, threatened the use of nuclear weapons to bring the conflict to a swift finish. It

obviously did not come to that; however, following the end of the fighting, the United States deployed nuclear weapons to South Korean soil, many of which were within miles of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). These weapons were to deter North Korea from invading South Korea. In the late 1970s President Carter began the process of removing those weapons and this task was not completed until 1991.⁹³ The United States still has tens of thousands of troops stationed in South Korea and nearby Japan. The U.S. also has no formal diplomatic ties to North Korea and its “policy toward the reclusive state has alternated in the past two decades from one of open engagement to outright confrontation.”⁹⁴ This confrontation is mainly due to North Korea’s nuclear weapons program, chemical weapons program, and possible biological weapons program. The threat of the North Korean nuclear program can ultimately deter the United States from effectively defending South Korean interests as well as other U.S. interests in the region.

The background of North Korea’s nuclear program can be somewhat compared to that of Iran’s. As with Iran, one of the main probable reasons behind North Korea’s desire for nuclear weapons is its fear of coming under nuclear attack from the United States. Iran and North Korea both believe it necessary to develop a nuclear stockpile in order to defend themselves from the United States or other possible aggressors. Like Iran, the North Korean nuclear research program began in the 1950s; however its aid came by way of the Soviet Union as opposed to the United States as Iran’s initially did. In 1965, North Korea acquired a small research reactor from the Soviet Union; however, “concerns over North Korea’s nuclear weapons program did not fully emerge until the

⁹³ Pincus, Walter. “N. Korean Nuclear Conflict Has Deep Roots.” *The Washington Post* (15 Oct 2006): A16.

⁹⁴ Cirincione et al. 280.

mid-1980s.”⁹⁵ By 1989, North Korea is said to have possessed a plutonium production reactor and extraction capability. At that time, North Korea also reportedly shut down its main research and production reactor for 100 days which would “have given it enough time to refuel the entire reactor and provide it with a source of enough nuclear material to build a nuclear device.”⁹⁶ The United States and the world took no action but rather decided to “press North Korea to join and then come into full compliance with its obligations under the NPT, and to make that compliance a condition of progress on diplomatic issues.”⁹⁷

During the early 1990’s the Clinton Administration intensified the process of dismantling North Korea’s nuclear program. The intense pressure applied to North Korea by the United States during this time brought the two countries closer to war; however agreements were beginning to form and the pressure subsided. In 2000 Secretary of State Madeleine Albright met with Kim Jong-Il in Pyongyang, but no agreements could be made before the Bush Administration took over in 2001. At this time the Bush Administration reassessed U.S. policy toward North Korea and, in June of 2001, issued a presidential statement announcing that the United States should “undertake serious discussion with North Korea on a broad agenda to include: improved implementation of the Agreed Framework [which froze North Korea’s nuclear production for eight years starting in 1994] relating to North Korea’s nuclear activities; verifiable constraints on North Korea’s missile programs and a ban on its missile exports; and a less threatening conventional military posture.”⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Ibid. 284.

⁹⁶ Ibid. 284.

⁹⁷ Ibid. 285.

⁹⁸ Ibid. 281.

The following year the Bush administration developed a more assertive policy to deal with hostile states. This policy called for carrying out regime change and using nuclear weapons against North Korea. The idea of regime change would likely not apply to Iran now considering the actions that have been taken in Iraq over the past four years. It is also improbable that the United States would use nuclear weapons against Iran. This aggressive posture was likely due in part to the September 11th attacks and it was necessary for the United States to become more assertive and remind the world that it will not take such matters lightly. North Korea became increasingly incensed with the United States and its “hostile” policies, and by December of 2002 the country took actions to continue the development of nuclear weapons. These actions included, expelling IAEA inspectors and their monitoring equipment as well as removing IAEA seals from its nuclear facilities, all of which culminated in North Korea withdrawing from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in January of 2003. The United States, adamant about disarming North Korea, engaged in six-party talks, which included these two countries as well as South Korea, China, Russia, and Japan. Little developed during the first two rounds of talks taking place in August of 2003 and February of 2004; however, during the third round of talks in June of 2004 the United States presented a proposal for North Korea to end its nuclear program. This proposal included “U.S. support for incentives for North Korea to be provided by other states...a new declaration to be made by North Korea, to include all plutonium production and uranium enrichment capabilities, nuclear materials, weapons and related equipment, and for the elimination of all of these to begin after a three-month preparatory period.”⁹⁹ North Korea did not

⁹⁹ Ibid. 283.

respond in kind and on February 10, 2005, the North Korean government claimed it “had ‘manufactured’ nuclear weapons as a deterrent to U.S. hostility.”¹⁰⁰

On October 9th, 2006, North Korea detonated a nuclear device and five days later the UN Security Council condemned the test and voted unanimously to impose sanctions on the country. These sanctions came under Resolution 1718 which “prevents a range of goods from entering or leaving the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and imposes an asset freeze and travel ban on persons related to the nuclear-weapon programme.”¹⁰¹

The test, probably not a successful one, frustrated the international community immensely. Since the test, the six-party talks have resumed and it appears as though North Korea is taking steps to shut down its nuclear weapons program. The government shut down its Yongbyon reactor in July of 2007 and in return is receiving 50,000 tons of oil from South Korea. This is the first noteworthy step that has come out of the six-party talks in an effort to disarm North Korea. If North Korea shuts down and disables the remainder of its nuclear facilities it will receive approximately 1 million tons of oil, which is needed greatly in the destitute country. The UN has since started sending in inspections teams to ensure the Yongbyon plant is completely disabled. Although North Korea appears to be complying with the six-party talks, it is likely they now possess a limited number of nuclear weapons.

NUCLEAR PROGRAM OF LIBYA

Much like Iran, Libya’s past relations with the United States have been anything but admirable. Colonel Mu’ammar al-Qadhafi [U.S. State Department spelling, referred

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. 282.

¹⁰¹ --. “Security Council Condemns Nuclear Test by Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 1718.” *United Nations Security Council* (14 Oct 2006) <<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/sc8853.doc.htm>>.

to as Qadhafi for the purposes of this study, except in a direct quotation] has ruled Libya since 1969 and his largely anti-Western attitude has led to a number of confrontations between his country and the West. These confrontations included engagements of Libyan and U.S. Navy jets, U.S. air strikes against Libya in response to the West German discotheque bombing in 1986, and the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 in 1988. These hostile confrontations provided uneasiness on the part of the United States in regards to Libya's ambition behind developing a nuclear weapons program.

Libya's pursuit of nuclear weapons began in the 1970s; however, it would not receive its first reactor until 1979. This 10-megawatt research reactor was supplied by the Soviet Union after Libya had signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1975 and by 1980, Libya had formal IAEA safeguards in place and continued its quest for the bomb throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Qadhafi, like Iran's Ahmadinejad, is an outspoken critic of Israel and justified his country's pursuit of nuclear weapons because of an Israeli threat and he believed "that the Arab states should acquire nuclear weapons to counter Israel's nuclear hegemony in the region." Along with this claim, Qadhafi also stated that "Arab states would be justified in possessing chemical and biological weapons to counter Israel's nuclear capability."¹⁰² Although Qadhafi was determined to develop the bomb, Libya signed the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty in 1996; however, this treaty had little or no effect on Libya's desire to develop a nuclear weapon.

After being isolated from the international community for a number of years, due in part to the Pan Am Flight 103 bombing, Libya was desperate to end the U.S.- and UN-imposed sanctions. The U.S. sanctions, imposed for many of the same reasons sanctions are now being imposed on Iran, were based on the assertion that Libya "was supporting

¹⁰² Cirincione et al. 322.

international terrorism and attempting to develop weapons of mass destruction.”¹⁰³ In March of 2003, as the U.S. was engaged in Iraq, Libya, [probably fearing the same repercussions for its clandestine nuclear program], “secretly approached” U.S. and U.K. officials with an offer to dismantle its nuclear program. At this point Qadhafi had realized the need for international cooperation, including access to Western markets, outweighed the need for nuclear weapons. The U.S. government responded by informing Libya they must “publicly disclose the extent of its programs and pledge to abide by those agreements regulating and monitoring.”¹⁰⁴ The Libyan Foreign Ministry responded by the end of the year with a statement that included the following:

[Libya] wishes to reaffirm that it considers itself bound by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Agreement on Safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Convention on Biological Weapons and that it accepts any other commitments, including the Additional Protocol to the IAEA Safeguards Agreement, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention.

[Libya], in its belief that the arms race is conducive neither to its own security nor to that of the region and runs counter to its strong desire for a world blessed with security and peace, wishes, through this initiative, to encourage all countries without exception to follow its example, starting with those of the Middle East region.¹⁰⁵

By the middle of 2004, the U.S. and Libya had resumed diplomatic ties and in October of 2004 the European Union ended twelve years of economic sanctions on Libya. Qadhafi participated in an interview in January of 2005 in which he stated that “We started to ask ourselves, ‘By manufacturing nuclear weapons, against whom are we going to use them?’ World alliances have changed. We had no target. And then we started thinking about the

¹⁰³ --. “U.S. / UK Negotiations with Libya regarding Nonproliferation.” *The American Journal of International Law* 98.1. (Jan 2004): 195.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. 195.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. 196.

cost. If someone attacks you and you use a nuclear bomb, you are in effect using it against yourself.”¹⁰⁶

Libya never faced any military action on its nuclear facilities by the United States. A few small confrontations between U.S. Navy jets and Libyan jets did occur during the 1980s; however, these were not in relation to the Libyan nuclear program. However, there was military action that likely did have an affect on Libya abandoning its nuclear program, and that was the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003. Qadhafi probably became fearful of what would happen to his country next if it did not give up its quest for nuclear weapons. It appears as though through the use of force, although indirectly, and diplomacy over a number of years, Libya was persuaded to abandon its pursuit of a nuclear bomb. The Libyan model should be proof that nuclear-aspiring countries can be convinced to cease its nuclear weapons development. According to Scott Sagan the fact that “Libya dismantled its nascent nuclear program in 2003” is evidence that “Washington should work harder to prevent the unthinkable rather than accept what falsely appears to be inevitable.” He goes on to say that just because the U.S. could not prevent states from acquiring or developing the bomb during the Cold War there are some states, such as Libya, where nonproliferation efforts succeed. But these efforts only succeed when the “United States and other global actors help satisfy whatever concerns drove a state to want nuclear weapons in the first place.”¹⁰⁷ Qadhafi realized the need for normalized relations with Western nations in order to survive. With a tightening of sanctions on Iran, Ahmadinejad could eventually come to the same conclusion.

¹⁰⁶ Cirincione et al. 319.

¹⁰⁷ Sagan 45.

MILITARY ACTION AGAINST IRAN?

There are a number of possible scenarios that could materialize in an attempt to develop a plan for managing the Iranian nuclear threat. One possible answer to this dilemma is to use military force. Some experts are calling for an all-out military offensive in Iran, while others are proposing the use of pre-emptive military strikes against the country's nuclear facilities in order to stop or slow the ongoing nuclear research in the country. If the U.S. determines that there is no other alternative but to launch a pre-emptive strike on Iran's nuclear facility, it will be extremely difficult to gauge what the outcome may be for the U.S., Iran, and the rest of the world.¹⁰⁸ However, as one government consultant points out "even if [a military strike] does not destroy Iran's nuclear network, there are many who think that thirty-six hours of bombing is the only way to remind the Iranians of the very high cost of going forward with the bomb-and of supporting Moqtada al-Sadr and his pro-Iran element in Iraq."¹⁰⁹

With the current crises facing the United States in Iraq and Afghanistan, it would seem impossible that military action against Iran would even be an option. However, the Bush Administration has given the impression that it has never ruled out a military strike on Iran and maintains that it will always be a possibility. Some scholars claim that some form of military action is a likely candidate for dealing with this dilemma especially if "the U.S. and Israel become convinced that Tehran is determined to pursue a nuclear weapons program."¹¹⁰ With that being said, it is an option to consider and one that needs thorough examination.

¹⁰⁸ --. "Next Stop Iran?" *The Economist* 382.8515 (10 Feb 2007): 11.

¹⁰⁹ Hersh, Seymour. "The Next Act."

¹¹⁰ Fulghum, David A. and Douglas Barrie. "Busting the Bomb." *Aviation Week & Space Technology* (11 Sept 2006): 44.

A strike on Iran's nuclear facilities would not be the first pre-emptive strikes on a country's nuclear plants the world has witnessed. In the event that a decision was made to attack Iranian nuclear facilities it could be left to Israel to carry out the mission. Israel, obviously more at risk initially from an Iranian nuclear attack due to its proximity and the anti-Israel rhetoric that comes from Ahmadinejad, has once before conducted pre-emptive strikes on a nuclear facility. On the evening of June 7th, 1981 eight Israeli F-16s flew into Iraq undetected, attacked the Osirak nuclear facility and returned to Israel unharmed. The site was crippled, but not completely destroyed and "this unprovoked attack on a sovereign nation in peacetime ignited fury around the world."¹¹¹ The pre-emptive strike was condemned by many countries, including the United States, while concurrently the UN passed a resolution which stated that Israel was in violation of the United Nations Charter. The bombing of Osirak set Iraq back a number of years in nuclear weapons development, but one thing it did learn from the attack was to move its facilities underground. Shortly after the strikes, Iraq began constructing an underground facility designed to produce bomb-grade uranium. This site remained hidden until the end of the Persian Gulf War when UN inspectors found and destroyed the facility.¹¹²

Although the United States condemned the Israeli strike on Osirak in 1981, Operation Desert Storm probably would have never occurred and Iraq would have, in the least, taken control of Kuwait, with nobody to stand in its way. For fear of nuclear strikes in Israel and Saudi Arabia, the U.S. would have not been able to mount the vast allied offensive that forced Iraq out of Kuwait. However, with the outcome of the Israeli attack in 1981, which set the Iraqi nuclear program back a number of years, and after a series of

¹¹¹ Grinspan, Jon. "Attack on Iraq's Nuke Plant." *AmericanHeritage.com* (7 June 2006).

¹¹² Sagan 47.

attacks during Desert Storm, the U.S. finally finished off the Osirak nuclear facility. One downfall from these events is that Iran learned from the situation and is likely constructing nuclear reactors in underground facilities to avoid detection. But there is one thing to consider when deciding whether or not to attack Iran, and that is Prime Minister “Begin’s decision to act 25 years ago means that the world suffers no memories of ‘a postnuclear Tehran or Tel Aviv’ today.”¹¹³

Several scholars suggest that pre-emptive strikes, rather than an all out invasion, would be the likely choice if any military action was to take place. However, a successful pre-emptive strike in itself would be difficult to plan. Not only are there numerous known nuclear facilities in Iran, there could very well be a number of unknown facilities. A large portion of these known, and probably unknown, facilities are located deep in the earth in order to prevent detection and attack. Because of this it could be extraordinarily difficult to determine which facilities to target in order to sufficiently cripple the nuclear program. Even if successful strikes are carried out on a few of the key facilities, it is likely that “there would be little impact on Iran’s technology base or team of scientists.”¹¹⁴ According to the GlobalSecurity.org website, there are over two dozen nuclear facilities in Iran, with the 1000-megawatt plant at Bushehr being one of the primary facilities. The website also states that “according to the Nonproliferation Policy Education Center, the spent fuel from this facility would be capable of producing 50 to 75 bombs. Also, the suspected nuclear facilities at Natanz and Arak will likely be targets of an air attack.”¹¹⁵ Many experts argue in opposition to an attack, stating that a strike on

¹¹³ Grinspan.

¹¹⁴ Fulghum et al 46.

¹¹⁵ --. “Target Iran – Air Strikes.” *GlobaSecurity.org Website* (2007).
<<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/iran-strikes.htm>>.

Iranian nuclear facilities could speed up, rather than slow down, the process towards obtaining a bomb. According to one British nuclear weapons scientist, Frank Barnaby, in a report by the BBC, “an attack might not destroy all of the nuclear programme,” and after the attack “it would be much more feasible for Tehran’s political leadership to pull out of the Non-Proliferation Treaty” and devote the maximum amount of resources to developing a bomb.¹¹⁶ This would probably occur because an attack, especially coming from the United States, could cause a wave of nationalism to spread throughout the country and rally the Iranian people around the government, including the ones who are considered to be pro-West. The idea of pro-West Iranians turning away from their beliefs will have a profound impact on future relations with the West.

As demonstrated with the 1981 strike on the Iraqi nuclear facility, a military strike on Iranian nuclear facilities could lead to a significant protest from the international community. Along with international condemnation, there is the possibility of a major retaliation focused on U.S. troops already operating in neighboring Iraq. It is possible that “any strike on Shiite-dominated Iran would likely further inflame the already volatile situation in Iraq at the very moment the Bush Administration is trying to reach Sunni-Shiite reconciliation.”¹¹⁷ To launch an attack, the U.S. would require a large backing from the international community. However, even if the U.S. did receive this backing, some can argue that the nuclear issue is a short-term problem and delaying, rather than decimating, the nuclear facilities is the answer. It can be argued that this may be a short-term problem due to the idea that “the country’s young people may be less inclined to

¹¹⁶ Corera, Gordon. “Iran: Can a Military Strike Work?” *BBC News Online* (5 Mar 2007). <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/6414771.stm>.

¹¹⁷ Scarborough, Rowan. “Bush Sticks to Diplomacy on Iran.” *The Washington Examiner* (27 Feb 2007).

follow hard-line Islamist ideology and may be less hostile to the West in general.”¹¹⁸ So if the world just waited, over time this younger generation will come into power and may be easier to negotiate with, eliminating the possibility of mass casualties. An all-out attack on Iran’s nuclear facilities would obviously escalate hostilities between the U.S. and Iran and it would likely lead to a number of civilian deaths and possibly even war.

In order to examine this idea further we can again look to the past for more answers. Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy both chose “diplomacy and arms control over preventive war in their dealings with the Soviet Union and China.”¹¹⁹ According to Scott Sagan, in his article “How to Keep the Bomb from Iran,” he states that if the U.S. was to attack Iran “the United States would expose itself (especially its bases in the Middle East and U.S troops in Afghanistan and Iraq), and its allies, to the possibility of severe retaliation.”¹²⁰ This retaliation would not necessarily be a nuclear retaliation, but more of a conventional, or even terrorist-run, retaliation. U.S. attacks on Iran could also “end up serving as a rallying point to unite Sunni and Shiite populations. ‘An American attack will paper over any differences in the Arab world, and we’ll have Syrians, Iranians, Hamas, and Hezbollah fighting against us-and the Saudis and Egyptians questioning their ties to the West.’”¹²¹ The fear of retaliation is, in all probability, the same reason that Eisenhower and Kennedy chose the option of diplomacy and arms control. Sagan also contends, and rightly so, that an Israeli strike on Iranian nuclear facilities would not do any more benefit than a U.S. strike. Like the U.S., Israel would not be capable of destroying all Iranian nuclear sites and would only initiate an increase

¹¹⁸ Fulghum et al. 46.

¹¹⁹ Sagan 45.

¹²⁰ Ibid. 45.

¹²¹ Hersh, Seymour. “The Next Act.”

in the design and development of an Iranian nuclear bomb. Sagan argues that “Muslim sentiment throughout the world would be all the more inflamed, encouraging terrorist responses against the West.”¹²²

DIPLOMACY WITH ECONOMIC SANCTIONS?

Another possible solution to the Iranian nuclear crisis is to continue using diplomacy and economic sanctions. The International Atomic Energy Agency “works with its Member States and multiple partners worldwide to promote safe, secure and peaceful nuclear technologies” and by being a signatory in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Iran subjects its nuclear facilities to inspection by the IAEA.¹²³ Iran, with its vast oil reserves is often asked: why does a country overflowing with oil and gas feel the need to develop a nuclear program with a sole purpose of providing energy? Iran’s response is that “its oil revenues will one day diminish and that in the meantime nuclear energy at home would free more petrol for export. Besides, say the Iranians, America and other Western countries were happy to help the Shah establish a nuclear industry before the revolution. Why should what America deemed to make economic sense at that time be thought absurd now?”¹²⁴ The IAEA has conducted inspections on Iranian nuclear facilities and, to date, there is no conclusive evidence that Iran is developing a nuclear weapons program; however, just because no evidence has been found does not necessarily mean the program is not in existence. The IAEA is not infallible and this was proven during the 1980s when “it failed to detect Iraq's nuclear-weapons programme at a time when it was in fact making rapid progress.”¹²⁵ Deception on Iran’s part has hindered

¹²² Ibid. 45.

¹²³ “The ‘Atoms For Peace’ Agency.”

¹²⁴ --. “Bombs Away.” *The Economist*. 384.8538 (21 Jul 2007): 8.

¹²⁵ Ibid. 8.

the ability of the IAEA to conduct adequate and thorough inspections of the country's nuclear facilities. This deception was brought to light in 2002 "when a dissident group, perhaps tipped off by Western spies, revealed that the country had built two nuclear facilities in secret without informing the IAEA. One of these, in Arak, was a heavy-water reactor, just the thing for making plutonium, which is one way to fuel an atomic bomb. The other, at Natanz, was a facility for enriching uranium, which is the other way of doing it."¹²⁶ Since it has already been proven that the IAEA is not a fool-proof method for monitoring nuclear energy programs and Iran has deceived the world at least once, additional measures must be taken to ensure the country does not develop nuclear weapons.

In place of the military action described in the previous section, continuing to implement diplomacy and economic sanctions would be a more likely candidate as an answer to the Iranian nuclear situation. When Iran refused the UN order to halt uranium enrichment in 2006, two resolutions, one in December 2006 the other in March 2007, were put into place in order to put pressure on Iran and force the government to cease its nuclear development. These UN resolutions resulted in "modest" sanctions and many world leaders are already calling for more severe sanctions to be implemented.

Without the UN economic sanctions, Iran is already facing economic woes. Ahmadinejad's presidential campaign was run on the grounds that he would "bring the country's oil money to every family's dinner table."¹²⁷ Just a few short years into his presidency, inflation in Iran is at about 18% and unemployment has jumped to about 30%. Ahmadinejad believes in "self-sufficiency," that is, Iranians should only rely on

¹²⁶ Ibid. 8.

¹²⁷ Taheri, Amir. "Iran's Economic Crisis: President Ahmadinejad isn't bringing the oil money 'to every dinner table.'" *Wall Street Journal*. (9 May 2007): A17.

Iranian products and not outside, and especially not Western, products. This idea certainly does not harmonize with the younger population who marvel at Western culture.

After repeatedly failing to heed the orders of the UN Security Council to halt uranium enrichment, Iran was subject to UN Security Council Resolution 1737 in December of 2006. This resolution froze the assets of key organizations and individuals involved in Iran's nuclear program. The resolution also prohibited the selling of nuclear-related material and supplies to Iran. The sanctions were to be lifted within sixty days if Iran complied with the orders to halt uranium enrichment. However, Iran did not comply and therefore was subject to UN Resolution 1747 in March of 2007. UN Resolution 1747 tightened the sanctions imposed by UN Resolution 1737. In addition, it has banned arms sales from Iran and frozen the assets of key organizations and individuals involved in missile development. The goal of this resolution is to reestablish a negotiation with Iran and proposes conditions that will allow for negotiation. The conditions:

- Reaffirm Iran's right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in conformity with its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (hereinafter, NPT), and in this context reaffirm our support for the development by Iran of a civil nuclear energy programme.
- Commit to support actively the building of new light water reactors in Iran through international joint projects, in accordance with the IAEA statute and NPT.
- Agree to suspend discussion of Iran's nuclear programme in the Security Council upon the resumption of negotiations.
- Iran will: Commit to addressing all of the outstanding concerns of IAEA through full cooperation with IAEA. Suspend all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities to be verified by IAEA, as requested by the IAEA Board of Governors and the Security Council, and commit to continue this during these negotiations.¹²⁸

The resolution also provides a section on "areas of future cooperation to be covered in negotiations on a long-term agreement." This section lists items such as reaffirming

¹²⁸ --. "Resolution 1747." *United Nations Security Council* (24 Mar 2007) <<http://www.cfr.org/content/publications/attachments/1747.pdf>>.

Iran's inalienable rights to a peaceful nuclear energy program as well as improving Iran's "access to the international economy, markets and capital, through practical support for full integration into international structures, including the World Trade Organization and to create the framework for increased direct investment in Iran and trade with Iran."¹²⁹ Through this resolution it is clear that the UN chooses to help Iran, so long as Iran suspends its uranium enrichment.

The sanctions faced so far by Iran are limited in scope. However, as time proceeds and Iran continues at failing to respond to UN calls for halting enrichment, the sanctions should intensify. By imposing firmer sanctions, there exists a number of possible problems. One of those problems is actually getting stricter sanctions approved by the UN Security Council. Russia has appeared hesitant on further sanctions and China would probably not approve. China relies heavily on Iran for imports and exports. From March of 2006 to March of 2007 "China's imports from Iran jumped nearly 30% to \$5.06 billion" and this situated Iran to "become China's third-largest supplier of oil after Saudi Arabia and Angola." Likewise, China's exports to Iran have "jumped by 40% over the same period, to more than \$5.23 billion, driven largely by a surge in steel sales, according to Chinese trade statistics."¹³⁰ Another significant issue to consider when imposing stricter sanctions is the fear of reprisal from Iran. The U.S. is currently in a fragile condition being that there are thousands of U.S. troops deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. If the UN were to increase sanctions on Iran, especially if there was pressure from the U.S., then U.S. troops could bear the brunt of retaliation. The sanctions could also rally

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ King Jr., Neil. "Stiffer Iran Sanctions Sought." *Wall Street Journal*. (11 July 2007): A6.

the Iranian population and shift their pro-Western views to a pro-Ahmadinejad view. This could significantly hinder any future chances of the formation of a pro-West Iran.

CONTAINMENT?

Rather than military action or implementing economic sanctions as a stand-alone solution, another foreign policy tool that has been suggested in response to the Iranian nuclear crisis is containment. The Encyclopaedia Britannica defines containment as being a “strategic foreign policy pursued by the United States in the late 1940s and the early 1950s in order to check the expansionist policy of the Soviet Union.”¹³¹ This idea can be applied today to any nation, not just the United States, which denies another nation from spreading its influence on other countries. One recent example is the United States’ foreign policy when dealing with Iraq from the end of the Persian Gulf War in 1991 until the commencement of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003. To determine whether or not containment could work for the Iranian problem, it is necessary to examine the historical aspect of the policy itself and how it came to be a tool for dealing with nations that threaten the United States and its interests.

The Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan laid the initial groundwork for implementing a policy of containment. Although George Kennan would originally propose the idea of implementing containment, much of his proposal would be reworked by President Truman and the rest of his Administration. Truman stated that the United States would confront the Soviets “at every point where they show signs of encroaching upon the interests of a peaceful world.”¹³² However, Kennan’s idea was just to confront

¹³¹ --. “containment.” *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, 2007. <<http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9026036>>.

¹³² Roberts et al. 46.

the Soviet Union in areas “vital to our security.”¹³³ Kennan’s successor at the State Department, Paul H. Nitze, was tasked with functioning as the lead writer of a document, which came to be known as NSC-68, for the National Security Council. NSC-68 outlined the policy for the national security strategy of the United States. Nitze was especially concerned with the balance of power throughout the world and realized that “changes in the balance of power could occur, not only as the result of economic maneuvers or military action, but from intimidation, humiliation, or even loss of credibility.”¹³⁴ Nitze was aware that the Soviet Union was extremely capable of all of these actions and they made “no distinction between military and other forms of aggression.”¹³⁵ John Lewis Gaddis wrote on this, stating:

The implications were startling. World order, and with it American security, had come to depend as much on *perceptions* of the balance of power as on what that balance actually was. And the perceptions involved were not just those of statesmen customarily charged with making policy; they reflected as well mass opinion, foreign as well as domestic, informed as well as uninformed, rational as well as irrational. Before such audience even the appearance of a shift in power relationships could have unnerving consequences; judgments based on such traditional criteria as geography, economic capacity, or military potential now had to be balanced against considerations of image, prestige, and credibility. The effect was vastly to increase the number and variety of interests deemed relevant to the national security, and to blur distinctions between them.¹³⁶

During the mid-1940s, while he was serving as the deputy head of the United States mission to the Soviet Union, Kennan was growing “ever despondent about Washington’s feckless attitude toward the Soviets.”¹³⁷ He was certain that Moscow

¹³³ Roberts et al. 46.

¹³⁴ Gillon, Steven M. and Diane B. Kunz. *America During the Cold War*. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1993: 32.

¹³⁵ Ibid. 32.

¹³⁶ Ibid. 32.

¹³⁷ Isaacson, Walter and Evan Thomas. *The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World They Changed*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1986: 352.

would make an attempt to “advance official limits of Soviet power” and that “the first signs of expansionism will come in neighboring areas, such as Iran and Turkey.”¹³⁸ The Soviet Union had two primary reasons for wanting to bring Iran under its sphere of influence: 1) having been forced out of Iran by the Americans, and 2) Iran’s strategic location as the gateway to the Middle East. In his “Long Telegram” Kennan voiced his idea of confronting the Soviets and holding them at bay. This eventually became known as a containment policy and ultimately became the cornerstone for American foreign policy during the Cold War. In the “Long Telegram” he stated that dealing with the Soviet Union was “undoubtedly the greatest task our diplomacy has ever faced and probably the greatest it will ever have to face.”¹³⁹ This statement appears to have held true for a number of years, however, it can be argued that the current crisis faced by the United States, fighting the Global War on Terrorism, is even more challenging. Kennan’s proposal of containment, (even though he eventually claimed this should not be a primarily military response) called for the United States to halt the spread of communism and that the “Kremlin was likely to back down ‘when strong resistance is encountered at any point.’”¹⁴⁰ Can the United States contain Iran and, if so, will it cause Iran to back down from their desire to develop nuclear weapons?

By the late 1940s the Soviet Union was taking considerable steps to obtain control over the Middle East, especially since the United States had “expressed no strategic ‘interest’ in the area.”¹⁴¹ While serving as Undersecretary of State during this time, Dean Acheson realized how important the Middle East region would be to the United States in

¹³⁸ Ibid. 353.

¹³⁹ Ibid. 353.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. 353.

¹⁴¹ Ibid. 370.

the future and that it was imperative to keep the Soviets out. At the time many thought the British would be able to maintain control; however, Acheson knew if the British failed, it would fall upon the United States to restrain the Soviet Union. Soviet military movements “from Trieste to Tehran” showed the world their expansionist intentions. The first steps toward implementing the Truman Doctrine and a policy of containment took place when Acheson suggested that “for global reasons... Turkey must be preserved if we do not wish to see other bulwarks in Western Europe and the Far East crumbling at a fast rate.”¹⁴² Acheson also felt the same about Greece. When the British ambassador informed the State Department they could no longer give financial assistance to Greece and Turkey, and indicated they would need to pull out of the countries, Acheson knew it would only be a matter of time before the countries would fall to the Soviet Union. He immediately assembled his staff and ordered them to write proposals for the United States to give aid to Greece and Turkey. The proposal for the Greece and Turkey aid package would pass in Congress and prove to be effective and “by the summer of 1949, the Communist-backed insurgency in Greece was finished; the American-backed government troops had won.”¹⁴³ Thus, the United States had entered into a period of practicing containment against the Soviet Union. The policy of practicing containment would continue for decades and one of the finest verbalizations of the United States’ containment policy came from President Kennedy when he stated that “we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and success of liberty.”¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Ibid. 371.

¹⁴³ Ibid. 401.

¹⁴⁴ Roberts et al. 47.

The concerns of a containment policy today are vastly different than they were during the Cold War. In his book, *Containment*, Ian Shapiro points out that “the Soviet Union was a single ‘it,’ whereas today we face dangerous threats from a variety of hostile regimes and transnational terrorist groups.”¹⁴⁵ What he suggests here is that the world is a more complicated place today than during the Cold War. The Cold War saw two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, facing off against each other, but at the same time balancing each other out. Containment was implemented during the Cold War in order to preserve democracy and the American way of life. In order to achieve this goal the policy was charged with stopping the spread of communism around the world. Shapiro states that “containment’s central project was a quest for national security that required neither pursuit nor maintenance of worldwide military supremacy.”¹⁴⁶ Noted Cold War historian John Lewis Gaddis states “what was required was not to remake the world in the image of the United States, but simply to preserve its diversity against attempts to remake it in the image of others.”¹⁴⁷ This appeared to have some success against the Soviet Union; however, some believe that regime change in Iran is the way to handle the situation. Attempting to remake Iran in the image of the United States could cause a number of problems especially since, as discussed earlier, the younger population of Iran is pro-West; therefore, if the United States takes severe action to change Iran, those less inclined to follow hard-line Islamist ideology may change their stance and support the regime. In light of this, some experts contend that the more logical choice in this situation is to wait. Many scholars also argue that Iran’s ultimate

¹⁴⁵ Shapiro 7.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. 33.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. 33.

goal is to be capable of projecting their influence over the entire Middle East region. If this were to happen it would likely prove disastrous for the United States.

With the United States currently deeply involved in conflict in neighboring Iraq and Afghanistan, Iran is certainly feeling threatened, and maybe even somewhat “contained.” Formulating a foreign policy towards Iran is unquestionably harder than it could have been. Shapiro claims the Iran problem can be attributed, in large part, to successive Administrations from President Eisenhower onward. He states:

[The] blame extends through successive administrations up to and including that of President Carter, who unwittingly encouraged the by then hugely unpopular shah and paid the price; Reagan administration, which backed Iraq in the Iran-Iraq War; and the Clinton administration, which was largely unresponsive to the overtures from President Mohammad Khatami after his election in 1997.¹⁴⁸

This is unfortunate due to the fact that, as stated, many Iranians, especially the younger generations, are largely pro-Western. Shapiro points out that “Iran, perhaps more than any other Middle Eastern country apart from Israel, has the potential to be a force for Western democratic values.”¹⁴⁹ This may be the case but Shapiro’s supporting argument claims that we should just leave Iran alone until it is ready to make the shift to democracy. Leaving Iran alone would not allow the West to prevent Iran from spreading its Islamic fundamentalism throughout the Middle East, which is one of its primary goals. The best method to prevent this spread is to contain Iran. If a containment policy were implemented, the United States would need to ensure there are checks in place to guarantee that the same mistakes made by previous Administrations are not repeated.

¹⁴⁸ Shapiro 116.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. 116.

Currently Iran “does not and cannot threaten the United States with nuclear weapons. We need to keep our guard up to ensure that this remains the case.”¹⁵⁰

When dealing with a containment policy against Iran, it needs to be stated that “it has been the de facto policy of the United States since the inception of the Islamic Republic, and it has enjoyed broad bipartisan support in Washington.” Seymour Hersh points out that a containment policy in Iran complicates U.S. strategy in Iraq. It appears as though, similar to possible results of military action against Iran, containing the country is forcing the Iranian government to launch attacks against the U.S. forces operating in Iraq. To add to this, Iran is also suspected of actively sponsoring terrorist organizations around the world. This brings about the following questions: “Can a state that projects its influence through indirect means, such as supporting terrorism, financing proxies, and associating with foreign Shiite parties, truly be contained? Will other states in the region be willing to help the United States isolate Iran?”¹⁵¹ These questions are important in that Iran cannot be truly contained unless these questions can be answered affirmatively.

CONCLUSION

After examining a number of possibilities it appears that there is no perfect answer for the Iranian nuclear dilemma. As discussed earlier, the young population of Iran is largely pro-West and will one day rule the country. So can the world wait until the younger population comes into power in order to normalize relations once again? Ahmadinejad rules a country where two out of three members of the population are under the age of 30. Given the opportunity, this younger generation, which enjoys Western

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. 117.

¹⁵¹ Takeyh 8.

fashion and music, are the ones who would likely welcome a normalized relationship with the United States. Many Iranians living in America “believe that the regime is so unpopular that it can indeed be reformed or even removed from within-if only the opposition receives a bit more help.”¹⁵² The help for the opposition would likely need to come in a monetary form, especially if it was from the United States because at the present time it would probably prove disastrous if the U.S. were to attempt to initiate a regime change in Iran. A U.S.-led coup would only conjure up painful memories of the coup in 1953. In addition, it is highly unlikely that the U.S. would attempt any type of regime change in the near future with the events that transpired after the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. With that idea in mind, the U.S. government has “earmarked scores of millions of dollars to help Iranian ‘civil society’ and pro-democracy groups.”¹⁵³ These funds may also be serving an unintended purpose. They may be operating as a mechanism that causes the Iranian government to distrust the United States and leads them into believing that the U.S. is plotting its overthrow.¹⁵⁴ Iran’s current position in the world and recent dealings clearly show that the country needs to be held accountable for its actions. It is expected that the United States would be the key component to dealing with the current Iranian nuclear crisis. It is unfortunate that this crisis comes at a time when U.S. and Iranian relations are at one of their lowest points in many years. As we can see from the examination above, the historical relationship between the United States and Iran make handling the situation a delicate task.

One certainty in this issue is that Iran must not be allowed to develop nuclear weapons. Some scholars, such as Kenneth Waltz, argue that a gradual spread of nuclear

¹⁵² “Bombs Away.” 6.

¹⁵³ Ibid. 6.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. 6.

weapons may be better than no spread. His argument is based on the idea that a country with nuclear weapons will use them as a deterrent. Contrary to that, if a country is prohibited from developing nuclear weapons and does it anyway, a regional arms race would commence, causing more nations to develop nuclear weapons. Waltz makes some valid points, but because of the already volatile situation in the Middle East, a regional nuclear arms race would likely start whether Iran developed nuclear weapons legally or not. By recalling a few of the actions Iran has taken over just the past few years, we can see the country's disregard for the international community and how it undermines the Middle East peace process. In the article "Don't Punt On Iran," Peter Schweizer claims that Iran represents a danger to the world by listing a few of the issues we should consider: "Iran continues in its efforts to acquire nuclear weapons...Iran has taken four Americans hostage and is holding them on trumped-up charges of spying...Iran is arming and supporting insurgents fighting American and allied forces in Iraq...Iran is hoping to undermine and eventually destroy Israel."¹⁵⁵ It is obvious that these are very serious accusations and need to be answered swiftly; however, the difficult question remains: How?

After examining the relationship between the United States and Iran, as well as Iran's nuclear program, it is clear that almost any action taken against the country to prevent the development of nuclear weapons would likely have unavoidable consequences. With the ongoing efforts to achieve peace in Iraq and Afghanistan, it would seem almost preposterous for the U.S. to engage in military action against Iran at this point in time. With U.S. forces already spread thin, mounting an effective military engagement with Iran, without fear of retaliation on U.S. troops already operating in the

¹⁵⁵ Schweizer 13.

region, would prove extremely difficult. If the U.S. were to engage in military action in Iran, it would likely come by way of surgical strikes using Navy and Air Force fighters and bombers. It is likely these strikes would be aimed at nuclear facilities around the country; however, this would have little effect on any of the supposed unknown sites throughout Iran. A military strike would only slow the process for a short time, while simultaneously launching a wave of nationalism throughout Iran thereby destroying any chance of a future attempts to normalize relations with the country.

We have seen in the past that economic sanctions do have some effect on pressuring or convincing a country to abandon its nuclear weapons aspirations and cease development on nuclear facilities. Some experts argue that sanctions will not stop Iran from developing nuclear weapons. The director of the Asia Program at the Center for International Policy, Selig S. Harrison, claims there are three reasons that preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons will be much more difficult than dealing with North Korea. His three reasons are:

First, Iran has petroleum riches. Unlike Pyongyang, it doesn't need a deal for economic reasons.

Second, the Iran-Iraq war, in which an estimated 200,000 Iranians were killed, is still a searing memory in Tehran. "If we had possessed nuclear weapons then, Saddam would not have dared to attack us," says Amir Mohabian, editor of the influential conservative daily *Reselaat*.

Third, Iran has a strong sense of historically based national identity and wants nuclear weapons primarily to assert major-power status. Kim Jong Il presides over an insecure regime struggling for short-term survival. He has developed nuclear weapons to deter U.S. military and financial pressures that threaten his immediate power and perquisites.¹⁵⁶

Harrison does make some valid points; however, Iran would need to eventually make a deal for economic reasons if the sanctions continue to tighten.

¹⁵⁶ Harrison, Selig S. "Sanctions Won't Stop Tehran." *Washington Post*. (2 Oct 2007): 19.

Evidence of sanctions working to stop nuclear programs can be seen with regards to Libya, and to a lesser extent, North Korea which has tested a nuclear weapon. When imposing economic sanctions on a country, while at the same time offering incentives to halt its nuclear program, it is imperative that the country providing the incentives hold up its end of the bargain. In an effort to persuade Libya to dismantle its nuclear program, the United States and the European Union agreed to ease a number of sanctions on the country. However, in November of 2004, Qadhafi “voiced his disappointment that Libya had not been properly recompensed.”¹⁵⁷ Qadhafi expressed his concern that there were a number of nice words from the U.S. and the European Union, but the security guarantees were not in place. He stated that “there must be at least a declaration of a program like the Marshall Plan, to show the world that those who wish to abandon the nuclear weapon program will be helped,” otherwise there is “little incentive for countries like Iran and North Korea to dismantle their nuclear programs.”¹⁵⁸

Containing Iran would seem like a logical answer to the question of how the U.S. should implement its foreign policy towards Iran. However, even if the U.S. were to effectively contain Iran there is still a significant chance that it would develop a nuclear weapon. Although difficult to implement, containment was a policy that seemed to work well for the United States during the Cold War; however, the world is much more complicated now. As some scholars suggest, coping with a nuclear Iran would not be like coping with the Soviet Union, but more like coping with an unstable nuclear power, such as Pakistan. To contain Iran, the U.S. would need the support from other countries, especially those in the Middle East, and it would be somewhat difficult to garner that

¹⁵⁷ Cirincione et al. 321.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. 321.

support. In the end, solely relying on containing Iran would not help prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear power, but it may help prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons to non-state actors, if Iran were to develop them.

After this examination one thing is certain: Iran cannot be permitted to continue down the path of developing nuclear weapons. Barry Posen contends that Iran would act as a rational actor if it possessed nuclear weapons. This would not necessarily be the case. A country that actively supports terrorism is far from rational and should not be allowed to develop the most destructive weapon known to man. Maybe an Iranian nuclear weapon would not find its way into the hands of a terrorist organization in the next few years, but nobody knows for sure what the future holds. It appears as though the Iranian nuclear problem will need to be engaged from a number of different angles if the U.S. truly wants to prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear power. “Given the progress of Iran's nuclear program, this issue deserves priority in second-track talks. The notion that the Islamic Republic will follow the Libyan model and completely dismantle its nuclear infrastructure is not tenable.”¹⁵⁹ The United States will need to insist that the United Nations impose stricter economic sanctions on Iran, while at the same time offering to protect Iran from any external dangers if it abandons its nuclear program. Iran argues that its nuclear program is peaceful and claims that its oil reserves will one day dry up. Therefore, if the U.S. were to normalize relations with Iran, it could perhaps develop a plan to introduce nuclear energy into the country by way of making it impossible for Iran to develop nuclear weapons from those nuclear power plants. Normalizing relations with Iran would be a very difficult task to accomplish. Last fall Ahmadinejad was asked: “Are America and Iran fated to be in conflict?” He answered by

¹⁵⁹ Takeyh 8.

stating that “The U.S. government should not interfere with our affairs. They should live their own lives. They should serve the interests of the U.S. people. Then there would be no problem with that.”¹⁶⁰ It appears as though Ahmadinejad does not want war with the U.S., he only wants the U.S. out of Iran’s business. However, the longer the U.S. stays out of Iran’s business, the faster Iran will likely develop a nuclear program.

Military action could be used against Iran, but only as a last resort. If it were to be proven that the development or testing of an Iranian bomb was imminent, and all other methods were exhausted, the United States may possibly consider pre-emptive strikes to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon that may one day be in the hands of a terrorist organization. The Iranian government does not necessarily always have complete control over the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, and therefore would not necessarily have complete control over an Iranian nuclear weapon program. Posen claims that a country would not give a nuclear weapon to an uncontrolled entity for fear of its own weapon being used on itself. However, if the government does not have complete control over the nuclear weapons, then they do not have complete control over who obtains those weapons and, therefore, the United States will need to take measures to ensure a nuclear weapon does not fall into the hands of a terrorist organization. The United States cannot allow Iran to become a nuclear weapon state for fear of the greater regional instability after U.S. forces leave the region. A nuclear-armed Iran, especially without a U.S. presence in the region, could unleash a wave of terror and fulfill its quest of becoming the dominant power in the Middle East.

¹⁶⁰ MacLeod, Scott. “A Date With a Dangerous Mind.” *Time* (25 Sept 2006): 34.

AFTERWORD

This thesis was completed just prior to the release of the November 2007 National Intelligence Estimate entitled *Iran: Nuclear Intentions and Capabilities*.¹⁶¹ This most recent NIE provides a current assessment of the Iranian nuclear program and a ten-year outlook for the program. It “examines the intelligence to assess Iran’s capability and intent (or lack thereof) to acquire nuclear weapons, taking full account of Iran’s dual-use uranium fuel cycle and those nuclear activities that are at least partly civil in nature.”¹⁶² This report is certainly worth some discussion as it gives further thought to many of the previous assumptions in regards to the Iranian nuclear program. It could also revise how the U.S. will formulate its foreign policy towards Iran in regards to its nuclear program. Below, I summarize the findings of the report, examine how it relates to the main arguments of this thesis, and consider what the strategic implications for the U.S. and Iran are at this time.

One of the main points of the National Intelligence Estimate is that until 2003, the Iranian military, under the auspices of the Iranian government, was working on a nuclear weapons program; however, the report indicates Iran has since ceased that work (at least up until the middle of 2007). The report also assesses it was likely that international pressure was responsible for the Iranian government ceasing the development of nuclear weapons, and this suggests that, in the words of the report, “Iran may be more vulnerable to influence on the issue than we judged previously.”¹⁶³ The suspension of the nuclear weapons program could also be contributed to embarrassment on the part of officials in

¹⁶¹ National Intelligence Estimate: *Iran: Nuclear Intentions and Capabilities*. National Intelligence Council (November 2007).

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

the Iranian government due to the revelation of its secret nuclear weapons program.¹⁶⁴

The report goes on to state that Iran likely does not have enough fissile material at this time to produce nuclear weapons and would need to acquire it elsewhere in order to build a weapon within the next one to two years.

Iran has claimed to have abandoned its nuclear weapons development; however, according to the NIE the country continues to develop technical capabilities and continues to enrich uranium with its civilian enrichment program, which could be used to produce energy or used in a nuclear weapon.¹⁶⁵ This is certainly a cause for concern, and the IAEA should monitor the program closely to ensure that Iran is using this enriched uranium for peaceful purposes only. Due to the findings in the National Intelligence Estimate it is important to address the possible policies I presented in my thesis. The use of pre-emptive strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities by the U.S. should be considered extreme at this time. Ray Takeyh states that this report “essentially removes the possibility of a military confrontation between the United States and Iran over the nuclear issue. The president and the candidates for the [U.S.] presidency can go around and talk about all options on the table, but the military option at this point is not on the table.”¹⁶⁶ The primary reason behind this is that the U.S. would need to obtain support from the international community and carry out a multilateral operation; obtaining this support would likely be extremely difficult considering the outcome of the situation in Iraq and the findings in the NIE. If the U.S. were to take unilateral military action it would risk

¹⁶⁴ Perkovich, George. “Assessing the NIE.” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. (4 December 2007). <<http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications>>.

¹⁶⁵ National Intelligence Estimate.

¹⁶⁶ Gwertzman, Bernard. “Takeyh: Immediate Threat of War with Iran Now Reduced.” *Council on Foreign Relations*. (4 December 2007). <http://www.cfr.org/publication/14953/immediate_threat_of_iran_war_reduced.html?breadcrumb=%2F>.

distancing itself even more from other nations, causing those nations to lose trust in the U.S. Joseph Cirincione, from the Center for American Progress, stated that the NIE “undercuts the argument for a military strike and strengthens the case for engagement” and that he and many other experts have always “believed Iran was years away from the ability to make nuclear fuel or a nuclear bomb.”¹⁶⁷

The implementation of a strict containment policy on Iran would also be difficult to justify, given that it could cause more of the Iranian population, especially the Western-leaning young generation, to rally around Ahmadinejad; thereby giving him even more power while making it difficult to begin any coordinated efforts between the West and Iran to arrive at a solution. A containment policy would also need multilateral cooperation for reasons along the same line as military action. The U.S. would not be able to single-handedly contain Iran, but it would also be extremely difficult to obtain multinational cooperation basing it on the grounds of an Iranian nuclear weapon, one that does not likely exist at this time. Some experts, such as Ray Takeyh, suggest that Western nations would have been more willing, previous to this report, to agree to tougher sanctions or implementing a policy of containment on Iran, but this was out of fear of the U.S. resorting to military action if it could not gain international support for these measures.¹⁶⁸

It is also important to address the U.S. government’s response to this NIE. Even though the NIE assesses that Iran has ceased development of a nuclear weapon, the U.S. is still calling on the international community to tighten sanctions and pressure Iran to

¹⁶⁷ Verjee, Zain and Charley Keyes. “Analysis: Report takes steam out of Iran hawks.” *CNN.com*. (3 December 2007).

¹⁶⁸ Gwertzman.

vow not to develop nuclear weapons and to suspend all uranium enrichment. U.S.

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates states:

While we must keep our options open, the United States and the international community must continue -- and intensify -- our economic, financial, and diplomatic pressures on Iran to suspend enrichment and agree to verifiable arrangements that can prevent that country from resuming its nuclear weapons program at a moment's notice -- at the whim of its most militant leaders.¹⁶⁹

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has also stated that the U.S. will maintain a “two-track” strategy which consists of calling for new sanctions and holding talks to persuade Iran to acknowledge its nuclear aspirations and capabilities.¹⁷⁰ At this point Iran should still be required, at least temporarily, to cease uranium enrichment activities and other nuclear-related activities. Sanctions should also be continued to ensure this happens, in order to provide the IAEA with an acceptable environment to adequately inspect the situation. The UN needs to decide if Iran should be allowed to develop a peaceful nuclear program, assuming that the ability exists to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapons program.

The bottom line of the National Intelligence Estimate is that Iran likely has “the scientific, technical and industrial capacity eventually to produce nuclear weapons if it decides to do so.”¹⁷¹ Iran may have currently stopped its nuclear weapons development; however, it has operated a clandestine nuclear weapons program in the past and there is a possibility that the same efforts could be continuing, or that they could restart in the future. George Perkovich, of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, sums up how this report plays well to Iran:

¹⁶⁹ --. “U.S. wants more pressure on Iran.” *CNN.com*. (8 December 2007).

¹⁷⁰ --. “Rice: U.S. still wants Iran sanctions.” *CNN.com* (7 December 2007).

¹⁷¹ National Intelligence Estimate.

Iranian leaders appear to have recognized that by staying within the rules they can acquire capabilities sufficient to impress their own people and intimidate their neighbors, without inviting tough international sanctions or military attack. The NIE, in a sense, says that Iran is playing the game so well that stopping it may not be possible within the rules. The question then arises: who can muster the international political will to change the rules?¹⁷²

Continuing or resuming a nuclear weapons program could be considered a rational action on the part of Ahmadinejad given the history of foreign intervention in Iran. Just over the last century Iran has seen, among others, Russia, Britain, and the U.S. at its doorstep attempting to influence national affairs and Ahmadinejad may feel the only way to keep his country secure is to have nuclear weapons in his arsenal. Be that as it may, it will certainly be alarming if Iran does indeed develop a nuclear weapon, in which case the conclusions of this thesis would still be relevant and the options for the U.S. formulating its foreign policy towards a possible Iranian nuclear weapons program can be revisited.

¹⁷² Perkovich.

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