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IRANIAN NUCLEAR WEAPONS POLICY: PAST, PRESENT, AND POSSIBLE FUTURE

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Iran has pursued nuclear weapons for over three decades. Throughout some of the most tumultuous times in its history the basic reasons for this quest have remained unchanged. Iran seeks nuclear weapons to defeat regional adversaries, to deter global power intervention, and to cement its leadership position within the Middle East. No matter who rules in Tehran these rationales are unlikely to change.

Iran will most likely be the world's next nuclear nation.(1) As such, it is worthwhile to understand Tehran's reasons for seeking nuclear weapons as an indication of how they might be used in the future. This analysis is divided into three eras. In each phase the reasons for pursuing nuclear weapons are explored in relation to the changing circumstances both inside and outside Iran.

This paper does not provide a technical overview of the Iranian nuclear program (or the development of delivery systems for them) except where such details serve to illuminate various aspects of Iran's nuclear policy. Neither does it seek to "prove" that Iran is attempting or has attempted to acquire nuclear weapons. It is assumed throughout that the civilian nuclear power program in Iran has always had a covert military application—despite Tehran's treaty obligations and public protestations to the contrary. Finally, no moral or political considerations are offered about whether Iran can or should develop nuclear weapons. Only the reasons why Iran seeks such weapons are analyzed.

NUCLEAR POLICY UNDER THE SHAH (1967-1979)

The quest for an Iranian nuclear bomb began as early as 1967 under Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi.(2) In that year Iran purchased a five-megawatt research reactor from the United States for the Amirabad Technical College in Tehran. Although this research reactor was important in terms of basic infrastructure, the Iranian program did not really begin to take off for several more years. In 1974, the Shah established the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) and as part of his long-term development program announced a plan to build 23 nuclear power plants throughout Iran by 1994. By the time he fell from power in 1979, the Shah had concluded contracts for four of these reactors. As demonstrated below, the

timing of this announcement offers insight into the Iranian desire for a nuclear bomb.

In these early years the Iranian nuclear program was supported by several Western powers. Reactors were purchased from the United States, France, and West Germany. Iranian nuclear scientists were trained in those countries as well as in Great Britain, Italy, Belgium, and Canada. Argentina, an aspiring nuclear power at the time, also provided advisers. Although each of these countries sought to help Iran develop nuclear energy rather than nuclear weapons, the Shah clearly had nuclear weapons in mind. Speaking in September 1974, the Shah remarked,

“[T]he present world is confronted with a problem of some countries possessing nuclear weapons and some not. We are among those who do not possess nuclear weapons, so the

friendship of a country such as the United States with its arsenal of nuclear weapons...is absolutely vital.”(3)

India was another important early supporter of the Iranian program and provided training to Iranian scientists. Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi is even rumored to have told the Shah about India’s planned “peaceful nuclear experiment” in May 1974.(4) India’s success both technically and diplomatically with its nuclear program may have inspired the Shah to pursue nuclear weapons more avidly and could have influenced his creation of the AEOI that year. Despite this support from India, Iran still regarded India—even with its nuclear weapons—as a potential adversary. Iran repeatedly stressed its support for the stability of Pakistan especially after the loss of Bangladesh, even going so far as to define any attack on Pakistan as an attack on Iran itself.(5)

Initially, Iran’s nuclear program was not overtly meant to threaten Israel. However, it cannot be ignored that Tehran saw Israel then and now as a potential rival in the Middle East whose strength needed to be counterbalanced. This held true particularly after Israeli victories in the 1967 and 1973 wars against its Arab neighbors. Both dates at least superficially coincide with major changes to the Shah’s nuclear program. At the time the Israeli nuclear program was still a genuine secret (as opposed to its “open secret” status today), but it is likely the Shah was aware or at least suspected Israel of possessing nuclear weapons.(6)

Although Iran received development assistance from the Soviet Union and occasionally threatened to accept Soviet military assistance to force greater concessions from Washington, Tehran remained a strong U.S. ally. As part of its obligations as a member of the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), the Iranian program was at least partly geared toward preventing Soviet intervention in the Middle East. At least one report argued that the Iranian program was designed specifically and solely to fight the Soviet Union, but this assertion was based

largely on a serious overestimate of Iran’s conventional strength.(7)

Nevertheless, it should be stressed that the U.S. government did not support Iran’s goal or program in this regard. At the time, Iran shared a long northern border with the Soviet Union and feared Soviet invasion of its oilfields. In fact, following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, the Carter Administration feared just such a move into Iran. When a Russian invasion appeared likely in August 1980, the U.S. allegedly considered using tactical nuclear weapons in response.(8)

The driving factor of Iran’s decision to pursue nuclear arms, however, was based on threats not from the Soviet Union, but from other regional powers including Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and especially Iraq. Iran and Iraq were contestants for regional hegemony and often clashed along their disputed border and in nearby waters even before their bitter war in the 1980s. In 1973 when Iraqi forces attempted to claim Kuwaiti islands in the Persian Gulf, Iran offered military support to Kuwait, which was turned down. Iraq also provided “diplomatic, financial, and military support to a number of subversive revolutionary, nationalist and secessionist movements” opposing the Iranian regime.(9)

Iran’s nuclear program was more advanced than Iraq’s at this time(10), but the relationship between the Iranian and the Iraqi quests for nuclear weapons is clear. In 1976 Iraq purchased the Osirak research reactor from France. Iraq was ostensibly pursuing a nuclear capability to counterbalance the Israeli program. In the words of an Iraqi government official, “If Israel owns the atom bomb, then the Arabs must get an atom bomb. The Arab countries should possess whatever is necessary to defend themselves.”(11) Iraq, however, was undoubtedly aware of the Iranian program and it is possible that Baghdad began a serious effort to develop nuclear weapons only after the Iranian effort began in earnest two years earlier.

NUCLEAR POLICY UNDER THE AYATOLLAHS (1979-1997)

After the Shah fled Iran in January 1979, the new ruling ayatollahs inherited his nuclear program. Considerable dispute surrounds the Islamic regime's early support for nuclear weapons. Many argue that Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini considered nuclear weapons (as well as chemical and biological weapons) as immoral and he did not seek them. Others, however, insist his government sought to continue the nuclear program, but on a less grandiose scale.(12)

Clearly, the Shah's grand plan was significantly reduced. Virtually all projects associated with the Shah were deemed inappropriate and scrapped including most of the contracts for nuclear reactors, though a small research reactor at Amirabad under international inspection was retained. All arms deals with the United States and other foreign powers were cancelled as well as at least \$34 billion worth of major civilian development projects—including four nuclear power stations.(13) Although the nuclear reactor complex at Bushehr was about 77 percent complete, the project suffered from significant technical difficulties and major cost overruns. The revolutionary regime could not afford the financial investment to complete the work at Bushehr and was unwilling to request--and unlikely to receive--the necessary foreign assistance.

In any event, this situation would not last long. By 1983, the Iranian regime was beginning to see the need for long-term economic planning. In March of that year Tehran announced the first of its five-year development plans including a restarting of Iran's nuclear program with the help of India.(14) Indian assistance was most beneficial because it permitted Tehran to stay apart from either side in the Cold War and India offered the kind of mid-level technology Iran sought. As the program progressed, however, other nations including West Germany, China, and Russia also apparently provided some assistance.

The most pressing reason for restarting the nuclear program, however, was military, not

economic. The new Iranian regime ended the Shah's alliance with the United States and actively sought to define itself as an enemy of America. To make matters worse, Iran did not trade one Cold War superpower ally for another. Even though Tehran turned away from the United States it did not turn toward the USSR. As a result, the possibility of superpower intervention in Iran—most likely to secure access to its oil supply—increased significantly as both sides in the Cold War now viewed Tehran as a hostile regime. Fear of such an invasion provided ammunition to the supporters of an Iranian nuclear deterrent.

No matter how great that threat became, however, it was unlikely to match the more immediate threat from other regional powers that either possessed or sought nuclear weapons. During the 1980s a nuclear arms race—as well as a devastating war—began between Iran and Iraq that was watched intensely by the Middle East's only acknowledged nuclear power, Israel.

The fear that each nation possessed of the others' nuclear capabilities is clearly demonstrated by a series of counterproliferation strikes conducted by all three sides. At the very beginning of their war, in September 1980, Iran struck Iraq's Osirak nuclear reactor with the goal of preventing an Iraqi nuclear bomb. The Israelis had publicly advocated such an Iranian move, but the attack apparently had little effect.(15) The following year, in June 1981, Israel took matters into its own hands and succeeded in destroying the Osirak reactor, striking a devastating blow against the Iraqi nuclear program. Iraq, for its part, struck the Iranian nuclear reactor at Bushehr seven times between 1984 and 1988, eventually succeeding in destroying most of Iran's ability to produce nuclear materials.(16)

None of these attacks, however, actually halted Iran's or Iraq's attempts to develop nuclear weapons, only delaying them. In 1983, Iran publicly restarted its nuclear program leading Jane's Defense Weekly to report that Iran was moving "very quickly" towards a nuclear weapon and could have one as early as

1986.(17) In March 1984 Baghdad and the Soviet Union signed a contract to study the feasibility of constructing a nuclear reactor in Iraq to replace the one destroyed by the Israelis.(18) Both sides were also developing chemical and, to a lesser extent, biological weapons. As early as August 1983 Tehran had complained repeatedly and apparently accurately to the United Nations that Iraq had attacked Iran with chemical weapons.(19) When the international community reacted with skepticism and nonchalance, Iran apparently felt the need to embark on its own programs to be able to respond in kind.

After the Iran-Iraq War ended in 1988, Tehran began a massive military rebuilding program to replace its lost forces and prepare for the next war. The eight-year-long war had made it clear to the ayatollahs that in any future conflict Iran would stand alone without support from other nations and needed to be self-sufficient in both conventional forces and “weapons of mass destruction.” Continuing fears of the Israeli and Iraqi nuclear programs pushed Iran to seek nuclear-related technology from China, India, Argentina, Pakistan, and Germany.(20) Even the death of Khomeini himself in June 1989 did not slow down Iran’s efforts. Some reports suggest it may have even accelerated them.

In the early 1990s two significant international events affected Iranian national security in major ways. The first was the fall of the Soviet Union that pushed the former superpower back from Iran’s border and lessened the chances of an invasion. Obviously, this was welcome news in Tehran especially following the earlier Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. However, the threat Iran faced from the Soviet arsenal remained intact and arguably even increased as security around former Soviet weapons weakened. Ironically, the end of the Soviet threat increased the perceived threat from the United States since Washington would not be as likely to be deterred from intervening in Iran by its superpower rival’s presence in the region.

The second event was the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and the subsequent Gulf War in 1991. While the Iraqi invasion demonstrated the continued belligerence and military strength of the Baghdad regime, the U.S. response to the invasion at least temporarily devastated the latter, if not the former. The defeat of Iraq was no doubt welcome news in Tehran, but the UN inspections that followed uncovered a nuclear program more widespread and advanced than anyone—including Iran—had imagined.

Thus, although Iraq had been defeated in war, the threat that Iran faced from Baghdad did not actually decrease. The Allied defeat of Iraq also demonstrated beyond a doubt the U.S. ability to intervene with massive military force anywhere in the Persian Gulf region and reinforced fears of U.S. intervention against Iran.

NUCLEAR POLICY UNDER PRESIDENT KHATAMI (1997-)

Although not as violent and dramatic as the fall of the Shah and the assumption of power by the Ayatollahs, the landslide election victory of Mohammed Khatami as President of Iran in May 1997 has been billed as tremendously significant. Khatami was viewed as being more moderate, more liberal, and more open to the West. His landslide re-election victory in June 2001 reinforced his international, if not domestic, stature.

Khatami’s foreign policy differs considerably from that of his predecessors and is one of the key reasons he was twice elected president.(21) He is alleged to be attempting to move Iran “from confrontation to conciliation” and to be trading in the “clash of civilizations” for a “dialogue of civilizations.”(22) The extent to which this change is actually occurring is a matter of considerable debate. Arguably, national security—the military, intelligence agencies, and especially nuclear weapons—remain in the hands of his factional opponents.

Regardless of the president’s proposals for change, Iran continues to pursue completion of the Bushehr nuclear reactor complex. Although

some assistance for the program is forthcoming from such nations as China and Pakistan, the main source of foreign assistance is now the Russian Federation. This is ironic, since Moscow was one of the principal threats against which Iran began its nuclear weapons program. In January 1995, Iran and Russia signed a contract to construct the first unit at Bushehr to be delivered by the end of 2002. The reactor should become operational in 2004.(23)

What effect, if any, might the tensions between the two factions have on Iranian nuclear policy just as Iran is about to cross the nuclear threshold? It is easy to speculate at length on what Iran would do with nuclear weapons without reaching any firm conclusions, (24) but given the potential importance of the subject it is nevertheless worthwhile to make educated guesses about future intentions.

First and foremost, Iranian opening to the West has little, if any, effect on relations with Baghdad except perhaps to strengthen Iran's hand in the next war. Iraq presents such a fundamental security challenge to Iran that, as Geoffrey Kemp suggests:

“[E]ven if the moderate forces in Tehran led by President Khatami were to eventually succeed in achieving control over all key instruments of power, including the armed forces, the police, the judiciary, and the intelligence agencies, it is unlikely their attitudes to Iraq would be any different than their more conservative brethren.”(25)

Put another way by Peter Jones, “Iraq is Iran's only real regional military rival and the only state that could launch a war against it.”(26) Thus, no matter who is in charge—president or ayatollah—little will change in Iran-Iraq relations.

As for the Middle East's other nuclear power, Iran's relationship with Israel also remains hostile. Iran has been increasing support to terrorist groups opposing Israel (which Iran argues are “resistance movements”). Israel, for its part, continues to fear an Iranian nuclear breakthrough and

periodically and credibly threatens a counterproliferation strike against Iran's nuclear facilities.(27) Iran apparently fears that Israeli-Turkish military cooperation in recent years may provide Israeli fighters an avenue of attack for such a strike.

Iran continues to be very critical of U.S. policy in the Gulf, Afghanistan, and the Middle East generally. Inclusion of Iran in President George W. Bush's “axis of evil” speech has increased talk within Iran of a possible American attack. Yet given Iran's regional threat perceptions, it would be likely to continue with a nuclear strategy even if U.S.-Iran tensions decline. Kemp suggests that even “a successor government, however friendly toward the United States and better disposed toward Israel, might still want to pursue many of the same programs that the current regime has initiated.”(28)

Finally, Iran's desire for regional leadership is only likely to expand as Tehran ends its diplomatic isolation. Iran is the largest, most populous, most unified nation in the Gulf area. The addition of nuclear weapons to its capabilities will enhance its status and give it greater clout as it speaks out with an “Islamic voice” on regional and global issues. This is especially true after the general international acquiescence now being displayed regarding the Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests of May 1998.

CONCLUSIONS

Even in spite of the sometimes radical changes within the Iranian leadership over the past three decades, Iran's nuclear policy has remained relatively consistent, at least in general terms. Some of the details have changed and the emphasis on particular aspects has shifted from time to time, but for the most part all of Iran's leaders have pursued nuclear weapons for the same basic reasons:

- Deter and, if deterrence fails, defeat regional adversaries
- Establish regional leadership position in the Middle East

- Deter intervention of a global power in Iranian/Middle Eastern affairs (29)

The desire to deter regional adversaries has principally focused on Israel and Iraq (although other possible future nuclear states in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey could be included as well as nuclear powers India and Pakistan). Given the Israeli nuclear advantage and the distance between the two states, Iran would most likely expect to be able to deter Israel with its nuclear weapons (and would be deterred in turn). Iran's then-vice president, Dr. Seyyed Ayatollah Mohajerani, said in 1992 (and in words very similar to those put forth by the Iraqis), "[T]he nuclear capabilities of Israel and the Muslims must be equalized. If Israel is allowed to have a nuclear capacity, than Islamic states, too, should be given the same right."(30)

Iraq is a different case, however. Beyond the goal of deterrence, Iran is likely willing to use its nuclear weapons against Baghdad, particularly if it believed Iraqi nuclear use was likely. Whether or not Iraq possesses nuclear weapons, Iran is also likely willing to use nuclear weapons against Iraq in the event of a major Iraqi attack with chemical, biological, and/or conventional forces, especially if the outcome of the war depended on it. This is by no means a new or a one-sided phenomenon. According to one Reagan Administration official during the Iran-Iraq War, "If either Iran or Iraq had nuclear weapons at their disposal, they would use them."(31)

Iran has also been motivated by desires of regional and/or Islamic leadership. As Iran has improved relations with Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Arab monarchies that are frightened by Iraq, (32) its claim to be the leading state in the Gulf would be enhanced by possession of nuclear weapons. Such arms could also be used to intimidate these neighbors to accept Iranian primacy or at least to listen to Iranian demands over those of the United States or Iraq.

Related to the drive for a regional leadership role is the need to prevent the intervention of an outside power in Iranian/Middle Eastern affairs.

Under the Shah, such fears centered on the Soviet Union and the possibility that it might invade Iran. After the Shah fell and the United States went from being Iran's superpower ally to its greatest enemy, the possibility of U.S. intervention also had to be prevented. Such U.S. action could involve large-scale naval operations, an attack on Iran similar to the Gulf War, or a counterproliferation strike against Iran's nuclear infrastructure.(33) Although the fear of American nuclear retaliation would probably prevent a direct Iranian nuclear attack on the United States or its forces, the threat of an Iranian nuclear retaliation may do the same to the United States. Thus, Iran would hope to be able to deter significant military intervention of an outside power (most likely, the United States) with its nuclear weapons.

It is important to remember that all three of these rationales are interrelated and each supports the other two. Attempting to separate Iran's reasons for seeking a nuclear capability is therefore counterproductive, if not impossible.(34) For this reason it is unlikely Iran can be dissuaded from achieving a nuclear capability in the long-term. Therefore it is imperative to understand Iran's desire for such weapons in order to be able to deter their use once the capability is achieved.

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NOTES

1. In December 1999 the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) informed senior U.S. government officials that Iran might already be able to make a nuclear weapon. James Risen and Judith Miller, "CIA Tells Clinton An

Iranian A-Bomb Can't Be Ruled Out," *The New York Times*, January 17, 2000, p. 1 and Walter Pincus, "CIA Not Ruling Out 'Possibility' Iran Can Build Nuclear Bomb," *The Washington Post*, January 18, 2000, p. 8.

2. The following section on the early history of Iran's nuclear program draws heavily from Mark D. Skootsky, "U.S. Nuclear Policy Towards Iran," *Nonproliferation Analysis*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (July 1995).

3. As quoted in Alvin J. Cottrell and James E. Dougherty, "Iran's Quest for Security: U.S. Arms Transfers and the Nuclear Option," *Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis Foreign Policy Report*, May 1977, p. 3.

4. James F. Clarity, "Information Abstracts," *The New York Times*, May 27, 1974, p. 2.

5. The Shah made such a pledge in 1972 after East Pakistan/Bangladesh gained its independence and Pakistan was proved incapable of defeating India in war. Cottrell and Dougherty, "Iran's Quest for Security: U.S. Arms Transfers and the Nuclear Option," p. 33.

6. In March 1976 the CIA accidentally publicly admitted that Israel had 10-20 nuclear weapons "ready to use." Arthur Kranish, "CIA: Israel Has 10-20 A-Weapons," *The Washington Post*, March 15, 1976, p. 2 and David Binder, "Information Abstracts," *The New York Times*, March 16, 1976, p. 1.

7. Cottrell and Dougherty argue that Iran was more than a conventional match for any of its neighbors in the Middle East and Persian Gulf and in the event of an attack "Iran would be more than adequately prepared to cope with such a contingency." Therefore, Iran only needed to fear the Soviet Union. This assertion was proved to be blatantly false when Iraq invaded Iran less than three years later. Cottrell and Dougherty, "Iran's Quest for Security: U.S. Arms Transfers and the Nuclear Option," pp. 5 and 8.

8. "U.S. Officials Discussed Using Tactical Nuclear Weapons," *The Associated Press*, August 26, 1986 and "Powell Says Carter Discussed Using Low-Yield Nuclear Weapons," *The Associated Press*, August 28, 1986.

9. Cottrell and Dougherty, "Iran's Quest for Security: U.S. Arms Transfers and the Nuclear Option," p. 10.

10. Iraq only had one nuclear reactor at Tuwaitha built by the Soviet Union in 1958. Kori N. Schake and Judith S. Yaphe, "The Strategic Implications of a Nuclear-Armed Iran," *Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, McNair Paper 64*, May 2001, p. 12.

11. J.P. Smith, "Iraq's Nuclear Arms Option," *The Washington Post*, August 8, 1978, p. 14.

12. David Segal, "Atomic Ayatollahs: Just What the Mideast Needs—An Iranian Bomb," *The Washington Post*, April 12, 1987, p. D1.

13. William Branigin, "Iran Set to Scrap \$34 Billion Worth of Civilian Projects," *The Washington Post*, May 30, 1979, p. 22.

14. "Massive Investment Planned to Spur Self-Sufficiency," *Middle East Executive Reports*, Volume 6, Number 3, March 1983, p. 17.

15. Barry R. Schneider, "Radical Responses to Radical Regimes: Evaluating Preemptive Counter-Proliferation," *Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, McNair Paper 41*, May 1995, pp. 12-13.

16. Schneider, "Radical Responses to Radical Regimes," p. 15.

17. Cathy Booth, "'Ayatollah' Bomb in Production for Iran," *United Press International*, April 24, 1984.

18. Sajid Rizvi, "Iraq and Soviet Union Sign Contract for Nuclear Plant Study," *United Press International*, March 23, 1984.

19. "Alleged Use of Chemical Weapons by Iraq," *The British Broadcasting Corporation*, February 16, 1984.

20. Elaine Sciolino, "Report Says Iran Seeks Atomic Arms," *The New York Times*, October 31, 1991, p. 7.

21. "[Y]oung people voted for Khatami significantly because they aspired to greater freedom at home and more cooperation with the rest of the world." R.K. Ramazani, "The Shifting Premise of Iran's Foreign Policy: Towards a Democratic Peace?," *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (Spring 1998).

22. Shah Alam, "The Changing Paradigm of Iranian Foreign Policy Under Khatami," *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. XXIV, No. 9 (December 2000).
23. "First Unit of Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant to be Delivered Next Week," *The Tehran Times*, November 15, 2001.
24. Anthony Cordesman, "Iran and Nuclear Weapons: A Working Draft," *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, February 7, 2000, p. 32.
25. Geoffrey Kemp, "Introduction," in *Iran's Nuclear Weapons Options: Issues and Analysis*, The Nixon Center, January 2001, p. viii.
26. Peter Jones, "Iran's Threat Perceptions and Arms Control Policies," *The Nonproliferation Review*, Vol. VI, No. 1 (Fall 1998), p. 43.
27. Associated Press and Reuters, "Israel and Iran Trade Charges," *The International Herald Tribune*, February 6, 2002.
28. Geoffrey Kemp, "Iran's Nuclear Options," in *Iran's Nuclear Weapons Options: Issues and Analysis*, The Nixon Center, January 2001, p. 11.
29. Michael Eisenstadt also adds "a desire to achieve self-reliance in all areas of national life" to this list. Although important, self-reliance simply does not deserve the same weight as deterrence, defense, and regional leadership. See Michael Eisenstadt, "Living with a Nuclear Iran?," *Survival*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (Autumn 1999), p. 125.
30. Yossi Melman, "Iran's Lethal Secret: How the Rafsanjani Regime is Closing in on Atomic Weaponry," *The Washington Post*, October 18, 1992, p. C5.
31. Segal, "Atomic Ayatollahs: Just What the Mideast Needs—An Iranian Bomb," p. D1.
32. Joshua Teitelbaum, "The Gulf States and the End of Dual Containment," *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Volume 2, Number 3, September 1998., p. 1-2.
33. Shahram Chubin, "Does Iran Want Nuclear Weapons?," *Survival*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (Spring 1995), p. 90.
34. For example, Cottrell and Dougherty overemphasized the importance of the Soviet Union in the Shah's nuclear planning and missed the threat from regional adversaries in Cottrell and Dougherty, "Iran's Quest for Security: U.S. Arms Transfers and the Nuclear Option." Similarly, Chubin claims Iraq is the only threat for which Iran would need a nuclear capability, but completely misses the importance of deterring Israel and the U.S. and of achieving regional hegemony in Shahram Chubin, "Iran's Strategic Environment and Nuclear Weapons," in *Iran's Nuclear Weapons Options: Issues and Analysis*, The Nixon Center, January 2001, pp. 17-33. Finally, Schake and Yaphe place too much emphasis on Israel with the statement that "Iran uses its need to counter Israeli nuclear capabilities as its primary reason for acquiring a nuclear option," in Schake and Yaphe, "The Strategic Implications of a Nuclear-Armed Iran," p. 38.