

THE CLARION: YESHIVA UNIVERSITY'S JOURNAL OF POLITICAL SCIENCE



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**The Clarion:
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Letter from the Editor in Chief

It is my honor to present this issue of the Clarion. After an extended hiatus, Yeshiva University's undergraduate journal of political science returns to present a strong compilation of articles from students.

This year's Clarion has adopted a more traditional journal format, honing in on long-established academic political science methods of thought and discourse.

In the past, the Clarion has had an unpredictable presence on the undergraduate academic scene at Yeshiva University. With a new design, editorial staff, hope and hard work, this edition is a first step towards this journal's steady semiannual publication. I hope that this journal will continue in the future via the staff's dedicated efforts, and submissions on the part of Political Science students on campus. As the university's Department of Political Science has expanded and reached new heights of achievement in recent years, so may the Clarion be strengthened and improved in the years to come.

The publication of a journal of political science at an institution with one thousand liberal arts students is no small feat, and was made possible only through the assistance of many individuals who possess a commitment to the pursuit of truth and unbiased analysis. Many thanks to the dedicated few: Levi Zwickler, Ashira Pollack, Yonatan Raskin, and most importantly, our faculty supervisor, Professor Maria Zaitseva. Without Professor's Zaitseva's support and constant encouragement, this journal would not have come to fruition.

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All submissions to the Clarion undergo a rigorous peer-review process and these were the select few that stood out from the rest. YUJPS accepts submissions from all students enrolled at an affiliated Yeshiva University institution. Please submit all inquiries regarding submissions to theyuclarion@gmail.com. In partnership with the J. Dunner Political Science Society. All rights reserved to YUJPS.

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Let U.S. Adjourn

How the JCPOA's Failure Will Lead to a Nuclear Middle East

Yonatan Raskin

Introduction

The subject of Iran's nuclear weapons capability has been the discussion of world powers for the last three decades. There have been scores of campaigns both on the civilian and government levels in countries around the world to hamper and completely dismantle Iranian nuclear weapons production. In 2015, decades of constant back and forth finally culminated in the Iran Deal, where all of the P5+1 entered into an agreement with Iran that was set to delay their development of nuclear weapons for a decade. The Deal was rife with holes and loopholes, with the inability to have spontaneous inspections by the IAEA and untold scores of sites undisclosed to regulators. Even the inspections that did take place resulted in uncertainty on whether Iran was surpassing the amount of uranium concentration that they were allotted.

Despite this international effort, the deal took a huge blow in 2018 when President Donald Trump decided to pull the United States out of the Iran Deal. The other member nations still technically keep to the terms of the deal, after the escalation of tensions with the United States in the early days of 2020. However, Iran announced that they would no longer respect the limits set upon them by the terms of the deal, stating that they "would abandon limitations on enriching uranium" (Hafezi, 2020). According to some estimates, Iran is now on course to be able to produce nuclear fissile material fit for a nuclear bomb by the end of 2020 and three to four months according to worst-case scenario estimates (Sanger 2020).

Taking these developments into consideration, it is clear that the JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) is no longer being adhered to and is out the window. These recent developments impact Iran's original motivations for gunning for a nuclear weapon by forcing them to go full force to develop an actual weapon rather than to just have a virtual one. The Iranian motivation for developing a nuclear weapon has evolved past its previous fundamental drives, and these recent developments are pushing the state to take the final step toward proliferation. Thus, the JCPOA's failure will cause Iran to finally proliferate and spark a nuclear arms race throughout the Middle East.

This paper will begin with a comprehensive overview of the history of Iran's nuclear program and an analysis of the intentions of the different parties who have been in power since its founding. Then this piece will discuss Iran's participation in both the JCPOA and NPT treaties, along with the various flaws in both of the agreements, and how Iran takes advantage of those flaws. Next, this paper will begin the analysis of the prevailing theories regarding the urge behind the nation's decision to proliferate. Finally, the consequences of these theories will be explored. This analysis will show how the breakdown of the JCPOA will lead to a fully nuclear weapon capable Iran, creating a nuclear and volatile Middle East in the coming years. Policy suggestions will be examined for dealing with this new reality.

Background

Historical Build Up

The Iranian nuclear program had initially started with the Atoms for Peace program back in the post-World War II era, with a lot of groundwork having been laid down by the United States itself. Atoms for Peace was an initiative started by United States President Dwight Eisenhower in 1953 as an effort to bring as many countries into the fold of peaceful nuclear energy, while at the same time giving plenty of economic incentives to pursue only civilian programs as opposed to trying to proliferate on their own. It was reasoned that it would be safer and more economically sound for all of the parties involved if the “nuclear expert” nations of the US, France and Great Britain administered the implementation of these programs, as opposed to just allowing these fledgling third-world countries trying to cobble these extremely sophisticated programs together on their own.

Beginning in 1957, the Iranian nuclear program made its humble beginnings as “a small 5MW research plant for Tehran University” (Shah, Rabnawaz 2018, 386). After about twenty years of leisurely paced research, in 1974 Raza Shah chartered the Iranian Atomic Energy Organization that was planned to build over 20 nuclear plants. At the time, this was widely supported by many of the international community. The program began to do very well but was impacted greatly by the removal of the Shah in 1979, and its production was halted for a brief time. In the mid-1980s, the program received a kick restart throughout the rest of the decade that was then slowed amidst the Iran-Iraq war, restarting afterward with the stewardship of China, Russia, and Pakistan (Shah, Rabnawaz 2018, 386). The program went into overdrive in the early 2000s following the United State’s statement that Iran was part of the “Axis of Evil” along with Iraq and North Korea.

The Program Under the Shah

The Shah’s intentions for getting the nuclear program up and running was for purely economic gain. Iran’s main export at the time of the Shah’s rule was oil. Getting a national nuclear power grid up and running would allow Iran to increase exports and shift their energy needs from oil to nuclear power. After all, Iran produces “about 3.8 million bbl/d [barrels per day] and exports (about 2.4 million bbl/d), and holds roughly 10 per cent of the world’s total proven petroleum reserves (more than 135 billion barrels), which should last, at current rates of production, for nearly a century” (Abulof 2014, 406). Oil currently makes up roughly 70 percent of government revenues and adding nuclear energy to the mix would allow that number to skyrocket even further. The most ironic part of this initial step toward nuclear power is that many of the Western parties who are currently standing in Iran’s way were staunch supporters of the program, as “the US, France, and Germany were counting on lucrative profits from sales to Iran” (Rabnawaz 2018, 386). Although there were some fears that the program would eventually lead to weaponization, the primary concern was the boost that these nations’ bottom lines would receive from a civilian nuclear-powered Iran.

Post-Islamic Revolution

However, this economic boon perspective was quickly lost amidst the chaos and political shuffle that was the Islamic Revolution of 1979. The Shah was ousted, and all original motivations for the nuclear program were quickly realigned and intentions resorted into the new regime’s point of view. The new regime was one based on strict adherence to the religious Muslim letter of the law, and thus all governmental policies were constructed in this theme. The grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini was quoted as saying that “In Islam the legislative power and competence to establish laws belongs exclusively to God Almighty. The sacred Legislator of Islam is the sole legislative power.” Clearly, the power of government in the Islamist regime’s view is meant to be an

extension of the power of Allah. As such, any initiative that the government undertakes is meant to be an application of this logic. It thus follows that a nuclear program that is developed under such a regime would also be based on the logic that the power it develops is for the specific use of enforcing the rule of the land.

Iran's Involvement in the NPT

As mentioned previously, there were strong economic incentives driving the Shah to get the Iranian nuclear program up and running. Therefore, when presented with the potential benefits that the Atoms for Peace program could provide with the caveat of joining the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Iran signing on was an easy decision. In fact, Iran was one of the first countries to sign on to the NPT in July of 1968. The NPT consists of several amendments that require the states that ratified it to adhere to. The amendments that will be focused on are Articles 3, 4 and 10.

Article 3 delineates how all member states must adhere to any and all rules/regulations that the International Atomic Energy Agency outlines for them, as well as specifically outline the IAEA's ability to perform checks and inspections of nuclear facilities to ensure that no illicit military activity takes place in any "civilian" nuclear programs. Article 4 emphasizes how all member states have the right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and have the right to share any information or materials that are involved with the peaceful nuclear energy program process. Finally, Article 10 discusses the ability of a member state to remove themselves from the treaty. As long as 3 months' notice is given beforehand, the state can withdraw from the NPT.

The problems with the NPT are self-evident in just the articles that were listed above, let alone the rest of the agreement. First the fact that there is an exit clause within the initial signing of the agreement displays the difficulty of enforcing the treaty. If there is no power stopping a state from deciding to withdraw after already acquiring nuclear energy intelligence, then how could any form of international coalition hope to reprimand any state that begins to use that very knowledge for illegal military purposes? Regarding Article 3, it remains extremely vague as to what constitutes a "civilian program" or what is the determining factor that tips a civilian program into a military one, and also leaves ambiguity in terms of how the IAEA conducts their inspections within each member state. While this is somewhat necessary as each state has different needs in terms of how the searches will be conducted, this also leaves open the possibility of a state taking advantage of the imprecise nature. The final and most troublesome aspect of the NPT is Article 4, which combines both of these issues and underlies the weakness and shortcomings of the agreement in general. Article 4 states, that as long as a member state claims that its program is fitting under the auspices of a "civilian" program and is being used only for "peaceful purposes," then that state is fully entitled to their nuclear program. This implies any infringement on that program is unlawful and out of line.

Iran has taken advantage of the general terms of the agreement in every aspect of the problems listed above. Whenever the international community protests the high quantity of fissile material that Iran has amassed, Iran points to their civilian energy program and claims it is just a necessary part of that program. At any point, Iran can use its membership in the NPT as a bargaining chip and threaten to secede at any point. Additionally, as the agreement stands there is no real way for the IAEA to force a rigid inspection schedule onto a member nation. While a step in the right direction, the NPT was drafted in a time of optimism and has many weaknesses given today's international relations schema. Thus, the only way that the international community could effectively restrain Iran was through the use of economic sanctions, which ravaged the Iranian economy and further alienated Iran from the West.

Given all this, one must ponder why Iran has yet to exit the NPT all together. First, as mentioned earlier, being a part of the NPT affords Iran a bargaining chip to use in any future deals with the ability to threaten its immediate departure as one of the terms. Secondly, it allows Iran to

maintain membership in a significant international body with relatively low cost, with the ability to leave whenever they see fit, albeit after a three-month waiting period.

The Iran Deal

Clearly, the NPT lacked the strength and enforcement necessary to keep Iran in line. Enter onto the scene the JCPOA, more commonly referred to as the Iran Deal. The deal was put into place after decades of international disapproval and condemnation of Iran's nuclear program and many sanctions placed onto Iran's economy by the world's trade leaders. United States President Barack Obama was one of the lead advocates of the plan in the years leading up to the passage of the agreement in 2015, brought on by the uptick in positive relations following President Rohani's ascension to power. The deal included the participation of the P5+1 which include China, the U.S., Great Britain, France, Russia and Germany. All of these nations had vast economic prospects that would be greatly opened up should increase their trade with Iran following the easement of sanctions under the terms of the deal.

The most notable aspects of the deal were that Iran would halt the construction of any future nuclear facilities and limit the number of centrifuges that were running, in addition to reducing its uranium stockpile (Rabnawaz 2018, 386). The deal would have Iran open its reactor sites to IAEA inspection and have them freeze their nuclear program at its current level of operations for 15 years, set to expire in 2030.

The terms of the deal were compiled in such a way that Iran's breakout time to develop a nuclear weapon would be extended from the three month estimate at the time, to a full year. In return for adhering to the terms of the deal, the United States and other member countries would suspend the crushing economic sanctions that were in place. Iran very much wanted to relieve the economic sanction pressure and accepted the deal after years of back and forth negotiation. One of the key clauses of the agreement stated that if there was any violation of the deal made by Iran, "all former UN restrictions would snap back in place" (Rabnawaz 391).

In terms of compliance of the terms of the deal, Iran's track record is sketchy, to say the least.

Although IAEA inspectors were able to schedule inspections and go to the sites, they were required to give advanced notice to Iran, with Iran retaining the right to deny entry for up to 24 days after the initial request for an IAEA inspection. That means that any violations of the deal with regard to the number of centrifuges running or stockpiles of fissile material could be relocated to clandestine locations, avoiding IAEA detection upon their actual arrival. Of course, this is only relevant to the disclosed nuclear reactor/storage facilities that Iran had disclosed to the international community as part of the deal. However, this does not include the various secret facilities that Iran is suspected to have deep within its vast mountain ranges, one of which was actually discovered in November of 2019 (Ma, 2019).

The Death of the Deal

To the chagrin of proponents of the deal, the JCPOA took a fatal blow in the summer of 2018 when the Trump administration announced the full withdrawal of the United States from the Deal. This withdrawal would result in the immediate re-implementation of all previous sanctions prior the Deal. The decision to withdraw from the deal had been part of President Trump's initial campaign promises when he ran for president in 2016. The fact that the Iran Deal had been a major success of his predecessor Barack Obama also sweetened the deal, as it gave Trump the ability to "shred the Obama legacy" (Zurcher 2018). The Trump administration had been emboldened by the recent success of diplomatic strides made with North Korea following hawkish rhetoric and expected the same approach with Iran to have a similar result (Landler, 2018). Additionally, the decision to retreat from the JCPOA could be seen as a political pivot by President Trump toward Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who was a steadfast opponent to the deal since its inception in 2015.

Analysis/ Major Points

To begin to understand the impact that the JCPOA's failure will have, some of the most prominent explanations for Iran's quest for nuclear weapons must first be examined, along with the theories behind Iran's relationship with the West overall. Scott Sagan delineates three models of the rationale behind the desire to acquire nuclear weapons: (1) security; (2) domestic politics; and (3) prestige.

Sagan's Model

Sagan's security model is states that when a state is faced with an external security threat, the state will be forced to try to protect itself via any means necessary. One of the paths that a state can take is acquiring a nuclear weapon, an incredibly powerful device which would act as a deterrent to outside actors and show potential enemies that it can exact a devastating counterattack. Although nuclear weapons do not automatically deter a conventional weapons attack, it does reduce the threat of a nuclear one.

What are the security threats that Iran faces? Within Iran's borders itself, there are potential threats, "in particular, Iran's numerous ethnic minorities and their locations along its borders make the maintenance of Iran's territorial integrity a daunting task" (Abulof 2014, 407). One need not look much further than east of their border to Israel, the only (unofficial) nuclear power in the Middle East as of now. Acquiring a nuclear weapon could be seen as balancing the regional power structure, by allowing Iran to be the counterweight to Israel's nuclear monopoly in the region. Iran also perceives a threat from the United States. Only a little over a decade ago, the United States was entrenched in Iraq, Iran's next-door neighbor. A nuclear weapon would be a direct deterrent to the United States, even considering similar actions in Iran, as the Iranian government suspects that "the United States is really after the regime itself" (Abulof 2014, 407).

Sagan's second model concerns the inner workings of a nation's domestic political schema. It claims that within a state there are internal groups or individuals whose interests would be served through the development of a nuclear program, in addition to bureaucratic inner workings that cause the nuclear program to materialize. It is through the actions and advocacy of nuclear scientists, energy lobbyists, the military and political leaders that spur support for or against a nation's nuclear program.

After the Islamist Revolution in 1979, the Islamist government raised anti-West sentiments. In turn, sanctions were imposed by the West and the Iranian economy dipped. Economically tough times led the regime to legitimize its rule. At that point, the nuclear program was touted as more of a nationalistic achievement, as opposed to an economic or religious one. "The 'nuclear flag' has gradually become a symbolic leverage in Iran's domestic power struggles, both between the opposition and the regime and within the ranks of the latter – each faction accusing the other of being too soft on the nuclear issue" (Abulof 2014, 408). Thus the nuclear program is used as a pivotal political tool to boost the public's feelings of national pride and further legitimize the government in power.

This came to fruition particularly during Ahmadinejad's rise to power in 2005, which consisted of mass protests and an overwhelming sense of disapproval among the Iranian citizenry regarding its government. In order to quell domestic insubordination, the regime touted the nuclear program as "a sacrosanct principle, a matter of national right and honor, which the regime successfully upholds," (Abulof 2014, 408) thereby providing the people with a shiny distraction from the dismal political inadequacy.

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nuclear program as “a sacrosanct principle, a matter of national right and honor, which the regime successfully upholds” (Abulof 2014, 408) thereby giving the people a shiny distraction to their dismal political inadequacy.

There is one more integral domestic influence on the development of the Iranian nuclear program, and that is the influence of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, the IRGC. After Ahmadinejad established himself in office, he led a gradual seepage of IRGC personnel into vast tracts of the government’s economic and political roles, and in particular in the oversight and security of the nuclear program. By doing this, Ahmadinejad secured people he could trust in charge of the program, but also paved the path for the IRGC to become an inseparable aspect of the program, as the two are completely entwined. “By establishing itself as the organization responsible for the nuclear enterprise, the IRGC ensures its continued relevance” (Sherrill 2012, 42).

This involvement can be viewed in both negative and positive contexts. On the one hand, even if the current Islamist regime were to fall, the IRGC would still have their members in place to keep the peace and would thus prevent any of the sensitive nuclear materials, intelligence or even potentially weapons from falling into terrorist hands. At the same time, this arrangement allows the IRGC to be in the prime position to attempt a military coup against the Islamist regime should any nuclear weapons develop, as “nuclear weapons [would] enhance IRGC power in the Islamist regime, guaranteeing that the IRGC will retain influence” (Sherrill 2012, 43). Any government would be powerless to overcome a threat from the inside armed with a nuclear weapon.

Sagan’s final model, the prestige model, falls under the premise that nuclear weapons are viewed as weapons of great status and a very “explosive” way for a state to achieve international legitimization and acclaim. Iran’s path toward nuclear power is the same tune of France’s scramble to secure a nuclear weapon in the aftermath of World War Two to show that the previously conquered nation was back on top, and more recently North Korea’s successful mission in achieving nuclear parity in its eternal quest for international recognition and legitimacy. This doesn’t only apply on the international stage, but within the country as well as “the Islamist regime has successfully framed the nuclear issue in terms of nationalism, making it appear that concerns over Iranian nuclear weapons are merely the latest attempt of the West to deny Iran its due respect. (Sherrill 2012, 41).

By framing the nuclear program as a matter of national importance and a great source of national pride, the regime is not only able to point to it as a matter of nationalistic pride but can even cite the program as being the source of draining government resources, which allows “the regime leaders [to] justify the economic difficulties in Iran” (Sherrill 2012, 42). In summation, the nuclear program allows those in charge to justify their wanton spending of government funds, and even pin the nations’ vast economic problems on the program itself, all under the guise of a nationalistic achievement. To put it succinctly, it would give the regime a sort of trophy to point to whenever its legitimacy is ever in question, and also beefs up Iran’s legitimacy on the world stage.

Cirincione’s Model

In *The Bomb Scare*, Cirincione describes two models of pursuing nuclear weaponry: (1) the technological capabilities of a state; and (2) the economic cost for a state to develop a nuclear program. The technological capability model addresses the fact that a state needs to have a minimal level of technological capability in order to acquire and stockpile the necessary fissile material required for a nuclear weapon. It also states that the fact that a state has the technological capability to produce a nuclear weapon does not necessarily mean that the state will develop such weapons. There are countless examples of nuclear-capable states across the world, such as Sweden and Switzerland, that actively choose not to proliferate. Italy once had a fully functioning civilian nuclear power program, but decided to dismantle it by 1990, ceasing to use nuclear power to produce electrical energy.

Cirincione's economic cost model asserts that even if a state has the technological ability to develop nuclear weapons, the program will not materialize if the state does not have the right internal economic conditions or capital to fund the program. Nuclear weapons programs rack up an enormous initial cost which may not be mitigated by an already-existing civilian program. Additionally, a state might decide to invest such money in another area. While lack funds make it improbable that a state proliferates, it is not impossible, as North Korea and Pakistan managed to form nuclear weapons programs despite a lack of substantial funds.

JCPOA Rendered Useless: Iran's Next Move

While conventional wisdom suggests that Iran's primary reasoning for the development of a nuclear weapons program is a combination of security, domestic politics, economic and prestige considerations, this work argues that there is a primary authoritative factor which determines Iran's moves with regard to nuclear power: Iran's economic success. As long as a successful economy is deemed feasible, thus strengthening the legitimacy of the regime, there is no need for Iran to go nuclear. Why else would Iran make countless concessions when it initially agreed to the JCPOA? Note that the nuclear development concessions only exist in a world where Iran's economic opportunity remains strong. However, where does that leave Iran in relation to other countries now that sanctions have been revived by the United States?

Iran's Economic Prospects

Regarding Iran's international economic partnerships, after the United States exited the deal, multiple sanctions were enacted to punish anyone who did business with Iranian individuals who the U.S. determined were supporting Iran's ballistic missile program, as well as those individuals who supported terrorist proxies throughout the Middle East (Belal 2019, 25). Additionally, the U.S. has made it increasingly difficult for European companies to make substantial investments due to constant waits for waivers, which makes the companies "skeptical of doing business with Tehran" (Belal 2019, 25). The U.S. also decided to stop issuing exceptions for those countries that imported oil from Iran, leading multiple countries (including India and Turkey) to end their oil export partnerships with Iran. (Belal 2019, 27). Setting aside specific sanctions that put pressure on the Iranian economic system, one must be reminded that the entire global banking system is based on the strength of the U.S. dollar, causing "large European banks vulnerable to political sensitivities and predilections in the US" (Belal 2019, 26). There is also a slew of large private corporations that have decided to not make substantial investments within Iran due to these sanctions, such as "Airbus, Total, Peugeot, Volkswagen, GlaxoSmithKline, Siemens, and Vodafone" (Belal 2019, 33).

In terms of the internal components of Iran's economy, although the initial years following the passage of the JCPOA brought economic success to Iran, having quadrupled Iran's oil exports for a brief period, the demand for oil quickly dissipated and the amount of barrels of oil exported from Iran was cut almost in half from 4.6 million per day to 2.8 million after America's exit from the deal (Belal 2019, 34). Although inflation in Iran was stabilized from 34 percent in 2013 to 8.9 percent in 2016, it has since risen 4 percent in just four years (Belal 2019 34). Economically, the post-withdrawal sanctions have had a substantial negative impact on Iran and have spurred Grand Ayatollah Khamenei to threaten to completely "abandon the deal if it does not serve its interests" (Belal 2019, 34). At this point, Iran's participation in the JCPOA is fully ceremonial, and there are prominent figures within the Islamist Regime's upper echelon who are prepared to dismantle that façade should this reality continue.

With Iran economically estranged from the U.S. and facing significant challenges with the European economic bloc due to the U.S. sanction complications mentioned above, a logical next-step would be to turn to potential trade partners within the region. However, "The Islamic Republic of Iran does not have the foundations for an ideological transnational coalition with any other country

in the region” (Golmohammaddi 2019, 101). Iran has isolated from neighboring states that would be potential economic partners. This lessens the likelihood of future economic arrangements. As such, “Iran’s baseline perception of its environment is one of... strategic loneliness” (Juneau 2019, 42). Additionally, with Iran’s economy shrouded in uncertainty as a result of the deal, other nations to steer clear of. For them, any significant investment would be too risky.

The Bottom Line

Estranged, Iran has no political allies that it can truly trust, and the prospect of any regional economic allies is scarce. Even while Iran was still fully benefitting from the JCPOA prior to the withdrawal of the U.S., the economic boom did not last. If the United States continues its policy of sanctions, or decides to increase them, all potential economic cooperation between Europe and Iran may dissolve due to the increased burden on European companies to dodge around the U.S.-led sanctions. Already, the sanctions have led Iran to lose all benefits from the JCPOA and provided Iran an opportunity to calculate whether going nuclear is in the regime’s best interest. As a result, the JCPOA has effectively dissolved, and Iran may exit from the NPT as well. With all possible economic benefits off the table, the real roadblocks to nuclear proliferation are no longer an issue. Once economic viability is unattainable, the Islamist regime will decide to double down on its efforts to attain a nuclear program as its method of legitimization. Recently, military tensions have been heating up between the U.S. and Iran as evidenced by the U.S. assassination of an Iranian General, and the announcement by the United States to allow navy vessels to shoot down any Iranian ships encroaching on forbidden waters. These tensions only intensify the security implications (Balluck 2020). Iran has significant security and domestic political reasons to ramp-up their nuclear program, and this final step toward complete isolation could be the final straw to cause further steps toward a more comprehensive program.

Proliferation: The Domino Effect

What does this mean for other powers in the region? In terms of nuclear capability, the only other country that is poised to balance Iran is Israel. There certainly is no lost love between Iran and Israel, and a nuclear Iran will bring definitive change to Israel’s nuclear policy. For over the past 50 years, Israel has maintained the policy of *amimut*, a strategy by which Israel denies having nuclear weapons. Indeed, Israel officially has not proclaimed itself a nuclear power, though its nuclear arsenal is known as the world’s worst-kept secret. If Iran decides to create a fully-functioning nuclear weapon, Israel will have to face its most hostile neighbor, newly armed with incredibly deadly weapons (Iran frequently vocalizes its willingness to destroy Israel, evidenced by writing “Israel must be wiped out” on its ballistic missiles). In terms of deterrence, a state’s nuclear weapons can only be effective as long as other states feel threatened by those weapons via a counter-strike attack, and a state cannot be threatened by “hypothetical” nuclear weapons. Thus, it is likely that Israel will make a fully public declaration of nuclear statehood.

What would be the response of Saudi Arabia, the other great regional Arab power? Why would a nuclear Iran be a source of worry to Saudi Arabia? Simply put, the relations between the two nations have soured quickly in recent years. With the states on opposing sides in the Syrian conflict, the fact that Iran made a deal with the West without Saudi Arabia’s participation, and the ongoing religious feud that exists due to their respective Sunni and Shi’a orientations, all lead to a sense of animosity between the two nations (Behzad 2017, 85, 90).

Saudi Arabia and Iran have had their fair share of up and downs over the years, but as of late, those tensions seem to be heating up again. Saudi Arabia now views Iran as a regional threat, and if Iran acquires a nuclear weapon it “will increase its regional power, which grants Iran a stronger position in the region” (Behzad 2017, 19). In order to place a check on Iran’s nuclear ambitions, Saudi Arabia may take up the nuclear mantel themselves. This would not only send a message to Iran in terms of Saudi Arabia’s capabilities, but also would serve as a message to the

region that Saudi Arabia remains one of the primary influences in the Middle East. Additionally, if Israel declares itself as an openly nuclear state, Saudi Arabia would have even more reason to proliferate and keep both Israel and Iran at bay.

However, the likelihood of Saudi Arabia attaining a nuclear weapon must be evaluated. Saudi Arabia already has the infrastructure for a weapons program from its civilian program and/or can rely on Pakistan to give them pre-assembled nuclear weapons (Rezaï 2019, 59). As such, the Saudi Arabian weapon need not come from its civilian nuclear program, but can actually be acquired from an outside source. Seeing that Saudi Arabia is flush with resources as a result of its oil exports, it will therefore be more likely to, “buy a nuclear device” (Bahgat 2006, 441). Pakistan is the likely salesman as it has the “so-called ‘Islamic-bomb’ and has close ties to Saudi Arabia” (Bahgat 2006, 441).

When faced with three openly nuclear countries, other Middle Eastern nations may scramble to also attain nuclear weaponry. Some nations such as Iraq and Libya have already attempted nuclear programs only to abandon them later, due to international pressure. However, once the region sees that Western intervention cannot prevent nuclear ascension in the region, they will attempt to join the ranks at any cost necessary, resulting in an arms race Middle East.

Conclusion

After consideration of the reasoning underlying Iran’s desire to proliferate, it is clear that the effective dissolution of the JCPOA will ruin Iran’s economic prospects in the near future, which may cause Iran to quickly pursue nuclear weapons as a means to legitimize the regime and ensure the state’s survival. This will start a security dilemma within the Middle East, one in which Israel is no longer able to maintain its nuclear policy of *amimut*, leading Saudi Arabia to proliferate and possibly starting a chain proliferation reaction across the region.

In order to avoid this, the United States could reconsider its current policy of heavy-handedness in terms of how it relates to Iran. As evidenced above, U.S. sanctions put a great strain on the Iranian economy and are a source of unease for many potential European/foreign investors. Additionally, Iran has already shown that it will continue its work with nuclear power regardless of pressure from international sanctions. If the U.S. tries a lighter approach of diplomacy with Iran and helps bolster economic prospects, it may encourage more foreign investment, and therefore prevent Iran from proliferating. For example, the U.S. could enter an exclusive economic partnership with Iran in the oil trade, or even work to help develop some of Iran’s other underdeveloped economic regions. Of course, a pre-requisite for any form of lighter diplomacy would have to come after a significant detente of the recent tensions which have developed between Iran and the United States.

Future research should examine how the latest flare-up of tensions between Iran and the U.S. plays into Iran’s economic prospects. If Iran continues to antagonize the U.S. through the use of proxies, will it result in an all-out war? What side of the line would the European parties fall on if that occurs? An in-depth analysis of the other Middle Eastern nations and their ability to proliferate may also be worth further examination.

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Iran's Nuclear Ambitions

From Well-Being to Wahhabism

Avishai Samouha

Introduction

From the onset of Iran's existence as a revolutionary state, the ruling Iranian regime has attempted to balance Iran's development in the international system with its nuclear ambitions. Simply put, the importance of understanding this pursuit lies in the far-reaching consequences of a nuclear Iran, such as the desire for nuclear proliferation in other Middle Eastern countries and the potential for further destabilization of the region. Thus, the goal of this paper is to understand the intricacies in Iran's nuclear ambitions, to investigate the validity of other proposed explanations for this phenomenon, and to discover how those explanations fit into a broader scheme of Iran's methodology. In essence, Iran's nuclear ambitions are far more related to the preservation of theocratic rule than its antagonistic foreign relationships. Although many propose that Iran's nuclear ambitions are largely a result of its contentious relationships with Israel, the United States, and Western ideologies, this paper will argue that Iran's primary motivation for obtaining a nuclear weapon lies within two intrinsically linked factors: deterring civil unrest and the obstruction of exported Saudi-Arabian Wahhabism. As such, an analysis of Iran's actions since the 1979 Iranian Revolution will reveal that its foreign policy decisions and contentious foreign relations, are, to a great extent, symptoms of its citizens' social and economic struggles and Iran's recognition, based on examples in other areas of the Far East, of the Wahhabist threat to its regime.

Historical Backdrop

When analyzing the current situation regarding Iran's nuclear ambitions, it helps to contextualize Iran's nuclear program in a more comprehensive way. From the onset of the 1950s until the 1979 Iranian Revolution, the Shah sought to attain nuclear material, primarily in the form of potential energy streams (Barzashka, Oelrich 4). Post-revolution, however, and after years of criticizing the Shah's nuclear program as excessive and corrupt, the mullahs found new use for the nuclear program in the Iran-Iraq War of the 1980s (Bahgat 27). As such, the Iranian regime increasingly began to view nuclear power as an arm of its potential military capabilities and a defining aspect of the revolutionary state. To quote Shahram Chubin in his book *Iran's Nuclear Ambitions*, "In Iran's case, the default position in its foreign policy has been one of obstructionism, due as much to its worldview as to its response to the strategic environment. (Chubin 14). Iran's depiction of its ascension to the ranks of states mastering nuclear technology...gives Iran greater weight internationally (Chubin 26)." All in all, we can see the transition that Iran has made in its nuclear pursuit, namely, from one of practical energy necessity to a strategic and integral part of its politics. As the paper progresses, this evolution will be examined in terms of the duality of Iran's domestic affairs and foreign policy decisions.

Iran's Nuclear Ambitions

The Alternative Explanations

Before the proposed theories for Iran's nuclear ambitions can be explored, a discussion must take place regarding the consensus around alternative explanations for Iran's nuclear program.

For the most part, many conclude that Iran desires nuclear weapons due its animosity towards Israel. According to Kenneth Waltz, a leading political scientist, Israel's undeniable military advantage is the reason why the Middle East is severely unbalanced. This "asymmetry of power" describes Iran's desire to offset Israel's nuclear supremacy by brandishing nuclear weapons of its own (Tobia). Additionally, Iran seeks nuclear weapons to bolster its efforts in the proxy conflicts it engages with Israel. With the potential backdrop of nuclear weapons, the already tense conflicts in Gaza and Lebanon would only be exacerbated. On the Israeli side, the threat of Iran has become a unifying issue when it comes to national security, especially in light of the Israeli consensus around Iran's radical hegemonic goals. For Israel, this revolutionary force is attempting to wield its influence in four distinct methods: the nuclear project, the support for terrorist groups in and around Israel, the attempts to undermine pragmatic Arab regimes such as the UAE and Egypt, and through ideological-theological threats of Israel's imminent destruction. In summation, Israel is cognizant of Iran's effort to lead the Muslim world by utilizing anti-Israel stances to bolster Iran's regional legitimacy among Arab populations. Hence, Iran desires nuclear weapons (Kaye 23-25).

Secondly, many propose that Iran desires nuclear weapons to oppose perceived aggression from the United States, whether ongoing or future, as well as to fend off the infiltration of Western Influence (Hurst 29; 84-86). On the Iranian side, the United States is seen as the regime's most prominent adversarial threat, a stance that is deeply rooted in decades of the United States' involvement in Iranian affairs. This deep-seated resentment began around 1953, when the United States, through the actions of the CIA, overthrew Iran's democratically elected government and supported Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi. Seen as the harbinger of Western ideals and modernization, Pahlavi was viewed by many Iranians as a Western "puppet" who prioritized the needs of Western imperial powers, the U.S and Great Britain, over the Iranian people (Hurst 63). After the 1979 revolution, the United States and Iran have struggled for regional supremacy. Since the revelation of Iran's nuclear facilities in 2002, however, tensions have worsened due to Iran's pursuit of a potential nuclear weapons program and its increased support for terrorist groups such as Hezbollah, Shi'a insurgents in Iraq, and the Taliban in Afghanistan. According to the Ayatollah Khamenei, the United States has, and currently is, engaging in ideological warfare against the Islamic Republic, and is hell-bent on enacting regime change to develop an "independent" Iran beholden to Western interests. This perceived regime-change strategy is not blatantly militaristic, it includes psychological and cultural warfare and the fomenting of internal instability in Iran. As such, many Iranians believe that nuclear weapons can deter the United States from undermining its resistance to Western domination of Middle Eastern affairs (Kaye 57-58).

Proposed Explanations

Now that mainstream theories behind Iran's nuclear ambitions have been examined, the theory that this paper will argue can now be explored. First off, this paper will argue that Iran's nuclear ambitions are far more domestically driven. To explain, as a result of myriad internal issues, as well as foreign economic sanctions, the Iranian people are indisputably living in precarious economic times. High inflation is just one of the economic pressures that Iranians face, let alone the various social pressures that they are subjected to, such as strict social codes and Sharia law. As such, antagonism against the US and Israel are symptoms of the civil unrest in Iran rather than the reason for Iran's nuclear ambitions. Consequently, the Iranian regime uses nuclear procurement as a distraction from the plight of Iranians by rallying its citizens around the nationalistic endeavor of attaining nuclear weapons.

Additionally, this paper will argue that Iran desires nuclear weapons in order to prevent the infiltration of Saudi Arabian Wahhabism. Simply put, Iran views Wahhabism as a threat to the stability of its regime. Using the case study of China's Uighur Muslims, this paper seeks to prove that Iran is trying to avoid the various internal problems that arise from the spread of Wahhabist ideology. Essentially, the Iranian regime believes that nuclear weapons can deter Saudi

Arabia from destabilizing Iran through its exportation of Wahhabism. The problem that lies in investigating this theory, however, is the comparative lack of intellectual discussion around the issue of Wahhabism. Presumptively, this reality can be described in a few ways. For one thing, it is not in Saudi Arabia's interest to have an investigation into its foundational ideology. To prevent any religious or social reform, the state will issue a fatwa, a religious decree, against any supposed enemy of the state. These fatwas can be life-threatening, as many radical individuals desire martyrdom by violently enforcing fatwas, whether it be by flogging or murder in the name of jihad. As such, journalists, political scientists, and religious reform activists are afraid of writing about the dangers of Wahhabism because they fear a fatwa being issued against them (United Nations Refugee Agency). As a result, this paper will try to fill in some of the gaps when it comes to the consequences of Wahhabism, particularly when it comes to Iran's nuclear weapons program.

Iran's Domestic Playbook

The Revolutionary Economy

The next following pages will discuss the domestic theory of Iran's nuclear ambitions and Iran's system of dealing with domestic issues, a framework which they have employed since the inception of the Islamic Republic. To explain, the early revolutionary economy must be investigated in order to fully understand how the mullah regime deals with internal domestic issues. Because the Iranian Revolution was in large part due to economic stresses, there was no choice for the Islamic Republic other than to project a strong and optimistic outlook for Iranian citizens. When that could not be achieved, and as the paper will show, Iran developed a method for distracting its citizens from their economic woes: rallying them around a nationalistic endeavor. Iran's current desire for nuclear weapons thus represents another nationalistic endeavor for the regime to maintain its legitimacy and distract the people of Iran from the bleak economic outlooks that have been realized post the Nuclear Agreement with the United States.

By 1976, the economy of the Shah's Iran was beginning to implode; imports were not steady, there were many shortages of necessary infrastructure, and inflation rose sharply on food and housing prices. By early 1979, Iran's developing economy had run out of control. The period of massive spending was coming to an end, growth declined further, and there was a jump in unemployment. Inflation mostly affected the poor, but the majority of Iranians were not immune to the faltering economy; rents were high for the middle class and poor alike. In essence, the sense of economic crisis only fueled the political uncertainty for those who had forgiven the regime for other domestic shortcomings (Axworthy 98-99).

Though there were other contributing factors to Iranians' disillusionment with the Shah, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini exploited the economic grievances of Iran's poor and middle class, and eventually led them into the Iranian Revolution. In a surprisingly quick turn of events, the monarchy was overthrown and the Islamic Republic was coming into shape. However, the initial days of the new regime were also rife with economic problems. To quote Suzanne Maloney in her article titled, *Iran Primer: The Revolutionary Economy*, "After two years of disruptions to the economy, the post-revolutionary turmoil put the country on the brink of economic collapse. As such, all sectors of the Iranian economy showed severe decline during the first several years of the revolution" (Maloney 2010).

The Power of External Conflict

The Iran-Iraq War Model

With an economy in decline, the regime was about to give the Iranian people the ultimate distraction: an 8 year war with Iraq. After Iraq's 1980 invasion, the Iranian government was forced to strengthen its economic policy. However, the Iranian economy never fully recovered from the

revolutionary turmoil, and in 1985, a collapse in oil prices severely constrained Iran's capacity to import goods required to maintain industrial production. On the whole, "the eight-year conflict gave the regime a convenient excuse for expansion of the state sector and the precipitous decline in general living standards" (Maloney 2010). According to historian Ephraim Karsh in his book titled, *The Iran–Iraq War: 1980–1988*,

"The Iranian government saw the outbreak of war as a chance to strengthen its position and consolidate the Islamic revolution, noting that government propaganda presented it domestically as a glorious jihad and a test of Iranian national character. The Iranian regime followed a policy of total war from the beginning, and attempted to mobilise the nation as a whole. They established a group known as the Reconstruction Campaign, whose members were exempted from conscription and were instead sent into the countryside to work on farms to replace the men serving at the front. Iranian workers had a day's pay deducted from their pay cheques every month to help finance the war, and mass campaigns were launched to encourage the public to donate food, money, and blood. To further help finance the war, the Iranian government banned the import of all non-essential items, and launched a major effort to rebuild the damaged oil plants" (Karsh 1-8, 12-16, 19-82).

From the Iraqi perspective, the Iranians, possibly feeling less of an allegiance to Revolutionary Iran given its economic struggles, would draw out a counter-revolution in Iran that would overthrow Khomeini's government and secure an Iraqi victory. The Iranian regime recognized that the country could not afford the war's toll on the economy or society. The costs of war were enormous, productivity plummeted, urban poverty doubled, per capita income dropped by 45 percent, and price controls and strict rationing of basic consumer goods failed to prevent rampant inflation. However, the nationalistic fervor that the regime instilled in the people had not abated. The Iranian government gave cash payments to families of soldiers and went on a massive campaign to brand fallen soldiers as martyrs. Thus, rather than turning against the revolutionary government, as experts had predicted, Iran's people, including Iranian Arabs, rallied in support of the country and put up a stiff resistance (Woods 9).

Iran's Domestic Problems

Now that Iran's playbook for dealing with domestic issues has been established, we can now focus on the current economic and social situation in Iran and how the nuclear program is again an example of a distraction for its citizens.

In 2015, the Iran Nuclear Deal was signed between Iran, the U.S, and other world powers, to curb Iran's nuclear activities in exchange for sanctions relief. According to the Central Bank of Iran, Iran saw GDP growth of 12.3% in the year following the agreement, giving many Iranians an optimistic outlook for their economic situation (Amadeo 2019). After President Donald Trump decided to reinstate sanctions in 2018 and pursue his "maximum pressure" campaign on Iran, a myriad of economic problems were to ensue. For one, the value of Iran's currency has plummeted; this sharp devaluation is only fueled by the high demand for foreign currency among Iranian citizens who bear the reality of lost savings and diminished purchasing power. This currency struggle particularly affects the import of basic goods and necessities. For example, many medical suppliers have refused to work with Iran to avoid a fallout with the U.S, thereby increasing the price of critical drugs and other medical equipment. Additionally, living costs have increased dramatically; inflation in Iran has risen to above 42%. The World Bank estimates that food-related inflation, particularly for meat, has risen 116% since sanctions have been reimposed. Nearly a quarter of all restaurants in Tehran have shut down, and food rationing has been reimposed for the first time since the Iran-Iraq War of the 1980s. For Iranians, the price of oil has doubled, with no signs of slowing down. The obvious impact of this economic hardship was widespread protests

that broke out in November 2019, which was brutally quashed by authorities. The crackdown left at least 208 people dead and thousands injured, according to

Amnesty International. The Iranian government, however, promptly dismissed these figures as “utter lies” (Six Charts That Show How Hard US Sanctions Have Hit Iran, 2019).

In addition, there are many social issues that are promoting civil unrest and presenting a dilemma for the Iranian regime. Iran continues to issue the death penalty for what it labels as “apostasy,” including same-sex relations, adultery, and certain non-violent drug-related offenses. Iranian law also punishes more than 100 offenses, such as drinking alcoholic beverages and extramarital sex, with flogging. Iranian women face discrimination in matters related to marriage, divorce, inheritance, and child custody. In Iran, a married woman is forbidden from traveling outside the country without permission from her husband. Under civil law, a husband can prevent his wife from having certain occupations if he deems them inappropriate. Iranians do not have the right to freely assemble and express their anger at their economic and social stagnation; the Iranian government repeatedly blocks access to the internet and its various social media platforms during times of protest (Roth 2019).

Iran's Current Nuclear Ambitions

All in all, we can see that Iran uses international conflict and “nationalistic” pursuits to distract its population from internal struggles. The Iranian regime understands that the previously mentioned social and economic pressures exist, and as such, it will try to prevent regime change by any means necessary. This ultimately means that Iran's foreign policy and nuclear ambitions serve to distract the population from their social and economic problems. To quote Scott Sagan in his article titled, *Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons?: Three Models in Search of a Bomb*,

“From this domestic politics perspective, nuclear weapons programs are not obvious or inevitable solutions to international security problems; instead, nuclear weapons programs are solutions looking for a problem to which to attach themselves so as to justify their existence. Potential threats to a state's security certainly exist in the international system, but in this model, international threats are seen as being more malleable and more subject to interpretation, and can therefore produce a variety of responses from domestic actors. Security threats are therefore not the central cause of weapons decisions according to this model: they are merely windows of opportunity through which parochial interests can jump” (Sagan 65).

These external conflicts are manifested in antagonism against the U.S, Israel, and Western ideology as a whole. As discussed previously, Iran understands that civil unrest can ensue as a result of economic and social pressures. This civil unrest is very threatening to the stability of the Iranian regime, and thus, the U.S, Israel, and Westernism are very convenient scape-goats for those pressures. Rhetorically speaking, it's much easier for the regime to give the Iranian people external forces to blame for their domestic problems than it is to actually solve them. When it comes to Israel, the Iranian mullahs can easily profess anti-Semitism to the people to paint the international economy as a Zionist entity, America can be painted as the imperialist colonizer, and Western ideals can be branded as poison to Iranian society. However, the pursuit of nuclear weapons is what allows the mullahs to tie all of these external conflicts into one cohesive nationalistic, and even prophetic, mission. Ultimately, this nuclear nationalistic fervor quiets the internal strife of the Iranian people and lulls them into accepting their domestic issues as irrelevant when compared to their “foreign issues.”

Wahabism

What is Wahabism?

Now that the domestic theory behind Iran's nuclear ambitions has been explored, preventing the spread of Wahhabism can now be proposed as an equal motive for Iran's nuclear ambitions. However, we must first understand what Wahhabism specifically is, including its origins, overall belief system, and how that belief system is manifested as a threat to the survival of the Iranian regime.

Simply put, "Wahhabism" is a general term for a branch of Islam that refers first and foremost to the teachings of the 18th-century Arabian preacher and activist, Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab. He was an ultra-conservative, far-right, religious zealot who believed in a myriad of things that his fellow Muslims did not. His main philosophy, which would ultimately come to define the Wahhabist movement, was that Muslims who would not follow his brand of Islam were subject to a violent death under jihad, justified by holy war in the name of God (Firro 30-44). In 1744, ibn Abd al-Wahhab made a pact with a local chief from the Saud tribe, who controlled a vast agricultural settlement in the middle of the Arabian Peninsula. The pact stipulated that Saud would raise a holy militia guided by Wahhabism; these militias would raid nearby settlements and forcibly convert the residents to Wahhabism. Once they were converted, al-Wahhab would teach his ideology, part of which included mandatory taxation and obedience to their new king, Saud. What resulted is the current kingdom of Saudi Arabia. (Firro 45-46).

Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia

Once the Saud family gained power they continued their rule by ensuring that the population was well indoctrinated with Wahhabist ideology. Throughout history, and even today, every Saudi Arabian is taught Wahhabism in school, in their mosques, and on television. However, it is estimated that 40% of the population believes in Wahhabism. Another thing to note is that Wahhabists represent a very small minority among the world's Muslims; there are approximately 4.56 million Wahhabis in the Persian Gulf region, with about 4 million from Saudi Arabia (Analyses-Wahhabism). For context, there are approximately 1.8 billion Muslims, which means that Wahhabists only make up 0.253% of the entire Muslim population (Lipka 2017).

In Saudi Arabia, Wahhabism is the state-sponsored religion. Some Wahhabi tenets are: No object of worship other than God, rejection of the use of holy intermediaries to win the favor of God, no name but God's to be cited in prayer. These three principles are the basis of the zealous Wahhabi rejection of saints or icons, Muslim or otherwise. For example, the Taliban's decision to destroy ancient statues of Buddha was influenced by Wahhabi backers. Additionally, the police in Saudi Arabia enforces Wahhabist beliefs such as: the prohibitions against smoking, shaving, and abusive language, and the rejection of leadership roles for women. Wahhabists believe in a literal definition of the Quran, which entails jurisprudence based on Shariah law and fervent rejection of all innovations not directly advancing Islam (Encyclopedia Britannica 2018).

Wahhabism Without Borders

Over the past few decades, Saudi Arabia has employed a variety of methods to spread Wahhabist ideology beyond its borders. For example, Saudi control over the two holiest sites in Islam, Mecca and Medina, has been used as an instrument of hegemony over Islam. This jurisdiction gives Saudi Arabia the ability to provide Qurans and other printed materials that promote Wahhabism. Additionally, after the discovery of Saudi Arabian oil in 1939, the kingdom had the monetary wherewithal to invest in mosques all over the world. More importantly, the kingdom received ideological control over the imams (preachers) in those mosques. Consequently, the number of Wahhabist mosques in many Muslim-majority countries, such as Qatar, the UAE,

Pakistan, etc, grew vastly, and is continuing to grow. For the most part, the danger of Wahhabism, particularly when it comes to other muslim majority countries, is how the extremist tenets of Wahhabism lead to violence. Wahhabism professes jihad against non-Muslims, though non-Wahhabi Muslims face a greater danger, as they are perceived as the primary infidels of Islam. Additionally, there is a plethora of evidence to show that Saudi Arabia currently encourages this violent jihad. According to internal documents from the U.S. Treasury Department, a prominent Saudi charity, the International Islamic Relief Organization, heavily supported by members of the Saudi royal family, showed “support for terrorist organizations” at least through 2006 (Lichtbau 2009). In addition, the tenets of Wahhabism can be shown to have influenced terror organizations such as al-Qaeda and ISIS. ISIS, for instance, has been described as both more violent than al-Qaeda and more closely aligned with Wahhabism. In the words of David Kirkpatrick of The New York Times, “For their guiding principles, the leaders of the Islamic State, also known as ISIS or ISIL, are open and clear about their almost exclusive commitment to the Wahhabi movement of Sunni Islam. The group circulates images of Wahhabi religious textbooks from Saudi Arabia in the schools it controls. Videos from the group’s territory have shown Wahhabi texts plastered on the sides of an official missionary van” (Kirkpatrick 2014).

The Iranian Opposition

Now that it has been established that Saudi Arabia is conducting a concerted effort to export Wahhabism beyond its borders, and that Wahhabist ideology can cause destabilizing violence and terror, we can understand why Wahhabism is considered a threat by the Iranian regime. For the most part, the Iranian Revolution was a rejection of Saudi Wahhabism. First off, it was a Shi’a Islam Revolution, which is seen as perverted Islam in Wahhabists’ eyes. Nevertheless, the massive popularity of the overthrow of a U.S.-allied secular monarchy generated enthusiasm among not just Shi’a Muslims, but Sunni Muslims as well. However, it became clear that Iran’s new supreme leader Ayatollah Khomeini was no fan of Saudi Wahhabism. He called for the overthrow of the al-Saud family, and in 1987, he said, “these vile and ungodly Wahhabis are like daggers which have always pierced the heart of the Muslims from the back. Mecca is in the hands of “a band of heretics.” All in all, this spurred Saudi Arabia to redouble their efforts to counter Iran and spread Wahhabism around the world, reversing any moves by Saudi leaders to distance itself from Wahhabism or “soften” its ideology (Commins 171).

Above all, Iran views Wahhabism as a threat to its regime. It is cognizant of the problems that arise from Wahhabism’s spread in various states, viewing examples of Wahhabist-caused domestic instability as potential foreshadowing for the downfall of the Islamic Republic. Simply put, this threat is actualized because Iran witnesses the exportation of Wahhabism into China and recognizes the damaging consequences that China is currently subject to. As such, the paper must now delve into China’s struggle with the Wahhabist infiltration into its Uighur Muslim population, the Chinese recognition of the threat, and the Iranian implications of China’s domestic problems with Wahhabism. Additionally, the paper will conclude that Iran seeks nuclear weapons to deter Saudi Arabia from their deliberate goal of destabilizing Iran by spreading Wahhabism within its borders.

China’s Uighur Muslims: A Case Study For Iran

In order to understand China’s current struggle with its Muslim Uighurs, it would be beneficial to get a better understanding of who the Uighurs are and where they originated. Modern western scholars can not exactly pinpoint the ethnic origins of the Uighur population, as the area of China that they reside in, Xinjiang, has been conquered by various different groups over the past 1000 years. Consequently, the Uighurs have constantly adopted various cultures and religions throughout history, adapting them over time. Over the past century, the Uighurs have identified as Sunni Muslims under the Sufi school of Islam, a more mystical version of traditional Islam. Within

the past few decades, however, there has been an influx of Wahhabism into the region (Gonul and Rogenhofer 7-9).

To understand this phenomenon, it helps to go back to the conflicts between China and Russia in the early 20th century. In the 1940s, Stalin's strategy was to weaken other countries by supporting separatist movements in various regions. In China's case, Stalin supported uprisings in the province of Xinjiang; Xinjiang Muslims, some separatists and some Han Chinese loyalists, were pitted against each other in the fighting. China was ultimately victorious and it consolidated its rule over Xinjiang. However, what resulted was tremendous animosity toward the Russians (Millward 208).

Fast-forwarding to the 1960s-80s, and China makes a mistake that will lay the foundation for its current Uighur Muslim problems: China decided to support and arm the mujahedin, Islamic guerrilla fighters, in Afghanistan. At that time, China wanted to combat the spread of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, so it allowed the mujahedin to set up camps in Xinjiang and it allowed the Uighur Muslims to join in on the fighting. To incentivize the Muslims to fight, China concurrently allowed the Muslims of Xinjiang to make pilgrimage to Mecca for the first time (Starr 157). However, because it was an expensive journey, the various Uighur Muslim communities would sponsor their imams to make pilgrimage. While in Saudi Arabia, the imams were recruited by Saudi Arabian Wahhabists to bring Wahhabism back to the Uighur Muslims. As such, some of the Uighur Muslims were being radicalized on two fronts: from fighting alongside the radical mujahedin, and from the indoctrination from their imams, who believed they were returning the Uighurs to "the true form of Islam" (Gonul and Rogenhofer 10-12). Within a 5-10 year span, terror attacks began in Xinjiang region. In essence, radicalized Uighurs were fighting to live under Wahhabist Sharia law and were attempting to create an autonomous country from China. From the 1990s and into the 2000s, the Wahhabist Uighurs carried out many bus bombings and knife attacks against non-Muslim residents of Xinjiang. Particularly from 2011-2017, there was a sharp increase in the number of terror attacks, with the vast majority of them being committed by Wahhabist Uighur Muslims (Gonul and Rogenhofer 12-14). Farah Pandith, the U.S Special Representative to Muslim nations, provided personal evidence of the Saudi Arabian infiltration of Xinjiang during her visit to the region, testifying to the concerted radicalization of the people to act against China (Pandith 2019).

Consequently, China understands that Saudi Arabia's export of Wahhabism is an existential threat because it radicalizes Muslims to the point that they attempt to overthrow governments in the hopes of attaining autonomous land run by Wahhabist ideology. Thus, in China's view, the Wahhabist Uighur Muslims must be targeted and put into "re-education camps" to eliminate the violence that has been ensuing. Iran, therefore, has adopted this same premise; the regime is afraid that an influx of Wahhabism will inspire a portion of the population to violently demand an overthrow of the Islamic Republic.

All in all, Iran is cognizant of Wahhabism's power to radicalize Muslims and indoctrinate them to commit acts of jihad against the nation state. Essentially, Iran desires nuclear weapons to deter Saudi Arabia from using its vast influence, whether it be monetary or religious, to destabilize Iran and potentially topple the regime. Though it seems like a relatively excessive pushback, nuclear weapons, in Iran's eyes, could represent a powerful enough influence to combat Saudi Arabia's desire for regional and foreign dominance with its own hegemony, whether it be purely militaristic or a defense of Islam. To explain, and as was stated previously, Saudi Arabia is using its control over Mecca and Medina as an instrument of hegemony over Islam. Not to be understated, this gives Saudi Arabia a particular edge in the realm of ideological "warfare." However, this power can potentially be held in check by Iranian nuclear weapons. Put simply, nuclear weapons would be able to compel Saudi Arabia to keep Mecca and Medina ideologically neutral and to keep Wahhabism confined within its borders. In addition, nuclear

weapons would give Iran overall dominance in the region, and as the major Shiite power in the Middle East, an ideological advantage over Sunni Islam. In the end, we can clearly see that Iran's nuclear ambitions have one overarching goal: the survival of its theocratic regime. When it comes to Saudi Arabia, this desire is exemplified by the regime's staunch opposition to exported Saudi Wahhabism and its destabilizing effects.

Conclusion

To summarize, the main pursuit of this paper was to examine the theories behind Iran's nuclear ambitions, to investigate the validity of proposed explanations for this phenomenon, and to discover how those explanations fit into a broader scheme of Iran's methodology. Through extensive research, taking into account the vast historical circumstances, it was discovered that Iran's nuclear ambitions are defined by the regime's necessity for self-preservation, rather than its antagonistic foreign relationships. Although it is widely believed that Iran's nuclear ambitions are a result of its contentious relationships with Israel, the United States, and Western ideologies, this paper concluded that Iran's primary motivation for obtaining a nuclear weapon lies within its desire to deter civil unrest and to obstruct exported Saudi-Arabian Wahhabism. Thus, an analysis of Iran's history revealed that its foreign policy is, to a great extent, a symptom of Iran's social and economic struggles and Iran's recognition, based on China's Uighur Muslim problems, of the Wahhabist threat to its regime. Further research should be conducted on other examples of Wahhabist infiltration and the problems that it causes, such as being the driving ideology of terror groups such as ISIS and al-Qaeda, as well as research pertaining to how the U.S has possibly promoted Saudi Arabia's exportation of Wahhabism as a means to destabilize certain adversarial countries.

Given everything that has been stated in this paper, we can conclude that the Western approach to Iran must shift. If the West's goal is to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, it would be more beneficial to address the theories that have been proposed in this paper. Essentially, if nuclear weapons are a distraction from domestic problems, actions such as lifting sanctions and re-entering the Iran Nuclear Deal would improve the Iranian economy and provide the regime with a reason to delay, or even stop, its nuclear hegemony. Lastly, Saudi Arabian Wahhabism would have to be addressed, with an international effort being led to deter Saudi Arabia from exporting Wahhabism to Iran and other countries around the globe. This could be done by refusing to sell U.S arms to Saudi Arabia or by isolating Saudi Arabia at international bodies such as the United Nations.

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The Second-Generation Snag

Why the U.S. Military Has Been Unable to Achieve Strategic Victory in the Middle East

Jason Siev

Introduction

The U.S. has one of the largest, most technologically advanced, and far reaching armed forces in the world today. With thousands of nuclear warheads, scores of aircraft carriers, more defense spending than any other country, and military bases that dot the globe, the U.S. military is considered by many to be the most powerful in the world. Despite this fact, since the beginning of the 21st century, the U.S. military has been engaged in conflicts in the Middle East but has yet to score a strategic victory. After 17 years, trillions of dollars spent, and thousands of lives lost, it doesn't have much to show for it. Why hasn't the U.S. won? And what, if anything, can it do to change this and secure a strategic victory once and for all?

This paper will attempt to answer that question using a novel approach: by pointing to the changing face of modern warfare and the U.S. military's inability to adapt to it as the root cause. Fourth-Generation Warfare has established itself as the current culture of warfare all over the world, especially in the Middle East, bringing with it many changes and challenges. Despite this, the U.S. military has been stuck in a Second-Generation Warfare culture for years and has not adapted to the ever-changing battlefield environment. What has prevented the U.S. from making this crucial change? The answer is a number of factors such as the military education system, the Defense Industry, and the current Military Industrial Congressional Complex. This is an important issue worth considerable attention. Due to its "warfare generation incongruity," the U.S. military cannot and will not win a strategic victory. The U.S. military is faced with two options: admit defeat and pull out or radically change the way it approaches warfare. Pulling out in the absence of strategic victory would be unacceptable as it would create a power vacuum allowing for radical groups to take control and establish a foothold in the region. Thus, the only acceptable course of action is persistence until a strategic victory is secured. The only way for this to happen is through a reevaluation of American military strategy and a transition to a Fourth-Generation Warfare model.

This paper will begin by seeking to define what constitutes a strategic victory in modern warfare and what is required to achieve one. It will continue by tracing the beginnings and changes of Western warfare as it progressed throughout the latter half of the second millennium, transitioning from First-Generation Warfare all the way to Fourth-Generation Warfare. Then it will then take an in-depth look at the characteristics of Second-Generation Warfare and Fourth-Generation Warfare to get a concrete understanding of these two very different cultures of warfare. With this understanding, it will delve into an analysis of the U.S. military's Second-Generation Warfare military culture and its shortcomings. After, it will then demonstrate how, when facing off against the Fourth-Generation Warfare culture, the U.S.'s Second-Generation tactics have been ineffective and have failed to produce a strategic victory. From here, it will ask the

major question of why the U.S. military hasn't transitioned from Second-Generation Warfare and look into possible explanations. This paper will then conclude with a summary of its findings and suggestions for future research.

Background

Strategic Victory

To understand why the U.S. military has been unable to clinch a strategic victory in its Middle Eastern conflicts, one must first understand what the term "strategic victory" means. Robert Mandel, in his article *Reassessing Victory in Warfare*, sheds "light on the meaning of victory in the post-Cold War global security context," giving a better look at what it takes for a state to truly emerge victorious over its enemy in the modern world of warfare. Here, Mandel writes of the many components that make up victory, starting off by telling how victory is made up of two equally important phases. Phase One, dubbed "war winning," is when a country seeks to bring the war it is engaged in to a militarily successful end, impacting the battlefield in regard to "how one fights or whether one continues or ceases to fight." Phase Two, dubbed "peace winning," is how the victor conducts itself after the combat has ceased, i.e. its political activities such as whether or not to pull out of the region, creation of a new government and transition of power to it, or taking advantage of the country under its domination and/or its resources for its benefit. Only after Phase Two is successful can the victor achieve clear postwar stability and declare a "strategic victory." Because of this, Phase Two carries more weight on the overall yielding of strategic victory than Phase One, lending credence to the concept that warfare and victory are more political than military by nature.

This is nothing new, to the contrary, it is a foundational concept of war theory that has been echoed by Clausewitzian war theorists for centuries. In his famous book, *On War*, Carl von Clausewitz wrote the now famous phrase "war is a mere continuation of policy by other means." Political goals and aims are the very backbone of war itself and to neglect the political aims that the country set out to achieve for even a second would undoubtedly lead to that country's failure in such a war. The political aims are the ends of war and must be woven in to the military identity and the political activities once the bullets stop flying.

Thus far, it has been established that strategic victory is a process of two phases, "war winning" and "peace winning," with greater emphasis being placed upon the "peace winning" phase. However, greater clarification of each phase is still needed, starting with Phase One, or the "war winning" military phase. Military victory entails overpowering the enemy or wearing them down to the point of no further resistance, leaving them unable to resist one's demands and forcing them to accept defeat and negotiate an end to hostilities. Mandel writes that achieving military victory involves not only triumph in combat but "requires achieving predetermined battle campaign objectives, including (1) defeating aggression on terms favorable to oneself and one's allies, as quickly and efficiently as possible; (2) reducing substantially the enemy's future war-making potential; (3) setting the conditions whereby the victim of aggression is able to defend itself effectively against future threats; and (4) doing so with absolute minimum collateral damage to civilians and their infrastructures."

Once the war has been won, "peace winning" is where the real work happens. The victor must now work towards the achievement of multiple interdependent elements: "informational, military, political, economic, social, and diplomatic." If even one objective is compromised, they are all at risk of failure. The first element, informational control, is classified as the need of the victor to maintain adequate intelligence about any and all sources of postwar disruption, both internal and external, its enemy's morale and desire to keep fighting, and protection of its own information systems while controlling or interrupting those of its enemy. Military deterrence, the second element, refers to the victor's need to ensure military security in the conquered state

by deterring any internal or external belligerent parties from engaging in violent, disruptive behavior through the threat of retaliation. Political self-determination, the third element, refers to the need for political stability established by the victor in the “defeated state by developing a duly elected government, involving locals taking responsibility for administration, with policies favorable to the victor’s core national interests.” The fourth element, economic reconstruction, is the need for the victor’s successful engagement in rebuilding the defeated state’s postwar economy and integrating it into the regional and global economy. It also includes access for the victor to the resources of the defeated state. Social justice, the fifth element, is the crucial need for the victor to monitor and manage “internal turmoil within the defeated state, particularly volatile ethnic/religious/nationalistic violence, transforming it in the direction of reliance on civil discourse to resolve internal and external disagreements.” Lastly, diplomatic respect is the need of the victor to possess external legitimacy, approval, and tangible support for the war outcome from the victor’s domestic public, foreign allies, international organizations, and other influential observers.” All six of these elements are required in tandem to achieve a strategic victory. A country overestimating or underestimating their or their enemy’s capabilities can compromise one of these crucial elements, which in turn would compromise the integrity of the overall strategic victory.

Generations of Warfare

To better understand what is meant by Second and Fourth-Generation Warfare, one must understand the history of the generations of warfare, from the First Generation until the current, or Fourth, Generation of Warfare. The term “Fourth-Generation Warfare” was first used in 1989, in an article in the Marine Corps Gazette that was co-authored by William S. Lind. In this article, Lind laid out the framework for this concept of multiple generations of warfare, all of which started with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, the Treaty that would end the Thirty Years’ War. Before that period, wars were fought between many kinds of non-state actors, such as clans or religious sects. However, from the ratification of the Treaty of Westphalia onward, warfare became largely state-centric. In what Lind labels as the First-Generation of Warfare (1GW), this time period and culture of warfare ran from approximately 1648 to 1860 and was characterized by highly formalized and orderly military culture. Line-and-column tactics, clear military hierarchy, and practices such as wearing distinct uniforms and saluting came to characterize this generation of warfare.

In the mid-19th century, this generation of warfare was rendered obsolete with changes in the culture of order and the military environment with the introduction of massive armies with increasingly modernized and highly lethal weapons. The answer to this was the Second-Generation of Warfare (2GW), which originated and was developed by the French Army during its involvement in World War I. This generation was characterized by solutions in mass firepower, (i.e. the machinegun, mass artillery, etc.) and attrition, while still mostly preserving the culture of order from the 1GW.

The solution to combat this new generation of warfare was the Third-Generation of Warfare (3GW), developed by the Germans as a response to the costly and stalemate-inducing 2GW that characterized World War I. They developed a novel kind of warfare, which they termed Blitzkrieg, that put an emphasis on maneuvers, speed, and dislocation of enemy forces. Using the element of surprise, fast moving armor and dive bombers, and other such elements, the German army rolled across most of Europe in the blink of an eye. This generation was novel in that it was not linear, leaving behind the concepts of holding or advancing lines. It was also the first generation to move away from the centralized, ordered nature of previous military culture, as initiative started to become valued over hierarchy and order.

This decentralized and initiative-rewarding nature morphed into the Fourth-Generation of Warfare (4GW) but was capitalized upon to a much greater extent. In this generation, the state-

centric identity of warfare that had existed since the Peace of Westphalia has disappeared entirely. It is non-linear, with no clear battlefield or combatants, and often blurs the lines between military and civilian spheres. Non-state actors have entered the fray on equal footing with state actors and in almost all cases, the state actors have been defeated. That is because 4GW is characterized by “a return to a world of cultures, not merely states, in conflict,” and that is a military environment that modern states are ill-equipped to combat.

2GW vs. 4GW

To better suit the purposes of this paper, a deeper understanding of the characteristics of 2GW and 4GW must be sought. Still state-centric and orderly, 2GW was largely driven by technological advancements, in actuality being born in the 1800s and spurred by “the technologies of steam, metallurgy, and mass production.” From those foundational innovations, advances in warfare technology expanded upon themselves to give rise to things such as the “rifled musket, breechloaders, barbed wire, the machinegun, and indirect fire.” The most significant aspect introduced by 2GW was “heavy reliance on indirect fire” and how “massed firepower replaced massed manpower.” The introduction of the machinegun, mass artillery batteries, and bombers redistributed the burden of winning wars from the soldiers onto these new, improved weapons systems, placing the army’s reliance on them to secure victory. As the French put it so eloquently, “the artillery conquers, the infantry occupies.” This technological driver “manifested itself both qualitatively, in such things as heavier artillery and bombing aircraft, and quantitatively, in the ability of an industrialized economy to fight a battle of materiel” (“Materialschlacht”, or warfare characterized by massive amounts of weapons and materials). Couple all of this together and you have a generation of warfare characterized by Mass: mass firepower, mass manpower, mass war materials, and consequentially, mass casualties. Another characteristic of 2GW was “the formal recognition and adoption of the operational art” of warfare. Tacticians largely utilized linear tactics such as fire and movement, and attacks advanced in dispersed lines while the defense sought to prevent any penetrations in their line. This constrained tactics but “operational art gave depth to the battlefield.” This concept was first introduced around the Napoleonic Wars, yet only truly became developed and institutionalized in the Second Generation. Overall, this 2GW culture created wars of attrition lasting a handful of years, characterized by operational art, the shifting of lines, and mass amounts of war materials and casualties. It was the generation of Total War and was utilized mainly during the First and Second Worlds Wars.

The 4GW is a completely different animal altogether. This new generation has lost its centralized, ordered structure in a manner of ways. Firstly, nation-states no longer have a monopoly on war. In this generation, war can be waged between state actors and non-state actors alike. With this modern, globalized world, non-state actors such as insurgent groups and terrorist organizations can receive support from other countries like Iran, the world’s biggest state sponsor of terrorism and carry out devastating attacks that can bring state actors to their knees. Warfare is nonlinear, widely dispersed, and largely undefined, having no clear or defined battlefields, instead being fought by small insurgent groups against large armies wherever they see fit to strike. The whole of the enemy’s society is included, with the distinction between «civilian» and «military» disappearing as combatants blend in with civilians to aid their guerilla operations. This can be seen quite clearly in the Middle East as terrorists have on many occasions used tactics such as using schools or hospitals, strictly civilian structures, as bases to carry out their attacks. Another important characteristic is that while the 2GW and 3GW focused and relied on massive armies and firepower, technology, and strong military industrial complexes in an effort to break the enemy’s military will, the 4GW focuses its energies almost entirely on smaller, devastating attacks in an attempt to break the enemy’s political will.

Thomas Hammes skillfully characterized 4GW as follows:

4GW uses all available networks – political, economic, social and military – to convince the enemy’s political decision-makers that their strategic goals are either unachievable or too costly for the perceived benefit. It is rooted in the fundamental precept that superior political will, when properly employed, can defeat greater economic and military power. 4GW does not attempt to win by defeating the enemy’s military forces. Instead, combining guerrilla tactics or civil disobedience with the soft networks of social, cultural and economic ties, disinformation campaigns and innovative political activity, it directly attacks the enemy’s political will....Strategically, it focuses on breaking the will of decision-makers...Tactically, 4GW forces avoid direct confrontation if possible, while seeking maximum impact...Finally, 4GW practitioners plan for long wars – decades rather than months or years.

In this new generation of warfare, all previously held conceptions are reversed and used against themselves. As war became more and more centralized and state based, these small 4GW fighting forces returned “to the way war worked before the rise of the state.” They removed the state altogether, instead returning to groups based around clan, religion, or other institutions. As wars became increasingly confined to battlefields, 4GW removed the concept of battlefields altogether, leaving every area open for a guerilla skirmish. As wars came to rely on the soldier to fight them, 4GW got rid of the soldier as warfighter, blurring the lines between civilians and combatants until even civilians became fighters. As wars started putting greater emphasis on speed, 4GW turned to long wars of attritions lasting decades. Instead of seeking military victory, they seek to collapse “the enemy internally rather than physically destroying him” by targeting things such as “the populations support for the war and the enemy’s culture.” Thus far, this new 4GW has been largely successful at resisting the will of 2GW states like the U.S., and thus is the reason why countries like the U.S. cannot secure strategic victory.

Analysis

As was said above, the first phase of achieving strategic victory is “war-winning” and it seems quite apparent that the U.S. military has already achieved its military triumph during the overwhelming displays of force and “shock and awe” during the beginning of the 2003 Iraq War. While most definitely formidable displays of power that very well were meant to strike, as the name suggests, shock and awe into the hearts of the Iraqi people and ensure compliance post-operations, these strikes did not secure strategic victory singlehandedly. The past 17 years that the U.S. military has spent stuck in the Middle East struggling for it is a pretty clear indicator of that. It is safe to say that the U.S. military is in the “peace winning” phase and it is struggling. Mandel points out that historically, countries have placed greater emphasis on the first phase than the second phase, causing them to “mistake military victory for political victory,” fail to make adequate preparations and strategy for “peace winning,” and fail to secure strategic victory. While this and many other aspects could contribute to the overall lack of strategic victory, it is predominantly due to the 2GW culture that pervades within the U.S. military while warfare, especially in the Middle East, has transitioned to the 4GW culture. At the moment, the U.S. is fighting this war as if it’s the kind it’s been trained to fight, not the kind it’s actually fighting.

For the past one hundred years, the U.S. military “has centered on 2 and 3GW, where conflict is primarily a matter for the military.” Despite the shift of warfare culture to 4GW, the U.S. military still operates with protocols and tactics very reminiscent of the French Army of the 2GW. William Lind wrote that

the U.S. Army and USMC learned Second Generation war from the French during and after World War I, and it remains the American way of war, as we are seeing in Afghanistan and Iraq. To Americans, war means “putting steel on target.” Aviation has replaced artillery as the source of most firepower, but otherwise (and despite the USMC’s formal doctrine, which is Third Generation maneuver warfare), the U.S. military today is as French as white wine and cheese. At the USMC desert warfare training center in California, the only thing missing is the tricolor and a picture of General Maurice Gamelin in the headquarters.

This 2GW culture pervades within the U.S. military and Lind isn’t the only one to call it out. Major Donald Vadergriff (ret.) gives a more in-depth history on how this 2GW culture took root in the U.S. and how it hasn’t changed since. He writes,

When the United States Army arrived in Europe in 1917...all U.S. staff officers and commanders attended French schools in planning and controlling forces in combat. When the United States and France emerged as the perceived victors in World War I, they saw that as a validation of their training process...and it worked well for the Army in World War I & II...Not only did assumptions about how the military must be developed remain stagnant, but many 1970s assumptions about how forces should train remained unchallenged...[and] the success of Desert Storm exacerbated the problem.

Nowadays, the U.S. military relies upon outdated tactics like fire and movement, linear warfare, and indirect fire. Indirect fire is still clearly seen in the U.S. military culture. Just like with the World War I reliance on machine guns, artillery, and bombing aircraft, the burden is being pushed onto weapons systems to do the heavy lifting rather than on soldiers. The U.S. military still has scores of field artillery regiments for the sole purpose of firing howitzers, missiles, and rockets. Aviation, as Lind pointed out, has also taken on a big chunk of this role. Air strikes and drones have become “Washington’s Weapon of Choice,” carrying out hundreds of missions over the past few years against enemies like Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and many other radical Jihadist groups. However, bombing runs and even drone strikes, which are claimed to be safer and more discriminate, have still led to the deaths of hundreds of civilians. A large portion of 4GW skirmishes take place in densely packed urban and civilian settings, making it impossible to use these kinds of weapons without risking civilian lives. As Mandel wrote in his piece how “precision guided munitions, however useful against enemy armor in the open field, are next to useless in cities and in partisan warfare.” After all, it would be difficult for the U.S. to win the hearts and minds of the people when they keep killing civilians through indiscriminate air strikes. For this generation of warfare, the U.S.’s most heavily relied upon munitions are useless, collapsing the “indirect-fire” backbone upon which it leans and greatly undermining its effectiveness as a fighting force.

The U.S. military still uses outdated 2GW tactics as well. For example, it still uses “Fire and Movement”, a linear tactic adopted from the French after World War I where one element of the attacking force lays down suppressing fire on an enemy position while another element moves rapidly to flank the enemy position. This tactic can be found today in many squad tactic field manuals and handouts for the Marine Corps and Army. Proficiency in such linear tactics and movements when enemies in 4GW are non-linear is an exercise in futility. Reliance on these kinds of weapons and tactics leave the U.S. military ill-equipped to handle a 4GW enemy, yet they still have failed to adapt after all these years. Not even “a defeat in Vietnam led to any serious questioning of the ‘tried and true’ 2GW way of war.” Rather, this generation of warfare is alive and well in the U.S. military and it is the very reason for its inability to secure strategic victory in the Middle East.

2GW Obstacles to U.S. Victory

If 2GW is ineffective in the world of 4GW, then there is no way that the U.S. military can yield a strategic victory. As written above, Mandel wrote in his piece of the many elements necessary for strategic victory. One such element in the “peace winning” phase is that of military deterrence, in which the victor must effectively provide security, deterrence of belligerents, restraint of foes and their supporters, and the prevention of new threats. The victor achieves this by sending the message that it, “when severely antagonized, is to be feared.” They must convince those foes who might disrupt that there will be credible punishment. This is the most important of the six elements of “peace winning” needed for yielding strategic victory. If the victor cannot prevent foes from disrupting the peace process, it cannot ensure aspects like political self-determination, economic reconstruction, and social justice.

And therein lies the crux of the problem. Because of the U.S. military’s outdated strategies and tactics, it cannot dish out the punishments necessary to provide sufficient military deterrence. Mandel wrote of many fallacies that prevent strategic victory, and the central major fallacy that has been plaguing the U.S. effort is the military fallacy of “overestimating the postwar payoff of military power capabilities [and] assuming that superiority in military force can guarantee compliance and deterrence.” This fallacy plays out in multiple different ways.

The U.S. overestimates the strength of its 2GW military and its definition of power, trusting that the number and complexity of its weapons and intelligence systems will deliver the necessary deterrent. While the U.S. military has its shiny toys, at the end of the day, 4GW needs soldiers and men on the ground, not smart bombs, to win that peace. Unfortunately, these soldiers are doomed to fail because the military is “expecting the same forces to do both high-intensity warfighting and stability operations [which] requires a grinding shift of mental gears for individual warfighters” and because of this, “the constabulary function (where they are asked to play peace-keeping roles) of the military will take a poor second place.” Those stability operations are the most important for strategic victory and crucial for combatting 4GW foes. If its soldiers cannot carry them out effectively, there is no way the U.S. military can win.

The U.S. military is also used to fighting fierce yet quick wars lasting only a few months or years. That is just another 2GW mindset that the U.S. military holds, thinking that its weapons systems and technological advancements will lead to a quick victory. America wants to plow through wars, getting in fast and getting out even faster. That doesn’t work for 4GW. As Col. Dan Dickerson points out in *Jihadi Concept of Fourth Generation Warfare*, 4GW requires

a high degree of patience, [but] Americans are not a patient people. We are used to quick solutions and then moving on to the next problem. We fail to understand that people and ideas are the essence of why wars are fought and for how long. We do not remember, if we ever learned, how many years our own Revolution took to develop. In addition, the West has trained for accelerated wars where its military superiority can best be brought to bear. Fourth Generation wars are deliberately long. The Chinese Communists fought for 28 years; the Vietnamese for 30; the Sandinistas for 18; the Palestinians for 41 years; the Chechens for 16 years, and Al-Qaeda has fought for over 24 years thus far.

The entire American society, in particular the military, has little patience. Its enemies know this, and they use it to their advantage. Especially when wars are sparked through a “Rally ‘Round the Flag Effect,” where approval of the President and his Administration spikes drastically following a crisis but then subsides over time, the American people can easily have their political will broken by a foe holding out long enough for them to forget why they got involved in the first place. This waning of support has definitely taken a hit out of the American war effort in the Middle East. The only way to win a war like this is through quick and decisive victory and that’s

what the U.S. has been preparing for. But the U.S. military has been training for sprints, yet these 4GW wars are marathons, lasting multiple decades as opposed to a few years. The U.S. military also continuously plans these wars “according to how they want to fight them, i.e. the Western way” of numbers, tanks, terrains, troops, etc. but that is a mistake. They are planning on fighting the wars for how in their mind they should be, not on how the wars and the battles are. The enemy draws out the conflict, exhausting its resources and political will and breaking its desire to keep fighting. The U.S. indeed possesses a formidable military, but as Dickenson said, it “is already obsolete as the enemy is playing by his rules and not ours.”

2GW Quagmire

If the main reason for the U.S. military’s inability to secure strategic victory is because of its 2GW military culture, why hasn’t it changed? Why has the U.S. military been practicing the same warfare culture for one hundred years when warfare already transitioned into the next generation by the second World War? There are a host of factors why.

First and foremost, this 2GW culture is perpetuated by the military academies and institutions that continue to teach these tactics and strategies. The culture of the U.S. military ‘has prepared officers for 2GW, and this legacy still persists.” Lind spoke of an instance at “the Army’s Armor School at Fort Knox, Kentucky, where one instructor began his class by saying, “I don’t know why I have to teach you all this old French crap, but I do.” Change is brought about through education, but if the officers of tomorrow are still taught the same out of date culture time and time again, the culture will not change, as it hasn’t since the end of World War I. Starting in 1929, George C. Marshall tried to counter the French teachings with progressive approaches like those of the German Army when he became commandant of the Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia. However, once he left, the school went back to teaching its 2GW system, undoing everything he achieved in moving the military culture forward. Other than that instance, it and many other schools still have yet to budge from teaching and perpetuating this outdated, 2GW culture.

Another large factor as to why the U.S. military is stuck in this snag is the lack of political will by decision makers to change the current Military-Industrial-Congressional Complex (MICC). By World War II, the U.S. had the luxury of time to mobilize its forces. By the Cold War, however, the U.S. realized that World War III could breakout at any moment. Couple that with the complexities of new weapon systems and the inability to manufacturing large quantities of them at a moment’s notice, and the U.S. military moved towards a system of constant combat semi-readiness, with units prepared to fight the second a war broke out. However, the U.S. military does not have the manpower nor the effective unit leaders to remain at a state of battle semi-readiness. In an effort to address this problem, decision makers are continuously looking for more “silver bullet” weapons systems to pick up the slack. The government thus packs “the defense budget with more new weapons programs than needed...[and] increases the complexity and cost of weapons.” Among the other problems that this causes units in the field, this MICC and its internal workings “lock decision makers into a day-to-day struggle to keep the defense ship afloat...The leads to a bailout mentality, which in turn soaks up the energy and saps the political will needed to change the ship’s course.” Those who have the power to change how the military operates are too preoccupied with maintaining this outdated need for constant combat semi-readiness that they are neglecting the need for a complete overhaul of the current military culture. This keeps the U.S. military in a perpetual state of 2GW readiness with no chance of remodeling.

The Defense Industry no doubt adds to this problem that exists between decision makers and the U.S. military. Defense contractors market their weapons systems as being more lethal, more effective, and able to deliver the outcomes that military leaders desire. These bigger and more complex bombs, planes, and artillery systems are not effective in a 4GW setting. However, contractors still market and sell these systems to the government because securing government

contractors on weapons such as these means billions upon billions of dollars. Defense contracting companies are businesses after all, and the main goal of a business is to make money. If the U.S. military and government were to transition to 4GW, the defense contracting companies would lose a substantial number of contracts, business, money, and jobs. To keep themselves afloat, they convince the government and appeal to the U.S. military's already 2GW mindset that these are the weapons it needs to defeat its enemies, thus ensuring that the arms will be bought. Because of this, they keep the U.S. military stuck in 2GW and cause it to rely on weapons system – a modern “indirect fire” - when in reality, simple, dependable, urban warfare weapons are the ones it needs. While this is solely speculation by the author, it is without a doubt that the Defense Industry is some way contributes to the perpetuation of a 2GW military culture.

Another possibility for the sticking in 2GW is in an effort to eliminate the need for more soldiers. The U.S. military has been having trouble with recruiting, recently failing “to reach its recruitment goals for the year, falling thousands of troops short of the target.” To make up for the dwindling number of troops in the military, the U.S. may be turning to more advanced weapons systems, especially unmanned systems such as drones, to pick up the slack. By relying on firepower and weapons system as a crutch and a basis for operational strategizing, this effectively keeps the U.S. military dependent on and stuck in a 2GW model.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there is almost no chance that the U.S. military will see a strategic victory in its conflicts in the Middle East. While there are undoubtedly many factors contributing to this, the main cause is the 2GW nature of the U.S. military in the face of a world where warfare has transitioned to 4GW. A military with a 2GW culture will be unable to ensure the elements of “peace winning” in a 4GW world and thus, will be unsuccessful.

Accepting defeat, packing up, and going home with its tail between its legs is an unacceptable course of action for the U.S. military. With that option off the table, there is only one alternative going forward: for the military to transition from 2GW to 4GW. To do this, the U.S. government and the high command must recognize “that in Fourth Generation war, we are the weaker, not the stronger party, despite all our firepower and technology” and that if the military wants to secure strategic victories in today's day and age, it needs changing. The high command and Congress must agree on a framework for the new military culture and how best to implement it. Military academies and institutions must teach their cadets to be proficient in 4GW and not waste their attentions on expertise in outdated tactics. The MICC must be remodeled and can no longer focus on an outdated combat semi-readiness structure. Finally, the Defense contracting companies must reduce production of weapons and arms made useless by 4GW and instead produce the kinds of munitions that would best benefit a 4GW fighting force.

While there is a good amount of research and literature on the four generations of warfare, more research is needed on how best to fight a 4GW war. Even Israel, which is considered by most to be the world leader in urban warfare and anti-terrorism tactics, has been unable to declare a strategic victory over the Palestinian organizations that have constantly plagued it for the past decades. However, while academic research is valuable, what is needed most is research gathered from the inside of these non-state terrorist and insurgent groups. This would give a better picture of how they operate, what drives them, and how they think. With this, the U.S. and many other countries could begin to transition from a 2GW culture to a 4GW culture and finally start seeing strategic victories in their future wars.

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Lessons From South Africa

The Denuclearization of North Korea

Elisheva Kohn

In light of North Korea's decades-old pursuit of a nuclear weapons program, it is vital that the international community reflect on South Africa's denuclearization in history, in order to work toward a more peaceful Korean Peninsula. The question: how can we practically apply the lessons learned from the denuclearization in South Africa in order to deal with the increasing threat posed by North Korea? After carefully examining the critical junctures that led to the denuclearization of South Africa, the diplomatic efforts between North Korea and the United States, and recent events, it is evident that only a formal, multilateral agreement can bring the denuclearization of North Korea into motion. While the denuclearization of South Africa certainly acts as a blueprint for this process, North Korea faces different issues which prevent it from denuclearizing. The United States is currently communicative with the DPRK and is taking the right diplomatic steps, steps which must be solidified in a formal multilateral agreement.

It is essential to understand the historical steps North Korea took toward its nuclear weapons program in relation to the diplomatic efforts of the United States to limit North Korea's power. As Matthias Maass illustrates in "North Korea as a 'Quasi-nuclear Weapon State,'" there were two nuclear crises in North Korea. The first took place in 1993, the second in 2002. North Korea first received nuclear technology from the U.S.S.R. in the 1950s. The Cold War led to increased hostility toward the West, and determination to deter a possible attack from the United States. North Korea witnessed the diplomatic and strategic benefits of nuclear weapons, which were demonstrated in the Korean War, underlining their conviction that nuclear weapons serve as deterrence. Additionally, the Cuban Missile crisis strengthened their concerns regarding their lack of technology. The result was "a major crisis which erupted when North Korea appeared on the verge of acquiring sufficient nuclear material for an atomic bomb" (Maass 139). After the fall of the Soviet Union, China was North Korea's sole ally, but China started distancing themselves from the DPRK. Therefore, nuclear arms were selected as a "strategic equalizer" (Nah 92), a sort of leverage for North Korea. At the same time, North Korea dealt with other concerns, such as the inability to feed their population due to crop failure, and the repercussions of natural disasters and economic mismanagement. Despite these concerns, North Korea chose a path that led to them to be regarded as an "international pariah" (Nah 91).

North Korea was not initially labeled an international pariah. In the early 1990s, Pyongyang was willing to consider trading the nuclear weapons program for a security guarantee, diplomatic recognition, and economic assistance (Maass 139), as formulated in the Agreed Framework. The Agreed Framework of 1994 stipulated that efficient, yet proliferation-resistant light water reactors (LWRs), would be built for North Korea. Additionally, the framework would fuel aid, reduce diplomatic barriers with the United States, and spur the United States to formally provide assurance against the threat of nuclear attacks. Meaning, the United States would pledge not to use their nuclear weapons against North Korea. In return, North Korea committed to freezing its nuclear weapons program, allowing for the removal of proliferation-prone materials and international monitoring of their nuclear activities.

The agreement was unsuccessful. In 2002, North Korea's Highly Enriched Uranium Program (HEU) was discovered. The North Korean leadership felt that "only actual nuclear

deterrence could provide the state with the security guarantees, the recognition, and ultimately the economic benefits that it had bargained for in the 1990s” (Maass 141). A look at the United States’ actions at the time may explain North Korea’s violation of the agreement. The construction of the light water reactors was not completed before the agreed-upon deadline of 2003, and neither the formal assurance against the use of nuclear weapons nor the normalization of economic and political ties were implemented by the United States. Consequently, the “long-term objective of preventing North Korea from acquiring nuclear weapons became rapidly unrealistic” (Maass 141). While one may argue that the United States was partially at fault for the escalation of nuclear North Korea, North Korea certainly took a risk by directly violating such an important diplomatic agreement.

North Korea’s secret pursuit of enriched uranium led to the Second Nuclear Crisis of 2002 to 2005. The United States reacted by terminating shipments of heavy oil to North Korea and reduced diplomatic dialogue. Then Vice President Richard Cheney expressed the administration’s attitude: “I have been charged by the President with making sure that none of the tyrannies in the world are negotiated with. We don’t negotiate with evil, we defeat it.” The DPRK was interested in an arrangement that included normalized relations with the United States and assured security. However, from the United States’ perspective, given North Korea’s violation of the Agreed Framework, this was completely out of the question (Maass 142). In his book *Detering America: Rogue States and the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction*, Derek Delbert Smith explains that North Korea was unwilling to bargain away its nuclear program without security guarantees, and the United States would not offer such immunity until it was sure the DPRK was disarmed and unable to transfer WMD abroad (Smith 82).

In February 2005, North Korea announced that it “possessed nuclear weapons as a deterrent against an alleged hostile American strategy” (Smith 84). The following year, North Korea carried out its first nuclear test, “providing proof of its rudimentary nuclear weapons capacity and of its determination to be perceived as a nuclear weapons state” (Maass 145). The test demonstrated that the DPRK had abandoned the “diplomatic track” and was focused on the military benefits of possessing nuclear weapons. Although the United State did not officially recognize North Korea as a nuclear power, an American document published in 2008 lists North Korea as one of the five nuclear powers on the Asian continent.

Maass argues that America’s dismissal of North Korea as a legitimate nuclear power led to the failure of the Six-Party-Talks. The Six-Party-Talks was a “multinational process to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula” (Dingli 858) from 2003 to 2009. The process ended in 2009 when North Korea launched a satellite-bearing rocket, which the United States feared was an intercontinental ballistic missile in disguise. Significant diplomatic progress had been made until that point. After the DPRK announced its willingness to participate in the Six-Party-Talks in 2003, the United States released and transferred previously frozen North Korean funds. South Korea provided fuel aid after the International Atomic Energy Agency confirmed that the DPRK had shut down its Yongbyon nuclear reactor. When the North Korean nuclear test was conducted in 2009, in violation of the Six-Party-Talks, the United States was firm in their efforts not to legitimize the DPRK’s nuclear program and therefore “remained determined not to condone North Korea’s actions” (Maass 147). In his book *Korean Endgame: A Strategy for Reunification and U.S. Disengagement*, Selig S. Harrison argues that the United States officials’ persistence in this belief was the main reason why the United States failed to develop a coherent long-term policy toward the Korean peninsula, relying on short-term fixes instead (Harrison 17).

If the Agreed Framework and Six-Party-Talks are retroactively considered mere “short-term fixes”, how do we develop a coherent strategy in response to recent escalations in North Korea? Do we develop a forceful military strategy, or do we introduce additional diplomatic resolutions? We currently face the “reality of DPRK’s nuclear weapon status” and are aware that “the chance of denuclearizing all its nuclear arsenal right away is slim, if not yet zero” (Dingli

859).

In the *Atlantic* article, “There Is No Precedent for What America Wants From North Korea,” writer Uri Friedman sits down with former President F.W. de Klerk of South Africa to discuss the denuclearization of South Africa and the potential denuclearization of North Korea. Friedman explains that the sole precedent for the type of outcome the U.S. is seeking on the Korean Peninsula is South Africa, which secretly embarked on a nuclear-weapons program in the mid-1970s out of concern that the Soviet Union was expanding its influence in southern Africa. As a result of apartheid and its discriminatory system, South Africa was economically isolated on an international level. Aware of the Soviet threat and unsure if the United States would support them, South Africa established a nuclear weapons program to serve as a deterrent. According to former President F.W. de Klerk, South Africa hoped the United States would choose to assist them in order to prevent nuclear war with the Soviet Union. What explains South Africa’s move to discontinue their nuclear weapons program? In the article, de Klerk lists three reasons why he chose to terminate the program when he assumed office. First, he was morally uncomfortable with the knowledge that his country owned nuclear weapons: “You have something which you never intend to use, really, which is unspeakable to use, which would be morally indefensible to use.” Second, the rationale fell away.

The political reality in the late 1980s and early 1990s did not cause any more concern regarding national security. The Berlin Wall had fallen, the Soviet Union had collapsed, and Cuban troops had withdrawn from Angola. Finally, the transition to the Nelson Mandela administration had begun and de Klerk was determined to “end South Africa’s pariah status.” The shutting down of the nuclear weapons program led to international recognition and prestige. However, as suggested in Frank V. Pabian’s article, “South Africa’s nuclear weapon program: Lessons for U.S. nonproliferation policy,” de Klerk’s administration may have also worried about the risk of “nuclear inheritance.” In other words, they were concerned that radical political factions would obtain the power of South African nuclear weapons and share the technology with Libya, Cuba, Iran, or the PLO (Pabian 10). In the *Atlantic* article, de Klerk denies the voracity of this claim.

In terms of South Africa’s deliberations regarding their nuclear weapons program, it is clear that the discussion revolved around three factors: (i) South African nuclear disarmament was brought about by a pacification of serious national security threats; (ii) the realization that the fact that sanctions induced economic autarky was intolerable; and (iii) the positive effect of international non-proliferation norms (Nah 91).

If these three factors were taken care of in North Korea, could we assume that the DPRK will discontinue its nuclear weapons program? If South Africa was able to relinquish its deterrent, can North Korea do so as well? In order to explore this possibility, it is necessary that we take a closer look at North Korea’s initial considerations vis-a-vis its nuclear program. Like South Africa, national security, economic growth, and international prestige were key factors for North Korea. This is made clear by the fact that the DPRK initially signed the Non Proliferation Treaty in 1985. However, in 2003, North Korea announced that «we can no longer remain bound to the NPT, allowing the country’s security and the dignity of our nation to be infringed upon” and blamed American aggression for its decision. The United States had not lived up to their end of the Agreed Framework, which included supplying the DPRK with LWRs and “implementing full normalization of political and economic relations” (Nah 93). There had been no advancement towards a peace treaty, and North Korea was still considered a sponsor of terrorism. Neither the economic nor the security concerns of North Korea were addressed by the United States. The American attitude remained present years later as well. Only a few weeks after the Six-Party Talks agreement in February 2007, the United States and South Korea conducted military exercises, which Pyongyang viewed as aggressive and threatening. This led to North Korea’s second missile test, which took place in 2009.

On July 4th, 2017, North Korea claimed to have successfully tested an ICBM, which could potentially reach the United States. Fortunately, after an intense year in terms of U.S.-North

Korean relations, and only two months after Kim Jong-un and South Korean President Moon Jae-in pledged to formally end the Korean war, on June 12, 2018 in Singapore, a historic summit between the United States' President Trump and North Korea's leader Kim Jong-un. According to their joint press statement, President Trump committed to provide security guarantees to the DPRK, and Chairman Kim Jong Un reaffirmed his firm and unwavering commitment to complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

According to a report by the Director General, the IAEA was unable to determine whether the DPRK has continued their nuclear weapons program since the summit took place. Since the Director General's previous report, the Agency has continued to monitor developments in the DPRK's nuclear program and to evaluate all relevant information, including open source information and satellite imagery. The Agency has not had access to the Yongbyon site or to other locations in the DPRK. Without such access, the Agency cannot confirm either the operational status or configuration/design features of the facilities or locations as described in this section, or the nature and purpose of the activities conducted therein. The same report describes how certain developments, which the IAEA monitored primarily in 2017, are cause for "grave concern." The agency observed the manufacturing of LWRs, activity in the Yongbyon experimental nuclear power plant, and questionable construction in various locations in North Korea. However, it is unclear whether these activities have ceased since the summit.

The Singapore summit sparked overwhelming debate in the media. Most articles have a skeptical tone and question whether the summit has changed anything. However, quite a number of symbolic gestures have been made by both American and North Korean representatives in the last few months. In September 2018, Secretary of State Michael Pompeo stated that the path to peace and a brighter future is only through diplomacy and denuclearization. Meaning, any other path North Korea may choose will inevitably lead to ever-increasing isolation and pressure. Additionally, the Trump administration revealed that Kim Jong Un requested to meet a second time with President Trump. In the press briefing, Press Secretary Sarah Sanders sounded optimistic about the denuclearization of North Korea. She explained that a number of things have taken place: remains and hostages have returned, there's been no testing of missiles or nuclear material, and of course, the historic summit between the two leaders.

In his paper, "Applying Lessons of South African Nuclear Disarmament to North Korea," Liang Tuang Nah maintains that it "is difficult to convince the Kim regime to relinquish its psychologically important nuclear deterrence" (Nah 95) because of the many actions the United States has taken that were viewed as threatening to the DPRK. He believed that the denuclearization of North Korea can only take place once the DPRK's national security worries are taken care of. Nah concludes that if popular opinion accepts South Africa as the poster child of nuclear disarmament, it should be acknowledged that just as South African security, economic and norms requirements were adequately met, similar North Korean needs should be satisfied in order to effect nuclear rollback (Nah 96).

One can argue that Nah would approve of the diplomatic progress made in the last few months. However, other scholars are not so optimistic and question North Korea's honesty and sincerity, as well as its leadership by Kim Jong Un. In "The Possibility of Building a Peaceful Regime on the Korean Peninsula Via Multilateral Approaches," Lee lists multiple reasons why the diplomatic track may not work to affect denuclearization in North Korea. He maintains that our lack of understanding about North Korea's internal affairs and regime "may lead to undesirable results," especially because Kim Jong Un has been very unpredictable in the past and does not seem to fear "any serious conflicts including nuclear war" (Lee 246).

The personality of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un does raise questions about the DPRK's sincerity regarding their commitment to denuclearize. For example, the mysterious assassination of Kim Jong-nam, the leader's half-brother, left the international community perplexed. The awareness of the violations of human rights in the DPRK leads to the perception

of the North Korean leader as mentally unstable. However, as Walt argues in his Foreign Policy article “Never Call Kim Jong Un Crazy Again,” the “belief that the other side is unreasonable, or even worse, incapable of reason, makes normal diplomacy seem like a waste of time.” Despite the previous perception of Kim Jong-un’s character, he must be taken seriously so that one may understand the real agenda behind his behavior and act accordingly.

As mentioned in the beginning of this essay, North Korea did have serious security and economic concerns. Recent events indicate that the United States is forthcoming and communicative. The Singapore summit legitimized Kim Jong-un’s status as a leader, which may have contributed to the progress that has recently been made, and was a platform for diplomatic discourse. However, the United States currently faces a problem. American leaders cannot repeat the mistakes they made in the past, such as conducting military activity on the North Korean border or failing to provide aid. In light of the Singapore Summit, President Trump expressed his intent to discontinue U.S. military activity in South Korea. However, the international community knows very little about the details of the summit and therefore cannot evaluate the possible outcomes of the meeting. Also, the IAEA cannot say with certainty that North Korea has ceased all nuclear activity. The summit was not a formal bilateral deal, which makes it too flexible and subject to change. The United States must therefore find a balance between seriously engaging in discourse with North Korea while also remaining cautious. It is evident that diplomatic negotiations are vital to the denuclearization of North Korea. Taking Kim Jung-Un seriously is the only way the DPRK might follow in South Africa’s footsteps. However, dropping sanctions would be problematic because of the current oppressive reality in North Korea. To a certain extent, the United States has an obligation to make a statement about the leader’s unacceptable treatment of his people. There is a precarious line between extending a hand yet also remaining cautious because of the many factors that come into play in the process of North Korean denuclearization. For the purposes of this paper, the focus is primarily on U.S. and North Korean relations, however, China, South Korea, Japan, and other countries play a large role in this discussion as well. Ultimately, the United States must decide whether it trusts North Korea’s leader. As Klinger puts it in his article, “U.S. Should Counter North Korea’s Strategic Objectives,” given the lengthy record of diplomatic failures in curbing the North Korean nuclear program, it is prudent to be cautious in trusting reports that the regime is now willing to abandon its nuclear arsenal (Klinger 2).

Klinger elaborates on the many requests North Korea has made in the past in exchange for “diplomatic outreach,” including the end of American and South Korean military exercises, the signing of a peace treaty to end the Korean war, no action on the U.N. Commission of Inquiry report on North Korean human rights abuses, and the removal of all economic sanctions. He emphasizes that North Korea has “famously broken its previous pledges” (Klinger 13) and goes through each agreement in nuclear history that North Korea violated, essentially offering a slightly more realistic perspective to the debate. Klinger makes a number of suggestions regarding how the Trump administration should deal with the (then) upcoming Singapore summit. Most of the suggestions he lists have indeed been implemented since, including not immediately offering a reduction in sanctions.

The United States must be forthcoming to Pyongyang, legitimize its leader and take its concerns seriously, while also increasing economic pressure so that North Korea follows through with its commitments. South Africa can be viewed as a successful model of denuclearization, but not as a strategy that can be directly applied to the crisis in North Korea. South Africa’s denuclearization can partially be attributed to its then newly elected president, who morally opposed nuclear weapons. This is not the case with North Korea’s Kim Jong-un. On the other hand, the two other concerns South Africa was able to check off, national security and economic stability, are relevant to North Korea as well. It is in the United States’ power to meet those needs. Additionally, the United States should refrain from provoking Pyongyang with tweets or similar rhetoric. Kim Jong-un should be taken seriously as a leader, but also as a threat. Sanctions should

not be immediately removed. Instead, the promise of future aid should motivate Pyongyang to denuclearize. All promises and commitments made by both the DPRK and the United States are only enforceable once they are established in a multilateral agreement, which must be the next step in the diplomatic process. This agreement should obligate North Korea to sign the NPT again. In exchange, the United States could promise aid and technology that is not nuclear-related. Robert J. Oppenheimer, the “father of the atomic bomb,” exclaimed, “I am...Death, the destroyer of worlds.” He fully recognized the impact his research will have on the world when he made that statement in 1945. One of the statutes in the nuclear non-proliferation treaty states that countries which currently possess nuclear weapons must get rid of them. The international community must recognize the threat North Korea currently poses and collaborate on a multilateral level in order to work toward a safe, nuclear-free future for humankind.

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The Growth of the New York Regulatory State

Yosef Lemel

Introduction

Over the past few years, the legislative branch of New York State has ceded much of its power to the bureaucratic executive branch. From a democratic standpoint, law should be initiated in the state legislature as it is the most representative sample of the people present in government. The recent developments negate a fundamental democratic ideal, namely, legislation by representation. For a state that considers itself a democracy, the actions that led to this cession are counterintuitive to democratic ideals. After providing a number of cases in the past five years to this effect, this paper will argue that the undemocratic cession of power must be reversed. It will suggest possible reasons for the emergence of this trend, diagnosing the disease which will hopefully lead to its treatment.

A comprehensive analysis of the situation during the recent years of the Democratic Cuomo administration has yet to be conducted. This specific topic is worthy of analysis as it addresses the primary concern of government, namely, legislation on the basis of representation from the people. I contend that a legislature that receives its mandate to govern from the people — as it does in the State of New York — does not have the right to cede such power to other governmental bodies without the consent of the people; this is a fundamental principle of representative democracy. The cession of power by the legislative branch to the executive runs counter to this ideal. A study of this topic is thus necessary since it is an understudied topic that relates to the core of Western democratic ideals.

This disturbing anti-democratic trend in the New York government will be highlighted and established by three very modern cases which will be followed by an examination and comparison of the cases. I will present a number of theories for the emergence of this undemocratic cession of power, none of which bode well for the political future of New York State.

Background

The government of New York State is comprised of three distinct branches — modeled after the branches of the federal government — namely, the executive, legislature and judiciary.

The legislative branch, much like the federal government, is split into two houses, namely, the State Senate and State Assembly. The Senate is currently composed of 62 members; the Assembly is composed of 150 members. Members of both houses are elected to two-year terms. The primary concern of the legislative branch is the creation of law. The laws passed by the legislature generally relate to “the appropriation of funds for the operation of state government and its agencies... the definition of acts... that constitute crimes and the setting of penalties; the promotion of the public welfare... and the correction, clarification, amendment or repeal of laws that are outdated or confusing.” Bills are usually developed by standing committees and forwarded to the general body of each respective house for a general vote. Bills must be passed by both houses

and signed by the governor to become law. Alternatively, in the case of a veto from the governor, the legislature can override the veto with a two-thirds vote to ensure passage of the bill. The primary responsibility of the legislative branch is — as implied in its name — to legislate. From a perspective of legal theory which the United States was founded on, especially from the Lockean perspective, the power of the government to legislate comes from the people. The people are the ones who vote in representatives to represent them and enact laws for their benefit and security, not to create commissions whose actions have the binding force of law. As it says in the U.S. Declaration of Independence, “to secure these rights [of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness], Governments are instituted among Men, deriving just powers from the consent of the governed.” The meaning of this statement is just applicable to the government of New York State as it is to the federal government. A bureaucratic commission that has the power of a legislative body strikes at the heart of representative democracy and undermines the constitutional foundations of the American republic.

The Governor of New York State and the head of the executive branch is Andrew Cuomo. The governor is a position elected by the citizens of New York every four years. Much like the U.S. President, the governor can sign or veto bills that are passed by the state legislature. The governor has the power of enforcement and thus oversees departments relating to all aspects of society from education to health to transportation. These departments act on matters passed by the state legislature and pass regulations regarding various sectors of New York society, concomitant with the passage of a respective bill in the state legislature. Although the governor is elected by the citizens of New York, the bureaucratic heads of these departments are not; they are appointed by the governor. When appointed, bureaucratic departments tend to act more unilaterally, unless otherwise indicated by the governor. The governor can only handle so much responsibility and usually will delegate that responsibility and power to the bureaucracy. This bureaucracy is often referred to as a “fourth branch of government” even though it is part of the executive branch, because of its relative independence. These departments will institute regulations in accordance with previously passed laws. The laws will generally give the executive bureaucracy enough latitude to make drastic changes in state policy, all in the spirit of the law’s original intent. In sum, the job of the executive is the implementation of law, not the creation of it.

The Judiciary consists of three divisions: Appellate Courts, Trial Courts of Superior Jurisdiction, and Trial Courts of Lesser Jurisdiction. Broadly defined, their role in relation to legislation is its interpretation, not the implementation nor the creation of it. The application of the courts’ interpretation of the law to the cases that come under its jurisdiction is called “case law.” This paper will primarily deal with the relationship between the executive and legislative branches of state government in the past few years.

Analysis

Pay Raises for Lawmakers

In 2018, the \$168 billion state budget included a provision creating a five-member commission to set pay raises for legislators. Prior to the commission, the base salary of an assemblyman or senator was \$79,500. A pay raise was thought to incentivize more people to involve themselves in public service. Some also thought a pay raise necessary to keep up with rising levels of inflation.

In the first pay raise since 1998, the commission established a pay raise in gradual increments until 2021 when the base salary for a legislator will be set at \$130,000, surpassing California to becoming the state with the highest-paid lawmakers. Governor Cuomo’s own salary would increase to \$250,000 under the commission’s recommendations, making him the highest paid governor in the U.S. The commission also limited the private income lawmakers can have from outside sources.

Public Campaign Finance Reform

The topic of election reform was dealt with in a similar manner. On January 18, 2019, the state legislature voted on a budget that, in Part XXX, mandated the creation of a “public campaign financing and election commission to examine, evaluate and make recommendations for new laws with respect to how the State should implement... a system of voluntary public campaign financing for state legislative and statewide public offices,” the end goal being to incentivise candidates to seek smaller contributions for their elections. This commission is financed by an annual \$100 million.

Normally such action is undertaken in a legislative committee. However, the newly-formed election commission was not limited to research and “recommendations.” The report of the commission, due on December 1, 2019, and its recommendations would “have the full effect of law unless modified or abrogated by statute by December 22, 2019.” The commission was composed of nine members, jointly appointed by the governor and the leaders of the state legislature. In essence, the legislature worked with the governor to cede their power relating to campaign finance to a commission separate from either branch.

The commission was created after disagreement between Gov. Cuomo and members of the legislature regarding campaign finance reform. In order to pass the annual state budget in a timely manner — a budget that included pay raises for legislative members — the commission was created and the entire issue of campaign finance was punted to it.

Powers delegated to the commission included, but were not limited to, the identification of “new election laws” relating to the “ratio of public matching funds to small contributions,” the creation of “an appropriate state agency to oversee administration and enforcement of the program” and “rules governing” inter alia “civil violations of public financing rules.” The range of powers given to the commission was quite broad given the fact that its recommendations would have “the full effect of law.” The commission was a legislative body unbeholden to the state legislature.

Some members of the legislature expressed their displeasure with the cession of power. Most notably, the Senate Finance Committee Chair Liz Krueger stated, “We shouldn’t have punted campaign finance to a commission. We should do it ourselves.” From her perspective, campaign finance reform could have easily been accomplished through regular legislative procedure; indeed, the legislature is given the mandate and the responsibility by the people of New York to create such legislation.

Indeed, when the report of the commission was released the recommendations of the commission was a sweeping overhaul of the prior system. First, the commission set restrictive limits on campaign contribution. For example, the limit for candidates for statewide office was reduced from \$69,700 to \$18,000. Contributions for Senate and Assembly candidates are capped \$10,000 and \$6,000, respectively.

Second, a public campaign finance system will be set up by 2022 in which small donations of private individuals of \$250 or less for statewide races would be matched by the government at a 6:1 ratio; for legislative races, contributions up to \$250 will be matched by a 8:1 ratio. This is crucial; a commission not elected by and not beholden to the citizens of New York determined the allocation of funds paid for by the taxes of citizens.

Third, the commission restricted the right to be listed on a voting ballot to parties that can garner at least 2% of the vote, thus enshrining the two party system in New York. The requisite amount was previously 50,000 votes, a number that is normally lower than the 2% of the overall vote.

Plastic Bag Ban

Most recently, the problem of non-legislative commissions setting rules has manifested itself in the plastic bag ban in New York. The New York State Plastic Bag Task Force was created

by Governor Cuomo in February 2017 to “develop a report and proposed legislation to address the detrimental impact of plastic bags on the state’s environment.” Normally, such legislation would be considered in a legislative committee relating to the environment and developed there. Instead, we once again see the shirking of responsibility by the state legislature.

While the recommendations did not have the force of law like the aforementioned cases, the mere proposal of legislation is a power that is normally left up to the legislature. In this case, the legislature gave up all responsibility and punted the issue to be researched and resolved by a task force, and the recommendations would be adopted by them.

Indeed, the recommendations of the committee had far-reaching consequences. All single use plastic bags were banned in stores that are mandated to collect sales tax. The Department of Environmental Conservation — an agency under Governor Cuomo’s jurisdiction — created certain exceptions to this rule that were not outlined in the original bill including reusable bags made out of thick plastic of at least 10 mils thick or a cloth and plastic bags for fish, meat and poultry. The regulations enacted by the agency thus undermine some vital aspects of the law and allow for storeowners to take advantage of loopholes.

Explanations

I have outlined above three cases regarding the shirking and punting of responsibility for legislative action by the legislature to the executive branch. The reasons for this phenomenon are varied.

First, the legislature fears that if it antagonizes Governor Cuomo its laws will not be signed by him. They thus come to a compromise solution in which an “independent” commission would be created to solve the problem. Both the governor and the legislature have a say in the makeup of the commission and the commission’s word is final, or at least holds much weight in the ensuing legislation. The governor is therefore more likely to sign a bill in a situation where he has a say as opposed to where he does not.

This is clearly evidenced in the case of the campaign finance commission. The governor and the legislature disagreed as to the particulars of the bill. The legislature could not wait to create the commission since they had a budget to pass with a limited amount of time. Therefore, the budget itself therefore called for the creation of a commission; they chose the easy way out.

Second, it is the nature of many human beings to lift responsibilities from themselves on to others. A public official who cares only about staying in office due to the prestige and does not care enough about legislation to do his/her own research would be in favor of a separate commission to do that work for him/her. A separate commission means less work and responsibility; all that is needed is a vote, or perhaps not even that as was the case in the campaign finance commission, whose recommendations had the full force of law.

Third, legislators might feel like there is a conflict of interest in drafting laws that relate to their respective offices, laws that relate to campaign finance reform or their salaries. They fear that people will call them out for corruption accusing them of voting for their own pay raises without the consultation and approval of the people. Yet, accountability to voters is a foundation of the democratic system. Why vote at all if you will be criticized by voters? If voters are not satisfied with the pay raises they will hopefully make their voices heard in a subsequent election.

Fourth, the shirking of responsibility created safeguards for the legislature. The importance of accountability in government was stated above. The idea of accountability is meant to safeguard the government from corruption. A legislator that wishes to absolve him/herself of accountability would be more than willing to create a separate commission to deal with legislative problems. If the people have a problem with a resolution the legislature claims no responsibility for its deleterious effects. They instead have a simple answer: “Blame the commission.”

A commission is not beholden to the people and is not regularly up for election. They thus have no incentives to satisfy the people. They are beholden to the legislature or the governor

because the legislature or governor can disband commissions at a whim. They, therefore, will enact policies that are favorable to the current system. In campaign finance reform, for example, the requirements for being placed on the ballot were tightened making it nigh impossible for third parties to make a showing on Election Day. This favored the system in place and did not necessarily reflect the will of the people. The exceptions to the plastic bag ban were also created by an executive agency, which is not beholden to the people, but rather to the governor himself.

Therefore, they were able to make any exception they deemed necessary without fear of losing their jobs after election season. Perhaps that is the reason why the legislature did not vote on the plastic bag exceptions; they did not want to be held accountable for a vote that would be deemed by some environmentalist groups as being deleterious to the environmental constitution.

Conclusion

This paper explored the relationship between the executive and legislative branches of New York State. The past few years under the Cuomo administration has seen the assumption of legislative authority by the executive. This is clearly evidenced in the cases of campaign finance reform, pay raises for government workers and the plastic bag ban.

In the case of campaign finance, an entirely new commission was appointed and its recommendations had the full force of law unless countered by legislation promulgated by the legislature. It was a usurpation of the legislative power of the highest order and the legislature was all too happy to go along with it, but the rights of the people were betrayed in the process.

The citizens of New York have the right to be represented in the government, and those representatives must make laws for the benefit of the people, not use commissions to push forward resolutions that work solely in the favor of the legislature while absolving them of accountability.

“No taxation without representation,” was a popular slogan used during the American Revolutionary War. The rights of Americans were fought through the countless wars to be preserved for posterity. The values of the Declaration of Independence and The Constitution, the underpinnings of our democracy, are being ignored by the State of New York.

This paper outlined the many reasons for the usurpation of power. The fear of not getting legislation passed through the antagonization of the governor, the wish to pin responsibility and accountability on others, namely, the executive, and the feeling that legislating on matters pertaining to their own offices would constitute a form of corruption all amalgamate into an general aversion to legislate on certain matters and the punting punting of those decisions to the executive.

In some cases, the reasons for this aversion combine. For example, in the case of campaign finance reform, the most serious cession of legislative authority in recent memory, all four explanations most apply. First, the governor and the legislaature were fighting over the particulars of campaign finance and it looked unlikely that anything would be accomplished unless a commission with the input of the governor would be appointed. Second, the legislature did not wish to legislate on matters pertaining to their own elections fearing the charge of corruption. By this mechanism, they were able to decrease the power of third parties in New York without taking the blame for it. This lack of accountability and responsibility constitute the third and fourth reasons for the punting of authority. These four reasons combine, especially in the case of campaign finance reform to a very compelling reason for the legislature to not vote on certain issues.

I have thus outlined in this essay the problem, namely, the punting of legislative authority and responsibility. The trend has been established. There are, however, still a number of questions that remain to be resolved. Where will this trend take us? Will it be reversed eventually? Can it be reversed? Are other states experiencing this trend? Is this trend apparent on the federal level? Would the relationship of a Republican administration with the legislative branch be similar to that of the Democratic Governor Cuomo? Should the legislature create safeguards that prevent them

from shirking responsibility? Is there a point in which government does not work towards the interests of the people and is thus necessary to be dissolved by the people, perhaps through forceful means? These are all questions that can be raised through the topic, but are not dealt with in this paper. Further research and publication would be necessary to answer these questions and the implications they hold for the future of New York State and America.

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