

Nuclear Weapons in Iran

Look around you. There is a seemingly endless list of problems that Secretary of State Hillary Clinton must face, in order to ensure a more secure, democratic, and prosperous world for Americans and people all around the globe. There is the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Darfur and other African civil wars, child soldiers in Africa, the Russian conflict with Chechnya, and Iran owning nuclear weapons. Of these, I think that Iran owning nuclear weapons is the most important conflict that Hillary Clinton must address, because if we don't rid Iran of nuclear weapons, we risk nuclear war.

The concept of building nuclear weapons in Iran began during the Shah's reign. The Shah (whose real name was Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi) was an Iranian monarch whose reign began in 1941, and ended in 1979. He made plans for twenty nuclear power plants and started research in nuclear weapons. However, the actual Iranian ownership of nuclear weapons began in 1985. Iran saw increased need for nuclear weapons after the Iran-Iraq war. If Iran was going to become strong in the world, it needed to acquire nuclear weapons. In 1985, the former head of Iran's parliament, Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, asked Libya, Syria, North Korea and China for nuclear weapons. He succeeded, and later that year, Libya gave a small supply of Scud nuclear-capable weapons to Iran. Iran wanted more, and turned to North Korea. Currently, China, Libya, North Korea and Russia have all donated nuclear-capable and other weapons to Iran.

Iran's first nuclear weapons plant, Bushehr 1, is expected to be operational this year. Two other plants, Natanz and Arak, would be able to produce a total of eight bombs per year when the plants are functional. This poses a threat to America, Israel, and other Iranian enemies. If Iran had nuclear power, it might encourage other Arab

nations to do the same, namely Saudi Arabia, but also Syria and Egypt. All of this nuclear power in the Middle East could trigger nuclear war. A nuclear weapon has only been used for non-testing purposes twice in history, at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. If Iran had nuclear weapons, they might be used more.

The Iranian nuclear crisis is important because it puts the US and the international community in danger. Iran's government has stated desires to attack other countries, such as Israel. If Iran had nuclear weapons, any war between them and a neighbor could involve nuclear weapons, which would be devastating to the whole world. Currently, the countries that have nuclear weapons (US, Russia, UK, France, China, Israel, India, Pakistan, and North Korea) are thought to pose less of an international threat than Iran.

I believe that the only way to prevent Iran from having nuclear weapons is by diplomacy in high-level meetings, for example, between both countries' presidents or secretaries of state. The reason that high-level meetings would be more productive than low-level meetings is that in high-level meetings, the Iranian leaders would achieve more world respect, because the world would see that the US, a very important country, was talking with Iran. In exchange for this, they might be willing to give up their desire for nuclear weapons. Another main Iranian interest is money. Iran, like the rest of the world, is affected by the recession. Also, Iran has a lot of oil. Recognizing these factors, the US could make a deal that went like this: Iran would not produce nuclear weapons if the US would buy oil from Iran, develop trade between the two countries, and give humanitarian aid. The US would benefit from this trade, because we would have a new trading partner, and we would have another supply of oil to buy. Most importantly, the US would benefit from this deal because there would be no danger of Iranian nuclear

weapons to the rest of the world. Iran would also benefit from this trade because it would receive humanitarian aid and it would have a new trading partner. Even though the government would not appreciate the no nuclear weapons policy, it would receive money and much more world respect, which would influence its decision about the deal. Average citizens would benefit, because they would receive humanitarian aid and a better economy. Improvement in Iranian lives would cause them to think more positively of their government. The government would benefit from this and it would be another reason for them to support the deal.

As a conclusion, I believe that diplomacy is the key for ridding Iran of nuclear weapons. Military is the wrong option to use, because then the US would have three wars going on which is expensive and deadly. Also, a peaceful approach is more likely than a violent one to persuade Iran to make a compromise. If the US can make a deal with Iran involving respect, trade, oil and humanitarian aid for no nuclear weapons, then the crisis will come to an end.

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