



## UNITED STATES-IRAN RELATIONS AND NUCLEAR PROGRAMME

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### ABSTRACT

*For preserving huge oil stocks for the coming days, that presumably would increase in value as world oil supplies dwindled and Iran could also reserve oil stocks for petrochemical use instead of fuel, Shah of Iran began an aspiring nuclear programme which was concentrated on an aggressive development of nuclear power. Arguments have been made by western economists that either Tehran was inexperienced or insincere in the process of nuclear programme; however, prudent would be, it to believe that Iran was serious, particularly assuming that the programme of Iran's Shah Reza Pahlavi was being assisted by the Washington and the consent to build first nuclear power station in Tehran was given by Federal Democratic Republic of Germany. This article contains a brief history of the Shah's nuclear program and a particular analysis of American-Iranian Relations during the Era of Shah of Iran.*

**KEY WORDS:** Bechtel Corporation, NPT, Shari'ah, IAEA, Nonproliferation, Ulama Administration.

### INTRODUCTION

Iranian nuclear program, having a long history began with Washington–Tehran civilian nuclear cooperation. At a time when Shah Reza Pahlavi was ruler of Iran, and was a close U.S. ally. A civilian nuclear cooperation agreement was signed between United States and Iran in 1957, and a 5 Megawatt Research Reactor was completed by the American firm AMF in 1967. A set of related Research Laboratories and the Reactor Known as Tehran Nuclear Research Reactor, or TNRR, are under the supervision of Tehran Nuclear Research Centre also known as TNRC.<sup>1</sup> In 1968 Tehran signed Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as a condition of Washington's nuclear cooperation. Treaty was ratified in 1970. Putting all of the country's nuclear facilities under the IAEA's inspection and monitoring regime. Putting all of the country's nuclear facilities under the IAEA's inspection and monitoring regime, Iran signed a Safeguards Agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in 1974.

Establishment of Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) took Place in 1974 and it as assigned the responsibility to fulfil the determined goal of producing 23000 megawatt electricity by 1995. The development of full nuclear fuel cycle, and unambiguously, the ability to

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<sup>1</sup>Nuclear Threat Initiative, "Iran: Nuclear Overview," [www.nti.org/e\\_research/profiles/Iran/Nuclear/index.html](http://www.nti.org/e_research/profiles/Iran/Nuclear/index.html).

enrich uranium was also included.<sup>2</sup>It was planned to construct 22 nuclear reactors in future, by Tehran which potential suppliers were European and American Contractors. Tehran also extended a \$1 billion loan to the European nuclear fuel manufacturer Eurodif, in return for the supply of 10% of the company's fuel production in 1974.<sup>3</sup>Iran developed plans to construct 22 nuclear reactors over the coming decades, to be supplied by European and American contractors.

In the early 70's, after Iran signed Non-Proliferation Treaty, the United States and other Western nuclear Countries (France and The Federal Republic of Germany) committed to help Iran implementing its nuclear capabilities for peaceful purposes. So, since 1974 the United States and Iran started negotiations for nuclear reactors selling. However, in the same year India tested its first nuclear bomb, so that the U.S. started worrying about proliferation in the region. At the same time, the Shah declared to many newspapers he was ready and willing to start his nuclear weapons program for defence purposes. In this context, U.S. officials raised concerns over U.S. nuclear capability exportation, so that the selling agreement had a stalemate.

### **ATOMS FOR PEACE [EISENHOWER DECLARATION]**

Nothing but, to pledge the Agreement for Cooperation Concerning Civil Uses of Atomic Energy by Tehran's Reza Shah Pahlavi with the United States, on April 1957 was the initiative stage in the direction of Nuclear Programme.<sup>4</sup> The document, earlier mentioned was part of the Atoms for Peace Program, a project considered by President Dwight Eisenhower in 1953 to deliver technology and educational resources in the field of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.<sup>5</sup>In reality under the setting of this program the United States were supposed to make bilateral bargains with States wanting to develop nuclear civilian programs. It meant that they provided research reactors, fuel and scientific training, with a special regard on non-developed countries.<sup>6</sup> To guarantee the civilian use of nuclear capability criteria – and so preventing the conversion for military purposes - in 1956, it was created the International Atomic Energy Agency.<sup>7</sup>

Consequently, completing the agreement between Tehran and the Washington, the United States delivered technical help and the contract of several kilograms of enriched uranium.<sup>8</sup> The Institute of Nuclear Science, based in Baghdad, was, after few months moved to Teheran. Realizing at this moment the Shah of Iran confirmed that how nuclear energy could be important for his country, with the intention of he took a personal interest to it.<sup>9</sup>In effect, he ordered the establishment of the Teheran Nuclear Research Centre (TNRC)in 1959, at Teheran University, and started defining which kind of technology and materials he needed to bargain with the United States.<sup>10</sup>Finally, Iran organised to buy a 5 megawatt research centre implemented at

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<sup>2</sup> International Institute for Strategic Studies, Iran's Nuclear, Chemical and Biological Capabilities: A Net Assessment, London : IISS, 2011, pp. 8–9.

<sup>3</sup>Oliver Meier, "Iran and Foreign Enrichment: A Troubled Model," Arms Control Today, Vol. 36, No. 1, 2006.

<sup>4</sup>US DEPARTMENT OF STATE, Atoms for Peace Agreement with Iran, in «Department of State Bulletin»>>xxxvi, 929, April 15,1957, pp, 629-630.

<sup>5</sup>Address by Mr. Dwight D. Eisenhower, President of the United States of America, to the 470th Plenary Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly, December 8, 1953, in <https://www.iaea.org/about/history/atoms-for-peace-speech>.

<sup>6</sup> A. ROWBERRY, Sixty Years of Atoms for Peace and Iran's Nuclear Program, Brookings, , in <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/sixty-years-of-atoms-for-peace-and-iransnuclear-program>.

<sup>7</sup> ibid

<sup>8</sup>US DEPARTMENT OF STATE, Atoms for Peace Agreement with Iran, cit.

<sup>9</sup>HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY MOHAMMED REZA SHAH PAHLAVI SHAHANSHAH OF IRAN, Mission for My Country, London, Hutchinson, 1961, pp. 307-308

<sup>10</sup>ROWBERRY, Sixty Years of Atoms for Peace, cit

TNRC: thus, they were able to yield up to 600 grams of plutonium each year in spent fuel.<sup>11</sup> A significant quantity, bearing in mind that at that time spent fuel was the main source to produce nuclear weapons, through a process called “nuclear reprocessing”.<sup>12</sup>

***International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) & Establishment of Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI)***

Tehran was also among the first countries who signed Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1968 which was based on three central doctrines; disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful use of nuclear energy. Specifically, nuclear weapons transfer from nuclear to non-nuclear countries was prohibited by NPT. Furthermore, provision was made under the NPT that all the civilian nuclear transfer will take place under the strict control of the IAEA.<sup>13</sup> In the mentioned setting, continuing his nuclear program, to control nuclear energy and create a synergy with the international agencies the Shah of Iran commanded to establish the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI),<sup>14</sup> a Swiss-trained nuclear physicist Akbar Etemad was appointed as the chairman of AEOI by then monarch of Tehran. Eventually he was accused for developing nuclear master plan. Lately he is assumed to be the Father of Iranian Nuclear Program.<sup>15</sup>

By bargaining capabilities with other Countries, in early 1974, Tehran started to broaden its nuclear horizon like France. Actually, they finalized an agreement. Contract envisaged an Iran’s \$1 billion loan to Commissariat à l’Energie Atomique (CEA) to shape a uranium enrichment plant in France in return for 10% stake in the plant and French assistance in uranium processing.<sup>16</sup>

**THE U.S.-IRAN “SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP”**

Regarding nuclear issues, the year 1974 was a crucial one for region particularly South Asia. Nourishing fear for destabilization in the region, on May 18 1974, India made her first successful nuclear test. Eventually, Reza Shah Pahlavi of Iran commented “Iran would one day possess the nuclear weapon and sooner than it is believed”, in an interview given in June.<sup>17</sup> Washington got worried by the statement, conveyed in interview in June as well as the nuclear weapon programme started by Shah without informing her. In reality, it brought a ‘storm’ in the America that is why Congress delayed the acceptance of enriched uranium supply contracts.<sup>18</sup>

Therefore, Iranian government spokesman Gholam Reza Kiampor intensely repudiated the declaration made by the Shah Reza Pahlavi. Though, it was commented that Shah’s remark as referred to policy reconsideration in the event other non-nuclear nations had developed nuclear

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<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> A. ANDREWS, Nuclear Fuel Reprocessing: US Policy: CRS Report for Congress, March 25, 2011, in <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/nuke/RS22542.pdf>, and WORLD NUCLEAR ASSOCIATION, Mixed Oxide (MOX) Fuel, in <http://www.world-nuclear.org/information-library/nuclear-fuel-cycle/fuelrecycling/mixed-oxide-fuel-mox.aspx>.

<sup>13</sup> Iran Nuclear Chronology, James Martin Center for Non Proliferation Studies, Monterey Institute of International Studies, 2011.

<sup>14</sup> ROWBERRY, Sixty Years of Atoms for Peace, cit

<sup>15</sup> M. ZUBEIDA, The Man Who Turned Iran Nuclear, British Broadcasting Corporation,

<sup>16</sup> MARWAH - A. SHULZ, Determinants of the Nuclear Options, cit., p. 190.

<sup>17</sup> U.S. Embassy Paris Cable 15305 to Department of State, Interview with Shah, June 24, 1974, Unclassified, in The National Security Archive - The George Washington University, online by W. BURR, in <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/nukevault/ebb268/doc01a.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> US Embassy Teheran cable 5389 to Department of State, Iran’s Intentions in Nuclear Matters, July 1, 1974, Confidential, *ibid.* in <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/nukevault/ebb268/doc01d.pdf>.

weapon.<sup>19</sup> When there was a period of turmoil in Washington's domestic policy, the argument between United States and Iran came. Virtually, presidency was going to be dismissed by President Richard Nixon since Watergate scandal, leaving it to Gerald m. ford. In fact the relationship-like friendship was there between Richard Nixon and Reza Shah Pahlavi, which was developed in 1950s.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, under Nixon's administration Tehran was having the characteristics, because of her geostrategic location, to be considered pivotal country as well as best western ally in the region.<sup>21</sup>

West Asia, in fact, for Washington was one of the most important areas of the conflict with USSR. But after Vietnam War they considered that they can't engage directly in any new war, it was needed for US to guarantee stability in the gulf region by backing local regional ally.<sup>22</sup> Tehran was most appropriate for this position since Shah was not interested in ideology of communism and Soviet Union and she was concerned to maintain status quo in the region. So, in 1969 when Shah of Iran visited United States both the countries negotiated an agreement named oil-for-weapons.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, in 1972 for fostering their 'Special-relationship' Nixon and Kissinger visited Iran concluding the accord and discussing about the past and future of the region of West Asia.<sup>24</sup> United States foreign policy purposes towards Tehran were largely two. First, making Shah of Iran to share American strategy; in actual, this was guaranteed by Tehran's Consensus towards Nixon Doctrine, second, developing Iran's efforts in contrast to Soviet Union, also through cooperation with other Arab neighbouring nations, according to Henry Kissinger.<sup>25</sup> Reza Shah' Pahlavi's intention was to sustain peace and stability in the region of West Asia, in a similar way to United States. Reza Shah Pahlavi too sought to strengthen Tehran's role in the World, acting as a mediator in major conflicts of the west Asian region.<sup>26</sup>

It elaborate why Tehran was so stubborn to develop a forward-looking nuclear programme, which covered in 1976 \$ 1.3 billion, it means it was the second largest public economic institution in country after the national oil company.<sup>27</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Iranian Nuclear Program during era of Shah Reza Pahlavi was appeared to be peaceful. On the other hand Iran's Shah Statement after Indian first nuclear test worried United States. Because of cold war rivalry between USSR and USA in west Asia also provided Iran the opportunity to save oil and start nuclear energy programme. By this Tehran could have earned appropriate income.

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<sup>19</sup> US Embassy Teheran cable 5192 to Department of State, Shah's Alleged Statement on Nuclear Weapons, June 25, 1974, Confidential, *ibid.*, in <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/nukevault/ebb268/doc01c.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup> V. VANTAGGIO, "L'asino con la pelle di leone". Gli Stati Uniti e i sogni di gloria iraniani (1969-1972), in A. DONNO - G. IURLANO, a cura di, Nixon, Kissinger e il Medio Oriente (1969-1973), Firenze, Le Lettere, 2010, p. 185.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*, p. 189

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, p. 196

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*, p. 227.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, p. 229

<sup>27</sup> MILANI, The Shah's Atomic Dreams, *cit.*