PREDICTING STATE DECISION-MAKING:

A CASE STUDY OF THE IRANIAN NUCLEAR CONTROVERSY

by

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(Under the Direction of Gary Bertsch)

ABSTRACT

The matter of accurately predicting political decision-making under circumstances of risk is investigated in this research. Other factors such as institutionalized perceptions and realist power concerns are incorporated in the decision-making process. This research has developed a methodology given these parameters to evaluate the decision-making process of the United States and Iran in the context of the international nuclear controversy.

INDEX WORDS: Iran, United States, Nuclear Program, Prospect Theory, Decision-Making, Middle East Politics

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In all political actions there are causes and effects. Political historians study the latter where political scientists study the former. When trying to understand the causes of these actions, political scientists must articulate what factors are most important to the calculus of decision-making. That is to say, why are certain decisions made while others are not? Basic assumptions must be developed or agreed upon in order to comprehend the constraints on that process. Theorists from both international relations and comparative politics have attempted to define these assumptions. Unfortunately, no single theory's assumptions can explain these constraints fully. However, it would be worthwhile to look at these theories as simply tools in a toolbox. Given the explanatory power of theories in their respective domain of assumptions, a useful synthesis can be drawn and applied to a particular political event, action, or set of actions.

If the causes of actions could be determined, the predictive power of this synthesis could be applied to likely near-future scenarios. One excellent case to test the potential of such a synthetic approach is the current controversy of Iran's nuclear program. The United States has effectively surrounded Iran with its military power, yet Tehran has remained defiant to Washington's demands. Despite the tens of billions of dollars spent on American military operations, Iran has come out the big winner in the region. All would agree that Iran is the weaker country in terms of power. The Islamic Republic's conventional military is vastly inferior to American forces. Iran's weak economy is another point of power contrast. Both money and military are strong indicators of power according to realists.[1] If that is the case, then

it should be puzzling as to how and why Iran has resisted American pressure to halt its nuclear activities.

This does not necessarily mean that balance of power issues are not at play. It is important, however, to describe the *extent* to which they are at play. There must be other factors beyond the a-historical and a-cultural world of power politics in this case. The history of the United States and Iran has been a tumultuous one since before the revolution.[2] Events like the CIA engineered coup and the U.S. embassy seizure were political decisions. The perceptions of these events have become institutionalized in the American and Iranian governments' policies towards one another. This must color present and future interactions as well as past ones. Are these perceptions enough to alter the cold and rational calculus of power politics? In other words, to what extent do these experiences shape the conduct of states? Perceptions have an influence on state decisions.

Political calculations are not made in a vacuum. The context of Iran's nuclear controversy is equally important to understanding state decision-making. The current Iraqi conflict and China's growing energy needs are but two examples that play a role. These kinds of examples help establish what the playing field looks like and who has the upper hand. It also describes what types of actions will upset the balance and what types of actions are risky and to whom. In this way it can be possible to predict the actions of the United States and Iran in likely near-future scenarios. Cognitive game theory approaches have had success in describing state actions under risk.[3] They also allow for a quantification of subjective factors with a simple empirical description. Furthermore, through an extrapolation of foreign policy behavior patterns and a firm theoretical framework it is possible to develop a general methodology to help explain and predict decisions.

It is the aim of this research to develop and apply such a method to the Iranian nuclear controversy and the accompanying decision-making behavior. First, it is vitally important to describe those historical events that have had the greatest impact on altering and institutionalizing perceptions. In this study four such events will be examined: the 1953 coup, the hostage-taking, the Iran-Iraq War, and 9/11. Second, a brief accounting of decision-making in the nuclear negotiations will be discussed. This discussion will include an explanation of state behavior and the extent to which perceptions have played a role. Third, the current political context of the United States and Iran will be described with a strong emphasis on realist motivations and constraints. Fourth, a succinct distillation of applicable theories will be provided for the foundation of the methodology. Fifth, the synthetic methodological approach will be fully elaborated. Additionally, the methodology will address the shortcomings of its constituent theories. Sixth, this approach will then be empirically applied to the case and likely future scenarios will be evaluated. And lastly, the conclusion will offer an assessment of the methodology's limitations and advantages, policy recommendations derived from its application, and future research possibilities.

Chapter 2

Perception Institutionalization: A Short Historical Analysis of U.S.-Iranian Relations

Perceptions of other states can be institutionalized through significant political events shared by states. Long standing alliances that have remained through trying times of war and economic depression are political relationships based on previous experiences. The United States and the United Kingdom currently enjoy a close relationship (albeit strained) even though America was conceived in a violent separatist movement to break away from the imperial British. The U.S. and the U.K. have been allies in world wars and share many international interests and cultural similarities. This is to illustrate that the U.S. will perceive British political actions differently than they would actions by China or Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, it indicates that perceptions of other states can change. The American colonists did not think highly of their colonial masters during the Revolutionary War. In World War II, the British and the Americans fought as allies. The U.K. is still the strongest supporter of United States military actions. It would be easy to imagine that the State Department does not regard the British with hostility and will not automatically assume the worst of intentions from their transatlantic friend. The case may be different in examining the relationship between Germany and Israel, or France and Algeria, or China and Japan.

Even though all of these states have diplomatic ties with each other they share a history of political hardship or hostility. These shared histories play a role in how these states interpret the actions of one another. When the political behavior of states seems to follow a pattern it can become nigh-immutable to the decision-maker. Future decisions will be based or colored by these perceived patterns. Thus, perceptions become institutionalized, or become part of

institutional memory. An examination of U.S.-Iranian relations renders an understanding of how these two states have viewed the actions of the other. This gives insight into how the current nuclear controversy has been handled and why certain decisions have been made. The origins of these institutionalized perceptions are revealed through four political events shared by the U.S. and Iran: the 1953 coup, the hostage-taking, the Iran-Iraq War, and 9/11.[4]

Mossadeq and Operation Ajax

During the 18th century, the Qajar dynasty ruled Iran. This dynasty was the first to introduce the West to Iran and quickly became controlled by it. The Qajar shahs gave huge concessions of territory and resources to foreign powers.[5] Exploitation by western powers became a reality for ordinary Iranians throughout the Qajar dynasty and into the Pahlavi era. Reza Shah, the founder of the Pahlavi dynasty, tried his best to wrest power from Russia and Britain and finally free Iran from foreign domination. He saw an ally in Nazi Germany but remained officially neutral during the war. This desire to resist foreign influence was to be his undoing when he was forced to abdicate his throne to his son, Mohammad Reza Shah, in 1941.[6] His son was described as a weak and easily manipulated young man.[7] Mohammad Reza Shah did nothing but acquiesce to the demands of states with interests in Iran.

One of the most important interests was the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC). This company, more than any other, exemplified the corruption of Iranian leadership and the frustration of the Iranian people. The AIOC held an effective monopoly over the oil of Iran. In 1951, Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadeq nationalized the company. He was a populist and the United States was initially indifferent, if not morally supportive, of his action.[8] The

debilitated British presented their case in the post-war years to the United States but to no avail. Then the British began painting Mossadeq as a Soviet sympathizer. The American imagination was captured.[9] The Cold War had begun and the U.S. was unwilling to allow strategic and oil-rich Iran to fall under Soviet dominion. The newly formed CIA was charged with bringing down Mossadeq's democratically elected government.

The CIA labeled this clandestine project Operation Ajax. At first the coup attempt failed, but the operational leadership was unwilling to accept it. The CIA tried again and was successful. Mossadeq was removed and the Shah was put in his place as an absolute monarch. The Shah had lost all notions of a democratic Iran and ruled the country through the use of the dreaded SAVAK (The National Agency for Surveillance and Security) and his American-made military. In his 26 years as the Shah of Iran, he had earned the enmity of his people for being perceived as a puppet of the United States and the West. He was regarded as a corrupt despot that ignored the plight of ordinary Iranians. Additionally, the Shah had implemented rapid modernization in Iran that created large swaths of unemployed Iranians. However, more than anyone else, the Iranians blamed the American government.

This animosity towards the Shah, the United States, and westernization was masterfully cultivated into revolutionary fervor by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. The origins of the revolution and that it occurred is significant to the development of Iranian foreign policy. Those perceptions of the United States that were popularly held among Iranians formed the lens to which all of American and Western actions were viewed. It was a perception of injustice, exploitation, and oppression. Furthermore, it indicated that the United States was more than willing to use their intelligence capabilities to meddle in the affairs of a sovereign state and do so successfully. The post-revolutionary attitude of suspicion, paranoia, and hatred towards America

was born in the 1953 coup. And it was, of course, the revolutionaries that formed the provisional government, or what would later be known as the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The 1979 Islamic Revolution and the U.S. Embassy Seizure

The revolution was massively popular as it appealed to whole sections of Iranian society. Among these groups were the university students of the country. A handful of them, armed with revolutionary fervor and idealism, stormed the U.S. embassy. The seizure became a national embarrassment for America and its fate was controlled by Ayatollah Khomeini and his cabal. The Carter administration was genuinely surprised by the events in Iran. Gary Sick, then senior White House advisor on Persian Gulf affairs, remarked on how the hostage-taking was only one aspect in Khomeini's strategy to consolidate his power and control over the revolution.[10]

During the 444 days of captivity, the American government encountered a new form of threat that was out of place in Cold War logic. The Islamic government of Iran was founded on a religious fundamentalism that entirely disregarded the conventions of international conduct.[11] Sick notes on an initial recommendation to the Carter administration:

> "The fatal weakness of that memorandum – which also proved to be the fatal flaw of U.S. policy over the following months – was its dual assumption that Khomeini would rather quickly "make his political point" and release the hostages, and the United States could bring sufficient pressure to bear on Iran to accelerate his decision…more serious was the tendency to underestimate Khomeini's willingness and ability to absorb external economic and political punishment in the pursuit of his revolutionary objectives."[12]

These mistakes were not made after the Carter administration. American policy-makers and pundits came to view the new leaders of Iran as uncompromising fanatics bent on destabilizing American power in the world.[13]

The Islamic Republic also became the forefront of global political Islam. Many Islamic groups were inspired by the theocratic vision of Khomeini.[14] Islamist groups began to articulate the hope that they could have an Islamic government. Islamic theocracies became an alternative form of government that rejected Western style democracy and the socialist model of the Soviets. More immediate to American interests was Iran's official exportation of the revolution to the rest of the Islamic world, especially Saddam Hussein's Iraq.

The Iran-Iraq War

Saddam Hussein very accurately gauged the threat of instability that a Shia theocracy would pose for the predominantly Shia country he ruled over. With the overt support of the U.K., France, the Soviets, and the U.S., he launched his pre-emptive invasion of Iran.[15] The Iranians had no allies and were ostracized from the international community for the embassy seizure and revolutionary rhetoric.[16] Hussein kept this in mind. In addition, he calculated that the internal disarray caused by the upheaval of revolution in Iran would spell a quick victory for Iraq.[17] The war lasted for eight years with nearly 700,000 war dead on both sides.[18] Countless others were wounded, maimed, and tortured. Tellingly, the Iranians did not blame the Iraqis, but rather, Saddam Hussein and his supporters.

The Iranians were the targets of chemical weapons used by Iraqi forces and supplied by Westerners.[19] Iranian decision-makers regarded these actions as proof of America's willingness to use weapons of mass destruction to break Iran. That only reinforced the vitriolic animosity that the Islamic Republic had for the United States. Ayatollah Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, then Speaker of Parliament, remarked that "[c]hemical and biological weapons are poor man's

atomic bombs and can easily be produced. We should at least consider them for our defense. Although the use of such weapons is inhuman, the [Iran-Iraq War] taught us that international laws are only scraps of paper."[20] Such an open disregard for international law has added much consternation for America and the West over Iran's nuclear program. More importantly, it indicates how much the Iran-Iraq War has had an effect on Iranian defense policy. The war considerably added to the Islamic Republic's sense of insecurity and led to a military buildup in the following years.[21] From the close of the war, the Islamic Republic has spent much of its resources in developing self-sufficiency in technological and military industries.[22] This is something successive U.S. administrations have watched.

Washington wanted to play two regional rivals against one another and did so successfully. As the war dragged on however, it became frighteningly evident the lengths Iran was prepared to go to achieve victory. The resolve of the Iranian resistance would certainly be taken into account when formulating battle plans for a ground invasion. Moreover, the Islamic Republic's influence and control started spreading to the rest of the Middle East. Iran organized militant Islamic groups to serve as proxies for its interests.[23] These militant organizations have been labeled by the U.S. as terrorist entities. And terrorism would take on quite a different meaning for American decision-makers after the attacks of September 11th, 2001.

9/11 and the Axis of Evil Speech

Not since the strike on Pearl Harbor has the United States been attacked on its own soil. 9/11 was a turning point for American foreign policy. The attacks were orchestrated by a radical Islamic group determined to destroy foreign influence in the Islamic world. American officials

began to look deeply into the Islamic world for threats against American national security. After a decade of stewing Islamic fundamentalism in the post-Cold War world, the United States encountered a new enemy to replace the old one. This new war, dubbed the "War on Terrorism", was to be seen through with massive military expenditures, an added cabinet-level ministry, new and intrusive security measures, a restructuring of the intelligence community, and clear cut villains.

President George W. Bush named Iran, Iraq, and North Korea as these villains when he stated:

> "States like these, and their terrorist allies constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger. They could provide these arms to terrorists, giving them the means to match their hatred. They could attack our allies or attempt to blackmail the United States. In any of these cases, the price of indifference would be catastrophic."[24]

No statement has been clearer about the views of the United States towards these countries. From the American administration's perspective, they are simply evil. Iraq was invaded in 2003 under the pretext of possessing WMDs that ostensibly would be handed off to terrorists. Yet, North Korea is currently engaged with the United States to resolve the issues surrounding their nuclear program, in lieu of a successful nuclear detonation.[25]

Iran's nuclear program was discovered several months before the invasion of Iraq. The "War on Terrorism" took a diplomatic turn with Iran. The American desire for quick victory and the rapid implementation of democracy has not been achieved in Iraq. Perhaps those aspirations were practice for another quick military adventure next door. Years after the invasion, Washington is now slowly and begrudgingly accepting the idea of talking to Tehran.[26] Perceptions are important to decision-making, but that is not all that is important. After all, how

could the United States speak to evil? An underlying factor is the constraining calculus of realism.

The Culmination of U.S.-Iranian Perceptions

The institutionalization of perceptions is one factor that can influence political decisions. Germany is an outspoken critic of Holocaust-denial and tries to have good relations with Israel. The Algerians fought a long battle for independence from France but still receives investment from their former colonizer. The Rape of Nanking was not enough to keep the Chinese from cementing deep economic ties with Japan. States have looked beyond their experiences with other countries out of necessity. Security and prosperity often times demands it. However, the National Democratic Party of Germany has fielded right-wing candidates that many Germans regard as nothing more than neo-Nazis.[27] Algerians are underrepresented in government and treated like second-class citizens in France.[28] The Chinese erupt in government-supported protest when the Japanese white-wash their war crimes in history textbooks.[29] Perceptions matter but only as part of a whole in the political decision making process.

Previous encounters with other states serve as a guideline to estimate state intentions. In the case of U.S.-Iranian relations, four major events have informed the opinions of decision-makers. The 1953 coup has fueled the Iranian mentality of paranoia concerning American designs. Furthermore, it illustrates what Tehran sees as a hypocritical foreign policy – espousing democracy in one hand, and crushing it in the other. Operation Ajax revealed the pernicious will of American imperialism for Iranians. The hostage-taking gave birth to the bearded Islamic extremist chanting "Death to America" in the American mind. It also suggested a profound

Iranian contempt for the rules and norms of international law and custom. The revolutionary rhetoric calling an end to Israel chillingly echoed the coming of another Holocaust to American and Israeli policy-makers. The desire to destabilize the Middle East through revolution has become synonymous with the Islamic Republic for the United States. The Iran-Iraq War may have been a strategic bleeding-out of two regional rivals for America but it was a cosmic battle between good and evil for the Islamic Republic. And the willingness of Iranians to incur any cost for victory may certainly find its way into American military planning. Perhaps the "War on Terrorism" is now another battle between good and evil, but this time, for Washington.

The current U.S. administration has clearly labeled Iran as "evil" if President Bush's speeches are any indication of state perception. The Iranian government deeply distrusts the United States and its intentions. These perceptions have played out in the international controversy over Iran's nuclear program. It is important to remember these shared and institutionalized events in U.S.-Iranian relations when examining the developments of Iran's nuclear quest. At every step, the lingering effects of history have come to shape the decisions that these two states have made in the past four years.

Chapter 3

Iran's Nuclear Diplomacy: A Brief Account

Iran's history of nuclear ambition begins in the 1950s and under the auspices of the U.S. Atoms for Peace Program.[30] The development of the program went through periods of active government support to relative stagnation and back to serious and clandestine investment. It was not until two events took place that brought the Iranian nuclear program under international scrutiny. First, the August 14, 2002 allegations of an anti-government group, the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), suggested that Iran was developing WMDs at their nuclear facilities.[31] Second was the post-9/11 probing of Iran for potential threats on behalf of the Bush administration.[32] In December 2002 Washington accused Tehran of a nuclear weapons program.[33] Tehran has consistently denied the accusation and has stated repeatedly that their intentions are for the production of a civil nuclear energy program.

The diplomatic game began and has continued at the intersection of security and perception. Realist concerns are coupled with estimated intentions. Washington demands and Tehran defies. Throughout the course of this diplomatic fray, the United States has used three states (U.K., Germany, and France) as a proxy to serve the joint interests all four nations. The EU3 have been the chief negotiators with Iran after IAEA inspections began in 2003.[34] These diplomatic strategies reveal a great deal of how the urgency of security issues and the institutionalization of perceptions play out.

The following is a short chronology of Iran's actions since 2002. Following, the Islamic Republic's behavior is both subjectively and objectively evaluated vis-à-vis the view from

Washington. The converse of that evaluation is also provided. The patterns of decision-making

are vital to the estimation of outcomes in likely near-future scenarios.

Iran's Nuclear Diplomacy: A Chronology of Significant Events Since 2002[35]

- August 2002: NCRI discovers Iran's clandestine nuclear program.
- September 2002: Reza Aghazadeh, President of the Atomic Energy Agency of Iran and then Vice President of the Islamic Republic, states Iran's long-term plans for nuclear energy and invites all advanced countries to aid in efforts.
- December 2002: U.S. accuses Iran of developing nuclear weapons technology.
- February 2003: Iran invites the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to inspect nuclear facilities.
- March 2003: The U.S. and other coalition forces begin military operations in Iraq.
- June 2003: IAEA reports that Iran has not fully complied with inspections.
- September 2003: IAEA issues ultimatum to declare all nuclear activities by the end of October. EU3 becomes actively involved.
- October 2003: Iran agrees to suspend uranium enrichment, offer complete transparency, and sign the IAEA's Additional Protocols.
- December 2003: Iran suspends uranium enrichment and signed the Additional Protocols without ratification.
- February 2004: IAEA reports Iran lacks transparency and has not fully disclosed all nuclear research and activities.
- March 2004: IAEA believes that Iran has had foreign assistance through the Pakistani A.Q. Khan network.
- June 2004: Iran declares that it would continue to enrich uranium and build centrifuges.
- September and October 2004: IAEA reports that strong indications exist that Iran is continuing its nuclear development program.
- November 2004: Iran accepts the Paris Agreement which offered various incentives in exchange for full verification and continuance of uranium enrichment suspension.
- December 2004: U.S. intelligence reports that Iran is actively pursuing the development of nuclear-capable delivery systems.
- March 2005: IAEA preliminary reports indicate Iran is complying with the Paris Agreement. The EU3 and Iran negotiates the General Framework for Objective Guarantees. In it is detailed a phased framework for negotiations that would give Iran nuclear power plants under the supervision of the EU3 in exchange for ratification of the Additional Protocols. The U.S. would also rescind objections to World Trade Organization (WTO) membership for Iran. Iran rejects offer.
- May 2005: The U.S. National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) reports that Iran is 10 years away from developing nuclear weapons. EU3 threatens to refer Iran to the UNSC for not abiding by the Paris Agreement.
- June 2005: Mahmoud Ahmadinejad becomes President of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

- August 2005: IAEA seals are removed from uranium conversion facility in Esfahan. IAEA asks Iran to completely stop all enrichment without an explicit deadline. EU3 calls off further negotiations with Iran.
- January 2006: Iran resumes nuclear research. EU3 calls on IAEA to turn the matter over to the UNSC.
- February 2006: IAEA adopts resolution referring Iran to the UNSC. Iran responds with threatening to stop all cooperation with the IAEA.
- March 2006: UNSC issues statement that urges Iran to fully cooperate with the IAEA.
- April 2006: Iran enriches uranium to 3.6%.[36]
- June 2006: UNSC offers incentive package to Iran. Iran says it will respond in August.[37] President Bush demands Iran halt its nuclear program.[38]
- July 2006: Israel attacks Lebanon.[39]
- August 2006: Iran makes a counter-offer.[40] U.S. says offer is not enough.[41] Iran continues enriching uranium.[42] EU3 negotiations resume. Israel and Lebanon agree to truce.[43]
- September 2006: The UNSC and Germany decide to discuss sanctions on Iran.[44]
- November 2006: Russia objects to draft resolution and wishes to implement changes that are less harsh.[45]
- December 2006: UNSC unanimously passes "smart" sanctions against Iran.[46]
- February 2007: UNSC permanent member states and Germany officially stop negotiations to halt Iranian enrichment.[47]
- March 2007: UNSC unanimously adopts further "smart" sanctions against Iran.[48]

Iran: Evasive or Prudent?

Washington has been the strongest critic of Tehran's nuclear program. The American perspective is one thoroughly convinced of Iranian malfeasance. There is little doubt in the minds of U.S. policy-makers that Iran is on a quest to acquire a nuclear weapon. Many legitimate issues have been raised by the American administration from the start of the controversy. Iran concealed several nuclear facilities, the research conducted at those facilities, and where it obtained its nuclear technology. The near two decades of secrecy has not improved the view from Washington.

It is easy to draw assumptions for the Bush administration from the American experience with Iran. First, the legitimacy of the NPT for the Iranians is suspect considering past violations

and rhetoric. The constraints that the non-proliferation regime provides are not a guarantee that Iran is abiding by the treaty. Second, Iran's position that nuclear development is to create electricity is suspicious. Iran sits on some of the largest reserves of oil and natural gas in the world. With such vast quantities of fossil fuels, Iran would not need nuclear energy for power generation. Third, Iran has active links with identified terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah and Hamas. Both of these organizations have carried out terrorist attacks against Israel, a staunch ally of the United States in the Middle East. This coupled with Ahmadinejad's rhetoric of Israel's destruction and Holocaust-denial conferences is a terrifying prospect for American and Israeli policy-makers. And fourth, America's inability to pacify Iraq after the close of official military operations is in significant part blamed on the Iranians. The sophistication of explosives used against Coalition personnel and the continuing agitation of predominantly Shia Iraq suggests a connection to Iran.

If the situation were to be objectively evaluated the picture would look different. First, legally speaking, Iran has every right to have full access to the nuclear fuel cycle. The secretive nature of the program was out of fear of its destruction during its infancy. This was a claim considered plausible by the 2005 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE).[49] Second, Iran's natural resources are finite. The Islamic Republic could be planning for the future inevitability of "no more oil". Also, the less domestic consumption there is of oil and gas reserves the more Iran would have to sell in the international market and the longer their reserves would last. Third, the claim that Iran supports terrorist organizations is entirely true. Hezbollah has attacked Israel numerous times and was responsible for the deaths of hundreds of American marines.[50] Hezbollah has largely only attacked military targets and only in Lebanon and Israel. They also provide social services, employment and education opportunities to many ordinary people in

Lebanon. Hamas is no different in providing social services and they form the democratically elected government of the Palestinians. In all fairness, there is a great deal of difference between Al-Qaeda and Hamas or Hezbollah. They are all terrorist organizations, but the two Iran is known to have ties with are strictly regional entities, not global ones. Additionally, they have a clear organization, leadership, and can be easily contacted. Neither Hezbollah nor Hamas has a stated aim of destroying the United States. Furthermore, Iran secretly proposed to the United States in 2003 that they would be willing to cease relations with these groups in exchange for a non-aggression pact.[51] Ahmadinejad's rhetoric has reinforced the institutionalized view of the Iranian government for many American policy-makers. His infamous "wipe Israel off the map" speech and Holocaust-denial conference were reviled by the international community. However, a more precise examination of the actual words of the speech reveals two important points. One, the words were not his, but Ayatollah Khomeini's. These words were used to revitalize the spirit of the 1979 revolution among Iranians. Second, the words were mistranslated. He said something equivalent to "The chapter of Jerusalem's occupation will be turned from the page of history."[52] The Iranian President has made little to no effort in correcting this error. The weight the mistranslated version carries is more politically advantageous to Iran among throngs of Arabs throughout the Middle East. This could create support for Iranian foreign policy among Arabs. The conference was a tit-for-tat response for the depiction of the Prophet Mohammad as a terrorist in a Danish cartoon.[53] The cartoon brought little condemnation throughout Europe and was reprinted in numerous newspapers. The Iranian government wanted to illustrate the hypocrisy of the freedom of speech by hosting the Holocaust-denial conference. Regardless of the intentions, it has immensely added to the concerns over Iran's nuclear program. Fourth, it is natural to see a relationship form between the Shia of Iraq with the Islamic Republic. Many of

the Iraqi Shia clerics are married into the families of Iranian Shia clerics. The highest ranking cleric in Iraq, Ayatollah Ali Sistani, is an Iranian. Much of the leadership of the Iraqi Shia in Iraq's government was formerly in exile in Iran for decades. There is also no definitive proof of Iranian interference in the ongoing conflict in Iraq, only suspicion based on perception.

The Washington apologist would argue that Iran, at worst, is prudent and doing its very best to promote its national interests and preserve its sovereign rights. The Washington jingoist would argue that Iran, at best, is evasive and is plotting to destroy Israel and the United States with nuclear weapons, dominate Shia Iraq, and become a regional hegemon. Both of these extremes have truth in them. It is for the discerning decision-maker to sift through the history and the facts to find how much truth is in these extremes.

America: Tyrant or Champion?

The Islamic Republic is faced with a serious threat to the survival of the regime. Many powerful actors in the international community are opposed to Iran's nuclear program. The U.S. military has Iran virtually surrounded. Yet Iran remains defiant to American pressures and demands so far. The Iranians view the dilemma of their nuclear program in the light of conspiracy. They feel the nuclear club wants to keep them out and is applying discriminatory measures to that effect.

The Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has declared nuclear weapons un-Islamic.[54] The Iranian leadership has claimed that the pursuit of their nuclear program is for peaceful purposes like research and the production of energy. The Islamic Republic feels that it has gone to great lengths to prove that its rhetoric matches reality. As soon as the clandestine

aspects of their nuclear program were discovered they immediately engaged in negotiations. The results of these negotiations were incentives that seemed more like colonial shackles to Tehran. Their position was one of thinking that it would not be in Iran's interests to hand any part of the nuclear energy process over to foreigners. The weariness originates in the history, when the British had a crippling monopoly over the resources of the country.

The Iranian economy has struggled through American sanctions and eight years of war. This has created the momentum of officially supported self-sufficiency in strategic industries. This desire for economic independence in no small part contributes to the defiance of Tehran. Furthermore, the hardline ideology of the state celebrates the opportunity to stand against the most powerful nations of the world. The political culture of martyrdom is a national virtue embedded in the values of the state. Confrontation is not necessarily abhorred among the hardline clerics that rule Iran's powerful executive and military organs. Tehran views the military operations of the United States as conquest rather than liberation.

Many regarded the 2006 war between Lebanon and Israel as a proxy test war between the U.S. and Iran. Lebanese Hezbollah survived Israel's attacks. In the same way, extremists in Iran feel that the result would be similar in an inevitable confrontation with the United States. For them, if it is not the nuclear issue it will be human rights or some other point of controversy. The hardliners would prefer a war occur on the pretext of defending Iran's sovereign rights.

The bellicosity described here belies an interesting fact. Iran's foreign policy has been mostly pragmatic since the end of the Iran-Iraq War and the death of Ayatollah Khomeini. They have warmed relations with a number of states they were hostile towards, such as Saudi Arabia and England. They remained officially neutral during the first Persian Gulf War and openly supported the liberation of Kuwait.[55] Tehran stopped actively supporting the export of

revolution and tried to create as much stability as possible both inside and outside the country.[56]

During former President Khatami's administration, desires were expressed to the United States for a normalization of relations.[57]   After the attacks of 9/11, the mayor of Tehran offered sympathies and condolences to then mayor of NYC, Rudolph Giuliani.[58] Iranians held candle-light vigils which indicate a rare country in the Middle East – one that likes America.

Perhaps the leadership of Iran is fully aware that the United States does not want to lose the hearts and minds of Iranians with war. President Ahmadinejad's actions and speeches must also be taken in the context of Iranian politics. He has little power in the domestic policies of the Islamic Republic, and far less in military and foreign matters.   Ahmadinejad's words (mistranslated or otherwise) should be dismissed out of hand because there is no real political power behind them. Important players in the Islamic Republic use the hostile and demanding rhetoric out of Washington to further secure the regime's survival. By posing a threat from the outside, Iranians (like most people) will rally around the flag and even support a government that is detested. The Islamic Republic looks to the United States as a blunder-factory. Every mistake is used against the United States to its fullest extent with the express purpose of adding survivability to the regime.

The recent sanctions are nothing but an unending list of examples for the Islamic Republic of Iran. These examples illustrate the desire for the powerful state-actors, especially the U.S., to subjugate the Islamic Republic or remove the regime from power. The Iranian government regards the actions of the United States as tyrannical connivances aimed at destroying them. The Bush administration has reinforced this institutionalized view of Iran for Iranian decision-makers. The pragmatists of the Islamic Republic seem resigned to stop further negotiations over their controversial nuclear program. As of the writing of this paper, Iran had

significantly limited cooperation with the IAEA.[59] Iranian decision-makers may be offering a declaration of victory by relying on the strategic constraints they have engineered for the United States – and America has engineered for itself.

Chapter 4

Confluence of Constraints: The Realities of Today

It was stated earlier that political decisions are not made in a vacuum. Perceptions often change when a state's survival or strategic interests are at risk. One way to better understand the nature of risk with Iran's nuclear program is to investigate the context in which the United States and Iran currently find themselves. This context provides constraints. Constraints are defined here as the limitations to policy options for a state when pursuing its perceived national interests. What follows is the present starting point from which future decisions will be made. Several salient conditions prevail in the status quo.

First is the current orientation of U.S. foreign and defense policy. The "War on Terrorism" is an American program pursued by the Bush administration as a response to 9/11. In the pursuit of accomplishing the goal of ridding the world of terrorism the Taliban of Afghanistan and Saddam Hussein have been forcibly removed from power. This also falls in line with the goal of creating moderate democracies as per the directives of the Bush Doctrine. The policy of supporting democratization has resulted in the removal of two checks to Iran's influence in the Middle East and Central Asia. Second, the ongoing conflict in Iraq provides opportunities to undermine the United States directly and indirectly. It has also provided a platform for a close relationship between any Shia dominated government in Iraq with the Islamic Republic of Iran. Logistical limitations to potential military operations against Iran are also a product of the conflict. Third, the U.S. and the Islamic Republic are not the only players in Iran's ambitious nuclear gambit. The European Union, China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Jordan,

Egypt, and Israel are also carefully following developments and shaping them. The influences of these state-actors are briefly discussed.

In the midst of these issues and constraints a picture is slowly emerging. Iran is poised to become the regional power of the Middle East. This rising power and matching ambition have serious long-lasting implications for decision-makers in Washington. Iran's drive for acquiring nuclear technology is the ultimate test for the NPT. The effectiveness of export controls and the future of nuclear weapons proliferation throughout the world will largely hinge on the future decisions of Washington and Tehran.

The War on Terrorism, the Taliban, and Saddam Hussein

The policies directing the "War on Terrorism" have had beneficial consequences for Iran's national interests and have provided significant constraints to the United States. Al-Qaeda was responsible for the 9/11 attacks and they were given safe haven by the Taliban. The United States gave an ultimatum to the government of Afghanistan to hand over the terrorists they harbored.[60] The Taliban refused and in short order the United States assembled the "Coalition of the Willing" to attack Afghanistan and kill or capture Al-Qaeda agents. The removal of Taliban has been a boon to the Islamic Republic. Following Afghanistan was Iraq. It is suggested that the United States manufactured evidence to gain international support for a pre-emptive war on Iraq, a member of the "Axis of Evil".[61] The removal of Saddam Hussein and his Baathist regime removed another check to Iran's power. The Bush Doctrine carries with it the hope that the creation of democracies in Islamic countries will decrease the breeding grounds of terrorism.[62] Through this overt support of democratization efforts, Hezbollah and Hamas have democratically

and legitimately come to power. Both organizations are in Iran's pocket.[63] The policies behind the "War on Terrorism" have weakened America's position in the Middle East.

Afghanistan was ruled by a government based on an extreme and austere version of Sunni Islam. The Taliban were ideologically opposed to the Shia theocracy of Iran and insulated themselves from Iran's influence. This made it impossible for Iran to develop economic ties with the rest of Central Asia. After the removal of the Taliban, Iran was able to develop trade with their co-linguists in the new Afghan government and use the country to bring in trade from the rest of Central Asia.[64] The United States initially poured billions of dollars into the development of Afghanistan. The administration of Afghanistan is lacking the basic stability necessary to make use of the money.[65] Iran has moved in to develop Afghanistan and has massively increased bilateral cooperation in a number of areas. Furthermore, as stability has increased for Afghans, the 600,000 Afghan refugees living in Iran are slowly returning home. This alleviates some of the cost of providing domestic services and opportunities to illegal Afghan workers and refugees.

Iran also hosted a number of Iraqi refugees and anti-Saddam groups. Saddam Hussein brutally suppressed the Shia of Iraq after the Iranian revolution. These dissenting Shia groups found their way to Iran as exiles. The Islamic Republic protected, organized, and trained them hoping one day they would return to Iraq.[66] The removal of Saddam Hussein has realized the Islamic Republic's hope. The most notable of these Iranian-backed groups is the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI). The SCIRI presence in the current Iraqi government is strong. The United States is bound by the ideals of the Bush Doctrine and cannot legitimately exclude the Shia from the government. The Islamic Republic has been making full use of the ill-considered outcomes of applying the Bush Doctrine.

Iran was once flanked by two implacable foes of different ideologies and interests. Now Iran is flanked by a friendly country dominated by co-religionists and another by co-linguists. Iran has ground access to Syria through Iraq and by extension Lebanon and Israel. Tehran is forging ties with an Afghanistan seemingly forgotten by the American government and promising lucrative trade deals with Central Asia. The American support for democracy in the Middle East has handed over a relatively moderate Palestinian Authority under Fatah over to an intolerant Islamist party in Hamas. After successful American pressure for Syria to leave Lebanon, Hezbollah candidates swept to power in elections. Iran now has the ability to project conventional power all the way to Israel and even inside it. This makes all the more difficult to use or allow Israel to take action against Iran for fear of immediate reprisal. However, the most important pressure valve of power projection for Iran is Iraq.

The War in Iraq

The war in Iraq was initially supported under the pretext that Saddam Hussein was in possession of WMDs. The intelligence presented to the international community is now regarded as highly suspect if not manufactured. The present American commitment to Iraq from the Bush administration is a severe constraint on policy options for the U.S. vis-à-vis Iran. The most important of these constraints is America's considerable troop presence. The second constraint is the idealistic support for a democratic Iraq. The third and last are the softer constraints like the international community's perception of the United States. All of these are translated into problematic logistics for many of the choices available to Washington when developing policy on Iran.

American soldiers in Iraq are approximately 141,000 strong.[67] It requires many billions of dollars to support these troops and their military operations. Any retaliation for an attack on Iran would certainly include targeting American military in Iraq. Iran shares a large porous border with Iraq making it possible to carry out attacks on American military infrastructure and personnel. Iran can threaten to apply pressure to the United States by keeping instability at a level that forces the United States to maintain troops there. Short of a Presidential order for a draft, the United States simply does not have the troops necessary to carry out a land invasion of Iran.[68]

Tehran has exploited the desire to see a functioning democracy operating in Iraq. The Bush Doctrine has provided avenues for religiously oriented groups and political parties to form. The Sunni Arab minority in Iraq lost much of its power after the fall of the Baathist government. The oppressed Shia came to the political fore and so far appears unwilling to equally share power with the former power brokers. As sectarianism rises, the Iraqi Shia are more isolated from the rest of the Arab world which forces them into the Iranian camp. The Iraqi Kurds have had long-standing ties with the Islamic Republic since the Iran-Iraq War. Kurds are also ethnic cousins to Persians and have a recognized minority population inside Iran. The persecuted Shia and the independence-minded Kurds are fearful of what a Sunni Arab dominated government might mean for them. Whatever government is in place whenever American troops leave will likely come under the considerable influence of the Islamic Republic.

In this nightmare scenario, Iran would be the most influential player in the region. Tehran could easily form a bloc with Baghdad in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and drive up the price of oil. The difficulty of taking military action against Iran is further complicated by softer factors. The general war-weariness of the American public

would make an expansion of the conflict politically costly. Elected decision-makers would also have to contend with the Islamic world's reaction in attacking another Muslim country. The international support necessary to attack Iran would be more difficult to muster in light of the poor intelligence used to justify attacking Iraq. America's loss of credibility and precarious security situation are carefully considered by other states interested in Iran's nuclear program.

Other Interested Actors

A number of states have a vested interest in the outcome of the nuclear standoff between the United States and Iran. These states are not just spectators but have also played a role in the development of the controversy. Most directly, the European Union has played the role of negotiator with Iran. China and Russia have close relationships with Iran that are threatened as tensions escalate between the Washington and Tehran. The tumultuous and hostile political environment of the Middle East hosts four states that fear a rising Iran: Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt. What a nuclear Iran would mean for all these interested actors differs and it is important how this may constrain the decisions of the U.S. and Iran.

The European Union regards Iran very differently than the United States in many respects. They believe through engagement the Islamic Republic can be moderated and brought into the international community as a responsible member. Iranian diplomatic actions took a more pragmatic turn after the death of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989. This began a steady and progressing relationship with European countries until the election of President Ahmadinejad. The United States enlisted the aid of the United Kingdom, France and Germany to resolve the concerns over Iran's nuclear program. It should be noted that France and Germany both have

significant trading relationships with the Iranian government. Targeted sanctions may harm the economies of these two states. It is not difficult to imagine the counter-pressure that Iran could apply during the negotiations.

Iran has also switched the currency of petroleum exchange to the Euro.[69] The Islamic Republic has designs to develop an independent oil exchange that would serve as an alternative to the two major petro-exchanges controlled by the United States.[70] The future stability and strength of the Euro could be notably improved by such a market. The domestic constituencies of most European states are very much against an expanded war in the Middle East. Pursuing military conflict as a policy option for European leaders would be highly unpopular. Still, European nations agree that a nuclear Iran would be a threat to their power and national interests. They have, by and large, served as avenues of diplomatic and political pressure throughout the confrontation.

China and Russia differ greatly from their European counterparts in how best to approach the nuclear issue. China has extensive and lucrative energy deals with Iran and would be unwilling to take action that would damage such a vital relationship.[71] Iran is also one of the largest purchasers of military goods from Russia.[72] The Russians have also provided a great deal of technical assistance in developing Iran's nuclear infrastructure. Considering Russia's weak economy, they are more than willing to pursue their national interests by selling nuclear technology and technical training to the Iranians. Russia does not want to see a nuclear armed Iran because of the Islamic Republic's proximity to Russia and connections to Central Asia.[73] Both China and Russia are permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). This complicates America's bargaining position because of the veto power these two members

hold. It is assumed that China would veto any resolution of military action against Iran meaning the U.S. would have to act unilaterally.

Israel would be one state that would fully support American unilateralism against Iran. Israel feels the most threatened by Iran and its nuclear program. A nuclear armed Iran is unequivocally unacceptable to Israel.[74] WMDs in the hands of Iranian hardliners, the rhetoric of destroying Israel, and Hezbollah and Hamas being funded by the Islamic Republic would put Israel into permanent status of high insecurity. If unilateral action does not come from America it may come from Israel. Israel is a state that has ignored international laws, customs, and prevailing attitudes when its security has been threatened. Israeli decision-makers may take extraordinary action to resolve the perceived threat against it. In this light, the nuclear arsenal of Israel is a matter of intense concern for Tehran and the rest of the Middle East.

The three major Arab powers of the Middle East have pointed to an international double-standard for Israel. If Israel can have nuclear weapons so too can Iran. Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt have all made similar statements. This is not out of a sense of solidarity with Iran, but an expression of a concern for potentially inhabiting a nuclear armed Middle East brimming with extremists. Jordan's King Abdullah is also fearful of what he calls the "Shia Crescent", or a stretch of states under the influence of Iran.[75] All three Arab states are worried of what an Iranian dominated Middle East would mean for their power in the region. A Persian power in the oil-rich Persian Gulf and in the contentious Levant could dramatically reduce the power of Israel and the Arab states. These states are supporters of the United States and if their power is undermined so too is American power. The Bush Doctrine has also weakened their legitimacy among Arab citizens. It seems to the Arab people that there is hypocrisy in democratic and nuclear standards. Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt are all authoritarian states with horrible

human rights records, while Israel has nuclear weapons. Democracies in those Arab countries would create Islamic-oriented governments or outright Islamic theocracies.[76] The instability of the Middle East creates a very delicate game where either Washington or Tehran could easily make the wrong move.

Iran: Rising Regional Power?

Iran is faced with an array of obstacles to achieving the kind of influence in the region it strives to attain. The Islamic Republic is patiently awaiting the exit of the United States from Iraq. It is contending with concerted international pressure from states in the Middle East, Asia, and Europe. Iran is enduring "smart sanctions" designed to halt its uranium enrichment in addition to the extensive American sanctions already extant. However, the regime in Tehran has been developing economic ties with Central Asia and has benefited (if not contributed) from the high price of crude in a worried oil market. America's international credibility is at an all time low and the war in Iraq is becoming increasingly unpopular. The Islamic Republic's chief antagonists in the Taliban and Saddam Hussein have been removed. This does not mean that Iran will definitely become a regional power, but the chance is there. Iran's waiting game will dictate the outcome of its ambitions.

Tehran is moving forward with its nuclear program. The place that program holds in the context of international security is contentious. Whether Iran plans to develop nuclear weapons or just nuclear energy can be predicted if that context is examined properly. Will Israel or the United States attack Iran over the nuclear issue? Will Washington and Tehran open a new dialogue and restore normal relations? If pressures continue to mount will Iran rescind its

signature from the NPT? Are harsher sanctions to follow? And the most puzzling is the original question: Why has Iran resisted American pressure to change its behavior? These questions can be addressed with an understanding of institutionalized perceptions, a description of present constraints, and a strong theoretical framework of assumptions.

Chapter 5

Theoretical Overview

The political decision-making process may be interpreted in a variety of ways. This interpretation is based on the assumptions the decision-maker chooses to draw. International relations theorists have sets of assumptions that they use to describe why certain patterns are observed. The patterns that have been observed in this case are in the recurring roles of power politics, risky decisions, and perceptions. Theories that have discussed the importance of these factors are most useful in synthesizing an applicable methodology. This methodology draws upon the following.

<u>Offensive Realism</u>

The assumptions that theories describe have had varying levels of success in describing observed behavior. The most successful of all the international relations theories has been realism. Realism has gone through many changes but the central tenets hold. Realism has sustained its explanatory power throughout time and independent of culture. This powerful set of assumptions cannot be ignored. Any attempt to elucidate a phenomenon in international relations requires some application of realism.

Power is the ultimate factor and it is that which all states strive to attain. The final goal of pursuing power is to become the only power, or global hegemon.[77] The system in which this struggle for dominance occurs is the international system. States operate in a circumstance of constant anarchy where no power has risen to the level of hegemon.[78] This creates fear between

states. This fear is typically called insecurity and is the imperative behind a state's desire to be

protected from the power of other states. There are three factors that most contribute to this fear:

> "…1) the absence of central authority that sits above states and can protect them
> from each other, 2) the fact that states always have some offensive military
> capability, and 3) the fact that states can never be certain about other states'
> intentions. Given this fear – which can never be wholly eliminated – states
> recognize that the more powerful they are relative to their rivals, the better their
> chances of survival."[79]

Offensive realists, like Mearsheimer, are most concerned with the causes of war and the means

to power. The ingredients of power offered by offensive realists are of two kinds: latent power

and military power.   Mearsheimer states that "latent power refers to the socio-economic

ingredients that go into building military power; it is based on a state's wealth and the overall

size of its population."[80] He goes on to describe military power as being "based largely on the

size and strength of a state's army and its supporting air and naval forces."[81] In short, power is

described as the "specific assets or material resources that are available to a state."[82]

Power politics cannot be ignored in the context of Iran's nuclear ambitions. The

constraints that exist in the reality of Middle Eastern politics for the U.S. and Iran must be taken

into account. Realism explains these constraints most fully but still fails to completely address

the issue of Iranian and American decision-making. Still, these assumptions provide a strong

foundation from which to build on.

Prospect Theory

The cognitive sciences are a relatively new addition to the development of international

relations theory. The underlying assumption is that the human thought process is complex and

requires theorists to look to the psychology of political actors to understand political behavior.

Game theory also deals with the decisions made by actors; unfortunately the assumption of rational behavior is accepted. Human beings do not always make rational decisions.[83] Prospect Theory (PT) seeks to address the shortcomings of rational choice based game models and the psychology of risk into a cognitive game theory.

One basic assumption of PT is that actors perceive gains and losses differently.[84] Even if the gain and loss of a decision is identical, perceived losses hurt more than perceived gains feel good.[85] The decision process is two-step: first, the decision-maker assesses outcomes and assigns loss or gain to them, and then second, chooses the decision of the highest perceived value.[86] A second assumption is that the actor:

> "[tends] to be risk averse – defined as a preference for a riskless prospect over a gamble of equal or greater value – in the domain of gains and risk acceptant – defined as a preference for a gamble over a riskless prospect of equal or greater value – in the domain of losses."[87]

In other words, when having to choose between a sure gain and a gamble, the actor chooses the sure gain. When the actor must choose between a sure loss and a gamble, the actor chooses the gamble. Third, all decisions are made from a neutral reference point called the status quo (SQ). The SQ is the sum total of all likely considerations an actor would include in the decision-making process. It includes the factors that the actor will find most useful in describing whether the current scenario is worth changing or keeping the same. The SQ is subjectively evaluated by the actor. PT also indicates how coercion works in decision-making.[88] An actor may threaten a rival-actor to force compliance with its wishes. The rival-actor may or may not decide the way the actor wishes. Punishments, or sanctions, follow if the rival does not comply. These sanctions must be credible to the rival during the threatening stage. The threat may induce risk acceptant behavior if the rival feels they are in the domain of losses (also called a losses frame).

Military deterrence is also covered by PT. Deterrence is most likely when both actors in a gains frame in the SQ and less likely when one or both actors are in a losses frame.[89] When actors are in a losses frame the SQ is unacceptable and must decide between maintaining existing losses or risking a costly action like war.[90] Economic threats are different from military threats but are also included in PT. A military threat targets all domestic actors equally whereas an economic threat targets only certain aspects of domestic actors.[91] This makes economic sanctions often times ineffective.

PT provides a solid decision-making framework to apply the case of the nuclear controversy. All of the factors described above are at play in the standoff between Washington and Tehran. Risk is associated with the decisions that have been made in the past, present, and will be made in the future. The empirical strength of PT's assumptions is considerable. This is very useful when understanding how and why threats and deterrence are perceived by state-actors and in what ways.

Perceptions in International Relations Theory

The importance of perceptions is an important factor in how states view and interact with one another. Previous experiences can shape how decision-makers treat a rival-state. The credibility of threats and the success of policies are, in part, dependent on these perceptions. Robert Jervis has contributed considerably to the theory behind the role of perceptions in international relations.

He argues that "a decision-maker's image of another actor can be defined as those of his beliefs about the other that affect his predictions of how the other will behave under various

circumstances."[92] These images, or perceptions, can directly contribute to determining whether a state can reach its goals.[93] These goals are defined as the national interest of the state. Jervis is careful to point out that these perceptions are only a contributing factor to goal attainment and international conduct.[94] Other constraints, typically associated with realism, are also at play. Jervis regards the international system in the same way as realists but also adds the significance of perceptions to the interaction of states.

Perception and game theory have also been examined by Jervis. The investigation into the compatibility of perceptions in a game theory model has direct bearing on the methodology. Jervis states three strengths of combining the two:

> "First, it builds upon central characteristics of international politics – anarchy, the security dilemma, and a combination of common and conflicting interests. Second, the approach is parsimonious and lends itself to deductive theorizing. Third, it seeks to bring together the study of conflict and the study of cooperation, and tries to explain a wide range of phenomena encompassing both security and political economy."[95]

The general view of realists is largely applied to the case in question. However it requires that the "actor's values, preferences, and beliefs" must be fully described before any analysis is undertaken.[96] In order to complete the picture, histories of interaction and patterns of behavior must be included. The rational game theory in which Jervis concentrates has shortcomings when compared to PT. However, Jervis does indicate the usefulness of creating a synthesis between game theory, realism, and perceptions.

Chapter 6

Methodology

The approach in designing the methodology is a synthetic one. Certain factors are of particular salience to the case. The theories that best describe these factors will be distilled into simple parameters. These factors will then inform what constitutes losses, gains, and risk as is described in PT. The shortcomings of the constituent theories are also addressed and organized as corrections or supplements to the other parameters. A synthesis will be drawn from these factors and an example of decision-making will be provided. The level of analysis and examples of parametric operationalization will also be provided. Finally, the goal of the methodology will provide the direction and content of its application.

Shortcomings of the Constituent Theories

The assumptions provided by the constituent theories are not complete. Several intrinsic problems must be addressed in order to create a successful synthesis. These problems will be addressed and the final factors most important to the case are distilled. Offensive realism does not take into account certain extra-state matters that are vitally significant to the Iranian case. Methodological weaknesses must be addressed for PT. Other points require clarity in the how perceptions are included in the methodology. These matters, once resolved, will then be incorporated into the methodology.

Offensive realism concerns itself with only state-actors and assumes a rigid definition of power. State-actors are the only level of analysis in describing the advantages and limitations of

power. These advantages and limitations can be significantly altered by non-state actors like terrorist organizations. Access to asymmetric warfare capabilities should be taken into account when describing the military power of a state. This can shore up the lack of power as a result of poor conventional military capabilities. Iran's conventional military is remarkably weaker than the conventional military of the United States. The same was true in the disparity of military power between Israel and Hezbollah. The Vietnamese were also in a similar situation with the United States during the Vietnam conflict. In both instances intangible asymmetric capabilities severely limited the warring power of the conventionally stronger side. Mearsheimer offers an important caveat in support of this point:

> "… [The] balance of power is not a highly reliable predictor of military success. The reason is that non-material factors sometimes provide one combatant with a decisive advantage over the other. These factors include, among others, strategy, intelligence, resolve, weather, and disease. Although material resources alone do not decide the outcome of wars, there is no question that the odds of success are substantially affected by the balance of resources… [and also] there have been numerous wars where the victor was either less powerful or about as powerful as the loser, yet the victor prevailed because of non-material factors."[97]

It is necessary to take into account the non-material factors when attempting to predict future decisions.

Decisions are most directly considered by game theorists. PT offers an insightful understanding of the decision-making process. It is not without its flaws however. One methodological problem is the matter of reference points. PT is designed to approximate the decisions based on a standard point of reference, or SQ. The complexities of creating an accurate SQ is difficult because of number of considerations a decision-maker must account for is high. Another point is that real-world problems are not described in a numerical fashion. This is not a significant barrier but one that must be resolved. The level of analysis PT uses is not directly applicable to a realist worldview. Individual actors are entirely ignored in realism.

PT is difficult to reconcile with realism but not so with theories on perceptions. Perceptions are at the core of PT's assumptions. Perceptions of risks, losses and gains can be important points of commonality. The difficulty in perception is that it is inherently subjective. This subjectivity makes theories of perceptions internally flawed. The literature describes a distinction between an accurate perceptions and misperceptions – those that are verifiably true versus those that are taken as being true but are actually false. The problems of realism, PT, and perceptions must be addressed in order to create an integrated working synthesis.

The first issue held in common with all of the constituent theories is the level of analysis. This research aims at understanding the decision-making of two states. Decision-making is done by individuals or small groups of individuals. This precludes a usage of the realist level of analysis, namely state-actors. It is the psychology of individual leaders or small groups of advisors that make decisions. Therefore, the level of analysis is the decision-maker. This level of analysis is more applicable to the theories on perceptions and game theory.

Second is the inclusion of non-material factors. The resolve of Iranian soldiers during the Iran-Iraq War is an important consideration when deliberating on a ground invasion of Iran. Furthermore, the Islamic Republic has considerable access to asymmetric warfare capabilities. Offensive realism would not include such things in the theoretical assumptions that it provides. These practical issues must be taken into account.

PT requires these issues be addressed because it is not truly a theory but an empty model with certain assumptions. This requires a very intensive elaboration of the SQ and what constitutes risk. Descriptions of history, context, and perceptions are the necessary ingredients that give the assumptions meaning. The methodology includes these factors but describes them numerically. Quantifying perceptions can be subjective but allows room for process tracing by

future analysts and decision-makers. Perceptions also escape the necessity of verification. It matters little whether a perception is true or false. The perception, regardless of its accuracy, can still lead to decisions both harmful and beneficial. The quality of the decision can only be determined in hindsight.

All of these factors must be extracted and clearly described for frame construction. The theories provide three distinct parameters: military, economy, and perception. In each frame these factors must be explored and conclusions drawn based on the sound description of considerations under those headings. These considerations will be given numerical values to describe their subjective importance to the decision. The following is an example of this process.

Synthesis and Operationalization

State X and State Y have an international dispute that may lead to war. State X and State Y have equivalent military capabilities, economic strengths, but warred against each other 70 years ago. In order to assuage any future conflict, the leaders of both countries began heavily investing in each other after the last war. However, State X thinks that State Y has a devious leader that wishes to destroy State X. In reality, State Y is firmly committed to peace and prosperity. However, the leader of State Y has a domestic constituency that wishes to fight against State X and elections are coming soon. Will State Y attack State X?

State X
Perception:
Fought war with State Y, -1
Leader Y is viewed as devious, -1
People Y want war with State X, -2
Upcoming Elections in State Y, 0

Military:
Equal Strength, 0
At Peace, 0
International Dispute, -2

Economy:
Equal Strength, 0
Integrated Economies, +4

State Y
Perception:
Fought war with State X, -1
Leader Y wants peace, +1
People Y want war with State X, -2
Upcoming Elections in State Y, -1

Military:
Equal Strength, 0
At Peace, 0
International Dispute, -2

Economy:
Equal Strength, 0
Integrated Economies, +4

The numerical summations are derived in the following way. Each parameter is given a value from the worst (-5) to the best (+5) with zero meaning neutral or equivalent. These values are based on this qualitative scale. These are added up and indicate the reference point, or SQ. The SQ is simply a reflection of the current circumstances the actor is basing their decision. Also, each scenario will be given a short description following the table. In this way several decisions will be studied and state priorities evaluated. These evaluations will then be applied to likely near-future scenarios.

The SQ will be affected either through acceptance or rejection. Accepting the SQ is effectively taking no action on the part of the actor. If the SQ is accepted, the value is the sum of all the parameters. Rejection of the SQ is a desire to alter the circumstance in favor of the actor. If the SQ is rejected special rules apply to each heading of parameters. The individual parameters of "Perceptions" remains the same when calculating rejection values unless the action being considered ignores perception or is a domestic consideration. Domestic parameters are defined as matters that affect the decision-maker from within their state but still have bearing on

the decision to be made. The values of domestic parameters remain the same whether the SQ is accepted or rejected. However, domestic parameters (such as elections, popular attitudes, etc.) of a rival-actor can still play a role in the decisions but since they cannot be controlled by the actor no value is given to them. However, ignoring perceptions brings with it its own rule. In real terms, perceptions will affect the thought process of the decision-maker unless the decision-maker is intentionally disregarding institutionalized views. This is called the "Rule of Progressive Exception" to the "Perception" category.

The parameters under the rival-state's "Military" are negated and included in the calculations of the other actor's "Reject" value. The military power of a state would be applied against the opponent. One parameter for State Y could be "Superior Military +4". This would weigh in on the decisions of State X. Its negation is applied to State X because it is State Y's "Superior Military" that they would have to contend. In other words, State X's military would incur a -4 for State Y's military strength since it would be State Y's military strength that State X would be fighting. This is an example of a significant risk associated with rejection for State X.

The heading of "Economy" comes with it shared, unique, and imbalanced parameters. Shared parameters indicate mutually affected economic matters and are identically labeled for both actors. In these cases, rejection nullifies the value. Unique parameters are those economic issues that are germane to the question and only to one state or would be independent of change should the SQ be rejected. These values remain the same. The imbalanced parameters are those economic parameters that one state has in common with the rival-state. These could lopsided economic relationships that can be applied as pressure. In these cases, the values are negated.

If the SQ is accepted by State Y the accept score would be -1 ("Fought War with State X" + "Leader Y wants Peace" + "People Y want war with State X" + "Upcoming Elections in

State Y" + "International Dispute" + "Integrated Economies" = -1 + 1 – 2 – 1 – 2 + 4 = -1). So State Y would be in a losses frame in the SQ. If State Y rejects the SQ, "Perceptions" remain the same because the question is not intentionally ignoring institutionalized perceptions. However, two domestic parameters are included for State Y, "People Y want war with State X" and "Upcoming Elections in State Y". Under "Military" the value is derived from the negation of State X's "Military". Ostensibly, the goal of attacking State X for State Y is to resolve the international dispute. Resolution of the dispute would equate to a negation or a +2 for "International Dispute" applied to State Y's "Reject" score. In other words, the dispute would end with a successful military action. This is *one* incentive for choosing war. The same is done for State X and the possible combinations of "Accept" and "Reject" in the SQ are described in Table 1:

Table 1. Will State Y attack State X?

	Accept (Y)	Reject (Y)
Accept (X)	-2, -1	-2, 1
Reject (X)	-6, -1	-6, 1

By applying PT, it is predicted that State Y will attack State X. Accepting the SQ, State Y is in the losses frame, but a rejection of the SQ would put State Y in the gains frame. This would make State Y risk-acceptant. In all probabilities, State Y will reject the SQ and attack.

<u>Goal of the Methodology</u>

The aim of this methodology is develop a means for involving intimate expertise on states with predicting the actions of those states. This creates an important need in policy for regional and country experts in foreign affairs, defense, and intelligence. Furthermore, accurate process tracing can occur by developing a method to quantify subjective evaluations very accurately. It will be possible to discover which analysts have the best talent for predicting a rival-state's future behavior. Also the factors that lead the analyst to that conclusion can be further isolated and explored. This could help in the development of sound policy and strategy towards states of great concern.

Chapter 7

Application of Methodology

Several potential political decisions are examined below. These decisions would be made in circumstances of risk. The most pressing questions are posed here. Four likely decisions are predicted. The first is whether the United State will invade Iran with ground forces similarly to Iraq. Another martial option is explored that seems more likely to many Iran observers. The United States may use strategic aerial bombardment against Iran's nuclear infrastructure. In the event that the Washington does not use military options, Israel very well might. Iran is considered Israel's number one state of concern. Tel Aviv feels the most threatened by Tehran nuclear program. Diplomatically, the UNSC's actions over Iran's nuclear program may yield harsher sanctions in the future. This tactic may not be useful in forcing Iran to stop its nuclear ambitions. All of these scenarios are investigated.

United States:
Perception:
Mullahs are fanatics, -2
Iran is developing WMDs, -5
Iran is evil, -1

Military:
Unknown Nuke Facilities, -3
Superior Military, +5
Iran is surrounded, +5
Too few soldiers, -5

Economy:
Superior Economy, +5

Iran:
Perception:
America wants regime removal, -3
America is hypocritical, -1
America used WMDs, -2
War is unpopular, +1

Military:
Asymmetric Capabilities, +3
Resolve of soldiers, +2
Straits of Hormuz, +2
Size and Population of Iran, +2

Economy:
Smart Sanctions, -1
Oil Prices High, +2

Table 2. Will U.S. invade Iran?

	Accept (US)	Reject (US)
Accept (Iran)	5, -1	5, -12
Reject (Iran)	-6, -1	-6, -12

PT predicts that the United States will be highly risk-averse in invading Iran. Furthermore, the SQ highly favors Iran. This can explain why Iran has been able to defy America's demands to suspend uranium enrichment. A strategic aerial strike is still an option to the U.S. The only difference from the above scenario is that the lack of troops is no longer a parameter for American decision-makers.

Table 3. Will the U.S. attack Iran with a strategic aerial strike?

	Accept (US)	Reject (US)
Accept (Iran)	5, 4	5, -12
Reject (Iran)	-11, 4	-11, -12

Once again, PT predicts that the United States will not attack Iran. But, Israel sensing serious insecurity may attack Iran. However, Israel faces a number of logistical obstacles. First, there are no fighter jets or bombers that can reach Iran and fly back to Israel in one trip. This would

require them to land in an Arab country between Iran and Israel. This would be highly unlikely and politically destructive to any Arab leader that would provide such a service. Iran also has access to Hamas' militant infrastructure operating inside Israel. Hezbollah also has access to Israel from the north. This provides a land route to Israel through Iraq and Syria and the ability to inflict retaliatory damage on Israel.

Israel:
Perception:
Mullahs are fanatics, -5
Iran is developing WMDs, -5
Iran wants to destroy Israel, -5

Military:
Unknown Nuke Facilities, -3
Superior Airforce, +5
Must fly over Arab airspace, -3
Distance to Iran, -5

Economy:
Decent Economy, +2

Iran:
Perception:
Israel is an enemy, -5

Military:
Asymmetric Capabilities, +3
Ground route to Israel, +2

Economy:
Smart Sanctions, -1
Oil Prices High, +2

Table 4. Will Israel attack Iran with a strategic aerial strike?

	Accept (Israel)	Reject (Israel)
Accept (Iran)	1, -17	1, -18
Reject (Iran)	0, -17	0, -18

PT predicts that Israel will not attack Iran with a strategic aerial strike. Israel's position is not likely to worsen very much more than in SQ. Iran would be in the best situation to not retaliate should Israel attack. Another, less bellicose, decision would be to massively increase sanctions on Iran as a deterrence measure.

UNSC
Perception:
Iran is violating the NPT, -3
Sanctions have not worked so far, -2

Military:
N/A, 0

Economy:
U.S.'s unilateral sanctions, +5

Iran
Perception:
National right to fuel cycle, +1

Military:
N/A, 0

Economy:
China's ties to Iran, +5
Russia's ties to Iran, +3
France's ties to Iran, +1
Self-sufficiency, +1
Strategic Oil Resources, +3
Smart Sanctions, -2

Table 5. Will increased sanctions stop Iranian enrichment?

	Accept (UNSC)	Reject (UNSC)
Accept (Iran)	12, 0	12, 0
Reject (Iran)	12, 0	12, 0

The decision to increase sanctions carries no risk with it. PT is unable to predict whether continued sanctions will change Iran's behavior. However, from a common sense perspective it would be highly unlikely that Iran will stop enriching uranium. The Iranians have limited access

to their facilities to the IAEA and possess strategic oil resources that can provide them capital. The smart sanctions are designed to affect only a handful of businesses, officials, and other individuals. Should a resolution for sanctions start targeting all of Iran's economy, China or Russia would likely veto the resolution. War and sanctions seem to be unable to alter Iran's trajectory.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

These near-future scenarios go to the heart of the research question. How and why has Iran been able to defy American pressure to stop its nuclear program? The options of warfare and sanctions come with them significant limitations when applied to Iran. The SQ is heavily in Iran's favor and the policy options of the U.S. are very few. The time for threatening Iran has come to an end. Those threats that the United States poses to Iran are not considered credible given the risks involved. The Islamic Republic has ignored all pressures because their decision-makers are fully aware that all they have to do is wait the United States out.

The methodology has revealed the kinds of constraints that states face when under conditions of risk. However, the application has illustrated both limitations and advantages. These are briefly discussed. The real use of this methodology is to form the foundation of sound foreign policy. Included is a policy recommendation based on this research. This research has also inspired new possibilities in the attempt to predict the political actions of decision-makers.

Yet, the methodology is problematic in several ways. First, it cannot be used inductively. It would be very difficult to work backwards from a decision to provide the parameters that caused the political action. The power of prediction only extends to the very near-future. Second, trying to predict decisions many years in the future is simply beyond the reach of this methodology. Third, the perceptions and political context of each case would need to be described in great detail. This makes this methodology very research intensive. And fourth, it is impossible to tell whether something will or will not happen until the future occurs. Additionally, there is no way of telling why an event did not come to pass. The only way of

discovering the predictive power of this method is to conclude that a decision will be made in the near-future and wait to see.

In such a circumstance, however, the method becomes very useful. If a prediction comes true, then it is very easy to process trace the thinking of the analyst. Quantifying subjective evaluations allows for expertise and intuition to play a role in policy. In doing so, it is possible to create cadres of experts that have the capacity to accurately predict the decisions of other states. This method is also an attempt to bring the academic and policy community closer together. It is often remarked how much disparity there is between academics and policy-makers in their approaches to political phenomena. This research was an attempt to bridge that gap.

These limitations and advantages have laid the groundwork for at least one policy recommendation in regards to the Iranian case. Given Iran's ability to resist pressure and threat from the United States, perhaps the best approach is direct diplomacy. These talks would have to be without condition and diplomatic relations between Washington and Tehran must be normalized. Right now Iran is isolated from the American economy. Should normalization occur, massive foreign direct investment should follow. This would expand the middle class of Iran and create a great deal of social tension and even upheaval. Wealth would empower Iranians to resist their government. The Bush Doctrine might just work if the United States would be willing to speak to evil.

Throughout the course of this research it has become clear that there are many more possibilities. Including more detailed histories to chart the most accurate status of state perceptions could be incredibly useful. This would expand the number of parameters but the values attached to them would be more accurate. Other theories could also be included like Fuzzy Logic. Fuzzy Logic is a theory popular in the computer sciences dealing with artificial

intelligence design. Computer scientists have worked with describing perceptions and decision-making. Ambiguous or relativistic perceptions are given a very full treatment in the computing science literature. Interdisciplinary approaches would certainly enrich the academic literature of international relations theory.

Other questions related to this research have also arisen. The core of the issue is Iran's utility in actually developing nuclear weapons. Given the current political context of Iran's position in the Middle East it would seem counter-intuitive for the Islamic Republic to create nuclear weapons. Arms races could be triggered and the relative power advantage would then evaporate. If future research could provide insight into this matter the entire approach to Iran's nuclear program would come into question. It is an exciting possibility to contemplate. Mearsheimer best describes the future of this kind of research:

> "…all political forecasting is bound to include some error. Those who venture to predict…should therefore proceed with humility, take care not exhibit unwarranted confidence, and admit hindsight is likely to reveal surprises and mistakes.
> Despite these hazards, social scientists should nevertheless use their theories to make predictions about the future. Making predictions helps inform policy discourse, because it helps make sense of events unfolding in the world around us…In short, the world can be used as a laboratory to decide which theories best explain international politics."[98]

Chapter 9

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[2] Kinzer, "All the Shah's Men", pgs 1-16

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[4] This is by no means a complete list and many lesser events have also shaped the relationship between Washington and Tehran. Those lesser events have largely served only to reinforce expected patterns of behavior, and for the sake of brevity, have been excluded.

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[7] Ibid., pg 6

[8] Ibid., pg 92

[9] Ibid., pgs 84-101

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[11] Ibid., pg 259

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[68] It should also be noted that Iran has a terrain similar to Afghanistan and is roughly three times the size of Iraq in land and population. Iran's military is in far better shape than Iraq's prior to the 2003 invasion further making a ground invasion an unlikely option.
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[76] Two notable examples are in Palestine and Lebanon with Hamas and Hezbollah victorious, respectively.
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