

Iran's Nuclear Decision Making and the Issue of Nuclear Non-Proliferation in the International System

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Abstract

This paper studies the reason for Iran's nuclear decisions making by using the realist approach in the international politics, also the issue of nuclear non-proliferation in the international system and why the international system is totally against the Iran's nuclear program? The study employs both primary and secondary sources as a method of data collection. The study reveals that that national interest should come first before any collective ones. The process which decisions are made is only determined by self-serving interests of those who possess power in the international system. The realist school of thought provides the critical opinions propounded by various political science scholars on power politics and national interest in the international system. According to Hans Morgenthau a classical realist scholar, society has to be governed generally by objective laws which are rooted in human nature. To him theory is necessary so that to bring order in the international politics, he rejected the idea of liberalism and idealism. Theory has to reflect the objective laws like power, military, diplomacy and norms of the society. First of all we have to look at the human nature which is seen as a rational, we have to examine through individual, group, and societal level because naturally human nature is selfish. Morgenthau defined the state as a collection of human beings who are self-interested, thus the state will have to deal with order interested states in the world politics. The aim of state in the international politics is pursuing national interest which is basically about power. He viewed international politics as a struggle for power. Thus, the realist scholars maintained that in the international politics, states happened to be the key actors and that politics is a conflictual, a struggle for anarchical environment in which nation-states defend on their own capabilities to survive.

Keywords: Iran's nuclear, Realist theory, Non-proliferation & International System.

1. Introduction

International relations can be defined as the interaction between two or more countries in the international system. In the international system no country can exist in isolation hence, countries must interact with each other in order to satisfy their needs in terms of interest which include economic, political, military and diplomatic issues. International relations are the process whereby different sovereign nation-states will interact and transact with each other in many issues. Thus, this paper is going to examine the reason for Iran nuclear decisions making by using the realist approach in the international politics, also the effects of this weapon to international system and why the international system is totally against the Iran's nuclear program? Morgenthau opines that national interest should come first before any collective ones. The process which decisions are made is only determined by self-serving interests of those who possess power in the international system. The realist school of thought provides the critical opinions propounded by various political science scholars on power politics and national interest in the international system (Art, and Jervis, 2005).

2. Objectives of the Paper

- To examine the reasons for developing nuclear weapon by Iran.
- To examine the issue of nuclear non-proliferation in the international system.
- To examine the ways of deterring nuclear proliferation in the International System.

3. Questions of Investigation

- What are the reasons for developing nuclear weapon by Iran?
- How does nuclear proliferation will affect the security of International system?
- What are the possible ways of deterring nuclear proliferation in the International System?

4. Research Method

This study used qualitative approach base on content analysis and data collected from various sources. The primary sources include data from media reports, which include radio, newspapers, and magazines. Whereas, secondary sources include data collected from text books, journals, and scholars contribution.

5. Theoretical Perspectives

Realism is one of the dominant theories of international relations after the end of the Second World War. Hans Morgenthau one of the classical realist scholar posit that society has to be governed generally by objective laws which is rooted in human nature. To him theory is necessary so that to bring order in the international politics, he rejected the idea of liberalism and idealism. He argued that theory has to reflect the objective laws like power, military, diplomacy and norms of the society. According to him first of all we have to look at the human nature which he sees as a rational, we have to examine through individual, group, and societal level because naturally human nature is selfish. Morgenthau defined the state as a collection of human beings who are self-interested, thus the state will have to deal with order interested states in the world politics. The aim of state in the international politics is pursuing a national interest which is basically about power. He viewed international politics as a struggle for power (Morgenthau, 1954).

The realist scholars maintained that in the international politics states happened to be the key actors and that politics is a conflictual, a struggle for anarchical environment in which nation-states defend on their own capabilities to survive. Nation-states exist in a condition of legal sovereignty in which there are degrees of capabilities with greater or lesser states as actors; states can be seen as unitary actors in the international system and there is diversity between domestic policy and foreign policy. As rational actor state characterised by a decision-making process leading to choice based on national interest; and power is consider the most important concept in explaining state behaviour. The concept of balance of power can be seen by the realist scholars as the mechanism of regulating the behaviour of nation-states in the international system, also as a tool of mitigating the anarchical structure of the world politics.

Hans Morgenthau observed that aspirations for power among several nations where by each state is trying to maximise its own power in order to maintain or to attain the hegemonic status leads to configuration which is called balance of power. Balance of power is necessary for the existence of society in order to reduce the competition and brings harmony in the international system. Without balance of power in international politics, one element or state may gain ascendancy over the other nations encroach their interests and rights, and may ultimately destroy them. Thus, it became necessary for the nation-states to have a kind of mechanism or tool that can stabilize the system without destroying the multiplicity of nation-states in the international arena (Morgenthau, 1954).

Balance of power can be seen by reducing the capability of states who are trying to get more power by possessing nuclear weapon and military strength in order to compete with the hegemons in the international system. Iran is an example, whereby she is trying to acquire nuclear weapon for self-defence and dominate the Middle East region. Balance of power can also be consider by increasing the military strength of nation-state in order to balance its power or to possess the same capability with its rival, during the period of cold war both the United States and Russia possess nuclear capability, and the US strength is more than the Soviet Union but they agree to manage their rivalry not to engage themselves into war. There are different ways of applying balance of power such as divide and rule, compensations, disarmament and alliance.

Therefore, for the purpose of this paper, disarmament method can be use in order to analyse the issue of Iran nuclear weapon, and to explain how the major powers are trying to stop Iran especially the United States of America (Ibid). Armament is the process or mechanism used by the major powers in order to reduce the military capability of the nation-states under the leadership of united nation. The issue of armament became necessary as a result of fear, suspicious and insecurity in the international politics. The techniques of stabilizing balance of power through the means of reduction of armaments require a quantitative evaluation and influence of the other major powers which is mostly cannot be realised. The issue of Iran can only be challenge by the United States and the other major powers.

6. Reasons For Iran's Nuclear Programme

The nuclear programme according to the Iranian perspective was peaceful in order to generate energy for its domestic usage and not for building or enriching nuclear weapon. In many occasion, Tehran government insist on that decision. Since 1970 at that time the relationship between Iran and United States was peaceful, the United States secretary of state Henry Kissinger alleged that the planning to acquire nuclear power would contribute to economy of Iran also help the remaining oil reserves to petrochemicals. However, after the Iranian revolution, the American perception on Iran is totally changed. The US assert that there is no need for a state that have oil and gas like Iran to build or generate nuclear fuel cycle facilities, Iran was accused of pursuing nuclear weapon program secretly since it has no need for nuclear energy because of its oil resources. In 1970s, government of Iran under President Shah Reza regimes were allowed to pursue its nuclear programme peacefully under NPT's provisions. However, after the revolution and consequently in this millennium during

the radical regime of President Ahmadinejad, Iran were not given the chance to pursue the nuclear program as agreed in 1970s (Wohlforth, 1999).

The Effects of Nuclear Proliferation in the International System

The US strongly believed that the uranium enrichment program by Iran is aimed at producing materials for nuclear weapons. Hence, American government calls for international attention and harsh policies of sanctions against Iran in order to suspend its nuclear programme. Since 2003 the IAEA is investigating Iran up to 2011, with the aim of verifying the Iran's nuclear programme and its intention. The United Nations supervisory panel up to now can't judge the intention of Iran nuclear programme which the US sees as an intention of producing nuclear weapon and threatening the peaceful coexistence of Middle East and international system.

The call for strikes against Iran by the US became necessary due to the threat of Iran's actions in challenging American interests particularly in Middle Eastern region. The United States maintained that developing nuclear weapon by Iran will threaten the peace and tranquillity of the middle East and serve as a tool for fuelling the conflict within the region, also threatening the peace and harmony of the international system because Iran has been accused of sponsoring terrorist organizations like Hezbollah and Hamas. America being a friend to Israel doesn't want Iran to become regional hegemon and threatening the security of Israel. They US always want to protect the interest of Israeli states against the Palestinian government especially in the United Nations Security Council.

7. The Possible Ways of Deterring Nuclear Proliferation

The nuclear proliferation is premised upon the realist approach to the international system. Realism evaluates the consequences of political actions in order to have benefit of politics. John Mearsheimer provides an explanation about the behaviour of nation-state in the international system, he opined that the international politics is an anarchy; where by the great powers possess some offensive military strength; and states can never trust each other's intentions. Moreover, survival of the states in the international politics is one of the primary goals of any great power thus great powers consider themselves as rational actors by studying the external environment and think strategically in order to survive (Mearsheimer, 2001).

Kenneth Waltz sees self-help as the only mechanism that will help the states to survive and fulfill its national interest and also provides for their own security in an anarchic order of the world politics. The only way that can achieve security is through defensive position or deterrence. The model calls for building defences in order to become strong enough with the view of preventing anyone from even trying to overcome your military capability. However, in this nuclear era it seems to be very difficult since no regulations can limit the influence of a nuclear offensive. Therefore, the only solution to state is to build counterstrike retaliatory forces to any danger of attacks or threat to their own security especially from external environment. Deterrence mechanism can only be achieved through two ways, the ability of state to defend also its ability to punish in the international system (Waltz, 1979).

Therefore, based on the above notion, also in this unequal balance of nuclear power, the state that doesn't have nuclear capability lacks the defensive ability to prevent any nuclear attack whereas; the state that owns nuclear capability has the ultimate preventive means against conventional threats. Hence, with regard to the argument of realist scholars, the United States and other major powers they should play a role in tackling the Iran nuclear decision and other nation-states like North Korea and the like. The US being a hegemonic power has the capability to deter the actions of Iran with the cooperation of the other major powers. The threats of nuclear weapon today are not from the major powers as like during the cold war rather from the emerging powers.

Furthermore, in this era of suicide bombing where by non-states actors are struggling to have nuclear weapon, they should be deterred from getting it and the US has the capacity to deter any states that provides weapons or financial support to terrorist groups. The U.S. means of tackling problems of nuclear proliferation and terrorism focused on denial, such as securing moveable weapons, materials, and deny any access to it, also by making it very difficult for terrorist's to succeed in their actions. Stopping the spread of nuclear weapons, particularly to states such as Iran will bring peace, harmony and regional non-proliferation. As a result of increased in the number of nuclear powers, the potentiality for spreading the weapon to non-state actors as well as the danger of using it, is a threat to international harmony. The Iran use of uranium in order to have nuclear energy brings about risk in the fuel cycles and nuclear weapons programs in the long-run.

In one occasion, President Barack Obama maintained that the US must retain a sound nuclear preventive major in order to curtail the intensification of nation-state. Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons is useful in gaining the support domestically for their Islamic regime. Though the government of Iran are not responsible to the people effectively, nevertheless, the government use cleric's popularity and support in order to reduce the tensions against their regime. They use religion as a tool in order to overcome economic, political, and social problems, the Islamic elites look for opportunities to change the minds of Iranian people. They successfully construct that nuclear issue in terms of nationalism, enlightens their citizen about any opposition against the Iran nuclear weapons will be consider an attempt to undermine the sovereignty of Iran by the west especially the United States of America (CNN, 2014).

Moreover, Iran's continue increasing its military capability and consider any international efforts to enforce the requirements of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as western discrimination against them. Therefore, the United States insisted that Iran has the capability of producing nuclear weapon as a result of assessment conducted by the United Intelligence Council which concludes that Tehran tried to develop nuclear weapon by using the tactic negotiations delay in order to reach its target. Despite many negotiation talks with regard to the Iran nuclear weapon, up to now agreement cannot be reached about its programme. Sometimes the leaders of Iran provoked the Westerns countries with the statement about the calling for the elimination of Israel, and in many occasion this will become a stumbling block to the negotiation talks. In the last sitting of the five major powers such as Russia, China, Britain, France, US, and Germany with Iran on 24th November, in Vienna they all agreed that the discussion will be extend for seven more months in order to give chance for comprehensive agreement that will end up a 12 years dispute on Iran nuclear programme. They looked at the deal which they have signed in Geneva last year November and it will remain in place during the course of negotiations until July 1, 2015 (BBC, 2014).

8. Conclusion

The issue of nuclear weapon became a debatable topic of discussion in the international world politics. Even last week, negotiation talks took place in Vienna which comprises the representatives of the five major powers plus Germany together with Iran representative. The major powers demanded Iran to suspend its nuclear programme in order to give room for lifting its economic sanctions by the UN. The Iran representative argued that Iran doesn't have any intention to acquire nuclear weapon rather its programme is purely energy related. Therefore, the issue of deterring country from acquiring nuclear weapon is very significant in order not to allow the proliferation of weapons not only to state actors but to non-state actors such as terrorist organisation like ISIS, AL Qaeda and Boko Haram in Nigeria.

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