

Beware of nuclear capabilities

Column

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It is a possibility that by mid-2014, Iran may have enough weapons-grade uranium for multiple bombs. It is a possibility that by mid-2014, if the United States does not offer its unwavering support of Israel, it will be terrorized and a nuclear war could become a reality.

It has been obvious since September that the Iranian threat is at the top of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's list of imminent dangers to deal with. He informed the United Nations of the 'clear red line' for uranium enrichment which Iran could not cross, or else. The Prime Minister implied that Israel would not have a problem taking military action against Iran if they reached the point of having ninety percent of the uranium needed to assemble a nuclear weapon. At that point, it was estimated that as early as this spring or summer, Iran could possibly reach that very point.

That was September. Almost five months later, where are we? President Obama's recent nomination of Republican Chuck Hagel as Secretary of Defense does not ease many people's worries about the United States' staunch support of Israel in the case of an Iranian attack. Hagel has been described as 'moderate' and 'antagonistic' from fellow Republicans. However, Obama's appointment of Hagel, as well as the not-so-perfect relationship between the president and Netanyahu himself, cannot be easing the prime minister's worries. Netanyahu has approached the Iranian threat headfirst and with an iron fist thus far, and the president's wish for diplomacy cannot be comforting.

So Iran gets a nuke, what comes next? An increased threat of terrorism in both Israel and the United States? The risk of a nuclear arms race throughout the Middle East? Could Iran possibly become a hub for U.S. enemies to learn/purchase the same uranium enrichment technology that Iran used to create its nuclear weapon? Or could the bomb just put Iran in a comfortable position to make threats without fear of military retaliation? Nobody can say with assurance what might happen if and when Iran obtains such a weapon, but Netanyahu is trying his best to prevent the world from finding out.

Why should we, as students, care about Iran's nuclear capability? Personally, if Iran is successful with a nuclear program, my family and friends in Israel will be threatened. Adding a nuclear Iran to its already daily worries of terrorism would not allow anyone to sleep peacefully at night. Many students may not personally know someone who lives in Israel, but a nuclear Iran also poses a huge threat to America.

Meanwhile, the United States must continue enforcing Iranian sanctions. The United States is truly isolating Iran and forcing its leaders to talk about the nuclear program. This month, the United States will not only continue to enforce sanctions regarding Iranian oil, but will also put other countries purchasing Iranian oil at risk of being cut off from the U.S. banking system. President Obama recently signed legislation which will prevent Iran from being able to exchange oil for precious metals like gold, or material like graphite. As long as Obama's support of Iranian sanctions is staunch, and his support in this area does look promising, Iran will continue to be isolated and pressured into negotiations.

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