

ORF OCCASIONAL PAPER #63

APRIL 2015



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About the Author

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Introduction

Even as India's position, of not seeing a nuclear Iran, has been consistent, the formulation of policies to meet this objective has gone through various phases. India has ultimately striven to pursue its national interest, which has been the maintenance of peace, tranquillity and stability in West Asia.¹ This definition of national interest stems from numerous factors, including the number of Indian nationals living in West Asia; the remittances which India receives from the region; the region's vast petroleum reserves; and also its geographical proximity to the Indian sub-continent. India sees the spread of nuclear weapons as a destabilising agent for any region and in particular West Asia. Therefore, while India has supported Iran on its right to pursue a peaceful nuclear programme, it has stressed upon Iran that it should adhere to its obligations as a Non-Nuclear Weapon State (NNWS) under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

The process of understanding Indian policies on nuclear developments in Iran, without doubt, has to begin with an examination of India's own position as a nuclear power in the global nuclear order. A detailed study of Indian policies and decisions concerning the Iranian nuclear programme, however, reveals a number of other critical factors, which have influenced policy makers in New Delhi in varying degrees. These include India's historic relations with Iran, trade of petroleum resources

and India's domestic energy security, and the civil nuclear cooperation deal which India negotiated with the US in the past decade.

This paper briefly examines these critical factors, along with India's overall approach to the issue of nuclear non-proliferation. The following section examines Indian approach to nuclear developments in Iran and studies how each of the factors has influenced this approach. It concludes with the argument that while various factors have had an unavoidable effect on Indian policies, the decision-making was largely driven by India's urge to define and serve its national interest with influences from some of the unavoidable underlying factors.

Critical Factors Influencing Indian Policies towards Iran

There have been several factors that have influenced decision-making in New Delhi on nuclear developments in Iran. This section identifies five of these factors shaping Indian policies towards Iran in the nuclear realm.

Indian Position on Nuclear Non-Proliferation

While India has refused to sign the NPT and pursued developing its own nuclear arsenal, it nevertheless has seen proliferation as a threat to international stability.² India has argued that it had to develop its nuclear weapons programme only due to tremendous security pressures. At the same time, it has maintained high standards of safety and control to counter any form of proliferation of sensitive matter and/or technology. This responsible nature is further linked with the Indian approach to the utility of nuclear weapons.

It was in the 1980s that Indian strategic thinkers such as Lt. General K. Sundarji and K. Subrahmanyam started examining the role of nuclear weapons in the Indian context.³ Ashley Tellis, of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, argues that the Indian discourse on the use of nuclear weapons focused primarily on their political rather than their military utility, on deterrence rather than war-fighting capabilities.⁴

Moreover, even as India crossed the Rubicon in 1998 by conducting full-fledged nuclear tests, it insisted that this sovereign decision did not violate any legal commitment.⁵ There had been a clear message already in 1996 when India refused to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). Its testing of nuclear weapons thus was not in breach of any international obligation. Even the then Minister of External Affairs, Jaswant Singh, had argued, “India's May 1998 tests violated no international treaty obligations”.⁶

India's position on the political, not military, utility of nuclear weapons, however, as Rajesh Rajagopalan argues, did not apply to India's views about how other states may use nuclear weapons.⁷ In fact, this view has largely been pessimistic, which consequentially means that India does not see other nations being as responsible as itself. Indian officials underlined the argument that nuclear weapons in the hands of *irresponsible* powers had an effect of destabilising the region.⁸ Though this argument primarily reflected Indian understanding of the Pakistani nuclear weapons programme, it also applied, to an extent, to the nuclear programmes of other nations. This is the reason why India refused to help other nations, such as Libya, with transfer of sensitive nuclear material and technology.⁹

When it came to Iran, India has again held the position of opposing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. However, there are factors, other than the general Indian approach to nuclear proliferation, which have influenced Indian policies toward Iran and have been briefly discussed in the following sections.

Historic and NAM Relations with Iran

One factor that affects India's policy towards Iran is the history it shares with the latter. Shiites from Persia once ruled large parts of India. Persian was the language of administration in large parts of India and remained so late into the British colonial era.¹⁰ Be it the spread of Persian literature and poetry across India or the influence of Persia in the fields of art and architecture, the historic relations between India and Iran are strong.¹¹ Another aspect of this factor is that of the Shiites. India, according to a study conducted by the Pew Research Centre in 2009, has an estimated Shia population of 16 to 24 million, the third-largest population of Shiites in any country in the world.¹² Even though the relative percentage of Shiites compared to Sunni Muslims in India is small, the Shiites are a sizeable number and continue to retain their historic relations with Iran.

India's association with Iran in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) should also be taken note of. While India has striven to develop strategic partnerships in the face of the changing balance of power in Asia and the world, its associations with some of these countries have been viewed with scepticism by some domestic actors. To them, these strategic partnerships reflect a digression from India's traditional non-aligned approach. It must however, be noted that while India led the NAM during the Cold War, it simultaneously developed relations with the two superpowers, whenever its interests converged with either of the two.

India's association with the NAM and its other member states, therefore, requires a more nuanced understanding, which remains beyond the scope of this paper. How India's historic relationship with Iran and their association with the NAM affected Indian policies will be examined subsequently.

Indo-US Civil Nuclear Deal

A major factor influencing Indian policies in the last decade has been the India-US civil nuclear deal. The 123 Agreement drafted and concluded in the US Hyde Act of 2006 states that the US President will report and certify annually to the US Congress on whether India's foreign policy is 'congruent to that of the US' and more specifically on whether India is joining US efforts in isolating and even imposing sanctions on Iran.¹³ Section 103 (b) 4 on “Statements of Policy” directs the policies of the US to:

“Secure India's full and active participation in United States efforts to dissuade, isolate, and if necessary, sanction and contain Iran for its efforts to acquire weapons of mass destruction, including a nuclear weapons capability (including the capability to enrich or process nuclear materials), and the means to deliver weapons of mass destruction”.¹⁴

The agreement's impact on shaping Indian policy towards the Iranian nuclear programme is critical. The India-US civil nuclear cooperation was pegged with the case of India being a responsible nuclear power. Thus, while the cooperation formally required India to assist the US on nuclear developments in Iran, India also had the moral obligation to do the same as a responsible partner of the global non-proliferation regime.

Energy Dependency

India meets up to 80 per cent of its crude oil needs and 25 per cent of its natural gas needs through imports. Iran, which has the world's fourth-largest proven oil reserve and second-largest natural gas reserve, therefore, becomes a natural trading partner.¹⁵ Also known is that many of the Indian refineries are designed for Iranian crude oil. While India has attempted to disconnect the Iranian nuclear issue from its crude oil exports, the US and EU see the massive wealth that Iran earns via export of crude oil and natural gas as the backbone of Tehran's nuclear programme and have, therefore, introduced economic sanctions on such trade.¹⁶ This has definitely had an impact on trade of petroleum products between India and Iran. It is important to note, however, that while India, though affected, has the choice of diversifying its crude oil and natural gas imports to other nations, Iran, on the other hand, has a big market in India to export its crude petroleum resources to. Therefore, while India and its private sector entities felt the impact of trade and economic sanctions imposed by the US and the EU, the pressure has been much higher on Iran as it stood to lose a big energy market in India.

Iran's Clandestine Nuclear Programme

Another crucial factor has been the manner in which Iran has developed some of its nuclear capabilities. Iran's clandestine enrichment and reprocessing activities have been of particular concern. In June 2003, the IAEA Director General came up with reports which stated that Iran had been conducting undeclared sensitive enrichment and reprocessing activities.¹⁷ Following its investigations, the IAEA adopted a resolution on 26 November 2003 calling upon Iran to suspend such clandestine nuclear activities in violation of its IAEA safeguards agreement.¹⁸ This

was a consensus resolution. To address increasing international concerns, Iran signed an Additional Protocol in December 2003 with the IAEA that allowed the IAEA to carry out inspections. Soon after, IAEA inspectors revealed that Iran had engaged in multiple undeclared nuclear-related sensitive activities, violating Iran's safeguard agreement with the IAEA.¹⁹

On 24 September 2005, the IAEA Board of Governors adopted a resolution that noted Iran as non-compliant with its IAEA safeguards agreement.²⁰ Thereafter, after Iran announced the resumption of centrifugal research and development, the IAEA officially approached the UN Security Council in February 2006 to consider sanctions to bring Iran into compliance.²¹ Two days later, Iran declared suspension of the Additional Protocol.²² This chain of actions prompted appropriate response from the international community, including India. It also significantly affected New Delhi's view on the nature of Iran's nuclear programme and policies.

Assessing Indian Position on Nuclear Developments in Iran

India sees nuclear proliferation as a threat to the stability of the international system. It is quite another matter of debate whether one categorises the Iranian nuclear programme as an issue of nuclear proliferation or not. One of the important questions in this debate is whether or not the Iranian nuclear programme is being run just for peaceful purposes. While the US, Israel and Saudi Arabia, among other nations, have accused Iran of using the technology and material it has availed of as an NNWS under the NPT for the development of nuclear weapons, Iran has always maintained the position that its nuclear programme is meant for peaceful purposes only. Though the issue is critical as it could jeopardise the trust associated with the present non-

proliferation regime, it is outside the scope of this paper to examine the consequences of the risks that arise either due to lack of trust among nations, or perhaps the shortcomings of the current nuclear non-proliferation regime. However, for the purpose of understanding the Indian position, it becomes important to examine the Indian perception of the nature of the Iranian nuclear programme and this shall be dealt with subsequently in this section.

Another important question is whether a nuclear armed-Iran would lead to other countries in West Asia going nuclear too.²³ To prevent any such eventuality, way back in 1974, the UN General Assembly had called for a Middle East Nuclear-Weapon Free Zone (MENWFZ). It is interesting to note that it was Iran, along with Egypt, that proposed the establishment of an MENWFZ, due to its concerns over the Israeli nuclear programme. Though the context has changed today, there has been no significant progress towards the establishment of an NWFZ in the Middle East. For a long time, this was due to the Israeli-Arab conflict and Israel's possession of nuclear weapons. Although Israel's official position is that it will not be the first country to introduce nuclear weapons in the Middle East, many intelligence sources have confirmed that Israel does in fact possess nuclear weapons.²⁴

As such an NWFZ in the Middle East continues to remain a matter of choice for the nations involved and their “free exercise of sovereign rights”.²⁵ As far as India is concerned, the general idea of a nuclear weapons free zone is not congruent with its own security concerns in South Asia. Much like its call for an MENWFZ, the General Assembly of the UN has also, for every year from 1974 to 1997, called for an NWFZ in South Asia – which India firmly rejected with a no vote.²⁶ Such a zone was also endorsed in the 2000 NPT Review Conference.²⁷ India's

stand has always been that such a zone would not address its security concerns which flow from the existence of nuclear weapons elsewhere, and it has, therefore, always voted against such resolutions. India maintains the position that an NWFZ remains subject to the sovereign choice of the nations involved. It also abstained from voting on the draft of resolution 64/387 of 27 October 2009 at the UNGA calling for an MENWFZ.²⁸ This was due to that resolution insisting on universal applicability of the full scope IAEA safeguards, as well as the Additional Protocol.

India's position on the nature of the Iranian nuclear programme significantly shifted in mid-2000s. This shift was specifically with regard to the first aspect of the debate mentioned at the beginning of this section: “whether or not the Iranian nuclear programme was being run just for peaceful purposes?” India and Iran signed the Tehran Declaration in April 2001 and the Delhi Declaration in January 2003.²⁹ The Tehran Declaration had stated that:

“[b]oth sides express concern over restrictions on exports to developing countries of material, equipment and technology for *peaceful purposes* and reaffirm, in this context, the right of States to development, research, production and use of technology, material and equipment for such purposes”.³⁰

Gulshan Dietl argues that this statement was directed against the American proliferation concerns over the nature of Iran's nuclear programme.³¹ New Delhi's remark over the US plans to impose restrictions on the Iranian nuclear programme, specifically at the Bushehr plant, highlights that India, at the time, saw Iran's nuclear programme being run only for peaceful purposes. The Delhi

Declaration of January 2003, during Iranian President Muhammad Khatam'si visit, reiterated the concerns over US' restrictive endeavours. This Indian view, however, was strongly questioned in mid-2003, around the time the IAEA Director General came up with reports which stated that Iran had been conducting undeclared sensitive enrichment and reprocessing activities.³² The subsequent chain of actions related to enrichment of uranium by Iran forced India to take a position, which it has not been keen on previously.

During the same time, India began a series of negotiations with the US which were concluded in June 2004, when President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee signed the 'Next Step for Strategic Partnership.' The following year saw the conclusion of more such agreements, such as the 'New Framework for the US-India Defence Relationship' and the 'Global Democracy Initiative'. A Defence Policy Group was institutionalised in June 2005 that consisted of the senior leadership of the defence establishments of both countries. A major milestone in the history of India-US bilateral relations was reached on 2 March 2006, when the US President and the Indian Prime Minister signed the 'Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement' or the 123 Agreement.

As already mentioned, the US Hyde Act which anchored the 123 Agreement required India to support the US in containing Iranian efforts towards acquiring nuclear weapons. Both – suspicions about the nature of Iran's nuclear programme and the commitment given to the US during the negotiation of the civil nuclear deal, to assist it in the goal of preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon – got materialised as India's vote in favour of the resolution sponsored by the United Kingdom, France and Germany (the EU-3) at the IAEA which called for 'implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement in the Islamic

Republic of Iran' on 24 September 2005 and India's subsequent position on nuclear developments in Iran.

Domestically, the Indian government faced protests for its decision to vote against Iran. The Left accused it of ranging itself with the US and Western powers and breaking ranks with the non-aligned countries.³³ The government, however, had etched its rationale for its vote quite succinctly in the explanatory note. India maintained that it recognised Iran's right to pursue a peaceful nuclear energy programme. Though the note registered that the resolution was “not justified in finding Iran non-compliant in the context of Article XII-C of the IAEA Statute,”³⁴ India called upon Iran to adhere to its non-proliferation commitments made as an NNWS under the NPT and stressed that more diplomatic efforts were needed to establish greater cooperation between the IAEA and Iran.³⁵ Following the same rationale, India again voted against Iran in the February 2006 resolution, albeit with no explanation of the vote, following which the IAEA report was sent to the UN Security Council. The UNSC, in turn, followed up by imposing sanctions on Iran. However India, not being on the Security Council, was not party to the imposition of sanctions on Iran.

India argued that its position on the Iranian nuclear issue would not hamper its ties with Iran. The government explained that “the vote in favour of the Resolution should not be interpreted as in any way detracting the traditionally close and friendly relations we enjoy with Iran”.³⁶ Prime Minister Manmohan Singh reiterated the same position and further added that India “intends to further strengthen and expand [the] multifaceted ties with Iran to mutual benefit”.³⁷ In February 2007, then External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee visited Iran in an attempt to revitalise ties, which had definitely been affected by the Indian

votes of 2005 and 2006 against Teheran at the IAEA. On the nuclear issue, however, Mukherjee reiterated the position India had taken while voting in the favour of the IAEA resolutions. He mentioned that:

“[Iran] is a signatory to the NPT, so it has certain obligations under the treaty. Therefore, [the Indian] position is that the issue should be resolved through dialogue. It cannot be resolved through coercive methods”.³⁸

India thus attempted to obliquely disconnect the issue of the Iranian nuclear programme from other aspects of its relations with Iran. Even on the nuclear issue, while India was opposed to the idea of Iran acquiring nuclear weapons and thus stressed Iran's commitments to the NPT, it maintained the position that only diplomacy could succeed in establishing greater cooperation between Iran and the IAEA, and that methods of coercion should be avoided. The position, as Sujit Dutta argues, did not give out any “confusing signals” to either the US or Iran, and helped India consolidate its efforts on establishing civil nuclear cooperation with the US, on one hand, as well as highlight the strategic gains Iran could reap by resolving its nuclear issue peacefully on the other.³⁹

The situation, however, got complicated at both ends for India. On the one hand, India agreed to launch the advanced Israeli spy satellite, Teqsar, from Sriharikota in early 2008. The satellite, capable of capturing high quality images at night and in extreme weather, was launched to boost Israel's intelligence gathering capabilities with the specific aim of targeting Iranian nuclear sites and military activities.⁴⁰ While India defended its position by stating that the exercise was carried out just for

technological and commercial purposes, Iran registered a strong protest, saying the decision “could also have political implications”.⁴¹

On the other hand, India struggled with the American and the general Western approach to the Iranian nuclear issue. While India tried to disconnect the nuclear issue from other aspects of its relations with Iran, including oil and gas trade, the US, Israel and other Western nations saw Iran's oil and gas wealth as a pillar for the sustenance of Iran's nuclear programme and, therefore, sanctioned its trade in order to pressurise Iran to cooperate.⁴² The UNSC has come up with several resolutions, including 1696 (2006), 1737 (2006), 1747 (2007), 1803 (2008), 1835 (2008), 1887 (2009), 1929 (2010), 1984 (2011), 2049 (2012) and 2105 (2013) which imposed sanctions against Iran.⁴³ These UNSC sponsored sanctions, however, have had no impact on India's crude oil and natural gas imports from Iran, as they primarily targeted activities such as development and supply of conventional arms, ballistic missile technologies, and financial companies which were directly linked with the Iranian nuclear programme. Thus, India faced no commercial challenges as such in abiding by these sanctions.

The UNSC resolutions, however, did expand the space for the US and other European nations to impose their own tougher domestic sanctions, which targeted the oil and natural gas trade with Iran. Although the spokesperson of the Indian External Affairs Ministry, in 2012, was quoted saying that India “does not feel obligated to comply with unilateral sanctions that undermine Indian commercial interests,”⁴⁴ several Indian public and private entities, by then, had already felt the impact of the US imposed sanctions. India was pressured to cut Iranian crude oil imports by 10-15 per cent. The refining companies found it difficult to continue with deals due to US sanctions on financing,

shipping and insurance.⁴⁵ Consequentially, by May 2012, Iraq had “toppled” Iran as the second largest crude oil supplier to India.⁴⁶ The pressure from Washington also resulted in the stalling of the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project, despite India claiming the reasons to be that of security and pricing.⁴⁷

India, nonetheless, has striven to formulate its policies with some degree of strategic freedom. Then Defence Minister A. K. Antony was quoted saying that India's relations with the US and with Iran were independent of each other.⁴⁸ Despite immense pressure from Washington to call off the gas pipeline deal, the Indian government did not officially do so and intends to pursue the project once the situation normalises.⁴⁹ A US Congressional report also accepts that:

“India-Iran relations are unlikely to derail the further development of a US-India global partnership. At the same time, given a clear Indian interest in maintaining positive ties with Iran – especially in the area of energy commerce – New Delhi is unlikely to abandon its relationship with Tehran or to accept dictations on the topic from external powers”.⁵⁰

Harsh V. Pant and Julie M. Super, writing on “India's tightrope walk between Iran and the United States,” argue that any decline in India's relations with Iran will be less a response to US sanctions and more a measure to counter Iranian actions that are against Indian national interests, and that Iran still has to prove its reliability as a strategic partner and stable energy provider to India.⁵¹ In this light, it is important to underline that while India has already diversified its petroleum imports, Iran is under greater pressure to cooperate on the nuclear issue.

Otherwise, as a consequence of the sanctions, it stands to lose out on a big energy market in India, apart from other major oil-importing nations. In any case, India has clarified its position explicitly and consistently that it would not want Iran to acquire nuclear weapons.

The interim nuclear deal between Iran and P5+1, implemented on 20 January 2014, comes at the right time for India as it eases pressures that India faced from the US and its western allies vis-à-vis the economic and trade sanctions. On the day the interim deal came into force, a government official commented that “any improvement in Iran's economy would be useful.” He further noted that “India-Iran ties did not gain much traction because of sanctions. The withdrawal of the sanctions will benefit the ties”.⁵² There are some who believe India could play the role of interlocutor in ensuring that the two-stage deal is implemented successfully, by using 'its good offices to enhance the trust between the US and Iran'.⁵³ India, however, has refrained from getting involved, as this could upset a military and strategic partner in Israel and an energy partner in Saudi Arabia, who are apprehensive of the consequences of the deal. Nevertheless, India continues to support the deal from outside, considering that the process is consistent with Indian calls for diplomatic solutions to the Iranian nuclear issue.

The framework agreement for a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which Iran and P5+1 arrived at on 2 April 2015, is seen as a major break-through.⁵⁴ Minor issues concerning the details of the framework, however, continue. For instance, the factsheet released by the US government includes details on the numbers of centrifuges and the amount of stockpiles that Iran will be allowed to retain post 30 June deadline for the JCPOA.⁵⁵ Iran, however, has neither denied nor accepted those figures and its statements remain ambiguous.⁵⁶ While the

deal remains subject to the condition, “nothing is agreed until everything is agreed,” even the smallest of the bones of contention can delay the negotiations further.

At the same time, a no-deal appears out of question given that the parties engaged in the negotiations would not want the efforts made so far to go for a toss. India too has welcomed the framework agreement. The official spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs called the framework agreement a “significant step”.⁵⁷ He also added that:

“India has always maintained that the Iranian nuclear issue should be resolved peacefully by respecting Iran's right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy as also the international community's strong interest in the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme”.⁵⁸

Conclusion

India's position on nuclear developments in Iran has thus been consistent. It supports Iran's right to pursue a peaceful nuclear programme, but it would not support Iran's attempt to acquire nuclear weapons. The position has two critical elements that have been examined in this paper.

The first element is India's take on proliferation and on how other states may use nuclear weapons. In the case of Iran, India has consistently maintained the position that it would not want Iran to acquire nuclear weapons and, as has been stated by the then External Affairs Minister, Pranab Mukherjee, in 2007, that Iran must comply with its international legal obligations under the NPT and its safeguards agreement with the IAEA. India continues to see the spread of nuclear weapons as a threat to the stability of the region, especially when the region in question is extremely volatile.

The second element of the Indian position is how India sees the nature of Iran's nuclear programme – whether it is run for peaceful purposes or not. India has supported Iran's right to pursue a peaceful nuclear programme, as was conveyed in the Tehran Declaration of 2001 and the Delhi Declaration of 2003. However, following the submissions made by the Director General of the IAEA in 2003, which indicated that Iran had been carrying out undeclared enrichment and reprocessing activities, India's position changed significantly, reflected explicitly in its IAEA votes. India's explanatory note – to its votes at the IAEA of 2005 and 2006 – called on Iran to adhere to its commitments under the NPT. India's voting position was further justified by the nuclear developments in Iran following the election of President Ahmadinejad in August 2005.

There were, however, some other factors which influenced decision-making in New Delhi, even if only to a limited extent. These were India's dependency on Iran for energy, Iran's historic relationship with India and their association in NAM. Thus, when the task of bringing Iran into compliance on its nuclear programme came up, India emphasised that the issue could only be resolved through peaceful diplomatic means. As Pant and Super rightly argue, India has been “balancing” on a “tightrope” with the US at one end and Iran at the other. Despite tremendous pressure, both internal and external, India has maintained a position that serves its national interest best. The attempt to retain a degree of “strategic autonomy” has resulted in policies that have questioned the traditional norms and practices of foreign policy decision-making in India.

For instance, while most of the NAM members abstained from voting on the IAEA resolutions against Iran, India, despite internal opposition from the Left parties and sections of the mass media, voted in favour of the resolution. India also agreed to launch the Israeli Spy Satellite, Tecsar, a decision it knew would upset Iran. On the other hand, while the US imposed strict unilateral sanctions, India maintained the official position that it would only adhere to the multilateral sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council. Even on the IPI gas pipeline, India did not call off the project officially, despite tremendous US pressure. It stressed diplomatic methods over unilateral coercion as the solution to the Iranian nuclear issue.

The negotiations between Iran and P5+1 have, therefore, been greatly welcomed by India. The negotiations, firstly, utilise peaceful diplomatic means to resolve the differences over Iran's nuclear programme. Although it can be argued that it was the unilateral economic sanctions imposed on Iran which then compelled it to negotiate with P5+1 in the

first place, these negotiations nonetheless definitely help in reducing the level of distrust between Iran and the international community, which has been at the crux of the issue.

India is consolidating its position as a responsible global power and a key one, and like any other global power, it aspires to attain a strategic space that allows it to identify and serve its national interest. While Indian interests coincide with that of the West in opposing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, devising means to bring Iran into compliance with its international obligations remains a matter of policy choice.

Endnotes:

1. An argument made by Sanjay Singh, former Secretary (East) Ministry of External Affairs, in an interview.
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7. Rajesh Rajagopalan, “India's Nuclear Policy” (paper presented at the 12th Symposium of the National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS) “Major Power's Nuclear Policies and International Order in the 21st Century,” Tokyo, Japan, November 18, 2009), p. 97.
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9. Rajesh Rajagopalan, “India's Nuclear Policy,” p. 107.
10. Pankaj Misra, “India Goes Its Own Way on Iran's Nuclear Program,” *Bloomberg View*, February 26, 2012.

11. For more on Historic Relations between India and Iran, see “India and Iran: Age Old Ties,” Embassy of India, Tehran, http://www.indianembassy-tehran.ir/indiairan_links.php.
12. “Mapping the Global Muslim Population,” *Pew Research: Religion and Public Life Project*, <http://www.pewforum.org/2009/10/07/mapping-the-global-muslim-population/>.
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14. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
15. Shebonti Ray Dadwal and M. Mahtab Alam Rizvi, “US Sanctions on Iran and their Impact on India,” *IDS A Issue Brief*, June 21, 2010, p. 8.
16. For more on US and EU economic sanctions against Iran, see Shebonti Ray Dadwal and M. Mahtab Alam Rizvi, “US Sanctions on Iran and their Impact on India.”
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20. IAEA, "Implementation of the NPT Safeguards in the Islamic Republic of Iran," September 24, 2005, available at <https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/gov2005-77.pdf>.
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22. Paul K. Kerr, "Iran's Nuclear Program: Tehran's Compliance with International Obligations," *CRS Report*, April 28, 2014, <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/nuke/R40094.pdf>.
23. There is also the need to examine the term "proliferation" in the context of Iran. As Kenneth Waltz argued, in the famous debate over "Nuclear Iran: Promoting Stability or Courting Disaster" with Scott Sagan in 2007 at Columbia University, proliferation is a wrong word to use in the case of Iranian nuclear programme as "proliferation" means to spread like wildfire. He further stresses that "with over fifty years of nuclear military capability, we have only nine militarily capable nuclear states, which can hardly be called proliferation."
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25. The NWFZ has been defined in the UNGA Resolution 3472 B (1975) as "any zone recognised as such by the General Assembly of the United Nations, which any group of States, in the *free exercise of their sovereignty*, has established by virtue of a treaty or convention whereby: (a) The Statue of total absence of nuclear weapons to which the zone shall be subject, including the procedure for the delimitation of the zone, is defined; (b) An international system of verification and control is established to guarantee compliance with the obligation deriving from the statute." The emphasis remains on the free exercise of the states' sovereignty.

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