

Nuclear Weapons and Iran's Global Ambitions: Troubling Scenarios

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With the world's attention focused on the dramatic events of the Arab Spring, Iran continues to make progress on its nuclear program. If the regime succeeds in crossing the nuclear threshold, the implications for the United States and its allies could be profound. But how specifically might Tehran use such a capability to advance its interests?

In this Policy Focus, Ash Jain outlines the ways in which a nuclear Iran might step up efforts to project power and influence in areas where it has already been active, both on the ground and rhetorically: the Gulf monarchies, Iraq, the Levant, Latin America, and, more broadly, terrorist activity against the United States and its interests. Although the regime does not appear to seek direct military confrontation, a nuclear capability could enhance its ability to challenge Washington and strengthen its resistance front. In Jain's view, preventing that outcome must remain a top U.S. policy priority.

THE AUTHOR

Ash Jain, a visiting fellow at The Washington Institute, served as a member of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff from 2004 to 2010 and provided counsel to U.S. officials on the strategic challenges posed by Iran and other actors. He also served as a special advisor with the department's Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation, examining policy options for addressing Tehran's nuclear program. Previously, he worked as counsel for the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs and as an adjunct professor of constitutional law and politics at George Washington University. A veteran analyst who has provided commentary for media outlets such as Fox News, BBC, NPR, Canadian Broadcasting, and the Los Angeles Times, Mr. Jain holds a law degree and a master of science in foreign service from Georgetown University.

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