

Bureaucrats, Ayatollahs, and Persian Politics: Explaining the Shift in Iranian Nuclear Policy

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Defying a 2003 agreement to halt its nuclear program, Iran resumed its nuclear activities in 2005 despite the objections and sanctions of a concerned international community. Theoretical frameworks in international relations may suggest the strategic environment, regime type, and international institutions as key variables to explain foreign policy-making. In this article, it is argued that nuclear decision-making in Tehran cannot be understood through a “black-box” model that would assume Iran to be a unitary rational actor that knows its capabilities, interests, and wants. Instead, one must investigate the changes in the domestic decision-making and bargaining process through a bureaucratic politics model. Although some point out hardliner President Ahmadinejad as the sole decision-maker, we argue that a single individual could not have changed the course of the entire country; there were coalitions and struggles among multiple actors within the regime. Analyzing two different eras within the case of Iran, we argue that the shift in bureaucratic coalitions among the Supreme Leader, the President, the Revolutionary Guards, the Atomic Energy Agency of Iran, and the Supreme National Security Council explains the shift in Iranian foreign policy. In our conclusion, we draw several implications of this argument for the scholarly literature and offer policy-prescriptive advice.

Keywords: nuclear proliferation, bureaucratic politics, Iran, Middle East, international security

Despite numerous declarations, promises, and agreements with the EU-3, Iran’s position on its nuclear program continues to raise concerns for policymakers and scholars alike. Iran’s relationship with the international community on its nuclear program was not as defiant as it seems today; Iran engaged in multilateral negotiations and committed to various international agreements between 2002 and 2005. Since late 2005, however, Iran has moved away and has continued a defiant and non-cooperative stance against the international community, despite numerous international incentives and sanctions. What explains the difference in Iran’s foreign policy orientation on its nuclear program? To what extent do international institutions sanctions and incentives solicit cooperation? What is the role of domestic variables in Iranian nuclear decision making? These questions have a venerable lineage in the fields of international relations

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theory, international security, and in policy-making circles in Washington and European capitals. The core argument in this paper is that an analysis of domestic actors, alliances, bargaining, and changes in relative power positions can yield important insights to understand the sources of Iranian foreign policy.

In 2002, a group of Iranian exiles and dissidents drew attention to Iran's secret facilities in Natanz and Arak; which was immediately followed by France, Germany, the UK (EU-3), and the United States referring the issue to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).¹ Bilateral negotiations with the EU-3 resulted in confidence-building measures including Iran's commitment to temporarily suspend its uranium-enrichment activities and to voluntarily comply with the Additional Protocol.² Following ups and downs with the IAEA, Iran signed the Paris Agreement with the EU-3 in November 2004, where Iran reiterated its commitment to the Additional Protocol, suspended all enrichment and processing related activities, welcomed economic incentives and peaceful nuclear energy transfer from the EU, and hailed the success of multilateralism. Iran seemed to be cooperative with the IAEA, major international powers, and international agreements.

The rapprochement between Iran and the EU-3 was short-lived, however. Despite a subsequent EU-3 proposal including economic incentives and security guarantees on August 6, 2005, Iran rejected the package as "ridiculous and disparaging" and "irrevocably" resumed uranium processing activities on August 8, 2005.³ In response, the EU-3 offered another package in June 2006, including "the construction of light water nuclear reactors, sale of commercial aircraft, a long-term energy partnership," and the UN Security Council passed four rounds of targeted sanctions starting from 2006.⁴ Still, Iran continued its nuclear activities and Iranian foreign policy remained defiant toward the international community.

The change and continuity of a state's foreign policy have been a major area of research in international relations theory. Whereas some theories focus on international institutions and sanctions (neoliberal institutionalism), others single out security factors and threat environments (realism), and still others point out culture and norms that shape foreign policy (constructivism). The existing scholarly literature on Iranian nuclear policy can accordingly be divided as follows: One argument is that Iran's decision to continue its nuclear program can be related to the external strategic environment.⁵ A second group of arguments emphasizes the impact of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), sanctions, and multilateral negotiations on Iran's nuclear policy.⁶ A third group of arguments centers on historical legacies, norms, and the cultural significance of acquiring nuclear capabilities.⁷

Although the aforementioned literature gives rich details from particular perspectives, little attention has been paid to the dynamics of Iranian domestic decision-making. Decision-making does not occur in a vacuum; policy outcomes are the result of the interaction of competing preferences among various actors within the regime. Our argument is that external variables have different meanings and are interpreted differently among domestic actors, which is why a bureaucratic politics model seems most relevant to an understanding of foreign policy-making. In this article we use Graham Allison's seminal bureaucratic politics model and test its applicability in a non-democratic regime.⁸ Our findings suggest that while Allison's model is applicable to the Iranian case, critical supplements must be taken into consideration such as that of Rosati, who stresses the role and relative power of the top decision-maker.⁹ Iran's breach of the 2003 deal with the EU can be explained as a result of a domestic bargaining

process among central decision-makers. According to Allison's bureaucratic politics model, the preferences, interests and relative power positions among nuclear decision-makers would be crucial to understand the shift in Iranian nuclear policy. Whereas the coalition between the Supreme Leader and reformist factions headed by President Khatami had a major influence in the previous cooperative era, the realignment of the Supreme Leader with the newly elected hardliner President and his associates in the Revolutionary Guards was the reason behind a defiant nuclear policy in the latter era.

The destructive power of nuclear weapons continues to disturb security scholars and concerned citizens of the world. Amidst the danger of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East, growing issues on the international political agenda are nuclear North Korea's recent provocative moves on the Korean peninsula, the security of the Russian nuclear stockpile, and the possibility of a terrorist network's acquiring a nuclear device, nuclear proliferation, and disarmament.¹⁰ The raw material for nuclear weapons comes from the reprocessing of plutonium or the enrichment of uranium, which is why major actors such as the United States and the European Union closely follow several nuclear programs' compliance with the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).¹¹ There remains, however, a difference in method within the trans-Atlantic alliance. Where the European Union puts emphasis on multilateral negotiations, the United States, under the previous administration, considered unilateral pre-emptive strikes as an option. With the Obama administration, diplomacy and sanctions seems to have replaced the option of strikes. However, it is not inconceivable that the United States, or Israel, may resort to unilateral air-strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities. The Iranians have repeatedly mentioned that any such action will be met with catastrophic retaliation on Western bases and interests in the region. For example, Iran's capability to disrupt oil transportation in the Strait of Hormuz would send shockwaves in global petroleum markets comparable in consequences to the effects of the oil crisis of the 1970s.¹² Avoiding such possibilities is imperative for the international community, which is still suffering from the effects of a major global recession.

A bureaucratic politics perspective on the Iranian nuclear issue can explain the shift in Iranian decision-making and provide a better understanding of possible resolutions of this conflict for scholars, policymakers, and non-proliferation activists. The bureaucratic politics model also serves as a test of the extent to which external variables (sanctions, incentives, security environment) matter in decision-making.¹³

The structure of this essay is as follows: First, we review existing theoretical explanations on Iran's nuclear policy. Second, we go over the bureaucratic politics model, as originally developed by Allison. In this section we examine some of the recent developments in this literature, review criticisms and present the model's applicability to the Iranian case. Third, the key decision-makers in Iran are identified—namely, the Supreme Leader, the President, the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). This paper analyzes these key actors' relative positions, interests and preferences in the decision-making process, and then applies the bureaucratic politics model to two different eras in Iran (pre-2005 and post-2005). Finally, we analyze some of the promises and shortcomings of the bureaucratic politics model and offer policy-prescriptive advice.

Theories of Foreign Policy and Nuclear Programs

Realist theories, focusing on the strategic environment, argue that states pursue survival strategies to maintain their position in the international system.¹⁴ A realist theory of nuclear policy would argue that the external security environment of a state may provide powerful incentives for acquiring a nuclear capability.¹⁵ For example, Waltz argues that “nuclear weapons dissuade states more surely than conventional weapons do” due to their mutual destruction capability and their domination of war strategies. Nuclear programs are steps toward acquiring nuclear weapons capability. Accordingly, Iran would want to continue its nuclear program to acquire the capability to build nuclear weapons in order to secure itself.¹⁶

From a realist perspective, Iran’s nuclear ambitions could be explained with reference to three security related issues. First, the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, Iran’s immediate neighbors, contributes to Iran’s fear of its immediate security and Iranian threat perception has further exacerbated with U.S. developed notions such as “axis of evil” and “pre-emptive war.”¹⁷ Accordingly Iran may wish a nuclear weapon to deter the United States from a possible invasion.¹⁸ The fact that the United States has not taken action against states with nuclear weapons such as Pakistan and North Korea may increase this desire. Second, Iran has several nuclear states in the region such as Pakistan, Israel and India.¹⁹ The developments in the external environment further undermines Iran’s weakness and its outdated equipment and weak conventional forces. It is therefore reasonable to say, through realism, that Iran may push for a nuclear program to acquire nuclear weapons in order to substitute for its weak conventional forces and strengthen its security in the region.²⁰ Third, one may also argue that Iran was always committed to acquiring a nuclear capability; after the discovery of its program it only engaged in cooperative behavior to buy time.

Although realism provides useful insights as to why Iran may want to acquire nuclear capability, it fails to account for many dilemmas. First, the presence of the United States in the neighborhood and Pakistani and Israeli nuclear weapons pose a vague threat to Iran.²¹ It could be argued that Iran has “no urgent strategic rationale, due to the lack of any existential threats or imminent enemies.”²² Furthermore, Iran’s major regional challenger, Iraq, had already been neutralized in 2003. Second, even though realism may give us a sense as to why Iran may pursue a nuclear program, it does not explain the change in Iran’s stance toward the international community. There is no change in the threats discussed above between pre-2005 and post-2005 periods; therefore, realism falls short of explaining the change in Iranian foreign policy. Third, not all states are hard-wired to maximize their material capabilities and it does not automatically follow from realist logic that states are hard-wired to build a bomb for deterrence. In line with the previous points, the strategic environment of a state does not automatically necessitate it to build nuclear weapons.

Another school of thought that may explain Iran’s nuclear program would emphasize the role and function of the NPT regime. Neoliberal institutionalism focuses on international institutions as possible tools for international cooperation.²³ The point of departure is that “conflict in world politics is unnecessary or avoidable when the actors fail to agree even though their preferences overlap.”²⁴ It follows that if there are international institutions mitigating uncertainty in anarchy, states may engage in cooperative behavior. Designing international institutions that reward cooperation and discourage defections and cheating would, ideally, mitigate the

negative aspects of anarchy.²⁵ In this sense, the NPT is an international regime designed to curb the spread of nuclear weapons by having states commit to certain rules and regulations regarding nuclear research and energy.

Iran has been a party to the NPT and has signed the comprehensive safeguards agreement with the IAEA. One may suggest that this international regime has had some effect on Iranian foreign policy. A neoliberal institutionalist would expect Iran to continue to comply with the NPT so long as there are benefits from holding onto the treaty's commitments. Nevertheless, Iran does challenge the "rules of the game" by declaring that allowing five permanent members of the UN Security Council to retain nuclear weapons is hypocrisy.²⁶ Accordingly, Iran's breach of IAEA safeguards can be explained with the Iranian perception of Israel's non-membership of the NPT as the relative cost of compliance with the regime. One may further argue that Iran's decision to breach the former agreements with the EU-3 in 2005, including the Additional Protocol, is because it does not see the NPT as serving its interests. However, the relevant international institutions and the NPT did not change during the period between 2003 and 2005, which raises the question why Iran appeared committed to cooperating with the EU-3 and the IAEA in 2003 and not from 2005 onwards.

Another major IR theory is constructivism, which puts emphasis on the role of norms and symbols in a state's foreign policy-making. Accordingly, a state's decision-making is shaped by discourse and shared beliefs about what actions are legitimate and appropriate in a given international relations context.²⁷ Constructivist scholarship on nuclear weapons has produced rich accounts of the 'nuclear taboo' or how nuclear weapons have come to be viewed as symbols of technical prowess, modernity, and prestige.²⁸ Individual case studies on several states such as France, China and Australia indicate that these countries sought prestige through nuclear weapons.²⁹ Such a constructivist argument may appear to be applicable to the Iranian case as well. A discourse analysis may reveal how Iranian leaders have in fact continuously emphasized the nuclear program as a symbol of self-reliance, independence, technological development and modernity.³⁰

Although constructivist variables as symbols and norms have explanatory power in identifying possible motives for Iran's nuclear program, these norms and symbols were already in effect during 2003 and 2005. Since the resumption of nuclear activities during the Khamenei era, nuclear weapons have always been regarded as symbols of prestige for Iranian leaders. Therefore, it is difficult to explain the shift in Iranian nuclear policy with reference to norms.³¹ Furthermore, as Sagan argues, symbols and ideas do not have power on their own but are reshaped and manipulated in the hands of certain groups who would have a stake in them.³² The analysis of domestic actors in the pre-2005 and the post-2005 periods in the following sections show how Iran's nuclear program has become further politicized in domestic politics in the post-2005 period. Following Sagan's point, this paper argues that the role of nuclear symbolism could be better understood through a bureaucratic politics perspective.

Another theory of foreign policy with specific emphasis on nuclear programs is advanced by Etel Solingen, who discusses the implication of domestic coalitions on Iranian nuclear decision-making. Her main argument is that leaders and ruling coalitions' responses to "internationalization" are the main reason for the differing nuclear behavior.³³ Leaders and ruling coalitions favoring internationalization have greater incentives to "avoid the political, economic, reputational and opportunity costs of acquiring nuclear weapons, because costs impair their domestic agenda."³⁴ Furthermore,

“Internationalizing models are not necessary but likely to be sufficient for denuclearization except under two circumstances: (a) when neighboring inward-looking regimes seek nuclear weapons (or other WMD); and (b) when nuclear weapons were acquired prior to the inception of internationalizing models.”³⁵ Solingen points out inward-oriented Middle Eastern countries that rely on economic self-sufficiency, nationalist values, and regime survival. As in the Iranian case, a shift of presidency among domestic factions has direct implications for the change in the executive’s course of handling the issue with other international actors. While Solingen’s emphasis on domestic actors’ response to “internationalization” broadens our understanding of how domestic factions’ economic interests steer the course of nuclearization in Iran, we suggest that an economic rationale is only one factor among others. Our study contributes to Solingen’s argument on the relationship between domestic politics and nuclearization by highlighting how the shift in the bureaucratic organization of nuclear decision-making and in their personnel composition affects Iranian nuclear negotiations with third parties. In this respect, personal and parochial interests of various bureaucratic institutions and their personnel deserve more attention in our study.³⁶

Although realism, neoliberal institutionalism and constructivism have explanatory power in understanding Iran’s motives for its nuclear program, these theories overlook important dynamics in the shift in Iranian nuclear policy in 2005. There are no major differences between the pre-2005 and the post-2005 periods in terms of regional power balances, the NPT, Iran’s threat perceptions and symbols attached to being a nuclear power. Given the relative consistency of such variables, it is argued that we should focus on domestic factors for a better explanation. In this respect, Graham Allison’s bureaucratic politics model provides us with crucial insight into changes in domestic political and bureaucratic establishments and their effect on nuclear decision-making in Iran.

Bureaucratic Politics Model

In his seminal work *Essence of Decision*, Allison presents three models to explain the Cuban missile crisis: the rational actor model, the organizational politics model, and the governmental politics model. The main difference among these models is that while the rational actor model assumes national government as a unified actor, the two other models recognize it as a conglomeration of organizational or bureaucratic actors. Of the three models, it is argued here that Model III is suitable to analyze the sub-national foreign policy formation in the Iranian case. According to Allison “each national government is a complex arena for intra-national games,” where “the decision-maker of national policy is not one calculating individual but rather a conglomerate of large organizations and political actors.”³⁷ It is the ongoing bargains, tugs-of-war and struggles amongst formal actors that ultimately affect a state’s foreign policy.³⁸

Allison argues that “most of the players participate in foreign policy decision-making by virtue of their roles” and positions in the government.³⁹ The particular positions define the players’ preferences, interests, capabilities and responsibilities. Therefore, it becomes natural for actors to bring the perspectives and interests of their own organizations or positions.⁴⁰ Furthermore, the specific character who occupies the position is important.⁴¹ Each actor’s operating style, sensitivities to certain issues, commitments to various projects, personal standing within groups and personality

are all factors in the process.⁴² There are three analytically distinguishable factors that shape a player's perceptions, preferences and standpoints. First, actors have parochial priorities which make them sensitive to their organization's interests and orientation.⁴³ Second, personal and domestic interests play an important role in making decisions on foreign policy issues.⁴⁴ Third, stakes are shaped by each player's understanding of what the national or organizational interest might be.⁴⁵

According to Allison, governmental decisions are the result of a political process where actors struggle to persuade others to adopt a specific course of action. The policy output is determined by each player's impact on it, which is a result of the relative power amongst the parties. Allison operationalizes power as a blend of "bargaining advantages, skills and will in using these bargaining advantages, and other players' perceptions of the first two ingredients."⁴⁶ Such advantages "include the formal authority and responsibility stemming from the position, control over resources to carry out the specific action, expertise and control over information, the ability to affect other players' objectives, personal persuasiveness and access to players who have bargaining advantages."⁴⁷ Taken together, the decisions and actions of governments are intra-national political resultants. In other words, a decision is not an ideal solution to a problem chosen among several options; rather it is a result of compromise, conflict and bargaining among officials with diverse interests and unequal influence.⁴⁸

A notable adaptation of Allison's bureaucratic politics model is offered by Sagan, who provides an explanation of nuclear proliferation by focusing on domestic players such as the nuclear energy establishment, senior military officers, politicians and political parties.⁴⁹ These actors' personal and organizational interests play out in a governmental political game where they try to persuade one another on the need for acquiring nuclear weapons. For example, a scientific community within a country may encourage a nuclear program to maintain the flow of money to their research laboratories. Similarly, the military may tilt toward acquiring a nuclear capability as a deterrent.⁵⁰ Therefore, the formation and dissolving of coalitions among groups within the decision-making process affects the eventual foreign policy outcomes.

Although the bureaucratic politics model has broadened our scope on decision-making, it has not gone without criticism.⁵¹ A vast amount of literature has emerged in the past four decades that criticizes or offers alternatives to Allison's bureaucratic politics model. While we cannot do full justice to all ranges of criticisms, we acknowledge at least three central criticisms, which are the centrality of the president, the pre-determination of national security interests and the applicability of this American-born model to other national settings. We briefly review them below.

Scholars such as Krasner, Ball, Perimutter and Rosati have stressed the importance of the president as the most powerful decision-maker in the state apparatus.⁵² The president appoints higher-level personnel within the executive branch, determines which players will be allowed access and are capable of suppressing all other options and plans in the game.⁵³ As a result, in Krasner's words, "the ability of bureaucracies to independently establish policies is a function of [p]residential attention."⁵⁴ According to this criticism, the bargaining and strategic interaction of various players does not matter as much as that of the central decision-maker—the president. Relatedly, Art and Welch argue that in many cases of decision-making, players do not engage in bargaining, whereas Allison would assume they would "pull and haul to promote their organizational interests."⁵⁵ Since authority is not evenly distributed, the name

of the game, in which players compete to persuade the most powerful decision-maker—the president, is not “bargaining” but “persuasion.”⁵⁶ As a result, bureaucratic interests matter only in a few cases where the president is not *a priori* appointed as the ultimate decision-maker.

A second set of criticisms argues that national security-interests are generally accepted throughout the state apparatus.⁵⁷ Freedman, for example, suggests that although personal and organizational interests and personal characters matter, ultimately “national security interests are usually predetermined and generally accepted.”⁵⁸ Along with Freedman, Welch argues that personal, organizational and national interests of each player may often overlap. This makes it difficult to decipher whether it was really bureaucratic positions that influenced a specific decision.⁵⁹ This set of criticism calls for a greater emphasis on the state as a, more or less, unitary actor with identifiable national security interests.

A third criticism of Allison is that the model is only applicable to the political system of the United States and is not generalizable to other national settings.⁶⁰ The argument is that the laws and regulations of the American establishment allow scholars to access various documents and to conduct interviews with key officials. Furthermore a democratic system, by its nature, is more open to scholarly investigation than a closed authoritarian system. While we agree that access to governmental documents in the United States allows for a smoother application of the bureaucratic politics model, the lack thereof in authoritarian countries does not mean that we should disregard the importance of bureaucratic politics in such polities. Furthermore, there have been successful applications of the model on closed political systems such as Chinese policy debates between 1964 and 1966.⁶¹

While we acknowledge these critical contributions to the bureaucratic politics literature, this paper affirms that the bureaucratic politics model is relevant. Although this case study of Iran is an implicit response to previous criticisms, some preliminary responses can be illustrated. The Iranian political establishment, like the United States, has a top political actor that has the ultimate say in the affairs of the state—the Supreme Leader. In this sense, the case of Iran allows the opportunity to test whether the existence of a final decision-maker invalidates the bureaucratic politics model. This analysis shows that even in apparent centralizations of power, as in a theocratic regime, *politics* is *politics* and the nature of the game is open to various strategic interactions among actors. As related to the second set of criticisms, it is argued that the national-security interests of Iran are not given. Various actors within the regime push and pull for their own stance on the nuclear issue. Third, in comparison to the U.S. political establishment, Iran is on the opposite end of the spectrum as far as regime types go. However, it is held that modern-nation states have more or less similar authority structures—bureaucracies can be found in every modern political regime. This paper seeks to show that even in a different case, as in Iran, the bureaucratic politics model can give insights into the decision-making process of a state. This paper’s articulation of these criticisms in the Iranian case will show how and why Allison’s model is relevant to understanding the shift in Iranian decision-making. In other words, we will be implicitly answering the shortcomings of Allison’s model.

It is contended in this paper that the changes in domestic political arrangements between 2003 and 2005, specifically, the changes in the positions and bargaining among key actors, is the reason why Iran has had a shift in its foreign policy over its nuclear program. Although there has been national consensus on the nuclear program

in both periods, the key players' preferences and relative power positions account for the change in Iranian policy.⁶² In the following section an analysis is made of each actor's relative position within the regime, the source of their political power, their status and authority within the legal framework, their political influence over one another, and their ideological orientation and preferences.

Mapping Out the Bureaucratic Politics of Iran

Many scholars and observers depict the Islamic Republic of Iran as a closed-box—a monolithic totalitarian regime with revisionist intentions. We hold that political scientists and IR scholars cannot afford to overlook the complex structure of the regime and the nature of decision-making. Iranian specialists point out that far from a centralized power structure, Iran is ruled by “a multitude of often loosely connected and fiercely competitive power centers.”⁶³ While some of these power centers are formal institutions of the state, others are informal in character. The informal power centers manifest themselves as “loose coalitions among like-minded individuals or groups” and as “personal patronage links.”⁶⁴ Decision-making in many policy areas, including the nuclear program, is the outcome of an interaction among these formal and informal power centers, which are effected by factions, parochial interests and personal baggages of various power holders. The Iranian regime provides us with a picture of a highly complex decision-making process with various actors involved depending on the policy area. The key actors of nuclear decision-making are the Supreme Leader, the President, the SNSC, the IRGC and the AEOI. Although there is a formal hierarchy amongst these actors, no single actor can be said to possess a monopoly over nuclear decision-making.

From a constitutional perspective, the Supreme Leader is responsible for devising general policies for the country and for supervising the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the government.⁶⁵ As the head of the national security structure, he has the authority to appoint top military bureaucrats, to command and mobilize armed forces, and to declare war and peace.⁶⁶ All major decisions, such as signing the Additional Protocol or suspending uranium enrichment, require his signature.⁶⁷ The centrality of the Supreme Leader in politics, however, is only apparent; his formal and constitutional capacity does not preclude the fact that he interacts with and is influenced by other actors in policy issues including national security. Therefore, the Supreme Leader is only one actor who engages in negotiations and bargaining with other actors on the nuclear program.

The President of Iran is the highest official elected by the public; however, his status is subordinate to the Supreme Leader. As the head of the executive, he is responsible for the appointment of ministers, the administration of government and the implementation of the Constitution, which grants him the authority to sign international treaties and protocols.⁶⁸ The President's appointment of ministers has a direct impact on the formation of the SNSC, which is the highest body dealing with the national security and foreign policy issues including Iran's nuclear program. Moreover, the President, as an elected official, reflects the various domestic factions' attitudes toward a nuclear program. An overview of the domestic factions in Iranian politics is therefore crucial to understand the position of the President in nuclear decision-making.

The three main factions in Iranian domestic politics are traditionalists, reformists and hardliners. Given the spectrum of Iranian politics, the traditionalists are situated at the center; they put emphasis on religious rule and advocate a free market economy.⁶⁹ Their preference for a *bazaar* economy makes them advocate a conciliatory and pragmatic foreign policy.⁷⁰ The conservatives have a strong representation in state institutions such as the Guardian Council, the Special Court for the Clergy and the Assembly of Experts.⁷¹ The reformists advocate an industry-based economy, modern banking and closer relations with the West.⁷² While they advocate moderation and reform in domestic politics, their motto for foreign policy is “pragmatism and rationalism” rather than “tradition and conservatism.”⁷³ Reformists, who call for an end to Iran’s international isolation, are generally found amongst academics, journalists, students and moderate clerics.⁷⁴ The hardliners are dedicated to the protection of the Islamic Revolution from its perceived external and internal enemies.⁷⁵ The primary body affiliated with this group is the Revolutionary Guards. Although all three factions agree on a civilian nuclear program for energy purposes, they differ from each other on how to handle the issue with the international community.

The central bureaucratic platform involved in nuclear decision-making is the Supreme National Security Council. The SNSC’s significance in the nuclear decision-making lies in the fact that it is responsible for performing negotiations with the IAEA. The body determines the defense and national security policies in line with the general policies specified by the Supreme Leader.⁷⁶ The SNSC is chaired by the President and includes the heads of three branches of the government, chief of the Supreme Command Council of the Armed Forces, the officer in charge of planning and budgetary affairs, two representatives nominated by the Supreme Leader, the ministers of foreign affairs, interior and information, a minister related with the issue-area, and the highest ranking officials from the Armed Forces and the IRGC.⁷⁷ Although, as Ziemke argues, the SNSC’s decisions are subject to the confirmation by the Supreme Leader, the composition of the Council is determined by the President, who appoints the members and thereby reflects his personal and factional preferences in the nuclear program.⁷⁸

Another important actor in the nuclear program is the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, which is the professional and scientific wing of the nuclear program. Established in 1973 by the Shah, the AEOI is the central organization that manages all technical aspects of the nuclear program including research laboratories, energy production, research, fuel production, education and regulatory safety.⁷⁹ AEOI has formally been responsible for all of Iran’s nuclear projects.⁸⁰

The final institution we consider is the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, which was established by clerical leaders to ensure the success of the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The IRGC’s main responsibility is to guard the Revolution and its achievements.⁸¹ Originally created to unite the paramilitary groups of the revolution, and serve as a possible counter-balance to the regular military previously loyal to the Shah, IRGC came to be seen as a vanguard of the state during the Iran-Iraq war. IRGC’s size grew enormously by 1985, and by the 1990s it became a professional fighting force symbolizing Iran’s military modernization and self-reliance.⁸² The IRGC’s military and economic power comes from many sources including the distribution network of contraband, access to foundations such as the Disabled Veterans and the Disadvantaged, and the manufacturing and international shipment of domestically produced weapons.⁸³ Although subordinate to the Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics, they

have increasingly become autonomous within the state.⁸⁴ Given the economic and political semi-autonomy of the IRGC, some analysts note that the IRGC may even pose a challenge to the authority and directives of the Supreme Leader.⁸⁵

A Conciliatory Iran: Pre-2005 Nuclear Decision-Making

Iran's relations with the international community over its nuclear program until 2005 reflect elements of pragmatism, moderation and conciliation. Although there was consensus among all actors on the necessity of the nuclear program for peaceful purposes, inter-agency disputes existed over how to manage the issue with the international community.

As the formal ultimate decision-maker in foreign policy and security issues, the Supreme Leader Khamenei has supported Iran's nuclear program for peaceful purposes.⁸⁶ Khamenei sees Iran's nuclear program as a symbol of "self-sufficiency" and "technological development," and refers to the civilian nuclear program as an "inalienable right" of the Iranian nation.⁸⁷ Assuming a non-factional position in policy-related disputes, the Supreme Leader intervenes in factional disputes as the "final arbiter" when such disputes seem to challenge the survival of the regime.⁸⁸ This bureaucratic role of the Supreme Leader is exemplified in the nuclear issue as well. For example, Hassan Rowhani, a pragmatic conservative, was appointed as the secretary of the SNSC and chief negotiator with the EU-3 by the Supreme Leader.⁸⁹ Khamenei's intention to appoint Rowhani as chief negotiator was due to his desire to strike a balance among several factions.

At the time of the exposure of Iran's nuclear program, the president of Iran was Mohammad Khatami. As a reformist, his foreign policy objectives were to diminish Iran's isolation, revive the domestic economy through international financial agreements and to establish more dialogue and cooperation with the outside world.⁹⁰ His reformist supporters declared that "integration into the international order and the global economy mandates accepting certain restrictions on [Iran's] nuclear program."⁹¹ The U.S. proposal for Iran's WTO membership and the EU-3 packages offering extended trade relations were appealing to the reformist supporters of Khatami.⁹² Khatami's conciliatory position on nuclear negotiations can be attributed to economic and factional interests.

During this process, the foreign ministry was concerned with the IAEA's requests for inspections and wanted to avoid the diplomatic consequences for not complying with the EU-3's demands.⁹³ The Foreign Minister of the time, Kharrazi, emphasized "the need for the settlement of the issue" through "full cooperation with IAEA," "confidence-building," "transparency" and "dialogue."⁹⁴ Not surprisingly, it was the foreign minister who initially recommended a pragmatic Rowhani to Khatami and Khamenei to be appointed as the nuclear negotiator and the secretary of the SNSC.⁹⁵

By mid-2003, Tehran felt that "the gravity of the [international] negotiations required high-level official attention," leading to the meeting of the SNSC for the first time to discuss the nuclear crisis.⁹⁶ In that meeting, President Khatami devised a decision-making mechanism composed of three committees within the SNSC for negotiations.⁹⁷ The nuclear decision-making elite then decided that one person should coordinate all the committees involved in the nuclear issue, who was Hassan Rowhani.⁹⁸ These committees were mainly composed of reformists and conservative

traditionalists; both factions had strong economic reasons and political preferences to cooperate with the international community.

Iran agreed to comply with IAEA inspections, to sign the Additional Protocol and to cooperate with the EU on the nuclear issue during Rowhani's nuclear chiefdom. In a speech delivered to the Supreme Cultural Revolution Council, Rowhani stated that "the Islamic Republic has never had political negotiations with this degree of gravity—with such serious implications and with multiple political, legal, technical and security dimensions."⁹⁹ Rowhani was concerned with the U.S. referral of the issue to the UN Security Council and pursued a pragmatic foreign policy strategy to delay it as long as possible.¹⁰⁰

As the public face of the negotiations and agreements, chief negotiator Rowhani met with strong opposition from several domestic actors, most notably by the scientific community. Until the discovery of the nuclear facilities, the AEOI was responsible for both the political and technical aspects of the nuclear program.¹⁰¹ From a bureaucratic politics perspective, one may predict that out of parochial interests the nuclear scientific community would have strong incentives for the continuation of the nuclear program. There are several instances that show how this was the case in Iran. First, following the exposure of the Natanz and Arak nuclear sites and the international uproar that followed, AEOI went on a campaign to downplay the negative implications for Iran of the increasing pressure from the international community.¹⁰² Second, as the negotiations with the EU-3 were reaching an agreement, the AEOI President Aghazadeh was reluctant to cooperate as the agreement called for the suspension of all nuclear enrichment and reprocessing activities in the facilities.¹⁰³ Khatami had previously allocated 800 million dollars for the completion of the Bushehr facility. The AEOI scientists harshly opposed to the suspension of nuclear activities as it would hamper their organizational prestige, reduce their budget, cut their employment opportunities and damage their professional prestige.¹⁰⁴ Third, besides the AEOI there are other scientific organizations that had a stake in the nuclear program such as Iran's technical universities, research institutions and military industrial organizations, all of which opposed the suspension of the program.¹⁰⁵ For example, "more than five hundred students and two hundred fifty faculty members from Sharif Technical University in Tehran wrote an open letter to the government" indicating that any agreement by Iran with the IAEA and EU-3 to suspend or stop uranium enrichment program would be "treason."¹⁰⁶

A review of the pre-2005 period shows that Khatami and his reformist bureaucratic cadre pursued a conciliatory foreign policy with the EU-3.¹⁰⁷ This is due to the factional interests of the reformist camp and bureaucrats coupled by Khamenei's alliance with them. However the growing power of other factions and new alliances within the regime would change the course of the cooperative foreign policy.

Changing Domestic Coalitions: Shifts in Iranian Policy

Iran's moderate and pragmatic foreign policy approach on its nuclear program underwent a dramatic shift in early 2005. During this period, Iran defied its commitments to the international community by resuming work in its nuclear sites. Although there was no significant change in the external strategic environment, the international institutions, and the symbols attached to nuclear programs, Iran had changed its foreign

policy orientation regarding its nuclear program.

With the growing power of other factions, the conciliatory foreign policy came under challenge. As one observer puts it, domestic politics was going to decide whether Iran was going to be “a revolutionary state willing to defy the world, or a normal state playing by international rules.”¹⁰⁸ When hardliners gained control of Iran’s parliament in 2004, they began criticizing reformists for pursuing a conciliatory foreign policy strategy and jeopardizing the national interests.¹⁰⁹ The presidential elections that took place on August 2, 2005 resulted in the victory of hardliner Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.¹¹⁰

The Iranian nuclear program immediately became politicized under Ahmadinejad’s presidency. Ahmadinejad saw the nuclear issue as an opportunity for playing against his domestic rivals in the reformist camp. He could use the nuclear development “to encourage or tap into a sense of nationalism and a feeling of injustice, e.g., U.S. double standards, the West versus the technological have-nots.”¹¹¹ Ahmadinejad was committed to the revolutionary ideals of protecting the country against external predatory forces and preserving the country’s military self-reliance. As Dueck emphasizes, “the international indifference to Saddam’s war crimes and Tehran’s lack of an effective response has led Iran’s war veteran President to perceive that the security of his country cannot be predicated on global opinion and treaties.”¹¹² Ahmadinejad saw the EU as acting at the command of the United States and the IAEA, who were, in Ahmadinejad’s words, “bullies determined to prevent Iran’s progress and advancement.”¹¹³ Ahmadinejad, however, as a single individual could not have changed the course of the entire country; there were bureaucratic coalitions and alliances within the regime.

Increasing cooperation and possible treaties with the West gave Tehran incentives for economic liberalization and opening up its market to the global economy. This signaled a threat to IRGC’s power because the economic power of the Revolutionary Guards emanates from their monopoly on the importation of expensive forbidden items from Iranian ports under their strict control.¹¹⁴ Enjoying the tutelage and prosperity of an import monopoly, IRGC opposed to Iran’s embrace of free market principles and the subsequent opening to the global economy.¹¹⁵ Therefore, IRGC had a stake in increased protectionism and an inward-looking state economy.¹¹⁶ IRGC’s material interests for defying conciliation with the international community on the nuclear issue also included military objectives. In 1982, IRGC established its own weapons industry independently from the regular military.¹¹⁷ While the technological pillar of the nuclear activities are under the control of AEOI, the Revolutionary Guards own several companies that are responsible for the construction of nuclear sites and the development of missiles.¹¹⁸ IRGC’s insistence on the uranium enrichment activities can be understood as a reflection of its role in the defense establishment. Apart from such material interests, IRGC has had parochial interests at the ideological level, having to do with their own status in Iran.

Representing the hardliners in the Iranian government and society, Ahmadinejad made significant changes in the bureaucratic apparatus.¹¹⁹ A former IRGC veteran himself in the Iran-Iraq War, Ahmadinejad appointed former Revolutionary Guard officials to various ministerial positions, thereby shaping the composition of the SNSC. Apart from ministerial positions in the cabinet, Ahmadinejad also appointed former IRGC officials as the head of the newly created directorates in the SNSC, as the spokesman of the SNSC and as deputy heads of SNSC.¹²⁰ He replaced Rowhani

with Ali Larijani as the Secretary of the SNSC.¹²¹ The newly elected president displayed a non-cooperative attitude toward incentive packages offered by the EU-3, resumed the uranium enrichment activities, and ignored the international threats either in the form of UN sanctions or U.S. military strikes.

Assuming a mediator position among factions and favoring consensus among nuclear decision-makers during Khatami's presidency, Supreme Leader Khamenei had shifted to support the hardliner camp during Ahmadinejad's presidency. Khamenei's gradual abandonment of his intermediary role among factions and his alignment with certain factions is attributed by some scholars to his "theological Achilles' heel."¹²² Khamenei has been aware of the rising power of the hardliners both in the government and among the public. He feels threatened by the Ahmadinejad-IRGC coalition, which he thinks could replace him with Ahmadinejad's hardliner mentor, Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi.¹²³ Although Khamenei assumed the position of Supreme Leader, he lacked Grand Ayatollah Khomeini's political charisma and theological qualification.¹²⁴ Khamenei was originally a mid-ranking clergy who was given the title of "Ayatollah" overnight to qualify him to issue fatwas.¹²⁵ As a result, Khamenei has always worried about the fragility of the religious foundations of his political authority. Challenged by a strong Ahmadinejad-Yazdi-IRGC coalition, Khamenei did not want to challenge Ahmadinejad's confrontational foreign policy because it may jeopardize his own position as the Supreme Leader.

The outright defiant position of the hardliner camp against the international community, however, has not gone unchallenged in the post-2005 period. One of Iran's top religious authorities, Ayatollah Hussein Ali Montazeri, criticized Ahmadinejad's policy arguing that nuclear energy should be "obtained in a way that will not create other problems, and without giving others an excuse to harm them."¹²⁶ Similarly, the former chairman of the Foreign Policy Committee in the Supreme National Security Council accused Ahmadinejad of not conducting a rational foreign policy.¹²⁷ Following the replacement of Rowhani with Ali Larijani as the nuclear chief during the Ahmadinejad era, the president and the new nuclear chief often displayed contradictory positions regarding the nuclear issue and even gave contradictory testimonies to the media.¹²⁸ Nevertheless, these individuals and groups were not able to stop the course of the new Iranian nuclear policy in the emerging alliance of hardliner bureaucratic actors.

Iran's post-2005 period nuclear strategy reflects the coalition between the President and the IRGC, who have acquired key nuclear decision-making positions within the SNSC. The heightened role of bureaucrats during Khatami's presidency, notably of Rowhani's role as the chief nuclear manager, diminished during Ahmadinejad's presidency. The change in the nuclear strategies and policies Iran adopted in the pre-2005 and post-2005 periods is explained by the change in the coalitions among multiple bureaucratic actors involved in nuclear decision-making.

Conclusion

The analysis of Iran's pre-2005 and post-2005 nuclear policy postures indicates that governmental politics exist not only in democratic regimes, but also in closed authoritarian regimes like Iran. The assumption that Iran is a unitary rational actor is not useful; rather there are multiple power centers, each of which is competing to

shape Iran's posture toward the international community. The analysis of nuclear decision-making in both periods reveals domestic, personal and parochial interests of actors who have bargaining advantages over others. President Ahmadinejad's appointment of IRGC officials to important positions in the SNSC has altered the existing balance-of-power within the decision-making apparatus. The coalition between the President and the IRGC increased both parties' power in nuclear decision-making vis-à-vis that of other actors such as the Supreme Leader. Although the Supreme Leaders usually have an arbitrator position, Khamenei's approval of Ahmadinejad has increased the power of hardliners in the regime. The alliance among these hardliners within the bureaucratic establishment has paved the way for reinitiating the nuclear program.

The Iranian case supports the bureaucratic politics' assumption that parochial, personal, national, and domestic interests shape the actors' positions toward the issue at hand. However, it should be admitted that there is great difficulty in identifying which of these interests might have contributed to the shaping of an actor's position. The AEOL's push for the nuclear program can clearly be attributed to their parochial interests, to ensure their survival. Similarly, the IRGC seems to be consolidating its position in the regime by pushing for the nuclear program. Ahmadinejad's tough stance can be attributed to his ideology and background. The least clear case is that of Ayatollah Khamenei. Due to the overlapping of his responsibilities as a cleric, as the Supreme Leader of the regime, and as the ultimate decision-maker in all foreign policy and security issues, the motives behind Khamenei's shift toward the hardliners is difficult to determine. Recently, Khamenei has strongly opposed to the president's decisions; Khamenei has rejected Ahmadinejad's dismissal of the intelligence minister Heydar Moslehi, out of fear that his power has grown too much. Furthermore, there are now conservative factions whose interests are diverging from the foreign policy course of the President.¹²⁹ Along with the "Arab spring," and internal challenges in Iran, it is likely that the power of the hardliners would be further challenged, and so would their foreign policy orientation. There are already signs to this as nuclear talks have resumed between the West and Iran in the past few months, first with a confidence-building meeting in Istanbul that is being followed by another round in Baghdad.

We have shown how Allison's model has explanatory power in a relatively closed and authoritarian political system. Second, despite the fact that the Supreme Leader is the ultimate decision-maker on all national security issues, the President and IRGC officials seem to have more power in determining the Iranian stance toward the international community. This evidence challenges Allison's critics who argue that there is actually no bargaining at the executive level due to power imbalances. Given the scarcity of academic research on Iranian bureaucracies, we hope that this article may pave the way for further research on bureaucratic politics in non-democracies. One notable shortcoming of the bureaucratic politics literature is its relative negligence of international variables. Just as structural realism avoids the internal political configurations of domestic politics, there is a possibility on the part of the bureaucratic politics literature to underestimate the role of the "international" in the domestic political setting. We would also like to suggest that one should also pay attention to the interaction between international and domestic variables. Namely, building on the second-image reversed literature, one may focus on the domestic implications of international pressures.¹³⁰ For example, the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq clearly had domestic implications. The hardliners in Iranian

politics were able to capitalize on a “rally around the flag” effect of this international dynamic, which arguably, led them to strengthen their position in the country. This is a key dimension that future research in bureaucratic politics research would want to consider. This relates to the next issue regarding the Iranian nuclear program.

One core question remains as to the real intentions behind Iran’s nuclear program; that is whether the civilian nuclear program is a cover-up for a military nuclear weapons program. Although a full explanation is beyond the immediate scope of this paper, a direction to travel maybe hinted by relating two theoretical perspectives on foreign policy. From a realist perspective, Iran could be argued to have strong incentives to use its civilian nuclear program as a cover-up for a weapons program. This is not just so from a “structural anarchy” argument, but because of the fact that Iran’s neighbors, both to its East and West, have been occupied by the United States and its allies. From Iran’s own perspective, it faces an immediate security risk from a United States that has occupied Afghanistan and Iraq. Furthermore, the fact that Israel possesses nuclear weapons means that Iran would have strong rational incentives to acquire one. In relation to the realist tone, from a bureaucratic politics perspective one may argue that key power centers in Tehran and political factions are strongly in favor of a weapons program. Setting aside the reformers, the political factions in Iranian politics see the weapons program as a symbol of national pride, and a viable hedge against a possible U.S.-led invasion. Furthermore, several bureaucratic agencies have strong incentives to press for a weapons program. This is not surprising given the recent evidence that suggests that key Iranian military sites have been exposed to have secret installations, which experts argue are ongoing sites for clandestine uranium enrichment.¹³¹ Furthermore, Iran has advanced most of its nuclear program under the Supreme Leader Khamenei, although he claims that “Islam forbids the development and use of nuclear weapons.”¹³² Therefore, the link between the interaction of domestic level variables and international pressures may show that the Iranian political elite, out of fear of an invasion, may have strong incentives for a nuclear weapons program. It could also be argued that, from a power-transition theory perspective, Iran would want to acquire a nuclear capability in order to challenge U.S. hegemony in the Middle East.¹³³

Five policy prescriptions follow from this analysis. First, the United States, the EU, and their allies ought not to take aggressive measures against Iran, as this would contribute to the strengthening of the hardliners—the ones that are responsible for the defiant status over the nuclear program. Second, the United States and its allies must pay attention to the factional divisions in Iranian politics. Third, as one of the authors have suggested elsewhere, occasional threats to “wipe out the West” by Ahmadinejad are not based on concrete material capabilities, and he knows it well.¹³⁴ It is wiser to treat such language as domestic political rhetoric aimed at strengthening his position. Pressing Ahmadinejad on such points will only make him stronger. Fourth, in light of the domestic economic networks outlined in this article, the pressure of sanctions that target Revolutionary Guards and other key officials is beginning to be felt in high circles in Tehran.¹³⁵ Finally, the rise of other major powers and the weakening of the U.S. global economic position suggest that the United States should not engage in unilateral policies and avoid potential quagmires; policymakers in Washington should rethink their priorities if they want to maintain global leadership. Turkey, as a rising regional power during the Arab Spring, may contribute to a possible dialogue.¹³⁶ There is also an opportunity for the EU, as preventing Iran from acquiring

nuclear weapons is one common foreign and security policy that all EU members agree upon. A successful foreign policy on the part of the EU powers in this realm can also help pave the way for a more institutionalized common foreign policy of the EU.

Notes

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3. Arzu Celalifer Ekinci, *Iran Nükleer Krizi* (Ankara, USAK 2009), 229. Monica Tocha, "The EU and Iran's Nuclear Program: Testing the Limits of Coercive Diplomacy," *College of Europe EU Diplomacy Papers* 1 (2009); Köse, *Iran Nükleer Programı ve Ortadoğu Siyaseti*, 89.
4. Roberto Dominguez, "Iran: A New Challenge to EU Foreign Policy," *European Union Miami Analysis Special Series* 4, no. 20 (August 2007): 7. The sanctions included the freezing of Iranian bank accounts and investments in several European capitals. For more information see, "EU to Introduce New Iran Sanctions," *Guardian Online* (June 15, 2010), <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/jun/15/eu-sanctions-iran-nuclear-programme?INTCMP=SRCH> (accessed on February 28, 2011).
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 11. Iran's nuclear program appears at the top of the list in the annual report from the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to the European Parliament. In fact, it is located on the very first section of the report, which is symbolic of the EU's attention to the Iranian nuclear program. The 2009 Annual report from the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy is available on the European Union website: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/showPage.aspx?id=248&lang=en>. For the official 2003 European Union Strategy Against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction see: <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/03/st15/st15708.en03.pdf>; For the U.S. National Security Strategy see: <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/nsc/nss/2006/sectionV.html>.
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 18. Ziad Khalil Abu Zayyad, "Why Iran Wants Nuclear Weapons," *Middle East Post Website* (February 10, 2008), <http://www.middleeastpost.com/96/why-iran-wants-nuclear-weapons/>.
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 21. Chubin, *Whither Iran? Reform, Domestic Politics and National Security*, 74.
 22. *Ibid.*
 23. Robert Axelrod, Robert Keohane, "Achieving Cooperation Under Anarchy: Strategies and Institutions," *World Politics* 38, no. 1 (October 1985): 226–54; Stephen Krasner, "Regimes and Limits of Realism: Regimes as Autonomous Variables," *International Organization* 36, no. 2 (1982): 497–510; Robert O. Keohane, "International Institutions: Two Approaches," *International Studies Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (1988): 386.

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31. See Lotfian "Nuclear Policy and International Relations," 163; Chubin, *Whither Iran? Reform, Domestic Politics and National Security*, 74; and Möller, "Iran's Nuclear Ambitions: What Caused This Multilateral Headache?" 14.
32. Sagan, "Why do States Build Nuclear Weapons?: Three Models in Search of a Bomb," 76.
33. Solingen, *Nuclear Logics*, 5.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid., 46.
36. For an analysis of bureaucratic changes in the Iranian regime, see Ray Takeyh, *Hidden Iran: Paradox and Power in the Islamic Republic* (New York: Times Books, 2006); *The Rise of Pasdaran: Assessing the Domestic Role of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps* (RAND Corporation 2009). For an analysis of the impact of bureaucratic changes in Iran on nuclear activities see Gaukhar Mukhatzhanova, "Pride and Prejudice: Understanding Iran's Nuclear Program," in *Forecasting Nuclear Proliferation in the 21st Century: A Comparative Perspective 2*, eds. William C. Potter and Gaukhar Mukhatzhanova (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010).
37. Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: Longman, 1999), 3 and 255.
38. Although Allison has been most influential in stressing the role of intra-governmental bargaining in decision-making outcomes in the IR literature, there has been prior scholarly interest in intra-governmental bargaining games. Warner Shilling and Samuel Huntington, for example, had discussed foreign policy to be the result of negotiations and bargaining among various actors at the governmental level. See Schilling, "The Politics of National Defense: Fiscal 1950," *Strategy, Politics, and Defense Budgets*, eds. Warner R. Schilling, Paul. Y. Hammond, and Glenn H. Snyder (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962); Samuel Huntington, *The Common Defense* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961). Similarly, Gabriel Almond, Charles E. Lindblom and Richard Neustadt concentrated on the role of specific actors influencing the final outcome of the bargaining process. See Gabriel Almond, *The American People and Foreign Policy* (New York: Praeger, 1950); Charles E. Lindblom, "The Science of Muddling Through," *Public Administration Review*, 19 (Spring 1959); and Richard Neustadt, *Presidential Power: The Politics of Leadership* (New York: Wiley, 1960). Among these, Neustadt gained much popularity with his *Presidential Power: The Politics of Leadership*, in which he argued that "presidential power is the power to persuade." Richard Neustadt, *Presidential Power: The Politics of Leadership* (New York: Wiley, 1960), 10. The presidential office itself is not enough for the president to be more than a "clerk," and a "leader" (6–10). The president's influence is derived from the president's professional reputation, public prestige and his bargaining advantages inherent in the job (33, 58, 86). Despite previous academic interest, bureaucratic politics gained wider popularity with Allison's *Essence of Decision*, opening up the way for more research on intra-governmental decision-making. Scholars such as Destler, Rourke, Cohen and Kegley widened the scope of research on bureaucratic politics to include not only crisis situations in the realm of national security, but also general foreign policy decision-making processes on wider issue areas such as economic policies. See, I. M. Destler, *Presidents, Bureaucrats, and Foreign Policy: The Politics of Organization Reform* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974); William I. Bacchus, *Foreign Policy and the Bureaucratic Process: The State Department's Country Director System* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974); Graham Allison and Peter Szanton, *Remaking Foreign Policy: The Organizational Connection* (New York: Basic Books, 1976); Stephen D. Cohen, *The Making of United States International Economic Policy* (New York: Praeger, 1977); *Bureaucratic Power in National Politics*, ed. Francis E. Rourke (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1978); John Spanier and Eric M. Uslaner, *How American Foreign Policy is Made* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1978); Chris L. Jeffries, "Defense

- Decision-making in the Organizational-Bureaucratic Context,” *American Defense Policy*, eds. J. E. Endicott and R. W. Stafford, Jr. (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 4th ed., 1977), 227–39; and Charles W. Kegley, Jr. and Eugene R. Wittkopf, *American Foreign Policy: Pattern and Process* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1979). Still, the major proponents of the model are considered to be Graham Allison and Morton Halperin, who contributed to the model through his Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy in 1974. Jerel A. Rosati, “Developing a Systematic Decision-Making Framework: Bureaucratic Politics in Perspective,” *World Politics* 33, no. 2 (January, 1981): 235.
39. Allison and Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 256.
 40. *Ibid.*
 41. *Ibid.*, 297.
 42. *Ibid.*, 298.
 43. *Ibid.*
 44. *Ibid.*
 45. *Ibid.*
 46. Allison also notes that the other player’s perception of power matters. *Ibid.*, 300.
 47. *Ibid.*
 48. *Ibid.*, 295. Halperin’s bureaucratic politics model places more emphasis on the role of the top decision-maker, the president, as having the most influence in foreign policy. Morton Halperin, *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 2nd ed., 2006), 16. Depending on the nature of the issue, the president is attended by senior bureaucrats and subordinates who provide him with relevant data and advice where necessary (16–17). Halperin also argues that information channels, maneuvered by other players, also affect decision-making. In this respect, he highlights the selectivity of bureaucrats in choosing arguments that would appeal to the president and promote their own interests, such as leaking negotiations to the press (164–84). For further details on Halperin’s operationalization of bureaucratic politics model, see Morton Halperin, *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 2nd ed., 2006).
 49. Sagan, “Why do States Build Nuclear Weapons: Three Models in Search of a Bomb,” 64.
 50. *Ibid.*, 64.
 51. For critiques of Allison’s bureaucratic politics model, see Stephen D. Krasner, “Are Bureaucracies Important? (Or Allison Wonderland),” *Foreign Policy* 7 (1972); Robert J. Art, “Bureaucratic Politics and American Foreign Policy: A Critique,” *Policy Sciences* 4 (1973): 467–90; Amos Perlmutter, “The Presidential Political Center and Foreign Policy: A Critique of the Revisionist and Bureaucratic-Political Orientations,” *World Politics* 27 (1974): 87–106; Desmond J. Ball, “The Blind Men and the Elephant: A Critique of Bureaucratic Politics Theory,” *Australian Outlook* 28 (1974): 71–92; Lawrence Freedman, “Logic, Politics and Foreign Policy Processes: A Critique of the Bureaucratic Politics Model,” *International Affairs* (1976): 52; *Bureaucratic Politics and National Security. Theory and Practice*, eds. David C. Kozak and James M. Keagle (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1996); Kim Richard Nossal, “Allison through the (Ottawa) Looking Glass: Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy in a Parliamentary System,” *Canadian Public Administration* 22 (1979): 610–26; Jerel A. Rosati, “Developing a Systematic Decision-Making Framework: Bureaucratic Politics in Perspective,” *World Politics* 33 (1981): 234–52; Jonathan Bendor and Thomas H. Hammond, “Rethinking Allison’s Model,” *American Political Science Review* 86 (1992): 301–21; Nelson Michaud, “Graham Allison et le paradigme bureaucratique: vingt-cinq ans plus tard, est-il encore utile?” *Etudes internationales* 27 (1996): 769–94; David Patrick Houghton, “Essence of Derision: What’s Left of the Bureaucratic Politics Approach?” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, 1996; Christopher M. Jones, “Reassessing and Transcending Allison: A Governmental Politics Paradigm for the 1990s and Beyond,” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, 1996;

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 65. Abbas William Samii, “It is Who You Know: Informal Networks,” 31. Also see Article 100 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, “Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran,” *Iranian Online*, <http://www.iranonline.com/iran/iran-info/government/constitution.html>.
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72. Moslem, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, 129.
73. See Moslem, *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, 129; and Kamrava, “Iranian National Security Debates: Factionalism and Lost Opportunities,” 88.
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119. Chubin, *Iran's Nuclear Ambitions*, 38.
120. Bar et al., "Iran's Nuclear Decision-Making Under Ahmadinejad," 20.
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122. Buchta, *Who Rules Iran*, 55.
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