

The International Community's attitude towards Iran's Nuclear Program

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ABSTRACT: The growth of Iran's nuclear program, especially following the 1979 Islamic Revolution, has become a key topic in global politics, attracting the focus of numerous international stakeholders. This article explores the international community's stance on Iran's nuclear program, focusing on the diplomatic engagement, regional security concerns, and the broader geopolitical implications. The piece highlights key milestones in the diplomatic process, notably the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and examines the role of major international players, including the United States, the European Union, and regional stakeholders like Israel and Saudi Arabia. The article discusses the ongoing challenges regarding Iran's nuclear ambitions and the international community's efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, stressing the complexity of the issue and its significance in both regional and global contexts. Despite the diplomatic strides made through agreements such as the JCPOA, the nuclear program remains a critical issue in international diplomacy, with unresolved questions regarding its future trajectory.

Keywords: Nuclear program, international diplomacy, JCPOA, United Nations, IAEA, Middle East, Sanctions.

I. INTRODUCTION

Iran's nuclear program, particularly since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, has been a critical issue in international relations, drawing significant attention due to its potential impact on global and regional security. This article examines the international responses to Iran's nuclear ambitions, focusing on the roles of key stakeholders, such as the United Nations and regional powers, and the strategies employed to address security concerns. Through an analysis of diplomatic efforts like the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the paper explores the complexities of managing Iran's nuclear program within a shifting geopolitical context.

II. DISCUSSION

The development of Iran's nuclear program, particularly following the 1979 Islamic Revolution, has consistently garnered the attention of the international community. The pursuit of a nation's foreign policy is significantly shaped by the international environment in which it operates. Specifically, the external perceptions of the international order—within which states, international actors (such as intergovernmental organizations, trade organizations, and other entities), and various geopolitical dynamics interact—play a crucial role in determining the direction of a state's foreign policy. As Gideon Rose articulates in his article *Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy*[1] "The scope and ambitions of a nation's foreign policy are primarily determined by its position within the international system." This statement underscores the notion that a nation's geopolitical positioning and the broader international context are pivotal factors in shaping its foreign policy trajectory[2]. Based on the United States' National Security Strategy, two key approaches emerge regarding Iran's nuclear program: the first is the pressure exerted by the international community, and the second is the United States' commitment to protect the state of Israel in the Middle East. The international community, particularly the United States and its allies, has consistently expressed concerns over Iran's nuclear ambitions, viewing them as a potential threat to regional and global stability. This has led to the implementation of various diplomatic and economic measures, including sanctions and negotiations, aimed at limiting Iran's nuclear development.[3].

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Despite the rigorous policies implemented in response to Iran's nuclear program, the international community's approach has consistently been distinguished by diplomatic engagement. In this context, economic sanctions serve as a critical diplomatic tool, aimed at addressing security concerns on both regional and global scales. Iran's efforts to develop nuclear technologies have, from the outset, provoked significant tensions, and ongoing debates persist among global powers, regional actors, and international organizations. This section primarily explores the multifaceted responses of the international community to Iran's nuclear ambitions, with a particular focus on the perspectives of key stakeholders and the strategies employed to mitigate Iran's nuclear program as a central issue of international security[4].

Iran's nuclear program has consistently been subject to the oversight and control of the United Nations (UN) and its specialized agency, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). As a signatory to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Iran is entitled to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes; however, it is also obligated to ensure that its nuclear program remains strictly civilian in nature, meaning that nuclear energy should be used solely for electricity generation. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), tasked with monitoring compliance with the NPT, has frequently found itself at the center of debates and discussions regarding Iran's nuclear program. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has also played a significant role in addressing Iran's nuclear program. Since 2006, the UNSC has adopted several resolutions imposing sanctions on Iran, demanding the cessation of uranium enrichment and ensuring the peaceful nature of its nuclear program. These sanctions aimed to exert pressure on Iran to engage in negotiations and prevent the potential development of nuclear weapons[5]. Between 2006 and 2015, the UNSC adopted 13 resolutions, calling for the Islamic Republic of Iran to halt uranium enrichment and the construction of a heavy-water reactor. Unfortunately, these resolutions did not yield the desired results.

The critical turning point in the international community's engagement with Iran's nuclear program came with the P5+1 agreement. As previously mentioned, the P5+1 agreement involved the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (the United States, Russia, China, the United Kingdom, and France), plus Germany, in negotiations with Iran, aimed at achieving a diplomatic resolution to the nuclear conflict. The culmination of these negotiations was the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), signed on July 14, 2015. The JCPOA was hailed as a pivotal agreement in the field of nuclear non-proliferation. Under the terms of the agreement, Iran agreed to limit its nuclear program in exchange for the easing of international sanctions. The agreement included provisions that Iran would restrict its uranium enrichment capabilities, reduce its stockpile of enriched uranium, and grant the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) access to inspect its nuclear facilities. On July 20, 2015, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 2231[6], which was ratified by the countries involved in the agreement. The primary aim of this resolution was to ensure international control over Iran's nuclear program and its ballistic missile production. It is also noteworthy that, despite the fact that many in the international community viewed the agreement as a diplomatic success, it faced opposition, particularly from countries such as Israel and Saudi Arabia, who expressed concerns about Iran's intentions and the perceived inadequacy of the agreement.

When discussing the international community's involvement in Iran's nuclear program, it is impossible to overlook the role played by the European Union (EU) and its pivotal contribution to the negotiations surrounding the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Despite the United States' withdrawal from the agreement, the European Union remains committed to preserving the accord and consistently emphasizes its broader interests in maintaining regional stability and advancing nuclear non-proliferation. The EU's approach is characterized by a balance between diplomatic engagement with Iran and the use of sanctions to ensure the goals of nuclear non-proliferation are met [7]. Regional stakeholders in the Middle East, particularly Israel and Saudi Arabia, have consistently criticized Iran's nuclear program. Israel, viewing Iran as the primary security threat in the region, frequently expresses concern that any nuclear capabilities developed by Iran could be used against the Jewish state. Saudi Arabia, on the other hand, fears the potential destabilizing effect that a nuclear-armed Iran could have on the security architecture of the Middle East. These countries have consistently advocated for more stringent measures against Iran, including sanctions, and have even considered military intervention targeting Iran's nuclear facilities and associated sites, [8].

The international concern and reactions to Iran's nuclear program indicate that it has both regional and global implications. Within the Middle Eastern region, Iran seeks to ensure its national sovereignty through its nuclear ambitions, aiming for technological self-sufficiency that caters to its population while simultaneously demonstrating to its neighbors that it is the dominant and influential power in the region. The Islamic Republic of Iran also strives to emphasize the potential deterrent value of its nuclear capabilities within the context of its security challenges, particularly concerning its adversaries, including Israel and Saudi Arabia, as well as, on a global scale, its relationship with the United States. For Iran, the development of nuclear technology serves both as a military-political tool and a symbol of its status as a regional power. On the global stage, Iran's nuclear program has raised questions concerning the spread of nuclear technology and the enforcement of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Critics of Iran's

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nuclear weapons argue that the continuation and expansion of Iran's nuclear program could inspire, motivate, and encourage other states to pursue similar programs, thereby undermining the international community's global efforts toward nuclear non-proliferation[9].

Currently, Iran's growing nuclear capabilities, coupled with the increasing instability in the region and the unresolved issues surrounding the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), underscore the intricate and complex nature of international diplomacy. Despite these challenges, one thing remains clear: the international community's response to Iran's nuclear program will inevitably be shaped by regional dynamics and the broader global security environment. While multilateral diplomacy remains the primary approach, the effectiveness of sanctions, the role of non-governmental actors, and the potential for military intervention continue to be subjects of debate concerning the nuclear program. There is no unequivocal or definitive solution regarding how to address Iran's nuclear ambitions[10].

In summary, the international community's stance on Iran's nuclear program clearly reflects the complex interplay of diplomatic engagement, regional and global security issues, and geopolitical confrontations. Iran's potential development of nuclear technologies has led to nearly half a century of significant global discussions and debates, particularly in the context of nuclear non-proliferation efforts, regional stability, and Iran's broader strategic ambitions[11]. Although international diplomatic efforts, such as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), sought to alleviate the challenges and tensions surrounding Iran's nuclear ambitions, it can be said that this diplomatic achievement has, at least for now, been halted. Consequently, it can be asserted that this issue will remain a focal point of international concern in the years to come. The future actions of the international community and global actors regarding this matter will be pivotal in shaping the nuclear non-proliferation discourse and determining the future security architecture within and beyond within the Middle East and beyond, amidst a changing and complex geopolitical landscape[12].

III. CONCLUSION

Thus, the presented article examines the international community's stance on Iran's nuclear program and provides significant insights into their corresponding reactions. Iran's nuclear program has always been under the scrutiny and oversight of the United Nations (UN) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Iran is permitted to use nuclear technologies for peaceful purposes; however, the country is obligated to ensure that its program remains strictly for civilian purposes. With the involvement of the international community, the most significant decision made regarding this program to date is the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (P5+1 agreement, JCPOA). This was one of the pivotal diplomatic steps taken to mitigate the impact of Iran's nuclear program. Discussions surrounding Iran's nuclear aspirations remain relevant today. The issue concerns not only the security of the Middle East but also global nuclear non-proliferation efforts.

In conclusion, it can be unequivocally stated that Iran's nuclear program remains a significant challenge in international politics, with decisions related to it encompassing both regional and global security concerns.

ABBREVIATION LIST

- **IAEA** - International Atomic Energy Agency
- **JCPOA** - Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
- **NPT** - Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
- **UN** - United Nations
- **UNSC** - United Nations Security Council
- **EU** - European Union
- **P5+1** - The five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) plus Germany. Those Countries that the participating in the agreement regarding JCPOA.
- **US** - United States (*mentioned indirectly as part of UNSC and JCPOA*).

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