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The Cause and Effect of the Iran Nuclear Crisis

The blood of the Americans and the Iranians has boiled to a potential war. The Iranian government is developing a nuclear program that they say is for nuclear energy, while the American government believes it's for nuclear weapons. Iran recently denied the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency, the IAEA, a tour through their main nuclear facility (BBC World). They took them through smaller sites, but refused them access to where the IAEA believe they are developing the weapons. This is not an ideal situation for the United States. They have already had their fair share of nuclear conflicts in the past, and if this isn't handled delicately, it could have unsavory effects on the nations involved. The Cold War may seem very long ago for some, but many Americans remember the fear of nuclear war like it was yesterday. Nobody wants a repeat of the sheer terror experienced in that time period. The American society is in danger of experiencing more economic troubles and war. Even the looming presidential election will be altered by the promises of how this will be carried out. The talk of conflict alone has already raised gas prices across America. This conflict is the latest point in the "War on Terror" started by the Americans. It is following the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, which were also started to ensure the safety of Americans. This one, however, has quite more potential danger than those because Iran's nuclear program is a real threat, and it is a fact that they have the capacity to be a

nuclear enemy. The day-to-day life of Americans will be affected by the developing Iranian nuclear program and how the governments involved handle this conflict.

Many observers believe the Iranian government will not take any course of action when confronted, so they think nothing will actually develop of this. Iran has, however, been conducting displays of their military power by doing drills in the Strait of Hormuz. Also, the IAEA said in November 2011 that Iran had “carried out activities relevant to the development of a nuclear explosive device” (IAEA). The IAEA published a document entitled “Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement and relevant provisions of Security Council resolutions in the Islamic Republic of Iran” in which they formally acknowledge Iran’s potential danger and the interactions between Iran and the IAEA. In this document, they state that they have credible evidence to believe Iran has preformed these experiments. They believe Iran’s nuclear program very well may have military dimensions. However, they are working with Iran to develop a solution.

Mohammad Hejazi, who is the deputy head of Iran’s armed forces, told an Iranian news source that if Iran feels threatened and endangered, they will act first (BBC World). The action will most likely take the shape of a pre-emptive strike. The strike could be directed at Israel or the US, and could come at any given time. Citizens of both countries are in constant danger. The UN put sanctions on Iran and expects their ally nations to follow their move by cutting down on Iranian oil. The countries are not expected to completely rid of Iranian oil, but to cut down by significant amounts. Those who don’t are expected to be frozen from the US financial system. The European Union has taken the side of the US and agreed upon an oil ban, but it will be spread out over multiple months, because they fear a quick change could ruin the small economies (Jonathon Marcus). The US doesn’t believe this will take a major toll on the world’s oil exchange, but it will hurt Iran financially and mentally. They hope Iran will

forfeit and all tension will cease. It is likely, however, that Iran will take action.

There are many ways Iran may “attack”, which could be either direct or not. If Iran chooses to use its naval program to block the Strait of Hormuz, an important route for oil transportation, Americans will experience a spike in gas prices. The US has acknowledged that they could open up the strait due to their greater naval strength, but a country that is constantly complaining about its financial situation should not involve itself in physical circumstances. Aside from the many deaths that will be a product of the violence, it will also damage the American economy and political system.

With a presidential election right around the corner for The US, Iran, and Israel, each step taken will be influenced by a politician’s want for public approval, instead of what they believe will help, and it will influence the election. Many Republican-nominee hopefuls are using this as a public relations tactic to get more supporters. Most are taking the very violent route to contrast President Obama’s “wait-and-see” method. If tensions escalate and everything does not go ideally for Americans, there will be a new president in the White House, which is a prime example of how a country flexing their military strength can completely alter another country’s government. The US is so tangled up with various countries, that even if Israel is the first to strike, they will have to jump in and protect them. Political analysts believe that if President Obama turns his back on Israel, he will lose many religious supporters, especially Jewish individuals. A president’s approval rating significantly drops when involved in a war, anywhere from 25 to 43 points (Andrew Malcolm). The overall race will be shaken up by the conflict, even if it never gets physical. President Carter’s reelection was interrupted by “the Iranian hostage crisis that helpfully elected Ronald Reagan in 1980” (Malcolm). Some might say Carter was president during a rocky time, which they claim is why he was not reelected, but the hostage situation did happen during his presidency, and voters take things like that with them into the booth. The situation also dealt with

Iran, which very well means it could take a similar toll on the government.

Out of the many ways this might pan out, each one involves the US. If Iran attacks any of the allies of the US, they have to protect their friendly nations. If Iran attacks a neutral country that has nothing to do with the US, they will still get involved. If Iran even talks about targeting anything to do with the US, they will strike. The US, being one of the major superpowers of the world, is obligated to get involved in practically any circumstance. War would mean a countless number of young men dead, a greater impact on the economy than many recent events, and the loss of safety. The likelihood of being under nuclear attack is obviously far greater when at war. Also the fact that Iran has allies fairly close to the US greatly increases the chances.

If you look back on past conflicts involving the stubbornness of multiple governments, you can see how current events may play out. The Cuban Missile Crisis is the closest to a nuclear war that the world has ever experienced. It was the peak of tension during the Cold War and almost brought modern civilization to its knees. Each government was ready to fire at any possible moment. Children were forced to do constant drills to prepare them for a nuclear attack. The actual crisis was a thirteen day period, which is quite too long for most citizens to be ready to die at any moment. If the governments tried diplomacy earlier on, it would not have elevated to what it did. If something isn't done soon about Iran, the conflict will fester and only get worse. The world should not have to experience another conflict that could end modern civilization. Once Iran obtains nuclear weapons, it will only be harder to intimidate them. The US may have more nuclear weapons, but they could never do that to a country again. Israel also has nuclear weapons, and they have made it clear that they wish to attack. If they attack Iran's nuclear facilities, the radiation and nuclear waste will kill surrounding civilians. If they don't and Iran becomes a nuclear threat, the US will likely invade and many Iranians,

including civilians, will die.

The economic toll of war is a big enough reason in itself to avoid more conflict. The project called “Costs of War” shows the actual toll the War on Terror has had on the United States, including everything from overall financial costs to deaths. According to their research, approximately 3.2 to 4 trillion dollars have been spent on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, which is going to skyrocket if this Iranian conflict develops. The real economic problem is that the US continues to borrow money to fund wars as their national debt grows greater and greater. If they stay out of physical confrontations, they can slowly pay off the debt without further disposing themselves towards more financial issues.

Many Americans believe that the American superpower needs to step in and install some sort of justice, but they must not see the downfalls to throwing money into a problem that can be solved by the classic art of diplomacy. The major industrial nations of the UN need to sit down with Iranian leaders and talk this through. If Iran is really enriching uranium for its energy resources like they claim they are, they shouldn't have a problem with the UN taking a few precautionary measures to make sure their nuclear potential does not become a problem. They seem to be just exercising their independence and freedom, but since they are a major nation of the world, they need to follow certain rules. The sanctions should deplete their income and it might make them more willing when it comes to diplomacy. The IAEA said that during their last visit in January, Iran seemed very cooperative and “‘committed’ to ‘resolving all outstanding issues’” (BBC World). The IAEA inspectors had a far different outlook on Iran's willingness after their failed visit a few weeks after the initial one. They claimed that Iran refused to give them access and refused to speak about the program's “possible military dimensions” (Sanger, Cowell). Iran has also not halted their enrichment process even after warnings (IAEA). One thing that is a fact is that if Iran doesn't cooperate, many people will die and many countries will be thrown into

turmoil.

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