Since I find my audience to be well-versed in theory and academic literature, I deem it necessary to present a conceptual framework in analyzing Iran’s nuclear program and issues. The initial level of analysis in this conceptual framework is a much more precise understanding of the international structure. With the demise of the Soviet Union, the bipolar and balance of power system at the international level disintegrated. In that era, developing countries had the peculiar political opportunity to define and pursue their national sovereignty priorities from a rather endogenous perspective.

The rise to power of the Democrats and the Clinton Presidency coincided more or less with the downfall of the Soviet Union. For eight years, from 1992 through 2000, President Clinton and his entourage as they led American foreign policy, focused on multilateralism and while promoting American economic interests, for the most part, pursued the methodology of soft politics in an international system with an extensive vacuum of power.

At the same time, during this period, an array of debates on the global role of the United States surfaced. Finally, American foreign policy took shape and direction with the Bush administration, and especially after the events of September 11th, on the basis of reconstruction of American military power and technological superiority within a context of fighting against terrorism and spreading of human rights and democracy. It appears that in the last five years, Washington has pursued a strategy of obtaining “Absolute Security” through setting up the appropriate political and military conditions.

In such a pursuit, we even witnessed that the opposition of France as an Atlantic ally to the Iraqi invasion caused a major rift in American-French relations. This French disagreement went as far as denying Paris both private and governmental military technology cooperation for some time so that French leadership can accurately contemplate on the correct meaning of absolute security for the United States.

On these grounds, countries have been forced to set their national political and military priorities according to American wishes in a global context where political competition is lacking and unilateralism dominates. The result has been that countries and especially developing countries are increasingly confronted with pressures to deny their endogenous priorities. In such a context, political, security and military domains are integrally locked to one another providing yet another stage for the Linkage Theory of James Rosenau (American scholar on International Relations).
In the literature on strategic studies, Absolute Security faces Relative Security. In absolute security, the acquisition of security of one side is sought with the destruction of others. In relative security, the policy of containment is pursued towards a competitor or an enemy. From the perspective of the neo-conservatives, now in command of American foreign policy, the appropriate policy in the Middle East is to replace governments when their policies counter American priorities. As an hegemonic power, the U.S. attempts to dictate its policies to others and uphold the least regard for contextual and environmental pressures and demands. American foreign policy behavior indicates to us that Washington acted unilaterally in all recent conflict situations to maintain American superiority. Examples abound from Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Kosovo to Iraq. Unfortunately, the unilateral theory of the United States has become relevant to the legitimacy and deeds of states. In this regard, the American Secretary of State has pointed out that Iran has the right to nuclear technology but does not have the legitimacy of enforcing it! This is the most radical form of modern hegemony.

Since in a hegemonic system, the opportunity of challenging others through regional hegemons does not virtually exist, the United States policy has consistently pursued a policy of denying Iran the chance to turn into a major power on the one hand and a regional power on the other. If any Middle Eastern country turns into a non-conformist power, then American regional and even international forces of power exertion will face difficulties.

From this perspective, any Iranian attempt to increase its national power will produce negative ramifications for the American political and strategic position in the Middle East. Such a confrontation between the U.S. and Iran reflects the fact that Iran is capable of emerging as a regional balancer with qualities to upset American superiority. Hence, a consistent American policy has been to obstruct power accumulation of non-conformist countries, states that choose to define their own political and security domains. In this context, it appears that the ultimate aim in the Middle East is to make sure that asymmetric power to Israel will not take shape. An increase in Iran’s power outside of American domain will raise political and military costs to the United States and it will also undermine Washington’s objective to cultivate the regime change theory in Iran.

The true nature of Iran’s nuclear program goes back to the American encouragement dating to the early 1970s. According to American studies then, Iran needed 27,000 megawatt electric energy. In other words, the American government allowed Iran to develop 27,000 megawatts of nuclear energy for a population one third of the current levels. The German company Siemens was solicited to provide only 1,000 megawatts of nuclear energy through the Bushehr operation.
Until two years ago, the Europeans suggested that if Tehran only signs and approves the Additional Protocol, there will not be any obstacles to the civilian development of nuclear energy in Iran. But in the Paris Agreement, by postponing all nuclear activities including nuclear research, the Europeans attempted to ignore the right of Iranians for the development of nuclear technology. Although, in the beginning only the postponement of enrichment was the issue but later all political developments and wasting of time virtually meant the loss of conditions for Iran’s endogenous nuclear development.

The aforementioned stages of postponement in Saad Abad, Brussels and Paris all aimed at the Rollback Doctrine. The political backbone of these demands deal with fact that in the contemporary Middle Eastern political structure, Iran does not acquiesce to American wishes. The general Western strategy regarding Iran’s energy program targets Iran’s national power and the curtailing of Iran’s regional presence.

This strategy of containing Iran does not fit the political history of Iran or Iranians, nor does it conform to the legal provisions of using peaceful nuclear technology and nor with Iran’s role at the regional level in the Middle East. For nearly three centuries, Iran has not initiated a war. Even the current policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is not a destabilizing policy. In Iraq, Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf, Tehran has maintained a policy of stabilization, balancing and even bordering status quo.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is not managed according to American wishes and priorities or in Heidegger’s terminology “Americanization” but is in search of newer logic for social life. It was expected that American unilateralism would be aimed only at practice and not towards exploring the truth. Unilateralism however has now become a source of ideology for the American Neocons. It is in this respect that the truth of Heidegger’s thinking, the German philosopher, can be understood. He contends that there are three political lives that can be envisioned as the end forms of modernity: Americanization, Marxism and Nazism. In his opinion, all three are different forms of Nihilism. In other words, from a metaphysical perspective, they are all the same. All are dictatorial hegemons of the state over the private domain and the technological aspects dominate over the spiritual. Moreover, Heidegger points out that Americanization is not liberalism and democracy. It is a form of logical positivism that takes control of human life through economics and industry. This is why the human being has become “homeless.”

He also contends that technology has brought homelessness and lack of direction for mankind. This is a feature of Western technology. Although, the Gestell of Heidegger commends technology and regards it as human historical fate but believes that the proportion of the Eastern societies to Western technology is in their human essence or Gelassenheit. In other words, the Easterners
should adopt technology with their human outlook and say yes to technology after saying no to homelessness. They should focus on human integrity first and not be overly attracted by technological attractiveness. This is the path of the Islamic Republic of Iran where it seeks to approach the West from an Islamic belongingness and passion.

Therefore, Iranian pursuit of power does not reflect weakening of other regional states nor does it threaten any country. The source of threat to Arab countries originated from Iraq, a long time Western ally. Iranian acquisition of power is related to the natural talent of Iranians in a fundamentally new way, an Islamic way of life and the logic of Iran’s geo-politics and geo-economics. On this different logic, it is possible that the political vocabulary of Iran today does not conform to that of the United States but our intentions and objectives are to serve Iranians and to uphold a long aspiration of Iranians, namely, Iran’s national sovereignty. We are not adventurers but we will not allow the Pahlavi-style degradation of Iran. Our national and Islamic sources of identity do not allow us to lock our fate to American unilateralism. Naturally, a stable and wealthy Iran can play a far more stabilizing role in the regional peace and security. From this perspective, Iranian power is not aimed at anyone. It is a new design in human and social life that needs to be fathomed.

On the basis of the Merits of Energy Mix, we have the responsibility to secure a better future for millions of Iranian citizens. Given Iran’s rate of economic growth, sooner or later, Iran will be deprived of oil exports. Therefore, Iran’s needs for energy diversification are predictable. Nuclear energy accounts for some 70 percent of French energy needs today. Even Russia and the United States despite huge oil and gas resources depend on nuclear energy. The U.S. has 104 nuclear power stations. The efficiency rate of nuclear energy is as high as 90 percent. As of now, some 40 countries depend on nuclear energy. According to the latest statistics, in 2005, some 447 nuclear stations produce 383,758 megawatts of energy. Some 28 nuclear power stations are now being built to produce some 25,087 megawatts of energy.

In article 4 of the NPT, the right of all countries to benefit from civilian nuclear technology is clearly recognized. Even procedures are developed to assist those that are in need of the technology. The IAEA has the responsibility to facilitate the processes by which states can acquire and utilize civilian nuclear technology.

Iran is clear of all allegations that its nuclear program may have possibly diverted to military purposes. Even the IAEA reports on Iran vividly approve of this fact. For some two years now, there has been non-stop IAEA supervision over Iranian facilities. There has never been any objective or any attempt of diversion to programs of nuclear weapons. It is on these facts and the prevalence of such a background that it may be concluded that the purpose of the Western
countries is to deny Iranians their right to develop their country and benefit from technological advancements. It is often said that there has not been any diversion in the supervision of Iran's nuclear program but we are not sure of Iranian intentions. This is a new terminology in international law. Today, international sources of power can also explore countries’ intentions. The deeds of nations are irrelevant. As far as we understand, in order to create a global order, laws should be applied equally to all nations.

If we focus on countries’ intentions, we will have an anarchic international system. American double standards can be witnessed in regard to India and Israel where they both have nuclear weapons. The current policy is that for those countries whose intentions can not be predicted, preventive actions should be applied. This logic will actually lead to the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The Washington Institute for Near East Studies has proposed three phased objectives to contain Iran’s national goals of development:

a) A policy of delay through diplomatic efforts and even possibly resorting to covert operations;
b) A policy of deterrence and containment by provoking anti-Iranian feelings among Iran’s neighbours and leading the region towards an arms race and the development of anti-missile systems;
c) A policy of encouraging Iran to voluntarily abandon and retreat from the nuclear program like the Libyan case.

Such plans are promoted at a time when Iran is capable of cultivating the infrastructure for alternative sources of energy. A regional policy of promoting peace and stability without Iran’s effective role is undeniable. As the last election in Iran demonstrated, even the policy of promoting civil disobedience that is carried out by the intelligence institutions of the United States has lost its appeal and relevance. Iran will not retreat from its policy of pursuing alternative sources of energy.

In my opinion, the framework for the Paris talks needs to be based on a sequential logic. As we gain an advantage provided to us by the Europeans, then we will be prepared to abandon one stage of the enrichment process. Economic negotiations need to be corresponded with Iran's step-by-step approach in the enrichment process. Usually, discussions between countries take years. In the past, while we took a major initiative of voluntary postponement of the entire enrichment process including nuclear research, we were provided with no tangible economic benefits in practice. The time installments of the negotiations were not dealt with properly.

If, for example, we divide the enrichment process into ten stages, then we can also divide the process of gaining economic benefits into ten stages. The
Europeans want us to give up our legal rights so that perhaps sometimes in the future we can receive some ambiguous economic benefits. The spirit and the logic of negotiations to which we are also committed should not be founded on what Iran should not do. We support the NPT framework and we also promote the idea of reviving this legal framework. We do believe that the NPT serves the rights of nations. The Western world, in creating and maintaining crises as well as a structure of crisis, aims at containing Iran. Those Westerners who have studied Iran know Iranians’ national pride. Today in Iran, the project of nuclear technology has turned into a national ambition and it is not appropriate for the West to confront such an ambition.

Iran is not Libya that took a preventive submission. Logically, such a course is not possible for Iran since Iranian scientists have acquired nuclear technology. Iran only seeks its legal rights according to international agreements and in that light is willing to engage in rational confidence-building measures. We also need to differentiate between rational confidence measures and Western scapegoating of Iran. The existence of vast uranium deposits, scientific capabilities, endogenous skilled forces and the need for alternative sources of energy have collectively necessitated the production of nuclear power stations and the prerequisites for their domestic sustenance. Therefore, the pursuit of nuclear power has turned into an undeniable national mandate. With such a peaceful logic, Iran should not be led into a direction where she will be fatigued by being constantly bashed and used as a scapegoat with the ultimate outcome of choosing the North Korean choice of reconsidering and/or abandoning the double standard approach to the NPT.

It should be pointed out that increasing Western political pressure and the prospect of referring Iran to the UN Security Council may marginalize the current internationalist theoreticians and the policymakers who are interested in cooperation and mutual understanding and turn the nuclear file into the domain of other hands. In the complex matrix of Iranian domestic politics, the nuclear issue is not a personal discretion or narrowly defined interests. Rather, it has been for some time now where there has emerged a national consensus on the general principles of this issue.

It is our sincere hope that in the future path and in the new round of negotiations, while we gain a better understanding of the conditions of current Iran, we can seek new ways of creating regional stability, processes of confidence-building measures, securing the rights of the Iranian nation and being responsive to the controversial issues within the framework of the IAEA. We surely intend to avoid the escalation of security concerns in the Middle East. The central features of the Islamic Republic of Iran’s strategic choices are: economic growth, social stability and national sovereignty. In this respect, we certainly do not wish to conduct our foreign policy in a confrontational way. It was on
this new spirit that we welcomed negotiations with the Europeans but it is not appropriate to witness a large gap between what the Europeans say and what they actually carry out in practice. In these contradictory conditions, it should be understood then that Iran reserves the right to stop wasting time and start the Natanz project.

We are deeply interested in pursuing a deductive approach from security confrontation to political differences which are natural among nations. We look forward to the peaceful dialogue and efforts of our partners so that collectively we can help the stability of the region and engage the peaceful objectives of Iran’s dogmatic and foreign policies. Let me assure you that the Iranian nation seeks to utilize nuclear technology in a peaceful way on the basis of its Eastern and Islamic integrity.

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