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## US/IRAN RELATIONS AND THE POLITICS OF NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION

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### **Abstract**

*The International Community is increasingly becoming more concerned about its overall security situation. This concern is as a result of events that range from natural disasters to man-made catastrophes such as wars, acts of terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, etc. The growing proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (such as chemical, biological and nuclear weapons) has generated concern in some member states of the International Community, notably the US and her allies. This opposition by the US and her allies such as the EU3 (comprising Britain, France and Germany) and Israel to the Iranian nuclear programme has generated a protracted conflict in the international arena. While the US and her allies maintain that Iran is secretly developing a nuclear weapons programme, Iran consistently insists that its nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes only. At the moment, there is no proven evidence provided by the US and her allies, nor the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), to suggest that the Islamic Republic of Iran has a secret nuclear weapons programme. In addition, the Iranian Nuclear Program poses no existing threat to international security. Rather, the axis states are using the nuclear proliferation issue to pursue their desired political and economic interest in relation to Iran. Specifically, they want Iran to end its hostility towards Israel and also to stop sponsoring terrorism as well as supporting Hezbollah and Hamas in Lebanon and Palestine respectively.*

**Keywords:** Nuclear technology, nuclear weapon, Non-proliferation, Iran, USA.

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## **Introduction**

Iran started its nuclear programme in 1953 during the Shah Reza Pahlavi's regime with a plan to build 20 nuclear power reactors. Under the Pahlavi regime, the Iranian Nuclear Programme enjoyed US support. In 1959, the Iranian Nuclear Research Centre (INRC) was established under the management of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI). The research centre was equipped with a US-supplied 5-megawatt nuclear research reactor fuelled with highly enriched uranium which became operational in 1967 (Aftergood & Kristensen, 2007).

Following this development, Iran signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1968 and ratified it in 1970. The Shah's Government approved a plan to construct 25 nuclear power stations by the year 2000 with the assistance of the US. The Shah envisaged that in time, oil supply would either run out or would be in short supply (Aftergood & Kristensen, 2007). Owing to the bitter relationship between Iran and USA which developed immediately after the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979, the US turned around and pressured the IAEA against rendering any assistance to Iran. The Islamic revolution has made a reversal in Iran-US nuclear cooperation which also affects their diplomatic relations to date.

The current controversy between Iran, on the one hand, and the US and her allies notably, Israel and EU3 (Britain, France & Germany) on the other, over the former's nuclear programme, started following revelations by Iranian dissidents that Iran had a secret nuclear weapon programme at two locations, one at Natanz and the other at Arak. In November 2004, Iran's Chief Nuclear Negotiator announced that, under the Paris Agreement, Iran would voluntarily suspend her Uranium Enrichment Programme even though uranium enrichment is not in any way a violation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Iran later demanded an amendment of the terms of the Paris Agreement to exclude activities for research purposes (Aftergood & Kristensen, 2007). The ongoing confrontation between the US and Iran over the latter's nuclear programme is essentially not aimed at campaigning against nuclear proliferation; rather the axis forces are merely mobilizing international support in order to instigate and justify a possible

attack on Iran. This is principally to weaken Iran militarily and economically as a regional power in the Middle East, similar to what they did to Iraq. Where this motive becomes difficult for the axis states, they hope to continue to impose sanctions against Iran in order to isolate it from the international community. The US and her allies are determined to continue pressurizing Iran until it denounces her open threats to Israel and USA as well as stop supporting terrorism, and giving assistance to Hezbollah and Hamas in Lebanon and Palestine respectively.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This paper is premised on Deterrence Theory. Deterrence is an old strategy of defense. As a theory, Deterrence was first developed by Bruce Russett. In its simplest form, deterrence is the persuasion of one's opponent that the costs and/or risks of a given course of action he might take would far outweigh its expected benefits. (see George and Smoke cited in Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff 1981:368). Although Thucydides did not use the term, he nonetheless prescribed deterrence to statesmen. He wrote an account of the Peloponnesian war (431 – 404 B.C) focusing on relative power among Greek city states, and observed that “the strong do what they have the power to do and the weak accept what they have to accept” (quoted in Goldstein and Pevehouse 2006:56). Corroborating Thucydides, Machiavelli argues, thus: “the wise prince must keep power in his own hands, and must never be the cause of another becoming more powerful than himself” (Machiavelli, in Nelson 1982:107).

The Cold-War conflict, in particular the arms race between the United States of America and the former United Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) and between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the defunct Warsaw Pact in general, engendered further developments in deterrence as a theory. It is essentially a military strategy aimed at preventing or discouraging an intended aggressor from carrying out his course of action. Deterrence is the prevention of another's unwanted action by wielding the threat that he will undergo undesirable consequences if he decides to proceed (Dougherty, & Pfaltzgraff 1981:376).

Essentially, deterrence is a particular kind of political relationship in which one party tries to influence the behaviour of another in a desired direction. It involves a particular distinctive kind of influence that rests directly and openly upon threat of sanctions or deprivation. It is an attempt by party "A" to prevent party "B" from undertaking a course of action which "A" regards as undesirable by threatening to inflict an unacceptable cost upon "B" in the event that the prohibited action is taken. The core concept, of course, on the basis of which the requirements of strategic deterrence are calculated, is the maintenance of a Mutually Assured Destruction Capability for retaliation after a surprise attack (Patrick Morgan, in Dougherty & Pfaltzgraff 1981:378).

Deterrence is a psychological phenomenon aimed at influencing the intention and consequently the actual behaviour of an adversary in a desired direction. It therefore does not involve physically obstructing a certain course of action, but rather making that action appear highly costly and unattractive. Deterrence attempts to restrain the intending aggressor from undertaking his intended course of action. In other words, the intending aggressor is prevented from doing what he is contemplating by being made to believe that to refrain from the action is in his best interest, and by refraining, he will not suffer any consequences.

Deterrence involves the threat rather than the application of sanctions, and the threat is contingent. It will be carried out and the cost actually inflicted in the event that the prohibited action takes place. It gives the party being deterred every incentive to refrain from the prohibited course of action. Simply, the former's behaviour is highly dependent upon the actions of the latter. In deterrence, the fulfilment of the threat often takes the form of retaliation, after a transgression has occurred. In this regard, the US and her allies are axiomatically assured that once Iran possesses nuclear weapon, nothing would prevent her from becoming a regional power in the Middle East. Consequently, Iran can effectively prevent any would-be aggressor against her. For this reason the US and her allies are not comfortable and remain highly suspicious of the Iranian nuclear programme. As such, blocking Iran is strategically in the interest of

the axis states in general and Israel in particular which is a regional power in the Middle East.

### **US – Iran Politics of Nuclear Non-Proliferation**

There are two contending claims over the Iranian nuclear programme. On the one hand, the US and her EU3 allies (comprising Britain, France, Israel and Germany) claim that the Iranian nuclear programme is for military purpose, and that, it is in violation of the Iranian obligation under the Non-Proliferation Treaty. On the other hand, Iran consistently insists that its programme is for peaceful purposes. In other words, that it is for civilian use only. The US and her allies argue that Iran is a “rouge state” and a sponsor of terrorism on a global scale. For this important reason, Iran must be stopped from achieving her nuclear ambition. The former US President, G. W. Bush states that:

The gravest danger to freedom lies at the perilous crossroads of radicalism and technology. When the spread of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, along with ballistic missile technology – when that occurs, even weak states and small groups could attain a catastrophic power to strike great nations. Our enemies have declared this very intention, and have been caught seeking these terrible weapons. They want the capability to blackmail us, or to harm us, or to harm our friends – and we will oppose them with all our power. (in Hutcheson 2002:2)

Indeed, the former US Permanent Representative to the United Nations Security Council, John Bolton, was very specific on those states Bush referred to as hostile, when he stated that:

Dictators in hostile states such as Iran, Iraq and North Korea already posses some WMD (Weapons of Mass Destruction) and are developing others. Their terrorist allies are in search of such weapons, and would waste no opportunity to use them against us (in Hutcheson, 2002:)

Bolton concludes that such states must not be allowed to acquire nuclear technology. According to him, 'stopping the spread of missile and nuclear technology through non-proliferation efforts forms another critical element of the New Strategic framework.... Above all, we must ensure that, would-be proliferators are not allowed access to the materials and technology needed to develop WMD' (in Hutchson, 2002).

The US government made it a matter of priority to prevent any state it believes is hostile to it and her allies from possessing nuclear technology and materials. The US has been particularly concerned over the Iranian nuclear programme. The former US Assistant Secretary of State for Non-Proliferation, John S. Wolf, also maintains that:

The proliferation threat posed by Iran is stark and multifaceted. Iran has an ambitious nuclear program, longstanding chemical/biological programs and a rapidly increasing ballistic missile program. At the same time it is a leading exporter of support for terrorist groups. Iran is actively seeking to develop and improve all aspects of its WMD and missile programs. Its clandestine effort to produce fissile materials is a particular worry. We must be under no illusions; Iran is intent on acquiring nuclear weapons and is actively seeking the foreign assistance it needs to achieve this objective (in Hutcheson 2002: 2)

Wolf earlier remarked that 'Marshalling international efforts to deny proliferators the materials, equipment, expertise, and technology necessary to pursue weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and the means to deliver them has long been a priority of the US government' (in Hutcheson 2002:2). Within the intellectual circle, some scholars argue that Iran is driven by necessity for self-defence to acquire nuclear weapons in order to deter her hostile neighbours, particularly Israel, from taking any acts of aggression against her. Alexander observes that:

The underlying belief is that Iran has enough motivation to pursue the nuclear weapon option because of the

dangerous neighborhood in which it resides. Seeking a nuclear weapons option would be consistent with some key realist principles like self-reliance, independence and equality. Nuclear weapons might be attractive for a state like Iran lacking dependable access to advanced (expensive) conventional arms and deprived of strategic allies, suppliers and friends. (Alexander, 2004:4)

Alexander further argues that Iran's rivalry with her neighbours, namely Iraq and Israel, revived its nuclear programme which was abandoned after the Islamic revolution. He observes that:

The Islamic Republic's formative security experience was its 1980–1988 war with Iraq, in which it learned bitter lessons regarding war peace and international politics. Frustration and anger over the battlefield reverses were exacerbated by the international community's behavior. Iran was the victim of Iraq aggressions, including repeated chemical attacks, both clear breaches of international law. Yet virtually no country came to its aid either directly or by effectively sanctioning Iraq. (Alexander, 2004:5)

Alexander further added that Iran's other concern in the Middle-East has been Israel, as part of the ongoing Arab-Israel conflict. The possibility of Israel possession of nuclear weapons added to the discomfort and Israel become the other motivation for Iran's need to develop nuclear weapons (Alexander, 2004:6).

Alexander got it right by arguing that Israel is perceived as an adversary to Iran in the Arab-Israel; conflict. It is a valid argument to hold that Iran would likely side with the Arabs in any conflict with the Jewish state. This argument is corroborated by the Iranian spiritual leader Ayatullah Sayed Ali Khamanei when he stated in his pilgrimage massage to the Muslims in 1991 that "usurper Zionist regime was the biggest danger threatening the present and the future state of the Muslim world" (Echo of Islam, September, 1991:38). He urged world Muslims to do something about the Israel-Palestinian conflict. Khamanei categorically warned that:

Today when the bloody uprising of the Muslim masses in Palestine is changing into a real, serious threat to the unscrupulous occupationists whose acts of inhumanity and criminality recognize no boundaries, the ways and methods of the enemy have become alarmingly more complicated. (*Echo of Islam*, September, 1991:38)

Khamanei further called on the world Muslim community to support and assist the Palestinians against the state of Israel:

However, it is the Muslims of the world who shall confront this danger and defeat it. They must extend their assistance to Muslim combatants and thereby strengthen and fortify the uprising inside Palestine. They should employ every possible means to prevent the governments of the region from compromising with the state of Israel at the behest of the United States. (*Echo of Islam*, September, 1991:39)

Besides the threat posed by Iraq and Israel, Iran equally sees and treat the US as another credible threat to her national survival. Since the Iranian Islamic Revolution of 1979, the US has been aggressive towards Iran. Ayattollah Sayed Ali Khamainei warns that the US is determined to dominate the world, especially the rich and sensitive regions such as the Middle-East, and maintain naval patrol of particularly the Persian gulf. Khameini argues that: 'If this threatening dream is translated into reality, then there will be a dark era for the peoples of this region, the like of which has never been witnessed in history' (*Echo of Islam*, September 1991:38).

Khameini further asserts that the US's desire to dominate the world, in particular the Middle East equally poses a threat to Islamic civilization and existence. 'It is a great threat to our Islamic existence in this region and it would be a great threat to mankind wherever such domination is secured by the arch-satan' (*Echo of Islam*, September 1991:38).

The end of the cold war between the US and the former USSR in particular, and between the Western bloc and the communist bloc in general, has made the US emerge as the most dominant state in global affairs, determined to eliminate any opposition to its interest. In particular, the US is seen to pursue a policy aimed at weakening Islamic regimes and movements globally. With regards to this, Khamainei reiterates that: 'The American Satan, being now free from the complications of the so-called cold war, is now determined to enter into a full-scale war against the Islamic awakening that is the only fortified obstacle on the path of its evil designs' (Echo of Islam, September 1991:38).

It is true that Iran is living in a hostile neighbourhood with Iraq (though Nuri Maliki is shiah and relates well with Iran now) and Israel as well as the presence of U.S. naval force in the Persian Gulf being sources of anxiety all of which could motivate Iran to develop nuclear weapons. This viewpoint is further expressed by Einhorn:

The Europeans and Americans seem to agree that the Iranians at a minimum are seeking enrichment and other fuel-cycle facilities not only to fuel reactors, but also to give themselves the capability to produce Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) for nuclear bombs. (Einhorn, 2004:4)

On the other side of the divide, the Islamic Republic of Iran consistently maintains that its nuclear programme is purely for peaceful purposes. The Iranians argue that it is essentially against the ideology and principles of the Islamic Republic to acquire nuclear weapons. They dismissed the claim of the Western European countries and the United States of America as false and baseless. According to Zarif: "...the hysteria about the dangers of an alleged Iran nuclear weapon program rest solely and intentionally on misperception and outright lies" (Zarif, 2005:8).

The Iranians consistently maintain that their nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes and in doing so Iran plans to produce part of the nuclear fuel needed to generate the required 20,000 megawatts locally. The Secretary to the Iranian Supreme

National Security Council, Dr. Ali Larijani, stated on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2006 that:

In accordance with its adopted program to generate 20,000 megawatts of nuclear electricity in the course of the coming 20 years, the Islamic Republic of Iran plans to produce a portion of the required nuclear fuel inside the country and endeavors to procure the needed fuel. (Larijani, 2006)

On the issue of fulfilling her obligation to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, Iran argues that it has been fully committed. Accordingly, Larijani maintains that:

The Islamic Republic of Iran, in the course of the past three years, has fully cooperated with the IAEA under the comprehensive safeguards agreements as well as through voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol and even beyond. Accordingly, Iran enabled the IAEA inspectors to carry out around 2000 person-days of inspection and over 53 complementary accesses to different sites across the country. Moreover, all activities and nuclear installations in Iran have been under IAEA Safeguards and monitored by the agency. (Larijani, 2006)

The Islamic Republic of Iran has presented its justification for pursuing a nuclear energy programme. The representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Security Council, Dr. Javad Zarif wrote in the *New York Times* of April 6, 2006, on the justification of the Iranian nuclear energy programme. He stated that although it is true that Iran is rich in oil and gas, these resources are finite, and given the pace of Iran's economic development, they will be depleted within two to five decades. With a territory of 1,648,000 Km<sup>2</sup> and a population of about 70 million, projected to be more than 205 million in 2050, Iran has no choice but to seek access to more diversified and secure sources of energy (*New York Times* 2006).

Zarif further argues that having been a victim of a pattern of deprivation from peaceful nuclear material and technology, Iran cannot solely rely on procurement of fuel from outside sources. Such dependence would in effect hold Iran's multi-billion dollar investment in power plants hostage to the political whims of suppliers in a tightly controlled market (New York Times 2006).

Zarif's argument to a large extent seems convincing, looking at the rate at which these same great powers, particularly the US, usually freeze foreign accounts and assets of countries in the name of sanctions. An example of countries which have fallen victims to debilitating sanctions and emasculation are North-Korea and Libya among others. Secondly, energy is to national survival what water is to fish. Should Iran rely on foreign supply for her nuclear fuel, it simply would translate into Iran creating a condition of dependency on nuclear fuel and, at the larger scale, dependency on a volatile foreign energy supply. Thirdly, depending heavily on the outside world for nuclear fuel supply would amount to surrendering sovereignty and making Iran more vulnerable to external control or influence.

It is therefore, not rational for whatever reason for Iran to rely on external sources for her nuclear fuel supply. Besides, it is not in violation of the Non-proliferation Treaty for any country pursuing a nuclear programme for peaceful purposes to depend solely on internal sources of nuclear fuel by way of nuclear enrichment as far as such a country meets her N.P.T obligations, which Iran persistently insists it had done so. Iran allowed the IAEA to carry out a series of inspections which is considered the most thorough inspection of any member state of the IAEA. Iran maintains that the IAEA inspected all the requested sites beginning from 2002 and it (Iran) had also signed the Additional Protocol on safeguard on 18 December, 2003 and implemented it. "In addition Iran submitted to the IAEA more than 1000 pages of declaration under the Additional Protocol" (Zarif, 2006).

The IAEA, following its inspection, reported that Iranian nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes. The Agency confirmed that "to date, there is no evidence that the previously undeclared nuclear material and activities ... were related to nuclear weapons program"

(IAEA report, 2003:75). The IAEA further reported in 2006 thus: “As indicated to the Board in November 2004 and again in September 2005, all the declared nuclear materials in Iran have been accounted for” (IAEA, report, 2006:15). The IAEA reaffirmed that it “has not seen any diversion of nuclear material to nuclear explosive devices” (I.A.E.A. report, 2003:75).

In line with the reports of the IAEA, Iran maintained that her nuclear programme poses no threat to the international community. Coincidentally, the opinions of the overwhelming majority of member states of the international community seem to corroborate the Iranian position. For instance, the Non-Aligned Movement at its Ministerial meeting of the coordinating bureau at Putrajaya (Malaysia) 27 – 30 May 2006, issued a statement on the Iranian nuclear issue. In paragraph 2, the Ministers reaffirmed;

The basic and inalienable right of all states, to develop research, production and use of atomic energy for peaceful purpose, without any discrimination and in conformity with their respective legal obligation. Therefore, nothing should be interpreted in a way as inhibiting or restricting the right of states to develop atomic energy for peaceful purposes. State choices and decisions in the field of peaceful uses of nuclear technology and its fuel cycle policies must be respected. (NAM/MM/COB/2006:1)

Here, the Non-Aligned Movement recognized a state’s inalienable right to develop a nuclear programme for peaceful purposes and the choices made by states on this issue must equally be respected, in so far as they are not in violation of the Non-proliferation treaty. The ministers in paragraph 3 of their statement further maintained that:

“We recognized the international Atomic Energy Agency (IEAE) as the sole competent authority for verification of the respective safeguard obligation of member states and stressed that there should be no undue pressures or interference in the Agency’s activities, especially its

verification process, which would jeopardize the efficiency and credibility of the Agency (NAN/MM/COB/2006:1)

It is clearly stated here in the document that the Non-Aligned Movement rejected any attempt by any state or group of states to proclaim the right to be responsible for the verification and safeguard of member states of the N.P.T. beside the IAEA. It equally rejects as unacceptable for any state or group of states to unduly pressure or interfere with the activities of the IAEA. In other words, the Non-Aligned Movement is questioning the legitimacy of the EU3 (Britain, France and Germany) in collaboration with the United States of America in interfering with the IAEA's verification of the Iranian nuclear programme. The rejection equally indicates that the duo (EU3 and the USA) are not representing the collective opinion of the member states of the IAEA nor the international community as a whole. This is because the Non-Aligned Movement constitutes the majority of the member states of the N.P.T. and a larger portion of the international community as a whole. Finally, the ministers in paragraph 8 of their statement appear very categorical

The Ministers strongly believed that all issues on safeguards and verification, including those of Iran should be resolved within the IAEA frameworks, and be based on technical and legal grounds. ....the agency should continue its work to resolve the Iranian nuclear issue within its mandate under the statute of the IAEA.  
(NAM/MM/COB.2006)

Besides the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of Islamic Conference in its Ministerial meeting held in Baku (Indonesia) strongly expressed concern over the undue pressure mounted on Iran by the EU3 (Britain, France and Germany) in alliance with the United States of America. The OIC in the Baku meeting adopted a resolution supporting Iran's peaceful nuclear programme. It states as follows:

- i. Any attempt aimed at limiting the application of peaceful uses of nuclear energy would affect the sustainable development of developing countries,
- ii. Rejected discrimination and double standards in peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and
- iii. Expressed concern over any unwanted consequences on the peace and security of the region and beyond of threats and pressure on Iran by certain circles to renounce its inalienable right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purpose (OIC, 2006).

Both the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organisation of Islamic Conference resolutely reject the interference in the activities of the IAEA and the undue pressure to prevent the Islamic Republic of Iran from locally enriching uranium for nuclear fuel. They intimated that Iranians have the inalienable right to a peaceful nuclear programme. The duo see no threat posed by Iran to international peace and security. Consequently, the pressure by the EU3 and United States of America is a deliberate effort to deny Iranians what is their inalienable right for some reasons other than the promotion of the non-proliferation regime.

The second political dimension of the Iranian nuclear programme is more complex and protracted. That is the international political dimension. Despite consistent claims by Iran that its nuclear programme is basically for civilian purpose, there exists strong international speculation and conspiracy that Iran is secretly enriching uranium with the intention of making a bomb. This is the position taken by the US, Israel and the EU3.

The pressure on and opposition to the Iranian nuclear programme by these states has created an internally united front in Iran in support of their nuclear programme and common opposition to the US pressure on Iran to give up what it calls its inalienable right to nuclear energy. Iranians see the pressure as an attempt to deprive them of development. The Iranians side of the discourse is that they want to be known and seen as a modern, developing state with a modern, developing industrial base. The history of relations between Iran and the West for the last hundred years has included

Iran's developing various kinds of industrial and technological advances to prove to themselves and to attempt to prove to the world that they are in fact, that kind of a country.

The Iraman regime feels that the United States opposition to its nuclear programme is a violation of Iran's inalienable right. The US takes it for granted that Iran's nuclear programme is for military purposes. The US applies a double standard in the treatment of states on this issue. For instance, the US and her allies maintain a high-level conspiracy of silence over Israeli nuclear weapons. At the moment, it is no secret that Israel has over 200 nuclear warheads in her arsenals (Aftergood & Kristensen, 2007:8). Both Israel and Iran are in the Middle-East region and have been hostile to each other since the fall of 1979 following the Iranian revolution. Iran could only deter Israel from carryingout military attacks against it if it possesses nuclear weapons with the capability of effectively launching a preemptive or retaliatory attack on Israeli homeland. Iranian nuclear programme is thus a reactive one, purposely as a means of deterrence against Israel and the western world, including the US. The case of North Korea today is a good example.

In this politics of nuclear non-proliferation, it does not matter whether or not Iran has nuclear weapon programme. The US and her allies are determined to push and go ahead with the campaign against Iran. So long as Iran remains a strong state in the Middle East and so long as Iran is hostile to Israel, the conflict would always remain unchanged. History may likely repeat itself, as in the case of Iraq, where the same US and Israel claimed that Iraq was developing weapons of Mass Destruction, a claim which turned out to be false and baseless. "Everybody, including Donald Rumsfeld, agrees the programme was destroyed 12 years ago (said one US expert in (*Washington Post* Sunday 26 October 2003:1).

### **Conclusion**

It is apparent from the foregoing that the ongoing campaign by the United States of America, the EU3 and Israel against the Iranian nuclear programme is characterized by international politics of power struggle and the regional politics of Middle East power relations, particularly between Israel and the Islamic Republic of

Iran. The Iranian authorities, on the one hand, consistently maintain that their nuclear programme is essentially for peaceful purposes and that they have no intention of developing nuclear weapons, as doing so would contradict the philosophy of the Islamic state. Indeed, the Iranian spiritual leaders have openly declared that nuclear weapon is against the principle of their state and the tenets of Islam. The United States and her allies, on the other had persistently claim that Iran has a clandestine nuclear weapon ambition. They argue that Iran is a major sponsor of international terrorism; that it is supporting Hezbollah and Hamas in Lebanon and Palestine respectively. And that these two liberation organizations resort to terrorism and cannot hesitate to use nuclear weapons to attack Israel if they possess it. As such, to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear technology and weapons would guarantee Israel and the US security in the international arena.

However, analysis has shown that, the growing pressure against Iran from the US and Israel over the former's nuclear programme is not essentially to prevent proliferation, but rather to protect some vital interest of the United States and Israel. These interests range from the elimination of Iran as a power contender to Israel in the Middle East, to reducing Iranian growing influence in the Middle East and the Great Central Area, as well as to eliminating any Iranian threat to the US interest in the Middle East, particularly in the Persian gulf, coupled with the objective of weakening Hezbollah, Hamas and the alliance between the Assad regime in Syria and the Shiite control Iran.

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