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FIFTY-EIGHTH SESSION

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IRAN

**INFORMATION DOCUMENT**

tabled on behalf of the Political Committee  
by Josette Durrieu (France, Socialist Group)



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Report transmitted to: the President of the Council of WEU; the Secretary-General of the WEU; the President of the Council of the European Union; the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy; the President of the European Commission; the EU Commissioner for institutional relations and communication strategy; the Presidents/Speakers and the Chairmen of the Foreign Affairs, Defence and European Affairs Committees of the 39 national parliaments represented in the Assembly; the Presidents of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Baltic Assembly, the Nordic Council, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, the CIS Parliamentary Assembly; the President of the European Parliament; the Secretaries General of the Parliamentary Assemblies of the Council of Europe, NATO and the OSCE.

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## IRAN

Iran is situated in the heart of the Middle East, between the Turkish, Indian and Arab worlds. Covering some 1,648,000 square kilometres, it has fifteen neighbouring states. Its entire history has been marked by its economic and cultural interactions with its neighbours, although it is the image of the Persian empire which prevails.

Its geographical location, large population of 70 million, and its huge hydrocarbon reserves give Iran considerable weight in the region. In addition to these material assets, Iran has a cultural influence and particularity lent to it by the ideology of its political regime, in place since 1979. Yet since the last presidential elections, in 2009, the Iranian government has further pursued its authoritarian approach and nuclear programme. And by apparently continuing to breach international obligations, it is exposing itself to sanctions and increased isolation.

However, Iran exerts a real power of attraction over the populations of the Near and Middle East, while also creating concern among its neighbours. With the exception of Syria, Iran does not have any real allies among the Arab states. Iran opposes Israel and anti-Zionism is a dominant theme in the speeches of President Ahmadinejad.

### ***I. IRAN: A HISTORICAL AND REGIONAL POWER***

Iran is not the only Islamic republic: Mauritania, Afghanistan and Pakistan also belong to this category. But when reference is made to the Islamic Revolution, this invariably means that which took place in Iran.

This particularity, and the conditions under which the revolution took place, have essentially contributed to the country's isolation on the international scene, but have also given it genuine independence from the outside world and from the West. It stands apart from most states in the Near and Middle East, and is regarded by many as a cause for concern.

#### **The Iranian people are proud of their history and are strongly nationalist.**

The Iranian mindset is dominated by great pride in belonging to one of the oldest states in the world and a nation whose history dates back several millennia.

The Persian empire, the Arab invasion and the arrival of Islam, the irruption of the Mongols, links with Asia, the authoritarian modernisation of the Pahlavis and the Islamic Republic have all made Iran what it is, yet Iranians focus solely on the most glorious episodes in their history.

Iran is the leading Islamic Republic, the sole Shia power, and the only majority Persian state in a region with a strong Arab influence. It feels isolated, and even "surrounded", which serves to further strengthen the nationalist sentiment of its population.

#### **The discourse of Shia Iran is one of universal Islam, dominated by anti-Zionism and anti-Americanism**

Iran is the only state in which Shias have held power since the early 16th century. The regime which emerged from the revolution in 1979 is an Islamic republic, whose constitution closely combines democratic principles providing for popular legitimacy with an affirmation of the supremacy of divine authority, via the role conferred on the Shia clergy through the Council of Guardians of the Constitution and the pre-eminence of the Supreme Leader. In this dual respect, Iran feels that it has a special commitment to the Shia populations in other states.

It is important to stress the significance of the Shia dimension in Iran's foreign policy, which is facilitated by the trans-national composition of the Shia clergy, based on a system of "family" co-option of the Grand Ayatollahs, the latter enjoying financial independence from states thanks to religious taxes. It should be noted that the Iran-Syria alliance is also based on shared and complementary interests. Iran has recognised the Alawites – the religious minority which holds power in Syria through Bashar al-Assad's family, but whom the Sunnis regard as heretics – as belonging to Shiism.

It may thus be said that Iran has always sought either to dominate or divide Shiism throughout the region. Just as it created Hezbollah in Lebanon to weaken Amal, Iran attempted to dominate the Iraqi Shia party al-Dawa and, faced with its resistance, succeeded in splitting it into three factions.

Under the theocratic regime introduced in Iran in 1979, the Preamble of the Constitution sets out Iran's universalist ambition to achieve "the victory of all the oppressed over the arrogant", in order to "prepare the way towards a united single world community" and "continue the progressive struggle for the rescue of deprived and oppressed nations throughout the world". In reality, revolutionary Iran's expansionist phase was quickly brought to a close by the commencement of the war against Iraq, and especially in Lebanon with the creation of Hezbollah. The Islamic Republic has also sought to provide backing to the most radical Palestinian groups.

Supporting the Palestinians represents a break from the pro-Israeli policy of the Shah. And yet Iran and Israel share the same hostility to the Arab world. Thus, for Iran, support for the Palestinians is a means of winning the sympathies of the Islamic world. This form of instrumentalisation of the Palestinian cause is certainly used by Iran to strengthen its regional and international leadership. It also asserts that the situation in Gaza is a crime against humanity, and in line with the Goldstone Report describes Israel as an organiser of state terrorism.

Israel does not adhere to the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council concerning the Middle East. Fatah and Hamas must work towards reconciliation, but the most important requirement is for Israel to end its colonisation activities and remove the separation wall. This would represent a huge step forward and would help the Palestinians to decide their own future. The Palestinians do not deserve to be punished **for events which took place during the Second World War**.

Hamas should not be regarded as a terrorist movement which must be isolated. This only serves to motivate it to become even more hard-line and radical.

Reconciliation between the various Palestinian movements is very important. Their differences render any peace agreement impossible, and Israel can only benefit from this situation. Iran believes that in order to break the current deadlock a referendum should be organised among all the region's inhabitants, whether Christians, Muslims or Jews, asking them how they wish to be governed. But everyone must be prepared to cooperate.

### **Iran supports activist groups**

Since the Islamic Revolution, Iran has given support to activist groups supposedly defending its values in other countries.

- **The creation of Hezbollah was the greatest success of the Mullah regime**, but Iran's backing is not limited to this organisation.

**Following the invasion of southern Lebanon** by the Israeli army, Iran sent 1500 Revolutionary Guards to Bekaa, to set up the first battalions of Islamic resistance fighters against Israel. These combatants from various groups, originating from southern Lebanon and suburban Beirut went on to form Hezbollah. During the 1980s, Iranian diplomats in Lebanon served as relays, spreading revolutionary ideas, forwarding directives from the Islamic Republic, distributing social aid, founding institutions based on the Iranian models, and providing financial assistance to Hezbollah schools and offshoots. After the Taif Agreement in 1989, Hezbollah began a process of integration into Lebanese political life which led to its participation in government for the first time in 2005. In parallel, despite the formalisation of institutional links between Hezbollah and the Leader of the Revolution, Iran engaged in dialogue with all Lebanese political forces under the presidency of Mohammad Khatami. Links were tightened in 2005 when Mahmoud Ahmadinejad acceded to the Iranian presidency. The party hierarchy, the Leader of the Revolution and the Iranian President once again share the same ideological affinities.

- **The other activist groups supported by Iran are located in the Palestinian Territories:**

These are:

- the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, the armed wing of Fatah, which is no longer anything more than a small mafia group fought by the Palestinian Authority. They are funded by Hezbollah and Iran, but do not receive instructions from them;
- Hamas has two objectives: the realisation of a societal project following the model of the Muslim Brotherhood, which stands apart from the Mullah regime, and the creation of a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders. On these two points, Iran is not an objective ally, but it is an important partner with regard to funding. Hamas is also supported financially by the Sunni states of the Gulf and by Syria. There is often friction between Hamas and Iran regarding certain actions. Iran seeks to directly fund the military wing of Hamas in Gaza without going through its political wing, but it does not hold sway over Hamas, whose primary ally remains Syria.
- Islamic Jihad, which in principle defends a Sunni Islamic ideology, although some of its members are Shia. Since it only has support from Iran, it allows itself to be instrumentalised by the latter, which supplies it with weapons and money.

Weapons originating in Iran – or Syria – arrive in the Gaza Strip by sea in packages carried by the current, or through tunnels of between 600 metres and 2 kilometres running between the Gaza Strip and Egypt.

- **More discreetly, Iran is also contributing to the troubles affecting Afghanistan and Iraq.**

In this respect, the Revolutionary Guards are strongly suspected of providing assistance to various armed groups in Iraq as well as to the Afghan Taliban, despite the fact that the latter, while in power, were their worst enemies.

**Iran is seeking to position itself as the avant-garde of the Muslim world** and has taken the leading role in the movement opposing “imperialism”, aimed in particular against the United States and Israel.

**Its opposition to Israel involves the same logic:** it is the “little Satan”, according to the expression used by the regime, while the United States is the “great Satan”. Expressed in the harshest possible terms by Ayatollah Khomeini, it was since been toned down. President Khatami attempted to re-establish peaceful relations with the United States. He agreed, in October 2002, that Iran would accept any peace agreement between the Palestinians and Israelis. President Ahmadinejad, on the other hand, has returned to the aggressive language of the early days of the Islamic Republic and bases his discourse on that of Ayatollah Khomeini. The organisation of a “**holocaust denial conference**” in December 2006 is a further illustration of this hostility.

All this is an ideological manoeuvre intended for an external audience. The anti-western and anti-Israeli discourse is relayed in Syria, Lebanon and Gaza and is used by Iranian authorities to form a closer alliance with the rest of the Shia community.

**A feeling of being “surrounded and isolated”**

With their intervention in Afghanistan and then Iraq, the United States and their allies have reinforced Iran's feeling of being “surrounded”. This impression is further compounded by the fact that the country is bordered by Arab countries and nuclear powers, combined with the strong influence of Russia in Central Asia in particular.

However, these military interventions have also removed Iran's two most dangerous neighbours: the Saddam Hussein regime and the Taliban. While this was in no way their objective, in doing so they have strengthened Iran's regional position and fuelled concerns in the Near and Middle East with regard to its ambitions.

Indeed, no state in the region is indifferent to the Iranians' capacity to exert influence: from Israel, its mortal enemy, to Syria, its loyal ally, all are to some degree apprehensive about Iran's ambitions, in particular its apparent desire to become a military nuclear power.

## **II. A THEOLOGICAL REGIME BASED ON A DOUBLE LEGITIMACY**

The Islamic Republic of Iran was proclaimed on 1 April 1979 after a referendum approved by a 98.2% majority. What has emerged from it is a political structure which attempts to combine democracy and Islam, employing two forms of legitimacy: theocratic legitimacy and popular legitimacy. The contradiction between these two approaches is at the root of the country's political and economic immobility.

**The Supreme Leader, who is the head of state, benefits from theocratic legitimacy: he is elected for life by the Assembly of Experts**, a body of 86 religious scholars elected by universal suffrage and endowed with the power to appoint the Supreme Leader, assess his competence, and dismiss him.

The principle of this kind of authority, however, runs contrary to Shia tradition, and the traditional hierarchy disapproves of this means of functioning. This is a point of some significance.

**The first Supreme Leader, in 1979, was Ayatollah Khomeini**, and since his death in 1989 the leading figure in the state has been Ali Khamenei. He has a wide political remit and all power is concentrated in his hands. It is he who approves the election of the President of the Republic, elected by universal suffrage, and he also has the power to remove him. He sets the guidelines of the regime's policy, intervenes in the legislative field, controls the judiciary, and oversees executive powers.

The Supreme Guide has the backing of a formidable military and ideological organisation, created by Ayatollah Khomeini in 1979 and estimated to number 110,000 men. The Pasdaran, the regime's army, of which Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is a former leader, control all: the economy, industry, smuggling, as well as the nuclear issue. They enjoy enormous privileges, and are often appointed to the Governorates and Ministries (7 out of 21). As a tentacular organisation, an industrial empire and a parallel army, the Pasdaran also controls a dozen ports, 25 airport customs posts, and monitors all smuggling. Challenging this system would be a very difficult task.

### **The President of the Republic holds popular legitimacy.**

After the reformer Khatami (in power from 1997 to 2005), it was the Islamist and radical figure of Ahmadinejad who was elected in 2005 and re-elected in 2009 under disputed electoral conditions, subsequently giving rise to spontaneous demonstrations.

**The President of the Republic**, whose role, despite his title, is similar to that of a head of government, performs this function alongside the other bodies elected by direct universal suffrage, the **Assembly of Experts** and, above all, the **Islamic Consultative Assembly of Iran**. However, this appointment by the people is far from free of any religious requirement, since the **Council of Guardians of the Constitution** (composed of **twelve members designated for six years, six of them chosen by the Supreme Leader**), performs the role of filtering candidates and monitoring elections.

In the event of disagreement between the **Parliament, the Consultative Assembly and the Council of Guardians of the Constitution**, the latter then performing the role of ensuring legal compliance, it falls to the **Council of Determination of the Superior Interests of the Regime** to settle the matter. Created in 1988, this institution is composed of thirty members, all appointed by the Supreme Leader, and performs the role of general supervision of the activity of the three powers.

Under these conditions, it is unquestionably the theological legitimacy which prevails, with divine will always being superior to that of the people. The non-elected bodies take precedence over the elected bodies, and the Supreme Leader is, notably, more powerful than the President.

Conflicts between them are possible. The current Supreme Leader may have come to an understanding with **reformist President Khatami from 1997 to 2005**, then to a lesser extent with **radical President Ahmadinejad** since his election in 2005 and re-election in 2009, but the Supreme Leader is endowed with means of limiting the authority of the President. He has sole power over the "Revolutionary"

institutions which complement the “regular” institutions, that of the Revolutionary Guards – the Pasdaran – in opposition to the regular army, for example. He oversees an extensive political and economic apparatus, and he is **regarded as embodying** the perpetuation of the revolution.

**III. THE AHMADINEJAD REGIME AFTER THE ELECTIONS OF JUNE 2009 AND THE POPULAR PROTESTS AGAINST IT**

**“REJECTION OF THE ELECTORAL PUTSCH”**

**Extracts from statements made by opposition intellectuals during the events.**

“This electoral putsch is the result of massive fraud and renders the Islamic Republic illegitimate”.

“Whatever the outcome of the huge electoral and political opposition movement against the Islamic regime, Monday 15 June 2009 will be remembered as a significant day in the turbulent history of Iranian democracy. In spontaneous fashion, listening only to their consciences as honest individuals and restraining their anger as wronged citizens, millions of Iranians turned out to demonstrate peacefully in the capital and across the country, braving the authorities’ ban and the threatening presence of the repressive forces. Hundreds of thousands of men and women from all walks of life and all political tendencies, a majority of them young people, decided of their own volition to go out into the streets to say no, powerfully and in chorus, to Ahmadinejad and to the swindlers seeking to maintain this “lunatic” in the Presidency. Since the fall of the Shah, the national protest movement has never been so widespread and so determined. Every evening, chants of “Allah o Akbar” (God is great) and “death to the dictator” ring out against the authorities, who have committed the greatest electoral fraud in history. Several million voices! If the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei does not have the wisdom to annul the results tomorrow, the Islamic Republic will no longer have any legitimacy”.

It should be noted that Ayatollah Khamenei, the Supreme Leader, subsequently endorsed the election results.

**A CRISIS OF LEGITIMACY**

**A pseudo-totalitarian or a semi-democratic regime?**

**(further statements)**

“The dramatic events in recent weeks (dozens of deaths, hundreds of injuries, thousands of arrests, expulsion of foreign journalists, silencing or censoring of all forms of communication) have sown dissension within the ruling block and separation between the governors and the governed, as shown by the de facto state of siege in the capital and in the major cities across the country. Why has the Islamic Republic, after a simple general election, fallen so quickly into discredit and a deep crisis of legitimacy? Has this shaken regime, which has shown no hesitation in opening fire on the young people who make up 65% of the population, already entered a process of decline similar to that of the Shah? Will this spontaneous national revolt be a prelude to the overthrow of the current regime? The following considerations and reflections will try to offer some answers to these and other questions”.

“Should we count on an aggravation of the situation, assume an inevitable dwindling of a movement without leadership, or fear the cyclical resumption of the urban protests and civil disobedience among the population? Those involved in the clampdown, who are keeping the streets under tight surveillance, imprisoning protestors, and spreading disinformation across the entire country, are very much on the alert. They do not know when or how this will all end”.

It should be noted that the street protests have stopped.

**THE FORCES AT PLAY**

**(further statements after July 2009)**

**Three decisive forces have held back:**

1. “**Firstly, the Shia clergy** who, until now, have sought to calm sentiments and political activities in order to preserve the interests of the Islamic community. However, prominent religious authorities,

such as Ayatollah Montazeri and Ayatollah Sanei, have openly condemned Ahmadinejad, describing his return to office as illegitimate. If Rafsanjani manages to persuade the majority of the high clergy – something he seems to be quietly achieving – to come out against Khamenei and the putschists, due to having brought the Iranian people, Islam and the regime into peril, then the downfall of the Supreme Leader could happen very quickly. If the popular uprising continues, it will shift the clergy into the opposition camp since, in principle, the clergy cannot oppose the nation, and must listen to its voice and defend it. The putschists are aware of this and are piling pressure on the religious dignitaries in Qom”.

2. “**Next, the bazaar**, which represents the heart of economic activity in Iran’s towns and cities. It has attempted to keep out of the situation so as not to aggravate matters. While politically many of the old bazaaris support the conservative forces in power, during the Presidential election most sellers and traders voted in large numbers for the candidate Mousavi, an Azari Turk like themselves. Furthermore, Ahmadinejad has never been popular among the bazaaris, due to his economic interventionism and his opposition to capital and wealth. For the moment the bazaar, like the clergy with whom it has always been linked, prefers to remain cautious, in the knowledge that any closure of the bazaar would have political consequences”.

3. “**Thirdly, there is the incumbent power, with an illegitimate President, and a Supreme Leader who has come under criticism but retains the support of his police and military network**”. “To understand the social and ideological basis of those currently in power, their use of fraud speaks for itself. It should be noted that in urban areas the vote for Ahmadinejad was very low. As for the rural regions, which he frequently visited with his propaganda team, the results were only partially favourable to him, with Mousavi and Karoubi having been more successful in most of the country’s main provinces”.

**The regime is clearly damaged and under threat from a diverse and spontaneous popular movement mostly made up of the young. But order has been restored by force. Can this regime last?**

**(further statements)**

“Whatever the outcome of this showdown, looking back over the events of recent months, several things can be noted: Ahmadinejad, whose image was not great before the election, has become a **detested political figure** in Iranian public opinion, and Supreme Leader Khamenei has completely lost his reputation as a religious leader and wise man”.

“The government’s supporters are well organised and have repressive force at their disposal. But the democratic movement benefits from its great numbers, its sense of citizenship, its spontaneity, and from the backing of the Iranian diaspora and international public opinion. The United States and Europe now know that Ahmadinejad has neither a majority nor any legitimacy. Will these factors spell the end of the fundamentalist and militarist minority which has stolen power in order to impose another four years of Ahmadinejad on the Iranian people?”.

“With regard to the issue of modernity and tradition, we have to understand that the differences between the two camps are not just political in nature. The fundamentalist forces aligned with Supreme Leader Khamenei profess a rejection of the democratic principles arising from Western modernity and assert the values of fundamentalist Islam. The so-called reformist tendency, affiliated with Rafsanjani, advocates an adaptation of modernity to Islam and tradition, a kind of *Aggiornamento*”.

“It has not been possible to channel the continuous tension between authoritarian tendencies and democratic aspirations inherent in this regime, and the contradictions came to a head during the Presidential elections. The upholders of fundamentalist Islam, Khamenei, Ahmadinejad and Mesbah, supported by the fundamentalist fringe of the military, advocate permanent revolution and a totalitarian form of Islam. Moderate Islam, represented by Rafsanjani, Mousavi, Karoubi and Khatami, responsive to the demands of civil society, defends reform and an Islam of dialogue”.

**Neda: the struggle continues (Neda means “call” in Persian)**

**Young female Iranian philosophy graduate** Neda was killed by Ahmadinejad’s militia on 30 July 2009.

**“Brought up in a middle class family, educated at the Islamic Azad University,** Neda was part of the generation born after the Revolution, victimised and oppressed by the regime in power yet having a real thirst for knowledge and always prepared to stand up against injustice and ignorance. She was more involved in music and philosophy than in politics or religion. The truth is that Neda was not a committed activist, like the millions of citizens swept aside by the electoral putsch. She had turned up on 20 June 2009 to peacefully express her indignation. Suddenly, a bullet came and struck down this flower of our country’s youth. **But the sacrifice of this young girl** was not in vain, because her blood has already watered the fields of the struggle against totalitarianism. Today, Neda has become the symbol of freedom, of hope, of the future. She will always represent the promise of a new Iran”.

**She has become the martyr of the movement of June-July 2009.**

**In conclusion with regard to these events, it can be said that:**

**While bearing in mind that these sentiments were expressed in the heat of the moment, the demonstrations are undoubtedly the expression both of a crisis within the authorities in power and of the discontent felt by civil society. And they certainly show a society with a strong progressive nature, an elite in office, and a youth which is in the majority in this country.**

But this movement, which now seems to have fallen back, had little structure, no identified leader and no programme. Yet the discontent seems latent and genuine.

**The massive electoral fraud** was the decisive factor which set events in motion, generating an unexpected democratic uprising. The differences between the government and the people remain a reality, **as shown by the cyclical resumption** of the demonstrations.

**This Islamist and radical regime appears to be in a minority.** Does it only represent 15% of the electorate, as has been claimed? It also has a strong military character and makes a habit of the use of force and the propagation of fear.

Death sentences continue to be handed down. On 28 January 2010, Iran executed two young protestors accused of having attempted to overthrow the Islamic regime simply because of their participation in the demonstration of 27 December 2009. On 9 May 2010, five political opponents were also hanged.

Furthermore, the regime seems to have fallen out of favour with the population. It is genuinely unpopular and has even succeeded in emptying the mosques.

**Will President Ahmadinejad, who has been elected for 4 years (2009-2013) last until the end of his term?**

The attitude of western countries with regard to Iran and the nuclear issue will be significant in this regard. Strategic objectives and political actions will not be without consequence.

Any aggression (sanctions and, to an even greater extent, targeted strikes) could bring about the rapid fall of the regime, according to some. Others, notably including the Iranian opposition movement, believe on the contrary that any attack against the regime in power would be an attack against Iran. The people, who are proud and nationalist, would most likely reunite to support the country and help save the regime. Furthermore, sanctions would certainly be harmful to the country and its people.

The Shia religion celebrates martyrs. This regime would be able to use any attacks against it to its benefit. It may even choose to provoke them. We have been able to draw all these conclusions from various interviews, notably with the Deputy Minister for European Affairs, Ali Ahani.

#### **IV. NUCLEAR IRAN**

Iran's experience during the war against Iraq in the 1980s unquestionably motivated the Iranian leaders to believe that it was necessary to equip themselves with weapons of mass destruction as the only means of ensuring the defence of a country which has few allies.

The context of its neighbours is a concern for Iran. India, Pakistan and Israel all possess nuclear arms. Iraq is not yet stable and American bases and nuclear arsenals are present in numerous countries. The Arab states in the Gulf are equipping themselves with sophisticated weapons. This all helps strengthen the case for Iran's nuclear option.

Iran understands that nuclear arms are weapons of dissuasion and a factor of stabilisation. It wishes both to guarantee its security from Israel and to become a pole of stability and influence in the region. The threat posed by its nuclear weapons has protected Israel. Similarly, these weapons have prevented any serious conflict between India and China or between India and Pakistan.

The current Islamic regime has inherited a nuclear programme instigated in 1950 by Reza Shah Pahlavi. In 1970, Iran signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, giving it the right to pursue a civil nuclear programme under the control of the IAEA.

The Shah's programme involved nuclear reactors in Bushehr and a nuclear research facility. With foreign assistance, initially from China and later from Russia, the programme was extended and intensified, ostensibly for civil purposes. In 1984 the IAEA began to suspect that Iran was developing a military nuclear programme. In the 1990s, western intelligence services were already concluding that Iran had conducted experiments in the production of fissile material and uranium enrichment by centrifuge and plutonium reprocessing.

##### **1. The nuclear programme in the last 10 years: 2000 - 2010**

In the months following the invasion of Iraq led by the United States in spring 2003, Iran began enrichment activities in the main facility intended for this purpose, in Natanz. The Director General of the IAEA at the time, Mohamed ElBaradei, complained and criticised Iran for not notifying the IAEA of these activities, although it had not yet breached its obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Subsequently, the IAEA acknowledged that there was no proof Iran intended to build "a nuclear bomb". In December 2003, Iran signed and implemented the Additional Protocol to the Non-Proliferation Treaty which provided, among other things, for its improved cooperation with the IAEA, giving its inspectors access to nuclear facilities and information on its nuclear programme.

On 27 February 2005, Russia signed an agreement with Iran for the supply of nuclear fuel for the Bushehr reactor, with the first delivery of enriched uranium due to be made in mid-2006. Upon completion of consultations, Iran was to transfer its low-enriched uranium to Russia for enrichment, and the processing required for use in a research reactor was to take place in France. Iran was to receive fuel rods around one year later, which would not have inconvenienced it, since it is thought to hold a reserve of one year's fuel for its reactor. However, shortly afterwards, Iran went back on this agreement, setting out a number of reasons, despite the partners considering their proposal to be a valid one.

The Arab and Muslim states in the region are concerned. Yet at the same time a relative feeling of pride can be detected. In opposition to Israel, this "Muslim bomb" is theirs too. And they would show solidarity in the event of an attack on Iran. "Hands off Iran", is their message. The danger would be nothing less than "the destruction of the Gulf" and "western economies too". Above all, they denounce the "double standard" policy in relation to Israel, which has at least 200 nuclear warheads.

There is every indication that Iran is pursuing its programme of uranium enrichment and the development of its military nuclear capacity. Three powers in the region (India, Pakistan and Israel) who are not signatories of the NPT have acquired nuclear weapons and Iran seems determined to strengthen its position within this regional context.

Other countries who are signatories of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, regional powers such as Egypt, Libya and Syria, who have renounced nuclear weapons, are critical of the system and the treaty.

These developments have led to intensive discussions at the Board of Governors of the IAEA, which adopted a resolution on 24 September 2005 affirming that Iran's failure to meet its obligations under its NPT Safeguards Agreement was considered to be a breach of the provisions of the Agency's Statute.

In early 2006, the IAEA's Board of Governors stated that there was "an absence of confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme" and informed the United Nations Security Council that Iran was in breach of its obligations "within the framework of the Non-Proliferation Treaty".

On 31 July 2006, the United Nations Security Council adopted its first resolution on Iran's nuclear programme, demanding "that Iran suspend all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities, including research and development, to be verified by the IAEA".

In the report of 16 November 2009, the Director General of the IAEA declared that "there remain a number of outstanding issues which give rise to concerns, and which need to be clarified to exclude the existence of possible military dimensions to Iran's nuclear programme". Iran delayed notifying the IAEA of a new nuclear facility at Fordo, near Qom, for example, the Agency only discovering its existence under disputed circumstances. This raised doubts as to Iran's good faith and led to a loss of trust.

In the report of 18 February 2010, the Director General of the IAEA again spoke of a number of outstanding issues. He concluded that, "Altogether, this raises concerns about the possible existence in Iran of past or current undisclosed activities related to the development of a nuclear payload for a missile. These alleged activities consist of a number of projects and sub-projects, covering nuclear and missile related aspects, run by military related organisations".

Iran declared that "these assumptions regarding possible military dimensions to its nuclear programme are unfounded and the information referred to by the Agency is false".

### **Iran criticises the Non-Proliferation Treaty**

Faced with sanctions from the United Nations, Iran recently strongly criticised the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Iran argues that the United States, the United Kingdom and other governments do not meet their own obligations under the treaty, while seeking to block Iran's legitimate rights. It claims that the Non-Proliferation Treaty authorises a programme for civil purposes with a full cycle of nuclear fuel.

The Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Manouchehr Mottaki, referring to the fact that the treaty was founded on three pillars – nuclear disarmament, the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons – asserts that, due to the discriminatory and selective attitude of some nuclear powers, the balance between these three pillars has been neglected.

He argues that the inability of certain governments to adhere to the key articles of the Non-Proliferation Treaty has led to the production of some 35,000 new warheads, introduced the illegal concept of sharing nuclear arms, and deprived other states of their inalienable rights.

Mr. Mottaki states that the United Kingdom's decision to renew and develop the Trident programme is in full contravention of Article VI of the treaty.

He also argues that the unconditional backing of some nuclear-armed states for Israel permits a situation that is beyond international law, while Israel's clandestine development of nuclear weapons and its refusal to join the Non-Proliferation Treaty poses a serious threat to the security of the Middle East and the balance of power in the region.

He declares that the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme has been confirmed by various IAEA reports (even if the texts of these reports do not support such claims), adding that there is therefore no

justification for the UN Security Council to pursue its policy of imposing sanctions and adopting illegal resolutions.

He proposes that the Non-Proliferation Treaty's provisions should be implemented in a non-discriminatory fashion and that, simultaneously, nuclear-armed states should formally renounce nuclear weapons and agree on a fixed timetable for their total elimination. Nothing in the provisions of the Treaty should affect the rights of all parties to develop research and make use of nuclear fuel cycle uranium enrichment for nuclear power plants.

## **2. Uranium enrichment and the production of fissile material**

With regard to the uranium enrichment path, using the ultra-centrifugation process, the following enrichment stages may be envisaged for the production of "weapons-grade" enriched uranium, if Iran is pursuing a military objective:

- The first stage – enrichment to 5%, which is the limit for civil industrial purposes – could be achieved at the Natanz site;
- A second stage of enrichment to 20% (authorised by the NPT for research reactors) could also be achieved at the Natanz site or at another site of much smaller size; Natanz is the only site which has been declared to date.

The production of highly enriched uranium could be achieved in 1 or 2 stages, either at a smaller-scale undeclared site, with around 1000 IR-1 centrifuges, or at the Natanz site. This would place Iran in opposition to the IAEA and the international community.

That fact that only the first kind of plant has been declared does not provide any certainty as to the existence or absence of other facilities. With reduced dimensions, such plants could be hidden either at the same Natanz site or elsewhere, in one of the country's possible facilities.

With regard to the plutonium path, this concerns **the Arak reactor currently under construction** which could be adapted for its production. This reactor will not, however, be operational for several years. Furthermore, Iran would then need to have a reprocessing plant to extract plutonium from the irradiated fuel. No facility of this type is currently known to exist in Iran. Bushehr nuclear power station, currently taking deliveries of fuel from Russia, should be operational in 2010. **However, this pressurised light-water reactor, which falls under IAEA inspection, seems unsuitable for the production of plutonium intended for weapons use.**

### **The availability of sufficient quantities of fissile material**

With regard to the "enriched uranium" path, Iran had by early 2009 produced one tonne of UF<sub>6</sub>, containing approximately 700kg of uranium enriched to 3.5%. A quantity of 1430kg had been obtained by August 2009. 1.6 tonnes of UF<sub>6</sub> enriched to 3.5% would be required to eventually obtain 25kg of uranium enriched to 90%, the quantity estimated by the IAEA to be necessary to produce an implosion-type nuclear device. It can therefore be considered that Iran is very close to having completed the first step in the enrichment process if its objective is a military one.

In order to complete the subsequent steps, according to the information at our disposal, it is possible to say that, were the programme to proceed under optimum conditions (with a low rate of centrifuge breakage), Iran could have a sufficient quantity of highly enriched uranium towards summer 2010, subject to having already constructed the facilities required for the other stages.

With regard to the plutonium path, Iran does not to date have any known facility with the capacity to produce plutonium.

## **3. The development of a nuclear payload and delivery system**

As soon as it has produced a sufficient quantity of highly enriched uranium to construct a nuclear weapon, having opted for an implosion-type design (requiring 25kg of HEU) and having mastered detonics (which seems likely), it would only take Iran a few months to have a nuclear payload at its disposal.

The next step for Iran, after a nuclear test for the purposes of verification and demonstration of its nuclear capability, would involve developing a delivery system for its payload, ballistic missile integration possibly being favoured over the production of a bomb to be dropped by aeroplane, considering the defence systems through which it would have to pass.

It can be considered that the transition from the nuclear payload stage to that of a nuclear warhead complete with delivery system would then take place in parallel to the development of the missile and would take somewhere between a few months and a few years.

**It might be possible for Iran to have a first-generation nuclear weapon at its disposal in the short or medium term by 2011. It would still be necessary for all stages to be completed in optimal fashion, and it would represent no more than a single “nuclear device”, which would not have been tested, and whose suitability for use with a ballistic missile would not have been demonstrated.**

**It thus seems that Iran is not in a position to demonstrate its command of the weapon and could not therefore use it for purposes of dissuasion against** potential adversaries. It would need to have at least two “devices” at its disposal, which would require a further period of at least a year and a half, i.e. some point in 2011-2012.

It would also be necessary for Iran:

- to already have constructed the secret plants required for the production of highly enriched uranium (HEU) or for it to convert the Natanz site with the full knowledge of the IAEA;
- to have simultaneously developed all the techniques required for military use of the weapon.

**The likelihood of such a scenario appears very low.**

If we consider, on the contrary, that Iran is seeking to acquire a nuclear arsenal, on a small scale but capable of dissuading a potential aggressor, it appears, after discussions with several French experts, that this stage could probably be reached by around 2015.

This estimation is largely in line with other known studies on the issue. In its 2008 report, the Foreign Affairs Committee of the British House of Commons estimated that “the earliest possible date Iran would be technically capable of producing enough HEU for a weapon is late 2009, but this is very unlikely. We judge with moderate confidence that Iran would probably be technically capable of producing enough HEU sometime during the 2010-2015 time frame”.

**Your Rapporteur therefore concludes that:**

- **It is not currently possible to confirm or deny that Iran has a military nuclear programme;**
- **There are, however, good reasons to believe that it harbours such an ambition:** the secret nature of its programme in the early stages; the impossibility for the IAEA to carry out the inspections it deems necessary; the very poor economic and technical rationality of the current programme if intended for peaceful purposes; and convergences between the command of uranium enrichment technologies and those involved in long-range ballistic missiles;
- In the event that Iran should pursue the military option, it would be capable, at the earliest, of having a nuclear “device” at its disposal by late 2010, and a full dissuasive arsenal by around 2015.

#### **4. Iran’s missile capacity**

Since the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988), Iran has undertaken a dedicated programme for the acquisition, development and deployment of a whole range of ballistic weapons.

In particular, in the mid-1980s it acquired Scud-B missiles from Libya and North Korea, followed by Scud-C missiles from North Korea in the early 1990s. Around this time it also began to produce Scud missiles in its own armaments factories.

Subsequently, Iran obtained Scud-C missiles from North Korea in the early 1990s, with an estimated range of over 500 kilometres and a nuclear payload of 700kg.

According to Israeli sources, Iran sought to acquire or develop around 300 Scud-B missiles and 100 Scud-C missiles between then and 1994.

In July 1990, Iran carried out its first test on its version of a No-Dong missile, imported from North Korea and known as Shahab-3. This was a single-stage, liquid-fuel device, terrestrially mobile and capable of carrying a payload of 1000kg with a range of 1000 to 1500 kilometres, declared operational in 2003.

Longer-range versions of the Shahab-3 can reach targets as far as 1500 to 2500 kilometres. It would seem that a dozen or so of these devices are deployable or operational.

Iran maintains that it has tested a version of the Shahab-3 with a range of 2000 kilometres able to carry a one-tonne payload. However, some analysts are sceptical, in view of Iran's exaggerated claims concerning its ballistic capabilities in the past.

Furthermore, the accuracy of a Shahab-3 missile at a range of 1300 kilometres varies by up to 3 kilometres, making this weapon unreliable in a conflict situation.

Iran claims to have acquired the North Korean BM-25, a modified version of the Soviet SS-N-6, a single-stage, liquid-fuel missile with a range of 2400 to 3000 kilometres.

Iran is thought to have deployed a certain number of short-range (less than 1000 km) ballistic weapons, but official sources are not consistent in terms of technical capabilities, performances, and the number of systems which are operational or deployed.

There are also the Chinese CSS-8 with a range of 150 kilometres, the Fateh A-110 with a range of 200 kilometres, the Chinese M-11 with a range of around 280 kilometres, the Scud-B/Shahab-1 with a range of 200 to 300 kilometres, the Scud-C/Shahab-2 with a range of 500 to 700 kilometres, and finally the M-g/DF-15/CSS with a range of up to 800 kilometres.

In May 2009, Iran successfully tested the Sejil-2, a two-stage, solid-fuel missile with a range of 2000 to 2500 kilometres, capable of carrying a one-tonne payload for around 2200 kilometres. An improved version of this missile was tested in December 2009.

In February 2010, within the framework of its space programme, Iran tested a Kavoshgar-3 rocket for peaceful purposes intended, according to President Ahmadinejad, to help break "the globally dominant system" of the western powers.

Many technologies used in the development of satellites can also be employed in ballistic delivery systems. Western experts suggest that Iran's space programme serves as a front for the development of long-range missiles capable of carrying a nuclear warhead.

**For all that, the production of an "operational nuclear bomb" would require everything, from the development of the nuclear warhead to the ballistics programme able to deliver such a bomb, to be underway and at an advanced stage. How much progress has Iran actually made? The IAEA is unable to answer this question. According to US intelligence agencies, Iran is not yet at this stage, but it is getting there.**

**If Iran possesses the threshold capacity, is there a procedure able to show that it has passed to the next stage in the assembly of a nuclear weapon? Some experts believe that the development of a nuclear weapon could take place by 2011 and a nuclear-warhead missile could be completed by 2016 or earlier. But the reality is unclear.**

**5. What dangers are posed by Iran obtaining nuclear weapons? What is the likelihood of an Israeli attack?**

Would a nuclear Iran a priori pose a serious threat to Europe or to the United States?

This is, however, an issue with regard to Israel. Due to the small size of its territory, a nuclear weapon would threaten the future of the Jewish state. Israeli leaders believe that the preventative destruction of Iranian military nuclear facilities is necessary, as it was for Iraqi facilities in 1982 and Syrian facilities in 2007.

Statements by Iran's leaders only strengthen the perception of this threat. Ayatollah Khomeini reportedly declared in 1980: "We do not worship Iran, we worship Allah. For patriotism is another name for paganism. I say let this land [Iran] burn. I say let this land go up in smoke, provided Islam emerges triumphant in the rest of the world". It took 500,000 Iranian deaths before Khomeini decided to end the war with Iraq, which could have been halted much earlier. Ayatollah Khamenei gained his religious education at Mashhad seminary, where an esoteric interpretation of the holy texts is taught and where it is professed that reason and faith are incompatible. President Ahmadinejad was influenced by the messianism of Ayatollah Mohammad Taghi Mesbah Yazdi. And the words of even those Iranian leaders regarded as pragmatic raise questions. The statement by Hashemi Rafsanjani, that "the use of a single nuclear weapon against Israel would destroy everything in that land (Israel) but would cause only limited damage to the Muslim world," prompts mistrust.

On the other hand, many experts on Iran believe that its leaders, whatever they say, are cautious and certainly do not want war. The fact remains, however, that Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons would probably represent a destabilising factor.

In this context, an attack by Israeli armed forces is not unlikely. Could they do it alone or would they need help from the United States?

A recent study by the respected American think tank CSIS sheds some interesting light on this issue, which your Rapporteur compared with her own investigations.

A nuanced response is required. It seems likely that, while not having the weapons to entirely destroy deeply buried sites such as Natanz, the Israeli air force could by itself, although doubtless at the cost of significant casualties, destroy Natanz or seriously damage two or three sites such as Natanz, Arak and Isfahan.

Yet it is almost certain that Israel does not have the means to destroy, in a single raid, all the sites involved in Iran's nuclear program, which are too numerous and too well protected.

Such an attack would set back Iran's programme by several years, but not stop it. If we can assume that a military programme is involved, it is likely that one or more hidden sites exist. In any case, Iranian engineers' technological know-how would remain intact.

Tehran could unleash many punishing reprisals: blockading the Straits of Hormuz, attacking certain Gulf States, launching Hezbollah and Hamas offensives, firing conventional ballistic missiles into Israel, etc. However, Iran might limit its retaliation to avoid giving the United States a motive to intervene.

An Israeli attack would probably cause Iran to leave the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the aim of which is to persuade countries to give up nuclear weapons by facilitating access to civilian nuclear power. However, it is a fact that the treaty has been in serious doubt since India, Pakistan and Israel demonstrated that by refusing to adhere to it they have been able to develop nuclear weapons and avoid IAEA control.

**6. Would sanctions be dissuasive and effective?**

According to the US Secretary of State, Hilary Clinton, turning a blind eye to the threat posed by Iran would place the world in an even more precarious situation six months to a year from now. Allowing Iran to acquire nuclear weapons would trigger an arms race among its neighbours, endanger one of the

most unstable regions on the planet, and could even lead to conflict. She argues that sanctions are a way of persuading Iran to enter negotiations “in good faith” on its nuclear programme.

Many States feel that economic sanctions, clearly excluding the consequences of military strikes, are much more likely to be effective than diplomatic engagement alone. Such sanctions, applied correctly, represent the only means of putting pressure on Iran with regard to the way in which it runs its nuclear programme.

The Brookings Institution argues that in order to persuade Iran, clear, realistic and limited objectives need to be set out, targeting the economic power base of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps and other elements within the hierarchy, with the aim of containing Iran’s nuclear programme rather than ousting the regime.

Others assert that regime change is only possible by preventing Iran from acquiring or producing a nuclear weapons capability. Thus the United States and its allies should focus their efforts on accelerating political change. However, no concrete proposals have been put forward as to how such an objective should be achieved, and in general western countries are reluctant to approve such actions, which could turn out to have the opposite effect.

The majority of experts currently agree that specific sanctions targeting the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps and their financial conglomerates are essential in order to challenge the Iranian nuclear programme.

Admiral Michael Glenn Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the United States Armed Forces, acknowledges that the development of a strategy towards Iran represents a complex and difficult challenge, and that all options remain open, while stating none the less that the military option would be the last resort.

**With regard to the European Union**, the United States not having had diplomatic relations with Iran since the occupation of its embassy in 1979, it has fallen to Europe to engage with Iran in a “critical dialogue”. It began to do so in 2003, with the UK, Germany and France undertaking negotiations on behalf of the European Union. After several years of fruitless efforts, Europe decided to transfer the Iranian case to the Security Council. The latter called on Tehran to halt its enrichment activities. When this demand went unheeded, the Council decided to impose sanctions, although these have remained mild.

Among the reasons Iran has largely ignored EU arguments and proposals, it is worth noting that decision-making procedures in Tehran are complex. Power is divided across several factions with separate roles, and the Pasdaran, a mixture of racketeers and sectarians, have a stranglehold on the system. Halting a programme of such strategical significance as the nuclear programme thus inevitably comes up against stubborn obstacles. It would hit the Pasdaran in the wallet. And while sanctions would create genuine dissension within a group which is far from monolithic, the racketeers would probably have everything to gain from sanctions and an embargo.

**The High Representative of the European Union**, Catherine Ashton, states that the EU wishes to maintain normal relations with Iran and underlines that discussions on Iran’s nuclear programme are part of this process. She regrets the fact that Iran is turning its back on continued discussion and refusing to cooperate fully with the IAEA. Iran’s violations of human rights, together with the arrests and violence against demonstrators after the Presidential elections are intolerable.

The EU admits that, after six years of tireless discussions led by Javier Solana, the EU is left with little choice but to consider serious sanctions.

Israel has openly warned that it does not exclude a military strike against Iran’s nuclear facilities. It refers to its own vulnerability to the ballistic missiles which form part of the Iranian arsenal and the need to react to President Ahmadinejad’s repeated statements concerning his intention to “wipe Israel from the map”. However, the American administration has urged Israel not to carry out a military strike, due not just to the risk of regional escalation, but also to the danger for the US of implication in such an attack.

**The problem is a complex one, and caution is required.**

**7. In this context, can a military strike be envisaged?**

Growing concerns with regard to the evolution of Iran's nuclear programme and its possible military dimension have recently refocused attention on the potential use of military strikes against Iranian nuclear facilities. In March 2009 a serious and detailed study was published reviewing all the options. The clear conclusion of this study was that the possibility of definitive destruction of the Iranian programme is ruled out by military experts. Even in the best possible scenario, this would only delay the programme for a few years, while the human and geopolitical cost would inevitably be very high. Most experts believe that a military attack would be counterproductive, in terms both of its effectiveness in stopping the nuclear programme and weakening the central government, and in encouraging regime change.

Israel has publicly declared on many occasions that it does not exclude the use of military strikes, but that this would be a complex operation. While it does not require authorisation from the United States, it would need to be able to use the most highly sophisticated American anti-bunker bombs. It would also need to put together a fleet of around 100 bombers and refuelling planes. The results of such an action would be highly unpredictable, but would certainly have a significant impact on the Middle East and on the world economy. Whether the United States was to approve an Israeli offensive or not, some would conclude that the Israelis had acted with the agreement of the US, implicating the Americans in subsequent events.

The Iranians might react by sending long-range missiles into Israel from Iran and by having their regional allies Hezbollah and Hamas launch shorter-range rockets. This kind of bombardment would force Israel to carry out further air strikes against Lebanon and perhaps in Iran. Iran could also lay mines in the Strait of Hormuz, through which pass 40% of the world's tankers, which would cause oil prices to rise and oblige the Americans to intervene. De-escalation of the conflict would be difficult and costly.

Iran could also use its influence in Iraq and Afghanistan to mobilise political or militant groups against American targets in both countries. Military strikes could also play into the Iranian government's hands by further marginalising internal opposition movements or provoking an upsurge in nationalism able to overcome internal dissensions.

***V. IRANIAN DEFENCE AND NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT***

Iran did not attend the nuclear security summit organised by President Obama in **Washington on 12 and 13 April 2010**. 47 head of state and government leaders participated, including the declared nuclear states and the countries of the European Union.

**1. However, a few days later, on 17 and 18 April 2010, Iran held an international conference in Tehran on nuclear disarmament**

Its theme was "Nuclear Energy for All, Nuclear Weapons for No One". Among the participants from around sixty countries were the Foreign Ministers of Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Oman, Armenia, Turkmenistan, the Central African Republic and Swaziland, as well as Secretaries of State from a number of other countries.

Western states were absent.

In his speech to the conference, President Ahmadinejad advocated the creation of "an independent international group which plans and oversees nuclear disarmament and prevents proliferation".

He demanded that "States which possess, have used or threatened to use nuclear weapons be suspended from the IAEA". He proposed that the review of the NPT be undertaken by independent states not having nuclear weapons. The presence of nuclear powers, and the US in particular, would be an "obstacle to elaboration of a balanced treaty".

Moreover, it was stated to our Rapporteur at a meeting with the Deputy Defence Minister, accompanied by General Shakiba, International Affairs Representative, and Professor Mirzaï, Director General of the Department of Armaments, that Iran's defence doctrine did not include the development of chemical or biological weapons, which Iran has renounced.

Moreover, the Deputy Defence Minister condemned "the discrepancies which exist between theory and practice, in particular the policy of 'double standards'". He declared that "the concept of a hostile country" was contrary to the doctrine of Iran, which was "not aggressive and does not have enemies". But he claimed the right to "defensive dissuasion" without aggression and without the use of nuclear or chemical weapons. He explained in this regard that "dissuasion was not necessarily nuclear" and that "civil defence capabilities" existed, without specifying what these were.

Ambiguity persisted, but the idea of a **right** was asserted with insistence. The interview continued with a statement on "total nuclear disarmament", arguing that it should be a priority objective in this region and even insisting on regional de-nuclearisation.

## **2. The 2010 NPT conference in New York: 3 May 2010**

In 2005, this conference ended in failure.

Ahmadinejad was the only head of state to attend, and he gave a lengthy speech. Portraying his country as a victim, he courted the non-permanent members of the UN Security Council, Brazil and Turkey in particular.

The purpose of the New York conference is to strengthen the foundations of this treaty, which entered into force in 1970 and has 189 signatory countries. The treaty has been shaken on several occasions, notably by India and Pakistan's nuclear tests in 1998, by North Korea's accession to nuclear status in 2006, and more recently by Iranian provocations.

However, other countries including Ukraine, South Africa, Brazil, Argentina and Kazakhstan have agreed to dismantle their arsenals and to abandon their research programmes. And nuclear conflict, which has at times seemed possible (India and Pakistan) has been avoided.

Other southern countries criticise the inaction of the NPT and the policy of the major powers which demands that certain countries renounce nuclear power and weapons. This applies in particular to Egypt and to several non-aligned states. They call on Israel to clarify its state of nuclear ambiguity and join the NPT, and they wish to see the Middle East become a de-nuclearised zone.

Meanwhile, Barack Obama "dreams" of totally eliminating the world's nuclear weapons, and has signed the START Treaties with Russia, towards the reduction of strategic arsenals.

## ***VI. TOWARDS NEW SANCTIONS AGAINST IRAN – June 2010***

### **1. The Iran-Turkey-Brazil Agreement – Monday 17 May 2010**

These 3 states proposed a negotiated agreement to the UN on an aspect of the nuclear issue, that of uranium enrichment, in the very middle of the NPT conference.

Under this agreement, President Ahmadinejad agrees to ship out of the country 1200kg of Iran's low-enriched uranium (3.5%) representing, seemingly, most of its known stock. In exchange for this shipment, one year later Iran will receive 120kg of fuel enriched to 20% for its medical research reactor.

The agreement provides for Turkey carrying out the uranium enrichment, under IAEA supervision.

This was in fact a reprisal of the draft agreement reached in October 2009 by the IAEA, which proposed that Iran send 85% of its stock of uranium enriched to 3.5% to Russia and France and that it would receive in return fuel enriched to 20% for medical and non-military use.

Tehran had refused this initial offer and announced, moreover, that it has begun production of uranium enriched to 20%.

Following this unexpected agreement, western countries seemed to have been duped.

It is worth noting that the agreement says nothing with regard to five essential points:

- Where will such a large quantity of enriched uranium be found?
- Who will pay for it?
- What will happen to the uranium enriched to 3.5% delivered to Turkey?
- Will Iran retain an equivalent quantity of uranium? (i.e. 1200kg).
- What is to become of the five UN resolutions calling on Iran to suspend its uranium enrichment programme? (three of which already included the threat of sanctions)

Whatever one thinks of the details of this Turkish and Brazilian mediation, presented as an unsolicited “fait accompli”, by its very nature it impinges on the remit reserved for the five permanent members of the UN Security Council: the United States, Great Britain, France, Russia and China.

The message being sent by President Lula of Brazil and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey is clear: Brazil and Turkey see themselves as part of the 5+1 group, i.e. the five permanent members plus Germany, which deals with nuclear affairs in Iran.

The ambitions of both countries are legitimate, and the idea is potentially a positive one.

The initial and requisite reaction of the 5 was to applaud this initiative as “a step in the right direction”.

And yet, the 5 now consider this agreement to have been “a trap”, bitterly denounced by Hillary Clinton, and have quickly made it known that they are maintaining pressure on Iran.

## **2. A draft resolution was drawn up on 18 May 2010 by the 5 + 2 (Russia and China)**

This text took a harder line through new sanctions against the Islamic Republic, and won the backing of Russia and China.

This draft resolution is based on the resolution adopted in 2009 against North Korea.

It authorises the boarding and inspection of merchant ships suspected of containing nuclear weapons or materials being taken to Iran, and continues the embargo on arms and fighter planes, warships, attack helicopters and missiles.

These new sanctions also target commercial activities and certain Iranian financial institutions and accounts abroad, notably those linked to the “Revolutionary Guards”, considered to be the armed wing of the regime and an instrument of internal repression.

Nonetheless, Russia and China, who finally backed this resolution, have sought to protect their commercial and strategic interests in Iran. Beijing imports 12% of its oil needs. The United States kept China on board and negotiated, it seems, guarantees with Saudi Arabia.

**There were a number of twists in the proceedings, but American diplomacy succeeded in the end, apparently allowing President Obama to affirm his strategic capabilities.**

**The UN Security Council** should rule on this resolution before the end of June. Nine votes are required, and it seems likely that they will be obtained.

**But a further point is worrying for Iran: the fact that the text contains, in its declarative section, the next stage in the requirement linking the energy sector to the military nuclear sector: a general embargo on oil exports and petrol imports.**

## **3. A Turkish-Brazilian setback in Iran?**

**Turkey** is a neighbour and traditionally a friend of Iran, and conducts intense diplomatic activity in the region. It also wishes to be seen as a decisive regional power. Turkey remains a loyal ally of NATO, but it has clearly sought to play one last hand before the likely introduction of UN sanctions.

The advantages for Turkey in the medium and long-term of a democratic Iran are obvious and natural, and it wished to preserve them.

**The interference of Brazil and President Lula is a different matter.** This represents a more risky diplomatic gamble. Brazil is a “developing giant” which is currently a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council and a determined candidate for a permanent position.

It also illustrates its intention to gain a foothold in regions such as the Middle East which offer economic potential. Trade between Brazil and Iran has quadrupled in the last five years.

President Lula was hostile to sanctions against Iran, which could radicalise the regime and cause suffering to its people. He is also campaigning for Iran’s right to develop nuclear energy for civil purposes. He asserted that the proposals set out by the IAEA in October 2009 remained valid and claimed to be offering a “new solution” and “helping dialogue”. He also expected Iran to make a gesture, and it did so, unless we see this as a further manoeuvre on its part. The gamble was a risky one, and the West has seen it as a “trap”.

Western countries responded by arguing that the Islamic Republic had often lied with regard to this issue over the years and that its aim was to win time in which to pursue its secret programme.

As for Russia and China, they will surely not have appreciated Turkey and Brazil having made a deal with Tehran on enriched uranium without consulting them.

**Russia:**

Russia has long opposed measures which would have affected its strategic and commercial relations with Iran, where Lukoil and Gazprom have interests. Russia also built the Bushehr nuclear power plant and is by far the leading supplier of arms to Iran. During the period 1995-2005, more than 70% of arms imported into Iran came from Russia. Trade between the two countries currently amounts to 3 billion dollars, and is constantly increasing.

However, Russia makes no secret of the fact that it has a security interest in monitoring nuclear programmes in all its bordering or neighbouring countries. It does not fear a nuclear attack from Iran, in the event that it should obtain nuclear capability, but it believes that any conflict would potentially have disastrous consequences for its own interests.

**China:**

Trade between China and Iran has more than doubled in the course of the last decade, reaching 30 billion euros, and China recently resumes its direct deliveries of refined petrol to Iran. In just a few years, China has become an important supplier of arms to Iran. It also shares its expertise with Iran in relation to defence equipment.

Furthermore, China opposed a ban on investments in the energy sector in Iran. Yet China also wishes to improve its relations with the United States and is not willing to sacrifice its interests for the sake of its economic and political links with Iran.

**This is a matter to be followed with great interest.**

**4. As for the other powers in the region:**

**Egypt** probably has the region's most advanced nuclear infrastructure and experience. It has two research reactors and, since 1998, two fuel-producing facilities. The Inshas research centre is reported to have carried out a number of undeclared experiments which could be used to develop a military program. In addition, Cairo and Tripoli are said to have co-operated in this area until the Libyan programme ended in 2003. Egypt has thus laid the groundwork for a military nuclear programme, and its ore reserves would give it a certain degree of autonomy. In 1998, President Hosni Mubarak declared that "when the time comes and we need nuclear weapons, we will not hesitate". If Iran acquires nuclear weapons it is therefore likely that Egypt "will not hesitate". It considers Iran to be a threat and has been worried, since Hamas took control of Gaza, that it will develop its influence on its borders. The enmity between them has never been a secret: they do not have diplomatic relations and the Iranian government recently authorised the broadcasting of a film glorifying Anwar al-Sadat's assassins. Saudi nuclear capability would have similar effects and it can be safely assumed that Egypt would not like to be seen lagging behind in the Arab world: its national pride would be at stake. However, Egypt's finances do not leave the country with much room for manoeuvre, unless it obtains financial investment from the Gulf Emirates.

**Syria** only has an embryonic nuclear programme. The two research centres set up near Damascus are not very technically advanced. None the less, the country has extensive phosphate deposits suitable for large-scale uranium mining, and built a facility for this purpose which has been operational since 1996. The discovery of the Al Kibar reactor near Dayr az Zawr surprised most analysts. In April 2008 the US administration presented documents to Congress and the press showing that the site destroyed in September 2007 by the Israeli air force was a nuclear reactor built with help from North Korea.

**Saudi Arabia**, which is often diplomatically at odds with Iran, would not hesitate to react. The prestige Iran would gain in the Muslim world from possessing nuclear weapons would surely prompt Saudi Arabia to follow suit and cross this strategic threshold. At present, the country only has limited nuclear facilities: the Atomic Energy Research Institute created in 1988 and the nuclear engineering department at King Abdul Aziz University founded in 1977. It also has four laboratories which could contribute to a weapons-grade plutonium production programme. In 1988 it purchased a significant number of Chinese CSS-2 missiles. These are operational and can carry a payload of over two tonnes each. The quickest and most effective option would be to conclude an alliance with Pakistan. Since 2003, Pakistani officials have openly spoken of the possibility of setting up a mechanism similar to

NATO with Saudi Arabia in the nuclear arena. Some experts say the two countries are in a state of advanced dialogue, and Pakistani officials openly admit that the granting of a security guarantee to Saudi Arabia is entirely possible.

**Were Iran to acquire a nuclear bomb, nuclear proliferation in the entire Middle East would probably follow**, involving a multi-polar and nuclearised Middle East, in a region where there are numerous conflicts. A race behind the scenes is already underway according to some experts, and President Obama has already begun to combat the potential threat of “nuclear terrorism”. There is a genuine risk of misappropriation of sensitive materials in the Middle East.

#### *VII. IRAN AND THE POLICY OF COMBATING DRUGS ORIGINATING IN AFGHANISTAN*

One of Iran’s neighbours is the largest producer of drugs in the world, Afghanistan, and the shortest transit route for transportation of drugs to Europe crosses its territory. The result is a huge problem of trafficking and consumption.

In the fight against drugs, Iran cooperates with the UNODC, as well as various countries and NGOs.

At regional level, the Paris Agreement introduced tri-lateral co-operation between Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan through a joint planning organisation, and in 2009 four combined operations were conducted against trafficking networks.

Co-operation with other countries in the region, notably with Turkey and the countries of the southern Persian Gulf, has increased, and is also excellent with countries outside the region such as France, which recently supplied a team of sniffer dogs.

In addition to these activities, Iran has also adopted a special strategy for prevention, treatment and rehabilitation in order to contain the problem of drug addiction in the country.

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 40% of opiates produced in Afghanistan travel through Iran. However, figures and statistics from Iran based on drug seizures and production estimates show that a maximum of 30% of the opiates produced in Afghanistan pass through. Most seizures take place along the border or in neighbouring provinces. The remaining quantities are subsequently confiscated, consumed in the Iranian market, or smuggled into Europe via routes through Turkey and the northern Balkans.

Following numerous preventative measures against drug smuggling across the border between Afghanistan and Iran, opiates now cross primarily over the border with Pakistan. Iran is therefore seeking to negotiate with Pakistan to ensure better controls by Pakistani border guards.

Iran contributes to economic and social infrastructure reconstruction. During the last three decades, Iran has granted asylum to three million Afghans, offering them education, health services and security.

Between January 2002 and March 2008, Iran secured 310 million dollars in aid, which has been spent in its entirety.

The United States acknowledges that Iran is keen not to cause provocation. The US Defence Secretary, Robert Gates, describes Iran’s support for the Taliban as low-level. Experts believe that Iran does not appear to have supplied the explosive devices, able to pierce armoured vehicles, which are used by the Taliban against army tanks.

According to some non-Iranian specialists, Iran and the United States share long-term objectives in Afghanistan: the emergence of a stable government and the prevention of extremist groups filling a power vacuum there.

Iran certainly has an interest in border stability and would like to rid itself of the problem of refugees and drug traffickers.

One American specialist argues that, all things considered, Iran has acted in a reasonable manner with regard to Afghanistan, doing its best to protect the long borders it shares with this country, addressing the troubles which have broken out in border provinces, and forgoing participation in plots in Kabul.

Afghanistan is perhaps one area where the allied countries should engage with Iran in an open, determined and comprehensive manner. Strategic cooperation on Afghanistan is possible thanks to the existence of joint interests.

### **VIII. HUMAN RIGHTS IN IRAN**

Unfortunately, respect for human rights is at a very low level.

Amnesty International, in its 2009 report, provided a general summary of the situation, stating that, “The authorities maintained tight restrictions on freedom of expression, association and assembly. They cracked down on civil society activists, including women’s rights and other human rights defenders and minority rights advocates. Activists were arrested, detained and prosecuted, often in unfair trials, banned from travelling abroad, and had their meetings disrupted. Torture and other ill-treatment of detainees were common and committed with impunity. Sentences of flogging and amputation were reported. At least 346 people were known to have been executed, but the actual number was probably higher. Two men were executed by stoning. Those executed included eight juvenile offenders”.

Iran was criticised for rejecting important United Nations recommendations for improvement of the human rights situation in the country. In particular, these concern ending executions of juvenile offenders; guaranteeing fair trials; investigations into torture, including rape; and the release of people imprisoned for peacefully exercising their rights.

It notes in particular that following the Presidential elections of 12 June 2009 and the massive street protests it provoked, the government unleashed a widespread crackdown which is still ongoing.<sup>1</sup>

Thousands of people have been imprisoned for participating in street demonstrations, and the security forces have arrested a large number of government opponents and human rights advocates, who are being detained without charge, often in solitary confinement. Many are held without trial, and mistreated, including sexual violence and denial of justice through being unable to choose their defence. Detainees have been exposed to torture or forced to make false statements. The government has organised a series of show trials at which prominent political figures, journalists and commentators publicly “confessed” to having instigated post-election riots and plotted a “velvet revolution”.<sup>2</sup>

The Iranian authorities imprison journalists and editors for publishing critical views, and strictly control publishing and academic activities.

The government systematically blocks Iranian and foreign websites that carry political news and analysis.

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) reported that at least 35 journalists were being held in Iran on 1 April 2010, and that the authorities were continuing their relentless persecution of the media. A group of 18 journalists were temporarily freed, but under threat of a return to prison.

Many imprisoned journalists are under physical and psychological pressure to “admit to crimes they have not committed”.

In a statement on 22 March 2010, the European Union expressed its “grave concern over measures taken by the Iranian authorities to prevent its citizens from freely communicating and receiving information through TV, radio satellite broadcasting and the internet. Deliberate interference by

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<sup>1</sup> Human Rights Watch: World Report 2009. Amnesty International: Report 2009, Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran

<sup>2</sup> Human Rights Watch: World Report 2009. Amnesty International: Report 2009, Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

jamming of satellite broadcasting has affected numerous radio and TV services, including European services, transmitted by EUTELSAT. In addition, the Iranian authorities regularly prevent their citizens from freely accessing, communicating and receiving information on the internet, and restrict or block mobile telecommunications". The Council added that: "The jamming of TV and radio satellite broadcasting runs counter to the undertakings given by the Islamic Republic of Iran itself in the context of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). Despite complaints made to the Iranian authorities through the ITU they have not put an end to this jamming, which originates on Iranian territory". The statement finally concluded: "The EU therefore calls on the Iranian authorities to stop the jamming of satellite broadcasting. The EU is determined to pursue these issues and to act with a view to putting an end to this unacceptable situation. The EU calls on Iran to ensure the right to freedom of expression as set out in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights that the Islamic Republic of Iran has signed and ratified".

It also noted that in Iran, there are more executions, generally after an unfair or politically-motivated trial where rights to legal counsel are not available, than in any other country apart from China. Iran has the highest rate of death sentences handed down to juvenile offenders.

Since 2005, the Iranian government has banned experts from the United Nations Commission on Human Rights from carrying out visits to assess alleged cases of human rights violations.

## ***IX. CONCLUSION***

By reaching out to the Iranian government and declaring in his Cairo speech in 2009 that the United States was prepared to engage with Iran in global dialogue, without preconditions, President Obama made a significant gesture, but without success.

Today the Iranian regime is increasingly pursuing authoritarian, repressive and nuclear policies, following the June 2009 elections which maintained President Ahmadinejad in power as the result of widespread fraud.

The prospect of a nuclear Iran in the short to medium term gives rise to many concerns. And the Iranian regime, as is the case with most dictatorships, needs external crises to escape its internal problems.

It will provoke attacks and be able to exploit them to reunite a proud population willing to defend its country even if they condemn the regime. This is the trap. Ahmadinejad has resisted public fury only through the support given to him by the Supreme Leader, the iron fist of the Pasdaran and the clientelist network he carefully maintains.

Western countries must avoid the Iraqi-style process which appears imminent.

With caution and vigilance, we must understand, beyond the threats, propaganda and bluff, the "operational nuclear reality of the Iranian bomb" before entering the final stages.

Iran's radical leaders despise the west and Israel. But they love their country and their position of power. And they are also rational people.

For all that, we must appreciate that the nuclearisation of Iran would lead to that of the entire region, and this would represent a real threat to peace in the region and across the world.

The economic sanctions voted on five occasions by the Security Council have remained relatively mild and have not yet had any effect on the behaviour of the country's leaders. Embargos tend to penalise populations, but do not dislodge regimes. Examples in the past include Iraq and Cuba, among others.

### **So, how can the Iranian regime be persuaded to abandon its "military nuclear" ambition?**

Iran's agreement with Turkey and Brazil may have been a "positive step" in the right direction, unless it was no more than a bluff.

Its political context, being presented as a “fait accompli” without prior agreement with Russia, in particular, and potentially China too, meant that this operation was doomed to failure. It provoked an immediate reaction from the United States and the elaboration of a new, stricter sanctions plan.

It remains to be seen what damage is caused and what consequences arise from the latest developments in this new stage, and from this downward spiral.

Is there any room left for dialogue? And who, now, would act as mediator?

**Perhaps it is through a broader strategy, through efforts to create a peaceful and lasting order in the Middle East and surrounding region, based on a comprehensive peace agreement to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with the participation of Syria and Lebanon, that the influence and weight of Iran may be counterbalanced.**

Does Iran have the capacity, in this context, to choose the path of diplomatic cooperation?

Only time will tell...

June 2010

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Vice-President of the parliamentary Assembly of WEU