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## Opinion: Rouhani's Nuclear Options

Posted By [Seyed Hossein Mousavian](#) On July 10, 2013 @ 12:00 am In [Opinion](#) | [No Comments](#)

The window for a diplomatic breakthrough in the stalemate over Iran's nuclear program will be most opportune during the second term of President Barack Obama. In his 2013 State of the Union address, he called on Iran's leaders to "recognize that now is the time for a diplomatic solution." Last month's election of Hassan Rouhani, a former top nuclear negotiator, as Iran's next president offers the prospect of a fresh approach to negotiations.

There is, however, a risk that if the current American/Western policy of pressure politics continues, we will inch toward a military confrontation. Iran, as a sovereign state and a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), is entitled to enrich uranium. I believe that if Washington recognized Iran's right to enrich, a nuclear deal could be reached immediately. Without this recognition, no substantial agreement will be possible.

The Iranian nuclear dilemma is centered on the legitimate rights of Iran to enrichment under the NPT, and is not about building a nuclear bomb. Iran has signed onto every Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) convention, such as the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in 1997, the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) in 1996, and the NPT in 1970. Such conventions entail rights and obligations for all signatories. The West, however, has chosen, in contravention of international law, to carry out a coercive policy whereby Iran is pressed on obligations while its rights are denied.

The NPT has been used by the West as an instrument of pressure against Iran and to falsely accuse Tehran of seeking nuclear weapons. Such tactics serve as a means to justify punitive measures and eventual military action. The NPT is effectively serving as a platform to deny the legitimate rights of Iran and to rally the international community to endorse and implement the most draconian multilateral and unilateral sanctions ever levied on Iran. As a result, Iran is increasingly disillusioned with international conventions that ignore its rights but expect full commitment to obligations. This has led some politicians in Iran to view the NPT as a national security threat, which is being used as an instrument by warmongers in the United States to press for measures to achieve their ultimate goal: regime change.

Rouhani's first priority will be to manage the economic crisis. The nuclear standoff resulted in unprecedented unilateral and multilateral sanctions being placed on the country, a primary reason for its economic hardship. The new administration has various options for handling the nuclear stalemate and thereby alleviating the effects of sanctions on the country. There are different options. The favorable option for Iran is to seek a peaceful standoff. Enduring the barrage of sanctions and other punitive measures is not realistic, while giving up Iran's nuclear rights would be impossible regardless who rules Iran.

In the absence of a realistic, face-saving solution, withdrawing from the NPT would become an attractive option for Tehran. Iran can substitute the treaties with the supreme leader's religious fatwa banning nuclear weapons and all WMDs. This move will ensure the international community that Iran is not after WMDs and would relieve Iran of its treaty obligations, which have been used by the West to place further sanctions on Tehran.

The US and Western punitive measures on Iran have exceeded those placed on North Korea, a country that withdrew from the NPT, built nuclear weapons, conducted three tests, and threatened to use them against the United States. And, at the same time, the United States and other Western countries have forged close nuclear cooperation with non-NPT nuclear weapons states such as India, Pakistan and Israel. It is no wonder that the Iranians are growing frustrated with such international

hypocrisy, which rewards violators and non-signatory states to the NPT with strategic alliances. In reality, Iran has paid a higher price for staying committed to the NPT and having no nuclear weapons.

Since the 1979 Revolution, the NPT has proven more harmful than beneficial for Iran. Instead, the NPT has effectively become a national security threat, because the West has used it as an instrument to bring Iran to the United Nations Security Council.

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has decreed that our religious tenets and beliefs consider these kinds of weapons of mass destruction to be instruments of genocide and are, therefore, forbidden and religiously banned. "The Islamic Republic of Iran considers the use of nuclear, chemical and similar weapons as a great and unforgivable sin," he has stated.

Iran can therefore lay a new foundation for non-proliferation based on Islamic values and principles, embodied in the supreme leader's fatwa and not on the NPT or other WMD conventions. In this way, the credit would go to Islam. As a goodwill measure, Iran would provide unfettered access to inspectors and declare its peaceful intentions. This would ensure Iran no longer permits the West to use the NPT and other WMD conventions as a means to press Iran and inflict economic, social and political harm.



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