

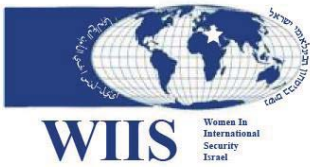
WIIS Israel Middle East Review



Vol. No. 2

Issue No. 3

January 2012



Editorial Team

Editors-in-Chief

Steven Aiello

Rebecca Resnick

Women in International Security Executive Board

Lea Landman

Acting Executive Director

Julia Chazkel

Development Director

Kasey Barr

Social Media Vice President

Tamar Bernstein

Membership Vice President

Shauna Naghi

Communications Vice President

Ella Ran

Webmaster

WIIS Middle East Review- Iran

Iran is the central focus in this edition of *The WIIS-Israel Middle East Review*. Iran's foreign policy goals hold key implications for regional issues, and domestically the theocratic regime faces complex challenges. This issue opens with an article discussing the obstacles Iran's government faces in terms of maintaining its legitimacy. Next we look at whether or not the Islamic run government in Iran does indeed abide by Sharia law as it purports to, focusing on applications of the punishment of stoning for convicted adulterers. Finally, we take a closer look at the Jewish minority in Iran and the challenges facing their community. This issue is highlighted by an interview with Dr. Emily Landau, an expert on Iranian deterrence and Israel's security policies. She offers her insights on what the future holds as a nuclear Iran becomes an increasingly closer reality.

Interview with Dr. Emily Landau.....	Steven Aiello.....	4
Challenges to Khomeini's Legacy.....	Sina Kashefipour....	8
In the name of Allah: Does Iran Follow Sharia Law?....	Steven Aiello.....	12
Iranian Jews and the Iranian State.....	Sarah Oliai	18

Interview with Dr. Emily Landau

Steven Aiello



Dr. Emily Landau is Director of the Arms Control and Regional Security program at the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS). She has published and lectured extensively on nuclear proliferation, arms control efforts, and regional security in the Middle East; proliferation challenges in the post-Cold War world with particular emphasis on Iran and North Korea; Israel's nuclear image and policy; and developments in global arms control thinking in the nuclear realm. Her most recent study is *Decade of Diplomacy: Negotiations with Iran and North Korea and the Future of Nuclear Non-Proliferation* (forthcoming, 2012). Dr. Landau teaches arms control in the Overseas program at Tel Aviv University and in the International School at the University of Haifa. She served on the Steering Committee of EuroMeSCo, and is currently involved in the Expert Advisory Group for Euro-Mediterranean affairs. She holds a BA and MA from Tel Aviv University, and a Ph.D. from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Which forms of deterrence have been used to try to stop Iran from pursuing nuclear weapons? Why does this deterrence seem to be failing?

Over the last ten years, various diplomatic initiatives have been pursued by the international community to try to stop the Iranian nuclear program. The EU 3 (Britain, France and Germany), and the IAEA have conducted negotiations; there has been American involvement, and the P5 + Germany have promoted initiatives. Sometimes inducements have been used, other times coercion. Generally incentives were offered, and when they failed, the parties moved to coercion tactics.

Since 2002, when the Iranian nuclear sites at Natanz and Arak were revealed, numerous efforts have been tried to dissuade the Iranians from nuclear aspirations, and all have failed. One question that has not been answered about Iran's strategic goals is whether they plan to reach a point six months away from completion of the program and then pause it there- the 'Japan' option, or whether they will see it through to full nuclearization.

The international community has not been able to stop Iran's slow move towards nuclearization. Iran has suffered setbacks- sabotage, targeted killings of key personnel, the Stuxnet virus, but these only delay the program. Iran's behavior throughout has been tactical; the Iranians have shown a policy of progressing with their plans at maximum speed, while minimizing the costs to themselves by slowing down when the response of the international community seems like it is getting too harsh. Only recently has the international community demonstrated that it is tired of the Iranian games.

The international community has limited means at its disposal—sanctions and other diplomatic measures. Military options have too many uncertainties to be viable solutions. Instead diplomacy has been chosen. However here, a strategic imbalance exists that has constrained Iranian negotiations to date.

What is this strategic imbalance? What can be done to address it?

The international community needs to reach a negotiated outcome in order to achieve its goal of stopping Iran from attaining a military capability. Iran on the other hand has no real need for negotiations to succeed – rather, it can proceed unilaterally to its goal, and a negotiated settlement would mean giving up its nuclear aspirations. This creates a structural imbalance with regard to negotiations which Iran has used to its advantage.

In response, the international community needs to change the cost-benefit calculus for Iran. It needs to make the costs of non-negotiation too high for Iran to prefer non-negotiation.

One early mistake of the Obama administration in dealing with Iran was the failure to establish a credible threat of military consequences for demonstrated Iranian unwillingness to reach a negotiated settlement. Iran needs to perceive a high cost for failure to negotiate in good faith. In the past, US rhetoric has not established such a credible threat; often when one person from the US administration would convey a threat, another figure would downplay the threat, or the same speaker might contradict his own message, by underscoring the dangers of military action. More

recently, this has begun to change. For a more detailed analysis of this recent shift in US rhetoric, please see my latest [INSS Insight article](http://www.inss.org.il/upload/%28FILE%291325968000.pdf). (<http://www.inss.org.il/upload/%28FILE%291325968000.pdf>)

To bring Iran to the negotiating table- and raise their incentives to reach an agreement there, several tools must be used. A credible military threat must be in place. Strong sanctions must be used to raise the costs of non-negotiation. This should include targeting the Central Bank of Iran, as well as an embargo on oil. In the past, China and Russia have prevented the US and its allies from passing such harsh sanctions and the sanctions that have been imposed over the years have been generally watered-down versions. To think that the diplomatic option is the easiest one to employ is a mistake. In many ways it is the hardest policy for a country to execute successfully.

Which country is in the best position to make a credible military threat to Iran- Israel or the US?

The United States. This can involve basic things like changing the rhetoric used by officials (see the INSS Insight paper). There was talk about an Israeli attack on Iran earlier this year, but at this point that does not seem likely.

If Iran does reach nuclearization, then what happens? How likely is Iran to use a nuclear weapon for ideological purposes, disregarding the costs to itself? Is Iran really an ‘irrational’ actor?

Iran has done nothing to indicate that it is irrational. To the contrary- Iran’s decision making calculus can be clearly mapped out under a cost-benefit analysis. On the strategic level, whether Iran’s ideological goals will trump its survival goals- I do not believe so for several reasons. Firstly, Ahmadinejad’s rhetoric in regards to this has become less prominent than it was in the past. Secondly, it is really Khomeini who is the ultimate decision maker in Iran, and he has not indicated that his policy goals are necessarily the same as Ahmedinejad’s. Finally, the Iranian regime has shown clearly in the past that it cares very much about its own survival.

Instead of a threat of military attack with nuclear weapons, the real fear from a nuclear Iran is the increase in its regional power and influence. Iran has hegemonic aspirations, and nuclearization would give it a clear edge in the region. It would change its relationships with other countries, and embolden actions that it may not be able to take currently. To take one example, Bahrain, which has a 70% Shiite population (from among the Bahrainis, excluding the foreign workers population) and which Iran has on occasion declared as ‘Iranian’, might see increased involvement and intervention by Iran to bring it under Shia rule and the Iranian sphere of influence. Another example would be the effect on proxies—certainly Hezbollah is an Iranian proxy, but the extent to which the organization would obey Iranian imperatives may depend on various other factors. The protection and influence of a nuclear Iran might lead to greater obedience of Hezbollah and other allies.

Which country is most threatened by a nuclear Iran then? Could nuclearization lead to an attempt by other regional powers (Saudi Arabia, Turkey) to achieve nuclearization?

It's hard to know which country is most threatened by this scenario. It may well be the Arab countries in the Gulf. Certainly there is a risk that a nuclear Iran leads to other countries seeking nuclear armament.

How has the regional instability created by the Arab Spring affected the Iranian domestic political arena?

Well the Green protests in Iran preceded the Arab Spring, and failed to have the same effect. Certainly there is not a lack of discontent with the regime in Iran, but the brutal repression by military forces has deterred most people from taking to the streets the way the Arab Spring protesters have. In Syria, Iranian Revolutionary Guards have trained Syrian soldiers in the tactics they have used, however the protests continue in Syria despite the harsh military response. So perhaps there are differences between the situations in Iran and in the Arab countries—cultural differences or perhaps Iranians do not feel as desperate as citizens in the Arab countries.

How has Iran been affected by the Arab Spring? In particular, how has the situation unfolding in Syria affected Iran vis-à-vis its relationship with Syria, Hezbollah, and Hamas?

It is really a mixed picture. Overall I think that Iran has lost more as a result of the Arab Spring, but there is not one clear answer. In Syria I think that it is too early to answer that question. Clearly though, if the Assad regime falls that is a loss to Iran, as Syria is currently Iran's only ally in the Arab world.