Nuclear Iran
A Double-Edged Sword Diplomacy

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Abstract

In trying to solve Iran's alleged development of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), the "EU-3"- France, Germany, and England- accompanied by the efforts of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA),¹ initially adopted persuasive diplomacy that was later on transformed to coercive diplomacy. The complexity of Iran's nuclear issue finds its roots not only in Iran's on-off cooperation, but also in the very nature of the EU-Iran and US-Iran relationships coupled with the US's aggressive agenda and lack of clear strategy.

For years, the international community has been suspicious of the aspirations of the Iranian Republic to have its own nuclear technology, but no one really knew the sophistication of the program. Indeed, the peak of the Iranian nuclear capabilities issue regained strength in August 2002, when the National Council of Resistance of Iran, (an exiled front group for the *Mujahidin el- Khaleq*)² publicly presented evidence of two undeclared facilities at Natanz and Arak. Since then, the European Union represented by the "EU-3" and the IAEA have been actively involved in negotiations and talks with Iran in order to persuade the latter to collaborate and act in a more transparent manner. At a later stage of the conflict, Russia and China, who have major economic interests in Iran and hold the veto power in the UNSC, opted as well for an engagement policy vis-à-vis Tehran. However, unlike the latter parties who engaged Iran in an attempt to solve the nuclear case, the US adopted a radical, coercive approach from the beginning.

Even though several agreements have been signed between Iran and the European troika, the ink on paper failed to concretize, paved the way for mistrust, and reinforced the game of throwing the ball into the other's court. Indeed, Iran's recurrent attempts to save its head from the UNSC fell short on February 4, 2006. With a coercive diplomacy that has so far faltered coupled with a costly war option that could comprise dangerous consequences, the international community is in a race against time. Indeed, in their attempt to resolve the so called "Persian Puzzle", the world powers must consider more creative and realistic options that would satisfy Iran's needs as well as international concerns.

Thus, rather than being an alternative to war and a means to resolve conflicts peacefully, is diplomacy experiencing a change in its role in the age of terrorism and global threat? Will diplomacy's function diminish in favor of forceful means in order to satisfy the priorities of our time or is it still a paramount instrument of containing dangerous spillovers?

¹ The IAEA is one of the specialized agencies of the United Nations.

² Iranian opposition group based in Iraq.

Introduction

The suspicion of the international community vis-à-vis Iran's ambition to acquire Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) has always been omnipresent. In an attempt to resolve this issue, the diplomatic track was favored. Though the case was followed up by the persuasive approach of diplomacy at the early stages of the conflict, it is the coercive method that succeeded in gaining the upper hand.

Persuasive diplomacy- a non-coercive incentive of growing importance in our world- means "to use symbolic communication to influence others to change their perception of a conflict."¹ One party will do its utmost to influence an adversary that "what it seeks should be granted, without threats of coercion or promises of rewards."² Using persuasion may also arise from a common interest or value that the different parties share, like for instance, to avoid war or thrive for freedom and justice. In addition, "positive sanctions" can be used encompassing a promise or a grant of rewards, that are given either unilaterally, in anticipation of a reciprocate move, or if a situation of contingency is sensed.³

For its part, Coercive diplomacy means "to back one's demand on an adversary with a punishment for noncompliance that he will consider credible and potent enough to persuade him to comply with the demand."⁴ Hence, unlike the warrior school of diplomacy, coercive diplomacy is "an alternative to reliance on military action"⁵ for one's opponent is first accorded a chance to stop or undo what he's doing –using threats- before opting for military force as a last resort. In addition, coercive diplomacy functions on two levels of communication: words and actions.⁶ It is paramount to know that coercion is not only based on intimidation of chastisement but can also include positive assurances. This strategy is referred to as the "carrot-and-stick strategy"⁷ but it is up to the leader to decide if he/she wants to rely solely on sticks or encompass vital carrots that could very much settle the problem.⁸

¹ Louis Kriesberg, *International Conflict Resolution*. (USA: Yale University Press, 1992), p.12.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Alexander L. George, *Forceful Persuasion: Coercive Diplomacy As An Alternative To War*. (Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1991), p.4.

⁵ Ibid., p.5.

⁶ Ibid., p.9.

⁷ Ibid., p.10.

⁸ For more details on coercive diplomacy read Alexander L. George, pp.3-14.

The diplomacy over Iran's alleged development of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) has been undertaken by the European Union (EU), especially France, Germany, and England, referred to as the "EU-3," accompanied by the efforts of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), one of the specialized agencies of the United Nations (UN). The task of these parties experienced growing complexities due to several factors, among which. First, Iran's on-off cooperation and growing radicalism. Second, the nature of the Iran-EU/Iran-US relationship. Third the IAEA and the UNSC's entrapment in their weaknesses. Fourth, the US's nominal support to the EU diplomacy while being devoted to another scale of priorities. Indeed, the US was using diplomacy behind the scenes as a tool for power, that is, to advance their aggressive agenda at the expense of the EU and IAEA's continuous work to settle the issue through peaceful talks.

For years, the international community had been aware of the ambitions of the Iranian Republic to have its own nuclear technology, but no one really knew the sophistication of the program. Indeed, the peak of the Iranian nuclear capabilities issue regained strength in August 2002, when the National Council of Resistance of Iran, an exiled front group for the *Mujahedin el-Khaleq*⁹ publicly presented evidence of two undeclared nuclear facilities at Natanz and Arak.¹⁰ Since then, the European Union represented by the "EU-3" and the IAEA have been actively involved in negotiations and talks with Iran in order to persuade the latter to collaborate and act in a more transparent manner. Unlike the latter parties who engaged Iran in an attempt to solve the nuclear case, the US adopted a radical, coercive approach. In fact, Washington's position has been to accuse Iran from the start, of using the civilian atomic energy program as a cover to produce nuclear weapons. However, all the parties were unified in their call for Iran to halt its uranium enrichment and plutonium reprocessing activities that could be used in an arms program.

A historical agreement on the Iranian nuclear program was signed between the "EU-3" and Iran on October 21, 2003 that was welcomed by the international

⁹ Iranian opposition group based in Iraq.

¹⁰ "Dealing with Iran's nuclear program." *ICG Middle East Report*, no18, October 27, 2003. Amman/Brussels, p.1. Available at www.icg.org. The ICG or International Crisis Group is an independent, non-profit multinational organization working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict.

community, including the US. However, a decision by the Islamic Republic to restart the enrichment of uranium-which is the core problem of the Iranian nuclear dossier for it can be used to have nuclear weapons- intensified the negotiations of the parties, and a new agreement was reached on November 15 , 2004. Unfortunately, the ink on paper failed to concretize, paved the way for mistrust, and reinforced the game of throwing the ball into the other's court. In order to save the diplomatic process, and amid new Iranian threats to restart their enrichment program, a meeting was held in Geneva on May 25, 2005 between the "EU-3" and the Islamic Republic in order to avert the crisis. However, the 'iron hand' between the two parties had already gained ground, reaching its apex in early August 2005 with the rejection by the Iranians of the "EU-3"-American backed deal- and their decision to resume some of their nuclear activities. Since then, the belief in solving this conflict diplomatically was revived thanks to the still unfavorable conditions for any military action as well as a Russian proposal. This new proposition was part of another but perhaps final round of a three year diplomatic tempo. Finally, on February 4, 2006, the international community had no other option but to send the case to the UNSC where more forceful means could be agreed upon.

Before presenting the core parts of this thesis, it is imperative to clarify the following. Although many states have a legitimate right to question and doubt Iran's nuclear intention, the aim of this thesis is not to prove the existence or nonexistence of WMDs in Iran. Needless to say, WMDs oppose the very concept of human life and should be fought against their proliferation everywhere for the sake of the preservation of humankind. The purpose of this thesis is to study the diplomacy adopted in the Iranian nuclear dossier and reveal the limitations of this core tool of foreign policy that is being undermined vis-à-vis military options. To put it differently, rather than being an alternative to war and a means to resolve conflicts peacefully, is diplomacy experiencing a change in its role in the age of terrorism and global threat? Will diplomacy's function diminish in favor of forceful means in order to satisfy the priorities of our time or is it still a paramount instrument of containing dangerous spillovers?

In an attempt to develop an answer to these questions and understand the Iranian case, it is essential to first comprehend the individual respective policies of Iran, the EU, IAEA and the US. Second, the capacity of Iran regarding the WMD will be discussed followed by an assessment of the diplomatic negotiations, positions, and

demands set by the different parties to end this local problem that has an international ramification. Third, the limitations and challenges of diplomacy will be underlined.

Chapter I: Policies of Iran, the EU, the IAEA, and the US:

A Historical Overview

History is the reservoir without which hurdles we face in the present can not be fully understood. Hence, in order to grasp the current attitudes of the major players vis-à-vis Iran on the nuclear dossier, it is imperative to go back in time and trace the major events that permitted for the present state of affairs to take shape.

A. Iran – EU

Before tackling the policies of Iran and the European Union, one has to understand the Iranian-West European relationship over time. As Ziba Moshaver puts it, this relationship can be summed up as “*functional accommodation*” that was more due to internal Iranian transformations as well as international state of affairs, than a deliberate strategic change in favor of the Irano-European relationship.¹¹ In addition, this functional accommodation has been based on short term interests mainly economic, political and diplomatic. The latter two interests were made possible thanks to the great animosity between the US and Iran.¹²

Ziba Moshaver divides the EU-Iranian relationship in three phases.

In the first phase from 1979 to 1989, Moshaver describes the relations as being undertaken in a broader atmosphere that she characterizes as “Cold Peace”. In fact, what is important to remember is that this period was known for Iranian support to radical Shia groups including Hezbollah in Lebanon that were responsible for taking several western hostages. In addition, Europeans feared the revolutionary Islamic trend that could have destabilized the Middle East and hurt European economic interests especially that they were oil dependent and main traders in the region.¹³

The second phase from 1989 to 1997, experienced diplomatic and economic reforms in Iran under Rafsanjani. This situation paved the way for both parties to explore their “mutual functional interests” rather than their differences. On the one hand, Iran considered the EU as “a source of foreign loans, credit and investment that

¹¹ Ziba Moshaver, “Revolution, theocratic leadership and Iran’s foreign policy: Implications for Iran-EU relations.” *The Review of International Affairs*, vol3, no2, Winter2003, pp.283-284.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., pp.292-293.

economic restructuring needed. Moreover, (...) the EU was the second best choice as trade and diplomatic partner.”¹⁴ On the other hand, the EU viewed Iran as “an important source of oil and gas (...) with trade and investment opportunities (...) the EU needed to accommodate Iran to help free its hostages and avoid subversive activities on European territory.”¹⁵ In addition, the Europeans implemented the “Critical Dialogue” with Iran after its adoption at the Edinburgh Council of Ministers on December 1992. This critical dialogue’s purpose was to “acknowledge US concerns in principle and at the same time allow improved relations with Iran (...) Engagement rather than isolation would encourage Iran to moderate its radicalism.”¹⁶ Finally, what is paramount during this period is the increase in trade and development projects especially from France and Germany. In general, the EU became the first trading partner of Iran with “40% of total Iranian imports [by 1995]”¹⁷ while Iranian exports to the EU accounted for “36% of the country’s total exports dominated by petroleum (over 75% of the total).”¹⁸

The third phase since 1997, with the election of the moderate president Khatami, appealed to the EU, giving more room for political, economic and diplomatic contacts. “Critical Dialogue” was now replaced by “Comprehensive Dialogue” which meant that “as with the critical dialogue, closer relations with Iran would help the reform movement.”¹⁹ Discussions widened on a variety of issues including proliferation, Human Rights, the Middle East peace process, refugees, and terrorism.

Although improvements have occurred in the Iranian-EU relationship over time, the fact that the rapport is short termed and more functional, leaves the door open to uncertainties over long term issues and the possibility to reduce differences that apparently still exist.

With this background in mind, one can hence state the different policies or objectives of the parties.

On the one hand, the Iranian objectives can be identified as the following:

¹⁴ Ibid., p.293.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., p.294.

¹⁷ Ibid., p.295.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., p.296.

- Since 1974, one of Iran's main objectives-with Egyptian support- was to establish a Middle East Nuclear-Weapon- Free zone.²⁰
- President Khatami said on February 9, 2003 that Iran intended to control the whole civilian nuclear fuel cycle. This statement reinforces that Iran wants to be self-sufficient in nuclear matters from any foreign supplies.
- Iran wants to negotiate with the Europeans because it is "afraid of losing Europe".²¹ In fact a loss of Europe would isolate Iran even more: the thing that would be disastrous to its economy.
- Iran's control over its nuclear energy will enhance the role it perceives for itself, which is the one of a regional power. As Mohsen Reza'i, Secretary of Iran's Expediency Council says: Iran is destined to be the "center of international power politics" in the post-Saddam Hussein Middle East.²²
- Foreign minister Kamal Kharazi said that the new national concept in Iran called "deterrent defense" is "to confront a broad spectrum of threats to Iran's national security among them war, espionage, foreign aggression." In this sense Iran wants to build capabilities that would reinforce its hegemony and shift the 'equilibrium'.²³
- Expand Iranian military capacities under "deterrent defence" and maintain alliances with China and Russia.
- Increase the use of diplomacy in the region as to counterweight the American military presence and pressure.²⁴ This would bring international acceptance to Iranian behavior.

On the European side, the objectives identified are as the following:

- The use of diplomacy rather than force, which is part of the European culture. In fact, as Mrs Sybille Bikar²⁵ said, "the EU leaders prefer a 'constructive

²⁰ Mohamed Elbaradei, *The Peaceful Use Of Nuclear Energy: The Contribution Of The IAEA*. (Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates: The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, 2003), p.17.

²¹ Steven Everts, "Europe and Iran: How to make 'reciprocal engagement' work." *The European Policy Network*, 2004.p.3. Available at www.europeananalysis.com/research/everts1.pdf

²² Ilan Berman, "How to tame Tehran." *The Middle East Quarterly*, vol11, i2, Spring 2004, pp.45-46.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Mrs Bikar is the responsible for the Human Rights Projects in Lebanon at the EU delegation in Beirut.

dialogue' with their partners rather than sanctions because, as she adds, "we are not here to give lessons but to share our experiences."²⁶

- Prevent Iran from going nuclear.
- Increase political and economic contacts with Iran. In this sense a policy of engagement is to be pursued based on closer relations with the Iranians in the fields of human rights, terrorism, the Middle East peace process, etc., in order to encourage the reformers.
- Promote democratic reforms in Iran.
- Use carrots to persuade Iranians but also make it clear that sticks are not to be excluded.
- End Tehran's support for terrorist organizations.
- Show a unified European position, especially after the divisions Europe went through vis-à-vis the war on Iraq.
- Enhance multilateral diplomacy because this so called "soft power" could work and hence exclude the need of resorting to force and sanctions.²⁷

Interestingly, one can view the conflictive nature of the EU's objectives, for if they want to reach a deal with Iran in relation to the WMD issue, they will be strengthening the power of the theocracy, and hence opposing their objective of encouraging the reformers and promoting democratic reforms in the country. As Steven Everts rightly puts it, "Regime change will not end Iran's nuclear ambitions. If western countries do not address underlying Iranian security concerns, any Iranian government will want nuclear weapons."²⁸

B. IAEA

Before presenting the policies of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) also called the UN "watchdog", it would be imperative to define the treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) signed in 1968. Under the terms of this treaty, non-nuclear weapon states agree never to acquire nuclear weapons, in

²⁶ Interview that I personally conducted on August 12, 2004 at the European Commission Delegation in Beirut with Mrs Sybille Bikar, responsible for the Human Rights projects in Lebanon.

²⁷ Everts, op.cit., p.2. See, "Iran welcomes trade, aid talks with EU." *United Press International*, Tehran, Iran, June 18, 2002.p.1. Copy given to me in person. See also, Steven Everts, "Iran will be the test for European foreign policy." *Center for European Reform*, June 1, 2003. Available at www.cer.org.uk/articles/everts_ft_1jun03.html.

See also, "A common flop: Europe and Iran. Europe's deal with Iran falls apart." *The Economist (US)*, v372, i8382, July 3, 2004.

²⁸ Everts, "Europe and Iran: how to make 'reciprocal engagement' work" op.cit., p.1.

exchange will receive access to and assistance in the peaceful use of nuclear energy; in addition, nuclear-weapon states pledge to carry out negotiations to end nuclear arms race as well as nuclear disarmament, coupled with non assistance of any nature in transferring nuclear weapons to non-nuclear states.²⁹

Established in 1957 as an autonomous organization under the UN, the IAEA serves as the world's foremost intergovernmental forum for scientific and technical co-operation in the peaceful use of nuclear technology. Its policies encompass (1) The prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons as a prelude for their elimination, but also the sharing of safe nuclear technologies-referred to as the "Atoms for Peace vision" (2) The organization of conventions and "safety services" for countries needing such an assistance (3) "Safeguards mandate"³⁰, that is, to verify if the states party to the NPT are assuming their obligations under this treaty (4) The use of remote surveillance, regular visits of inspectors to nuclear sites to verify the nuclear material, prepare reports, and collect environmental samples in facilities to analyze them later on in the IAEA's laboratory or other qualified ones.³¹

C. USA

The Irano-American relationship is perhaps the most perplexing one of our time. The first contact between both parties took place as early as the 1800's with the signature of the Treaty of Friendship and Commerce in December 1856 which extended most-favored- nation status to both parties. Moreover, in one of the Persian drafts to the US, a call was sent to the latter to "protect the Persian seas from the bad conduct and evil designs of the enemies of Persia."³² Another contact was of religious character when in 1830 the first American Presbyterian missionaries settled in

²⁹ *Basic Facts About The United Nations*, (New York: United Nation Department of Public Information, 2000), p.110.

³⁰ The safeguards system comprises measures by which the agency independently verifies the declarations made by states about their nuclear material and activities. They are implemented through various types of agreements and protocols. For more information on this issue, see "The Safeguards system of the IAEA". Available at www.iaea.org/ourwork/sv/safeguards/safeg_system.pdf

³¹ For more details on the IAEA's policies, see ElBaradei, op.cit., pp.1-2;7-8;11-12. See also, *Basic Facts About The United Nations*, op.cit., p.114. The nuclear verification process of the agency has greatly increased since 1997, thanks to the adoption of the Board of Governors of the Additional Protocol to the safeguards agreement. The agency's rights of access to information and to sites are now expanded to providing credible assurance not only about the diversion of declared nuclear material but also about the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities. Nevertheless, this authority is only applied with states who do sign the Additional Protocol.

³² Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: The Conflict Between Iran And America*. (USA: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2004), p.19. For more details on the US-Iranian relationship read Pollack's book in its entirety.

Urumiyyah in Iranian Azerbaijan. Part of the Persian Empire's policy was to "bring the Americans in to give them leverage against Britain and offered very favorable economic terms to do so."³³ Later in 1883, the US made a concession by finally sending a minister to open a permanent diplomatic mission in Tehran.³⁴

World War II was the period during which a large scale contact took place between America and Iran. During this phase, the major US policy was to build an independent Iran, "strong enough to stand up to its old imperial nemeses."³⁵ In this context the famous Tehran Declaration³⁶ was adopted. But "America's good intentions but mixed implementation had even less of a positive impact on the Iranian people than they might have."³⁷ In fact, the Iranians suffered once again from foreign interference- which they always fought and considered as their main source of problems- as well as widespread famine, severe inflation, and a lack of interest by Britain and Russia which did not care much about the Iranian's welfare.³⁸

The vital turning point that led to a continuous degeneration of the American-Iranian relationship was the 1953 US orchestrated *coup d'etat* that overthrew Dr. Mohamed Mossadeq—a hero among Iranians- and led to the subsequent restoration of Mohamed Reza Shah to the throne. As Kenneth Pollack shrewdly underlines:

Unfortunately for the US, over the course of the twenty-five years from 1953 to 1978, 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 rising and declining with his until his fall took us down with him.³⁹

The 1979 Iranian Revolution, the hostage crisis after the seizure of the US embassy and America's tilt towards Iraq (during the Iran/Iraq war of 1980-1988) widened the rift drastically between the two parties. In fact, during the 1980's the US did not have any clear "policy" towards Iran; Indeed, American policy makers perceived Iran as a "bizarre and troubled country, so intensely anti-American, and so unpredictable that no one in Washington thought anything could be done with them or to them that could possibly benefit the US in any way."⁴⁰ Thus, what Washington saw

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., p.42.

³⁶ The war has caused special economic difficulties to Iran. Preserve Iran's unity and independence, and promote Iranian development.

³⁷ Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: The Conflict Between Iran And America*, op.cit., p.43.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid., p.73.

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp.234-235.

best was, as Pollack puts it, "to avoid Iran and hope that it avoided us too."⁴¹ The latter hope however revealed to be short lived. Indeed, the clash between the US and Iran became more direct than ever, after the end of the Iran-Iraq war in 1988 and the beginning of the 1990's. More aggressive and radical measures, among which Dual Containment, were opted as the rules of the game with each party hoping to impose itself as the major player. One can say that both parties were driven in a power of force 'show'. On the one hand, America was presenting its actual, real power among which the adoption of more sanctions, military force, containment and isolation of Iran. On the other hand, Iran was trapped in the 'power of words' which it had inherited from the time of the revolution coupled with the reliance on radical groups such as Hezbollah and Hamas to help it fulfill its objectives and logically theirs.

The unexpected victory of Mohamed Khatami in the 1997 Iranian presidential elections gave hope to the Clinton administration as well as the Iranian youth and reformists that a rapprochement was not out of reach. Though the bulk of the sanctions regime against Iran was maintained, modest but concrete positive steps were taken in a bid to try and build something new. However, it was evident that both parties were still facing challenges from within their psyche and in the way of perceiving the other. Hence they were not fully prepared to forget the past so easily and change their radical approaches for the sake of a healthier relation. Moreover, let us not forget that Clinton and Khatami were facing constraints from their respective domestic arenas that succeeded to dash the nascent expectation. To sum up, "the result [of this period] was equally unsatisfying, producing only a frustrating exchange of missed opportunities as well as a continuation-and-in some important areas, an intensification- of the very Iranian policies that Washington sought to thwart."⁴²

After the September 11, 2001 attacks, the US and Iran "suddenly had something very important in common"⁴³: Afghanistan. In this respect, the Geneva Contact Group was created as a vehicle composed of Iranians, Americans and Europeans who would meet and discuss Afghanistan; Iranians were willing to discuss other issues too. Iranians provided essential assistance to Operation Enduring

⁴¹ Ibid., p.235. In 2000, the US congress passed the Iran Nonproliferation Act which deters international support for Iran to develop nuclear, chemical and biological weapons programs and missile-delivery systems.

⁴² Zbigniew Brzezinski, Robert M. Gates, & Suzanne Maloney. *Iran: Time For A New Approach: Report Of An Independent Task Force Sponsored By The Council On Foreign Relations*. (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2004), p.38.

⁴³ Ibid., p.346.

Freedom and others, by giving a lot of facilities to the US. However, violence between Israel and the Palestinians, and the interception of the ship *Karine A* on January 3, 2003 in the Red Sea filled with weapons, made it clear to the US that Iran was still determined to use violence in an attempt to disrupt the Middle East peace process and support terrorists.⁴⁴ But earlier in 2002, President George W. Bush had declared in his State of the Union address that Iran was part of the "Axis of Evil" along with North Korea and Iraq that threatened the US and free people everywhere. This portrayal was a huge mistake the current US administration did. In fact, rather than working to promote even further the positive cooperation that was moving slowly but surely, the US policy makers only kept the negative actions in the back of their minds and brought the relationship back to paralysis. As Pollack underlines:

The speechwriters who came up with that line [the axis of evil] did not have any policy guidance to put Iran in the speech. Iran stayed because the president believed that "no question about it, North Korea, Iraq and Iran are the biggest threats to peace at the time." Bush remarked that, "I doubt the students and the reformers and the liberators inside Iran were displeased with that. I made the calculation that they would be pleased...Now I am confident the leaders didn't like it."⁴⁵

Though many youth and reformists believed this statement was an accurate depiction of their regime, others were not wrong in underlining that what the American speech did was, to help the hard liners rally the populace around them and strengthen their oppression. To put it differently, the US and Iran were sending mixed signals and failed to build a coherent stipulated strategy vis-à-vis one another. This puzzled situation in which fear, ignorance, and uncertainty played a major role paved the way to the election of a radical Islamist, a Khomeinist par excellence, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

As the aforementioned history revealed, lots of complexities lie in the confused relation that the US and Iran experienced throughout time. One of these complex issues that depict the great rift between America and Iran is the nuclear power projects of the Islamic Republic. In a latter part, I will be analyzing the American approach vis-à-vis this highly sensitive issue- by focusing on the post 9/11

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp.346-351. See for more details on the US perception over Iran's role in international terror Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: The Conflict Between Iran And America*. op.cit.,pp-358-369. See also, Roger Howard, *Iran In Crisis? Nuclear Ambitions And The American Response*. (London: Zed Books, 2004), pp. 43-88.

⁴⁵ Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: The Conflict Between Iran And America*, op.cit., p.352.

period. But as a concluding point in this part, it is important to identify the objectives of the US foreign policy in the Middle East as follows:

- Promote democracy and security in the Middle East
- Ensure a stable flow of oil from the Persian Gulf
- Change Iran's behavior in the areas of its active opposition to the Middle East process, terrorism, human rights, acquisition of WMD, etc.
- Stop Iranian interference in Iraq
- Prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons under the guise of a civilian nuclear program
- Pressure Iran to cooperate with the international community or face referral of its nuclear case to the UNSC
- Support the "EU-3" and Russian diplomacy in the Iranian nuclear case
- Restore the balance of power in the Gulf

Chapter II: Iran and the Nuclear Program

A. Capacity

The motivations behind the Iranian nuclear program and the position of Iran will be analyzed in the second subdivision of this part. But to begin with, one has to know what the scope of the Iranian nuclear program is.

First, the US has played a key role in starting and developing Iran's nuclear program and research assistance under the Shah. It is believed that discussions on the development of a nuclear program in Iran first took place in 1955. In 1957, the US and Iran signed an agreement on civilian nuclear cooperation that was part of the US Atoms for Peace Program.⁴⁶ During the late 1960's, Iran was provided with a small research reactor- 5 megawatt- still in use at the Tehran Research Center, and was supplied with "hot cells" that are "heavily shielded rooms with mechanical arms used to separate irradiated material from the research reactor."⁴⁷ Moreover, the US gave Iran "5.54kg of enriched uranium, of which 5.16 kg contained fissile uranium isotopes-which could, in principle, be used in a nuclear bomb."⁴⁸ Until 1974, the US had rejected the Shah's proposal of creating a Joint Economic Commission (JEC) for the regulation and expansion of Iran's commercial relations between the two countries. But with the oil boom of the mid-70, the US needed cash and suddenly became "very interested in establishing a JEC with Iran in a *Secret* letter."⁴⁹ Funny enough, the US stated that the first important working group under the JEC would be the nuclear energy production group. On March 3, 1975, Iran and the US signed a \$15 billion deal in which the US would, among other things, build "eight Nuclear Power Plants (NPP)s" and supply the fuel as well.⁵⁰ A month later, and throughout 1976, President Ford "instructed the US negotiators to offer Iran uranium enrichment and reprocessing facilities."⁵¹ On April 12, 1977 the US and Iran signed an agreement to

⁴⁶ Under this program, both parties would be provided technical assistance enriched uranium could be leased by both signatories, and joint research on the peaceful use of nuclear energy would be undertaken.

⁴⁷ "Dealing with Iran's nuclear program", op.cit., p.3.

⁴⁸ Dr. Muhammad Sahimi, "Iran's nuclear energy program. Part V: From the United States offering Iran uranium enrichment technology to suggestions for creating catastrophic industrial failure." *Payvand*, December 22, 2004, p.2. Available at <http://www.payvand.com/news/04/dec/1186.html>

⁴⁹ Ibid. For more details on the letter read p.3.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p.4. US secretary of state Henry Kissinger signed the agreement.

⁵¹ Read Ibid., pp.4-5 for more details on the national security decision memorandums that stipulated the rather generous offers of the US to Iran's nuclear program.

exchange nuclear technology and cooperate in nuclear safety. The final cooperation between both countries took place on January 1, 1978 when President Jimmy Carter and the Shah reached a vital agreement referred to as the US-Iran Nuclear Energy Agreement, which was never implemented due to the Islamic Revolution a year later.⁵²

In 1974, Iran entered into a commercial agreement with France in order to purchase enriched uranium from the latter. However, after the Iranian revolution in 1979 and the US pressure, France changed its position.⁵³ After the discovery of uranium deposits in September 1989 near the Iranian town of Saghand as well as in other sites, Iran started its own domestic production in 1990. In addition, it adopted a five year plan (1989-1994) for the purpose of building a "uranium bullion" plant with the help of Argentina that concluded a deal with Iran for \$18million.⁵⁴ No wonder, the American pressure made Argentina change its mind like it previously did with France. Doubts were also present in relation to China and the Soviet Union that were believed to be transferring and concluding nuclear deals with Iran.

The Cold War rivalry followed by a financial desperation made Russia the vital support to the continuing development of Iran's presumably peaceful nuclear program.⁵⁵ When Vladimir Putin took over as president, he defended Russia's right to provide Tehran with nuclear power reactors not only because of financial benefits but also to counter the "unipolar world dominated by US hegemony".⁵⁶ Since the visit of Russian defense minister Igor Sergeyev to Tehran in December 2000, military and defense cooperation were strengthened. Moreover, Russia decided to revoke its 1995 agreement with the US that stipulated the bringing to an end the sale of conventional weapons to Iran. This action permitted Iran to take "10% of the Russian defense market" and "become the Kremlin's biggest arms customer after China and India."⁵⁷

The showcase of Iran's nuclear program is the construction of the Bushehr nuclear plant on the south-western coast that began with a western German help in the 1970s and halted after the revolution.⁵⁸ After the Iran-Iraq war that damaged parts of the plant and a German refusal to complete the project, Russia concluded a

⁵² Ibid., pp-5-6. See for more details on the agreement p.7.

⁵³ "Dealing with Iran's Nuclear Program", op.cit., p.3.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Howard, *Iran In Crisis? Nuclear Ambitions And The American Response*, op.cit., p.97.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid. See also for more details p.94-97.

⁵⁸ "Dealing with Iran's nuclear program", op.cit., p.3.

\$800million contract with Iran including the training of Iranian scientists at Russian nuclear facilities and the development of a nuclear mine in Iran among others. The Bushehr facility has been completed in 2005 and will be operating in 2006.⁵⁹

The Natanz facility was revealed to the international community thanks to the *Mujahidin-el-Khaleq's* declaration in 2002. Not only is Natanz a high security uranium enrichment facility that uses gas centrifuges⁶⁰ but the facility also includes a pilot plant that holds "1,100 centrifuges"⁶¹ sought to have been completed in 2003. IAEA Director General (DG) Mohamed Elbaradei, visiting Natanz in February 2003 declared that the uranium enrichment program was "sophisticated".⁶²

The heavy-water reactor (HWR) at Arak was also divulged by the *Mujahidin-el-Khaleq* in 2002 and is intended to produce "up to 100 tons of heavy water per year, an amount greatly exceeding the requirements of Iran's medical and chemical industries."⁶³ In addition, Iran says that this reactor is part of "a long term program to manufacture heavy water power reactors. But ... the reactor would produce 8-10kg of plutonium annually or enough for about two nuclear weapons each year."⁶⁴ The latter idea is still suspicious and questionable for in order to have nuclear bomb, plutonium would have to be separated, the thing that so far has not been reported by Iran.⁶⁵

The Kalaye Electrical Company in Tehran is believed to be used for testing uranium enrichment equipment, though Tehran negates such a proposition and says that it is a "watch factory but that it also makes certain centrifuges components."⁶⁶

Uranium was imported from China, of which uranium tetrafluoride (UF-4) that has been converted to uranium metal. The latter is principally used in the manufacture of nuclear weapons.⁶⁷

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ David Albright & Corey Hinderstein, "The Iranian gas centrifuge uranium enrichment plant at Natanz: Drawing from commercial satellite images." *The Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS)*, March 14, 2003, p.1. Available at the official site of the institute www.isis-online.org/publications/iran/natanz03_02.html

⁶¹ "Dealing with Iran's nuclear program", op.cit., p.6.

⁶² David Albright & Corey Hinderstein, "Iran, player or rogue?" *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, vol59, no5, September/October 2003, pp.52-58. Available at www.thebulletin.org/article.php?art_ofn=so03albright This is a very informative article if one wants to know more technical details about the facility.

⁶³ "Dealing with Iran's nuclear program", op.cit., p.6.

⁶⁴ Albright & Hinderstein, "Iran, player or rogue?" op.cit.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Miriam Rajkumar, "Understanding the IAEA report on Iran." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, June 19, 2003, p.2. Available at the official site www.carnegieendowment.org

Iran also declared to the IAEA on February 2003 that it was preparing to "mine uranium ore near Saghand, had produced yellowcake and had completed uranium processing plants at Isfahan."⁶⁸

In what concerns missiles and other delivery systems such as aircraft, the picture can be defined as the following. Missiles wise, it was under the Shah that Iran started developing its capabilities to produce different missiles systems among which the SCUD duplication program, a cruise missile program and lately the *Shahab* or "Meteor" series that is a revived intermediate ballistic missile program (IRBM).⁶⁹ This missile was of course a domestic effort to develop a "strategic capability" that is to reach a range beyond the Gulf region.⁷⁰ Moreover, Iran was able to "manufacture short- range solid fuelled rockets, and it has become a leading producer of artillery rockets with ranges between 40 and 200km."⁷¹ In addition, Iran has SCUD-B or *Shahab -1* missiles that can reach up to 310km and carry up to 1000kg. As for the SCUD-C missiles-due to North Korean transfer of technology in 1985- they can reach 500km and carry 700kg. Finally the *Shahab-3* is capable to carry up to 1000kg warhead over approximately 1300km, making it possible for Iran to strike any region inside Israel.⁷²

On October 5, 2004 former Iranian president Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani stated in a speech to the Aerospace Research institute in Tehran that Iran "is determined to improve its military capabilities"⁷³ and that the new missiles *Shahab-4* have a range of 2000km and "puts Israel and US bases in the Middle East in range."⁷⁴

Alireza Jafarzedeh, president of Strategic Policy Consulting Inc., and a former representative of the *Mujahedeen-el-Khaleq*, declared that the relationship between

⁶⁸ "Dealing with Iran's nuclear program", op.cit., p.6.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Aaron Karp, "Lessons of Iranian missile programs of US Nonproliferation policy." *The Nonproliferation Review*, Spring-Summer 1998, p.19. Available at the *Center for Nonproliferation Studies*' official website www.cns.miis.edu/pubs/nprvol05/53/karp53.pdf

⁷² Karp, op.cit., p.20. See also, "Dealing with Iran's nuclear program", op.cit., p.7.

⁷³ Behzad Farsian, "New Iranian missile 'can reach Israel.'" *The Telegraph*, October 6, 2004. Available at the *Gulf 2000project: Change, communication, and cooperation in the Persian Gulf*. This is a restricted site that I was able to use thanks to the generosity of Dr. Walid Moubarak who is the Chairperson of the Social Science Division and Education as well as an Associate Professor of Political Science at the Lebanese American University (LAU). It is associated with Columbia University www.columbia.edu

⁷⁴ "Iran 'increases missile range'", BBC, October 5, 2004. Available at the *Gulf 2000project*, op.cit. See also, on Iran's nuclear capabilities, Dr. John Chapman, "Iran's strategic weapons programs: a net assessment", *International Institute for Strategic Studies*, September 6, 2005. Copy given to me in person by Dr. Najmedin Meshkati

the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and the Khan network grew intimately, as members of both parties met and held discussions in the nuclear weapons research area as well as the development of long-range missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads.⁷⁵ In this line of thought, Jafarzadeh stated that from 1999-2001, Ukraine had sold to Iran six (Kh-55) missiles. Known to the US military as the (AS-15), the (Kh-55) has "an accurate guidance system (...) is difficult to intercept (...) and flies at a low altitude, making it easier to evade detection."⁷⁶

The Aircraft of the Iranian regime has been rather limited. From the two hundred (F-4D) Phantom fighter aircraft that Iran got from the US under the shah's rule, only thirty are still operational, and their use has been undermined. As for the (SU-24) strike aircraft and the (MiG-29) fighter-interceptor aircraft bought from Russia, their integration has proven to be complex.⁷⁷

B. The position of Iran

Iran perceives itself as an insecure country surrounded by an alien environment. Indeed, it is widely known that the Islamic Republic of Iran is hostile to Israel, feels uncomfortable with many Arab states-a residue of Persian nationalism and superiority-and is no doubt surrounded by Gulf monarchies which, by opening their doors to the US forces- specially after the 1979 Iranian Revolution- rendered themselves and the US army susceptible to any Iranian plan. Moreover, Tehran is surrounded by nuclear powers such as Pakistan, India and Israel. In this context, Iran views itself under threat, and hence is constantly in search of security to help it defend its views and policies. With the Iran-Iraq war of (1980-1988), Iraq used chemical weapons with the cover of the international community that did nothing to stop the Iraqi violation of the 1925 Geneva Protocol against the use of chemical weapons that Iraq had signed. This violation by the international community and a signatory state-Iraq-made Iran change its view.⁷⁸ In fact, the following comment of Hashemi Rafsanjani-then speaker of the *Majlis*- reflected Iran's position: "Chemical and biological weapons are the poor man's atomic bombs...we should at least consider

⁷⁵ Claude Salhani, "Politics & policies: Iran's nuke missiles." *United Press International*, August 29, 2005. Available at <http://www.spacewar.com/news/iran-05zzn.html>

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ "Dealing with Iran's nuclear program", op.cit.,p.7.

⁷⁸ Peter Jones, "Iran's threat perceptions and arms control policies", *The Nonproliferation Review*, Fall 1998, p. 41.

them for our defense. Although the use of such weapons is inhuman, the war taught us that international laws are only scraps of paper.”⁷⁹ Furthermore, the US sanctions on Iran exacerbated the already frail Iranian military that was denied to buy proper equipment from the international community. This action rendered Iran more vulnerable to Iraqi attacks that kept on using chemical weapons to the point that finally compelled Iran to end up the war.⁸⁰

The Iraqi use of chemical weapons and the international assent “gave the impetus for Iranian programs of weapons of mass destruction.”⁸¹ Being surrounded by states that possessed WMD as well as by two military powers, Israel and the US, Iran perceived its vulnerability and considered “WMD as a potentially effective deterrence. [Hence] self-reliance in all critical areas of technology and manufacturing were viewed as the only way Iran could assure itself of reliable defense in the event of crisis.”⁸² Furthermore, by acquiring WMD, Iran would pose a threat to Israel and US bases in the Middle East as well as any Gulf country that supports the former two.

As mentioned earlier, Iran is known to be a very proud and highly nationalistic country praising the superiority of the Persian culture over the Arab culture. Consequently, pursuing nuclear technology is related to national pride, a “deep conviction that Iran must be treated as a respected regional power and resentment of international double standards.”⁸³

A document prepared by the permanent mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the UN on November 21, 2003, encompassed several points which revealed the negative series of actions taken by the international community, led by the US, that gave Iran the momentum to restate its inalienable right to have nuclear energy under the NPT and justify its reaction. (1) Over time, and until today, Iran had been prevented from exercising its rights. (2) A policy was adopted aiming at destabilizing Iran, hampering its economic development, and depriving it from modern technology. (3) The international community has disregarded its obligations of providing and facilitating technology to Iran under the NPT and the IAEA statute by imposing

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ “Dealing with Iran’s nuclear program”, op.cit.,p.13.

⁸¹ “Dealing with Iran’s nuclear program”, op.cit.,p.14. See also, Seth W. Carus, “Iranian nuclear, biological and chemical weapons: Implications and responses”, *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, vol2, no1, March 1998. Available at Bar-Ilan University’s site <http://www.biu.ac.il/SOC/besa/meria/journal/1998/issue1/jv2n1a3.html>

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid., pp.14-15.

restrictions in nearly every field. Iran explained its failure to report its 'peaceful' nuclear activities to the IAEA as a reaction to the above wrong actions undertaken towards it. In addition, Iran stated that, having been loyal to the NPT and the objectives of the safeguards despite its deprivation from its indisputable right proves that it is committed to nuclear non-proliferation.⁸⁴

There is no ambiguity in the Iranian position when asked about the possibility of building a nuclear weapon. Officials in Iran insist that they are not interested in having nuclear weapon, basing it on moral and religious prohibitions.⁸⁵ Indeed, on August 18, 2003 Khamenei acknowledged that "the Islamic Republic of Iran, based on its religious and jurisprudence fundamental beliefs, would never resort to the use of WMD" while president Khatami added on September 16, 2003: "We don't want nuclear arms, no, no, no, this is against our policy and our faith."⁸⁶ In the same line of thought, an Iranian diplomat declared that a nuclear military program in Iran "would not enhance Iran's security but augment its vulnerability by offering a pretext and a target for hostile powers such as the US and Israel and leading gulf nations to take protective counter measures."⁸⁷

Iran was constantly advised by the EU, represented by France, Germany and England, known as the "EU-3" to sign the Additional Protocol (AP) that would be of great significance to continue dialogue and confidence building. As mentioned earlier, the AP would indeed enhance greatly the authority of the IAEA in its inspections of information and facilities. Finally, on October 21, 2003, an agreement was reached between Iran and the "EU-3" in which Iran agreed on the following: First, Iran reaffirmed that it was not interested in nuclear weapons and that the latter was not part of its defense doctrine. Also, it restated that its programs and activities were exclusively peaceful. Second, Iran decided to engage with the IAEA and cooperate fully with the agency to resolve all pending issues by being transparent. Third, in order to promote confidence, Iran has decided to sign the AP and start the ratification process and the cooperation will continue even before the protocol is ratified. Finally, though Iran has a right under the NPT to develop nuclear energy for peaceful

⁸⁴ "Why Iran's nuclear program is exclusively peaceful", *The Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the UN*, Vienna, November 21, 2003. Available at [http:// www.un.int/iran](http://www.un.int/iran)

⁸⁵ "Dealing with Iran's nuclear program", op.cit, p.18.

⁸⁶ Ibid, footnote 90.

⁸⁷ Ibid, p.18.

purposes, it has decided to voluntarily suspend all *uranium enrichment*⁸⁸ and processing activities as defined by the IAEA.⁸⁹

On the same day Iranian foreign minister Kamal Kharrazi stressed that "Iran is committed to a Middle East free from WMD (...), does not seek nuclear weapons (...), has the right to use nuclear energy peacefully under the NPT, has great potentials to restore peace and security in the region and welcomes cooperation and talks in this effect."⁹⁰ On December 18, 2003 Iran signed (via its ambassador Salehi) the AP to its NPT safeguards agreement with the Director General of the IAEA Dr.Elbaradei. This step was part of the October 21 agreement.⁹¹

Few months after the agreement was reached, Iran's statements and positions reflected another attitude and brought the international community to be suspicious about Iran's activities. The resolution of the IAEA's Board in September 2004 was qualified by Iran as "illegal and vowed to persist in developing the entire fuel cycle."⁹² In fact, on October 7, 2004, an Iranian diplomat said that Tehran had started "a week ago to process amounts of uranium for enrichment ...with the knowledge of UN inspectors."⁹³ Furthermore, Hasan Rouhani⁹⁴, responsible for the nuclear dossier, stated that "Iran refuses categorically to stop completely uranium enrichment and [we are] ready to confront as much as [we are] ready to negotiate."⁹⁵ In the same spirit, the President of the Higher Council for National Security added, "We clearly said that we will not apply the second part of the IAEA resolution related to complete cessation of uranium enrichment because it is a language of pressure(...)we have suspended

⁸⁸ Enrichment is a process of purifying uranium for use as fuel for nuclear power plants or weapons. This issue is at the very heart of any solution to the Iranian case because the EU and the IAEA fear that Iran is using the NPT as a cover to use the enriched uranium to build nuclear weapons.

⁸⁹ "Agreed statement at the end of a visit to the Islamic republic of Iran by the foreign ministers of France, Britain and Germany." October 21, 2003. Available at the official site of the French Foreign Ministry <http://www.france.diplomatie.fr/index.gb.html>. The IAEA board of governor's resolutions of September 12 and November 26 2003 strengthened the points of the "E3" position.

⁹⁰ "Iran, France, Germany, Britain discuss nuclear programs." *Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA)* Tehran, October 21, 2003. Available at

<http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/iran/2003/iran-031021-irna01.htm>

⁹¹ "Iran signs Additional Protocol on nuclear safeguards." December 18, 2003. Available at the official site of the IAEA <http://www.iaea.org/newscenter/news/2003/iranap20031218.html>

⁹² Albright & Hinderstein, "Iran: Countdown to showdown." *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, vol60, no6, November/December 2004, pp.67-72. Available at http://www.thebulletin.org/article.php?art_ofn=nd04albbright_037

⁹³ "Information on the beginning of uranium production. Khatami assures the right of his country in nuclear technology. Rouhani: We are ready to confront and negotiate and cooperate." *Al-Diyar*, October 7, 2004 p.19.

⁹⁴ Rouhani is also the Secretary General of Iran's Supreme National Security Council.

⁹⁵ *Al-Diyar*, October 7, 2004, op.cit.,

enrichment voluntarily and we won't accept pressure."⁹⁶ Also, the spokesperson for the parliamentary commission related to national security and foreign affairs declared, "Why can't we start enriching uranium again? Where is it written in the NPT that this is forbidden?"⁹⁷

Few days later, several Iranian officials said that if the Iranian nuclear program was going to be sent to the UNSC-where Tehran could face sanctions- Iran would bar IAEA inspectors from working on Iranian soil, and exclude transparency from its behavior.⁹⁸ On the same day, foreign minister Kharrazi stated that, "The time has come for Europe to take a step forward and suggest that our legitimate right for complete use of nuclear energy is recognized [in exchange for] assurances that our program will not be diverted toward weapons."⁹⁹ On October 16, Hossein Mousavian- a senior national security official involved in the nuclear negotiations- reinforced the idea that Iran was going to reject any European proposal in which complete cessation of Iranian work on the nuclear fuel cycle was mentioned. Mousavian pointed out that he expected from the IAEA to recognize the right of Iran under the NPT to possess the full fuel nuclear cycle because "cessation would be discrimination against an IAEA member."¹⁰⁰ In fact he declared that "If they want suspension for cessation, we do not want a deal. If they want suspension for confidence building, we are prepared to think about it."¹⁰¹ He added that "If they have a mistrust of our future enrichment activities and fear its diversion to nuclear weapons this chapter is open to the IAEA to implement a mechanism that assures it remains peaceful."¹⁰² At the end of the interview, Mousavian accused the Europeans of "double-standards" for they pressure Iran rather than Israel which is the only state in the Middle East that possesses nuclear arms¹⁰³ - and that did not sign the NPT.

On October 20, Gholamreza Aghazadeh-head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization (IAEO) reaffirmed that Iran was "determined to press ahead with its atomic plans and would not give up its right to enrich uranium [because] using

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ "Iran threatens to bar IAEA inspectors." *The Daily Star*, October 15, 2004, p.7.

⁹⁹ "Trio 'to offer Iran nuclear deal'", *BBC*, October 15, 2004. Available at the *Gulf 2000project, op.cit.*

¹⁰⁰ "Iran will not agree to cease nuclear work." *Agence France Presse*, October 16, 2004. Available at the *Gulf 2000project, op.cit.*

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

nuclear technology for non-peaceful purposes is not in our agenda.”¹⁰⁴ In addition, he stated that, “We are not going to refuse the fuel that is being proposed to us by foreign countries, but we need to produce our own fuel.”¹⁰⁵

Iranians were very much holding on to their rights under the NPT and wanted to be treated as any other signatory regime. This feeling of discrimination in treatment played a role in holding on to their firm positions and demands that are actually consistent under the NPT. Economic reasons with a tacit sense of vulnerability in this unstable region also played a role in the Iranian position as President Khatami revealed when he said that “we can not stay dependent on others to get fuel for our nuclear facilities, for they could abandon us and stop granting us fuel at anytime.”¹⁰⁶

Negotiations and proposals to have a new agreement continued to flow. In fact, on October 25, 2004, a proposition from the Europeans insisted on an Iranian halt of uranium enrichment accompanied by a series of incentives. The Iranians said that the proposition was “unbalanced” and that it was going to continue enrichment. However, Iranian officials said that the proposition was just a beginning to a long process and that positive points ought to be looked upon rather than the negative ones. Hamid Reeda, the spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs added that “negotiations with Europeans is a right decision and today we are on the right track (...)but the Europeans should present assurances to prove that they will execute their vows.”¹⁰⁷ Interestingly, Hassan Rouhani mentioned that, when Europeans say “indefinite” freeze of uranium enrichment, it is not the same as “permanent” because “Iran and Europe are supposed to hold negotiations for a long time.”¹⁰⁸

The optimism to reach an agreement appeared in Khatami’s speech to journalists in Tehran on November 3, only a day after the reelection of US president George W. Bush. In fact, Khatami repeated that if the Europeans were to accept Iran’s legal right to pursue peaceful nuclear technology, Iran was ready to prove to the world that it is not aiming to have nuclear weapons. Furthermore, he mentioned that “Iran

¹⁰⁴ Louis Charbonneau, “Europeans will make final nuclear offer to Iran this week.” *The Daily Star*, October 20, 2004, p.7.

¹⁰⁵ “79% of Iranians refuse to stop nuclear program; reunion of the last chance between Europeans and Tehran.” *Al-Diyar*, October 20, 2004, p.11.

¹⁰⁶ “Washington runs away from the European proposition in Vienna today; Tehran presents an opposed proposal and experiments Shahab-3.” *Al-Safir*, October 21, 2004, p.15.

¹⁰⁷ “Iran refuses the European proposal and assures the continuation of uranium enrichment.” *Al-Diyar*, October 25, 2004, p.1.

¹⁰⁸ “Tehran hints at agreeing to extend freeze on uranium enrichment.” *The Daily Star*, October 26, 2004, p.7.

would be ready to suspend enriching uranium but only under her rules and for a momentary period of time. (...) it will be voluntarily and no one can force us to stop completely.”¹⁰⁹ On November 11, although no Iranian agreement was reached towards the EU nuclear proposal, discussions “took place in a very positive atmosphere.”¹¹⁰ In fact, the European’s deal included the core idea that Iran halts uranium enrichment, so that in exchange, it would be granted European civilian nuclear technology, including access to nuclear fuel, increased trade as well as help with Tehran’s regional security concerns.¹¹¹ However, the following day, the *faqih*, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei declared that the international pressures ought to be “resisted” and described the European propositions as “stupid and childish”.¹¹² As for former president Rafsanjani, a more realistic conservative, he avowed that “we are lucky that negotiations are moving step by step but they are still two steps further from what they want”¹¹³, adding that Tehran was also waiting from the EU a quick start of the trade negotiations that have been deteriorating, since halting uranium enrichment is a precondition to any trade talks.¹¹⁴

On November 14, foreign minister Kharrazi stated that “Iran had done everything it can to persuade the international community of the peaceful nature of our nuclear program and we can not do more.”¹¹⁵ He also said that it was up to the Europeans to agree or not to the Iranian proposition. Moreover, Kharrazi clearly declared: “I will not accept to ruin any chance of negotiating and I will not refuse to negotiate with any person who proves its willingness to settle this issue rapidly.”¹¹⁶ The following day, to the great surprise of many, Iran had finally reached an agreement with the EU in which Iran announced that it was “suspending uranium enrichment activities for as long as talks with the EU continue.”¹¹⁷ With this

¹⁰⁹ “Iran is ‘optimistic’ in reaching a compromise in the nuclear issue with the European Union.” *Al-Diyar*, November 3, 2004, p.18.

¹¹⁰ “No Iranian agreement to EU nuclear deal, discussions to continue.” *Agence France Presse*, November 11, 2004. Available at <http://www.spacewar.com/2004/041111192505.k7jxve8t.html>

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² “Rafsanjani: Iran is close to reaching an agreement with the Europeans; Khamenei declares to resist the international pressures and defines the European demands as ‘stupid and childish.’” *Al-Diyar*, November 13, 2004, p.17.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ “The IAEA postpones again its report publication; Kharrazi: The Iranians have presented what they have and it is up to the Europeans now to decide.” *Al-Diyar*, November 14, 2004, p.1.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ “Iran suspends nuclear programme under EU deal.” *Euronews*, November 15, 2004. Available at <http://www.euronews.net>

agreement concluded, the Europeans and Iranians had won a battle by showing that with a strong and serious will and belief, diplomacy could bear fruits.

On March 24, 2004, both parties met at the French Foreign Ministry in Paris in an attempt to bring about objective proof that Iran was not intending to develop nuclear weapons. Though some progress was made, the deadlock could be sensed. In fact, the Iranians insisted on their inalienable right to develop peaceful nuclear technology, stating that giving up nuclear activities was not "something we are prepared to consider."¹¹⁸ In April 2005, foreign minister Kharrazi stated that, "If there is no agreement and negotiations collapse, there is no choice but to restart the program (...) No one can deny our right for enrichment of uranium"¹¹⁹ In fact, Iranians speeded up the pace of their pressure on the Europeans, even threatening to resume some conversion activities if their core right was not seriously considered. As top negotiator Cyrus Naseri stated in early May 2005, "If the Europeans won't do anything, we will move on to the next level, that is, uranium conversion at Isfahan, we want to solve the problem but we do not have much time to give for the Europeans."¹²⁰

This atmosphere of increased tensions paved the way for the Geneva talks on May 25, 2005, in which the Islamic Republic reiterated (1) Its agreement to maintain the suspension of its uranium enrichment program agreed in the November 2004 Paris Agreement (2) A reassurance that it was not seeking nuclear weapons (3) A declaration that the Geneva talks were "a final chance" for the Europeans who pledged to present new proposals to Iran by late July or early August in order to reach a solution to the conflict.¹²¹

With the election on June 2005 of the radical mayor of Tehran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as president, it was obvious that the Iranian nuclear case was not going to be settled peacefully soon. Indeed, echoing his predecessors but yet with a more extremist tone, Ahmadinejad declared that "We need the peaceful nuclear technology for energy, medical and agricultural purposes and our scientific progress. This is the

¹¹⁸ Elaine Sciolino, "Nuclear accord eludes Iran and Europeans." *New York Times*, March 24, 2005. Available at the *Gulf 2000 project*, *op.cit.*

¹¹⁹ Wendel, Broere, "Iran says will restart enrichment if talks fail." *Reuters*, April 28, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20050428/wl_nm/iran_eu_kharrazi_dc_6

¹²⁰ "Iran expects to face some hard time, Kharrazi threatens to stop the negotiations with the Europeans", *Al-Diyar*, May 8, 2005., p.19.

¹²¹ "EU and Iran avert deadlock in nuclear standoff", *Agence France Presse*, May 25, 2005. Available at <http://www.afp.com/english/news/stories/050525175456.7dpw7c9o.html>

final path we have taken.”¹²² He also pointed out that Iran will continue talking with the Europeans while preserving its national interest and its right to develop nuclear peaceful energy.¹²³

Since early July 2005, Iranian officials and negotiators have restlessly reiterated their pessimism vis-à-vis the European deal due to be delivered in late July or early August. As the head of the IAEO declared, “Talks will reach a very sensitive stage from now on. It will not go smoothly. I am not optimistic [The EU-3’s] proposal will capture Iran’s interest.”¹²⁴ Also, Ali AghaMohamadi, a spokesman for the Supreme National Security Council, stated that “Our main objective in the negotiations is to preserve the fuel cycle, so it is unimaginable abandoning that principle objective and agreeing to anything else.”¹²⁵ In his last days in office, the pragmatist president Khatami declared that the Iranians waited to hear from the Europeans an approval to include in their deal, an agreement on the resumption of conversion activities in Isfahan, adding that “whether they do it or not we are going to resume the activities at Isfahan.”¹²⁶ In a letter sent to the EU by the Iranian chief negotiator, one could view the firm and decisive stand on the Iranian part to try and persuade the Europeans to play it their way. As Rouhani recognized, “one of our minimum demands is that the suspension is partially lifted. If the Europeans do not take into account the Iranian request concerning enrichment, they will be considered null and void.”¹²⁷

For the Iranians, the slow pace that Europeans undertook in bringing about concrete proposals for a nuclear cooperation deal rendered them impatient and more aggressive in their approach with the other party. In this line of thought, the Iranian officials and negotiators were now setting their rule of the game. Aghamohamadi, a spokesman for the Supreme National Security Council, declared that, if the EU did

¹²² Kathy Gannon, “Iran president-elect vows to pursue nukes”, *Associated Press*, June 25, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20050626/ap_on_re_mi_ea/iran_election_1

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Parisa Hafezi, “Iran not optimistic on EU nuclear offer-official”, *Reuters*, July 5, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20050705/wl_nm/iran_nuclear_dc_1

¹²⁵ “Nothing can convince Iran to give up enrichment: Negotiator”, *Agence France Press*, July 16, 2005. Available at <http://www.spacewar.com/news/iran-05zd.html>

¹²⁶ “Iran to resume nuclear conversion, Khatami tells EU.” *Agence France Presse*, July 27, 2005. Available at

http://news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&u=/afp/20050727/wl_mideast_afp/irannuclearkhatami_050727100858

¹²⁷ “Iran urges EU to accept resumption of some nuclear work.” *Agence France Presse*, July 26, 2005. Available at

http://news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&u=/afp/20050726/wl_afp/irannucleareu_050726140533

not submit their proposals by August 1, 2005 the only action Iran was going to undertake was some limited uranium conversion activities at Isfahan, adding that Iran will continue its talks with the EU and will not resume uranium enrichment.¹²⁸ After the EU failed to meet the deadline, Iran sent a letter to the IAEA in which it retraced its cooperation with the agency and the Europeans, mentioning in details the objective guarantees it had offered in March 2005 in order to ensure the peaceful nature of the Iranian program.¹²⁹ In addition, Iran declared that

The proposal not only fails to address Iran's rights for peaceful development of nuclear technology, but even falls far short from correcting the illegal and unjustified restrictions placed on Iran's economic and technological development, let alone providing firm guarantees for economic, technological and nuclear cooperation and firm commitments on security issues.¹³⁰

The Iranian irreversible action of resuming uranium conversion¹³¹ at Isfahan was postponed for a couple of days with news that the EU was going to offer its deal on August 5- a deal already considered void by Iran. Indeed, the Iranian official stand had been taken in advance. What the Islamic Republic wanted to see included in the proposal was the right to uranium enrichment, which was not even closely mentioned. As foreign minister Kharrazi affirmed, "The European proposal has no value. We will insist on our rights and have decided to resume Isfahan activities as the first step of our measures. This does not mean we will stop negotiations with Europe."¹³² On August 8, the UN inspectors were already at a uranium conversion plant at about 20km of Isfahan to install their surveillance equipment. Finally, on August 10, Iran's nuclear boss made it clear that "today all seals will be removed by IAEA inspectors (...) only after they had finished installing their cameras and other surveillance equipment (...) then all reprocessing activities can be carried out at the facility."¹³³ In the meantime, Iran's new president was not only defending the resumption of work at

¹²⁸ "Iran to continue EU talks, no uranium enrichment." *Reuters*, July 31, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20050731/wl_nm/nuclear_iran_eu_dc_1

¹²⁹ See for more details on the objective guarantees, "Communication dated 1 August 2005 received from the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Agency." p.3. Available at <http://www.iaea.org/publications/documents/infircs/2005/infirc648.pdf>

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.4.

¹³¹ Conversion is a process of turning uranium ore or yellowcake, into uranium hexafluoride gas (UF₆). This gas is then fed in centrifuges for enrichment. Enriched at a low level, uranium is used to produce nuclear fuel; while if highly enriched, uranium can be used in an atomic bomb.

¹³² "Iran unconcerned about Security Council referral." *Reuters*, August 7, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20050807/wl_nm/nuclear_iran_dc_62

¹³³ Andrea Dudikova, Susanna Loof, & Ali Akbar Dareini, "Iran may draw rebuke over nuke activities." *Associated Press*, August 10, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/nuclear_agency_iran

Isfahan but repeated that Iran wanted to continue negotiations with the EU, and that "he has new initiatives and proposals which [he] will present to the West after [his] government takes office."¹³⁴

On August 11, Iran sent a firm message before the adoption by the IAEA Board of Governors of the EU resolution calling on Iran to halt its nuclear fuel development so that negotiations can continue. Mohamed Saidi, deputy head of the IAEA, said that Iran rejected this "unacceptable" decision, and that "the Paris accord will become void if the resolution proposed by the Europeans was adopted."¹³⁵ The unanimous approval of the resolution angered the Iranians who qualified it as a political, illegal and illogical action stemming from American pressure.¹³⁶

In early September, the Iranian desire to challenge Dr. ElBaradei's report and prove their righteous cause to the world had started. Indeed, Iran tried to get the support of Non Aligned States including India Pakistan and China. Ali Larijani, chief nuclear negotiator, declared that Tehran was going to continue with its atomic program but that it was ready at the same time to satisfy any international concerns.¹³⁷ In addition, on September 12, Iran reiterated its full cooperation with the IAEA inspectors on the condition that it is allowed to make nuclear fuel. In addition, an Iranian document titled "Complementary Information to the report of (DG) ElBaradei" was sent to the IAEA, in which Iran declared its full cooperation in the past, and called on the UN nuclear watchdog to be wary of the bad intentions of a "certain state" to undo all what has been achieved so far, for this would bring about "confrontation which definitely endanger regional and global security."¹³⁸

On September 14, 2005 at the UN General Assembly, President Ahmadinejad defended his country's indisputable right to maintain a nuclear energy program, while lashing out against "nuclear apartheid" practiced by the US and its allies. In addition, in a bid to show the peaceful nature of his country's nuclear program, he made it clear

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ "UN atomic watchdog calls on Iran to halt nuclear work." *Agence France Presse*, August 11, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20050811/wl_mideast_afp/irannuclearadopt_050811151756

¹³⁶ Susanna Loof & Ali Akbar Darreini, "UN agency concerned over Iran nukes." *Associated Press*, August 11, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20050811/ap_on_re_eu/un_nuclear_agency_iran_3

¹³⁷ "Iran says ready to satisfy international nuclear concerns." *Agence France Presse*, September 7, 2005. Available at <http://www.spacear.com/news/iran-05zzv.html>

¹³⁸ Michael Adler, "Iran says full cooperation with inspectors if allowed to make nuclear fuel." *Agence France Presse*, September 12, 2005. Available at http://www.nci.org/05nci/09/iran_cooperation.htm

that "every resource" would be used to defend Iran's nuclear right, inviting private companies and any nation to engage in serious partnerships with Tehran.¹³⁹

The resolution of the IAEA Board on September 24, 2005, calling for a referral of Iran to the UNSC infuriated the Iranians. Foreign minister Manouchehr Mottaki reiterated the uncontested Iranian right to have nuclear energy, described the resolution as illegal and unacceptable, but at the same time, declared that Iran was committed to the NPT and to negotiations.¹⁴⁰ Few days later, Iran hardened its tone by threatening to resume uranium enrichment, block UN inspections of its nuclear facilities and even reduce trade with the countries who voted for the resolution, unless the IAEA would retract from the declaration that referred Tehran to the Council for possible sanctions.¹⁴¹

In early October, Mohamed Saeedi, deputy head of the IAEO, said that it was in the Iranian as well as western interests to start unconditional talks in order to remove the suspicion of the international community about Tehran's nuclear program. But these talks, as Saeedi stated, had to be settled through "practical, legal and technical solutions, [for] if Europe chooses a radical stance to confront Iran and refers the country to the UNSC, we will use our options."¹⁴²

On October 12, 2005, in a rather promising shift in its hard line position, the Iranian foreign ministry stated that Iran "was ready to resume unconditional negotiations with all member states of the IAEA including the EU countries, to strengthen cooperation and assure Iran's right to nuclear development."¹⁴³ This new stand was taken as the IAEA delegation, led by Olli Heinonen, arrived in Tehran to test the readiness of the Islamic Republic to cooperate in inspections to come. In the meantime, Iranian officials, including president Ahmadinejad, repeated their refusal to return to full nuclear freeze and their attachment to their lawful right. Facing continuous international pressure, top nuclear negotiator Larijani said that "Iran is a hard target. They do not have the means to go to war on two fronts". If the west

¹³⁹ "Iran is resolved to pursue nuclear program." *CNN*, September 17, 2005. Available at <http://edition.cnn.com/2005/WORLD/meast/09/17/iran.president/index.html>

¹⁴⁰ "Iran furious over nuclear resolution, but says talks possible." *Agence France Presse*, September 25, 2005. Available at

http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20050925/wl_mideast_afp/irannuclear_050925074748

¹⁴¹ Ali Akbar Dareini, "Iran threatens to resume enrichment." *Associated Press*, September 27, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20050927/ap_on_re_mi_ea/iran_nuclear_7

¹⁴² "Iran, west urged to resume nuclear talks." *Associated Press*, October 8, 2005. Available at http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2005-10-08-iran-west-talks_x.htm

¹⁴³ Nazila Fathi, "In a shift, Iran agrees too resume nuclear talks." *The New York Times*, October 13, 2005. Available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/13/international/middleeast/13iran.html>

wanted to impose sanctions on Iran, including oil sanctions, they are mistaken, for "Oil sanctions will only increase the price of oil."¹⁴⁴ In early November, in an apparent intention to avert a referral to the UNSC, the Iranians provided key documents to the UN nuclear inspectors-including the permission to visit the controversial Parchin military complex that had long been a core demand on the IAEA's part.¹⁴⁵ In parallel, Iran declared that it was going to proceed to a new phase of uranium conversion at Isfahan. These mixed signals sent by Tehran were a reaffirmation that even though it was ready to negotiate and help reassure the international community that its nuclear program was 'peaceful', the rules of the game were going to be set by Iran itself for itself. At a time when the issue was highly considered to be sent to the UNSC, the policy of Tehran was to try and buy more time, show its goodwill and get more concessions from the west without upsetting the latter.

On November 6, Iran formally asked from the "EU-3" to resume negotiations over its nuclear program. In a letter to the troika, Larijani reiterated the indisputable right of Iran to full nuclear fuel cycle, mentioning the positive steps that Iran had undertaken as confidence building measures. Also, while accusing Europeans of going beyond the authority of international provisions, Larijani stated that his country wanted a new round of negotiations in which he hoped that the EU would base "their positions on a more accurate perception of the current situations in Iran and in the region"; while threatening to stop the voluntary measures taken by Iran if illegal and excessive demands were made towards her.¹⁴⁶

The new proposal drafted on November 13, 2005, by the European troika and backed by the US and the IAEA did not get a positive echo in Iranian ears. Officials in Tehran, among which Larijani, were categorical in their rejection of a nuclear compromise, stating that enrichment ought to be on Iranian soil. However, Larijani later on declared that he was opened to having the uranium enriched abroad.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ "Iran says not afraid of war, sanctions." *Agence France Presse*, October 31, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20051031/wl_afp/iranpoliticsnuclear_051031183142

¹⁴⁵ George Jahn, "Diplomats: UN inspectors returning to Iran." *Associated Press*, November 2, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20051102/ap_on_re_mi_ea/nuclear_agency_iran_1

¹⁴⁶ See for more details on the content of the letter, "Iran uncompromising in EU talks offer." *Agence France Presse*, November 8, 2005. Available at <http://www.spacewar.com/news/iran-05zzzzzr.html>

¹⁴⁷ "First results from Iran site show no nuclear activity: Diplomats." *Agence France Presse*, November 11, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20051111/wl_afp/irannucleariaea_051111200342

The defiance and cooperation attitudes used by the new Iranian team intensified ahead of the IAEA meeting. Indeed, Iranian officials stated that they had started to convert a new batch of uranium at a plant in Isfahan. At the same time, the UN agency declared that Iran handed over the IAEA a 1987 document encompassing a black market offer which Iran "never acted upon."¹⁴⁸ This document steps down the "procedural requirements for the casting and machining of enriched, natural and depleted uranium metal into hemispherical forms"¹⁴⁹ On November 20, just four days before the IAEA meeting, Iran increased its intransigence a step further when its parliament approved by "183 of the 197 lawmakers present"¹⁵⁰, a bill stating that if the agency refers the nuclear dossier to the UNSC, the consequences would be (1) barring UN inspectors from its nuclear sites (2) stop voluntary and non-legally binding measures that the Iranian government is applying (3) implement its scientific, research and executives programs in the nuclear field. The bill which later on became a law was a means to show the increased support of the parliament to the tougher stand the government was adopting¹⁵¹ as well as a solid Iranian will to do whatever it takes to defend what it defines as its natural right.

With the decision of the EU and the US to refrain from transferring the case to the UNSC and grant another chance to diplomacy-especially with the new added efforts of the Russian diplomacy, the Iranians seemed to have saved their heads yet another time, but now the pressure was growing even more to get additional concessions from Tehran. While foreign minister Mottaki said that Iran was willing to resume talks with the EU, but that "naturally we aim to have enrichment on Iran's territory"¹⁵², he was confronted with a softer position from the Iranian delegates to the IAEA, who declared that the Russian plan was being considered by the Iranians and that dialogue was the path to be adopted with the EU. In addition, Mohammad Akhondzadeh-one of the Iranian delegates to the IAEA- declared that the EU accusation that Iran possessed nuclear designs based on documents Tehran revealed,

¹⁴⁸ "Iran hands over suspected atom bomb blueprint: IAEA." *Agence France Presse*, November 18, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20051118/ts_afp/irannucleariaea_051118184505

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Nazila Fathi, "Iran parliament votes to close atomic sites to UN monitors." *The New York Times*, November 21, 2005. Available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/11/21/international/middleeast/21iran.html>

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² George Jahn, "EU alleges Iran possesses nuclear designs", *Associated Press*, November 24, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20051125/ap_on_re_mi_ea/nuclear_energy_iran_13.

were only "simple and non-sophisticated information which could be found in open literatures and on the Internet."¹⁵³

At a time when all the parties were trying to revive the talks, Mr. Mottaki declared to the French newspaper *Le Monde* that western governments had to change their rigid mentalities and stop their "nuclear apartheid" approach because Iran has inalienable and equal rights as any NPT signatory and will never surrender to these privileges.¹⁵⁴ Few days later, all the media focused on the \$1billion Russian-Iranian deal in which Russia was going to sell to Iran, twenty nine (TOR-M1) tactical surface-to-air missiles designed to bring down aircraft and guided missiles at low altitudes. To ease fears, both parties stated that this deal was purely defensive in nature.¹⁵⁵ Chief nuclear negotiator Larijani, speeded up the Iranian tone in what appeared to be an attempt to once again squeeze the international community to play by Tehran's terms. Indeed, Larijani said that the talks during the previous years did not bring any result, adding that "we are following this case patiently but [our] nation's patience has a limit of a few months. We have a limited time framework for talks."¹⁵⁶ He also repeated that Iran's rights had to be respected and threats of referral to the UNSC had to stop. Finally, Larijani declared that he viewed the talks with the EU as a "win-win game" in which the Iranians would have enriched uranium for the nuclear fuel-that is, by allowing foreign companies to participate at Natanz. Hence, the EU will be reassured that the Iranian program is peaceful.¹⁵⁷

On December 12, Gholamreza Aghazadeh, head of the IAEO restated that there was no doubt Iran was going to enrich uranium to produce its own nuclear fuel for as he put it, "Iran can not trust promises by Europeans. There is no guarantee that the west will supply us with nuclear fuel."¹⁵⁸ But, "in a goodwill gesture", he also added that the enrichment was not going to take place during the excepted round of

¹⁵³ "UN nuclear agency puts off referring Iran to Security Council", *Agence France Presse*, November 24, 2005. Available at

http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20051124/wl_mideast_afp/irannucleariaea_051124195708

¹⁵⁴ "EU-Iran having hard time getting talks re-started: Diplomats", *Agence France Presse*, November 30, 2005. Available at

http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20051130/wl_afp/irannucleariaea_051130182714

¹⁵⁵ Meg Clothier & Maria Golovnina, "Iran and Russia sign \$1bln defense deal: Reports", *Reuters*, December 2, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20051202/ts_nm/Russia_iran_arms_dc_5

¹⁵⁶ Paul Huges & Parisa Hafezi, "Iran's patience running out over nuclear issue." *Reuters*, December 4, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20051204/wl_nm/nuclear_iran_larijani_dc_1

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ali Akbar Dreini, William J.Kole, & Doug Mellgren, "Iran's plans to enrich uranium draws heat." *The Associated Press*, December 10, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20051210/ap_on_re_mi_ea/iran_nuclear_7

negotiations.¹⁵⁹ Aghazadeh divulged as well a plan to construct a 460 megawatt nuclear power plant based on domestic technology in Dar Khovin, in Khuzestan province in southwestern Iran. The following day, in a rather surprising move, Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi declared that "America can take part in international bidding for the construction of Iran's nuclear power plant if they observe the basic standards and quality."¹⁶⁰ This move was part of the Iranian effort to probably throw the ball in the US court and show to the world that it was the Americans who were sending the negative vibes to Iranian proposals to loosen the conflict. For indeed, the Iranians may not have been serious in this offer and knew pretty well that the US would not accept such a deal at a time when the Irano-US relationship was at its worst since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. In fact, Larijani rebuffed Asefi's earlier claim stating that Iran did not "need America's participation". Larijani, responding as well to El Baradei's proposal that the US grants security guarantees, stated that "Iran does not need such aristocratic guarantees" and "Iran has the national might to protect itself."¹⁶¹

With the decision taken by both Iran and the EU in their December talk to meet again in January, and with the threat of referral existent more than ever, the Iranians seemed to have realized that they were in a serious *face a face* with the Russian proposal which stipulate that uranium conversion would take place in Iran but the critical enrichment phase would be in Russia. In order to avoid the possibility of sanctions, Iran was under the obligation of dealing with it. After an initial denial from Iran that it did not receive any plan from Moscow- although the later reiterated its offer several times- Javad Vaidi, a member of the Supreme National Security Council, declared in late December that the Russian proposal "can be studied so that its economic, technical and scientific aspects will be clear (...) and can lead to the extension of a peaceful use of nuclear knowledge."¹⁶² Vaidi added that the share of

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ "Iran offers US part in building nuke plant; Foreign Ministry proposal an apparent effort to stem opposition to program." *Associated Press*, December 13, 2005. Available at <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/6448213/did/10418404>

¹⁶¹ Ali Akbar Dareini, "Iran: No need for US security guarantees." *Associated Press*, December 13, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20051214/ap_on_re_mi_ea/iran_nuclear_1

¹⁶² "Iran ready to study Russia nuclear proposal." *Agence France Presse*, December 28, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20051228/ts_afp/irannuclearrussia_051228163754

the Iranian participation in this project “will be a serious element.”¹⁶³ However, in a contradictory statement, Mr. Asefi stated that the Russian plan was “ambiguous”, and that any plan was going to be accepted positively as long as it recognized the right of Iran “to carry out enrichment on its soil.”¹⁶⁴ The inconsistent statements of Iranian officials appear to reflect the rift lying at the heart of Iranian politics between the conservatives and the reformists which has been growing even among the conservative ranks. It is true that the ideological fundamentalist branch holds its grip on power but its inexperience, extreme radicalism and idealism seem to have alarmed the *faqih*.¹⁶⁵ In fact, Khamenei’s decree revealed earlier on October 1 increased the power of the Expediency Council-headed by former president Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani- giving it supervisory authority over the parliament. “The adjudication of the Expediency Council is the final word. Even if other state sectors do not agree with it, it is the final word and they have to accept it.”¹⁶⁶ This measure was a clear signal from the highest authority of the regime that it did not approve any escalation.

Diplomacy was once again put into jeopardy when Iran declared in early January 2006 that it had developed a “mixer-settler” technology used to “separate the uranium from the mined ore to produce concentrated uranium oxide-also known as yellowcake-which can be converted and enriched in nuclear fuel work.”¹⁶⁷ Moreover, Iran declared that it planned to resume-starting January 9- its sensitive nuclear research activities suspended in 2003 as a confidence building measure under the previous administration. As president Ahmadinejad puts it, Iran would not “step back” on the decision to resume nuclear fuel work. We will go “forward on the nuclear path with patience, wisdom and planning.”¹⁶⁸ At the same time, in a step of

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ The *faqih* (the leading Islamic Jurist), also known as the “Spiritual Guide” decides on all religious as well as non religious issues based on the Koran and Islamic teachings. Since the death of Ayatollah Khomeini, the father of the Islamic Revolution, it is Ayatollah Ali Khamenei who holds this powerful position in Iran.

¹⁶⁶ Karl Vick, “Iran moves to curb hard-liners: Power given to relatively moderate body led by Rafsanjani.” *Washington Post*, October 8, 2005. Available at http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/07/AR2005100701865_pf.html

¹⁶⁷ “Iran develops uranium separation technology.” *Agence France Presse*, January 1, 2006. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20060101/wl_mideast_afp/irannuclearuranium_060101135839. In the mix settler technology, two liquids of different density are mixed, allowing certain chemical compounds to pass from one liquid phase to the other, The two liquids then settle due to natural gravity.

¹⁶⁸ “Iran determined to resume nuclear fuel work: Ahmadinejad.” *Agence France Presse*, January 3, 2006. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20060103/wl_mideast_afp/irannucleariaea_060103201643

reassurance, Larijani said that the nuclear research that would be supervised by the IAEA was “not related to industrial production.”¹⁶⁹ But with a regime that is adopting the same radical and religious approach of the 1979 revolution, certainly more action is needed to reassure the world about its true goals. To add more skepticism, the Iranians failed to show up for the talks at the IAEA’s headquarters in Vienna in order to explain the aforementioned decision. For them, there was no need to attend a meeting which fails to encompass “an aim and a result”.¹⁷⁰

True to their intentions, the Iranians removed the seals on their nuclear facilities¹⁷¹ -including at its Natanz uranium enrichment plant-on January 10, 2006, drawing harsh criticism from the west. Deputy Chief of the IAEO did not forget to reassure the world that the resumption concerned only “the field of research [while] the production of nuclear fuel remains suspended.”¹⁷² Saeedi also added that the research facilities were under the IAEA’s supervision and that an agreement was made with the later on the work Tehran was going to do.¹⁷³ With this latest action, Iran was once again opting for a show of force and defiance to the international position. In other words, Iran wanted to be the master of its own destiny, something any highly nationalistic country entrenched in its past grandeur and deep populist religious ideologies would most likely want to achieve.

Iran had made a big miscalculation at this point: its underestimation that the west will have a strong resolve to transfer the case to the UNSC only paved the way for the opposite desired effect. Facing this new reality, former President Rafsanjani said that he was “astonished by the West’s attempt to bully Iran”, and that it “would not be easy for [the west] to solve the case by imposing sanctions or anything like that [because] they would regret it.”¹⁷⁴ He also added that “keeping the third world and the

¹⁶⁹ “Iran nuclear research troubles EU.” *BBC News*, January 4, 2006. Available at http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/4582320.stm

¹⁷⁰ Parisa Hafezi, “Iran to remove UN seals at atomic research sites.” *Reuters*, January 8, 2006. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20060108/wl_nm/nuclear_iran_dc_5

¹⁷¹ The other facilities were Pars Trash and Farayand technique. And according to the IAEA the seals covered P-1 centrifuge components, maraging steel, high strength aluminum and centrifuge quality control and manufacturing equipment, as well as two cylinders containing UF₆ located at Natanz. The seals also covered some process equipment at the Pilot Fuel Enrichment Plant (PFEP) at Natanz.

¹⁷² Parisa Hafezi, Louis Charbonneau, Mark John, Madeline Chambers, Kerstin Gehmlich, Guy Faulconbridge, et al., “Iran provokes west by resuming nuclear research.” *Reuters*, January 10, 2006. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20060110/wl_nm/nuclear_iran_dc_26

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ “Iran dismisses sanctions on nuclear plans.” *The International Herald Tribune*, January 11, 2006. Available at <http://www.ihf.com/articles/2006/01/11/news/iran.php?rss>

Islamic world several steps behind has been the West's traditional colonial policy."¹⁷⁵ These statements represent the collective Iranian memory of a failed past which they want to heal so badly by mastering the present with their own hands.

The cat-and-mouse game that Iran was adopting with the west was patently echoed in the statements of its officials. In fact, the foreign ministry had said that if the case were to be sent to the UNSC, "the government will be obliged to end all of its voluntary cooperation."¹⁷⁶ Also, president Ajmadinejad declared that "our nation doesn't need nuclear weapons", that there was "no evidence" to prove that Iran was building a nuclear bomb, and that his country has "always wanted dialogue"¹⁷⁷, an idea echoed by the foreign ministry stating that "diplomacy was the only clear answer to the current situation."¹⁷⁸ In reality, western capitals do not deny Iran's right to peaceful nuclear energy, and they openly stated that they do not have a concrete proof that Tehran is trying to build the nuclear bomb. However, Iran might be forgetting its disappointing cooperation with the IAEA whose inspections have only access to declared sites. Feeling the heat from the west, Iran sent a letter to the "EU-3" in mid-January 2006 in which it declared (1) its intention to restart talks and allay international fears that it was building an atomic bomb (2) its will to continue talks with Russia over the latter's proposal to create a joint venture with Iran where enriched uranium would take place in Russia. Paradoxically Iran stated that its decision to resume nuclear fuel research was "irreversible".¹⁷⁹ In this respect, Tehran was trying to prove its good intention and attachment to diplomacy while underlining with its firm tone that it would not bound to any foreign demand related to the nuclear right of their great nation. As president Ahmadinejad underlines in his sharp reply to the latest western stance: "Who are you to deprive us from our goals? You think you are the lord of the world and everybody should follow you. But this idea is wrong."¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ali Akbar Dareini, "Iran vows to end cooperation over nukes." *The Associated Press*, January 13, 2006. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20060113/ap_on_re_mi_ea/iran_nuclear. This step would only be a reinforcement of the law adopted last year calling the government to block intrusive inspections of Iran's facilities if the IAEA sent the issue to the UNSC. The law also requires the Iranian government to resume all nuclear activities stopped voluntarily in 2003, including enrichment.

¹⁷⁷ Ali Akbar Dareini, "Iran's leader shrugs off sanctions threat." *The Associated Press*, January 15, 2006. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20060115/ap_on_re_mi_ea/iran_nuclear_81

¹⁷⁸ "Defiant Iran calls for atomic talks." *Reuters*, January 15, 2006. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20060115/wl_nm/nuclear_iran_dc_86

¹⁷⁹ Parisa Hafezi, "Major powers dismiss Iran call for nuclear talks." *Reuters*, January 17, 2006. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20060117/ts_nm/nuclear_iran_dc_110

¹⁸⁰ Nasser Karimi, "US, Europeans say no to more Iran talks." *Associated Press*, January 18, 2006. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20060118/ap_on_re_mi_ea/iran_nuclear_28

The Iranian leadership's ideals and actions were transforming the diplomatic road into a bumpy frustrating one.

At this point, Iran's attitude looked schizophrenic. On the one hand, it was pressing with its threats to increase oil prices, resume uranium enrichment on an industrial scale, and cut IAEA inspections, if the case was sent to the UNSC. On the other hand, it only welcomed Moscow's enrichment offer, one which it had first rejected and still sees as incomplete. Indeed, Larijani said that Iran viewed positively the Russian proposition, but that it was unacceptable in its current form and had to be further discussed because it "does not meet all the nuclear energy needs"¹⁸¹ of the country. Iran's statement let us conclude that the offer is good but not good enough. But if the basics are viewed as insufficient, will Tehran ever be satisfied and accept this deal? Indeed, will the west be willing to recognize the additional demands of Iran in order for the proposal to work? Many doubt Iran's sincerity and seriousness, and perceive its move as an exploitation of the Russian card as part of its so far well-known tactic consisting in acquiring extra time to save itself prior to crucial IAEA meetings.

February 4, 2006, was certainly a date Iran had tried so hard to evade but to no avail. After the resolution of the IAEA Board to report Iran to the UNSC, Tehran's initial response was a reiteration of non-cooperation, a restart of full scale enrichment, and an end to the IAEA inspections to its facilities. However, in what it seems to be a change in tactic under the new reality, Tehran added via its foreign ministry that Iran was going to attend the talks with Russia on February 16, and that "the door for negotiations is still open. [The UNSC] is not the end of the world."¹⁸² However, rather than working for a peaceful resolution of the conflict, the Iranians reinforced their coercive diplomacy vis-à-vis the west. Indeed, in a blatant defiance to the UNSC's presidential statement of 29 March, 2006, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad announced on April 11, 2006, that Iran had successfully enriched uranium at 3.5%, adding that the country was working on speeding up its enrichment work.¹⁸³ As for the IAEA's vice

¹⁸¹ Nasser Karimi, "Iran: Russian enrichment plan negotiable." *Associated Press*, January 27, 2006. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20060127/ap_on_re_mi_ea/iran_russia_nuclear_1

¹⁸² Ali Akbar Dareini, "Iran to reevaluate Russian enrichment plan." *Associated Press*, February 5, 2006. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20060205/ap_on_re_mi_ea/iran_nuclear_13

¹⁸³ "Iran defies UN with nuclear breakthrough." *Agence France Presse*, April 11, 2006. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20060412/wl_mideast_afp/iranuclearpolitics_060412015055. In early May 2006, Iran declared that it was able to enrich uranium at 4.8% and that it would not exceed 5% because it would suffice for nuclear fuel. In order to make an atomic bomb, uranium has to be enriched at 80%

president, he added that Iran was "determined to complete its work ... on a heavy water reactor in Arak."¹⁸⁴

Iran's calculation was patent: Opting for coercive diplomacy with the west would squeeze the latter when decision time will come. To put it differently, enrichment is now a *fait accompli* and the world will have to live with it.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

Chapter III: The Diplomatic Emissaries

A. WMD strategy: An international synopsis

Before going into the EU's policy towards the Iranian nuclear case, it is imperative to first, go back in time and trace the major international steps undertaken to combat nuclear proliferation apart from the NPT that has been discussed previously.

The debate over how to combat the WMD proliferation has intensified since the events of September 11, 2001 as well as the Iraq war. The EU, with its "disarmament diplomacy"¹⁸⁵ policy, has been actively involved in forging new ways to bring about more effectiveness to this area. Following the massive number of deaths after WWI that shook the world, the international community decided to ban chemical and biological weapons (CBW). The Geneva Convention of 1925 as well as the Hague declaration of 1989 did ban the use of CBW but failed in three ways. First, they did not prohibit research and development. Second, they failed to demand the destruction of existing stockpiles. Third, thirty seven signatories maintained some reservations to the convention that allowed them to retaliate with CBW.¹⁸⁶ To sum up, "an effective norm against the use of these weapons was not therefore established: chemical weapons in particular were used quite extensively in the following decades."¹⁸⁷ The common position of the EU member states in the mid-1990's led to an increase in negotiations in order to give birth to a verification protocol for the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC). After six years of negotiations, the BWC failed. It was "brief, [hence] rather unspecific, and with a lack of verification mechanisms."¹⁸⁸

On November 7, 1995, a new agreement related to the cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy was signed between the US and the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) in Brussels, Belgium. This agreement was of great importance for the US in many ways (1) it renewed and strengthened the political and

¹⁸⁵ This term is used as part of the studies conducted by the Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy . www.acronym.org.uk

¹⁸⁶ Ula Jasper, "Disarmament diplomacy: The challenge of biological weapons: Proposals for greater EU effectiveness." *The Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy*, no78, July/August 2004. Available at <http://www.acronym.org.uk/dd/dd78/78uj.htm>

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

economical bonds with the US's European allies at a time when global security is threatened (2) it strengthened the cooperation with Europe in terms of preserving and reinforcing the international nuclear non-proliferation regime (3) it permitted for an upgrading in US controls over nuclear items subject to previous US agreements with EURATOM (4) it reaffirmed the American intention to be a reliable nuclear trading partner, hence paving the way to an enhancement of US civil nuclear exports to the countries of EURATOM.¹⁸⁹ As for both EURATOM and the US, the new agreement provided "advance, long term approval for specified enrichment, retransfers, reprocessing, alteration in form or content, and storage of specified nuclear material in a manner that is compatible with US non-proliferation policy and statutory requirements."¹⁹⁰

With the Maastricht treaty-that included the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) – and the Amsterdam Treaty in 1997, the disarmament and arms control agenda of the EU gained more significance. In fact, the increased intergovernmental cooperation that derived from the aforementioned treaties gave the EU 'the duty' of being involved not only regionally but also globally in countering proliferation and arms control. However, the progress of the Union has been more in the biological and chemical disarmament rather than in the nuclear weapons area. In fact, the later process is "still complicated and hampered by the unequal status of the EU member states [France and the UK are nuclear weapons states]."¹⁹¹ The common positions taken by the European Council in 1996, 1998, and 1999 illustrate an "ambiguity which characterizes the EU approach to arms control"¹⁹² because, as author Ula Jasper underlines:

They can be praised as a sign of political will to express unity and to call for further steps towards disarmament [while] they completely lack concrete and convincing measures, demands and steps to make actual progress towards the goal of nonproliferation and disarmament¹⁹³

The European Security Strategy, the EU Strategy against WMD and the Action Plan for implementation reflected the first real comprehensive European

¹⁸⁹ "New US-EURATOM agreement for peaceful nuclear cooperation (European Atomic Energy Community) (Nicholas Burns, State Dept. Spokesman) (Transcript)", *US Department of State Dispatch* 6,no47, November 20,1995.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Jasper, "Disarmament diplomacy: The challenge of biological weapons: Proposals for greater EU effectiveness", op.cit.,

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

strategies to deal with the question of WMDs.¹⁹⁴ With the fear of terrorists using such weapons, and in order to strengthen the role of the Union as one voice-especially after the schism that appeared during the war in Iraq, the EU adopted a new approach. Following the Tessoniki Summit in June 2003, the Council of the EU approved the Declaration on the EU Strategy Against Proliferation of WMD on December 10, 2003. Its main principles are the following:

- "Effective Multilateralism", that combines the "US way" of enforced disarmament with a strong commitment to multilateralism (cooperate with the US, Russia, Japan, Canada).
- Take into account that root causes of conflicts and arms races need to be dealt with in order to nurture global security. Hence, countries should feel that they are not threatened. The more they feel secure, the more likely they will abandon WMD programs.
- Because the EU's stability and security are closely linked to the ones of the Mediterranean region, the EU should be especially attentive to the proliferation issue in this part of the world.
- In order to prevent WMD proliferation, the EU should adopt several instruments (multilateral treaties, political and economic levers like trade and development policies, interdiction of illegal procurement activities, and as a last resort, coercive measures in accordance with the UN Charter).¹⁹⁵

Energy security is a major part of global security. Having access to and control over energy sources translates into political supremacy and strategic affluence; and in the era of uncertain oil supplies and unstable markets, energy rich countries are finding themselves vulnerable vis-à-vis powerful states longing to own their prizes at any cost. Hence, one can ask if the world is properly dealing with energy issues for global security, or is it a quest of securing energy for global dominance.

B. The EU

"Maybe terror needs a new form of containment, but preventive use of force needs wider legitimation either through the UN or some form of multilateral backing. If the US claims that power for itself, it will only foster resentment and undermine its national interest."

Javier Solana

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Gawdat Bahgat, "Nonproliferation success: The Libyan model." *World Affairs*, v168, i1, Summer 2005, pp.3-13.

The EU's "internal practice of building consensus through endless discussions"¹⁹⁶ as opposed to the US, has continued to favour a multilateral approach in the European foreign policy as well as an attachment to UN and other international bodies in dealing with world issues.¹⁹⁷ While the US is inclined to rely on military solutions, the EU's culture is more entrenched in "conflict prevention through dialogue and sensitivity to the economic and social roots of violence."¹⁹⁸ Finally, the EU is "skeptical of the moral passion that imbues US foreign policy" and its "twists and turns" in the Middle East.¹⁹⁹ This European mind has been trying to persuade Iran to give up its nuclear program in return for incentive packages.

Since 2003, the EU's policy towards the Iranian nuclear case was clear. Iran had to comply with the IAEA, particularly, by signing and implementing the AP, otherwise, the case would be sent to the UNSC ²⁰⁰ where the possibility for sanctions is high. Moreover the dialogue pursued by Europe was based on the reports and activities of the IAEA.

The EU's policy has been one of engagement known as "Conditional Dialogue". The latter encompasses official dialogue, Track II diplomacy, and an improvement of trade and cooperation provided that at the same time, Iran presses forward issues such as terrorism, nonproliferation, and the Middle East peace process.²⁰¹ British foreign secretary Jack Straw, visiting Tehran in late June 2003 stated that, "Unless Iran implements the protocol unconditionally and quickly, confidence will not be improved and the international community will be profoundly reluctant to lift the sanctions."²⁰² Straw was indeed adding to the official UK statement given at the IAEA Board of Governors meeting in which the UK position was that:

Iran's failure to meet its obligations under its safeguards agreement is of a great concern to us. The UK urges Iran to complete the process of rectifying these failures as rapidly as possible (...) Iran faces a confidence deficit (...) my delegation believes

¹⁹⁶ Clyde Prestowitz, *Rogue Nation: American Unilateralism and the Failure of Good Intentions*. (New York: Basic Books, 2003), p.240.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid. For more details read pp.230-244.

²⁰⁰ "Dealing with Iran's nuclear program", op.cit., p.23.

²⁰¹ Ibid. Also see, Albright & Hinderstein, "Iran player or rogue?" op.cit., pp.52-58.

²⁰² Albright & Hinderstein, "Iran player or rogue?" Ibid.

that (...) it is essential and urgent that Iran (...) demonstrates the often stated commitment to transparency and a peaceful programme.²⁰³

As for the French, their view was similar:

France expects a strong gesture from the Iranian authorities which will help restore confidence about the end purpose of Iran's nuclear program. We urge Iran to sign and implement the Additional Protocol; this would be a significant first step in responding to our concerns.²⁰⁴

The EU, as part of a long-term effort to fortify its behavior toward nuclear proliferation, used the discovery by the IAEA of previously unknown activities related to uranium enrichment in its visit to Tehran in February 2003, to take a stiffer position. This move "shocked" Tehran, for it was echoing the US position.²⁰⁵ Among the new documents approved at the 2003 EU summit in Thessaloniki (Greece), was an Action Plan that called for

The threat of effective punishment in addition to the use of incentives to get problem states to comply with arms control agreements, drawing a direct linkage between the maintenance of EU cooperation and assistance programs and recipient state adherence to non proliferation agreements.²⁰⁶

This strategy however would be used "only after diplomatic and economic measures have been exhausted."²⁰⁷

Javier Solana, the EU High Representative, clearly said in Tehran on August 30, 2003, that failures to sign the AP and fully cooperate with the IAEA were to be harmful for any EU-Iranian relations. This EU position was reaffirmed on September 8, at the IAEA Board of Governors meeting in Vienna, which included as well a demand to halt uranium enrichment.²⁰⁸ Furthermore, the French stated that "France's objective is not to isolate Iran [but to] maintain the dialogue with that country."²⁰⁹

²⁰³ "IAEA Board of Governors, 16-20june, 2003. Agenda Item 6B-DirectorGeneral's report on Iran. UK statement." Available at the official website of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office <http://www.fco.gov.uk>

²⁰⁴ "Statement by the ministry of foreign affairs spokesperson." Paris, July 31, 2003. Available at the official site of the French foreign ministry <http://www.france.diplomatie.fr/index.gb.html>

²⁰⁵ "Dealing with Iran's nuclear program", op.cit., p.24.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., footnote 137.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., p.24. See also, for more details the "EU statement, IAEA Board of Governors Meeting." Vienna, Austria, September 8, 2003. Available at the official site of the IAEA http://www.iaea.org/newscenter/focus/iaecairan/bog092003_statement-eu.pdf

²⁰⁹ "Statement by the ministry of foreign affairs spokesperson", Paris, September 26, 2003, available at the official site of the French foreign ministry <http://www.france.diplomatie.fr/index.gb.html>

On October 21, 2003, the "EU-3"-France, England, and Germany-reached an agreement with Iran in which the following was decided: First, the "EU-3" governments recognize the right of Iran to enjoy peaceful use of nuclear energy in accordance with the NPT. Second, The AP is not intended to undermine the sovereignty, national security or national dignity of its state parties. Third, they view that the full implementation of Iran's decisions, confirmed by the IAEA, DG, should enable the immediate situation to be resolved by the IAEA Board. Fourth, the "EU-3" believes that this will lead to dialogue on a longer-term co-operation, hence, providing the parties with positive assurances related to the Iranian nuclear dossier. If international concerns are resolved, Iran will have easier access to modern technology and supplies in a wide range of areas. Finally, the "EU-3" will cooperate with Iran to bring about security and stability in the Middle East among which the creation of a zone free from WMD-an objective of the UN-²¹⁰ also proposed by Iran in 1974. This agreement was no doubt a success to the European strategy of using pressure and engagement at the same time. In addition, the EU gained economically, for its imports from Iran grew from "3.7 billion euros in 1998 to 8.4 billion of euros in 2000, and the union [was] now Iran's largest trading partner."²¹¹ Also, one can add that it reflected a truly 'united union'-after its division over Iraq- and assured that the economic and political relevancy of what was qualified as the 'Old Europe' was still very much alive.

On December 18, 2003, Iran signed its AP as part of the aforementioned agreement with the "EU-3" parties. France affirmed that this Iranian step had met the French requests made for years in its bilateral relations with Iran, in relation to its EU counterparts, and in international forums; adding with satisfaction that this was "a first step towards greater confidence between Iran and the international community."²¹²

Even though dialogue was an ongoing procedure and positive results were expected to be reached, Iran suddenly decided in 2004 to resume some of its activities related to uranium enrichment. This action alarmed the "EU-3" who described it as an

²¹⁰ "Agreed statement at the end of a visit to the Islamic republic of Iran by the foreign ministers of France, Britain and Germany." October 21, 2003, op.cit.

²¹¹ "EU-Iran: Commission proposes mandate for negotiating trade and co-operation agreement." Brussels, November 19, 2001. Available at the official site of the EU http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/iran/news/ip01_1611.htm

²¹² "Statement by the ministry of foreign affairs spokesperson." Paris, December 19, 2003. Available at the official site of the French foreign ministry <http://www.france.diplomatie.fr/index.gb.html>

abandonment of the October 21 agreement. For the French, the “announcement was troubling”²¹³ and urged Iran to continue acting positively to create the confidence-building measures necessary to prove their peaceful intentions.²¹⁴ The British hoped for a quick ratification of the AP, and considered the undeclared P2 centrifuge program to be a “very serious omission.”²¹⁵ They added that in order for Iran to rebuild international confidence it should “provide detailed and accurate information on every aspect of Iran’s past and present nuclear activities.”²¹⁶ As for federal foreign minister of Germany Yoshka Fisher, he declared that the news his country was receiving from the IAEA was “a cause for great concern”, hoping that Tehran will “realize that they are not on the right track. Furthermore, he appealed to Tehran “not to fall victim to a misjudgment but to adhere to our agreement.”²¹⁷

The climate for dialogue was becoming more difficult with the stubbornness of Iran to resume part of its uranium enrichment program—a break of the October 21 agreement. In order to save the situation, the “EU-3” was categorical in assuring that “this dialogue to which we attach a great deal of importance (...) is continuing naturally, (...) in all circumstances.”²¹⁸ Additionally, the EU refused the US rigid approach, and reassured their preference to give Iran “one last chance for a negotiated solution”²¹⁹ before the IAEA Board meeting in November where further steps could be decided. Following the “G8” meeting in October 2004, the EU presented their new plan concerning Iran’s nuclear case. Based on “a bigger stick and a bigger carrot”²²⁰, the plan was to persuade Iran to abandon its uranium enrichment program and receive incentives, or there will be no choice but to send the dossier to the UNSC where sanctions are a serious option.²²¹ The deal included (1) recognition of the Iranian right

²¹³ “Statement by the ministry of foreign affairs spokesperson.” Paris, June 28, 2004. Available at the official site of the French foreign ministry <http://www.france.diplomatie.fr/index.gb.html>

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ “IAEA Board of Governors, 8-12 March 2004. Agenda Item 4A: Implementation of the NPT safeguards agreement in the Islamic republic of Iran: Report by the Director General. Draft UK speaking Note”. Available at the official website of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office <http://www.fco.gov.uk>

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ “Interview with federal foreign minister Fischer on current political issues on ntv television.” July 28, 2004. Available at the official website of the German foreign ministry <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de>

²¹⁸ “Statement by the ministry of foreign affairs spokesperson.” Paris, September 24, 2004. Available at the official site of the French foreign ministry <http://www.france.diplomatie.fr/index.gb.html>

²¹⁹ Albright & Hinderstein, “Iran: Countdown to showdown”, op.cit.

²²⁰ “Europeans to offer Iran another deal; Britain, France and Germany agree on a last-ditch attempt to rein in Tehran’s nuclear efforts.” *LA Times*, October 16, 2004. Available at the *Gulf 2000project*, op.cit.

²²¹ Ibid.

to develop technology for peaceful use of nuclear power, coupled with a guaranteed access to reactor fuel (2) lift some economic sanctions on Iran (3) trade cooperation among others (4) persuade Iran to stop all the technology that could make atomic weapons.²²² (5) help Iran to develop light-water reactor (LWR) technology.²²³ Actually, the EU was now adopting a more coercive diplomacy but still indirectly. It wanted to give Iran juicer incentives in the hope that it would not use punishments. However, the EU had to allude that a stick was a probability. As Jack Straw declared, "We hope that this issue will be solved in the end inside the IAEA, otherwise the case will be brought to the Security Council"²²⁴

A European diplomat acknowledged in early November, that lately, the Iranians were using strong words and showed inflexibility in their position, but later on changed their mind in order not to be obliged to face the UNSC. As he puts it, "Clearly, they want to reach an agreement before the meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors [on November 25]. Maybe they think that they are not scared of the UNSC but they know that it is one thing to say they will go to the Council and another thing to get there."²²⁵

On November 15, 2004 the talks over the latest proposed EU deal-mentioned earlier-received the Iranian positive response. This new agreement, though a replica of the October 2003 accord, encompassed more details on Iran's commitments and European incentives. The main ideas were (1) Iran's agreement to suspend all uranium enrichment activities-by describing in detail what it would include (2) Iran's reaffirmation that it did not seek nuclear weapons (3) Iran would work under the AP pending its ratification. In exchange, EU incentives would include a guarantee to provide Iran with nuclear fuel supply for a peaceful end, more trade and economic assistance, and an assurance that the nuclear issue was not being sent to the UNSC.²²⁶ The Europeans were keen on saying that this new agreement was simply a first step in

²²² Ibid. See also, "The US is reaching a middle ground with Iran: Importing fuel for reactors is permitted in exchange to halting enrichment." *Al-Diyar*, October 13, 2004, p.19.

²²³ "Tehran hints at agreeing to extend freeze on uranium enrichment." *The Daily Star*, *op.cit.*,

²²⁴ "79% of Iranians refuse to stop nuclear program; reunion of the last chance between Europeans and Tehran." *Al-Diyar*, *op.cit.*,

²²⁵ Iran is 'optimistic' in reaching a compromise in the nuclear issue with the European Union." *Al-Diyar*, *op.cit.*,

²²⁶ "The Bush government misses a strategy concerning Iran; the success of the EU-Iran agreement is related to the US participation." *Al-Diyar*, November 17, 2004, p.18. See also, for more details on the new agreement, "Iran: Where Next on the Nuclear Standoff?" *International Crisis Group (ICG) Middle East Briefing*, November 24, 2004, pp.5-6. Also check "Iran-EU agreement on nuclear programme", November 14, 2004. Available at http://www.iaea.or.at/NewsCenter/Focus/IaeaIran/eu_iran14112004.shtml

the process of reaching a longer term deal. As a leading European diplomat said, "do not think that the case is closed."²²⁷ Also, Bernard Bout, the foreign minister of the Netherlands, reaffirmed his strong belief that negotiations with Iran were the way to reach final solutions for many problems including the nuclear issue.²²⁸

In early 2005 the Bush administration became determined to back the EU's diplomatic efforts to end Iran's ambiguous nuclear weapons ambitions by offering trivial economic incentives to Tehran. In fact, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice recognized that the US had decided not to oppose Iran's membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO), coupled with an agreement to sell parts of civilian aircrafts to Tehran that would stem mainly from the EU.²²⁹ These two events brought about the EU and US positions closer, especially after the visit of President Bush to Europe. In this line of thought, a European report, pursuant to the March 10 talks, had acknowledged that "progress is not as fast as we would wish; but the recent international support for the European negotiating process, particularly from the US and Russia, has strengthened the prospects for a satisfactory outcome."²³⁰ To sum up, the US's support to the EU had a price to be paid, the one of being supported in its turn by the Europeans in sending the Iranian issue to the UNSC if the diplomatic talks would fail.

Feeling the new increased pressure from this new international 'division of labor', Iran re-threatened to resume its enrichment activities. The Europeans, hoping to continue the talks with Iran in order to reach a diplomatic solution, declared that this is "the beginning of the controlled crisis we have been predicting".²³¹ In fact, the "EU-3" sent a warning letter to Tehran in May 2005 in which they notified Iran in a firm tone that it would send the case to the UNSC if Iran carried out a threat to resume enrichment activities. By adopting this stiff position, the Europeans had fulfilled "their part of the bargain that persuaded the Bush administration to back negotiations with Tehran."²³² Viewing that the talks were quite complex and very fragile, the European leaders decided to avert a nuclear crisis with Iran and hence met in Geneva

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ann Gearan, "US will back European efforts on Iran." *Associated Press*, March 11, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&u=/ap/20050311/ap_on_go_ca_st_pe/us_iran_20

²³⁰ Sciolino, op.cit.,

²³¹ Broere, op.cit.,

²³² "Warning to Iran." *The Boston Globe*, May 17, 2005. Available at http://www.boston.com/news/globe/editorial_opinion/editorials/articles/2005/05/17/warning_to_iran?mode=PF

on May 25, 2005. During these talks, the "EU-3" promised Tehran to give it detailed proposals on a package encompassing incentives in late July or early August. In this sense, the EU adopted a 'wait and see strategy' that would help them define their deal depending on the new Iranian president.

After the election of the radical Ahmadinejad as the new Iranian president, the Europeans urged him to continue with the negotiations and to respect the Paris agreement of November 2004, adding that they were ready to work with "any Iranian government willing to progress on nuclear energy [among other matters]."²³³ But the use of threats was still maintained by the Europeans, when Franco Frattini, European Commissioner for Justice and Security Issues, declared that the "EU could freeze talks with Iran unless Ahmadinejad makes a clear commitment to continue discussions with the bloc's three biggest countries on the nuclear issue."²³⁴

At this point, the EU leaders' inflexible tone was gaining ground and a consensus was hence created over the strategy to use with the Islamic Republic in the months to come. Everyone expected Iran to honor its obligations under the Paris agreement and give objective guarantees of its peaceful nuclear energy program. During a meeting in Washington on June 28, 2005, President Bush and Chancellor Gerhard Schroder reaffirmed that any Iranian development of nuclear weapon was "unacceptable", while Schroder added that "We're going to be tough and firm. The message must stay very clear."²³⁵ However, under this apparent 'honey moon' between the US and European position, lies a fear and ambiguity on the European part, specifically when it comes to considering its economic gains. Indeed, Schroder declared that Europe depended heavily on Middle Eastern oil and that taking punitive actions against Iran had to be weighted carefully.²³⁶

Sooner or later, the "EU-3" knew that the Iranian nuclear case would be sent to the UNSC for the following simple reason. On the one hand, the Iranian core demand to enrich uranium on its soil was the very argument the Europeans tenaciously rejected. The impasse was seen by many but no one wanted to admit it.

²³³ "EU ready to work with new Iran government's sets terms." *IranManiaNews*, June 26, 2005. Available at <http://www.iranmania.com/news/articleview/viewprintablearticle.asp>

²³⁴ Robin Pomeroy, "EU concerned for Iran nuclear talks after election." *Reuters*, June 26, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20050626/wl_nm/iran_election_eu_dc_2

²³⁵ Brian Knowlton, "Bush and Schroder are on message about Iran." *International Herald Tribune*, June 28, 2005. Available at http://www.iht.com/bin/print_ipub.php?file=/articles/2005/06/27/news/germany.php

²³⁶ *Ibid.*

The decision by the Islamic Republic in late July to resume some of its nuclear activities, even before receiving the "EU-3" package, gave European leaders a major opportunity to reiterate their threat to use the UNSC, and hence, possible sanctions. In this line of thought, the EU troika demanded from Tehran to be patient and look into the proposal first before taking this decisive negative step. Moreover, when Iran argued that it was resuming uranium conversion and not uranium enrichment, the Europeans did not make much of a difference, stating that any step of the nuclear cycle was perceived as a breach of the Paris agreement.

White House spokesman Scott McClellan declared on August 1, 2005 that the US as well as Europe considered the new Iranian threat to resume nuclear activities as an "unnecessary and a damaging step [which, if pursued, will lead to] the next step [of referring] the matter to the UNSC for possible sanctions."²³⁷

As a last ditch effort to bring Tehran to consider the final package before resuming its nuclear activities, the "EU-3" foreign ministers sent a letter to Iran's top nuclear negotiator Hasan Rouhani, warning that

The decision to resume suspended activities at Isfahan would, if carried out, breach both the Paris Agreement and the IAEA Board of Governor's resolution of 29 November 2004. [This step] would terminate our dialogue before we have presented [our] detailed ideas (...) we will be seeking a special session of the IAEA Board of Governors in the next few days to discuss the way ahead.²³⁸

On August 5, the "EU-3" finally submitted its American-backed package of proposals to Iran aimed at ending the crisis over Tehran's nuclear program. For European diplomats, the proposal covered lots of trade, security and technological carrots among which (1) the declaration of Iran's right to peaceful nuclear energy; that is, internationally controlled (2) the offer of light-water reactors (LWR) and spare parts and equipment for aircraft (3) an acceleration on negotiations on trade and cooperation with the EU (4) a favorable treatment to Iran in international conferences and security arrangements in the region. In addition, the European trio asked Iran to stop the construction efforts at Arak that includes a HWR that creates great amounts

²³⁷ Shirzad Bozorgmehr, "US warns Iran on nuclear threat." *CNN*, August 1, 2005. Available at <http://www.cnn.com/2005/WORLD/meast/08/01/iran.nuclear/index.html>

²³⁸ "Communication dated 2 August 2005 received from the Permanent Missions of France, Germany, and the United Kingdom to the Agency." Available at <http://www.iaea.org/publications/documents/infocircs/2005/infocirc649.pdf>

of plutonium which could be used along with uranium to make an atomic bomb.²³⁹ Not mentioning the right of Iran to enrich uranium and master its fuel cycle on its own, this deal was nullified by the Iranians. As for the "EU-3", it had put its words into action by calling for an emergency meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors on August 9, 2005.

On August 11, the IAEA Board of Governor's resolution fashioned by the "EU-3", expressed "serious concern" about the recent decision of Tehran to resume conversion activities at Isfahan. It also urged Iran to cooperate by "re-establishing full suspension of all enrichment-related activities [adding that] the agency is no yet in a position to conclude that there are no undeclared materials or activities in Iran." Furthermore, the resolution requested Iran to "permit the DG to reinstall the seals that have been removed at Isfahan" and stressed that the door was still open for further discussions.²⁴⁰ Interesting enough, the resolution failed to mention the referral of the issue to the UNSC that could impose sanctions. This point underlines blatantly that Europeans and Americans were both aware that the nuclear issue is a highly nationalistic one in Iran and could trigger the support of the masses to the regime. Hence, the international community was willing to save the diplomatic track by giving Iran one last chance in order to rejoin the European troika to the negotiating table.

Although in early September the EU started to lose hope that Iran will suspend its uranium conversion activities and resume talks, it was obvious that the belief in diplomacy was still present. But now, the coercive tone was more patent. For instance one EU diplomat said: "The logical step is [that the Iranian case] be reported to the UN Security Council (...) it is important to inform the Security Council first rather than demand sanctions. It is not the moment to start talking about sanctions."²⁴¹

Ahmadinejad's speech at the UN General Assembly did not help ease the fears of the EU leaders. Instead it only brought their suspicion to the open and increased

²³⁹ Steven R. Weisman, "Europeans prepare broad deal for Iran." *The New York Times*, August 5, 2005. Available at the *International Herald Tribune's* online website.

http://www.ihrt.com/bin/print_ipub.php?file=/articles/2005/08/04/news/iran.php

²⁴⁰ Louis Charbonneau, Francois Murphy, & Parisa Hafezi, "EU, allies demand Iran resume nuclear freeze." *Reuters*, August 11, 2005. Available at

http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20050811/ts_nm/nuclear_iran_dc_110. See also, "Implementation of the NPT safeguards agreement in the Islamic Republic of Iran and related Board resolutions. Resolution adopted on 11 August 2005." Available at

<http://www.iaea.org/publications/documents/board/2005/gov2005-64.pdf>

²⁴¹ "Iran unlikely to comply with demands on nuclear issue: EU official." *Agence France Presse*, September 6, 2005. Available at <http://www.spacewar.com/news/iran-05zzu.html>

their desire to take a tougher stand. As Jack Straw stated, Ahmadinejad made "an unhelpful speech" and "had offered nothing to suggest that he wants to abide by the agreement Iran has made." As for the French foreign minister Philippe Douste-Blazy, he declared that "what I heard today told me that the option of referral of Iran to the UNSC remains on the agenda...to reinforce the credibility and authority of the IAEA."²⁴² At this point, the US and the EU seemed more than ever unified in building a case against Tehran and send it to the Security Council, excluding a direct application of sanctions-at least temporarily- viewing the strong opposition from other powers such as Russia, China and India who have a history of economic interests in Iran. Under this atmosphere, the EU backed by the US, Japan, Australia and others, sent on September 23 a draft resolution which required Tehran to be reported to the UNSC but at an unspecified date. Hence, the open-ended nature of the draft resolution was permitting another round of diplomacy with Iran before sanctions could be applied. In a way, this proposal- passed as a resolution the following day- created a harsh but not hopeless reality for the believers in the 'power of words'.

In a bid to loosen the international speculations about the consequences of the latest resolution, Straw stated that a military action was unconceivable in Iran because "it is not going to solve the issue. No one is talking about going to war against Iran. This can only be resolved by diplomatic means and by diplomatic pressure."²⁴³ Moreover, EU sources had declared that the ball was in Iran's court. Indeed, it was up to Tehran to take the necessary steps that would in turn influence the actions that the international community would adopt at a later stage. In addition, the EU said that it favored a diplomatic solution to the Iranian nuclear dossier that should include long-term agreements.²⁴⁴ In early October, the "EU-3" held an unofficial meeting in what was described as a brainstorming session in order to revive the talks with the Iranians.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair declared on October 11, that the pressure of the west was going to continue until Iran abides by the international rules over its nuclear program, adding that Tehran should not doubt the will of the international community to ensure that these rules are reinforced. As for Douste-Blazy, the three core demands were clear (1) a unified international community (2) an explanation to

²⁴² "Iran is resolved to pursue nuclear program", op.cit.

²⁴³ Ed Johnson, "Britain rules out military action on Iran." *Associated Press*, September 28, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20050928/ap_on_re_eu/britain_iran_4

²⁴⁴ "EU wants better ties with Iran." *IranMania News*, October 1, 2005. Available at <http://www.iranmania.com/News/ArticleView/viewprintablearticle.asp>

Iran that the aim of the west lies in negotiations (3) a respect-on Iran's part- of the Paris Agreement of November 2004.²⁴⁵ To sum up, the European position was a gradual escalation of pressure in an attempt to squeeze the Iranians in the corner and make them face tough choices. However, the EU was well aware that too much aggressiveness would provoke Iran, hence reducing the chances for more cooperation. In this unstable atmosphere, the Europeans wanted to get further concessions from Iran and at the same time show them their goodwill; that is, that the issue was not going to be referred to the UNSC at the November 24 meeting as long as they were receiving positive results from Tehran.

On October 13, the European Parliament (EP) adopted a resolution with "499 in favor, 43 against, and 89 abstentions"²⁴⁶ that encompassed several major points among which:

- Iran has the right to develop a nuclear program according to Article IV of the NPT
- The EP supports the proposals of the EU for cooperation with Iran in the nuclear field for peaceful use.
- No military option will be considered in order to solve this issue.
- The existing double-standards towards nuclear and non-nuclear states should be countered by credible nuclear disarmament steps.
- The EU has to take the lead in the negotiations.
- The US has to actively support the negotiations between the EU3/EU and Iran by delivering security guarantees.
- The EP is concerned about the US approach of integrating the nuclear weapons option into the preemptive strike scenarios and calls the US to revise its security strategy.
- Iran has to use the time it has before the November IAEA Board meeting and restart talks in good faith and devoid of intimidation.
- The EP recognizes Iran's legitimate security concerns when viewing its neighbors that already have nuclear capacities.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁵ Katherine Baldwin & Timothy Heritage, "Britain, France press Iran on nuclear program." *Reuters*, October 11, 2005. Available at

http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20050111/wl_nm/nuclear_iran_britain_dc_4

²⁴⁶ "European parliament acknowledges Iran's nuclear program." *Iran-European Union, Politics*. October 13, 2005. Available at

<http://www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/051013/2005101330.html>

This resolution not only reaffirmed the European will to resolve this case via diplomacy and acknowledged Iran's right to peaceful nuclear energy like any other NPT signatory state, but it was also a clear message to all parties concerned that in order to fulfill the two aforementioned statements, a more active and moderate approach had to be undertaken.

On October 23, in a joint interview with US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, British foreign secretary Straw declared that the agenda vis-à-vis Iran was a diplomatic one and that military action was a completely "abstract issue".²⁴⁸ In addition, during this period, Russia and India-two key Iranian partners- had reiterated their opposition to any forceful action against Iran and their support to Tehran's right in terms of peaceful nuclear technology.

In early November, European diplomats revealed their cautious optimism concerning the new Iranian cooperation with the IAEA over key issues. In fact, the EU interpreted this move as a readiness by Iran to meet some rather than the whole core demands of the international community. Even though the pace of concrete results was rather slow, the fact that it was taking place pushed the Europeans to hold on firmly to the diplomatic track. Some diplomats and experts claimed that the quality of the Uranium Hexafluoride (UF₆) in Iran-that is the gas that can be enriched- "is so far so poor as to be unusable."²⁴⁹ Thus, if Europeans themselves are asserting that due to the poor quality of UF₆ it is hard to think of any real enrichment activities in Iran then on what legal basis does the EU constantly press Iran to give up all nuclear activities, bearing in mind that the NPT itself "permits a country to acquire every step in the difficult processes of uranium enrichment and plutonium extraction."²⁵⁰

Facing an Iranian intransigence since the summer of 2005, the Europeans have opted to emphasize in their negotiations on "intermediate contacts",²⁵¹ mainly Russia and to a lesser extent China. As a main partner of Iran and a holder of a veto right in the UNSC, Russia seemed to be the best intermediary to try and persuade Iran

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ "Rice says US military action against Iran 'not on agenda.'" *Reuters*, October 23, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20051023/ts_nm/nuclear_iran_usa_dc_2

²⁴⁹ Louis Charbonneau & Saul Hudson, "Iran to process fresh batch of uranium-diplomats." *Reuters*, November 2, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20051102/ts_nm/nuclear_iran_dc_6

²⁵⁰ Kenneth M. Pollack. *The Persian puzzle: The conflict between Iran and America*, op.cit., p.366.

²⁵¹ "EU/Iran: EU looking to Russia for way out of nuclear dead-end." *European Report*, November 5, 2005, p.496.

to comply with international demands and give up the enrichment of uranium. What Europe wanted was "to secure transparency guarantees from the Russian authorities" while also hoping to "wield a stick by securing Moscow's support for the dossier's transfer to the UNSC at the November 25 meeting of the IAEA Governors."²⁵² As it was astutely underlined, the European diplomacy had no alternative at that moment but to focus hard on the Russian option despite its reservations—vis-à-vis transparency and some economic considerations.²⁵³

The statement of president Ahmadinajad that Israel should be "wiped off the map", coupled with the news that Iran was going to convert a new amount of uranium was met with skepticism in Europe. In fact, some EU diplomats started reassessing the true intentions behind the fresh Iranian cooperation. Meeting at the European council in Brussels on November 7, EU foreign ministers stood firm on their already known demands calling Iran to stop uranium processing activities—both conversion and enrichment—before any resumption of talks. Moreover, the ministers denounced the status of human rights in Iran as well as the president's attitude towards Israel that brought about international condemnation.²⁵⁴ Hence, the EU was again making it clear that any improvement of relations between Iran and Europe would have to include not only the nuclear issue but also economic and political ones. Europe did not want to 'lose' Iran at a time when a clearer picture of the nuclear case was being formed but also because any provocation of an Iranian regime—radical more than ever—would have serious backlashes at the regional as well as international levels. Indeed, at this stage of the negotiations, the EU was unwilling to take any uncalculated move that could push Iran to abandon the NPT, bar inspectors from the country, use economic commodities such as oil to disrupt the market or even use its proxies in the region to hit western targets. To the dismay of the EU, even a minimal cooperation from Iran was to be perceived as a gigantic gain in order to prevent dangerous consequences.

On November 13, and after days of speculations, an "EU-3" draft proposal called 'elements of a long-term solution' backed by the US was declared under which

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Graham, Bowley. "EU restates its demand, but studies Iran's request." *International Herald Tribune*, November 8, 2005. Available at <http://www.ihf.com/articles/2005/11/07/news/union.php>

Iran would be able to keep part of its atomic fuel production program provided the most sensitive part, uranium enrichment, was scrapped and moved to Russia.[Moreover] Iranians could continue to run Isfahan to produce uranium hexafluoride(UF6) gas but would have to transport the gas to Russia for enrichment at a joint venture owned by Russia and Iran.²⁵⁵

One EU diplomat was swift in stating that an Iranian refusal of this proposal would (1) give a boost to the EU and US project of referring the case to the Security Council at the November 24 IAEA Board meeting (2) admit that it wants nuclear weapons rather than a peaceful nuclear energy program as it claims. In addition, the diplomat stated that "it makes no economic sense for Iran to enrich uranium in Iran. Doing it in Russia would be cheaper and would assure the world that no enriched uranium would be diverted to a weapons program."²⁵⁶ However, another EU diplomat stated that initial results of environmental samples from the recently visited Parchin military complex "showed no trace of radiation however further tests were needed before a conclusion could be reached."²⁵⁷ With this in mind, and because final results were not going to take place before the November 24-25 IAEA meeting, it would have been absurd to send the case to the UNSC. As long as new information was coming, it was evident that more time was required in order to reach answers to the unresolved questions. Thus, at this point, a referral to the UNSC seemed dubious.

With the news that Iran had started to convert a new lot of uranium prior to the November 24 IAEA meeting, the EU reiterated the negative consequences of this step and the confidence building gap that it would create between the two parties. But even with the increased confrontational approach that Iran was adopting before the IAEA meeting, the decision taken by the EU and the US was the option of non referral of the Iranian case to the UNSC in order to give more time for the Russian diplomacy to persuade Iran to compromise on its nuclear activities and accept the latest plan²⁵⁸ that was on the table. But more than that, both the EU and the US knew that with Cuba, Syria and Belarus joining the IAEA Board as well as the high probability that Russia

²⁵⁵ Louis Charbonneau & Parisa Hafezi, "EU3 draft nuclear proposal for Iran." *Reuters*, November 11, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20051111/wl_nm/nuclear_iran_proposal_dc_2

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ George Jahn, "IAEA chief to press Iran on compromise." *Associated Press*, November 13, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20051113/ap_on_re_mi_ea/nuclear_agency_iran_2

²⁵⁸ The same plan which I mentioned on page 56 called "elements of a long term solution" The plan did not go in details but was just a general idea to be agreed upon. Russia and Iran did meet several times to discuss the plan and agreed on a basic common formula in late February 2006 that was never detailed and declared publicly.

or China- two key trading partners with Iran- would use their veto power, a referral to the UNSC was highly put at stake.

A European diplomat declared that the idea behind a new round of talks between the two parties- that would take place in December- would be "to talk about (resuming) talks" based on the guarantee that Tehran will not develop nuclear weapons. In addition, "no strings" will be attached to these talks and Iran should "be prepared to discuss seriously" the latest Russian proposal.²⁵⁹ At the same time, Peter Jenkins, the British delegate to the IAEA stressed that "Iran should not conclude that this window of opportunity will remain open in all circumstances", adding that "Iran needed to implement the confidence building measures for which the IAEA has called (...) and Britain reserves the right to convene an IAEA special session."²⁶⁰ More importantly, Jenkins alluded to the EU's latest remarks about the suspected documents that Iran shared with the UN Agency declaring that, "the EU sees grounds for deep concern that Iran has admitted to having in its possession a document which was supplied by an international black market and which is a guide to making explosive core of an atom bomb."²⁶¹

For the "EU-3" the prerequisite for any resumption of talks with the Iranians was for the latter to re-suspend the uranium conversion work. However, under the Russian proposal endorsed by the Europeans and Americans, the conversion was going to take place in Iran while only enrichment was going to be undertaken in Russia. This paradoxical statement underlined the confusion among the western powers in their attempt to adopt the right strategies that would lead to the desired results. In an interview with CNN, French Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin stated that: "I think there is a deal possible (...) it is in the interests of the international community, [and of] Iran, to accept these proposals. If [Iran] does not accept, then we will go to the UN SC."²⁶² Hence, the EU was reinforcing the policy of trying to save the diplomatic track by showing the positive side of the acceptance of the deal while keeping the shadow of the stick looming at the horizon.

²⁵⁹ "EU, Iran to meet in December on nuclear dispute: Diplomat." *Agence France Presse*, November 22, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20051122/wl_afp/iranucleariaea_051122190815

²⁶⁰ Jahn, "EU alleges Iran possesses nuclear designs", *op.cit.*, See also, "UN nuclear agency puts off referring Iran to Security Council", *op.cit.*,

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*

²⁶² "French PM says nuclear accord possible with Iran." *Agence France Presse*, November 29, 2005. Available at <http://www.spacewar.com/news/iran-05zzzzzzr.html>

The EU might have seriously reconsidered the efficiency of its diplomatic strategy vis-à-vis Tehran, as well as the Russian proposal to which the international community granted its blessing, when the Russian deal to sell \$1 billion of missiles to Iran was made public in early December. As one western diplomat underlines, "Russia has long positioned itself as a major peace broker between Iran and the west- and all of a sudden they are throwing this bombshell. It just does not make sense."²⁶³ The Russian move irritated the US and its long time ally, Israel, which in its show of force, tested with success the Arrow missile defense system that was able to intercept and destroy a missile similar to the Iranian Shahab-3. As Israeli Defense Minister, Shaul Mofaz said, "The state of Israel, which is a clear target of each of these missiles and of the production stations of Iran's non-conventional weapons, reserves the right to have other capabilities to prevent this threat."²⁶⁴

A missile defense system can not be built overnight hence it is clear that Israel had been working for some time on its development. But ironically, no one in the west even showed concern over this event and the possibility of using nuclear warheads on Israeli missiles as it is highly suspected concerning the Iranian ones. The core question here is not about Israel or Iran's rights to defend themselves, but about the right of the Middle Eastern countries to live in peace, free of nuclear threats and counter threats. For, indeed, if we want to talk about 'nuclear rights', no country on earth has the privilege to even think about having these weapons in the first place and endanger the lives of millions. The right to live supersedes all others.

Facing the intransigence of the Iranians to enrich uranium on their soil, the EU leaders seemed skeptical about the possibility of reviving talks which were hoped to bring about an Iranian adoption of the latest Russian deal. As a European diplomat said, "The Iranians may think they are in the driver's seat now, we need to do something to show they can not play ping-pong with us."²⁶⁵ Other EU diplomats among which French and British, complained that Iran was undermining the *nuclear diplomacy* and saw no basis for talks if Iran was going to remain inflexible. Few days

²⁶³ Meg Clothier & Maria Golovnina, "Iran and Russia sign \$1bln defense deal: Reports.", op.cit.,

²⁶⁴ Ramit Plushnick-Masti, "Israel tests self-defense system in wake of threats from Iran." *The Associated Press*, December 3, 2005. Available at the *Seattle Times*, http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/nationworld/2002661443_israelmissile03.html?syndication=rss

²⁶⁵ Mark Heinrich, "EU to rap Iran over nuclear standoff: hope fades over Russian proposal." *The Boston Globe*, December 7, 2005. Available at http://www.boston.com/news/world/europe/articles/2005/12/07/eu_to_rap_iran_over_nuclear_standoff/?rss_id=Boston+Globe+--+world+news

before the first face to face contact between the EU and Iran since the talks broke off in August, the Europeans seemed to have joined a call by the US to reach out to the Iranian people via funding. Indeed, Ahmadinejad's menacing rhetoric, the Iranian interference in Iraq, and especially the nuclear crisis, favored such a decision. As a European diplomat declared, "There are no plans to halt European engagement with Iran but rather to effect fundamental change in the way Iran behaves. One idea is "beefing up or using more creatively European funding for programs aimed at building Iranian civil society."²⁶⁶ The December meeting was crucial by itself but was weakened by the paradoxical atmosphere surrounding it. Indeed, a great gap was still present between the parties, the diplomacy was fighting for its survival, and the shadow of an unrealistic military option was kept on the table. On the EU side, the impatience was growing, and their adoption of the Russian card was a double-edged sword. First, their hope was to make Iran accept the Russian deal in order to save the diplomatic track. Second, if Iran refused, the EU hope was to secure Russia's vote in the UNSC after having been rebuffed by Tehran. On the Iranian side, the tactic was to try and buy more time to save their heads from the UNSC while keeping the pressure on board. What the December meeting finally achieved was the setting up of a new meeting in January 2006 with a warning from the EU to Iran not to carry out any activities before the meeting especially enrichment because the consequences were now clear.

The US sanctions against nine companies from China, India and Austria in late December who undertook business with Iran-military wise- complicated the EU's job even further. In fact, EU officials were skeptical about the latest American move and believed it "could complicate the diplomatic efforts of the Union (...) which is acting as a mediator between Washington and Tehran."²⁶⁷ One EU diplomat stressed the importance of staying united with the US and the EU role of continuing to lead the diplomatic track.²⁶⁸ But which diplomacy will Europe lead anyway when the overall feeling is a growing impatience and intransigence among all parties, and a tacit will to terminate the on - off talks and let the SC decide on Iran's fate.

²⁶⁶ Carol Giacomo, "US wants to work with EU on broader Iran agenda." *Reuters*, December 14, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20051215/wl_nm/iran_usa_europe_dc_1

²⁶⁷ Dan Bilefsky & David E. Sanger, "Europeans criticize US sanctions as potential risk to Iran talks." *International Herald Tribune*, December 29, 2005. Available at <http://www.ihf.com/articles/2005/12/28/news/sanctions.php>

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

The Iranian plan to resume nuclear fuel research in early January 2006 was a step the EU realized would very much occur, but tried to postpone. The "EU-3" reaction was a unanimous "concern" and "[urged] Iran to go back on this announcement" which would seriously oppose the IAEA's Board demands if it were implemented. Also, they restated that "full doubts remain about the goals of Iran's nuclear program."²⁶⁹ A day later, the British newspaper *The Guardian* revealed- according to a leaked intelligence report from July 1, 2005- that Iran was trying to obtain technology and expertise required to build a nuclear weapon.²⁷⁰ In addition, it stated that Syria, North Korea and Pakistan were part of a "global market in illicit weapons parts."²⁷¹ The fifty five page report was based on material gathered from British, French, Belgian, and German agencies and "has been used to brief European government ministers."²⁷² Some European diplomats questioned the timing of the leaked information and declared that the report wasn't clear evidence that Iran was indeed obtaining products for their sole use in building nuclear arms.²⁷³ In opposition to the US optimism of directly sending the issue to the UNSC and hence sanctions, some European diplomats were however less excited, stating that the US and the EU still have "a lot of work to do and it is no easy sale yet."²⁷⁴ Moreover, an EU diplomat declared that if the issue is sent to the UNSC soon it would be done "mainly to support the IAEA [rather than] immediately impose sanctions."²⁷⁵ Finally, he made it clear that Iran's argument that it has the right to enrich uranium under the NPT found lots of sympathizers among those countries who "hope to reserve the option of doing it themselves."²⁷⁶

The EU was quick to denounce the Iranian resumption of its nuclear research activities on January 10, 2006. French President Jacques Chirac said that Iran as well as North Korea had to cooperate with the international community and would commit

²⁶⁹ "Iran nuclear research troubles EU", op.cit.,

²⁷⁰ Intelligence report says Iran seeks nuclear bomb: Paper." *Reuters*, January 4, 2006. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20060104/wl_nm/nuclear_iran_report_dc_5

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ See for more details, Mark Heinrich, "Iran trawls Europe for nuclear technology: Report." *Reuters*, January 4, 2006. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20060104/ts_nm/nuclear_iran_report_dc_7

²⁷⁴ Glenn Kessler, "US has votes on Iran, Rice says." *The Washington Post*, January 6, 2006. Available at http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/01/05/AR2006010502082.html?nav=rss_world

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

“a serious error by not accepting the hand we are holding out to them.”²⁷⁷ Also, the British and German foreign ministries condemned the Iranian disastrous signal adding that it “jeopardized hopes of further negotiations.”²⁷⁸ As for the Russians who were in Iran trying to fulfill their mission as ‘diplomatic saviors’ by bringing about a positive outcome concerning their proposal, they demanded from Tehran to abide by its international commitments, and underlined their concern of its latest move.²⁷⁹

Prior to the Berlin meeting that the EU troika as well as EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana were going to attend in January 2006 in order to study the next step to be taken vis-à-vis Iran, the positions were clear and unanimous. Gernot Erler-German deputy foreign minister- stated that “if there are no concessions from Iran everything is pointing towards the Security Council.”²⁸⁰ As for Cristina Gallach-Solana’s spokeswoman- she declared that by violating the 2004 Paris Agreement, Iran “gives us very great cause for concern”, adding that unless Iran promises not to begin enriching uranium, “it would risk referral to the UNSC that could in turn lead to economic sanctions.”²⁸¹ The joint statement of the European troika following the meeting concluded that, based on the deceptive Iranian stand and its willingness to “turn [its] back on better relations with the international community”,²⁸² the talks with Iran had reached a “dead end”, paving the way for the involvement of the UNSC. However, Europe wants to solve the problem “diplomatically, multilaterally and by peaceful means.”²⁸³ It is true that with its latest statement, the troika was opting for a coercive tone but nevertheless it was still willing to make from sanctions a last option on the table. As Jack Straw underlined it, “there are prior stages [to sanctions] called the Chapter Seven resolutions imposing obligations on a member state without the resort to sanctions. If Iran failed to comply, the Security Council would then consider sanctions.”²⁸⁴ Straw added that there was no “categorical evidence” that Iran was

²⁷⁷ Parisa Hafezi, Louis Charbonneau, Mark John, Madeline Chambers, Kerstin Gehmlich, Guy Faulconbridge, et al., op.cit.,

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

²⁸⁰ Louis Charbonneau & Sebastian Alison, “EU3 to discuss UN sanctions on Iran”, *Reuters*, January 12, 2006. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20060112/ts_nm/nuclear_iran_dc_47

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Geir Moulson, “Europeans say Iran talks reach ‘dead end’”, *The Associated Press*, January 12, 2006. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20060112/ap_on_re_eu/germany_iran_nuclear_9

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ “Iran sanctions may be considered: UK’s Straw.” *Reuters*, January 13, 2006. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20060113/wl_nm/nuclear_iran_dc_69

building a nuclear weapons, but he had "strong suspicion" that Tehran wanted a nuclear bomb.²⁸⁵

The London meeting on January 17, 2006 reflected an international community that was getting closer but not totally unified concerning whether to put more pressure on Iran and especially sanctions if the case was to be sent to the UNSC. Indeed, Russian President Vladimir Putin agreed that his country had "very close positions" with the US and the EU but underlined that the case should be solved "without abrupt, erroneous steps."²⁸⁶ In the same line of thought, the Chinese-another veto-power- stated that sending the case to the UNSC might "complicate the issue."²⁸⁷ The "EU-3" was still willing to solve the impasse diplomatically but saw no point in doing so if Iran was not willing to stop its latest activities that ran counter the 2004 agreement. Unfortunately, the Iranians only offered to resume talks while maintaining their decision to continue their activities related to nuclear fuel for research purposes. Based on this latest position, the "EU-3" dismissed the frivolous offer and was even joined by Russia. In a tough stance, Sergei Lavrov- Russia's foreign minister- stated that Iran's call for negotiations presupposes an "obligation to stick to the moratorium. But now Iran [has departed from] the moratorium on scientific research."²⁸⁸ To sum up, the cat-and-mouse game used by the Iranians made the latter lose their credibility in the eyes of the west, and increased the existing distrust of Iran's intentions.

In an attempt to further their goal of sending the case to the UNSC, a joint British-French letter was sent to the IAEA's chief requesting a "short progress report" since November 2005, prior to the February 2 emergency meeting of the Board that would include:

- A verification of Iranian declarations
- Monitoring Iran's voluntary halt to uranium purification.
- An explanation by ElBaradei to the board members of the importance of a document- believed to be an instruction guide for the core of an

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ Noah Barkin, "Germany says clear consensus lacking on Iran." *Reuters*, January 17, 2006. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20060117/ts_nm/nuclear_iran_eu3_dc_7

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ Parisa Hafezi, "Major powers dismiss Iran call for nuclear talks", op.cit.,

atomic bomb- which Iran had procured to the IAEA inspectors in 2005.²⁸⁹

This letter was among others sent by the EU, US and Australia. Even though the west had to be contented with a brief update by the IAEA deputy DG on January 31, 2006²⁹⁰, they finally succeeded in reporting the Iranian dossier to the UNSC on February 4, 2006.

Since the February resolution, the European troika's position vis-à-vis Iran's nuclear issue has been reflecting the American one. To be sure, in March 2006, the "EU-3" and the US were pushing for a strong presidential statement from the UNSC. However, their coercive approach was once again challenged by the more moderate Russian and Chinese positions who opposed the use of a strong language. Finally, after more than two weeks of talks, the UNSC adopted a presidential statement which called upon Iran the "particular importance of reestablishing full and sustained suspension of all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities, including research and development, to be verified by the IAEA."²⁹¹ In this respect the UNSC requested that Dr ElBaradei submit to the IAEA Board and the UNSC in 30 days "a report on Iranian compliance with the steps required by the Board."²⁹²

Iran's lack of cooperation and defiance tone towards the latest international demands, paved the way for serious discussions of punishment between the EU and their US counterparts.

C. The IAEA

"As long as I don't see an imminent threat, I'd like to pursue diplomacy and verification."

"I do not read intentions, I work with facts."

Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei

²⁸⁹ Steve Holland, Mark Heinrich, Peter Griffiths, Madeleine Chambers, & Oleg Shchedrov, "Bush says sees risk of Iranian nuclear blackmail". *Reuters*, January 23, 2006. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20060123/ts_nm/nuclear_iran_dc_6

²⁹⁰ Read the full text of the brief "Developments in the implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Agency verification of Iran's suspension of enrichment-related and reprocessing activities: Update brief y the Deputy Director General for Safeguards", January 31, 2006. Available at

<http://www.iaea.org/newscenter/statements/DDGs/2006/heinonen31012006.pdf>

²⁹¹ Security Council Presidential Statement on Iran. March 29, 2006. Available at

<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/sc8679.doc.htm>

²⁹² Ibid.

Since 2002, when Iran's secret nuclear activities had been revealed, some officials at the IAEA have been concerned that Iran is not only pursuing a peaceful nuclear program but is also violating the NPT. The struggle of the agency to persuade the Iranians to cooperate fully with the agency has known its ups and downs.

In fact, on June 19, 2003, a statement of the Board of Governors of the IAEA, based on the June 6 report of DG Elbaradei expressed "concern that Tehran has failed to report nuclear material, facilities, and activities required by its safeguards obligations"²⁹³ but declared that Iran was not "in violation of its safeguards agreement."²⁹⁴ In addition, though Iran was still complying by the NPT rules, it was "the number of failures of Iran to report the material facilities and activities in question that is a matter of concern."²⁹⁵ Mentioning the necessity to sign the AP, the Board said that Iran had achieved some positive steps but that the process of their verification was ongoing.²⁹⁶

Among the discoveries of the IAEA that led the agency to be suspicious and point out that Iran was behaving like a country that had more than a civilian program are (1) the use of a laser uranium separation process (2) environmental samples taken by the IAEA showed traces of enriched uranium in the Natanz facility-that can be also used for nuclear weapons (3) the development of a HWR that can produce plutonium (4) the discovery of polonium, used to trigger a nuclear explosion.²⁹⁷ Even though the situation was not looking very encouraging, Dr. Elbaradei was not enthusiastic to refer the case to the UNSC, a step that would alienate the Iranian government. Instead, he insisted on working with Iran and completing the IAEA's scientific research.²⁹⁸

In November 2003, the IAEA Board of Governors adopted a resolution on nuclear proliferation in Iran. This resolution was not only due to the efforts of the EU but also the US, Russia, China and South Africa. The demands of the IAEA were unchanged. In fact, it restated that (1) Iran should suspend all further enrichment

²⁹³ Paul Kerr, "IAEA presses Iran to comply with Nuclear Safeguards." *Arms Control Association*, July/August 2003, p.1. Available at the official site of the association http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2003_07-08/iran_julaug03.asp

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²⁹⁵ Rajkumar, "Understanding the IAEA report on Iran", op.cit, p.1.

²⁹⁶ Kerr, "IAEA presses Iran to comply with Nuclear Safeguards", op.cit.

²⁹⁷ Paul Reynolds, "Iran: The next crisis?" *BBC online news*, July 27, 2004. Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3929369.stm. See also, Albright & Hinderstein, "Iran: Player or rogue?" op.cit.

²⁹⁸ Rajkumar, "Understanding the IAEA report on Iran", op.cit, p.2.

related activities (2) has to collaborate and work in a transparent way with the IAEA and sign the AP as part of the confidence building measures (3) the Iranian failures in applying its obligations give deep concern (4) the enrichment of uranium and separation of plutonium in undeclared facilities give grave concern. The Board however, did not fail to mention that Iran was increasingly cooperating with the IAEA's demands.²⁹⁹

With Iran signing its AP on December 18, 2003, Dr Elbaradei stated in his report to the Board that:

Iran has committed itself to a policy of full disclosure and has decided, as a confidence building measure, not only to sign the Additional Protocol (...) but also to take the more important step of suspending all enrichment related and reprocessing activities and to accept IAEA verification of this suspension. These are positive and welcoming steps which I very much hope will be sustained.³⁰⁰

In the resolution of the IAEA Board of February 13, 2004, based on the DG's report, several points can be evoked. First, Iran had to clarify certain aspects of its undeclared nuclear program. Second, progress was made in Iran's cooperation with the IAEA specially in the signing of the AP and in the extension of the suspension of uranium enrichment activities. Third, accesses to sites and verification of nuclear materials have improved.³⁰¹

The resolution of June 18, 2004 of the Board reflected the unexpected move of Iran to resume some of its enrichment activities it had voluntarily agreed to suspend. The Board, though stating that Iran was not in non-compliance-which would demand a referral to the Security Council- deplored that the cooperation of Iran was not "full, timely and proactive as it should have been" entailing that Iran was not fully complying³⁰². Furthermore, it called on Iran to reconsider its decision -among others- in order for international confidence to be restored, mentioning that "with the passage

²⁹⁹ "Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Resolution adopted by the Board on November 26, 2003." Available at <http://www.iaea.org/publications/documents/board/2004/gov2004-21.pdf>

³⁰⁰ "Iran signs Additional Protocol on Nuclear Safeguards", op.cit.

³⁰¹ "Statement by the ministry of foreign affairs spokesperson." Paris, March 15, 2004. Available at the official site of the French foreign ministry <http://www.france.diplomatie.fr/index.gb.html>

³⁰² Peter Crail & Jean du Preez, "IAEA Board deplores Iran's failure to come into full compliance: Is patience running out?" *Nuclear Threat Initiative*, June 2004, p.1. Available at the official site of the organization http://www.nti.org/e_research/e3_48a.html

of time, Iran's full cooperation was growing in importance in order to enable the agency to gain a "full understanding of Iran's enrichment program."³⁰³

During the summer of 2004, some outstanding safeguards issues were managed by the agency including the Iranian experimental laser enrichment activities. To add more, no new undeclared Iranian nuclear activities came out. As Elbaradei puts it, "the two principal outstanding issues involved the origin of uranium contamination found at various locations in Iran, and the completeness of Iran's declaration about the P2 gas centrifuges."³⁰⁴ Moreover, the agency found no traces of highly enriched uranium (HEU) at Natanz and Kalaye-the two major sites-but was working to make sure that HEU was not taking place locally or imported.³⁰⁵ As for questions related to nuclear weaponization-whether Iran has indeed conducted activities to research, test and produce a nuclear weapon itself- much was to be revealed depending on the information concerning Dr.Abdul Kadeer Khan's network which is believed to have supplied Iran with some valuable nuclear information.³⁰⁶

During the Board of Governors meeting in September 2004, the issue that created a division between the US and the EU position was the suspension of all enrichment activities. The EU, in opposition to the US, wanted to give Iran a last chance to negotiate a solution. The resolution of the board on September 18, 2004, called Iran to "suspend all enrichment-related activities immediately and as a matter of necessity reconsider its decision to construct a heavy water research reactor.[In addition] the board will decide whether or not further steps are appropriate [in November]"³⁰⁷. In fact, Elbaradei reiterated that, "even if Iran does not commit, the issue will not be directly referred to the Security Council where possible sanctions will be taken."³⁰⁸ Adding that "the agency did not find any sign that Iran was using its

³⁰³ Ibid. See also, "Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Resolution adopted by the Board on June 18, 2004". Available at <http://www.iaea.org/publications/documents/board/2004/gov2004-49.pdf>

³⁰⁴ Albright & Hinderstein, "Iran: Countdown to showdown", op.cit. See also, "Dr.Khan acted on his own: Rashid: Centrifuges for Iran", op.cit.

³⁰⁵ Albright & Hinderstein, "Iran: Countdown to showdown", op.cit.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ Ibid. See also, "Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Resolution adopted by the Board on September 18, 2004". Available at <http://www.iaea.org/publications/documents/board/2004/gov2004-79.pdf>

³⁰⁸ "Elbaradei: The agency is improving in its work in Iran." *Al-Diyar*, October 9,2004,p.19.

nuclear program to build nuclear weapons" ElBaradei still felt "anxious", asking for "more time to verify this claim."³⁰⁹

With the IAEA threatening to bring the issue to the UNSC if Iran failed to suspend its uranium enrichment process before November 25, 2004, it nevertheless presented some incentives to persuade Iran to do so. Indeed, not only did the agency promised to guarantee the supply of nuclear fuel for Iran, but also agreed to back Europe in its offer to help Iran build a light-water reactor.³¹⁰ On November 9, 2004, during a press conference in Sydney Australia, ElBaradei talked about a "cautious optimism" towards a possible new agreement between Iran and the EU. Indeed, the suspension of uranium enrichment was the core demand of ElBaradei as to build international confidence. This optimism was reinforced when the EU and Iran reached an agreement on November 15, 2004.

When Iran threatened to resume some of its nuclear activities in May 2005, ElBaradei repeated his hope that the Iranians would not act unilaterally, declaring that "it is a delicate phase. There is no question about it."³¹¹ Few weeks later, the IAEA gave its support to the negotiations between Iran and the Europeans. Some diplomats added that the agency was also waiting for Tehran's answers in relation to the traces of radioactive material, as well as the highly sophisticated P-2 nuclear centrifuge that the IAEA inspectors found in Iran. Furthermore, there was concern over Iran's refusal to give access to the inspectors at its Parchin military site.³¹²

In an interview on July 11, 2005, Dr. ElBaradei declared that the Iranians had to be "fully transparent, fully productive, and fully proactive" to build confidence and to satisfy the American and European concerns that not only encompassed the nuclear issue, but also regional security and human rights issues. In this line of thought, ElBaradei stressed for the need to continue with dialogue and negotiations because as he sees it, the "nuclear issue will only be settled as part of [the aforementioned] package."³¹³

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ "IAEA offers to guarantee Iran's nuclear fuel supply." *Xinhua (Chinese) News Agency*, Vienna, October 29, 2004.

³¹¹ "ElBaradei: Iran should not resume nuke enrichment." *Reuters*, May 2, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20050502/wl_nm/nuclear_iran_elbaradei_dc_4

³¹² "IAEA backs Iran-EU crisis talks, still wants more answers from Tehran." *Agence France Press*, May 20, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20050520/wl_mideast_afp/irannucleareuiaea_050520182754

³¹³ Christopher Dickey, "Iran wants to be a major player." *MSNBC*, July 11, 2005. Available at <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/8445414/site/newsweek/>

When Iran decided to resume its nuclear work at Isfahan in late July, ElBaradei was swift in his call for Tehran to "continue the negotiation process,"³¹⁴ and refrain from undermining the agency's inspection process at a time when it is moving ahead in "resolving outstanding issues with Tehran."³¹⁵ On August 9, and before the opening of the special session of the Board of Governors, the DG reported several points worth mentioning. (1) the good progress made by the international community and the IAEA in trying to create confidence with Iran (2) the need to go back to the negotiation table and avoid a lose-lose situation (3) the patience needed to reach a long-term agreement (4) the right of Iran to present a counterproposal before taking its final decision.³¹⁶ On August 11, the IAEA Board adopted by consensus the EU resolution that called on Iran to halt nuclear fuel development while keeping the door opened for further talks if Iran complied.

The September 2 report of ElBaradei exposed the increasing frustration within the agency in relation to its incapacity in getting answers to the various questions it had repeatedly asked from Iran. Indeed, the report, mentioning a reluctant Iranian government not sharing much information about some nuclear sites and suspicious activities, was concluded in a stiff tone: "In view of the fact that the agency is not in a position to clarify some important outstanding issues after two and a half years of intensive inspection and investigation, Iran's full transparency is indispensable and overdue."³¹⁷ Few days before the September 19 Board meeting, El Baradei urged the US to give Iran one last chance to comply with the international community's demand but the American reply was inflexible. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice declared that it wasn't a good idea to delay the referral and that Iran needed to get a unified message. With a referral to the UNSC looming at the horizon, ElBaradei pressed all the parties to replace international confrontation with talks. Criticizing the Iranian "intransigence" but also the US-EU constant calls for the Security Council involvement as examples of "confrontations and political brinkmanship", the DG

³¹⁴ "UN nuclear chief calls on Iran to hold off on nuclear activities." *Agence France Press*, August 1, 2005. Available at

http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20050801/wl_mideast_afp/euirannucleariaea_050801155245

³¹⁵ Ibid.

³¹⁶ "Transcript of the Director General's press statement on Iran." August 9, 2005. Available at

<http://www.iaea.org/printerfriendly/newscenter/transcripts/2005/transcr090805.html>

³¹⁷ Implementation of the NPT safeguards agreement in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Report by the Director General. September 2, 2005. Available at the IAEA's official website <http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Board/2005/gov2005-67.pdf>

hoped for the creation of an atmosphere that would permit for a restart of the negotiations.³¹⁸

On September 24, 2005 the IAEA Board adopted a resolution that underlined Iran's "many failures and breaches of its obligations to comply with its NPT Safeguards Agreement [as an act of] non compliance".³¹⁹ The issue was therefore pointing at the UNSC as being the organ that holds the main responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.³²⁰ The transfer didn't mean a direct application of sanctions but was a tool to put up pressure on Iran to comply with the NPT. The resolution was adopted by a vote-a rarity in the IAEA- with twelve countries abstaining, one against, and the rest approving.³²¹ For ElBaradei, the resolution sent a clear message

The international community sent a message to Iran that it is not satisfied with the pace and level of cooperation with the IAEA in clarifying outstanding issues [neither] with the level of confidence-building measures. There is still time for diplomacy and negotiation.³²²

At a meeting on nuclear safety issues in early October, 2005, ElBaradei described the current situation between the "EU-3" and Iran as a temporary "hiccup" that he hoped would end soon in order for negotiations to restart. In addition, ElBaradei stated that Iran had a legitimate right to develop civilian nuclear energy but that it needed a close supervision, because as long as the outstanding issues are not resolved, the IAEA can not declare that the Iranian program is strictly peaceful.³²³

During this period, Olli Heinonen, the IAEA deputy director general, along with other members, left for Iran in an attempt to bring about the Islamic Republic to comply with the latest demands of the agency in order for talks to move forward. Indeed, the core IAEA demands to Iran were (1) access to two military sites (Lavisan-Shian & Parchin) (2) interview military officials thought to be associated with what

³¹⁸ George Jahn, "IAEA chief urges more diplomacy on Iran." *ABC News*, September 19, 2005. Available at <http://abcnews.go.com/international/print?id=1141543>

³¹⁹ For more details see, Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Resolution adopted on September 24 2005. Available at the the IAEA's official website <http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Board/2005/gov2005-77.pdf>

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ The IAEA Board of Governors is composed of 35 members. Hence during this resolution 22 approved.

³²² "Iran: Tehran rejects IAEA resolution, says it is committed to NPT." September 25, 2005. Article I received via email.

³²³ "Iran will resume nuclear talks but questions persist: IAEA chief." *Agence France Presse*, October 5, 2005. Available at <http://www.spacewar.com/news/iran-05zzzzd.html>

Iran claims to be a civilian nuclear program (3) documents linked to the country's uranium enrichment program are to be delivered.³²⁴ In order to save the diplomatic track, cooperation on these core issues was crucial to the IAEA.

To the positive but yet cautious surprise of the UN "nuclear watchdog", the Iranians improved their collaboration and handed over sensitive documents to the UN inspectors. Indeed, Mr Heinonen had reported that "his visit was positive and access easier. The Iranians handed over some long overdue documents and allowed the agency to interview an Iranian official."³²⁵ ElBaradei viewed that the new progress made demanded patience from the international community and an "exhaustion of all diplomatic avenues."³²⁶ Referring to Ahmadinejad's call to "wipe Israel off the map", ElBaradei declared that, "despite the unfortunate rhetoric, they are still cooperating with the agency."³²⁷ In a later declaration, the IAEA chief demanded more transparency from Tehran in order to enable the agency to verify the Iranian claim, resolve outstanding issues, and as a result, ease international fears. Saying that progress was indeed being made, he nevertheless added that "the ball is in their court."³²⁸ The mixed discourse used by IAEA officials was an instrument with a double function: It kept the pressure on Iran but frustrated it at the same time.

In early October, 2005, ElBaradei proposed a nonproliferation plan while attending a meeting organized by the Nuclear Threat Initiative³²⁹. According to him, in order to effectively stop the spread of nuclear weapons, the international community would guarantee the supply of nuclear fuel to the countries that agree not to produce it themselves. Indeed, this strategy would undermine the Iranian argument that they should be able to produce nuclear fuel in Iran as the only way to shield a civilian energy industry from disruption in supply.³³⁰ As the DG puts it, "Objective, apolitical, nonproliferation criteria should be used to guarantee the fuel supplies. If a

³²⁴ George Jahn, "Diplomats see possible Iran compromise," *Associated Press*, October 11, 2005.

Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20050111/ap_on_re_mi_ea/nuclear_agency_iran_4

³²⁵ Louis Charbonneau, "Iran to escape UN referral over atomic plans: Diplomats," *Reuters*, October 20, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20051020/wl_nm/nuclear_iran_dc_2

³²⁶ "ElBaradei sees progress with Iran nuclear probe," *Reuters*, November 1, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20051102/wl_nm/nuclear_elbaradei_iran_dc_1

³²⁷ Ibid.

³²⁸ "UN nuclear watchdog chief says Iran must be more transparent," *Agence France Presse*, November 7, 2005. Available at

http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20051107/ts_afp/irannucleariaaelbaradei_051107163655

³²⁹ Washington based foundation that works to prevent the spread of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. It was founded by former senator Sam Nunn and media mogul Ted Turner.

³³⁰ David Holley, "Nuclear Chief offers a nonproliferation plan: promise of fuel," *Los Angeles Times*, October 6, 2005. Available at the *Gulf 2000 project*, *op.cit.*,

country meets these criteria, it would be assured of the supply of the fuel.”³³¹ However, based on the plan, the countries would not permanently give up the right to produce the fuel

On November 18, 2005, ElBaradei released his report which, while underlining the positive steps Iran undertook, demanded from the latter full transparency that was “indispensable and overdue.”³³² On the positive side, the report stated that the agency (1) was allowed access to the buildings requested at Parchin (2) has not observed any inconsistency with Iran’s voluntary undertaking not to carry any enrichment activities (3) all UF₆ so far produced at the Uranium Conversion Facility has remained under Agency containment and surveillance measures (4) access was granted to additional documentation related to the 1987 offer (5) interviews with individuals previously involved in discussions with the procurement network were permitted. The agency however needed additional information and assurances from Iran involving the P-1 and P-2 centrifuges programs, the research and development (R&D) cascades, access to the Lavisan-Shian site, additional environmental samplings and interviews among others.³³³ Interesting enough, the report did not mention the information related to the Iranian stolen laptop that the US “obtained from a longtime contact in Iran”³³⁴ and whose information was unveiled in Vienna in the presence of IAEA officials and Europeans. As some of the Agency’s officials said, there wasn’t any mentioning of the computer, because “the claims had emerged only in secretive briefings rather than as part of the agency’s formal agenda.”³³⁵

In an interview with Arabic daily Al-Hayat on December 7, 2005, ElBaradei declared in a firm but yet tactful tone that the world was starting to lose patience with Iran and that the latter had to “stop seeking to enrich uranium, because when a state is

³³¹ Ibid.

³³² “Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement in the Islamic Republic of Iran: Report by the Director General.” November 18, 2005. Available at <http://www.iaea.org/publications/documents/board/2005/gov2005-87.pdf>

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ For more details on the story, read William J. Broad & David E. Sanger, “Relying on computer, US seeks to prove Iran’s nuclear aims.” *The New York Times*, November 13, 2005. Article sent to me via e-mail thanks to Dr. Najmedin Meshkati.

³³⁵ David E. Sanger & William J. Broad, “Bush and Putin want Iran to treat Uranium in Russia.” *The New York Times*, November 19, 2005. Available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/11/19/international/middleeast/19iran.html?ex=1290056400&en=88b5a57fbff3098c&ei=5088&partner=rssnyt&emc=rss>

able to do that, it only needs a few months to produce a nuclear weapon.”³³⁶ Adding that a military solution was “inconceivable and non-existent (...) because it will lead to the opposite, aggravating the situation greatly”, ElBaradei did not forget to mention that although the world had lots of speculation about the Iranian drive to have nuclear weapons, “we try to work on the basis of facts, and the facts are that we haven’t seen a smoking gun in Iran (..) We haven’t seen enough materials in Iran, other than gram quantities, to put into a weapon.”³³⁷

While taking part in a nuclear policy seminar in Stockholm (Sweden), former IAEA chief-Hans Blix noted in an interesting move, that the EU had not offered “sufficiently interesting things to the Iranians” when you compare them with what has been offered to North Korea.³³⁸ In addition Blix stated that the EU could do more to soften the Iranian position by, for instance, including security guarantees. Unfortunately, Blix added that the EU was “restrained by the backseat driver whom [it has] in the car, the Americans.”³³⁹ In a final point he stated that, “I am not sure that we are at the negotiations end”³⁴⁰, and a military solution to the Iranian deadlock was not an option. Mr Blix’s comments were not only a reinforcement of the current IAEA position but also an appeal to compromise and work more to save the diplomatic track.

On December 10, 2005, Dr. ElBaradei and the IAEA received the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, Norway. In a live interview with CNN after the ceremony, El Baradei went through paramount points that one needs to mention. First, he declared that nobody denied the right of Iran to have nuclear energy but there were questions on the extent to where Iranians were willing to go. As he put it, there was no rush and no economic sense for Tehran to enrich now. Second, he believed that there were lots of information and misinformation, hence the IAEA needed time to declassify and verify the authenticity of what it received. Third, ElBaradei demanded from the nuclear countries to lead the example and start denuclearizing themselves first, if they wanted to halt the threat of nuclear weapons in the world. Fourth, he stated that Iran had a

³³⁶ “World losing patience over Iran: El Baradei.” *Reuters*, December 7, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20051207/wl_nm/nuclear_iran_elbaradei_dc_2

³³⁷ “World impatient over Iran nuclear program says El Baradei.” *Agence France Presse*, December 7, 2005. Available at <http://www.spacewar.com/news/iran-05zzzzzzzg.html>

³³⁸ “EU should offer Iran more for nuclear deal: Ex-IAEA chief.” *Agence France Presse*, December 8, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20051208/wl_mideast_afp/iranpoliticsnucleareu_051208182605

³³⁹ Ibid.

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

confidence deficit but there was no proof that the country had enriched uranium so far. Fifth, ElBaradei underlined that at the end of the day negotiations will triumph because war delays solutions and one would only prevail for a short while. Finally, he demanded for a revision of the nuclear non proliferation system, and better compliance mechanisms, because "we are in a race against time" in an age where the threat of nuclear weapons that could be used by terrorists is more real than the one coming from states.³⁴¹ Only two days later, ElBaradei urged the US to grant security guarantees to Iran as they have done with North Korea, and hoped that they would increase their engagement in the talks. As ElBaradei viewed it, the security assurances by the US would be "part of the solution".³⁴²

Rather than receiving encouraging signs from Iran prior to the exploratory talks set with the "EU-3" on January 18, the IAEA had to deal with another blow. Indeed, the Iranian mission in Vienna sent to the Agency a "note verbale" stating that Tehran was going to resume starting January 9, R&D "the peaceful nuclear energy program which has been suspended."³⁴³ ElBaradei's response was to remind Iran that it should maintain its suspension of all enrichment-related activity as "a key confidence building measure" because of its high significance to the Board.³⁴⁴ Few days later, the IAEA, the EU and the US were stunned by the Iranian cancellation of a high-level meeting at the Agency's headquarters during which Tehran had to clarify in detail their formal decision to resume sensitive R&D activities. The IAEA was unable to give any explanation and was dismayed of this move. But echoes within the agency suggested that ElBaradei had met initially a day earlier with Iran's ambassador to the IAEA-Mohammad Mehdi Akhonzadeh- and had told him that "their decision was not helpful for their own sake" and could make the option of sanctions more existent than ever.³⁴⁵

When Iran finally removed the seals under IAEA supervision in order to resume some R&D activities, ElBaradei noted that he was losing patience with Iran and that the

³⁴¹ Live Interview with Dr. Mohamad El Baradei on CNN on December 10, 2005 following the ceremony of the Nobel Peace Prize. Dr El Baradei was interviewed for a whole hour by Johnatan Mann- CNN.

³⁴² "US cool to call for security guarantees for Iran." *Agence France Presse*, December 12, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20051212/pl_afp/usiranuclearsecurity_051212220119

³⁴³ "Iran determined to resume nuclear fuel work: Ahmadinejad", op.cit.,

³⁴⁴ Ibid.

³⁴⁵ Paul Hughes, "Iran firm on resuming atomic research: Ahmadinejad." *Reuters*, January 5, 2006. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20060105/ts_nm/nuclear_iran_ahmadinejad_dc_4

latter was crossing a "red line" for the international community. In addition, IAEA chief said that three factors were important to ensure Iran's right to peaceful nuclear energy and reassure the international community of the peaceful nature of this program. They are (1) maintaining the suspension (2) resuming the dialogue with all concerned parties and (3) providing the necessary cooperation and transparency to the IAEA.³⁴⁶

As the conflict was getting more complex, coupled with a real but uncertain threat to take the issue to another level, ElBaradei gave an important interview in January in which he laid the core ideas to consider when dealing with Iran's case. First, the key was how to contain and resolve the issue, and how to ensure a balance between Iran's right to peaceful nuclear energy and the international community's legitimate right to be satisfied of the peaceful nature of the program. Second, no one was questioning Iran's right, but because of the past activities and unresolved issues, a "transitional period"³⁴⁷ is a must. Third, the Russian proposal is a "very intelligent compromise" and a basis for a solution. Fourth, more incentives are needed among which the direct engagement of the US that is the only country able to give the security guarantees that Iran is looking for. Fifth, avoiding escalation and sanctions is better because we reach an "agreed solution and not an enforced one". However, the UNSC is needed if a peaceful solution is excluded.³⁴⁸

True to his legal background and respect for institutional laws above any other interest, Elbaradei's response to the west's pressure concerning its demand for a full report during the emergency February 2, 2006 meeting was swift and clear. Iran was given time until March to answer all the unrequited questions of the IAEA. As the DG puts it, the extra questions to Iran had only been sent "last week". "Due process therefore must take its course before [we are] able to submit a detailed report."³⁴⁹ Finally, he stressed his belief in additional talks with Iran as well as IAEA inspections in Tehran rather than opting for a UNSC referral.

³⁴⁶ "Iran begins removal of IAEA seals at enrichment related locations." January 10, 2006. Available at <http://www.iaea.org/NewsCenter/PressReleases/2006/prn200602.html>

³⁴⁷ ElBaradei meant by Transitional Period that Iran should not go into an enrichment period but make sure that Iran gets its need in civilian nuclear energy from outside supply.

³⁴⁸ "Transcript of the Director General's interview on Iran." IAEA.. January 9, 2006. Available at <http://www.iaea.org/printerfriendly/newscenter/transcripts/2006/skynews09012006.html>

³⁴⁹ Steve Holland, Mark Heinrich, Peter Griffiths, Madeleine Chambers, & Oleg Shchedrov, "Bush says sees risk of Iranian nuclear blackmail", op.cit.,

Following a two-day meeting in Vienna in February 2006, the IAEA Board finally issued its resolution. With twenty-seven countries approving, Cuba, Venezuela, and Syria against, and five abstentions, the decision requested the DG to "report to the UNSC the steps required of Iran by the Board and to the report to the UNSC all IAEA reports and resolutions as adopted, relating to this issue."³⁵⁰ The IAEA hoped that this new reality would persuade Iran to fully cooperate before the critical March report.

With the new reality on the ground, the DG's report came out earlier than expected. The core observations and recommendations of the February 27, 2006 report did not differ from the earlier findings of the year 2005; nevertheless, the presence of unanswered outstanding issues, and the Agency's inability to "conclude that there are no undeclared facilities or activities in Iran"³⁵¹ after three years of verification, underlined the urgency of taking appropriate steps vis-à-vis Iran.

The April 28, 2006 report of ElBaradei was not a surprise for the international community. In fact, the report underlined Iran's defiance to the UNSC's call to freeze uranium enrichment as well as Tehran's consecutive failures to fully cooperate with the IAEA's demands. This continuous knowledge gap of the UN "watchdog" pushed all the involved western parties to seriously consider a mandatory order which they hope would finally persuade Iran to stop its enrichment program.

³⁵⁰ "Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement in the Islamic Republic of Iran: Resolution adopted on February 4, 2006." Available at

<http://www.iaea.org/publications/documents/board/2006/gov2006-14.pdf>

³⁵¹ "Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement in the Islamic Republic of Iran: Report by the Director General." February 27, 2006. Available at

<http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Board/2006/gov2006-15.pdf>

Chapter IV: The United States of America

A. The American Ways of Thinking

Though eased at times- especially under Clinton and Khatami- the US hostility towards Iran has been omnipresent and growing since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The Bush administration is a mélange of several trends: Hegemonist thinking coupled with neo-conservatism and “assertive nationalism.”³⁵² Though unique, the latter views intermingle with one another and have been able to rule over the “doves” and more moderate figures in the administration especially when it comes to the Iranian nuclear case and other issues pertaining to terrorism and democratization in the world. The success of the Bush administration is also based on the president himself who installed a “revolution in the [US] foreign policy.”³⁵³

In order to understand the US diplomatic approach and positions vis-à-vis Iran, it is imperative to understand the “Bush Revolution”, as well as the Bush administration’s psyche and the American mind in general.

1. The Bush Revolution

“The first task of the new [Bush] administration is precisely to reassert American freedom of action. America, in short, could and should be unbound.”³⁵⁴ The Bush revolution did not start on September 11, 2001, but as soon as he took the oath of office. Indeed, this was clear in his quest for missile defense, and his rejection and criticism of various multilateral agreements among which the Kyoto Protocol on climate change, and the International Criminal Court.³⁵⁵ September 11 provided the “rationale and the opportunity to carry out his revolution.”³⁵⁶

The two core beliefs of the Bush revolution in foreign policy are as follows:

³⁵² Ivo H. Daadler & James M. Lindsay. *America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy*. (Washington D. C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2003), p.15.

³⁵³ Ibid., p.13.

³⁵⁴ Ibid.

³⁵⁵ Daadler & Lindsay, *America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy*. The Brookings Review, Fall 2003, vol21, no4, p.2. Available at <http://www.brook.edu/press/review/fal2003/daadler.htm>

³⁵⁶ Daadler & James M. Lindsay. *America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy*. (Washington D. C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2003), p.13.

- a) The best and only way to protect America's security in a dangerous world is to "shed the constraints imposed by friends, allies, and international institutions."³⁵⁷ There is a need to drastically increase the American freedom to act because viewing its "unique position" it is a highly probable target for groups or countries hostile to the west. Formal arrangements and counting on other states will constrain the US from using its power to the fullest.³⁵⁸
- b) "An America unbound should use its strength to change the status quo in the world."³⁵⁹ As president Bush declared in his "Axis of Evil" speech in 2002, "I will not stand by as peril draws closer and closer. The USA will not permit for the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons."³⁶⁰

The aforementioned beliefs had consequences in the practice of foreign policy. First, a "decided preference for unilateral action."³⁶¹ Indeed, rather than relying on multinational institutions and agreements like the previous US presidents did, unilateralism was the most appealing because "it was often easier and more efficient, at least in the short term, than multilateralism."³⁶² However, when unilateral action is impractical or unwise, a "multilateralism a la carte"³⁶³, that is, building ad hoc coalitions of the willing, will be opted for.

Second, "preemption was no longer a last resort of American foreign policy."³⁶⁴ In a dangerous world where terrorism and WMDs are spreading more easily to rogue states, the US should be prepared "to act not just preemptively against imminent threats, but also preventively against potential threats."³⁶⁵

Third, "the US should use its unprecedented power to change the regimes in rogue states."³⁶⁶ Although the regime change notion was used during previous

³⁵⁷ Ibid.

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

³⁶⁰ Daadler & Lindsay, *America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy*. The Brookings Review, op.cit., p.1.

³⁶¹ Daadler & Lindsay, *America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy*. (Washington D. C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2003), p.13.

³⁶² Ibid., pp.13-14.

³⁶³ Ibid.

³⁶⁴ Ibid

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

administrations,³⁶⁷ the novelty of the Bush approach was “the willingness, even in the absence of a direct attack on the US, to use US military forces for the express purpose of toppling other governments.”³⁶⁸ The Afghanistan and Iraqi wars are clear examples.

2. The Bush Administration’s Psyche:

The logic behind Bush’s foreign policy has its roots in “a strain of realist political thinking best labeled hegemonist.”³⁶⁹ Most of the Bush administration accepts this hegemonist thinking which is based on five proposals:

- a) The US lives in a dangerous world that is closer to Thomas Hobbe’s state of nature where life is “war of all against all” than to Immanuel Kant’s perpetual peace where “the idea of law of world citizenship is no high-flown or exaggerated notion.”³⁷⁰ As Mr. Bush once said, “this is still a world of terror and missiles and madmen.”³⁷¹ Moreover, Condoleezza Rice criticized the Clinton administration’s adoption of a “romantic” view rather than a more realistic one vis-à-vis Russia.³⁷²
- b) Self- interested nation-states are the key actors in world politics.³⁷³ In fact, globalization was rarely mentioned among Bush and his advisors during foreign policy talks, and terrorism was practically always related to rogue regimes and belligerent powers. To sum up, states “sought to advance their own narrow interests”, rather than create, as Rice puts it, “an illusionary international community.”³⁷⁴
- c) In the age of globalization, hegemonists perceive power, and particularly military power as the “coin of the realm.”³⁷⁵ The Bush team was convinced of the unrivaled American military, economic, and cultural powers that the US could use to promote its interests. And because power is also about will, Bush and his advisers made it clear that “there are limits to the smiles and scowls of diplomacy. Armies and missiles are not stopped by stiff notes of

³⁶⁷ For example The Eisenhower administration engineered the overthrow of Iranian Prime Minister Mohamed Mosaadeq, Bill Clinton helped the Serb opposition forces to get rid of Slobodan Milosevic.

³⁶⁸ Ibid.

³⁶⁹ Ibid., p.40.

³⁷⁰ Ibid., p.41.

³⁷¹ Ibid., p.42.

³⁷² Ibid.

³⁷³ Ibid.

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

³⁷⁵ Ibid., p.43.

condemnation. They are held in check by strength and purpose and the promotion of swift punishment.”³⁷⁶ Hence, if America will lead the show other states will follow.

- d) Multilateral agreements and institutions are “neither essential nor necessarily conducive to American interests.”³⁷⁷ The Bush team did speak of strengthening international organizations such as the UN or NATO, but the latter bodies were only seen credible and useful when they served the urgent and concrete interests of the US. However, when the US will find itself alone, it should be “postured to act independently.”³⁷⁸ In addition, Bush viewed international agreements as hampering the US and other law-abiding states rather than the rogue states who want to harm American interests.³⁷⁹ Thus, the main theory lied in viewing the benefits of flexibility in having a free hand in world affairs prevail over the diplomatic costs of declining to participate in international agreements that are popular with allies.³⁸⁰
- e) The US is a “unique great power and others see it as such.”³⁸¹ The Bush administration’s conviction was the following: because the US national interest was linked to the spread of freedom, prosperity, and peace, allies and friendly populations ruled by dictators will not be alienated nor disappointed. It is rather those who are afraid of freedom who will feel threatened by American power.³⁸² To sum up, this administration truly believed that “what Washington wanted was what everyone wanted.”³⁸³

As for the core traits of neo-conservatism, they are found in liberalism, socialism and Marxist views. At a later stage however, neo-conservatism moved to the republican arena. A main characteristic of the “neo-cons” is their liberal idealism that argues that “democratization of the outside world and the defense of human rights should play a prominent role in US foreign policy at the expense of a more ‘realist’ emphasis upon the national interest.”³⁸⁴ Moreover, they believe that “armed

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

³⁷⁷ Ibid., p.44.

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

³⁷⁹ Ibid., p.45.

³⁸⁰ Ibid.

³⁸¹ Ibid.

³⁸² Ibid.

³⁸³ Ibid.

³⁸⁴ Howard, *Iran In Crisis? Nuclear Ambitions And The American Response*, op.cit., p.18.

intervention by the US in the domestic affairs of other states can typically play a highly constructive role in bringing these ethical changes.”³⁸⁵ Indeed, President Bush was greatly influenced by the view that the war in Iraq for instance would serve as “a dramatic and inspiring example of freedom for other nations in the region and send forth the news for Damascus and Tehran that freedom can be the future of every nation.”³⁸⁶ In addition, the “neo-cons” argue that by actively deploying its military, economic, and political might, the US would serve its interest as well as the ones of other countries. To be sure, the American military power would deter potential threats to the US’s security. By doing so, the US would be enhancing the international security because the menace America is facing also endangers other states.³⁸⁷

One has to know as well that the proximity of US interests and the ones of the right-wing Likud Party in Israel bares a great importance when it comes to understanding the aggressive approach of the “neo-cons” towards Iran. For instance, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon declared that “disarming Iran straight after any assault on Saddam was of vital importance.”³⁸⁸ In addition, defense minister Shaul Mofaz stated that Israel and the US “have a great interest in shaping the Middle East the day after the regime change in Baghdad. Maximum political, economic, and diplomatic pressure on Tehran was central to that end.”³⁸⁹

It is important to underline that although “neo-cons” are influential in the Bush administration, they are “more prominent outside the administration ... in the pages of *Commentary* and *Weekly Standard* and in the television studios of Fox News.”³⁹⁰ Moreover, vice president Dick Cheney or Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld are “not neo-cons [but rather] assertive nationalists-traditional hard-line conservatives willing to use American military power to defeat threats to US security but reluctant as a general rule to use American primacy to remake the world in its image.”³⁹¹ Although the two trends in the Bush administration, that is, the “neo-cons” and “assertive nationalists” have their differences, they nevertheless share a common

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

³⁸⁶ Ibid., p.19.

³⁸⁷ Daadler & Lindsay. *America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy*. (Washington D. C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2003), p.47.

³⁸⁸ Howard, *Iran In Crisis? Nuclear Ambitions And The American Response*, op.cit., p. 19.

³⁸⁹ Ibid. See also for more examples pp.19-21.

³⁹⁰ Ivo H. Daadler & James M. Lindsay. *America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy*. (Washington D. C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2003), p.15.

³⁹¹ Ibid.

view. Indeed, "both were deeply skeptical of the cold war consensus on the importance of the rule of law and the relevance of international institutions to American policy. They placed their faith not in diplomacy and treaties, but in power and resolve."³⁹² This perception was led and reinforced by President Bush.

In 2001, the Bush Administration had conducted a major reassessment of the US nuclear strategy and force posture as an effort "to reconcile US nuclear forces to the needs and challenges of the post- Cold war contemporary security environment."³⁹³ The result was the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR). The main conclusions of the NPR were (1) Russia is no longer an enemy nor an immediate threat to the US (2) the US-China relationship is vague (3) rogue states possess or seek nuclear, chemical and biological WMDs to threaten their neighbors and US interests (4) WMD and delivery systems are proliferating globally (5) the current US nuclear stockpile would require years to face any new unexpected challenges to US nuclear deterrence (6) deterring rogue states armed with WMD is paramount but increasingly uncertain with the current US arsenal that was mainly designed to deter the Soviet threat (7) new capacities called the "New Triad"³⁹⁴ are needed (8) nuclear weapons remain vital to US national security however the US seeks to reduce its nuclear arsenal to the lowest level consistent with US national security and its commitments to allies, but should enhance its accuracy and control (9) a part of the US-Cold war nuclear weapons arsenal will be kept to deter some adversaries, dissuade challengers, and assure allies.³⁹⁵ It is important to note that even though the rationale and conclusions of the NPR remain relevant today, the fact that it is still classified has left the public with a lack of understanding of its foundation and conclusions and has also increased suspicion and paved the ground for misconceptions about the US nuclear policy.³⁹⁶

³⁹² Ibid., pp.15-16.

³⁹³ David Trachtenberg & Peter Pry, "Understanding American nuclear weapons policy and strategy: A citizen's guide to the nuclear posture review and the role of nuclear weapons in the 21st century." *United States Nuclear Strategy Forum*, 2005. (p.i) Keyth B. Payne, (co-chair). Available at the National Institute for Public Policy <http://www.nipp.org/Adobe/Citizens%20NPR.pdf>

³⁹⁴ Ibid. "New Triad" of strategic capabilities calls for developing a more balanced and approximate mix of nuclear and advanced non-nuclear strike capabilities; missile defenses to augment deterrence and reduce reliance on nuclear weapons, and a revitalized defense research and development and industrial infrastructure so that US forces can adapt quickly to evolving threats. Also included are improved intelligence, more robust command and control, and adaptive planning measures to enhance the utility of the aforementioned capabilities.

³⁹⁵ Ibid. Read all the report.

³⁹⁶ Ibid.

3. The American Mind:

As author Roger Howard puts it, the aggressiveness of the US vis-à-vis Iran is not only confined to neo-conservatism but also stems from "much deeper traits within the American mind."³⁹⁷ First, the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks in a country that had no collective memory of terrorism have led to a general fear among Americans for their future. Hence, the view was that US policy towards Iran ought to be based on national security considerations.³⁹⁸ In the same line of thought, a need was created "for national catharsis among ordinary Americans that transcends any party affiliation or political divide."³⁹⁹ Second, the formation of the American mind in its early history coupled later with the neo-conservatives view is based on "threats and force at the expense of diplomacy."⁴⁰⁰ Familiar declarations by neo-cons include, "history teaches us that weakness is provocative", "rather than coming as victors who should be feared and respected rather than loved, we are still engaged in old diplomacy (...) that led to the attacks of September 11."⁴⁰¹ Third, the tendency of using force rather than diplomacy reflects the "susceptibility of some [key] US decision makers to think in terms of blueprint theory rather than mere practicality."⁴⁰² From this idea stems one of the most dangerous characters in American thinking, that is, the sense of unavoidability with which future threats have been viewed. Fourth, the Americans tend to adopt an attitude that in a way reflects a "latent superiority" towards their opponents. This attitude was clear during the early conquest period towards the Native Americans but also lately in the appeal by different congressman and writers of the US "right to impose civilization and liberty upon other countries."⁴⁰³ Fifth, most American leaders have followed the principles of democracy, life, liberty, equality, as being divine and universal with the US having the duty to promote them. President Wilson once declared that "American principles are also the principles and policies of forward-looking men and women everywhere, of every modern nation, of every enlightened community [they are] the principles of mankind and they must

³⁹⁷ Howard, *Iran In Crisis? Nuclear Ambitions And The American Response*, op.cit., p.22. See also, for an additional background Alexander George, "The role of force in diplomacy: A continuing dilemma for US foreign policy". Available at <http://www.colorado.edu/conflict/peace/example/geor2643.htm>

³⁹⁸ Howard, *Iran in crisis? Nuclear Ambitions and the American Response*, op.cit.p.23.

³⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid. p.24.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid. These quotations are the ones of Donald Rumsfeld, and Meyrav Wurmser (the director of the center for Middle East Policy at the Hudson Institute). Other similar ideas are proposed too by Michael Leeden, Michael Rubin, Jonah Goldberg.

⁴⁰² Ibid., pp.27-28.

⁴⁰³ Ibid., p.29. See also for more details pp.28-29

prevail.”⁴⁰⁴ Also President Bush “really believed that he was placed here to do his [military police] as part of a divine plan.”⁴⁰⁵ Sixth, there is the tendency to use simplistic assumptions about events and view the world as black and white which Roger Howard refers to as “Manichaeism”. Examples include terms such as “axis of evil” those who are “with us and against us”, used by President Bush in 2002. Also, during the same year, Condoleezza Rice argued that “the single sustainable model for national success- America’s- that is right and true for every person in every society.”⁴⁰⁶ And even the state department referred to the “good guy Khatami versus the bad guy Khamenei” and the Iranian “people” want freedom, democracy and human rights versus its “oppressors”.⁴⁰⁷ Seventh, some American leaders have admitted that their mistakes had been partially caused by “the stupidity of being wrapped in their own illusions.”⁴⁰⁸ Based on a Manichaean mind and the simplistic views it draws, it is obvious that “self deception or gross errors of judgments”⁴⁰⁹ have and still occur among US leaders. Moreover, the American people are geographically remote from the rest of the world, have not taken part in the world war until a later stage and have not really experienced at home the tragedies that war brings like their European counterparts. As a result, they “still remain highly susceptible to an element of hysteria in which fallacy and intervention thrive.”⁴¹⁰

B. The American diplomacy:

After the September 11, 2001 attacks, the US policy toughened towards states believed to pursue a WMD program and support terrorist groups. What this strategy did was to exacerbate the already highly aggressive relationship between the US and Iran. Also, the US has argued extensively that Iran did not need nuclear energy because the country has loads of natural resources-oil and gas-that are far cheaper to develop. As White House spokesman Ari Fleischer has argued:

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid., pp.29-30.

⁴⁰⁶ The paper was called the National Security Strategy and was published in August 2002.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid., pp.30-32.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid., p.33.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid. Examples of the illusions US leaders were trapped into were for instance concerning the Iranian intervention in Iraq. Michael Leeden, Donald Rumsfeld and others claimed that there are “thousands of Iranian agents at work in Iraq” who want to sabotage the peace in post- Saddam Iraq. Few sentences later, Leeden stated that the terrorists in Iraq were “next to impossible to verify.”

⁴¹⁰ Ibid., p.35. An important fallacy based on illusions as well is the fact that US policy makers believe that “enemy regimes” are oppressive of their “people” that are quite sympathetic to the US and its values. Hence dealing with the people rather than the government and the consequent regime change would be widely welcomed inside that country.

Such facilities are simply not justified by the needs that Iran has for their civilian nuclear program. Our assessment when we look at Iran is that there is no economic gain for a country rich in oil and gas like Iran to build costly indigenous nuclear fuel cycle facilities. Iran flares ('burns') off more gas every year than the equivalent power that it hopes to produce with these reactors.⁴¹¹

Like the rest of the world, the US was taken by surprise when some of the Iranian nuclear facilities were revealed by the *Mujahedin-el-Khalq* in 2002. Unlike the EU who adopted a policy of dialogue and persuasion that later turned into coercion, the US opted from the start for the coercive diplomacy style which makes from threats of punishment the core idea to make the adversary comply with one's demands. Indeed, the US has been reiterating that the camouflage of Iran's nuclear facilities for almost eighteen years proved only one thing for sure: That Iran was using a civilian energy program as a cover to build nuclear weapons. From that moment onwards, exaggerated speculations among US officials and academician critics of Iran started to flourish. Michael Leeden wrote in September 2002 that "the regime's leaders have told their doomsday scientists and technicians that they desperately want to demonstrate a nuclear capacity by the end of the year."⁴¹² Nine months later, Leeden "pushed his timetable back" and claimed that some "well informed people" believed that Tehran was hoping to build a device "by the end of the summer."⁴¹³ Also, Senator Hillary Clinton declared that the prospect of Iran also developing nuclear weapons "must be unacceptable to the entire world" since it would "shake the foundation of global security to its very core."⁴¹⁴ In the same line of thought, American officials tend to be certain rather than doubt the existence of an alleged Iranian nuclear WMD project. "This tendency of proof rather than likelihood"⁴¹⁵, was present in statements made by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld who stated that "there is clear evidence that Iran is trying to build a nuclear warhead" and reports made by the CIA reveal that they have been "convinced that Tehran is vigorously pursuing the same program."⁴¹⁶ In December 2003, a draft UNSC resolution calling for a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East- a point already raised since 1974 by Iran

⁴¹¹ Howard, *Iran In Crisis? Nuclear Ambitions And The American Response*, op.cit, p.98.

⁴¹² Ibid., p.108.

⁴¹³ Ibid.

⁴¹⁴ Stephen Zunes, "Democracy, terrorism, and nuclear weapons." *Foreign Policy In Focus (FPIF)*, July 25, 2005, p.5. Copy made available to me while I was attending the Middle East and Central Asia Conference (MECA) on September 8-10, 2005 at the University of Utah, USA.

⁴¹⁵ Howard, *Iran In Crisis? Nuclear Ambitions And The American Response*, op.cit, p.107.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid.

itself- was “withdrawn when the US threatened to veto it.”⁴¹⁷ Indeed, the Bush administration insists that the US “has the right to decide which countries get to have nuclear weapons and which ones do not.”⁴¹⁸

The November 2004 IAEA report and its conclusion that no evidence was found that Iran was pursuing a nuclear weapons program angered the US who tried to oust IAEA director ElBaradei⁴¹⁹, complaining that he was not sufficiently tough on the Iranian issue. Failing to do so, the Bush administration- that was not a member in the negotiations that the “EU-3” had been undertaking since 2003-realized the limits of its coercive unilateral approach and decided to shift its position. The approach since March 2005 consisted in supporting the EU diplomacy while the latter would guarantee in return its support to bring the Iranian issue to the UNSC if diplomacy fails. The Americans had weighed the success of their new tactic. In fact, while overtly supporting the European diplomatic approach, the US was implicitly aware that- as UN ambassador John Bolton stated- “The EU’s strategy of negotiating with Iran was doomed to fail,” adding that “a robust military action” should be taken by the US “if the UNSC fails to impose the sanctions that Washington demands.”⁴²⁰ In order to fulfill their part of the deal, the US offered trivial economic incentives to Tehran which Secretary of State Rice defined as being (1) not to oppose Iran’s membership in the WTO (2) an agreement to sell parts of civilian aircrafts to Tehran that would stem from the US but mainly from the EU.⁴²¹

In a June 2005 meeting with former German chancellor Gerhard Schroder, President Georges Bush stated firmly the US position related to Iran’s nuclear ambitions. Declaring that “the message hasn’t changed” Bush added that “we continue working with the [EU-3] to send a focused, concerted, unified message that [is unacceptable for Iran to develop nuclear weapons].”⁴²² A day later, Secretary of State Rice added that the US would “lose nothing by allowing the diplomacy to play out here and to give the Iranians a chance”, but “if the Iranians do not take that chance, then we have a united international security going forward [that is, to the

⁴¹⁷ Zunes, “Democracy, terrorism, and nuclear weapons”, op.cit, p.5.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid., p.4.

⁴²⁰ Ibid.

⁴²¹ Ann Gearan, “US will back European efforts on Iran.” *Associated Press*, March 11, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&u=/ap/20050311/ap_on_go_ca_st_pe/us_iran_20

⁴²² “Bush firm on Iran nuclear program.” *Agence France Presse*, June 27, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20050627/pl_afp/usirannuclear_050627212621

to prove their intentions. But this additional chance was not given as part of a carrot and stick strategy- for the US was exclusively relying on the stick- but rather because the US had failed to secure the votes of Russia and China who are sympathetic to Iran and hold the veto right in the UNSC. In addition, President Bush declared that a civilian nuclear program in Iran “makes sense only so long as the plant is under strong international inspection regimes and the uranium used to run the power plant is provided by a country with whom we’re comfortable.”⁴²⁶ It was Russia-a country far from meeting the democratic values of the US- who ironically got the latter’s blessing.

The stubbornness of the Iranians, their decision to restart conversion, and their refusal of the “EU-3” American backed package deal, gave the golden opportunity to the US administration to go ahead with its agenda. In an interview with Condoleezza Rice on September 20, 2005, just few days before the crucial IAEA Board decision, the coercive tone was present more than ever. Indeed, Rice stated that

We think it will end up in the Security Council. We believe they should probably have been referred some time ago. But sometimes in diplomacy it takes time to build a consensus and you are stronger for having done that. At some point you will have to act. Nobody trusts [the Iranians]. Their problem is that they can argue all they want about what their rights are (...) but nobody believes it is safe for them to exercise those rights-if indeed they have those rights.⁴²⁷

Although the US failed to get an immediate referral of the case to the UNSC for possible sanctions- due to Chinese/Russian reluctance- the September 24, 2005 IAEA resolution was a hurdle for Iran and half a victory for the US. Indeed, the non-compliance of Iran with its NPT obligations was, for the first time, put explicitly under the competence of the UNSC. As Nicholas Burns-undersecretary of state for political affairs- stated, “this is a significant step forward in the international effort to isolate Iran. It is also a significant setback for Iran’s nuclear strategy.”⁴²⁸

Rather than working to strengthen the diplomatic efforts of the Europeans, present new ideas, and grant negotiations more time, what the US did was to see its latest ‘achievement’ as a door to pressure even more Iran, and increased its statements

⁴²⁶ Ibid.

⁴²⁷ Elaine Shannon, “Rice outlines next steps in Iran showdown.” *Time*, September 20, 2005. Available at <http://www.time.com/time/world/printout/0,8816,1107125,00.html>. See also for more statements from American officials, an interview with US department of state Adam Ereli on the following link. “US: Iran will be forced to comply with US objectives.” *Iran-USA, Politics*, September 22, 2005. Available at <http://www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/050922/2005092231.html>

⁴²⁸ “US calls IAEA vote on Iran a ‘significant step forward’.” *Agence France Presse*, September 24, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20050924/pl_afp/irannucleariaeaus_050924232124

calling for a non suppression of the military option. For a country that hasn't had any diplomatic relations with Iran since 1979, it is understandable that the US fails to appreciate that diplomacy needs time especially when dealing with a complex country such as Iran. Hence, though supporting the EU verbally, the US was staying behind the curtains, making sure that sticks and a forceful approach led the way to achieve its plan. In this line of thought, in early October 2005, American officials made it clear that they were not considering any change in their policy concerning a direct diplomatic participation by the US with Iran and the EU. Moreover, Sean McCormack-state department spokesman- stated that "if anything, over the past weeks and months you have seen an even tougher minded US policy [and the same goes for] the international community."⁴²⁹

In its effort to refer the Iranian case to the UNSC during the November IAEA meeting, the US presented additional 'proof' that Iran had other than peaceful intentions concerning its nuclear program. As the New York Times article revealed on November 13, 2005, it was in Vienna, during the summer that the US presented in front of IAEA officials and Europeans an Iranian stolen laptop that the Americans had "obtained from a longtime contact in Iran."⁴³⁰ This laptop contained thousands of pages including several experiments and studies for crucial features of nuclear warheads. However, this story left many American and European experts doubt the veracity of the story. Prior to the November report of ElBaradei, Iran surprisingly delivered key documents that the agency had been asking for some time and seemed to be cooperating partly but not fully with the international demands. Each of the IAEA, the EU and the US, viewed this latest cooperation as an important concession from Iran but were still cautious and demanded a full collaboration. Once again the efforts of the US to send Iran to the UNSC had failed not only due to the Iranians themselves who used this latest tactic, but also due to a new Board that was less friendly to the US including (Syria, Cuba and Belarus), and the continued opposition of China and Russia.

The election of a Khomeinist president par excellence rendered Iran a more threatening country. The defiance tone that the new Iranian administration used especially related to Israel-the closest US ally- being "wiped of the map" and the

⁴²⁹ Barry Schweid, "US seeks ways to pressure Iran on nukes." *Associated Press*, October 6, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20051006/ap_on_go_ca_st_pe/us_iran_3

⁴³⁰ For more details on the story, read Broad & Sanger, "Relying on computer, US seeks to prove Iran's nuclear aims", op.cit.

claim that the "holocaust was a myth", made the US adopt an extra coercive tone and a will stronger than ever to take the necessary steps to stop Iran's nuclear plans. In fact, George Schuttle-chief US representative to the IAEA- stated that, "a country that threatens 'death' to other countries must be denied the most deadly of weapons. Tehran is lying, covering up and withholding information on its nuclear activities."⁴³¹ In addition, although the military option "was not on the agenda (...) the American president never takes any option off the table" as Secretary Rice stated.⁴³² With Tehran threatening to resume uranium enrichment, the US finally accepted a Russian deal backed by the "EU-3" which permitted for Iran to convert uranium on its soil but enrich it in Russia. The US approach was to gain a strategic ally of Tehran to pressure the latter in a bid to get a broader international consensus when the time for referral to the UNSC arrives. In fact, the US and the international community knew quite well that Iran would most likely reject a deal where its inalienable right of enrichment is not mentioned. The American tactic might have been to support any initiative that *they* could live with -as long as it was under the red line- but which they knew *Iran* would not accept. Hence, the blame for the failure would be put on Iran and an easy path would be open for the transfer of the dossier.

With this new Russian diplomatic initiative on the table, and at a time when more information was being received from Iran among which a key document describing how to probably make the explosive core of an atom bomb, the US threatened that "Iran must understand that the report to the council is required and will be made at a time of this board's choosing." George Schuttle added that the patience of the Board "should not be unlimited" and that the non-referral to the council was only for a "short period."⁴³³ Few days later, undersecretary of state Nicholas Burns declared that "if diplomacy fails, a growing number of countries are likely to consider economic weapons as curbs on trade and investments". Burns also mentioned that regime change is "clearly the job of the Iranian people."⁴³⁴ Only forty-eight hours later, rather than seeing more pressure taking place, the Russians were declaring that they were having a \$1billion missiles and other hardware deal with Iran. This step

⁴³¹ George Jan, "Russia angered by Iran's nuke activities." *Associated Press*, November 18, 2005.

Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20051118/ap_on_re_eu/nuclear_agency_iran_3

⁴³² "Rice says US military action against Iran "not on agenda", *op.cit.*,

⁴³³ "UN nuclear agency puts off referring Iran to Security Council", *op.cit.*,

⁴³⁴ Barry Schweid. "State dept official urges Iran trade curb." *Associated Press*, November 30, 2005.

Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20051130/ap_on_go_ca_st_pe/us_iran_3

was a setback for the US coercive approach and belief that their allies' agenda was the same as theirs. But the willingness of the US to rely solely on sticks and its lack of direct participation in the EU diplomatic efforts that it is supposed to back was reaffirmed prior to the Irano-"EU-3" December revival of talks. Indeed, rather than cooperating with ElBaradei's proposal of granting security assurances to Iran like they did with North Korea, Adam Ereli responded with a firm tone, stating that "before anybody asks the US to do something, it is up to Iran to answer questions, act like a responsible member of the international community, and stop violating its agreement with the EU-3 and others."⁴³⁵ Another State Department official was more direct, saying that "diplomatic niceties aside, these guys are bent on developing a nuclear weapon and they are going to stop at nothing to do it. And so giving them security guarantees at this point are not going to change that."⁴³⁶ Maybe the Americans are right about the ineffectiveness of being more moderate with the Iranians at a time when they are ruled by an administration that has a hostile agenda. But diplomacy is not all about sticks and confrontation, it is a means to negotiate and discuss each party's fears and demands. After all the US was grateful for Iran's help in Afghanistan, but in the nuclear issue, it looks like constructive talks are out of the picture and the rift is only widening.

Because the Iranian nuclear dossier is correlated to other issues such as human rights, terrorism, global and international security, the US believes that with more pressure on the Iranian regime from the outside as well as from the inside, the nuclear problem could be solved. In this respect, assistant secretary of state Daniel Fried, declared on December 14 that there should be an increased international pressure on Iran in 2006 coupled with an American-European "agenda for hope for Iran which is directed at support for the Iranian people (...) and what we believe are universal aspirations and therefore shared by the Iranian people and Iranian society of freedom and democracy."⁴³⁷ Moreover, Secretary of State Rice declared that the recent declarations by the Iranian president towards Israel made it clear that the international community can not trust Tehran with its technologies that can lead to a nuclear

⁴³⁵ "US cool to call for security guarantees for Iran", *op.cit.*,

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁷ Carol Giacomo, "US wants to work with EU on broader Iran agenda", *op.cit.*,

weapon, adding that "I am convinced that this will end up in the Security Council if Iran doesn't change course, and I see no evidence that Iran will [do so]."⁴³⁸

The influential pro-Israel lobby group- the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) - overtly criticized the Bush administration in late December over its policy related to Iran's nuclear program. Qualifying the American policy decisions on Iran as "dangerous", "disturbing", and "inappropriate", AIPAC underlined its "concern" that there was no decision to go to the UNSC, as well as the US support to the Russian proposal which in AIPAC's view is a "disturbing shift in the administration's policy on Iran and poses a danger to the US and our allies."⁴³⁹ As a final word, the pro-Israel lobby group "urged" Bush to "work quickly toward reporting Iran's case to the UNSC, where it could face sanctions or an oil embargo."⁴⁴⁰ Whether influenced by AIPAC's comments or not, the US imposed sanctions few days later against nine companies from China, India, and Austria, accused of supplying Iran with military equipment and technology. The sanctions ban the companies from doing business with the US government and US companies and are part of the Iran Non-Proliferation Act of 2000 which aims at preventing Tehran from developing nuclear weapons.⁴⁴¹ As Adam Ereli stated, "These entities will be sanctioned based on credible information that they transferred equipments and technologies referred on the multilateral control lists to Iran. They are serial offenders." Ereli added that the sanctions were an "important and effective tool in constraining Iran's efforts to develop missile and WMD capabilities."⁴⁴² This move was not appreciated at all in China whose foreign ministry declared that they were "strongly dissatisfied with and firmly opposed to the US government sanctioning Chinese companies, adding that China had always undertaken the necessary steps "to strengthen export management and control."⁴⁴³

The Iranian decision to resume nuclear fuel for R&D in early January 2006 was a valuable gift to the US agenda. State Department spokesman Sean McCormack

⁴³⁸ "Iran can not be rusted with nuclear technology: Rice." *Agence France Presse*, December 18, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20051218/ts_alt_afp/irannuclearusrice_051218154837

⁴³⁹ Dafna Linzer, "Pro-Israel group criticizes White House Policy on Iran: At issue is new stance on Tehran's nuclear program." *The Washington Post*, December 25, 2005. Available at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/12/24/AR2005122400636>

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁴¹ "US sanctions nine firms for Iran arms-related deals." *Agence France Presse*, December 27, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20051227/pl_afp/usirannuclear_051227230924. The names of the companies sanctioned are included in the article.

⁴⁴² Ibid.

⁴⁴³ Bilefsky & Sanger, "Europeans criticize US sanctions as potential risk to Iran talks", op.cit.,

said that "if Iran takes any further enrichment-related steps, the international community will have to consider additional measures to restrain Iran's nuclear ambitions."⁴⁴⁴ Adding up that the US and the international community were not "going to buy" the Iranian claim that enrichment is only for pure research purposes, McCormack reiterated that Tehran was only trying to extend the discussions, was not really committed seriously to negotiations, and that the patience of the world was finite because this was a "serious issue."⁴⁴⁵ In the same line of thought and in a more direct tone, Condoleezza Rice declared several vital points. First, Rice said that the US and its European allies had the votes to refer Iran to the UNSC for possible sanctions. Second, she suggested that "if the Iranians are not prepared to do what they say they want to do-which is to pursue peaceful nuclear energy- we're going to the Security Council"⁴⁴⁶ at a time when the US sees it appropriate. The absurdity here is that the Iranians openly claim that they are pursuing what they qualify as being peaceful nuclear energy. Logically then, they are supposedly doing what they say they want to do. But if 'reading intentions' seem to play a role in nuclear proliferation issues, then if having one's energy controlled by other states or giving "objective guarantees" renders it "peaceful", why couldn't the same approach be adopted to other states such as Israel, North Korea, Pakistan or India, who built their nuclear weapons using the same pretext. Third, Rice declared that the Bush administration has worked to build "a consensus for action"⁴⁴⁷. In fact, the US's definition of diplomacy was to reduce their differences with the EU and get a consensus in order to act jointly in a forceful way. Finally, Rice said that a major goal was "transformational diplomacy"⁴⁴⁸, that is "to remake the culture of the foreign service from merely reporting on events overseas to actually shaping them."⁴⁴⁹ This new questionable perception of diplomacy makes one wonder if diplomacy will mean to make events suit our agenda so that diplomacy will always make the party adopting it always successful. Will there be any room for negotiations and compromise or will it be an indirect imposition of one's will whatever the price would be under the badge of diplomacy?

⁴⁴⁴ Saul Hudson, "US warns Iran against resuming nuclear research." *Reuters*, January 3, 2006. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20060103/ts_nm/nuclear_iran_usa_dc_3

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁶ Glenn Kessler, "US has votes on Iran, Rice says", op.cit.,

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid.

When Iran finally had put its words into action and resumed its nuclear research activities on January 10, 2006, the US qualified it as “a step towards creating the material for nuclear bombs.”⁴⁵⁰ George L. Schulte, the US representative to the IAEA believed that the Iranian move was a revelation of this country’s “disdain for international concerns and its rejection of international diplomacy.”⁴⁵¹ Schulte added that the choice of the regime in Tehran to confront rather than cooperate was only isolating the country even more and harming the interests of the Iranian society.⁴⁵² Even though the US reiterated once again its long time call to refer Iran to the UNSC- a goal now made highly credible- some American officials were not sure that this option was definite especially when it was still unclear if Russia or China would support this move. After talks with German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, in Washington, US president said that he wanted to solve the Iranian issue via the “proactive diplomatic policy”⁴⁵³ that was taking place. Declaring that the world has to send a “common message to the Iranians not to have a nuclear weapon to blackmail or threaten the world”, Bush added that what he wanted to see are allies willing to “talk tough” and “face up to the possibility of confrontation with Iran” sometime in the future.⁴⁵⁴ The latter statement seems to reflect that for the US, the EU was adopting the long awaited coercive direction but still not to the fullest. As for Russia and China, it was alluding that if they wanted to be true allies they might have to act harsher. Not surprisingly, the Iranian offer to restart talks while retaining its resumed nuclear fuel activities was qualified by the US as “cheap”, while Condoleezza Rice declared that “there is not much to talk about”⁴⁵⁵ under the current situation. In fact, many US officials-including senators- were growing frustrated and were urgently demanding for sanctions in the UNSC.

In its attempt to bring about a consensus among the major powers, the US intensified its negotiations prior to the February 2 emergency Board meeting. For the Americans, the latest IAEA resolution was- as it has recurrently said- a clear message to Iran that it will not be permitted to have nuclear weapons. Even though the decision

⁴⁵⁰ Ali Akbar Dareini, “Iran resumes work at nuclear facilities.” *Associated Press*, January 10, 2006. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20060110/ap_on_re_mi_ea/iran_nuclear

⁴⁵¹ Ibid.

⁴⁵² Ibid.

⁴⁵³ “Bush urges Iran nuclear diplomacy.” *BBC News*, January 13, 2006. Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pt/fr/-/2/hi/middle_east/4610636.stm

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁵ Nasser Karimi, “US, Europeans say no to more Iran talks”, op.cit.,

felt short from taking any effective action for now, the US perceived it as a first victory that will create the snow-ball effect desired.

Since February, the US has been stressing its attachment to diplomacy yet it has refused to take the military option off the table. In addition, a controversial article by renowned journalist Seymour Hersh in *The New Yorker* on April 17, 2006, underlined the different military plans that the US has been considering in its attempt to stop Iran from getting the atomic bomb.⁴⁵⁶ US officials have constantly reiterated that Iran was a grave national security concern. In this respect, the American strategy since the March presidential statement of the UNSC and the April 28, 2006 IAEA report has consisted in threatening Iran to use Chapter VII of the UN Charter which includes the use of force. As a consequence, Iran would be legally obliged to meet the IAEA's calls.

⁴⁵⁶ For more details on the different plans read Seymour M. Hersh, "The Iran Plans: Would President Bush go to war to stop Tehran from getting the bomb?" *The New Yorker*, April 17, 2006. Available at http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/articles/060417fa_fact

Chapter V: An Assessment of Diplomacy

Diplomacy is vital because of its influence to bring adversary states to resolve their disputes via the power of words rather than the power of arms. Although diplomacy has been the tool adopted to resolve the Iranian nuclear issue since 2003, this instrument of foreign policy is now struggling for its survival. Indeed, whereas coercive diplomacy succeeded in the Cuban Missile crisis of 1962 and averted the most dangerous crisis of the Cold War, it has so far failed in pushing Iran to bind to international demands. The comparison of the two cases reveals the following:

First, US President Kennedy employed the “try-and see”⁴⁵⁷ approach using a gradual blockade coupled with an explicit threat to use military force in case of noncompliance.⁴⁵⁸ In the Iranian nuclear case, the US adopted a unilateral coercive approach in the beginning. However, realizing the failure of this approach, the US decided to use a multilateral coercive diplomacy. Indeed, after having criticized the IAEA several times and tried to oust its DG ElBaradei, the Bush administration renewed its support to the UN nuclear “watchdog” in supervising Iran’s moves. In addition, by opting for a multilateralism compellence approach, the US knew that it could use its EU allies and other powers who continued to do business with Iran, to force Tehran to comply with international demands. With an unrealistic and costly military option, and no other clear strategies, the Bush administration was increasingly aware of the benefit of “forging a cooperative strategy [multilateralism compellence] that would unite the major powers on Iran”⁴⁵⁹, and permit it to advance its goals via international legal institutions. Although the “EU-3” adopted a persuasive diplomacy at the beginning of the conflict, it is the coercive tone that succeeded later on. Concerning the “EU-3’s” persuasive diplomacy, it can be perceived as half a success. Indeed, the European troika’s desire to prevent any forceful US or Israeli action was successful because it was able to win the US and Israel to consider and work for a diplomatic rather than a military solution. Moreover, the troika’s

⁴⁵⁷ Alexander L. George, *Forceful Persuasion: Coercive Diplomacy As An Alternative To War*. Op.cit., p.32.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁹ Daadler & Lindsay. *America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy*. (Washington D. C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2003), p.187.

persuasive diplomacy was able to postpone Iranian nuclear activities under reformist president Khatami. But they also changed their tone into a more coercive one when they formed the pact with the US in 2005. The EU's pledge to send the issue to the UNSC if diplomacy failed was finally enforced due to the new Iranian leadership that was more intractable in its demands and more radical in its policy.

Second, Kennedy engaged in a "careful crisis management"⁴⁶⁰, hoping that Khrushchev would do the same so that they could both avoid war. Hence, Kennedy "limited his objective"⁴⁶¹ to the removal of the missiles rather than using the crisis to get rid of Castro or eliminate the Soviet influence in Cuba. Unlike the Cuban Missile crisis, the US did not apply a careful crisis management in Iran's nuclear issue. In the contrary, the absence of a consistent sense of urgency for the US and its lack of clear strategy has undermined the diplomatic talks. Does it want regime change or nuclear security? Negotiate or work aggressively to take actions? Military full scale operation or selected targets? Unlike Kennedy who limited his objective and gave security assurances to Khrushchev, the Bush administration opted for continuous threats of sanctions, possible military use and regime change all of which only strengthened the resolve of Iran to defy the international plans and defend its legal right. In addition, unlike Kennedy who realized that to pursue the more ambitious goals of the US "would have greatly strengthened the Soviet motivation, made coercive persuasion much more difficult, and increased the likelihood of war"⁴⁶², the Bush administration understood that to "achieve most of its goals, it still required the cooperation of others."⁴⁶³ Therefore, thinking that everyone will follow her, America made all its goals public to Iran and to the international community and continued to pressure Tehran with ultimatums which failed to push the latter to cooperate. This was a big US miscalculation.

Third, Kennedy gave a clear signal of his "preference for a peaceful resolution of the crisis"⁴⁶⁴, and avoided "boxing Khrushchev"⁴⁶⁵ in a corner that would most

⁴⁶⁰ Alexander L. George, *Forceful Persuasion: Coercive Diplomacy As An Alternative To War*. Op.cit., p.32.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid.

⁴⁶² Ibid.

⁴⁶³ Daadler & Lindsay, *America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy*. (Washington D. C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2003), p.189.

⁴⁶⁴ Alexander L. George, *Forceful Persuasion: Coercive Diplomacy As An Alternative To War*. Op.cit., p.33.

likely make him escalate the situation in order to avoid a humiliating defeat. In the Iranian nuclear case, the US just did the opposite. In fact, Washington gave its verbal support to the diplomatic approach only after two years of the initiation of the talks between Iran and the "EU-3". Moreover, Washington stated its attachment to a diplomatic solution not only because of the deal it had reached with the EU in 2005, but because a military scenario as well as Russia and China's support were not secured. In addition, while publicly stating its support for diplomacy, the US kept the military option on the table and worked via the multilateral compellence strategy to isolate and "box" Iran in the corner.

Fourth, in an attempt to end the crisis before it escalates to war, Kennedy included an ultimatum with a carrot and stick strategy. Indeed, not only did he put more pressure on Khrushchev to comply with his demands, but at the same time, coupled the threat with concessions at the end of the bargaining process.⁴⁶⁶ Unlike Kennedy who "seriously negotiated with Khrushchev to reach a compromise solution to the missile crisis"⁴⁶⁷, the Bush administration rejected any form of negotiation with Iran and any compromise settlement. In Iran's nuclear case, the US perceived the conflict with Tehran in a zero-sum terms and thus provided mainly sticks, while the carrots they proposed were rather trivial to build trust, giving little room for diplomatic maneuver. An "effective diplomacy requires speaking directly to foreign publics as well as to their leaders", but in the Iranian nuclear case, at least for now, this core idea was simply unrealistic.

Fifth, unlike Khrushchev who acted cautiously to avoid escalation, Iran has used coercive diplomacy against the west in response to the multilateral coercive strategy it was facing. In fact, North Korea's success in the adoption of coercive diplomacy against the US related to its nuclear issue was a perfect example for Iran to pursue. Following the failure of the US in preventing North Korea to build its nuclear arsenal, Bush "tried to shift responsibility onto the shoulders of others."⁴⁶⁸ That is, multilateral forums such as the IAEA, and the UNSC became the best options to deal with nuclear rogue states.⁴⁶⁹ However, throwing the ball in the other's court did not

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid., p.35.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid., p.63.

⁴⁶⁸ Daadler & Lindsay. *America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy*. (Washington D. C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2003), p.181.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid.

bring any concrete result. On the contrary, the North Korean declaration in 2002 that it was working on a uranium program alarmed the US who subsequently sanctioned Pyongyang. This unilateral act was negatively perceived by North Korea who "immediately disconnected IAEA monitoring devices at Yongbyon, ejected international weapons inspectors, announced its withdrawal from the NPT, resumed construction on two other reactors, and removed eight thousand fuel rods from Yongbyon's cooling pond for the purposes of reprocessing."⁴⁷⁰

Iran's coercive diplomacy against the west was a mirror response called "counter-coercion."⁴⁷¹ In fact, like North Korea, Iran believed that it could significantly alleviate the coercer's measures by calling in sensitive moments for more dialogue with the EU, and show a willingness to study the Russian proposal. Also, Iran believed it could impose risks on the coercer. Indeed, Tehran repeatedly threatened the west of the following actions it would take if forceful means including sanctions or military strikes would be adopted in the UNSC. (1) Increase the price of oil⁴⁷² and cut oil production of which it is the fourth largest exporter in the world and the second in the Organization for Petroleum Exporting States (OPEC) (2) Stop IAEA inspections (3) Enrich uranium- a step already taken- but now on a larger scale- (4) Consider the AP as void (5) Withdraw from the NPT (6) Hide its program (7) Share or export nuclear technology (8) Work on P2 centrifuges. Moreover, the military show of force that Iran undertook in April 2006 in the Strait of Hormuz⁴⁷³ was a clear threatening message to the west and specifically to the US, who has been menacing Iran with military strikes in case of non compliance. Despite the numerous evoked military plans the US was considering to use, Tehran reiterated her warning of inflicting heavy damage to US interests worldwide if the US considered a military strike.

Coercive diplomacy is a form of "compellence", and as Thomas Schelling observed, "compellence is harder to pull off than deterrence."⁴⁷⁴ In fact, trying to get the target-

⁴⁷⁰ Gordon . Chang. *Nuclear Showdown: North Korea Takes On the World*. (London: Hutchinson, 2006), p.29. For more details read Chapter 2 of the book

⁴⁷¹ Robert J. Art & Patrick M. Cronin (Eds), *The United States And Coercive Diplomacy*. (Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace press, 2003), p.369.

⁴⁷² Iran exports roughly 2.5million barrels a day, that is, 1 million barrel more than the current excess production worldwide. Iran also controls the Strait of Hormuz that is a critical shipping lane in the Middle East and through which at least 35 percent of the world's oil is shipped.

⁴⁷³ One third of oil supply must pass by the strait of hormuz which Iran controls. The US qualified the strait as a "chokepoint".

⁴⁷⁴ Art & Cronin (Eds), *The United States And Coercive Diplomacy*, *op.cit.*, p.361.

Iran- to change its behavior is tougher than keeping it as it is. Compelling Iran means that it should "alter its behavior in a manner quite visible to all"⁴⁷⁵ in response to the coercer's initiative. Moreover, compellence more openly engages the "passions of the target state" rather than deterrence "because of the pain and humiliation inflicted upon it."⁴⁷⁶ Once passions are engaged, the consequences backfire. In fact, the Iranian government has been successful in keeping the Iranian populace ignorant about the core nuclear issue and has thus been able to unite the people behind it against the international community. These actions have made the government even more popular after the coercive threats of the west, and less vulnerable to coercive diplomacy.⁴⁷⁷

Sixth, the perception that Kennedy and Khrushchev had of one another was paramount in the resolution of the crisis.⁴⁷⁸ Their correct depiction permitted for a right calculation of the other's reaction. In the Iranian nuclear case, the right portrayal of the other was a justification for coercion and aggressiveness. On the one hand, former reformist president Khatami who sees in the dialogue among civilizations a resolution to current problems, believes in diplomacy, is experienced, and has traveled a lot, was seen positively- to a certain degree- in the eyes of many western leaders, including Americans. However, current president Ahmadinejad, who is a fervent Khomeinist pupil, lacks experience, is only ideologically oriented, and vows to destroy other states is viewed by many as an irrational dangerous human being. Thus, an international consensus was a necessity to remove him from power and stop him from getting nuclear know-how. On the other hand, Iran perceives America as the "Great Satan" par excellence who wants to deny Iran its rights and hamper its aspirations, among which the nuclear right and being a regional power.

Seventh, "two conditions that generally favor the success of coercive diplomacy- strong international and domestic support and a sense of urgency for the opponent's compliance with the demand"⁴⁷⁹ were missing in Iran's nuclear case or at least came late. It is true that the "EU-3" joined the US in its multilateral compellence

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid., p.362.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁸ Alexander L. George, *Forceful Persuasion: Coercive Diplomacy As An Alternative To War*. Op.cit., p.37.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid., p.59.

strategy but it only did so lately. Moreover, EU leaders are still confused on what kind of actions to consider next over Iran. As for China and Russia, they are far from joining the US and EU in their call for sanctions on Iran and still favor a peaceful resolution of the conflict. In fact, the US and the EU reiterated the need for a strong unified message from the international community in order to compel Iran to abide by international rules. However the continuous Chinese and Russian reluctance to 'join the club' has been a tool used by Iran. Biding on this very division among the world powers, Tehran has been strengthening its coercive position and underestimating any forceful approach. In addition, even though the multilateral coercive diplomacy that gained ground might be necessary to bring an international legality, it also had its weaknesses. The presence and interference of many actors among which the EU, China, Russia, India, the US and Non Aligned Countries directly or indirectly, has complicated the talks and rendered it fragile as various interests and objectives clashed. Be it economical, political, defending the same cause, or simply as the opportunity to further one's right or to show goodwill, the Iranian nuclear case had it all.

Eighth, Kennedy was able to convince Khrushchev that the US was "more highly motivated by what was at stake than the Soviet Union... and that he had a resolution to achieve that objective."⁴⁸⁰ In a bipolar world, getting security guarantees of one's sphere of influence was more important than destroying the other and one's self. The concept of WMDs in the Iranian nuclear case itself constrained the diplomatic approach. Rather than leading to a moderation in the position of adversary states, this concept has motivated countries to be more intransigent and aggressive, in the hope that the opponent will give in. In fact, many countries including the US do not want to see Iran have a nuclear weapon. From a US perspective, a repressive regime like Tehran's, that supports terrorism, threatens America and its interests, vows to destroy of Israel, and is against the Middle East peace process, can't in any way be permitted to acquire the bomb. In this respect, the US is highly motivated to stop Iran at any cost. Nevertheless, Iran's motivation supersedes the American one. In fact, Iran's deep nationalism, cultural pride, and national and regime security play a huge role in transforming the nuclear issue into a non negotiable one. The Iranians did

⁴⁸⁰ Alexander L. George, *Forceful Persuasion: Coercive Diplomacy As An Alternative To War*. Op.cit., p.36.

cooperate at certain times, but only when they saw it beneficial. Thus, their paradoxical statements and shrewd timing to show good will patently echo a sense of hiding information and buying time. Because of the aforementioned Iranian perception of itself and its role in the world- especially after the arrival of the Khomeinist style Ahmadinejad to power- Iran calculates that the value of having a nuclear capability surely exceeds the carrots that the "EU-3" was going to offer. Also, being a nuclear power, the US would seriously reconsider facing up to and meddling with Iran and will thus be obliged to live with a nuclear foe. Because Iran values highly its objective, it is willing to suffer to achieve it, and thus the US is less likely to succeed.

Ahmadinejad's declaration on April 12, 2006 that Iran was now a nuclear country and hence enjoyed the position of a powerful one, underlined the following thinking: Via Iran's legal nuclear right under the NPT and with the Iraq and Afghanistan threats out of the picture, Iran will fulfill its role of a regional superpower and nothing will stop it.

Ninth, the nature of the Cuban Missile crisis is different from the Iranian nuclear issue. To begin with, the former crisis took place in a bipolar world where the survival of the ideology and the preservation of its sphere of influence were crucial. Questions of terrorism, preemptive strikes and other core policies of the "Bush revolution" were nonexistent. Moreover, the motivations of the Soviet Union and the US to end the crisis are totally different from the ones of Iran and the International community. The nature of the conflict studied in this thesis is quite complex. Indeed, coercive diplomacy is being tested in the Iranian nuclear case because the nuclear issue is only the tip of the iceberg that encompasses other issues at stake concerning not only Iran but the Middle East as a whole such as security, terrorism, human rights, etc. In fact, the quest of Iran for nuclear energy is related to its role of being a regional power. Moreover, the complexity of this case lies in the normalization of relations and security guarantees that Tehran wants from the US, that is, a formal recognition of the regime.

Tenth, the weaknesses found in the NPT and the UNSC have diluted and questioned their relevancy during the talks. Indeed, the major problem in the diplomatic discussions concerns Iran's right to master its own nuclear fuel cycle. Unfortunately, it is widely agreed that the NPT was a flawed document because under the "atoms for peace" vision of the IAEA, a country is allowed to acquire nuclear

energy capabilities for peaceful ends. However, that same capability can permit a country to have nuclear weapons. The NPT allows for uranium enrichment and plutonium extraction while it only forbids taking the finished material and loading it into a bomb. In this respect, ElBaradei himself stated that because the system was developed in the 1970's a revision and reform of the whole system is urgently needed. In addition, ElBaradei gave an important example while receiving the Nobel Peace prize in 2005. Indeed, in 1992 the IAEA had referred North Korea to the UNSC for non compliance but "we still need to hear from the UNSC." As he puts it, the IAEA is "an early warning system", but "we need effective compliance mechanisms."⁴⁸¹

The west's definition of the "objective guarantees" that Iran had to give to the international community in order to relieve its suspicion simply meant stopping all nuclear enrichment programs. In the Iranian dictionary however, the suspension of nuclear work was only a temporary move as talks moved on. This rather paramount disagreement makes us think that by inferring that some countries can be trusted with the technology to produce nuclear material while others can't just because the big powers of this world decide so, the NPT is being reinterpreted, and hence undermined. As Mr. Dejevsky states in the *Independent*, "The point of a treaty is that it should be neutral and applied to all; if it not, it should be scrapped or rewritten to make the requirements explicit. The double standard [adopted] risks encouraging the very behavior the treaty was designed to prevent."⁴⁸²

What is more, if Iran has violated some aspects of its Safeguards Agreement, other countries fall under this category too. In fact, the IAEA has found "discrepancies in the utilization of nuclear material in as many as fifteen countries"⁴⁸³, among which South Korea, Egypt, and Taiwan. For instance, South Korea refused to let the IAEA inspect its laser enrichment facilities. Though Seoul has "confessed to having secretly enriched uranium to a 77% concentration of U-235-sufficient for fissile material"⁴⁸⁴, no one in the international community has proposed referring the case to the UNSC. The paralysis of the IAEA as well as the UNSC vis-à-vis nuclear proliferation makes

⁴⁸¹ Interview with Dr. Mohamad El Baradei on CNN, op.cit.,

⁴⁸² "Iran has a perfect right to go nuclear", *RedNova News*, August 12, 2005. Available at <http://www.rednova.com/modules/news/tools.php?tool=print&id=204607>

⁴⁸³ Siddharth Varadarajan, "The Persian puzzle: Iran and the invention of a nuclear crisis." Originally published in *The Hindu*, September 21, 2005. Available at the author's webpage

<http://svaradarajan.blogspot.com/2005/09/persian-puzzle-i-iran-and-invention-of.html>

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid.

us wonder how many more countries will evade international rules and threaten our world.

Eleventh, as Raymond Cohen puts it, cross-cultural differences have significant effects on diplomatic negotiations. In fact, cultural factors play a prominent role in deciding which issues are negotiable and which ones are not.⁴⁸⁵

The Iranian past filled with many foreign interferences and a wounded national pride have led to a stiff resistance of outside interference in Iranian national affairs and a rather skeptical view about foreigner's intentions towards Iran. Diplomacy, which is first based on communication, can hence be greatly "affected by different cultural norms, perceptions, ideals, meanings."⁴⁸⁶ Individuals who lead the talks are of course affected by their respective cultures, therefore the way they will read the other's message and understand it will depend greatly on his/her cultural experiences.

This thesis presents the perfect example between Iran, that is a closed system, highly religious, attached to its past and greatly affected by it and the EU/US who are democracies-open systems- learn from the past without letting it submerge the present, etc. It is a dispute between two conflicting self interests fighting to impose or preserve themselves. Moreover, the concept of coercive diplomacy "assumes pure rationality on the part of the opponent."⁴⁸⁷ It is thought that one's enemy will collect all the relevant information, assess it correctly, make the proper judgment as to the credibility of the threat, and hence realize that it is in his interest to comply with what is demanded from him.⁴⁸⁸ In this sense, coercive diplomacy forgets that the enemy's shrewdness can be affected by other psychological factors, values, and traditions that can divert the meaning of the message sent. This point played a big role in the Iranian nuclear case. In fact, if one goes back to the various statements of the parties in the aforementioned chapter related to the diplomatic approaches, the rift is patent. Prior to or following the discussions, every party was analyzing the other's message based on their own perceptions as well as beliefs, and were clearly affected by their cultural ethics and historical background.

⁴⁸⁵ Raymond Cohen, *Negotiating Across Cultures: Communication Obstacles In International Diplomacy*. (Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1991). A Summary of the book written by Tanya Glaser can be found at <http://www.colorado.edu/conflict/peace/example/cohe7517.htm>

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁷ Alexander, L., George. *Forceful persuasion: Coercive Diplomacy As An Alternative To War*, op.cit., p.4.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid.

To sum up, the aforementioned analysis revealed that coercive diplomacy was successful in the Cuban missile crisis because (1) Kennedy limited his objective and the means he employed on its behalf (2) Both Kennedy and Khrushchev adopted carefully the crisis management principles (3) Kennedy was successful in convincing Khrushchev that he had a much higher motivation and a firmer resolve to end the conflict than the Soviet Union's (4) None of the parties miscalculated the other's move or intention (5) The images both leaders had vis-à-vis one another and their respective personalities helped in peacefully resolving the crisis.⁴⁸⁹

The comparison study of the two cases showed that the factors used in the Iranian nuclear issue have been either nonexistent or just the opposite of those factors present in the Cuban Missile crisis that have contributed to the success of coercive diplomacy.

⁴⁸⁹ Alexander, L., George. *Forceful persuasion: Coercive Diplomacy As An Alternative To War*, op.cit., pp.36-37.

Conclusion

The *Mujahedin-el-Khaleq*'s revelations in 2002 brought the all time suspicion of the international community over Iran's ambition to acquire nuclear weapons to the open. The US and European help under the Shah, coupled with the North Korean, Chinese, Russian, and Pakistani assistance at a later stage were the driving forces behind Iranian's actual knowledge in nuclear technology.

Iran sees itself surrounded by an alien environment, was indeed attacked by chemical weapons during the Iran-Iraq war, and all what the international community did was to watch the Iraqi aggression and later on isolate Iran with sanctions- especially from the US. In light of these several historical negative actions undertaken by the west, Iran was persuaded of its vulnerability and reacted by getting nuclear know-how in order to protect itself against any future foreign aggression. However, the Iranian perception of itself as a regional power and the revisionism nature of the Islamic Republic with Khomeini-its idea of exporting the Iranian revolution- rendered the neighbors of Iran susceptible as well, seeking to counter any aggression from Tehran-mainly via US support. Fearing that a nuclear Iran would lead to an arms race in the region and hence change the current balance of power, Gulf States leaders have lately adopted a unified message: Iran had to "abandon its nuclear research" and hopefully join the new initiative of the Gulf Cooperative Council related to the ban of all nuclear activities in the gulf.⁴⁹⁰ As Saudi Prince Saud al-Faisal warned, Iran's nuclear ambitions threatened "disaster in the region."⁴⁹¹ The swift tone taken by Arab countries vis-à-vis nuclear weapons underlined a desire to enforce a more forceful action against Tehran

In order to resolve the Iranian nuclear dossier, the "EU-3" and the IAEA first embarked in a series of restless talks and negotiations with Iran in an attempt to persuade the latter to adopt confidence building measures and cooperate transparently with the west. Indeed, the EU and the UN agency were aware that in order to reach their ultimate goal, they had to engage with Tehran by offering it juicy carrots. However, time revealed the Iranian appetite for bigger incentives that the EU alone failed to procure. Because they identify the nuclear issue as a national pride, the

⁴⁹⁰ Hassan M. Fattah, "Gulf States join call for tougher action toward Tehran." *The New York Times*, February 1, 2006. Copy sent to me via email by Dr. Meshkati.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid.

Iranian team wanted to pressure the Europeans either to get a better package in which their right to enrich uranium would be included, or simply force them to accept their inalienable right as a *fait accompli*. This new intransigence made the EU adopt a year later an indirect form of coercion by threatening to refer the case to the UNSC. With sticks now in the picture, at least verbally, Iran saw not other option but to cooperate slowly but surely, while underlining its conviction that diplomacy was the only path to resolve this conflict. The EU and the IAEA were clear from the beginning: Diplomacy was to be used “naturally (...) in all circumstances”⁴⁹², even when facing a radical and inflexible Iran. Furthermore, although Europeans were offering incentives to Iran, it is the US that can close a deal. As an EU official puts it, “at the end of the day, it is US economic ties and political and security guarantees that Iran is after. The only true test of Iran’s intentions will come if the US is part of the incentive package.”⁴⁹³ Indeed, Dr. ElBaradei once stated that the US should be part of the dialogue, offer security guarantees, and can not simply “sit on the fence”⁴⁹⁴, because the issue with Iran is about the security of the Middle East. Since the 2005 EU-US deal, the former became tougher and more demanding negotiators because of their duty to fulfill their role of being ‘diplomatic emissaries’ on behalf of the Americans, in order to get the latter’s support to the negotiations. In this sense, the Europeans continued their indirectly coercive talks and it was time for Tehran to “confront a painful choice: either nuclear weapons or economic health.”⁴⁹⁵

The ‘wait and see’ strategy adopted by the Europeans in May 2005 enabled them to buy time and keep the enrichment suspension moving until the Iranian presidential elections. However, in their analysis that a change in government would change foreign policy in Iran, the Europeans committed a miscalculation. In fact, they may have forgotten that it is Khamenei, the spiritual leader backed by the powerful Revolutionary Guards, who decide on such issues at the end of the day, and that even the pragmatist Khatami viewed the nuclear right of his country as a red line. In June 2005, former chief UN weapons inspector Hans Blix declared that “it would take many years for Iran to achieve the capability to produce highly enriched uranium

⁴⁹² “Statement by the ministry of foreign affairs spokesperson”, Paris, September 24, 2004, available at the official site of the French foreign ministry <http://www.france.diplomatie.fr/index.gb.html>

⁴⁹³ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁴ “Director General Interview: World Economic Forum”, *Washington Post*, January 30, 2005. Available at <http://www.iaea.org/printerfriendly/newscenter/transcripts/2005/wp30012005.html>

⁴⁹⁵ Kenneth Pollack & Ray Takeyh, “Taking on Tehran”, *Foreign Affairs*, v84, i2, March-April 2005, p.20-, Retrieved from The Expanded Academic Database ASAP.

needed for an atomic bomb.”⁴⁹⁶ In the same line of thought, a recent US intelligence report said that Iran was “some ten years away”⁴⁹⁷ from producing highly enriched uranium to make a nuclear bomb, adding that even though there were “credible indicators that Iran’s military was conducting clandestine work, [nothing indicated] they were related to a nuclear weapons program.”⁴⁹⁸ With two credible sources stating such ideas, one can not but join Dr. ElBaradei in his view that the nuclear Iranian issue is just part of a bigger equation. As he puts it,

Iran wants to be a major player in the whole Middle East, which is being reshaped now (...) [Iran’s] dialogue with Europe is a bridge toward their ultimate normalization with the US. It is not just the nuclear issue, it is the whole future of the Middle East, and [the one] of regional security, global security. That’s why [talks] are more difficult, and that’s why it takes time, and that’s why people should be patient.⁴⁹⁹

Since August 2005, Iran has been astutely able to save its head from a UNSC referral and get a diplomatic ‘*période de grace*’. But the new ultra radical government in Tehran only made matters worst. Thinking that chanting absurd slogans, adopting an aggressive behavior, and exaggerating its nuclear prowess would get the west’s attention to conciliate, Tehran only made the west’s positions closer and tougher than ever. Iran’s paradoxical statements over nuclear weapons were certainly not to its advantage: denied access to vital technologies, it seems that nuclear technology with its reachable black market was a painless option to illustrate power.

A core problem in the EU- Iran talks is the normalization of the US-Iran relation as ElBaradei once stated. In fact, the US seems to avoid any direct talk with Tehran because this step would satisfy an Iranian vital goal. Legitimizing and recognizing a regime that has been nothing but oppressive to its own people, supports terrorism, vows to “wipe Israel off the map”, and is against the Middle East peace process would be committing suicide for the US. Almost everyone agrees that the diplomatic track would work better and probably succeed if the US directly gets involved in the talks and offers the technologies and other incentives that Iran wants from it. But with practically nothing but discrepancies shaping the US-Iran

⁴⁹⁶ Gannon, “Iran president-elect vows to pursue nukes”, op.cit.,

⁴⁹⁷ “US intelligence says Iran 10 years away from nuclear bomb: Report”, *Agence France Presse*, August 2, 2005. Available at

http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20050802/pl_afp/usirannuclear_050802074838

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁹ Dickey, “Iran wants to be a major player”, op.cit.,

relationship, it is hard to think of any positive outcome unless the two parties unexpectedly decide to work from scratch.

The geo-strategic importance of Iran to the EU is too important to be ignored. If sanctions are imposed by the UNSC, not only will Iran be hurt but also Europeans who have benefited of the golden opportunity, that is, the American boycott for the last decades to impose themselves as the major leaders. Moreover, sanctions are not the magic bullet; at a time when the US troops are facing mounting pressure in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as a growing Islamic radicalism and anti-American sentiments in Pakistan- its supposedly ally in its fight against terror- Egypt and lately in Palestine, undertaking any uncalculated coercive action could be very costly. In fact, Iran will not only use oil prices, cut its cooperation with the IAEA and restart enrichment, but may well, as a last resort, use its proxies in Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon to hit US and Israeli targets. In addition to the economic importance of Iran to Europe, is the political one. Indeed, viewing their interests underrepresented in Iraq, the Europeans are working to get their part of the cake in the Gulf region. Iran seems to be their bargaining card that would permit them to settle for a longer period, hence, sharing the power over the Gulf and the Middle East with the US.

The April 28, 2006 report of the IAEA has been the golden card that the US and the EU are using to enforce their sanctions regime against Iran. But there are several reasons why economic sanctions seem difficult to be agreed upon in the UNSC in the weeks to come. (a) Russia has strong economic and strategic interests in Iran. In fact, it is a key supplier of arms and nuclear technology and services among which the construction of the Bushehr facility, and the \$1billion weapon deal in late 2005- among others- which it said was for defense purposes (b) China has strong economic interests as well, for it is an important Iranian oil exporter and drilling partner, has signed a \$70billion oil and gas deal in November 2004, and has been another major arm supplier to Iran (c) Though India is not a veto power like Russia or China, it is a central country to consider when talking about Iran. In fact, India is an Iranian oil exporter and has decided since September 2005 to move ahead with its plan to build a \$7.4 billion gas pipeline with Iran to supply the needed natural gas through Pakistan. This was done despite a US absolute opposition to the project and its pressure on India to withdraw from the deal. In this respect, the US had ironically concluded a nuclear cooperation deal with New Delhi on March 2, 2006. This preferential treatment will no doubt make it harder for the US to rein in Iran's nuclear ambitions.

Moreover, although India had joined the US and the EU troika in September 2005 and backed the IAEA resolution that set the stage to UNSC referral, it is not clear if it will adopt harsher measures (d) Economic sanctions are widely believed to harm the civilian people more than the regime. The case was obvious under Saddam Hussein's Iraq, Fidel Castro's Cuba, and Kim Jong-il's North Korea, where economic sanctions only created misery and poverty while the leaders got all the benefits. Hence, the US and Europe should be very thoughtful when adopting this strategy for a vital reason: Economic sanctions on Iran might greatly impair the population especially the pro-democratic forces that the west says it wants to support in its fight for freedom and democracy.

Concerning targeted sanctions that the west is also considering, their effect is rather limited. To be certain, denying visas to diplomats and other officials for instance will not really make a huge difference because as a matter of fact while this procedure has been going on for years, it turned out to be inefficient. Also, preventing the Iranian team from taking part in the soccer world cup will not have the desired strong effect and will only draw further anti-Americanism sentiments.

As for an arms embargo sanctions, they seem unrealistic and very risky. Based on past and current deals with Russia, North Korea, Pakistan and China⁵⁰⁰ who are the main arms providers of Tehran with missiles, reactors, nuclear know-how, etc., it is hardly plausible that their role will stop any time soon.

Lately, the US administration publicly declared that "if the UNSC fails to act, Mr. Bush will organize "like-minded nations" to begin impose punishment."⁵⁰¹ But with Russia and China's firm opposition to UN sanctions on Iran and insistence on a negotiated solution, to what extent will the punishment of the so-called "like-minded nations" be effective on Iran? And if that punishment fails, will the US drop the multilateral compellence approach and use its initial unilateral coercive approach in a bid to serve its 'right to self defence'?

⁵⁰⁰ For more details on the Chinese role in providing military related goods and know-how to several Middle Eastern countries including Iran, see Frank J. Gaffney, Jr., "China arms the rogues." *The Middle East Quarterly*, September 1997, vol IV, no3. Available at the Middle East Forum website <http://www.meforum.org/article/360>

⁵⁰¹ David E. Sanger & Elaine Sciolino. Iran Strategy: Cold War Scenario." *The New York Times*, April 30, 2006. Available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/30/world/middleeast/30iran.html?ex=1146628800&en=044b0451b4130e7c&ei=5087%0A>

Iran is neither Iraq nor Libya, not even North Korea. First, the Iraqi invasion style is militarily unrealistic in Iran's case. Indeed, the US can not afford to embark on such an operation whereas limited strikes will only further inflame the region. Also, Russia and China- two vital Iranian allies- seem opposed to undertake harsh measures against Iran and will certainly work to prevent a military scenario. Second, a diplomatic success like the Libyan model is hard to fit Iran's shoes. Indeed, historical relations apart, the "security environment of Tehran is drastically different from Libya's."⁵⁰² Iran is surrounded by US troops and nuclear powers (Israel, India, Pakistan), and is more "democratic" than Libya. As mentioned in previous parts, Iran sees the nuclear issue as a natural right, national pride, with cultural connotations. The *raison d'être* of Iran and Libya are unique and what has worked for the latter will not necessarily work for the former. Also, as ElBaradei stated, the threat posed by Libya was not as important as that of Iran. The Libyans only had a "warehouse full of equipments and not buildings or facilities." They were "in recipient program that was not yet industrialized."⁵⁰³ Finally, neither the US nor the west sees North Korea as menacing as Iran especially in matters of terrorism. In addition, the US is an active member of the six-party talks⁵⁰⁴ that are discussing with North Korea over its nuclear issue. Also, North Korea is "a small, poor, and isolated nation with no key resources" compared to Iran which is the second largest oil and gas exporter and keeps threatening to use these "prized commodities as a bargaining chip" in its nuclear row with the west.⁵⁰⁵

If the US and particularly European countries really care about the Iranian populace's agony concerning human rights abuses and other terrible oppressions that they had to cope with decades ago, why did they prioritize their economic interests and used humanitarian calls only at times when it suited their agenda? And if the US truly believes in universal freedom and democracy why didn't it seize the opportunity to do so under Khatami who was backed up by a pro-reformist parliament in 2000? And is the Iranian regime the only "evil" that the US is seeing? What about Azerbaijan's latest largely contested elections that permitted for the dictatorship of President Ilkham Aliev to survive but to which the US turned a blind eye just for oil

⁵⁰² Gawdat Bahgat, "Nonproliferation success: The Libyan model." op.cit.,

⁵⁰³ Interview with Dr. ElBaradei on CNN, op.cit.,

⁵⁰⁴ China, South Korea, North Korea, US, Russia, and Japan.

⁵⁰⁵ "Iran poses bigger problem to US than North Korea in nuclear row." *Agence France Presse*, September 27, 2005. Available at http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20050928/pl_afp/usiranmkoreanuclear_050928030153

interests? And what about Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev who has been in power since 1990⁵⁰⁶ and whose recent reelection was condemned by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Nazarbayev had been recently sworn in as president for another term without any criticism from the US, something quite understandable from an American point of view. Indeed, by opening Kazakhstan's lucrative Tengiz and Kashagan oil fields to American oil firms, the US had secured more strategic interests, making democracy a nonexistent item on its scale of priorities.

Diplomacy is an essential tool in conflict resolution. Diplomacy doesn't solely consist in talking but can sometimes be backed by pressure and in extreme cases by force. The combination of carrots and gradual pressure gives room for additional talks and bargain in the hope of resolving the issue. These ideas were revealed in the Cuban Missile crisis. However, in the so called "Persian Puzzle", diplomacy has suffered many setbacks and appears to falter. Because nuclear weapons can be easily transferred to non state actors and terrorists, we "are in a race against time"⁵⁰⁷ in finding new and efficient solutions. If this is not the case, threats will spread more rapidly and as faster actions will be needed, a new era ruled by force and military supremacy could be preparing itself at the expense of diplomacy and its power to contain dangerous spillovers. Hence, wouldn't it be wiser to work hard on preventing nuclear proliferation rather than react to it although seemingly idealistic.

The preferential treatment that the US gave to India, Israel, Pakistan, and the experience with North Korea empowered Iran to adopt a swift inflexible position in the hope of getting what it sees as its inalienable right.

Are Iran's calculations correct or is Iran one of these 'exception states' that are destined to pay the price for the conflictive agendas of the influential powers? In complex conflicts such as nuclear proliferation that puts at risk the entire humanity, speculation might seem naïve, particularly in the Iranian case where the solution to the nuclear issue is just a fraction of a larger politico-economic package. Yet what appears to be lying at the horizon is a probable radicalization of the situation in an already turbulent region of the world.

⁵⁰⁶ Nazarbayev wrote a decree in 1998 permitting him to rule for 7 more years. In the latest elections he won again.

⁵⁰⁷ Interview with Dr. ElBaradei on CNN, op.cit.,

When asked if he can save the world, Dr. ElBaradei replied, "only if you help me."⁵⁰⁸ Helping this great man in his fight against one of the most pressing issues of our time will require from us the solution he himself proposed as follows:

We continue to rely on the so called "Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD)". The time has come for us to start thinking of "Mutual Assured Security (MAS)." Humanity in my view deserves no less.⁵⁰⁹

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid.

Glossary of Acronyms

WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
EU	European Union
US	United States
UNSC	UN Security Council
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
NPT	Non- Proliferation Treaty
JEC	Joint Economic Commission
NPP	Nuclear Power Plants
IRGC	Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps
AP	Additional Protocol
IAEO	Iran Atomic Energy Organization
DG	Director General
CBW	Chemical and Biological Weapons
BWC	Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention
LWR	Light Water Reactor
HWR	High Water Reactor
WTO	World Trade Organization
EP	European Parliament
UF6	Uranium Hexafluoride
HEU	Highly Enriched Uranium
R&D	Research and Development
NPR	Nuclear Posture Review
AIPAC	American Israeli Public Affairs Committee

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