

Iran's Nuclear Program: A Case Study

Dr. Naheed Anjum Chishti¹

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Abstract

The main theme of the research is to discuss the importance of nuclear program for Iran. It also focuses on the role of big powers. The study also presents the different phases of development in the nuclear program of Iran. Iran has strategic importance in the region. The viability of the country is oil and other resources. The US and worldwide countries expressed their concerns over the Iran's nuclear program. Iran continuously stressing that this program is not for war purposes. The research paper analyses the current scenario of the foreign policy of Iran. It also discusses the possibilities of the successful achievement of Iran's nuclear program. The approach will be descriptive and analytical. The research emphasized on original and secondary sources there are findings and bibliography in the end.

Key Words: Tehran Nuclear Research Center, Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), International Atomic Energy Agency.

Introduction

Reza Shah Intended to start the nuclear program in Iran with the help of United States, Reza Pahlvi ordered the establishment of an institute at Tehran University—The Tehran Nuclear Research Center- -and negotiated with the United States to supply a five –megawatt reactor. Over the next decade, the United States provided nuclear fuel and equipment that used to start up its research. On July 1, 1968, Iran signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) on the day it opened for signiture. Six year's later Iran completed its Safeguards Agreement with the International atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

By the 1970s, France and Germany joined the United States in providing assistance to the Iranian nuclear program. Regional wars and prediction of a looming energy shortfall prompted the shah to explore alternative forms of power production. In March 1974, he established the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, and announced plans to “get, as soon as possible, 23000 megawatts 9electricity) from nuclear power stations.” By the mid-1970s, Iran had signed contracts with Western firms- - including France's Farnatome and Germany's Kraftwerk Union- - for the construction of nuclear plan and supply of nuclear fuel.

Despite the early and sustained flow of nuclear technology to Tehran, Western governments support for Iran's nuclear program began to erode ahead of the Islamic Revolution of 1979. In August 1974, a U.S. special national intelligence estimate (PDF) declared that while “Iran's much publicized nuclear power intentions are entirely in the planning stage,” the ambition of the Shah could lead Iran to [pursue nuclear weapons, especially in the shadow of India's successful nuclear test in May 1974.

P. J. Crowley, U.S. State Department Spokesman said, “If Iran is willing to enter into serious negotiations, then they will find a willing participant in the United States and the other countries. (P.J.Crowley)

This concern led to withdraw support for Iran's nuclear program. Pressure on France which in 1973 signed a deal to build two reactors at Darkhovin and Germany, whose Kraftwerk Union

¹ Chairperson and Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Balochistan, Quetta, Pakistan.



began building a pair of reactors at Bushehr in the 1975 to the cancellation, the seizure of U.S. hostages, and termination of diplomatic relations in 1979, U.S. opposition to Iran's nuclear efforts increasingly during the 1980s and 1990. Washington blocked nuclear deals between Iran and Afghanistan, China, and Russia.

The withdrawal of Western support after the Islamic Revolution slowed Iran's nuclear progress, the exodus of nuclear scientists, and the destruction of Iraq's nuclear facility by Israel in 1981, which removed an immediate threat - - sent Iran's nuclear program into a tail. But many nonproliferation experts believe Iran became interested again in a nuclear program by the mid -1980s. Leonard S. Suspector, deputy director of the Center for Nonproliferation studies, writes there is evidence Iran received assistance from Pakistani nuclear scientist A.Q.Khan as early as 1985, though it was not until the death of Khomeini in 1989 that Tehran's efforts reached critical mass.

In a boost to the civilian nuclear effort, Russia in January 1995 picked up where Germany off, signing a contract with Iran to complete two 950-megawatt light -water reactor at Bushehr (with fuel supplied by Russia). (Edith M, Lederer). During 1990s, US vehemently opposed Bushehr deal between Russia and Iran. Continued to deny the US allegations that its nuclear program is for peaceful purpose and within the framework of NPT, to which it is a signatory. International skepticism of Iranian intentions was first aroused intentions was first aroused in August 2002 when a London-based Iranian opposition group disclosed details about a secret heavy -water production plant at Arak, as well as the underground enrichment facility at Natanz. In May2003, State Department spokesperson Richard Boucher said the disclosure of Arak and Natanz raised serious questions about Iran's nuclear intentions.

"We believe Iran's true intent is to develop the capability to produce fissile material for nuclear weapons" These revelations coupled with subsequent admissions from Iran that it has concealed aspects of program, prompted the IAEA to intensify inspections. (Richard Boucher. Spokesman U.S. State Department reported on May 2003.).

While international inspectors have never found concrete evidence linking Iran's nuclear program to weapons development, Iran's concealment of its program—like the partially constructed enrichment facility near Qom, which Western officials say was under construction for years before Iran's disclosure in the year of 2009—has fed concerns. In a June 2003 report (PDF), IAEA inspectors concluded that Iran had failed to meet obligations under its Safeguards Agreement signed in 1974.

"Iran has not cooperated with the Agency in connection with the remaining issues... which need to be clarified in order to exclude the possibility of there being military dimensions to Iran's nuclear program."(IAEA Director General Mohammad Eilbaradi reported on June 2003).

In 1992, following media allegations about undeclared nuclear activities in Iran, Iran invited IAEA inspectors to the country and permitted those inspectors to visit all the sites and facilities they asked to see. Director General Blix reported that all activities observed were consistent with the peaceful use of atomic energy. (Blix, Director General IAEA reported in 1992).

National Council of Resistance of Iran, publicly revealed the existence of two nuclear sites under construction: a uranium enrichment facility in Natanz and a heavy water facility in Arak.It has been strongly suggested that intelligence agencies already knew about these facilities but the reports had been classified.

France, Germany and the United Kingdom (the EU-3) undertook a diplomatic initiative with Iran to resolve questions about its nuclear program. On 21 October 2003, in Tehran, the Iranian government and EU-3 Foreign Ministers issued a statement known as the Tehran Declaration. (Tehran Declaration)

Iran agreed to cooperate with the IAEA, to sign and implement an Additional Protocol as a voluntary, confidence –building measure, and to suspend its enrichment and reprocessing activities during the course of the negotiations. The EU-3 in return explicitly agreed to recognize Iran's nuclear rights and to discuss ways Iran could provide "satisfactory assurance" regarding its nuclear power program, after which Iran would gain easier access to modern technology. Iran signed an Additional Protocol on 18 December 2003, and agreed to act as if the protocol were in force; making the required reports to the IAEA and allowing the required access by IAEA inspectors, pending Iran's ratification of the Additional Protocol. (Tehran declaration signed between France Germany and United Kingdom on 21 October 2003).

The IAEA reported 10 November 2003 that "it is clear that Iran has failed in a number of instances over an extended period of time to meet its obligations under its Safeguards Agreement with respect to the reporting of nuclear material and its processing and use, as well as the declaration of facilities where such material has been processed and stored". (IAEA reported on 10 November 2003 about the failure of Iran to meet the obligations by Safeguard Agreement).

Iran was obligated to inform the IAEA of its importation of uranium from China and subsequent use of that material in uranium conversion and enrichment activities. It was also obliged to report to the IAEA experiments with the separation of plutonium. On the question of whether Iran had a hidden nuclear weapons program, the IAEA's November 2003 report states that it found No Evidence that the previously undeclared activities were related to a nuclear weapons program, but also that it was unable to conclude that Iran's nuclear program was exclusively peaceful.

On 14 November 2004, Iran's chief nuclear negotiator announced a voluntary and temporary suspension of its uranium enrichment program and the voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol, after pressure from the United Kingdom, France, and Germany acting on behalf the European Union (EU, known in this context as the EU-3). On 24 November, Iran sought to amend the terms of its agreement from this deal for research work.

Before the Paris agreement was signed, Dr. Rohani stressed that they should be committed to neither speak nor even think of a cessation any more. The ambassadors delivered his message to their foreign ministers prior to the signing of the Paris agreed text. The Iranians made it clear to their European counterparts that if the latter sought a complete termination of Iran's nuclear fuel-cycle activities, there would be no negotiations. The Europeans answered that they were not seeking such a termination, only an assurance on the non-diversion of Iran's nuclear program to military ends. (Paris Treaty signed between Iran and France).

IAEA Board of Governors deferred a formal decision on Iran's nuclear case for two years after 2003, while Iran continued cooperation with the EU-3. On 24 September 2005, after Iran abandoned the Paris Agreement, based largely on facts that had been reported as early as November 2003. On 4 February 2006, the 35 members Board of Governors of the IAEA voted 27-3 (with five abstentions: Algeria, Belarus, Indonesia, Libya and South Africa) to report Iran to the Security Council. The United Kingdom, France and Germany sponsored the measure, and it was backed by the United States. Two permanent council members, Russia and China, agreed to referral only on condition that the council takes no action before March.

In late Feb 2006, Director Mohammad El-Bradei raised the suggestion of a deal, whereby Iran wove up industrial –scale enrichment and instead limit its program to a small – scale pilot facility, and agree to import its nuclear fuel from Russia. The Iranians indicated that while they would not be willing to give up their right to enrichment in principle, they were willing to consider the compromise solution. However, in March 2006, the Bush Administration made it clear that they would not accept any enrichment.

President Ahmdinejad vowed that Iran would not back away from uranium enrichment and that the world must treat Iran as a nuclear power, saying “Our answer to those who are angry about Iran achieving the full nuclear fuel cycle is just one phrase. “Be angry at us and die of this anger, because we won’t talk with anyone about the right of the Iranian nation to uranium.”

Qolam Ali Hadad-adel, speaker of Iran’s parliament, said on 30 August 2006, that Iran had the right to “peaceful application of nuclear technology and all other officials agree with this decision,” According to the semi- official Iranian Students News Agency,” Iran opened the door to negotiations for Europe and hopes that the answer which was given to the nuclear package would bring them to the table.”(Qolam Ali, speaker of Iran’s Parliament gave statement on 30 August 2006 about the right of Iran’s peaceful nuclear program).

The UN Security Council

The UN Security Council has passed seven resolutions on Iran:

- Resolution 1696 (31 July 2006) demanded that Iran suspend its uranium enrichment activities, invoking Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter to make that demand legally binding on Iran.
- Resolution 1737 (23 December 2006) imposed sanctions after Iran refused to suspend its enrichment activities. (The United Nation Security Council passed the Resolution 1696 on 31 July 2006).
- Resolution 1747 (24 March 2007) expanded the Iranian entities and welcomed the proposal by the permanent five members of the Security Council plus Germany for resolving issues regarding Iran’s nuclear program.
- In 1803 (3 March 2008), the Council decided to extend those sanctions to additional persons and entities, impose travel restrictions on sanctioned persons, and ban exports of nuclear and missile- related dual- use goods to Iran.
- Resolution 1929 (9 June 2010) imposed a complete arms embargo on Iran, banned Iran from any activities related to ballistic missiles, authorized the inspection and seizure of shipments violating these restrictions, and extended the asset freeze to the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL). The resolution passed by a vote of 12-2, with Turkey and Brazil voting against and Lebanon abstaining. A number of countries imposed measures to implement and extend these sanctions, including the United States, the European Union, Australia, Canada, Japan, Norway, South Korea, and Russia. (UN, Resolutions. Text).

On 30 July 2007, inspectors from the IAEA spent five hours at the Arak complex, the first such visit since April. Visits to other plants in Iran were expected during the following days. It has been suggested that access may have been granted in an attempt to head off further sanctions. In late October 2007, according to the International Herald Tribune, the head of the IAEA, Mohammed Elbaradi, stated that he had seen “no evidence” of Iran developing nuclear weapons. The IHT quoted Elbaradi as saying “we have information that there has been maybe some studies about possible weaponization. That’s why we have said that we cannot give Iran a pass right now, because there is still a lot of question marks. In a Feb 2009 press interview, IAEA Director Elbaradi said Iran has low enriched uranium, but “that does not mean that they are going tomorrow to have nuclear weapons, because as long as they are under IAEA verification, as long as they are not weaponizing, you know. In February 2010, the IAEA issued a report scolding Iran for failing to explain purchases of sensitive technology as well as secret tests of high – precision detonators and modified designs of missile cones.

In August 2010, the IAEA said Iran has started using a second set set of 164 centrifuges linked in a cascade, or string of machines, to enrich uranium to up to 20% at its Natanz pilot fuel enrichment plan.

The majority of Iranians are in favor of nuclear program. A pole in September 2010 by the International Peace Institute found that 71 percent of Iranians favored the development of nuclear weapons drastic hike over the previous polls by the same agency. (ReportIPI)

Iran's nuclear program is being vehemently opposed by the United States. United States has double standards on Iran's nuclear program.

U.S. and western countries oppose the present Iranian nuclear program more for geo-political reasons than any legalities arising from infringement of NPT provisions.

The U.S Senate has passed a resolution that reaffirms U.S. efforts to stop Iran from developing a nuclear weapon. The decision comes a day after Senator Joseph Lieberman, the head of the Senate Homeland Committee, accused Iran of sponsoring cyber attacks against major American financial institutions.

He said he believes the attacks were a response to "increasingly strong" economic sanctions that the U.S. and its European allies have put on Iranian financial institutions.

These are the some of the findings of a new poll conducted by the Program on International Policy Attitudes the Anwar Sadat Chair for Peace and Development at University of Maryland.

14% American said that the U.S. should openly encourage Israel to strike Iran's Nuclear Program. Fifty-eight percent believe that Iran has decided to try to produce nuclear weapons working to do so. If Israel and Iran have Military Conflict, Americans say U.S. should stay out.

Conclusion

In the light of above discussion, it is concluded that Iran is not ready to withdraw from the enrichment of nuclear program. Due to the changing world scenario, Iran wanted to be atomic power for its national strength.

Iran believes that the Iranian nuclear program is being treated with political consideration than a technical approach which the UN specialized agency (IAEA) is expected to take.

On the other hand, International community has its own reservation particularly Israel.

The question that pertinent is that if tomorrow the present regime is replaced by a U.S. backed regime, would the United States withdraw its objections then. A new poll finds that only one in four Americans favors a military strike against Iran's nuclear program. Seven the U.S. and other major powers continuing to peruse nuclear Iran.

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