

# Responding to Iran's Nuclear Challenge

## Delay is Victory

Jan 1, 2004



Articles & Testimony

**T**he late 2003 IAEA deal at its best addresses only a small part of the Iranian nuclear proliferation threat; at its worst, the deal could become a significant obstacle to responding to the Iranian nuclear threat. The test will come over time -- which is convenient for the Bush administration, because the United States is so absorbed now with reconstructing Iraq that it would rather postpone difficult decisions about Iran.

### Likely Consequences of the IAEA Deal

The best outcome from the IAEA deal would be that it leaves Iran completely free to pursue one of two routes to the fissile material for a nuclear bomb: namely, the plutonium route as distinct from the uranium route. The uranium route is blocked by the IAEA deal so long as enrichment is in fact suspended. However, the plutonium route remains wide open. Here the issue is the Bushehr nuclear power reactor. The 21 October agreement between Iran and Britain, France, and Germany is carefully worded such that the three European states make no commitment regarding Bushehr or nuclear power, but it is a fair reading of that deal to say that it implicitly blesses Bushehr. After all, the three European governments made no objection to the completion of the Bushehr nuclear power reactor. Those three governments have a history of not objecting to Bushehr, and the 21 October agreement shows that they have not changed their stance in light of the discoveries about Iran's clandestine nuclear activities, whereas they did change their position about Iranian enrichment. On the matter of principle -- does Iran have to give up some of the rights to peaceful nuclear technology that is guaranteed by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) -- Britain, France, and Germany took a clear stance: yes, Iran does have to give up some of those treaty-protected rights. But on the matter of practice -- does that include foregoing nuclear power generators -- the three European countries did not take a stand, which is in effect agreeing to allow Iran to proceed with Bushehr. . . .

Iran and Its Neighbors: Diverging Views on a Strategic Region, Vol. II

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Feb 11, 2022



Farzin Nadimi

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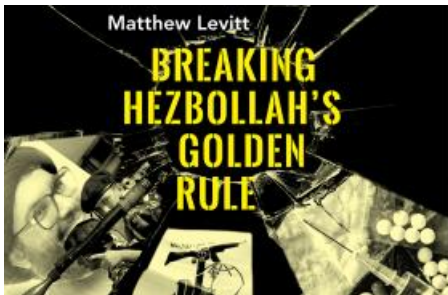
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Simon Henderson

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