

The Prospects for Nuclear 'Roll Back' in Iran

Jan 1, 2004



Articles & Testimony

Although it may not be feasible now or in the near future, the U.S. should not exclude the possibility at some future date of nuclear roll back in Iran -- particularly in light of Libya -- s recent surprise decision to scrap its nuclear, chemical, and ballistic missile programs.

Since World War II, there have been nine cases of nuclear roll-back: Argentina, Brazil, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden, Taiwan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine (and if Libya follows through on recent commitment, there will be ten). Argentina and Brazil abandoned their nuclear weapons programs following the transition from military to civilian rule in both states. South Africa, despite a significant investment in nuclear weapons, gave them up with the end of the Cold War and apartheid. And Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine -- successor states of the Soviet Union -- gave up their nuclear inheritance in return for political and economic blandishments by the U.S. and others. In light of these successes of the past decade or so, it is worthwhile assessing the various factors that have led to roll back elsewhere, and consider their relevance to Iran.

Studies of roll back have identified five key factors critical to roll back decisions: political change, altered perceptions of the military utility of nuclear weapons, external pressure and inducements (such as financial blandishments, and positive or negative security assurances), economic constraints, and the lack of public commitment to the possession of nuclear weapons. . . .

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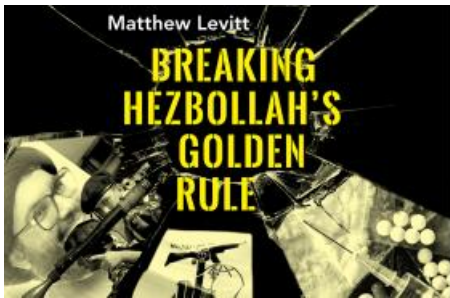
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