

# STRATEGIC IMPACTS OF IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM

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## **Abstract**

*Iran becomes a nuclear weapon state in immediate future or not is hard to predict forecasted, however, this study reveals the implications of a nuclear Iran for the Middle East in specific and the world at large. Unlike De Gaulle, a nuclear analyst who opined that the possibility of the states with nuclear weapons behaving illogically has been based on unfounded fear and blown out of proportion, the analysts belonging to other school of thought assume that if Iran gains nuclear status, it would enhance her influence on the Arab states that would increase rift between Shiite and Sunni states of the Persian Gulf, the signs are already visible. Some analysts also believe that in future, nuclear Iran would go to war in Middle East that probably would be nuclear, against the U.S. and Israel. None of these scenarios can be either accepted or rejected out-rightly. Even the accord between Iran and P-5 plus 1 does not provide clear direction as to how Iran would behave 10 years down the line if strict measures are taken by the U.S. and its allies. However, it is viewed that the situation for Pakistan as a result of a nuclear armed Iran might not be as grim as considered by some scholars. Pakistan and a nuclear Iran being the two neighbouring countries might continue to enjoy good brotherly relations.*

**Keywords:** Middle East, Persian Gulf, P-5 plus 1.

## **Introduction**

There is a general consensus amongst the scholars/analysts that Iran's nuclear program has strategic implications. Iran's quest for nuclear weapons is perceived by the West as the most dangerous development at the strategic level. The discovery of Iran's nuclear program during the early part of the last decade and its continuous defy complying with

the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) safeguards agreements has pushed Iran to the center of international attention.<sup>1</sup> Despite denials, Iran's continuous delay to explain inconsistencies in IAEA findings and safeguards raised alarms that its peaceful nuclear program was being diverted to nuclear weapons development.<sup>2</sup> It is because of the nuclear concerns that the P-5 plus1 conducted extensive dialogue with Iran for a prolonged period and managed to strike a deal though, the contours of the deal have yet not been crystallized. To analyze Iran's approach towards nuclear weapons correctly, one needs to look at the security and geopolitical environment of Southwest Asia and the greater Middle East.

Given its bitter history with the United States (U.S.) and its troops in Afghanistan and Iraq, Iran is increasingly concerned about her influence in the region. Adding nuclear-armed Israel to the situation, Iran suddenly finds itself in a hostile environment with increasing isolation.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, it is believed that Iran is also concerned about the future discourse of the U.S. that had captured Iraq even after it did not possess nuclear or chemical weapons.

Iran is conscious of the fact that if Iraq had the nuclear weapons, the U.S. would not launch offensive attack twice during early 1990s and later on during 2003. Iran is therefore, watchful of its weakness vis-a-vis that of the U.S. and Israel. Above all, Iran does not enjoy good relations with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) especially Saudi Arabia which also maintains a well equipped military establishment fully backed by the U.S, being its close ally.

It is believed that these are emerging strategic threats to Iran's sovereignty which compel her to look for alternative security arrangements. Like any other state, Iran is also expected to follow the realist school of thought by perusing the 'Theory of Realism'.<sup>4</sup> Keeping in view its security concerns and limitations, Iran seems to maximize its security by acquiring nuclear weapons as explained by Kenneth Waltz in his theory of 'Neo-realism' or 'Structural Realism'.<sup>5</sup>

Since 2003, working both tracks was kept secret by Iran in violation of the IAEA safeguards agreements. As listed in the Director General's report of September 2005, Iran failed over an extended period of time to report on important transactions and activities; to declare the existence of important facilities; to provide design information; and on many occasions, to cooperate or facilitate the implementation of the safeguards.<sup>6</sup> In 2005, Ahmedinejad said in his election campaign speech, "I don't agree with those who say the nuclear issue has created a crisis for the country. What crisis? Nuclear technology is our right and no one can deprive us of it. We have come so far, and, God willing, we will need just one more push [to reach it]".<sup>7</sup>

Later on, Obama administration tried to convince Iran to give up its plan and extended numerous friendly gestures. Obama said, "If countries like Iran are willing to unclench their fist, they will find an extended hand from us" but Iranian regime did not change its attitude and continued to behave aggressively by adopting back and fro policy on the issue of its nuclear program.<sup>8</sup>

In the backdrop of these developments, some nuclear non-proliferation experts like Orde Kittrie further suggests that the America and her allies should intensify sanctions to increase negotiating leverage with Iran. They believe that the existing level of sanctions against Iran is quite weak as compared to the sanctions imposed against other countries during 1990s including Libya, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Yugoslavia, Haiti and South Africa.<sup>9</sup> Kittrie suggests that instead of outsourcing the mission to Israel, U.S. should do the job itself because Israel's involvement would make the issue more intricate.<sup>10</sup>

This research paper aims at understanding, how Iranian nuclear program has made strategic impacts on the regional security and stability in specific and the world at large. The arguments presented in this paper have been unfolded in following sequence: One, brief history of the Iranian nuclear program, two, NPT obligations and Iran, three, Iranian nuclear program and its implications for the regional stability,

fourth, the nuclear danger and the possible way forward and finally the conclusion.

### **NPT Obligations and Iran**

Nuclear weapons continue to pose a threat to the world community. The Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, (NPT) signed more than four decades ago, established a significant framework for the security in the world.<sup>11</sup> The treaty constrained free will of obtaining the nuclear weapons.<sup>12</sup> Despite being signatory to the treaty, Iran will ultimately go for development of nuclear arsenals because she continues to defiance the compliance. Iran has thus, created strategic threat to the regional stability.<sup>13</sup> It is viewed that the recently concluded agreement between the U.S. and Iran might give a pause to the ongoing strategic threat to the regional stability, but Iran being a realist country, might come back to pursue its nuclear program after a decade as soon as she regains the economic strength.

Iran believes that each nation has the 'inalienable right' to enjoy the benefits of the peaceful use of nuclear energy, in conformity with the provisions of non-proliferation and safeguards obligations in the NPT and the IAEA statute. Iran considers that it has the right to access peaceful nuclear technology and accordingly, it has given its expression of readiness to guarantee the 'three Ss', safety of its facilities and operation; security of facilities and materials; and safeguards. Tehran's official stance on the issue is that the enrichment of uranium has nothing to do with the development of nuclear weapons but in reality, all indicators are going against Iran's declared stance.

### **Iranian Nuclear Program: Implications for the Regional Stability**

As pointed out earlier, Iranian nuclear program dates back to later half of 1950s and continued to prosper till late 1979. The U.S. cooperation with Iran turned into confrontation after the fall of Pahlavi. Since then, the U.S. pursued a coercive

diplomacy towards Iran. In turn, the discourse of the Iranian leadership in the backdrop of Islamic Revolution clearly demonstrates that Iran considers the U.S. as its number one enemy referring it as 'the Great Satan'. Since 1979, both the countries have had bitter experience of dealing with each other. Making hostage of 52 diplomats of the U.S. Embassy by Iran from late 1979 to early 1981 was a serious issue. It ended into a disaster because all the members were killed during the U.S. operation to rescue them from Iran's captivity. It brought huge embarrassment for the U.S. back home.<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore, the Iran-Iraq war had a detrimental effect on Iranian nuclear program as Iraq frequently bombed the Iranian nuclear installations. It is viewed that Iraq was duly supported by the U.S. during its 10 years war against Iran. However, there is a consensus on the view that the Israeli attack on Osirak nuclear reactor in 1981 and subsequently, the first Gulf War in 1991 must have convinced Iran that without a credible deterrence, it stands no chance to effectively defend its interests and stature in the region.

Additionally, as explained earlier, the U.S. presence in the region and its support to Saudi Arabia is yet another factor that must have encouraged Iran to look for credible security mechanism to protect its supreme national interests in the region and beyond. In this background, during 1991, Iran succeeded in obtaining nuclear cooperation from China thus, she reinitiated its nuclear ambitions as China provided the components of Uranium conversion at Isfahan.<sup>15</sup> Subsequently, Iran also managed to negotiate a contract with Russia in 1995 to complete the nuclear facility at Bushehr.

Since the Islamic revolution, the U.S. was always wary of the Iranian nuclear program and perceived it as a threat to Israel and vital U.S. economic and strategic interests in the Middle East. The U.S. apprehensions were based on the behaviour of the Iranian leadership who frequently hinted to strike against the U.S. and Israel's interests. The former Iranian President Rafsanjani, in a speech at Tehran University in December 2001, specified that "on the day Iran comes into

possession of a nuclear weapon, Israel will cease to exist". Additionally, the U.S. is also worried that Iran is already working on the Shihab-5 missile; it will enable her to hit the U.S continent in addition to Israel.<sup>16</sup>

As Gold Dore in one of his writing states "The Iranian nation will not give up until the corrupt leadership in the world has been obliterated".<sup>17</sup> Iranian nuclear program has in fact created dilemma for P-5 plus 1. Since 2003, it has been evidently proven that Iran has been violating its international commitments by passing the existing system. The Director General of the IAEA has identified "many breaches of Iran's obligations to comply" with the safeguards, Iran agreed to under the NPT.<sup>18</sup>

In the backdrop of the international pressure, keeping the Iranian nation united was a vital factor for the President of Iran. In researchers' view, the narratives structured and promoted by Ahmadinejad were probably aimed at convincing the domestic audience to remain united in the face of economic difficulties that Iran was likely to face due to the international sanctions and the sanctions that the U.S. imposed unilaterally.<sup>19</sup>

The U.S. security concerns notwithstanding, the imposition of latest round of UN sanctions in June 2010 has put Iran in a further defiant mode with a belief that pushing Iran further would prove to be counterproductive and may compel her to pursue a course towards an acquisition of nuclear weapons similar to that of the North Korea. Probably, it was because of this reason that during the prolonged parleys with Iran, the U.S. and her allies did not cross the 'redlines' despite the fact that they had been frustrated by Iran quite often. Resultantly, they could not draw maximum advantage of the long awaited agreement between Iran and the P-5 plus1. Timmerman and Kenneth in the book "Countdown to Crisis: The Coming Nuclear Showdown with Iran" has analyzed Iran's nuclear weapon program and its impacts by giving the facts that former CIA Director R. James Woolsey is of the view that acquiring a nuclear weapon would embolden Iran to

become more aggressive in a number of ways against the Iraqi government. Albeit, the political situation in Iraq has already turned in Iran's favor. Nuclear capability will also embolden the regime to stamp out domestic dissent. At the same time, it will actively seek ways of lashing out at what it sees as the sources of that dissent: the U.S. and Israel.<sup>20</sup>

Indyk and Martin in the book "Restoring the Balance: A Middle East Strategy for the Next President" has discussed that in order to contain Iran's nuclear program, although diplomatic efforts could not be so far successful, yet it will take 2-3 years that Iran acquires the capability of nuclear weapons. The intrinsic problem to detect and monitor weapon program denotes most consistent measure and capability of producing nuclear fissile material, the most challenging technological hurdle in development of nuclear weapons.<sup>21</sup> Whether or not Iran could develop the capability, it took considerable amount of time by prolonging the dialogue process with the P-5 plus 1. Mahjoob Zweiri in his article "Arab-Iranian relations: New Realities", discussed how Arab and the GCC countries perceived Iranian nuclear program. Soon after Ahmadinejad came into power, Arab countries, as well as the European Union and the U.S., expressed their concern about Iran as a threat to security in the Middle East. The GCC countries are apprehensive of the using Russian technology by Iran.<sup>22</sup>

These concerns have been articulated by Arab officials and GCC countries. The foreign minister of Saudi Arabia has announced that the Iranian nuclear program is not a threat to their country, but at the same time, he has asked Iran to pay more attention to the demands of the international community. Egypt takes the same position. Interestingly, the secretary of the Arab league has criticized Arab countries for not doing enough to have their own nuclear program so that they can join the nuclear club and follow the examples of Pakistan and India.<sup>23</sup>

The U.S. and Israel have proclaimed that Iran, with nuclear weapon capability, is unacceptable and all options including military strikes are on the table. Israel's stance

regarding attack on Iran's nuclear investiture is older than the hardliner regime and had in fact helped them in coming to power. Most neutral experts believe that there is no way to stop Iran from acquiring the ability of nuclear weapons. Even if Israel makes a decision to attack on Iranian's nuclear program, there is very rare chance of completely eradication of Iran's conventional military and nuclear capacity. The Israeli initiative might complicate the situation in the Middle East.<sup>24</sup> Irrespective of the decision that Israel might take in future to eliminate Iranian nuclear capability, she is not convinced about the positive outcome of the agreement between Iran and the P-5 plus 1. Thus, Israel has explicitly criticized the deal and registered her concerns with the U.S. decision makers.

Nonetheless, Israeli initiatives to eliminate Iranian nuclear program would involve such a heavy cost for the U.S. and Europe which would be far greater than having a nuclear Iran in the region.<sup>25</sup>

➤ **Iran's Nuclear Program and Arab World**

- Arab World shows great concern over Iranian nuclear program and their strategic ambitions. The world powers are concerned about the response of major countries in the Middle East, like Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Egypt. Iran's nuclear proliferation will comprise a considerable threat to the security of the region. Hence, counter security measures in the form of nuclear weapons technology would remain as an option open on table by the other regional states. Krepon concluded that if Iran is not contained, it might lead to the spread of unsafeguarded enrichment plants in the Middle East that will doom the NPT.<sup>26</sup>
- 2003 has been marked as a turning point because Iran's bitter relationship to its neighbors became more stressed as Iran made achievements in two fields. Firstly, the civilian nuclear plant at Bushehr was near to completion and Iran started arrangements for its operation. Secondly, the

reactors having capacity of producing weapon grade uranium were discovered at Arak and Nantanz. The Middle East's Arab states took two years in clasp the fact, as King Abdullah of Jordan stated, "the rules of the game have changed" consequently, uncovering Iran's nuclear activities paved way for revitalization of nuclear program.<sup>27</sup> Iran's advancement became a major distress of Arab countries, because Iran also remains involved in the internal matters of some of the Arab states.

- Iran did not re-assure the regional countries about the environmental effect of civil nuclear plant at Bushehr. Moreover, in Middle East, the balance of power would incline the U.S. and (possibly) Saudi Arabia to support an Israeli attack, if not publicly, then privately, country that seems prepared to take out Iran's nuclear program by launching pre-emptive strike.

➤ **Regional Dominance and Hegemony**

- Iran, in the Middle East, has two major objectives; first establishment of its hegemony in the region, especially, in 'Strait of Hormez' and the second is exporting Shiite revolution to other countries in the Middle East. Most of the countries in the region have fears that if Iran becomes a status of nuclear state, its hardliner regime would possibly utilize this weapon as a psychological instrument to establish her hegemony. Iran would, obtain bargaining position and international importance because of its control over the oil supply route.
- Iran seems pursuing 'Defensive Realism promoted by Waltz, but when we consider it in the regional context, Iran's strategy appears to be offensive in nature, following Mearsheimer's school of thought which persuades her to maximize military power vis-a-vis that of the other regional states with an ultimate aim to gain regional hegemony.<sup>28</sup>

- Hence, a nuclear Iran might force her regional adversaries to follow the strategy of ‘Defensive Realism’ by maximizing their security. This situation would create a state of ‘Security Dilemma’ in the region that might lead to an unending competition in arms race including acquisition of nuclear weapons.<sup>29</sup>
- **Rift between Sunni and Shiite**
- Iran’s endeavors for exporting Shiite to other countries with nuclear weight behind. These efforts could critically multipart the rift between the Sunnis and Shiites within the entire region. This would also have severe effect on Pakistan. Pakistan, having friendly relationship with both Iran and Middle East’s Sunni states could face a very hard situation to choose Iran, a Shiite state, or other Sunni states of the Middle East. It would also cause stress among Sunni and Shiite sects in Pakistan.
  - Pakistan being the next door neighbor and a center for Shiite-Sunni conflict is likely to suffer more especially with Iran becoming a nuclear state. Regrettably, since the last four decades, Pakistan has failed to contain the influence of the outside powers especially that of Saudi Arabia and Iran which has made Pakistan a battle ground to promote their respective brands of religion. With Iran becoming nuclear, it might come up with more strength to encourage Shiite in Pakistan without caring for its sensitivity.
  - This kind of scenarios would have very serious consequences for the whole region engulfing the entire Middle East where the majority of the established Muslim communities live. It is believed that the outside powers might not be very serious about containing the conflict of this scale among the Muslims.

➤ **Serious Blow to NPT**

- If Iran becomes a nuclear weapon state, it would seriously damage the efforts for non-proliferation. Other regional countries, for example, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Jordan and Egypt (some of them already hinting at starting their nuclear programs) would be compelled to go nuclear. This situation would lead to a stage where the NPT might become fruitless. Since we live in realist world therefore, we must expect a matching response from the regional states to protect their respective national interests.
- Additionally, if Iran becomes a nuclear state, it would open a Pandora box and encourage South Korea, Japan and Indonesia<sup>30</sup> as well as Malaysia<sup>31</sup> to pursue their nuclear programs in South Eastern region. This development would also help North Korea to further strengthen its stance over the nuclear program and its possibility to come back in the NPT fold would be minimized.
- Finally, the leading provisions of NPT have already been shattered by the U.S. and its allies by striking a nuclear deal followed by the waiver given by the Nuclear Supplier Group to India. There are over 44 countries with nuclear weapons' technology. If Iran is not stopped, no one would be able to stop all 44 nuclear technology possessor states from developing nuclear weapons' program. Therefore, a nuclear Iran would have implication for the whole world.

➤ **Bolstering Non State Actors**

- In case Iran succeeds in developing its nuclear weapons technology, she might bolster non state actors like Hezbollah, Hamas, Islamic Jihad and splinter groups in Northern Alliance in Afghanistan. This scenario might embolden these groups to undertake clandestine and surgical operations within Israel and Afghanistan respectively.

- It would significantly increase the violence at regional level, besides further strengthening these groups militarily. Pakistan would also be confronted with a troublesome scenario as some groups operating from Pakistani soil usually adopt a hostile posture towards Iran which would profoundly affect the Iran-Pakistani relations in this power struggle.
- **Escalating Scenario towards Israel**
- Presently, Iran is involved in hostile diplomatic relations with Israel and the U.S. Though, Iran has developed political conflict with the U.S., its conflict with Israel is religious in nature. Iranian leadership has been hinting to eradicate Israel, following the advent of their twelfth Imam, called Imam Mehdi.
  - Iranians believe that the world would have to face a situation of anarchy and turmoil, prior to advent of Imam Mehdi hence, an Israel's invasion on Iran or some catastrophic occurrence of alike magnitude would paved the way for advent of Imam Mehdi<sup>32</sup> and he would subjugate the whole world, starting from East to West, thus, establishing Shia rule throughout the world.
  - Therefore, it is opined that if Iran gains the nuclear power, it might launch a nuclear attack on Israel to create favorable condition, in the light of their belief regarding arrival of Mehdi. Furthermore, Israel contemplates nuclear Iran to be threat to its existence<sup>33</sup> primarily for its size that recognizes it to be a country of single bomb.<sup>34</sup> It is because of these concerns; Israel is convinced that if diplomacy fails, the sole method to avert Iran from attaining the nuclear capability would be the full military attack.<sup>35</sup>
  - While Israel has guaranteed the U.S. to refrain from assaulting Iran, till they feel to be left alone and forsaken however, she is of the view that the moment of action against Iran would come soon for

which Israel's army is fully prepared regardless being a challenging mission.<sup>36</sup>

➤ **Easing of Pressure on Pakistan**

- From realist perspective, no country would like to have a powerful neighbor and Pakistan is no exception. The national interests get preference over all other factors. A nuclear Iran, as a next door neighbor is not in Pakistan's national interest. Pakistan has had a neighbour with nuclear weapons in the East, and therefore, it would not like to have another neighbour with nuclear weapons along its western border.
- In the international relations, today's friend can be tomorrow's enemy. Secondly, one has the flexibility to change friends but there is no possibility to change neighbours. Prior to Iran-Iraq conflict, no one could imagine that Iran would suffer for 8 long years due to war imposed on her by Iraq. Likewise, prior to the Iranian revolution, no one could imagine that one day, Iran would stand in the opposite camp of the U.S.
- Nonetheless, on the plus side, if Iran succeeds in attaining the capability of nuclear arms, this would release international pressure, especially by the West, on Pakistan. It would generate new debate over legality of Iran's nuclear arms that might help Pakistan strengthening its position on its nuclear program including its stance over the issue of fissile material cutoff treaty.

➤ **Iranian Nuclear Weapons - A Political Bargain**

- Some analysts in the western diplomatic circles believe that Iranian nuclear capability doesn't pose a threat to the West rather it is a weapon for a grand political bargain especially against the U.S. This is also the assessment of Australian Office of the National Assessments which has recently been made public through a leaked wiki leaks cable.<sup>37</sup> It

would therefore, be naive to think that the Iranian regime will adopt a suicidal approach to directly confront with either the U.S. or Israel only to lose all the political and diplomatic benefits of the nuclear capability.

- Despite an agreement between the P-5 plus-1 on November 24, 2013 in Geneva on a six-month ‘Joint Action Plan’, the interim deal could not make any headway for negotiations over a longer term comprehensive agreement. During the deal, Iran was able to get several months of relief and gained time to look for an alternative strategy.<sup>38</sup> However, the U.S. administration is optimistic that the “Joint Action Plan’ is being followed in letter and spirit by Iran.<sup>39</sup>
- Another round of negotiations was held between Iran and P-5 plus-1 at Vienna to conclude a nuclear deal which ended on November 24, 2014.<sup>40</sup> The extensive dialogues continued for five days without making any headway.<sup>41</sup> After a long discussion, the deadline was extended to finalize the nuclear agreement on Iran’s nuclear program, until July 01, 2015.<sup>42</sup> The two sides also “extended the Geneva nuclear deal, which was signed in last November for providing Iran with some sanctions relief in exchange for Tehran agreeing to limit certain aspects of its nuclear activities”.<sup>43</sup>
- The fresh deadline has given sufficient cushion to Iran to think over its future strategy and come back with a renewed vision to protect its national interests without further annoying the stakeholders. Miles A. Pomper opines that the next phase too is unexpected to lead to the long term agreement which could impose permanent restriction on Iran’s enrichment program. <sup>44</sup> Pomper is of the view even if the U.S. is able to strike a deal; Iran could still violate the terms and conditions thus, would continue to use its nuclear weapons program as a

bargaining chip with the U.S. and its allies including P-5 plus 1.<sup>45</sup>

- Kittrie, reinforces what Pomper has said about Iranian intents. He says, “It seems likely that Iran will violate the temporary freeze agreement, as it violated a similar agreement in October 2003, or that follow-on negotiations will fail to extend the temporary freeze”.<sup>46</sup>
- Mark Dubowitz and Kittrie opined that “In the absence of verifiable Iranian commitments not to proceed with nuclear-weapon and ballistic-missile research, there is nothing to stop Iran from having a designed bomb and ballistic missile ready to go”.<sup>47</sup>
- The P-5 plus 1 group and Iran on July 14, 2015 entered into a comprehensive agreement called as the “Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action”, in order to limit the sensitive nuclear activities of Iran.<sup>48</sup> Iran in return, has succeeded to secure the relief of about 150 billion dollars that were frozen in the banks in European countries and also lifting of the international sanctions gradually in fields of energy, trade, finance and transport.<sup>49</sup>

### **Nuclear Dangers and the Way Forward**

Once Iran completes a dash to weapons-grade uranium, it can insert the warhead and quickly have a deliverable nuclear weapon. Therefore, as suggested by Albright and others, “Washington and its allies must insist that Iran verifiably stops increasing the number and quality of its centrifuges. Anything short of that will leave Iran far too close to an undetectable breakout capacity”.<sup>50</sup>

The latest accord is an attempt in the right direction but it is still not a foolproof system to ensure that Iran roll back its nuclear program. In the long term, Iran is unlikely to compromise nuclear program even if it is given extra ordinary space by the P-5 plus-1 unless its security concerns are addressed amicably. Krepon suggested that “At this juncture,

the best of a poor set of choices is to constrain Iran's nuclear capability under close scrutiny".<sup>51</sup> Persuading Iran for adherence to the Additional Protocol of the IAEA and its greater cooperation with the Agency is also essential to give confidence to the international community that Iran is serious to implement the latest accord with P-5 plus 1.

A long term diplomatic resolution of the issue depends upon America's readiness to deal with Iran in transparent manner by adopting the policy of cooperation, instead of confrontation. The success of the recently concluded agreement between the U.S. and Iran depends how Washington behaves with Iran in coming years. A greater cooperation from the U.S. might help them in maintaining and sustaining the agreement in the long term.

However, depending upon the political and strategic situation in the region, the leverage to abrogate the treaty remains with Iran. Therefore, the authors sincerely believe that besides cooperation, a deterrence of a more serious consequences must also be created by the U.S. so that Iran does not exercise the option of sabotaging/abrogating the recently concluded 'accord' at any stage.

The fact requires dire consideration that Iranian President has very less role in formulating Iran's nuclear program. The President only implements the instructions issued by Iranian Supreme Leader. Therefore, if the West has to deal with the Iranian nuclear issue, they should try to get an access to the Supreme Leader rather than relying on the statements of the President.<sup>52</sup>

Finally, in the larger interest of the Middle East and the world, the U.S. will have to resolve Palestinian issue and take away the genuine cause of the insecurity from Israel. It having resolved the long pending Palestinian issue, similar to that of the Kashmir, comprehensive dialogue for Middle East nuclear weapons free zone (NWFZ) be initiated. Unless, this initiative is taken, this region would remain under tension and unending debate would continue without any result.

## **Conclusion**

Impact of Iran's nuclear program has mostly resulted from its leadership. Former President Ahmedinejad believes that God has entrusted him with a divine mission. Some people in Iran are worried about threat of the U.S. and Israeli attack on their nuclear facilities. The options of isolating Iran from the world will be direr then to reduce the Iranian quest of nuclear weapons. It will be a threat to global security.

There should be a comprehensive strategy to meet the Iran security dilemma and its future energy needs. The West should also consider living with nuclear Iran. However, if the nuclear risk in the Middle East is to be removed, serious talks should take place over Israel case to rollback its nuclear program for the sake of global security. That can be made possible only if Palestinian issue is resolved amicably. Additionally, the West must also understand the history and culture of Iranian nation and accordingly plan their negotiating strategy to deal with them.

Containment, sanctions or military action would not be a perfect or a foolproof policy against Iran's nuclear program. A weaker state has to see threats posed to its security by a much stronger state and the only viable response against such a threat is the nuclear deterrence. It is worth mentioning that Iran's security needs and regional objectives against the U.S. are compelling her to look for alternative security arrangements. If its national interests are well protected through assured guarantees, Iran might change its position and come forward with a positive response.

## **Notes**

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