

1. Once again there is a lot of talking about Israel plans to attack Iran's nuclear installations. Do you see a real risk of that happening?

Israel has been threatening Iran with military strike since 1988, following the end of Iraq's invasion of Iran. However it has not been able to advance any of its threats. Today, the risk of a military strike is real, but I do not believe Israel would attack Iran without Washington's consent. I am confident the United States is not after a military strike as they are well aware that the consequences would be catastrophic and would drag the international community into an unmanageable chaos. Furthermore, the existence of Israel would be threatened more than ever in an event of a military strike on Iran.

2. For the Israelis, Iran getting irreversible nuclear capability is a red line. According to your knowledge, has Iran reached that point yet?

Firstly, the Israelis are not in a position to draw redlines for Iran as Iran is a member of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and does not poses nuclear weapons. Furthermore, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has also confirmed on numerous occasions that Iran has not even diverted its nuclear program towards a nuclear bomb. While the Israelis has violated all international norms and regulations regarding nuclear armament. Israel is the only country in the Middle East possessing nuclear weapons and defying requests made by IAEA and international community.

Secondly, Iran already has reached the capability and is able to build nuclear weapons if it decides to do so.

Thirdly, having the capability is not in violation of Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Other member states of the NPT like Japan, Germany, Brazil and Argentina have the capability to also build nuclear weapons and have not come under any international scrutiny.

Finally, the IAEA is the agency responsible to draw redlines in these matters, not Israel.

3. Could you still defend, as you did when you were at the Supreme National Security Council, that the Iranian Government is not after nuclear weapons?

I am not concerned about Iran deciding on building a nuclear weapon; I am more concerned about the Western strategy, which practically is pushing Iran towards no option but to go for a nuclear weapon. The West has already begun a comprehensive economic and covert war with Iran. The amount of pressures, hostilities and sanctions imposed by the west against Iran is more than North Korea, while Iran is a member of NPT and does not posses nuclear bomb, whereas North Korea has withdraw from the NPT and has nuclear weapons. Faced with this reality, the West is actually telling Iran that while you have paid the cost more than North Korea, why not have the deterrence too?

4. Are the US financial sanctions and the EU eventual oil embargo going to make any difference in the regime nuclear plans?

Sanctions of any kind would hurt Iran's economy, but would not compel Iran to forgo its legitimate nuclear rights under the NPT, which includes enrichment. Sanctions have been imposed on Iran since the revolution in 1979 and the balance sheet today shows that Iran has advanced greatly in the fields of nuclear, chemical, biological and missile technologies.

5. One Iranian lawmaker has said that the recent letter from Obama to Khamenei included an invitation to dialogue. Is there still room for a comprehensive dialogue as you have advocated in the past? What are the shared interest and what is getting in the way?

The ultimate decision maker on Iran-US relations is the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei. With over two decades of experience in Iran's foreign policy, I believe the Supreme Leader has always been ready for a comprehensive dialogue with the United States based on the following:

1. If the Americans ensure that their real intention is not regime change in Iran. The Supreme Leader has always believed that the core goal of the United States is regime change in Iran since 1979, using all means possible.
2. If the Americans base their rapprochement with Iran based on non-interference, mutual respect and acknowledging the legitimate interests of Iran in the region and beyond.

It is a fact that no US administration since the revolution in Iran has been able to orchestrate a policy towards Iran based on a legitimate framework. All US administrations have been competing to increase sanctions, pressures and threats on Iran. As the current US presidential campaign clearly shows, almost all candidates have advocated for increased pressures, sanctions and even war with Iran. This has been the situation in the past three decades.

President Obama entered office with the promise of engagement with Iran, changing 30 years of hostilities between the two countries. However, he was extremely proud of his achievements to mobilize the world and built an "unprecedented" sanctions regime targeting Iran. He further stated that, "We've been able to organize folks like China and Russia that previously would have never gone along with something like this,"

6. How can the US develop a security plan for the Persian Gulf with Iran while Iranian officials are threatening to close Ormuz (Strait of Hormuz)?

Firstly, according to recent official statements by Iran's Foreign and Defense Ministers, Iran does not threaten to close the Strait of Hormuz.

Second, if the US policy were based on "all options on the table", Iran's policy would be the same. Threat begets threat.

7. When I interviewed you in 2004 you were the chief nuclear negotiator for Iran and you told me that you didn't have anything to hide. However, later on the inspectors will uncover documents that imply that Iran was interested in a nuclear warhead since the beginning of the effort. An American intelligence estimate even said that there was a military program till 2003. Is it possible that you didn't have access to the full extent of the plan? Who is the real boss?

I have never been informed of the technical aspects of Iran's nuclear activity, but still I believe the November 2011 IAEA report on possible military dimensions of the Iran's nuclear program is not based on IAEA findings but rather those provided by foreign intelligence agencies. Therefore there is a politically motivated scenario aiming to escalate international pressures on Iran.

8. You negotiated with the EU the suspension uranium enrichment in 2004. What was your reaction when a few months into Ahmadinejad Presidency, he denounced that understanding?

From the start, the suspension of the enrichment was based on a voluntary, temporary and non-legally binding gesture, just for confidence building. Six-months prior to the Iranian presidential elections, when no one could imagine Ahmadinejad would become president, we told our European interlocutors that Iran would not tolerate indefinite suspension and if they are not capable to finalize a deal, Iran would defiantly re-start enrichment regardless of the consequences. The legitimate right of Iran for nuclear technology, including enrichment has been a redline for all administrations before and after the revolution and would continue in the future.

9. Your replacement after his election in 2005 was expected, but why did he imprisoned you? And why after you were cleared of the espionage charges you were forbidden from any official post? Was your case part of an insight power fight? If so, who are fighting it?

Since my arrest in April 2007, I decided to remain silent on the reasons behind my arrest and I will continue to do so.

10. You left Iran after the controversial reelection of President Ahmadinejad in 2009. Was your decision related to that? Have you been back since then? Are you planning to do so soon? Is there anything hindering your return?

Based on the final judicial verdict, I am deprived of having a diplomatic post for five years since April 2008. I decided to use this time for academic pursuit and that is why I am currently a research scholar and lecturer at Princeton University.

11. At that time you downplayed the chances of regime change in Tehran in spite of the street demonstrations. Have you changed your mind after the Arab Spring? What makes the Iranian case different from its Arab neighbors?

After two and half years following the disputed Iranian presidential elections, we see that I was completely correct. Today, as we witness the increasing pressures by the West in the hope of bringing regime change in Iran, I am telling them: you are wrong; it is not going to happen.