Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for
a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and
private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without
the permission of the Author.
Living in a Dangerous Neighbourhood:
Iran and its Quest for Security through Nuclear
Deterrence

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of

Master of Arts in Politics

at Massey University, Albany, New Zealand.

Hamid Gharekhanian

2015
ABSTRACT

The ongoing dispute between Iran and certain members of the international community over Iran’s nuclear programme has attracted academic debate, significant media attention, and much diplomatic anxiety over the past two decades. While the Iranian Government maintains that its nuclear programme is based upon peaceful purposes and primarily aimed at enhancing energy efficiency to meet the country’s increasing domestic demand, this thesis argues that key factors informing Iran’s nuclear ambitions include its overarching security concerns which transcend the use of nuclear energy for economic ends. Iran’s nuclear policy has largely been shaped by the insecurities caused by its neighbouring countries, some of which are nuclear-armed states. Iran’s sense of insecurity has been compounded by the presence of US armed forces in the region, whose military superiority cannot be overcome by Iran’s conventional army alone. This thesis contends that Iran’s leaders continue to pursue a nuclear programme in the face of the international community’s objections because they believe that nuclear weapons represent a credible military deterrent and, as such, form a vital part of its quest for national security.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are three people to whom I owe my personal gratitude. I wish to thank Dr. Nigel Parsons for good advice. I would also like to thank Dr. Grant Duncan whose advice has helped me in the early stage of this thesis. My greatest thanks go to my supervisor, Dr. Damien Rogers, whose constant support has been instrumental in getting this thesis to where it is now. This thesis would not have been possible without his outstanding contribution. I am deeply indebted to Dr. Rogers for providing helpful comments and directions throughout my work. I am extremely grateful to him for offering his insight and expertise.

I hereby declare that the content of this thesis is my own work, except for sources duly cited and referenced.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .......................................................................................................................... ii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ..................................................................................................... iii

TABLE OF CONTENTS ........................................................................................................ iv

ABBREVIATIONS ................................................................................................................ vii

LIST OF FIGURES .............................................................................................................. ix

INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................................... 1

The Argument ....................................................................................................................... 4

  Research Questions ........................................................................................................ 5
  Sources ............................................................................................................................ 6
  Analytical Method ......................................................................................................... 8
  Theoretical Perspectives ............................................................................................... 12
  Thesis Structure ............................................................................................................. 14

CHAPTER 1: IRAN’S NUCLEAR PROGRAMME ................................................................. 16

  Iran’s Nuclear Facilities ................................................................................................. 20
  Iran’s Strategic Position ............................................................................................... 30
  Iran’s Foreign Policy .................................................................................................... 33
  Iran’s Nuclear Ambitions ............................................................................................. 40
  Iran’s Nuclear Weapons Programme? ......................................................................... 44
Conclusion .................................................................................................................. 53

CHAPTER 2: INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY’S OBJECTIONS .......... 55

International Organizations’ Perceptions and Responses ...............56

International Atomic Energy Agency ......................................................... 56

UN Security Council ............................................................................. 58

European Union ..................................................................................... 64

Gulf Corporation Council ..................................................................... 67

Governmental Perceptions and Responses .................................... 71

United States ......................................................................................... 71

Israel ........................................................................................................ 84

Conclusion ..................................................................................................... 90

CHAPTER 3: THE IMPACT OF SANCTION REGIMES ......................... 95

Impact on the International Community ............................................. 95

Trade Impacts ......................................................................................... 97

Sanction Busting .................................................................................... 99

Impact on Iran ......................................................................................... 103

Economic Harm .................................................................................... 106

Social Harm .......................................................................................... 108

Conclusion ..................................................................................................... 111
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 4: IRAN’S INTRANSIGENCE</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran’s Nuclear Diplomacy</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran’s Perceptions of Regional and Extra-Regional Threats</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION: IMPLICATIONS OF A NUCLEAR-ARMED IRAN</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undermining the NPT Regime</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Arms Race</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Military Action</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran’s Security Dilemma</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCE LIST</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX 1</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BP ----- British Petroleum
CISADA ----- Comprehensive Iran Sanctions Accountability and Divestment Act
ESS ----- European Security Strategy
EU ----- European Union
FEP ----- Fuel Enrichment Plant
FFEP ----- Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant
GCC ----- Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP ----- Gross Domestic Product
HEU ----- highly-enriched uranium
ISIS ----- Institute for Science and International Security
IAEA ----- International Atomic Energy Agency
ISA ----- Iran Sanctions Act
ILSA ----- Iran-Libya Sanctions Act
IRGC ----- Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps
IRISL ----- Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines
LNG ----- liquefied natural gas
LEU ----- low enriched uranium
MAD ----- Mutually Assured Destruction
NATO ----- North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCRI ----- National Council of Resistance of Iran
NPT ----- Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
NSA ----- National Security Agency
PFEP ----- Pilot Fuel Enrichment Plant
PRC ----- People’s Republic of China
TRR ----- Tehran Research Reactor
UCF ----- Uranium Conversion Facility
UAE ----- United Arab Emirates
UK ----- United Kingdom
UN ----- United Nations
US ----- United States of America
USSR ----- Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WMD ----- Weapons of Mass Destruction
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Iran’s Key Nuclear Sites .......................................................... 21

Figure 2: Nuclear Sites: Arak............................................................... 22

Figure 3: Nuclear Sites: Busheshre......................................................... 23

Figure 4: Nuclear Sites: Fordow.............................................................. 24

Figure 5: Nuclear Sites: Isfahan ............................................................. 25

Figure 6: Nuclear Sites: Natanz ............................................................. 26

Figure 7: Nuclear Sites: Parchin ............................................................ 27

Figure 8: Iran and its Neighbours......................................................... 31

Figure 9: US Military Bases around Iran .............................................. 132