

Iran's Nuclear Program: A Case Study of Mistrust, Hatred and Betrayal

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Abstract

Few studies have examined the international community's pursuit of stringent measures aimed at eliminating military dimension of Iran's nuclear program. The purpose of this study is to examine the reasons behind the extensive and intrusive international measures against Iran's nuclear program despite IAEA reports and intelligence assessments reporting that Iran does not have a nuclear weapons program. This study drew one major conclusion that there is insurmountable mistrust and hatred between Iran and the West originating from their historical interaction since the early 19th century that reached the zenith after the 1979 Iranian revolution. For the West, the source of mistrust, hatred, and betrayal was Iran's hardline ideology against the West and secret illegal nuclear activities outside the IAEA safeguards. Iran's feeling of betrayal and lack of trust in the major Western powers originated from the West's breakup of promises, withdrawal from agreements, repeated attacks on Tehran's nuclear facilities and scientists, and unending economic sanctions.

Keywords

Iran, nuclear program, JCPOA, Britain, France, Germany (E3), the United States, IAEA.

Introduction

Iran is party to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, commonly known as the NPT. It is also a signatory to the comprehensive safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).¹ Iran's official stance on pursuing a nuclear

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program is that it is for civilian purposes, such as energy production. IAEA reports and American intelligence assessment state that Iran is not currently [since 2013] pursuing a nuclear weapons program as such.² So, why is the world worried about Iran's nuclear program and why do world's major powers want to have a nuclear deal with Tehran? Much of the existing literature on the subject tries to answer the question through addressing Iran's post-revolutionary ideology and behavior and the Western countries' policy towards Tehran after 1979. This study looked in history and traced the roots of the Iranian attitude towards the West and its nuclear policy. The most notable impression on Iran's perception of the West came in the wake of the Anglo-Iranian oil agreements, the 1953 military coup in Tehran, and the Shah's Westernization of the country. In later years, the Supreme Leader Ali Khomeini developed his political manifesto against the western political intervention in the country and Jalal Al-i-Ahmad published his critique of subservience of domestic economic policies to the Western capitalist interests. Khomeini's political manifesto as much as Al-i Ahmad's critique of imports-led development have dominated the Iranian political and economic value systems since the 1979 revolution. Later, Al-i-Ahmad's focus on indigenous technological development and mistrust of foreign capitalist powers led Iran to stress on developing uranium enrichment and technology indigenously and not rely on imported fuel and technology. But Tehran's hardline ideology against the West, in particular the United States, and its secret nuclear enrichment activities outside the IAEA safeguards generated unyielding mistrust of the IAEA, the U.S. and the major European powers (Britain, France, and Germany, or the E3).³ After the secret Iranian nuclear activities became known, international community tried to negotiate a nuclear agreement with Iran and this negotiation process from 2003 onwards to date has largely shaped perceptions of each party about the other (especially Iran versus the US and the

E3). The perception has always remained an outcome of the betrayal and mistrust on both ends. After the latest round of negotiations resulted in a nuclear deal in 2015, the U.S. withdrew from it only two years later, citing Tehran's ballistic missile development and its regional proxy warfare in the Middle East—the issues that were outside the Iranian nuclear deal, but the U.S. wants that they should be made part of the deal. Tehran, on the other hand, has been asking to lift sanctions as a starter for any resumption of the dialogue on the nuclear deal. Future negotiations could revolve around this theme.

Why Did the World Need an Iran Nuclear Deal?

The world needed an Iran nuclear deal because Iran's hardliners, who control the political, security, and foreign policy discourse, not only stand against the international liberal order, but they continue to defy the global financial regime and consider western investments or engagement with the West, in particular the United States as an existential threat to Iran's Islamic revolution.⁴ Because of these policies, Iran has remained an outlier state at an international stage. This is what concerns the world powers, especially major European powers, Britain, France, and Germany. They expect Iran to avoid becoming another North Korea, potentially with nuclear weapons, sitting on one of the most important maritime trading chokepoints in the Indo-Pacific region.

The fundamental problem that Western countries find in Iran is its hardline ideology which seeks revisionism in the current world order. According to their ideology, liberal constructs of democracy, human rights and liberty are antithetical to Islam and regards engagement with the West as unpropitious to its Islamic revolution.⁵ Iran's Supreme Leader Ruhollah Khomeini's book *Vilayat-e-Faqih* (Persian: the governance of the jurist) became a vital part of the preamble of the Iranian Constitution in 1979. Khomeini held that the Westphalian model and the Euro-centric

system of world politics were aimed at extirpating Islamic values, traditions and laws.⁶ That the post-Westphalian European countries were more satanic in character than the Jews in the early days of Islam. He also claimed that the British tried to replace the Islamic laws in the Iranian constitution of 1905 with the Western laws and judicial system which brought only misery to the country. Therefore, he commanded his disciples to topple the then oppressive political system and establish vilayat-e-faqih, or the governance of the jurist, which would be based on justice and the knowledge of Islamic laws. The person with the supreme knowledge of Islamic laws would be the ruler of the Islamic state.⁷

Background to Iran's Anti-Western Thinking

From 1801 to 1828 Britain made military alliance agreements with the Iranian rulers only to renege on them later (due to complicated rapid alliance shifts among great powers). Persia [old name of Iran] lost its historically held territories to Russia and finally had to agree to Russian economic encroachment in the country. Later after losing a war with Britain over former Iranian cities in Afghanistan (1856-7), Persian rulers started what became a process of economic concessions to the British that continued until the 1950s.⁸ These concessions resulted in abundance of foreign imported products in Iran without any local competition.⁹ It alienated local merchants, who formed a redoubtable alliance against foreign companies. They were also backstopped by mullahs who were also averse to foreign presence in the country.¹⁰ Another issue that stirred the nationalist passions of the Iranians was Britain's 80-84 percent share in the profits from the Iranian oil, compared to the 50-50 share in other oil-producing countries.¹¹

After the Mossadeq-led government nationalized the Iranian oil in 1951, the British attempted a naval blockade so that Iran could not export its oil.¹² Mossadeq cut off diplomatic ties with Britain and went to the United States to gain some financial and diplomatic

support only to return empty-handed. Washington in solidarity with London boycotted the Iranian oil.¹³ Roughly a year later the British MI-6 and American CIA colluded with pro-Shah (plus self-funded) demonstrators and overthrew Mossadeq. American involvement in the coup against Mossadeq was hard to believe for many Iranians and it took them a while to appreciate it.¹⁴ Mossadeq was extremely popular among the Iranians of all strata and the 1953 coup continues to haunt the Iranian socio-political spectrum to this day.¹⁵ The Iranians feel reminiscent of these scenes whenever the American officials talk of a regime change in Tehran.

Another factor that shaped the long-term perception against the West in general among the Iranians was Reza Shah's continuation of the Westernization of the Iranian society that had begun under his father's rule.¹⁶ The clergy despised this policy largely because it interfered in their own jurisdiction: the state under the new policy controlled the educational discourse and changed the dress code of women (banned veil), inter alia.¹⁷ The Shah started associating modernization with the West. Roy Mottahedeh, an expert on Iranian culture, described Iran's import-led consumerism and social milieu as Iranian montage (where everything including ideas, academic degrees, medicines, outfits, vehicles, and socio-cultural behavior looked in an unfinished assemblage, configuration, or setup after importing them from the West).¹⁸

Jalal Al-i-Ahmad (1923-1969) another eminent and massively popular literary figure in Iran in the 1950s and 1960s, had reprimanded Iran's intoxication with the West in his book, "Gharbzadagi (Weststruckness)".¹⁹ The outcome of Iranian montage was that local industries were unable to compete with Western corporations and products for lack of advanced technology and skilled manpower. The solution to it was in becoming an independent and self-sufficient economy through investments in the skill development of local labor force; production of advanced technology and machines, promotion of

local firms and corporations and consumption of locally produced products.²⁰ The clergy and the business class spurred on by Al-i-Ahmad's economic manifesto led mass demonstrations against the Shah's policies in October 1968.²¹

The history of Iran's interaction with the West has taught Iran one lesson that engagement with the West has resulted in Iranian subservience. Khomeini and his followers both in government and the public learnt this lesson for good. They would have to undo it and establish their ascendancy, one that is characteristic of the Iranian political, economic and social values. Jalal Al-i-Ahmad's idea of *Gharbzadegi* became a rallying cry for the revolution and the basis of Iran's "self-sufficient" economic development and technological advancement.²² Along with this Ruhollah Khomeini's vision of a *velayat-e-faqih* became the central pillar of Iranian political system.

Iran and the Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime: Trust Deficit Looms Large

The fundamental issue with Iran's relationship with the nonproliferation regime is not that it is being non-compliant with the international nonproliferation regime. Till date, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has no evidence nor any intelligence assessment that suggests that Iran is violating the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT).²³ Instead, Iran's past secret nuclear activities at undeclared nuclear facilities created mistrust among the IAEA and other NPT member states about Iran's commitment to nonproliferation norms as an NPT State Party. The trust deficit and constant suspicion are not just going away.²⁴

For Iran, whenever it tried to mend fences with the West, the latter had betrayed it. During President Khatami's government (1997-2005) Iran was trying to liberalize itself and form good relations with the West including the United States. It also helped the US in

its campaign in Afghanistan. But the then US President Bush included Tehran as part of “Axis of Evil”. Bush’s 2002 Axis of Evil speech arguably undermined Khatami’s and moderates’ efforts to liberalize the Iranian society and improve relations with the West. It instead strengthened the stance of the hardliners who were already incensed by Khatami’s liberal reforms. The exposure of Iran’s secret nuclear facilities and enrichment in 2003 further rocked the fragile boat of the Iran-West relations.

Iran has been a signatory to the NPT since 1968, the very day of its rollout for signatures and had ratified the treaty in 1970. It has also been signatory to the Comprehensive Nuclear Safeguards agreement (a part of the NPT requirements) since 1973 and subjected its declared civil nuclear program under the monitoring and inspection of the IAEA to prevent any potential diversion of nuclear material for military use.²⁵

After the 1979 revolution, the new regime did not withdraw from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty notwithstanding the extraordinary circumstances created by its war with Iraq for the next decade, not least in the midst of Iraq’s missile strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities and chemical weapons (Weapons of Mass Destruction-WMDs) attack on Iranian population.²⁶ It is well known that Khomeini considered WMDs including nuclear weapons against the Islamic canons.²⁷

Khomeini’s compatriots in the government and his successors were however pretty much interested in developing chemical and nuclear weapons. Despite being a State Party to the NPT, they were allegedly pursuing nuclear weapons for which they were involved in procuring fissile material and nuclear enrichment technologies from the nuclear black market.²⁸ These activities and the development of secret nuclear facilities were exposed in August 2002 in a press conference by Alireza Jafarzadeh, the press officer of an Iranian dissident group. He revealed that Iran was working on

a secret uranium-enrichment facility in Natanz in the Isphahan province, and a heavy-water reactor plant in Arak, 100 miles south of Tehran.²⁹ Essentially Tehran was working on two paths to the development of a nuclear weapon; by uranium enrichment at Natanz, and plutonium production at Arak.

To recall, Iran has had Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement (CSA) in force since 1974, but it was not a signatory to the Additional Protocol (AP) to the safeguards, which the IAEA had adopted in 1997 to expand the scope of its inspection and monitoring to non-declared nuclear activities and facilities. Therefore, IAEA could not trace these facilities and activities but had a slight idea about them. It was later surprised to see the extent of Iran's secret nuclear facilities and the magnitude of enrichment work being done there.

Still under the CSA, Iran was obligated to be fully transparent about its "source or special fissionable material within its territory, under its jurisdiction or carried out under its control anywhere, for the exclusive purpose of verifying that such material is not diverted to nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices."³⁰ The Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) published his findings in his August 2003 report in which he mentioned that Iran had been working on its secret nuclear enrichment program since 1985, but had failed to report its fissile material, imported or processed, and the nuclear facilities where the nuclear enrichment process was ongoing.³¹ Based on these findings the IAEA adopted a resolution in September 2003, in which it concluded that Iran had failed to comply with the Safeguards Agreement. It noted with grave concern that even after a year of the IAEA's initial inquiries, Iran had not given assurances that it had declared and subjected all of its undeclared nuclear material to IAEA safeguards.³²

The 2003 Resolution also required, among other things, provisional suspension of Iran's enrichment and processing activities, including an introduction of additional fissile material in the Natanz nuclear facility and requested the Iranian government "to promptly and unconditionally sign, ratify and fully implement the additional protocol, and as a confidence-building measure, henceforth to act in accordance with the additional protocol".³³ Iran, after much internal political strife, decided to suspend the enrichment and reprocessing activities and accepted the wider inspection of the IAEA by signing the Additional Protocol on December 18, 2003 and agreeing to act according to AP's provisions as if it were in force.³⁴

Yet in February 2004 IAEA reported in its findings that Iran had failed to include the advanced gas centrifuge P-2 in its October 2003 letter to IAEA.³⁵ Moreover, the IAEA inspectors noticed in 2004 that Iranian scientists had produced polonium (Po-210), that has potential military uses, in the Tehran Research Reactor. IAEA also reported that Iran had failed to prove their claim that the Po-210 was produced only for civilian (power generation) purposes. Iran's repeated failures to be fully transparent about its nuclear activities created deep mistrust about Iran's intentions behind the nuclear program. Still, the Europeans and the West-led IAEA preferred diplomacy to the UNSC referral, which would have brought on sanctions on Iran right away.³⁶

The internal political divide regarding Iran's response to IAEA inspections and overall nuclear program would cast its shadow on later developments. Iranian hardliners wanted Iran to withdraw from the NPT, refuse to adopt the additional protocol, and increase defense spending to get ready for strong resistance against the West.³⁷ On the contrary the moderates, including Muhammad Khatami, (President, 1997-2005, Hassan Rouhani (Secretary of Supreme National Security Council, 1989-2005, and President, 2013-2021), and Javad Zarif (ambassador to UN, 2002-07, and

foreign minister, 2013-present), among others, however, saw benefits in the international engagement and therefore decided to cooperate with the international community.³⁸ This led to the signing of the Additional Protocol in 2003 and the conclusion of the Paris Agreement on November 15, 2004. As per the Paris Agreement Iran agreed to suspend its enrichment activities in exchange for economic and security guarantees from the major European powers and the United States.

Later the Iranians insisted that they should be allowed to enrich uranium for civilian purposes, to which the US and the Europeans were reluctant to consent. Negotiations could not proceed beyond this point. The stalemate in the negotiation process led the hardliners, led by Ali Khamenei (Iran's supreme leader) and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (former Iranian President), to abrogate the Paris Agreement and suspend the Additional Protocol. They also started introducing more advanced gas centrifuges, enriching uranium, increasing the stock of fissile material and plutonium production, opening new nuclear facilities (Fordow) and threatening withdrawal from NPT.³⁹ Meanwhile, the moderate group in Iran, including Ali Larijani (former speaker of the parliament of Iran), were not in favor of closing the diplomatic option.

The P5+1 (the US, Britain, France, Russia, and China, plus Germany) eventually lost patience due to the hardliners-led Tehran's recalcitrant noncompliance with the CSA and AP and started the process of referring Iran to the UNSC. In December 2006 they adopted the unanimous UNSC Resolutions 1737, 1747, and ultimately 1803. The UNSCR 1803 sanctioned Iranian individuals and companies involved in nuclear activities, banned some of the Iranian banks from carrying out international transactions, banned the sale of dual-use materials and technology to Tehran, and forbade international companies from trading with Tehran. Beyond the UNSC sanctions, Washington imposed

unilateral sanctions on commercial activities of some of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, even designated some of them as terrorists for their involvement in ballistic missile development activities and banned several additional Iranian banks. These sanctions covered the remaining years of Ahmadinejad's tenure, till 2013.⁴⁰

Hassan Rouhani became President of Iran in August 2013 and immediately started working on improving Iran's nuclear profile. His efforts paid off and the P5+1 (the United States, China, Russia, Britain, France, plus Germany) signed an interim nuclear deal with Iran, the Joint Plan of Action (JPA), on November 24, 2013.⁴¹ In response to Iran's compliance with the nuclear regime, including the safeguards agreement and wider access to the IAEA inspectors, the UNSC offered a sanctions relief of more than \$7 billion, in addition to other trade facilities. Building on the confidence the P5+1 and Iran signed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) known as the Iran nuclear deal, on July 14, 2015.⁴²

Under this agreement Iran could retain only 300 kilogram of uranium enriched to 3.67% and sell the remaining 10,000 KG stockpile of fissile material or blend it down; operate only 5,060 IR-1 gas centrifuges and decommission other advanced versions of centrifuges in the next decade; the Fordow facility would cease to have fissile material at all (research into enrichment or the enrichment as such) for fifteen years and would operate only 1,066 IR-1 centrifuges in six cascades for civilian purposes; and Iran would redesign the Arak heavy-water reactor to the maximum of 20MW capacity and sell the remaining HW to buyers abroad (it must not accumulate HW or build HW reactors).⁴³ The international community's objective of the nuclear negotiations and deals was to slow down Iran's pace of enrichment and ultimately to increase the breakout period (the amount of time required to produce one weapon). The breakout time had extended from two months in 2013 to one year in 2015, after the deal. And it

should have remained one year for another 15 years, had the US not withdrawn.

IAEA's 2017 report concluded that Iran was fully complying with the conditions set in the JCPOA, or the Iran nuclear deal.⁴⁴ However, US President Donald Trump considered the deal less stringent in curtailing Iran's nuclear and missile development programs and regional behavior. He withdrew the United States from the deal and later reimposed the secondary sanctions on Iran (US' unitary sanctions had remained in place even after the JCPOA). By these measures, the US would fine companies of other countries involved in carrying out business transactions with Iran.⁴⁵ Other parties to the deal and the IAEA have however remained engaged with Iran in a bid to salvage the nuclear deal.

Iran was disappointed for not receiving the guaranteed economic benefits in return for implementing the provisions of the 2015 nuclear deal. The U.S. had kept its unilateral sanctions in place despite the lifting of the UN sanctions which made it difficult, if not impossible, for the Europeans and other countries to trade with Iran using the dollar currency. Since the U.S.' withdrawal from the JCPOA in 2017 Tehran continues to reduce its compliance with some clauses of the JCPOA as it is increasing the uranium enrichment in the upwards of 5% and has been testing ballistic missiles with controversial designs of the warheads.⁴⁶

Experts believe that Iran has reduced the breakout time from one year to 10 months and decreasing. As the enrichment goes up the breakout time will keep shrinking.⁴⁷ It may however be mentioned that Iran's nuclear program, albeit peaceful, is not a normal country's nuclear program. As this paper has observed there is a serious trust deficit between IAEA, western powers and Tehran about the potential "weapon" part of Tehran's nuclear program. On the other hand some of the ballistic missiles that Iran has developed have been called into question for their potential intent

and design to have a capability to carry a nuclear warhead. The UNSC Resolution 2231 forbids Iran to “undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons”.⁴⁸ According to some analysts, three of Iran’s ballistic missiles, the Shahab-3, Khorramshahr, and Emad have designs that show the intent to mating them with nuclear warheads.⁴⁹ Therefore, any American attempt at reviving the Iran nuclear deal could incorporate Tehran’s ballistic missile program and Iran would not apparently return to the deal until it gets economic compensation for the U.S.’ secondary sanctions.

Conclusion

This study explained the reasons behind Iran’s hardline ideology against the West and the West’s international campaign for placing stringent checks on Iran’s nuclear program. The single major conclusion of the study was that there existed mistrust, outright hatred and a sense of betrayal among the top Iranian leadership against the West, especially the US. Mistrust among the West especially the US was, due in part to Iran’s past secret illegal nuclear activities and in part to its hardline anti-West ideology. The evidence shows that the West’s sanctions have not bended Iran to reduce its enrichment activities, let alone pause the nuclear program, and has instead made Tehran more defiant in pursuing its indigenous defense and nuclear capabilities. Nonetheless Tehran’s remaining outside the international trading regime and its forceful military posture in the Middle East have kept its neighbors unnerved. This only makes the case for the international community to keep Iran engaged in diplomacy and trade, and not to let it become another North Korea, potentially with nuclear weapons sitting on the most important strait of maritime trade in the Arabian Sea. All in all, in order to revive the Iranian nuclear deal, all parties need some structural readjustments. The United States and Iran both need to put aside their hard stance against

each other which would only otherwise, create political schisms in both countries. More importantly, if the US or its allies in the Middle East do not cease attacking Iranian nuclear facilities or killing its nuclear scientists and military leaders, it will further harden the animosity and set Iran on the path of nuclear weapon development by illegal means. Two, Iran needs to eliminate the designs of the ballistic missile systems that show a conclusive and clear intent of mating them with the nuclear warhead, and the western countries will have to let Iran retain its ballistic missiles with conventional capabilities. Third, Iranian hardliners need to appreciate that they will have to respect the existing world order and engage and comply with the conditions and standards set by international financial institutions. It is considered responsible behavior internationally. Otherwise, they will remain isolated from the international economy. Finally, the western countries will have to ensure that if Tehran complies with the international financial regime, the country is able to easily conduct international financial and economic transactions and receive all the economic benefits as a normal state actor.

Endnotes

¹ “NPT Safeguards Agreement with the Islamic Republic of Iran,” *IAEA Board of Governors*, June 5, 2020.

² “Verification and Monitoring in the Islamic Republic of Iran in light of the United Nations Security Council resolution 2231 (2015),” *Board of Governors*, March 3, 2020.

³ David Patrikarakos, “Nuclear Iran: The Birth of an Atomic State,” (London and New York: I.B. Taurus, 2012).

⁴ Patrikarakos, Nuclear Iran. Also see Farhad Rezaei, “Iran’s Nuclear Program 1979-2015: A study in proliferation and rollback,” (E-book: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

⁵ Patrikarakos, Nuclear Iran; Rezaei, *Iran’s Nuclear Program 1979-2015: A study in proliferation and rollback*, 2017.

⁶ Imam Khomeini, “Wilayate Faqih: Governance of the Jurist: Islamic Government,” *translated* by Dr. Hamid Algar. (e-book: Institute for compilation and publication of Imam Khomeini’s works, 2017).

⁷ Khomeini, “Wilayate Faqih.”

⁸ Ervand Abrahamian, “A History of Modern Iran: Revised and Updated,” (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Michael Axworthy, “Revolutionary Iran: A History of the Islamic Republic,” (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013)

⁹ Abrahamian, “A History of Modern Iran.”

¹⁰ Abrahamian, “A History.”

¹¹ Michael Axworthy, “Revolutionary Iran: A History of the Islamic Republic,” (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013)

¹² In 1944, first elections since 1920s were held. The prime minister appointed by the Mohammad Reza Shah was assassinated in 1951 by an extremist group, and was replaced by Mossadeq, who had formed the National Front in the Iranian Majles (=National Assembly), which had nationalized the Iranian oil only a month before Mossadeq’s becoming the premier.

¹³ Mossadeq had gained support in the Iranian communist party, called Tudeh, which supported the oil nationalization. Washington feared Soviet hand (due to the Tudeh link) in the ongoing Iranian nationalism and boycotted the Iranian oil in solidarity with London.

¹⁴ Many Iranians considered the United States as the Prince Charming for most part of the first half of the 20th century and American ideals of self-determination, democracy, anti-imperialism, and non-interference were admired by the Iranians.

¹⁵ Ervand Abrahamian, “The Coup: 1953, the CIA and the Roots of Modern U.S.-Iranian Relations,” (London and New York: The New Process, 2013).

¹⁶ David, “Nuclear”. Michael, “Post-revolutionary”.

¹⁷ David, “Nuclear”. Farhad, “Iran’s”. Michael, “Post-revolutionary”.

¹⁸ Roy Mottahedeh, “The Mantle of the Prophet: Religion and Politics in Iran,” (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985), 269-287.

¹⁹ R. Campbell, “Occidentosis: A Plague from the West,” (Mizan Press Berkeley, 1985).

²⁰ Campbell, *Occidentosis*, 25-35, 78-91; The book is a typical account of a Marxist or communist writer who looks at the world through the prism of East and the West or South and the North, developing and the developed world. He criticized the way the West, or the developed nations of Europe and the North America, had subjugated the East/South/developing nations such as Iran into importing their ideas, machines, and technology. For him, and for any communist, the solution to this problem was to develop own technology, ideas, and machines and advance in them, and make them accessible for the entire community.

²¹ Michael, “Post-revolutionary”; Ervand, “A History”.

²² The current ideas of self-reliance in economy and defense may be an afterthought of the Al-i-Ahmad’s philosophy, plus the result of experience with the Western governments.

²³ “Verification and monitoring in the Islamic Republic of Iran in light of United Nations Security Council resolution 2231 (2015),” *IAEA Board of Governors*, November 16, 2020. See also, David, “Nuclear”.

²⁴ Remember the usual phrase that it takes a lot longer to build trust than a mere second or a small action to break it? And in nuclear domain, it takes years of legal and diplomatic effort to build a trust—even then it is fragile—and takes only a small dissident faction to break it in a moment of a press conference!

²⁵ Before that, his government had already signed and ratified the Limited Test Ban Treaty in 1963. It signed the NPT in 20 minutes, without any expert advice, or internal deliberations. In short, without seeking a domestic expert opinion, the Iranian ruler closed the chapter of developing a nuclear bomb, long before China and France, the nuclear weapon states, had signed the treaty.

²⁶ Not all of the Iranian leaders shared Khomeini’s view on the WMDs. During the Iran-Iraq War (1980-89), many Iranian leaders, especially Ayatollah Beheshti, Rafsanjani, Amrollah Salehi, Ali Khamenei, Hassan Rouhani, among others, debated the production of nuclear weapons with Khomeini, who almost always demurred, terming these weapons as contrary to Qur’anic canons.

Moreover, Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty says in its Article X, “Each Party shall in exercising its national sovereignty have the right to withdraw from the Treaty if it decides that extraordinary events, related to the subject matter of this treaty, have jeopardized the supreme interests of its country. It shall give notice of such withdrawal to all other Parties to the Treaty and to the United Nations Security Council three months in advance. Such notice shall include a statement of the extraordinary events it regards as having jeopardized its supreme interests.” See “Text of the Treaty,” 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, *The United Nations*,

<https://www.un.org/en/conf/npt/2015/pdf/text%20of%20the%20treaty.pdf>; North Korea withdrew from the NPT on January 10, 2003, citing security threats to it from the United States, see Frederick L. Kirgis, “North Korea’s Withdrawal from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty,” *American Society of International Law*, Volume 8, Issue 2, January 24, 2003;

Interpreting the Article X, Daryl Kimball wrote that a state can withdraw from the Treaty if its supreme national interests are in danger due to some extraordinary events, see Daryl Kimball, “The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty at a Glance,” *Arms Control Association*, March, 2020;

²⁷ For details on this point, see David, “Nuclear”.

²⁸ Farhad, “Iran’s”.

²⁹ David, “Nuclear”.

³⁰ “Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement in the Islamic Republic of Iran,” *IAEA Board of Governors*, August 26, 2003, <https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/gov2003-63.pdf>.

³¹ “Implementation of the NPT,” *IAEA*.

³² David, “Nuclear.”

³³ David, “Nuclear.”

³⁴ David, “Nuclear.”

³⁵ “Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement in the Islamic Republic of Iran,” *IAEA Board of Governors*, February 24, 2004, <https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/gov2004-11.pdf>.

³⁶ By then, no one in the international community doubted that Iran had not been developing nuclear weapons. The “West” feared that a nuclear Iran would have tipped the balance of power in Middle East against the Western allies, leaving the Arab allies at their mercy. Also, the military option was inconceivable for the U.S., due in part to its entrenchment in Afghanistan and Iraq, and that Tehran was too strong ideologically—and therefore structurally—to be wiped out overnight. Above all, the Europeans, led by Britain, France, and Germany were averse to the use of military force, and thought of diplomacy as a cogent option, for reasons stated in the main discussion. The IAEA, in its September 2004 report, however, issued a threat of the UNSC referral (sanctions) to persuade Iran to widen the scope of suspension on enrichment and halt the work on the feed material.

³⁷ David, “Nuclear”.

³⁸ Farhad, “Iran’s”.

³⁹ Farhad, “Iran’s”.

⁴⁰ Farhad, “Iran’s”.

⁴¹ David, “Nuclear”.

⁴² Samore, Gary et al, “The Iran Nuclear Deal: A Definitive Guide,” *Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs*, Harvard Kennedy School, 2015, <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:27029094>.

⁴³ Gary, “The Iran Nuclear Deal,” *Belfer Center*.

⁴⁴ “Verification and monitoring in the Islamic Republic of Iran in light of United Nations Security Council resolution 2231 (2015),” *IAEA Board of Governors*, November 13, 2017, <https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/17/11/gov2017-48.pdf>.

⁴⁵ Daniel W. Drezner, “Economic Statecraft in the Age of Trump,” *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 42, Issue 3, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0163660X.2019.1663072>.

⁴⁶ Paul K. Kerr, “Iran’s Nuclear Program: Tehran’s Compliance with International Obligations,” *Congress Research Service*, November 20, 2020, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/nuke/R40094.pdf>.

⁴⁷ Mark Fitzpatrick, “Iran’s nuclear latency needs to be guarded, not goaded,” *The Survival Editors’ Blog*, IISS, March 6, 2020, <https://www.iiss.org/blogs/survival-blog/2020/03/iran-low-enriched-uranium-stockpile-iaea-report>. Even then, the enrichment of Uranium up to more than 80% (the weapon-grade) will not be possible without expelling the IAEA inspectors, removing cameras from the centrifuges assembly, and not least testing the nuclear weapon. And these actions are impossible without inviting a military strike from the US and its allies in Europe and elsewhere.

⁴⁸ Michael Elleman and Mark Fitzpatrick, “Evaluating design intent in Iran’s ballistic-missile program,” *Adelphi Series*, 57:466-467, 89-130, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19445571.2017.1555918>.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*