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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

**The Islamic Republic Of Iran - Nuclear Motivations and their
International Security Implications.**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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Executive Summary

Title: The Islamic Republic of Iran Nuclear Motivations and its International Security Implications

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Thesis: In order to successfully influence Iran and deter its pursuit for a nuclear capability the international community must understand Iran's strategic culture and utilize a balanced approach using the instruments of national power: diplomacy, information, military, and economics.

Discussion: For over the past three decades, the Islamic Republic of Iran has openly been a state sponsoring terrorism. Iran has routinely sent insurgents and terrorists organizations throughout the Middle East in order to undermine various countries of interest. These actions, on the part of Iran, have been to ensure that chaos and instability continue to reign within the region. Iran's continued subversive activities are in direct support of its religiously based ideology and national interests. As a result, Iran's pursuit for a nuclear capability has been a principal concern for neighboring nations and the international community. Therefore, the question is raised as to the significance of Iran's nuclear ambitions and if it truly poses a threat to regional and international security. In turn, Iran's revolutionary nature and its quest for the expansion of its ideology throughout the region is viewed as a major concern for the Arab Gulf region. Ultimately, Iran's aspirations for becoming a regional hegemony has influenced its quest for a nuclear capability. Iran views its nuclear ambitions as a key element in protecting its sovereignty while at the same time providing the country a political advantage within the international community. This thesis will conduct a historical analysis of Iran's Nuclear Program to recent diplomatic dialogue. Additional analysis will examine Iran's strategic culture and how a balanced approach using the instruments of national power such as diplomacy, information, military, and economics can be used as a calming measure or as a preventative tool. Subsequently, this paper will review the implications of Iran's pursuit for a nuclear capability and the impacts on both the regional and international security environment.

Conclusion: A failure to establish positive dialogue and the development of an amicable relationship between Iran, the Arab Gulf Region, and international communities could negatively impact the peace and security within the Middle East. In turn, any inflammatory relations regardless of their size and scope could impact the international community and result in unwanted discord and possible conflict.

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Preface

The purpose of this paper is to study the development of the Iranian Government's Nuclear Program and its International Security implications. The study further examined Iran's relationships with their neighboring nations and its involvement in the destabilization of the region. Finally, this thesis scrutinized the Iranian Nuclear talks from their beginning dialogue to present day negotiations and the effects they had on the Arab Gulf Region and the international community.

The completion of this thesis was not possible without the assistance and support, of the Command and Staff College and the Marine Corps University. To all that have contributed to my paper I would like to express my deepest gratitude for their enduring hard work and support. Additionally, to my military faculty advisor LtCol. Chesarek, I would like to thank you for your help, guidance, and instruction throughout the year.

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There is only one thing worse than the U.S. exercising a military option, and that is a nuclear-armed Iran.¹
U.S. Senator John McCain, Arizona

Introduction

For the past three decades, the Islamic Republic of Iran has openly been a state sponsoring terrorism. Iran has routinely sent insurgents and terrorists organizations throughout the Middle East in order to undermine various countries of interest. These actions, on the part of Iran, have ensured that chaos and instability continue to reign within the region. Iran's continued subversive activities are in direct support of its religiously based ideology and national interests. As a result, Iran's pursuit for a nuclear capability has been a principal concern for neighboring nations and the international community.

Therefore, the question is raised as to the significance of Iran's nuclear ambitions and if it truly poses a threat to regional and international security? If Iran does pose a threat how should the international community move forward and what it must understand about Iran in order to do so. Iran's revolutionary nature and its quest for the expansion of its ideology throughout the region is viewed as a major concern for the Arab Gulf region. Ultimately, Iran's aspirations of becoming a regional hegemony has influenced its quest for a nuclear capability. Iran's strategic culture causes the Islamic Republic to view its nuclear ambitions as a key element in protecting its sovereignty while at the same time providing the country a political advantage within the international community. In order to successfully influence Iran and deter its pursuit for a nuclear capability the international community must understand Iran's strategic culture and utilize a balanced approach using the instruments of national power: diplomacy, information, military, and economics.

This paper will conduct a historical analysis of Iran's Nuclear Program to recent diplomatic dialogue. Additional analysis will examine Iran's strategic culture and how a balanced

approach using the instruments of national power such as diplomacy, information, military, and economics can be used as a calming measure or as a preventative tool for influencing and negotiating. Subsequently, this paper will review the implications of Iran's pursuit for a nuclear capability and the impacts it has on both the regional and international security environment. A failure to establish positive dialogue and develop an amicable relationship between Iran, the Arab Gulf Region, and the international communities could negatively impact the peace and security within the Middle East. In turn, any inflammatory relations regardless of their magnitude and scope could impact the international community and result in unwanted discord and possible conflict.

History

In order to fully understand the Islamic Republic of Iran, one must be cognizant of the important historical events that have shaped and impacted the culture of that country. Iran's historical significance and its past role of being a regional power in the Middle East is a major factor behind its current pursuit in trying to once again become a hegemonic nation. Although, known for its great Persian Empire the country of Iran did not come into existence until shortly after 1930. Originally, Iran was called, "Iranshahr which comes from the ancient Islamic texts describing the geographical land mass and not a nation state."²

Iran's nationalistic pride of its ancient Persian society has been a major driving force behind Iran's revolutionary ideology and ultimately led to the establishment of the country. However, Islamic Shiite religious doctrine has replaced various aspects of the Persian culture. Islamic doctrine believes in taking control of conquered societies; whereas, ancient Persians never forced their beliefs on their subjugated territories and in turn allowed them to rule themselves.³ The practice of leaving subject state societies intact allowed Persia to prosper. Persia integrated

the successful aspects of all conquered civilization into its own culture which resulted in the continued growth of its empire.

However, in 642 AD Islamic forces defeated Persia at the battle of Qadisiya. As a result, the Persian culture was replaced with the Arab culture and Islam.⁴ In 1501, “the Safavid Dynasty designated the Twelver Shia Islam as Iran’s official religion.”⁵ Shortly thereafter, the Persian culture that had been dormant for years reemerged and has since influenced the Iranian society. Although Iran’s culture is based on two different traditions, one founded on Islam and the other on its ancient Persian heritage, both of these conflicting customs continuously compete for the centrality of being the sole philosophy in which the country is governed.⁶

The Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini established the current day Iran through the Islamic republic revolution of 1979. Prior to the revolution, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi’s monarchical authoritarianism of the Pahlavi dynasty ruled Iran. However, “In 1989 upon the death of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was chosen as Ruhollah’s successor as Iran’s Supreme Leader.”⁷ Although, an Islamic Republic, during the last Shah’s reign of power, Iran leaned briefly towards western values and democracy. Since the revolution of 1979 Iran remains a steady Islamic state based on Shiite principles.

The structure of the Islamic Republic of Iran’s Government is similar to that of the United States in that both countries have a president, a judiciary branch, and a legislature branch.⁸ However that is where the similarities end, for Iran’s government is centralized around the Supreme Leader and not the President. Iran’s President is more of a figure head and in reality only responsible for the nation’s economic policies. Ultimately, the Supreme Leader has complete control of the country of Iran. Furthermore, the Iranian society follows strict adherence to the

Islamic religion in which both politics and legislature follow Shiite ideology and Sharia Law, whereas within western societies there is a strict separation between religion and government.

Even though, certain offices of the Iranian Government are elected positions, the Supreme Leader has the power to directly or indirectly overrule any decisions made by an elected office. The Supreme Leader directly selects personnel for the non-elected branches of the Government and controls their term of appointment. These hand-picked officials work in the various offices that conduct oversight and control over the numerous elected positions.⁹

Iran's Government is comprised of "a Supreme Leader, President, Parliament, Assembly of Experts, Council of Guardians, Expediency Council, Judiciary, and the National Security and Intelligence branch."¹⁰ The National Security and Intelligence branch is further divided into various elements such as the, "Supreme and National Security Council, the Regular Army, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and the Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MIOS)."¹¹ The Supreme Leader acts as the commander in chief and directly controls the National Security and Intelligence branch. In turn, understanding the Islamic Republic's Governmental structure and history is crucial when trying to negotiate or influence the nation of Iran.

Strategic Culture

Strategic Culture provides critical contextual factors that influence Iran's decision making process and actions. The Islamic Republic of Iran strategic culture is complex in nature and comprised of various cultural elements such as: psychology, propaganda, deception, patience, self-identity and nationalism. In order for the international community to truly understand the basis of Iran's motivational dynamics it must be cognizant of the nation's cultural make-up.

Principles, beliefs, and values are the foundation of strategic culture which are derived from current and ancient texts, philosophies, events, and the doctrines of a group of people. In

some nations' strategic culture is seen, "as the root and foundation of strategy which defines ones actions."¹² In turn, the Middle East and the international community must fully understand the salient features of Iran's strategic culture and their implications for strategy, policy, and planning if they want to be able to successfully influence and deter Iran's pursuit for a nuclear capability.

However, prior to understanding the strategic culture of Iran, the international community and neighboring nations must fully understand the psychological aspect behind the decisions making process of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In most instances, government officials are usually well rehearsed and trained in politics and history, but not psychology. In turn, diplomacy can fail if political decisions and actions are made without the knowledge of the opposing country's psychological thought process and cultural beliefs. This is extremely important when a nation is engaged in the process of building relations with another country.

For instance, Iranian policy and military leaders are, "more concerned with the moral and psychological effects of actions versus the physical."¹³ The Islamic Republic of Iran follows its rich history and looks to the past for guidance from the various immortalized lessons of long ago. In turn, Iranians believe in, "politeness above all even if one disagrees with another person, praise will be given regardless of any dismay."¹⁴ Therefore, Iran may come to an agreement with another nation in order to be polite; however, it may have no intentions of following the provisions of the pact. This explains the complexity of Iran and the accusations that it works not in the black and white areas of ethics, but instead the grey or middle zone and further clarifies why Iran violates binding agreements. A thorough understanding of the Iranian psychological temperament and their decision making process offers the international community an indication of possible actions Iran may make in the future.

According to Ghaemi, Iran remains committed to the, “Shiite philosophical beliefs about divinity and revelation, which is the bedrock upon which the structure of their culture is built.”¹⁵ Additionally, Ghaemi suggest that Iran is a self-professed nation of martyrs and remains isolated and nationally self-focused. As a result “Iranians are willing to sacrifice results but not principles, hence the western societal approach of compromise first, then negotiate is illogical to the Islamic Republic of Iran.”¹⁶ Furthermore, Iranians view hard work as important but not a critical belief within the society for work hours are flexible and naps are still prevalent.

Iran uses propaganda as a means to communicate its message of resistance through various proxies both domestically and internationally. Propaganda is defined as, “the spreading of ideas, information, or rumors.”¹⁷ Propaganda is utilized to represent and express an organization’s vision, goals, mission, and beliefs. As a result, Propaganda is used “as a means to conduct psychological warfare, within one’s own organization to include the local community.”¹⁸ The Arab Gulf Region distrusts Iran and is very uncertain as to their true intentions. As a result, “Iran has been known to be its own worst enemy in past dealings with neighboring nations in which their actions have contradicted their messaging.”¹⁹ Iran has been trying to appeal to the Iraqi Shiite population, but forgets that the Iraqi Shiites saw first-handedly during the Iran and Iraq war the atrocities that Iran is capable of committing.

Another aspect of Iran’s strategic culture is the utilization of reflexive control for furthering its subversive ideology. Reflexive control is “a means of conveying to an opponent specially prepared information to incline them to voluntarily make the predetermined decision desired by the initiator of the action.”²⁰ In turn, information is reported in a manner that obstructs the decision making process through calculated strategy, misinformation and deception. Iran has successfully utilized this process to project influence outside of its borders through the use of proxy

warfare. Proxy warfare is “the use of violent pressure groups as instrument of foreign policy.”²¹ Through the utilization of proxy organizations and the means of reflexive control Iran has been able to conduct national strategic operations in foreign states without the direct use of its military. Iran has used this capability as an instrument of its foreign affairs that has allowed it to operate in the grey area of diplomacy and military action due to the ambiguity of this process.

As a result of reflexive control and the utilization of proxy organizations, “Iran is known as an unconventional adversary that requires unconventional approaches to planning, strategy, and policy.”²² Iran has a long history of using Hezbollah, Hamas and other terrorist organizations to conduct Iranian-sanctioned operations in foreign nations. Some examples of such operations are, “the US Embassy and Marine barracks bombing in Beirut, Lebanon (1983),²³ the bombing of the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires (March 1992);²⁴ and the bombing of the US military barracks (Khobar Towers) in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia (June 1996).”²⁵ The initial information and investigations of these incidents were filled with misinformation and speculation as to who conducted these events, how the incidents were accomplished and why. The process to find the correct information and who was ultimately responsible for the bombings took years. In turn, this allowed Iran in most cases to achieve its desired goals. Iran has been known for their, “ability to deflect accountability while also gaining from negotiations.”²⁶

Another element of Iran’s strategic culture is its patience. Iran has consistently used “Fabian strategies of delay, indirection, and attrition.”²⁷ Iran has been able to make slow, incremental progress in its nuclear program due to it has drawn out negotiations with the European Union (E.U), the United States (U.S.), and the United Nations (U.N). Additionally Iran has, “intimidated, demoralized, and worn down the domestic opposition by conducting mass arrests, torturing detainees; and trying to ensnare Israel into an open-ended conflict with Lebanese Hezbollah and

Palestinian Hamas.”²⁸ Iran has showed unrelenting patience and its ability to long term plan in order to achieve its goals. Some nations would attack immediately after an incident or once a political decision has been made, whereas Iran has been known to conduct an operation six months to a year later after an incident against its country has occurred. Iran’s strategy of patience is similar to that of a chess match where calculated moves are made in order to achieve an end result which could take a considerable amount of time.

Through its strategic culture Iran, has transformed into a threshold hegemonic nuclear state. Iran has transitioned from an “isolated soft power subversive nation fearing encirclement to a rising regional power projecting influence within the Gulf States.”²⁹ However, the regime still utilizes ambiguity and covert methods as a method of deception and means to communicate its message of intimidation to the masses while promoting a culture of jihad, and martyrdom. As a result, Iran uses isolation as a part of its strategic culture. In turn, Iran has “tried to create strategic depth in the informational domain by jamming foreign radio and TV broadcasts, banning social media, creating firewalls that make it difficult for average Iranians to access the world-wide-web, and working to create a stand-alone national internet to insulate its population from subversive foreign influences.”³⁰

However, to further understand Iran’s strategic culture and the psychological aspect behind its decision making process the international communities must further understand the composition of Iran’s social identity. Social Identity is defined as, “the classification of others into groups. Groups we belong to are called in-groups, and those we do not belong to are out-groups.”³¹ Iran’s social identity is based on their Islamic Shiite faith, their ancient Persian ancestry and the revolutionary movement. Not belonging to one or all of these groups can classify one as an outsider and make living in Iran troublesome. Minority groups are often persecuted and

terrorized due to the perceived threat that they pose to the culture and as a means to control the masses through intimidation tactics.

Identifying a nation's social identity is critical in better understanding the country's political and military makeup. In addition, the association of various personnel within these groups provides information as to the group's capabilities and possible actions they may make in the future. Utilizing a political psychological approach allows one the ability to, "explore how individuals make sense of others and themselves in the context of issues, choices, and conflict."³² Additionally, a political psychological approach will further examine other aspects of a society and how they impact the actions, decisions and behaviors of the civilization.

Through a political psychological examination of Iran, the significance of the role of the Supreme Leader and the Islamic faith are identified as key aspects of the Iranian strategic culture and influences. Therefore, in order to influence the Islamic Republic of Iran one must have a thorough understanding of the Supreme Leader and the Islamic Shiite Religion. Furthermore, one must remain cognizant that the President of Iran is more of an advisor and plays a role in the central government similar to that of a foreign ambassador than the leader of a nation.

Another aspect of Iran's social identity is nationalism. Nationalism is the, "belief that a group of people or a community belong together in an independent country and a willingness to grant that community primary loyalty."³³ Iran uses nationalism as a means to motivate and control its population. Nationalism can be a positive factor for any country; however, when utilized for negative or derogatory reasons it can cause hate and violence. Iran's nationalistic identity played a major role during the revolutionary movement. The Ayatollah Khomeini seeing a disgruntled and neglected nation used the societal identity of nationalism as a rallying point for the revolutionary movement which led to the overthrow of the Shah and the establishment of the Is-

Islamic Republic of Iran. In turn, identifying the Islamic Republic's strategic culture is a crucial when trying to understand Iran's intentions behind their pursuit for nuclear power.

Strategic culture informs, influences, and shapes the Iranian society. By better understanding the key elements of Iran's cultural contextual factors will only further the ability and success of the international community in influencing Iran's actions and decisions. Although, strategic culture is essential to the Iranian society, being able to understand it is paramount for the international community.

Iranian Nuclear Program

Iran's nuclear program started in 1957 during the rule of Shah Reza Pahlavi. The United States assisted Iran with its nuclear program in providing technical support and the leasing of enriched uranium.³⁴ Not only did the United States support the Iranian nuclear program, but so did Italy, Germany, France, the United Kingdom and several Latin American countries through construction and scientific support. In turn, the Shah established various programs that were necessary for the creation of nuclear energy. However, upon the departure of the Shah due to the 1979 revolution the nuclear program became stagnant. Iraq took advantage of this opportunity and destroyed Iran's nuclear program with, "counter-proliferation strikes during the Iran and Iraq War."³⁵

Iran's nuclear program was reinvigorated in 1997 after the presidential election of reformist Mohammad Khatami.³⁶ Khatami expanded the once stagnant program in which he made it a more robust and developed function within the government. However, the driving force behind the current nuclear program dates back to 2005 with President Ahmadinejad. Under Ahmadinejad, "the Iranian Nuclear issue began to develop quickly and strained relations with most of the world; especially the West."³⁷

In order to fully understand the background and reasoning behind the Islamic Republic of Iran's desire to obtain a nuclear capability one must fully understand Iran's complex historical past. Iran is a nation that was once ruled or controlled by various foreign kingdoms and empires throughout the ages. Since its existence, "Iran has been invaded by the Greeks, Arabs, Mongolians, Turkish, British, and Russians."³⁸ Furthermore, Iraq, Egypt, the United States and Saudi Arabia have threatened Iran's authority and independence at various times.

Iran's ambitions for a nuclear program are not only for nuclear power, but also for nuclear weaponry in order to protect their sovereignty and further its revolutionary ideology. According to Dueck and Takeyh, "the direct influence of the Iran-Iraq War changed the perceptions regarding the need and use of nuclear weapons among the Iranians".³⁹ As a result, Iranians are sympathetic towards the Islamic Republic of Iran nuclear aspirations. The Iranian people feel that with this capability they will finally be respected within the international community and be able to defend their homeland if necessary. Additionally, past incidents such as the Iran Air Flight 655 in which the U.S. shot down a civilian plane that was inside Iranian waters and airspace contribute to this way of thinking. In the eyes of Iran, "the U.S. failed to offer adequate sympathy for the incident and there was no help from the international community."⁴⁰ In turn, the Iranians believe that if Iran had a nuclear capability the nation would have been treated with respect and dignity by the international community. As a result of incidents such as Iran Air Flight 655, Iran is unlikely to abolish their nuclear program based on any economic sanctions or political pressure from the International Community.

Also, events such as the death of the Libya's Omar Gadhafi, shortly after his regime negotiated a nuclear disarmament, have most likely reinforced Iran's stance on obtaining a nuclear capability. As a result, "it is now less likely that states suspected of pursuing a nuclear weapons

option are keen to follow Libya's example."⁴¹ The same nations that had recently negotiated the nuclear rollback with Libya were also responsible for supporting the rebel forces who had overthrown the Libyan government.

In 2013, the election of Iranian President Hassan Rouhani established a new era in Iran-United States negotiations. Through the cooperation of President Rouhani the United States was able to negotiate a framework for a landmark nuclear agreement, known as United Nations Resolution 2231. Although, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei approved the deal, he still voiced his skepticism of the U.N and the United States.⁴² In turn, "the United Nations, the United States and the European Union have agreed to lift all sanction against Iran in return for reductions in Iran's nuclear facilities and capabilities."⁴³ The agreement will ensure that Iran uses the nuclear capability for electrical power and not weaponry. In turn, if Iran were to try and create a nuclear warhead the preventative measures and safeguards that have been put into place should detect any covert activity.

Although there are skeptics of the Iran-U.S. nuclear agreement, in reality the outcome of this deal is quite significant. The Iranian nuclear program has never been solely for nuclear power. Iran's nuclear program has always had a covert aspect attached to its existence. From the very beginning the Shah wanted a "surge capability which was comprised of the necessary equipment and knowledge to create a nuclear bomb in a limited amount of time."⁴⁴ In turn, the Islamic Republic of Iran "wanted to be able to develop and test a nuclear device within 18 months."⁴⁵ Without the current agreement, Iran would have been able to achieve this goal in 3 to 6 months.

Regardless, Iran needs to be continuously monitored for the Islamic Republic of Iran's past record of following the International Atomic Energy Associations (IAEA) standards have

been less than desirable. According to the, “IAEA Statement of June 6, 2003 (IAEA GOV/2003/40), Iran failed its obligations under its Safeguard Agreement in the reporting of nuclear material, the reporting of processing nuclear material, and the declaration of facilities where materials are stored and processed.”⁴⁶ This is just one of numerous infractions that Iran has committed. Iran, continuously plays the limits of the standards that it must follow and uses its own elements of national power as a means to deter, delay and defend its lack of transparency and noncompliant actions. As a result of Iran’s past and current actions, the international community must be prepared to intervene utilizing their instruments of national power if Iran deviates from the United Nations Resolution 2231.

DIME Methodology and Approach:

Although the international communities approved the Islamic Republic of Iran pursuit for nuclear energy, Iran still remains a country that needs to be closely watched and diplomatically engaged with. The reasoning behind the continuous active engagement with Iran is its subversive history and the fact that Iran has violated various nuclear standards mandated by the international community on numerous occasions. The agreement made between Iran, the United States, and the United Nations offers the international community an early warning capability if Iran were to choose to conduct unauthorized nuclear research and development. In turn, the international community needs to be prepared to utilize their instruments of national power as a means to influence Iran.

Iran has continuously utilized the destabilization of the region, its pursuit for a nuclear capability, and existing relationships to further its desire in becoming a regional super-power. As a result, using the instruments of national power are paramount towards the establishment of peaceful negotiations with Iran. The acronym that the United States uses for, “the instruments of

national power is DIME (Diplomacy, Information, Military and Economics).⁴⁷ Throughout the world, a nation's strategic objectives are directed by its national security strategy. In turn, these goals are enforced by the country's capabilities and capacities known as its instruments of national power. For the United States, "the ability to advance its national interests is dependent on the effectiveness of the United States Government (USG) in employing the instruments of national power."⁴⁸ The instruments of national power are not exclusive or separate but instead mutually supportive and can be scaled as required.

Even though the key to peaceful negotiations is obtained through diplomacy and active dialogue, each instrument of national power is equally important when dealing with international relations. In order to peacefully interact with non-state actors and foreign governments a nation must effectively employ its diplomatic powers. Diplomatic powers are an amicable means in which a country can advance its national goals, values, and interests within the international community.

The international community has constantly pursued opportunities for active dialogue with Iran in relations to the Islamic Republic of Iran's pursuit for a nuclear capability. This was especially evident after, "the IAEA issued GOV/2003/81 on 26 November 2003, which criticized Iran for its past failures and breaches of the mandated standards."⁴⁹ Although, the international community could have approached the United Nations Security Council and recommended increased sanctions against Iran, instead the group conducting the negotiations looked at this incident as an opportunity for active dialogue.

Information is the second instrument of national power that a nation can utilize to achieve the various objectives set forth by a country's national security strategy. Information is the use of propaganda, intelligence, psychological operations, information operations or other data to fur-

ther ones means to undermine an adversary. In today's technologically advanced world, enemies of a state have the ability to conduct information related capabilities (IRC) through numerous ways. In turn, "employing these means in the information environment requires the ability to securely transmit receive, store, and process information in near real time."⁵⁰ With the strategic environment continuously changing, a nation must be able to adapt and counter all threats. Although conventional wars are fought on battle fields, future wars may be fought in cyber space where cyber-attacks or the releasing of information may be even more devastating to a society than a traditional battle.

Although the Islamic Republic of Iran has increasing utilized cyber-attacks, Iran has also been the victim of such attacks. Iran has executed, "some of the largest-scale cyber-attacks to date, U.S. officials have said, including operations in 2012 that destroyed 30,000 computers at Saudi Arabian Oil Co., as well as disabling the email system at Qatari natural-gas firm RasGas."⁵¹ However, since the nuclear negotiations started becoming a reality, Iran drastically decreased the amount of cyber-attacks focused against the western nations. In turn, "Iran has also found itself on the receiving end of Cyber-attacks such as the Stuxnet worm, part of a covert U.S. and Israeli program that destroyed Iranian nuclear centrifuges."⁵² In the end the international community must understand that although Iran was isolated in past it did not remain dormant and was able to expand its instruments of national power, specifically information related capabilities. Although, the Islamic Republic of Iran may not be up to the same cyber standards as the United States, Russia and China, Iran has shown that they are capable of coordinating calculated and destructive information related attacks. As a result of Iran's information capability, the international community needs to ensure that it is poised in a manner to deter, defend, and attack if necessary.

The most commonly utilized instrument of national power by the international community is the military. Although, militaries are designed and equipped throughout the world to fight wars, defend homelands, and protect national interests, they have also been utilized for numerous other efforts such as peace keeping missions and humanitarian relief. Currently, Iran has joined the coalition effort against the Islamic State of the Islamic Levant (ISIL); regardless, of its own conflicts and issues within the Middle East. The current coalition plan, “includes air strikes against ISIS targets, increased support to local forces on the ground, continuation of counterterrorism efforts to prevent future attacks, and humanitarian assistance to non-combatants in the region.”⁵³

Iran has shown that it has a capable military that can execute both overt and covert missions. Even though Iran is part of the current coalition forces fighting against ISIL, its national interests differ than those of the other member nations. This is not a new phenomenon or concept for a coalition force. Coalition forces differ greatly from allied partners and can often have competing views. Currently, there are several competing agendas from the various coalition countries such as Russia, Turkey, the United States, Iran, and Saudi Arabia to name a few. However, for now they are able to work together against a common enemy in support of ending the conflict within the region.

The different militaries of the international community are often over utilized and tasked with performing certain aspects of the other instruments of national power such as diplomacy, information, and economics. The reasoning behind these tasks is that the military is able to enforce or incorporate various elements of a nations instruments of national power while forward deployed or stationed overseas. Furthermore, most agencies of a nation’s government are not

adequately manned or equipped to perform the various duties which fall under the different instruments of national power.

In reality, outside of diplomatic advising and negotiating, most militaries around the world execute the vast majority of all taskings related to the instruments of national power. Historically, militaries have executed missions such as: negotiations, advising, information related capabilities, military action, a show of force, humanitarian relief, peacekeeping missions, overt and covert missions, freedom of navigation, lines of communication and sanction enforcement, along with numerous other tasks as directed. In turn, the international community must prepare its military forces for the future roles and responsibilities. Although Iran is currently a coalition partner in the fight against ISIL, the next conflict may have Iran identified as the enemy. Therefore, the international community must be cognizant of the Islamic Republic's military capabilities, tactics, techniques, and procedures. Amid nuclear talks in 2015 Iran conducted a military wide range exercise projecting its capabilities while trying to, "establish its status as a regional power through a rapid military buildup and show of force."⁵⁴ Iran has shown that it is not afraid to utilize the elements of national power in order to establish a narrative for the international community

Most countries throughout the world enjoy the open access they have to the global market which offers free trading and opportunities towards strengthening a nation's economy. However, this is not the case for all nations. Economics is an instrument of national power that is utilized to further a nation's interests and influence countries of concern. Economic activities can be used as a leveraging mechanism through the use of incentive or disciplinary actions against a rogue nation. In turn, there are numerous ways to conduct economics leveraging such as freezing of funds, liquidation of assets, sanctions, or incentives which are initiated through either the

transferring of new money from one country to another or the returning of previously confiscated capital.

In the past, the United Nations along with various western countries have enforced financial sanctions against Iran that have burdened the Islamic Republics economy and isolated the country from the open global market. However, in light of the recent nuclear agreements all economic sanctions that were once against Iran were lifted based on the fact that the Iranian Government had complied with the terms of the new arrangement. In turn, “Iran regained access to the international financial system, repatriated billions of dollars in frozen assets abroad, and returned to the oil market.”⁵⁵

For the international community the instruments of national power is an integrated approach combining their national military, government agencies, and in most cases elements of the civilian sector. Dependent on the complexity of a situation the various instruments of national power should be utilized in a more comprehensive approach based on purpose, risk, and scaled as required. In turn, political and military leaders of the international community are able to influence Iran through the utilization of the numerous capabilities available to them through the means of national power.

Findings and Analysis

Iran continues to destabilize the region, through the use of covert subversive actions, which ultimately, “caused the fall of both Baghdad and Kabul.”⁵⁶ As a result, Iran is utilizing the instability within the region as a means to pursue its nuclear ambitions and desired hegemonic status. Iran is using its national security concerns and the safety of its nation as the main factor behind its pursuit for a nuclear capability. Iran’s historical past has numerous incidents in which it was either invaded, occupied, or had its sovereignty threatened. Additionally, Iran was the vic-

tim of biological attacks during the Iraq and Iran war. Although Iran has been responsible to some extent for the various incidents of the past, the atrocities that have occurred against the Islamic Republic have left an overall feeling of insecurity amongst the population. Iran constantly, “cites how foreign powers did nothing when Iran was attacked by Iraq’s chemical weapons and missiles. This experience taught Iran that it should not expect help from other nations and they should develop indigenous military, conventional and non-conventional, capabilities.”⁵⁷

Iran’s negotiation style, politics and military strategies are known for their subversive, covert techniques. By focusing the world’s attention elsewhere, Iran has been able to advance its nuclear program with little to no resistance within the region or from the international community. Iran utilizes numerous methods to ensure that the region remains unstable. One such technique that Iran has used is the utilization of women as suicide bombers. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, “has established Shiite women sleeper cells within the Iraqi government and security forces.”⁵⁸ As long as Iran continues to use subversive techniques and proxy organizations the Middle East will remain unstable.

Iran is also utilizing the suffering and lack of basic services that the destabilization of region has caused as means to manipulate the populaces of these countries. Through the use of religion, Iran is gaining the trust of the local populaces. Iran has utilized religion in the past to influence various areas while at the same time deceiving the people. One religious Imam in particular that Iran had used in Iraq for furthering Iran’s agenda was al Sadr. Iran has, “played a double game in Iraq, using the young firebrand al-Sadr to undermine Sistani and keep pressure on the U.S. military to withdraw, while still maintaining good relations with Shiite political parties who revere Sistani and need continued American support.”⁵⁹

Some experts say that it is just a matter of time until Iran achieves a nuclear capability and has the ability to develop nuclear weapons. According to David Albright and Paul Brannan, since 2004 “Iran has had sufficient information to be able to design and produce a workable implosion device.”⁶⁰ A nuclear capable Iran will influence the Middle East and possibly the international community to some extent. According to the World News Connection (2007) “the US knows Iran has become a regional power.”⁶¹ The war on terror and the instability within the region has caused a regional shift of power that currently favors Iran. In the past, the leadership within the Middle East prevented Iran from becoming a hegemonic nation. However, with the changing of regimes and new leadership within the region the question remains as to who is capable of opposing Iran.

Currently, relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia are uncertain along with tensions between these two nations remaining high. Iran and Saudi Arabia have an extensive history of conflict which dates back to the very beginning of the country of Iran. The question remains that if Iran causes further issues within the region will Saudi Arabia and the Middle East be able to handle the Islamic Republic of Iran or will they need to call on the international community to assist, especially if Iran has a nuclear capability.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Since the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iran has posed a threat to the safety and security for both the Middle East and the international community. Iran, through subversive and covert means, has been directly and indirectly responsible for the terrorization of numerous nations throughout the world. In turn, a nuclear capable Iran would further exasperate existing concerns in reference to the Islamic Republic’s intentions within the Middle East. Only through a balanced approach using the instruments of national power along with a thorough un-

derstanding of Iran's strategic culture can the international community influence the Islamic Republic.

Although Iran has been approved by the international community to pursue nuclear power, the Islamic Republic is prohibited from creating a nuclear weapon. According to Abbaas Faisal, if Iran, "had a nuclear weapon they would use it immediately during the next conflict they are involved in."⁶² The analysis is based on Iran's revolutionary religious views, the fact that they desire respect from the international community, their pursuit in becoming a hegemonic nation and their past application and utilization of force when involved in various conflicts. However, in light of the recent United Nations agreement, a failure to establish positive dialogue and the development of an amicable relationship between Iran, the Arab Gulf Region, and international communities could negatively impact the peace and security of the Middle East.

The future for Iran and the Middle East holds a lot of unknowns and uncertainties due to the current imbalance of power and instability within the region. What is known is that Iran will now have a nuclear capability, access to billions of dollars in holdings due to the lifting of the sanctions by the United Nation's and international community along with a substantial increase in its economy due to future oil exports. In the past, "it is estimated that roughly 70 percent of Iran's national budget which was heavily based on oil exports were sanctioned."⁶³

In the end, it is in the best interests of the international community and the current nuclear powers to ensure that Iran does not become a nuclear capable nation. The international community saw first handedly the effects of a nuclear arms race and the ramifications it had on a nation's economy. Whether it is the United States and Russia or India and Pakistan, a nuclear build up has never created a positive situation. A nuclear capable Iran would greatly influence the Middle East and cause an imbalance of power within the region. Iran is known for leveraging its

position through various venues and proxy's, in order to achieve a desired Islamic Republic end-state. It would not be unthought-of for Iran to use a nuclear weapon as a means to hold the Gulf Region hostage while trying to control the global energy supply and influence the international community.

Ideally, the international community through a balanced approach using the instruments of national power along with a thorough understanding of Iran's strategic culture will be able to influence the Islamic Republic of Iran. However, it is recommended that the international community closely follow the outlined expectations and mandated standards set forth in the United Nations Resolution 2231.⁶⁴ Additionally, the United Nations and the international community should closely monitor Iran through the use of the various national intelligence capabilities and the utilization of the International Atomic Energy Association. Furthermore, that if Iran were to commit any violations, the international community would immediately enact the various disciplinary mechanisms that have been set in place per the resolution. In relation to Iran's pursuit for nuclear power, the international community has already given Iran undue respect, diligence, leniency, and consideration.

If Iran fails to follow the United Nations Resolution 2231 the international community outside of enacting the various disciplinary mechanisms of increased monitoring, economic sanctions, and the ending of all support for Iran's nuclear program should adopt additional punitive measures. An Iran that is disobedient to the international community needs to be severely dealt with and made an example of so that others are not so quick to follow. As a last resort, the international community should pursue a stance of political isolation towards Iran, establish an opposition coalition, and support instability within Iran's borders. As for now only time will tell what

Iran's true intentions are and how they will affect the Middle East and the international community.

Figure 1: Map of the Islamic Republic of Iran



U.S. State Department Website 2016

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