

Reputation and Iranian Nuclear Program: 1997-2013

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Abstract

This paper suggests how, over time, a state like Iran could deliberately develop a number of different reputations in connection with international law and international relations. The theoretical and empirical findings confirm the hypothesis that states with a weak reputation in both international law and international relations should probably put more emphasis on reputation building for 'resolve' rather than for 'compliance' if intended to get the results in the short term. Using reputation as a causal variable to explain Iran's status in the international arena, one could find out that reputational sanctions imposed on Iran, is actually due to its reputation for resolve and toughness in international relations. The paper not only justifies why states, as rational actors, change their dispositional behavior in security area but also provides an empirical study into the analysis of the interdisciplinary function of reputations in this area.

Keywords: Iran, Nuclear Energy, Reputational Sanctions, International Law, International Relations

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Introduction

The US announced a new round of its unilateral sanctions on Iran in February 2013, with the aim of blocking Iran's ability to trade its oil for gold and other precious metals; as a result, a large number of financial, shipping and communications companies were blacklisted. Sanctions by the United States and its allies have cut Iran's lucrative oil exports by half, sharply undermined the value of the national currency and caused shortages of key imports. The sanctions impose penalties on companies and individuals who work with Iran's energy, petrochemical, insurance, financial, and shipping sectors. These sanctions, so far have not caused the Iran to give ground on its nuclear program. At the same time, a strong majority of Iranians want their country to continue to develop its nuclear program, despite the burdensome effect of Western sanctions.

Are the actions taken against Iran legitimate and based upon legal rules? Has the country defied any of its major obligations under the statute of the International Atomic Energy Organization (IAEA) to justify passing 11 resolutions in the Board of Governors against it? Why did the IAEA refer Iran's case to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) so that 6 resolutions under Article 41 of Chapter VII of the UN Charter can be issued against the country? What do they expect from the Islamic Republic of Iran? Teaching public international law, I have been constantly confronted with students asking these questions about the way Iran is being treated regarding its nuclear energy program.

Based on the resolutions adopted by the Board of Governors



and the UNSC, and considering the regular reports made by the IAEA Director General to both organizations, it seems that they are seriously concerned about the implementation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and its relevant safeguards agreement in Iran. They emphasize on: 1) the implementation and prompt ratification of the additional protocol to safeguard agreements; 2) application of Modified Code 3.1 of the Subsidiary Arrangement; 3) Iran's obligation to restore international confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear program consistent with NPT regulation. But, is Iran legally obliged to accept these requirements or not.

To answer this question fairly and precisely, one needs to consider the provisions laid down in the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (1969); and refer to the article 52 to show illegitimacy of making a state to comply with the law by coercion and the threat of using military force. Knowing the fact that some states are neither member of the IAEA nor the NPT suggests the dominance of this *jus cogens* principle in international law. Iran is a member of the IAEA, has signed and ratified the NPT in 1970 and has agreed to its Safeguards Agreement in 1974. The Additional Protocol is not legally a binding instrument; and the Modified Code 3.1 is merely a recommendation by the Board of Governors, and not an integral part of the comprehensive safeguards agreement. However, Iran voluntarily implemented both of these arrangements from December 2003 to February 2006, for more than 2.5 years as a confidence building measure. According to Iranian officials, the suspension of voluntary implementation of these arrangements was due to legally unjustified referral of Iran's nuclear program to the UNSC in 2006.

The requests made in the relevant resolutions to adapt and implement the Additional Protocol and the Modified Code 3.1 are seemingly in contravention of international norms and the Convention on the Law of Treaties. However, according to international laws, when states enter into an agreement, they send



signals about their intention to comply with international legal obligations. The states could refrain from any international agreement, before signing the agreement, but after they have applied to be a member, they have to comply with all relevant provisions of the agreements. In this case, based on Article 39 of Iran's Safeguards Agreement, agreed Subsidiary Arrangements (including The Additional Protocol and Modified Code 3.1) cannot be changed unilaterally; nor is there a mechanism in the Safeguards Agreement for the suspension of provisions agreed to in the Subsidiary Arrangements. Therefore we have to admit that although under principle of sovereignty, states have the option of withdrawing their consent but signatories to the agreements should behave differently from non-signatories.

There are so many questions raised by my students and here are some frequently asked questions: 1) Is it fair that some states choose not to be members of the NPT, and enjoy more freedom, benefits and rights with fewer obligations? 2) Is it true that there are many IAEA and NPT members that have not yet implemented the Additional Protocol and Modified Code 3.1 to their safeguards agreement? 3) What crime is committed by Iranian nuclear scientists, to have several bodyguards protect them against assassins in their own country?¹⁰ 4) Why North Korea, the former member of the IAEA and the NPT, withdrew from the Agency and the Treaty in 2003 and no severe action was taken against it? 5) Why Israel as the non-signatory state of the NPT has not been pressured by the director general of IAEA? 6) Is the Agency in a forceful position to take action against undeclared nuclear material and activities in North Korea and Israel? 7) Can the Agency provide credible assurance that these two countries will not be threats to international peace and security as much as Iran? 8) Why the Agency becomes silent and indifferent to the lost nuclear materials in the United States? 9) Why the burden of proof is on Iran to build international confidence while other states are presumed innocent until proven guilty?



As a lecturer of international law, I have to consider the limits of the international law and the pure reality of power-centered equilibriums in the international politics and remind the students that the effect of the international law is not absolute. Unlike domestic law, there is no international authority to coerce countries into accepting the decisions of the international courts. As Hans Morgenthau, father of the realist school, wrote in "**Politics among Nations**", there can be no more primitive and weaker system of law enforcement than this. In this article and as an extended struggle to find a better explanation for the above questions, I take a new approach by using the concept of "Reputation" to redefine the case. In this paper, I try to elaborate on how reputation matters in Iran's case, and in what ways reputation as one of the most important concepts in proving the efficacy of international law can be subjugated to international relations' norms in security area.

I- The Reputation Paradigm

While in the classic literature of international law, one can see a considerable emphasis on the self-help and resorting to retorsion or reprisals, in the recent studies there has been a clear emphasis on the role of reputation building in maintaining international agreements. Authors like Keohane, Alexlord, Fortna and Guzman have introduced a well-structured notion of Reputation.⁽²⁾ They think when leaders sign a treaty or other legal agreements, it becomes more costly to take actions the law forbids. Although the theoretical centrality of reputation in the recent literature of international law seems obvious, it would be necessary to address its definition before implying it in our case study.

In international law, reputation can best be defined as aggregate of judgments about an actor's past behavior used to predict future behavior or performance. The greater a state's reputation, the more credibly it can commit to a particular course of action, the easier it is for it to enter into cooperative arrangements, the more it can extract



from other states as part of a bargain, and more likely it is that it can find other states to cooperate. In fact, reputation is a potent means of commitment, and sometimes the only means.⁶⁹ According to the standard argument, a major reason why states keep their commitments, even those that produce a lower level of gains than expected, is that they fear that any evidence of unreliability would damage their reputation and lead other states to change their willingness to enter into future agreements and cooperation with the violator. Though, there are institutionalists and skeptics, suggesting that there are some limits on reputation ability to generate cooperation, they generally concede that states are concerned with their reputation and reputation plays an important role in promoting compliance. In the absence of any coercive enforcement mechanism, states must rely on reputation as a disciplining device to encourage compliance. The stronger a state, the more easily it can make credible commitments and cooperation. When a state violates a commitment, other states take note and the violating state's reputation suffers. When a state enters into a treaty, it represents to the other party that it prefers mutual cooperation to noncooperation. The loss of reputation matters, because it makes future promises less credible. In conclusion, we can regard states as rational actors that when entering into international agreements they must choose between compliance and violation, while observing states being ready to assess their action. States regard their reputation as an asset so that if they violate the agreement, they would give up some of this reputational asset and automatically send a signal to other states that cause decrease in the likelihood that they could comply and make their promises more credible. Then, reputation is a credibility card to every state that can ensure generating compliance and imposing costs on states when they have sufficiently large incentives to violate a commitment. (Guzman, 2008: 35-38).

Unlike international law scientists, who have long argued that reputational concerns help guarantee that states maintain their



commitments in international agreements, in international relations (IR) realm not only there are so many skeptical views about this claim and in fact they predominately infer a completely different meaning of Reputation, but also there are much debates about the consequences of international law itself. It is claimed that leaders pursue their national interest without regard for international law and such arguments have no significant impact on preferences and decisions.⁽⁴⁾ In the international relations, reputation is being used as firmness or resolve in dealing with security. In this field, reputation has frequently been used in the context of deterrence literature. According to Huth, the concept of deterrence can be defined as the use of threats by one party to convince another party to refrain from initiating some course of action (Huth, 1999: 26). The logical link between reputation and deterrence outcome is based on the effect of reputation on the credibility of a defender's deterrent policy. The credibility of a threat, in turn, is a function of multiple variables relating to military capabilities and resolve. In international relations literature, the focus has been on the deterrer's reputation for resolve and whether its past behavior makes it more or less likely to be believed it will resist subsequent challenges. The more resolute it is believed to be, given its past history, the less likely it will be challenged (Clare et al, 2010, 862).

II- Iran and Reputation

Finding a logical basis that can justify imposing several resolutions and sanctions against Iran because of its nuclear program was addressed in the introduction section. Since the IAEA is an international organization that has to operate according to the international laws and regulations, it has some obligations to provide good legal proofs for its allegations against Iran. As already explained in the introduction, there are so many unanswered questions in this case. The IAEA is yet to provide any good legal justification for its double standards towards Iran. Taking a comparative approach, any nonpartisan can easily recognize that the IAEA has not acted upon



principles of justice and equity.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is a three pillar treaty that almost none of its pillars seem to work fairly and properly. One can scrutinize the conduct of states in the 2010 Review Conference of NPT regarding: 1. Non-proliferation, 2. Disarmament, and 3. the right to peacefully use of nuclear technology. The nuclear weapon states sought to avoid any specific actions or timetables for nuclear disarmament, while the Nonaligned states rejected any strengthening of the nonproliferation toolbox that would have added new obligations on them. Then the final draft couldn't be finalized in a better condition than producing no timelines for disarmament, no negotiations on a nuclear weapon convention in a foreseeable future, no "verification standard" that would include the Additional Protocol, no clear propagation of multinational nuclear arrangements, no stricter rules for withdrawal from the NPT, no confirmation of the key role of the Security Council in enforcement, and no criticism of Iran (Müller, 2011: 232).

Considering these uncertainties and using a comparative analysis, one might conclude that Iran has not violated any of its major legal obligations in a way that could provide a good basis for the Agency to impose an unprecedented procedure against one of its member states. Almost all of the semi-legal arguments of the IAEA and the UNSC against Iran originate from some uncertainty about the peaceful nature of that country's nuclear program. However, there is no legal response to the unresolved questions such as why couldn't they trust Iran's legal commitments or how could they find good reasons not to be suspicious about the activities of some other states with limited commitments?

According to our theoretical debates discussed earlier, when a state makes a compliance decision, it sends a signal about its willingness to honor its obligations and subsequently other states should use the information in this decision to adjust their own behavior. Contrary to this assumption, Iran's willingness to comply



with its obligations neither helped developing a good reputation for a better cooperative mechanism nor could stop more damages imposed on its already damaged reputation. Why did the IAEA remain suspicious of Iran's nuclear activity and continued passing several more resolutions against it, even though Iran decided to cooperate beyond its obligations under the NPT to the extent that it signed and implemented the Additional Protocol and Modified Code 3.1 voluntarily? To find an answer, it is inevitable to consider the interdisciplinary effects of reputation in the international field.

III- The Historical Context

The Islamic Revolution was a rebellion against the Pahlavi Regime; a trusted partner of the West. The revolution transformed the nature of the Iranian government that eventually became a major opponent of the Western-Israelis interests in the region. Iran's policy of confronting the West entered into new era after Mohammad Khatami was elected and recognized as a reformist president who was expected to end the old hostilities with the West. At that time, Iran was experiencing relatively good interactions with Western countries and its diplomatic relations with the UK was restored at ambassadorial level. Khatami was endowed with such a considerable respect in the world by introducing the idea of "Dialogue among Civilizations" to the extent that subsequently the year 2001 was announced as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. In an effort to build international confidence in Iran's nuclear activities, Khatami signed and implemented the Additional Protocol and Modified Code 3.1 in 2003. All uranium enrichment activities were suspended as well. This intellectual gesture of the government came to an end after Mahmoud Ahmadinejad became president in 2005.

Ahmadinejad soon became popular by frequent use of the slogans like, "Nuclear Energy is our Absolute Right". Although the overall system of Iran has reached broad agreements on matters of principle, such as the idea that Iran should have access to nuclear



technology, but issues like how these broad matters of consensus should be implemented, and how the spoils should be divided, is the stuff of day-to-day disagreements (Jones, 2011: 109). As a response to the IAEA that referred Iran's case to the Security Council, Ahmadinejad decided to discontinue Iran's high level cooperation and the cooperation was limited to the basic level defined by NPT standards. This paper argues that Iran's behavior during Ahmadinejad could be possibly best understood as a new struggle by Iran to invest more on its reputation for resolve rather than compliance. In the international relations literature, states could develop reputations along two dimensions. One would be a reputation for "willingness" to use force in order to protect the state's foreign policy interests, and the second would be a reputation for "having" powerful military capabilities. The credibility of a defender's threat is a function of both the defender's relative military capabilities and his perceived resolve to use military force. This credibility should be high when: a) the defender possesses the military capabilities to impose substantial costs and deny victory to the potential attacker; and b) the potential attacker believes that the defender will use its available military forces in a retaliatory strike.

There are many arguments about the importance of nuclear energy in enhancing the deterrence capability of states. Kenneth Waltz, as a leading scientist in this context, claims that nuclear weapons dissuade states from going to war more surely than conventional weapons do: If the atom had never been split, the United States and the Soviet Union would still have much to fear from each other. Wars that might bring nuclear weapons into play have become extraordinary hard to start (Waltz, 1990: 774). One can easily find many proponents of Waltz in Iran. There are some Iranian political scientists who frequently blame the NPT that has divided the world into two groups of "Haves" and "Have nots" and openly insist that the government should stand firm on the issue of nuclearizing Iran, as the most valuable factor to guarantee national integrity and



political stability.

Despite such strong arguments by experts of arms control, that Iran must have invoked Article 10 of the NPT and withdrew from the treaty many years ago, the officials have not yet decided to step out of the NPT. The semi-peripheral and peripheral states could expect that membership in international organizations helps them promote their legitimate status in the international communities. In this regard, the rational choice will suggest that where a state does reflect on the necessity of complying with valid global law norms, it will conclude in most cases that its medium- to long-term interests are enhanced by a reputation of being an actor in good standing in the international community and a reliable partner for international cooperation (Huth 1997: 74).⁶⁾ The author intends first to examine the role of reputation for resolve and willingness in Iranian deterrence policy, instead of relying on Iran military capabilities. When an analyst refers to reputation for resolve, analytically he has to specify the kind of reputations used in his analysis that is the empirical referent for the concept. Employing the concept of reputation, I try to be explicit in specifying the behaviors and actions that Iran's reputation refers to.

It should be noted at the beginning that as Iran's revolution in 1979 has had some ideological components, one could see a nonstop confrontation between Iran, the US, some European states and Israel on security interests. Having some sort of permanent strategic rivals, Iran could have a good reason to resort to reputation building. Iran and the United States both have substantial reasons for their mutual antipathy. Iranian grievances go back to the American role in overthrowing Iran's democratically elected government in 1953, followed by Washington's backing of the shah for the next 26 years, and by American support for Saddam Hussein's war of aggression against Iran, during which the US Navy shot down an Iranian civil airliner over international waters in the Persian Gulf. American grievances begin with the seizure of the US Embassy and the holding hostage of its staff in 1979, followed by Iranian support for some



movements in Lebanon, Gaza, Iraq and Afghanistan. Most recently, Iran's apparent involvement in terrorist attacks on Saudi and Israeli targets in the United States adds yet a new provocation and further source of conflict (Dobbins, 2011: 33-34). 'The United States' main objective with respect to Iran is restraining its external behavior that might be out of reach by completion of its current nuclear program. Over the past decade, Iran's nuclear program has emerged as the dominant American concern in foreign affairs. Bearing in mind the US indispensable relations with Israel, this concern could be even more intensified.

Iran on the contrary had always been working on making challenges to the US and its strategic allies in the Middle East by promulgating its Anti-Capitalism and Anti-Zionism strategy. President Ahmadinejad tried to respond in an unprecedented way to its strategic opponents. The government of Iran gave a high priority to challenging the world order by publicly criticizing the unfair combination of the Security Council and calling the UN Resolutions mere scraps of paper that can be shredded or disregarded. Ahmadinejad frequently showed his willingness for collective management of the world and tried to undermine the UN legitimacy in his regular speeches to UN General Assembly: If the US and the UK who are permanent members of the Security Council, commit aggression, occupation and violation of international law, which of the organs of the UN could make them accountable? Those who committed the crime by dropping the first atomic bomb should be considered the most hated in the history⁶.

Considering American support for Israel, from strategic considerations to ideological affinity to a strong pro-Israel lobby that has captured Congress, one has to admit that American politicians of both left and right have always considered themselves committed to protect Israel. Over the last four decades, Israel has been the recipient of massive amounts of American foreign and military aid. The United States announced in August 2007 that it would increase military



assistance to Israel by \$6 billion over the following decade (Koplow, 2011: 270). Israelis urged the US to imply a strategy of containment about the future of Iran: A purpose of the containment regime should be to enforce a red line before weaponization, nuclear testing or withdrawal from the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Whether Tehran's crossing of that line should require a military response would depend on attending circumstances (Allin *et al*, 2010: 40). A clear correlation between these new confrontational relations and its effect on reputational behavior of Iran will be addressed later.

Another evidence for Iran's investment on reputation for resolve is its behavior for viewing its security commitments as interdependent. Potential attackers may believe that a certain defender is more likely to intervene in any given conflict because that defender is more concerned about the negative repercussions for other security commitments if it—the defender—fails to act forcefully in a particular conflict (Huth, 1997: 76). A review of Iran's foreign policy strongly suggests the priority that has given to interdependence of commitments. Currently, a concise account of the main challenges confronting Iran in its foreign affairs could be named: human rights, terrorism and nuclear energy. Adopting 3 resolutions in 3 different subjects against Iran in less than a month in November 2011 would ratify previously mentioned correlation. Declaring serious concerns about possible military dimensions of Iran's nuclear program by the IAEA on November 8, confirming Iran's implicit involvement in a terrorist plot to assassinate the Saudi ambassador to the United States at the UN General Assembly on November 18, and finally condemning Iran's status to observe human rights by the third committee of the UN General Assembly on November 21, best possibly introduce the multidimensional pressures adopted by Iran's international rivals.

These signals have been received and interpreted well by the Iranians. The Islamic Republic of Iran, as a rational player, believes that once it acquiesces to one of these challenges, in fact it sends back



signals to its adversaries, confirming it would not resist another challenges as well. The reformist president, Khatami, presented valuable evidences for this argument. Iran's full cooperation policy on its nuclear program not only failed to make any progress in convincing the world about the peaceful nature of its nuclear program, but it further determined its rivals to strengthen their pressures on all other remaining challenges. At the same time, that Iranian intellectual president was considered to be one of the first world leaders to condemn 'the barbarous acts' of September 11, his country notoriously became the axis of evil and was accused of helping terrorism and seeking weapons of mass destruction. The records of Iran on human rights still remained on the table as well. Analyzing the behavior of Iran's adversaries would suggest that appeasement in one challenge can generate a reputation for a weak resolve, thus prompting further challenges. Since states cannot be certain about their opponent's willingness to fight, acquiring a reputation for a weak resolve is costly, because it might lead to the assumption that a state will be irresolute in the future. The costs for acquiring a weak reputation are greater when there are more opponents that could potentially challenge the state in the future (Clare, 2010: 864).

Iran's multiple challengers in each of these policy areas, could intensify the necessity of its investment for reputation. The past full cooperation policy of Iran, especially regarding its strategic rivals, gave rise to a new aggressive and risky policy. In this context, our major expectation is that states with a reputation for weak resolve, and in particular those facing multiple potential challengers, have the greatest incentive to initiate and escalate disputes. Iran's multiple challengers in each of these policy areas, could intensify the necessity of its investment for reputation as resolve. The past irresolute behavior of Iran, especially regarding its strategic rivals, gave rise to a new aggressive and risky policy. Another factor showing Iran's determination to rebuild its reputation is its firmness to maintain a



live coalition in support of its deterrence policies. In this case, a potential attacker may conclude that certain defender states are more likely to use force, since they are able to mobilize political support behind a deterrent policy (Huth, 1997: 76). Iran has managed to make a strong coalition with Syria, Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Palestine.

In reputation literature, states are being warned against their irresolute behavior, because the failure to stand firm on one issue or at one point in time would increase the risk of future challenges. Considering the importance of pursuing security and military interests in international relations, and enduring all types of sanctions adopted by great powers and international organizations, one can still see Iran's high priority to invest in its strategic goals vis-à-vis nonmilitary ones like health, education and financial ones. Iran's firmness to build a new reputation to deter aggressive behaviors has resulted inter alia in no diplomatic relations with the US and Israel for more than 30 years and reducing diplomatic relations with London and Ottawa to the lowest possible level.⁶ Pursuing the policy of reputation for resolve in the power-centered world of international relations would not remain without any costs. There are many approaches that have been selected by the West to constrain Iran's willingness for such an investment on its reputation. Seemingly, none of these offers the prospect of advancing their main objectives: Pure direct engagement will take them nowhere with the current Iran. Preemption deals only with the nuclear issue, and then only temporarily, while making progress toward other objectives more difficult. Containment may constrain only Iran's external behavior and has nothing to do with its domestic situation. Neither normalization nor regime change are attainable short-term objectives. Worst of all would be a situation in which Iran had openly breached the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), tested and deployed nuclear weapons, and begun to articulate a doctrine for their use (Dobbins, 2011: 43- 44).

Considering all the evidences gathered in this paper, we may



conclude that contrary to Mercer studies (1996), not only investment on reputation for resolve does work in Iran's strategy, but also only by considering the importance of this kind of reputation building for Iranian, we may find ourselves in a good analytical position, justifying why leaders who backed down in one crisis did not appear to ignore and refuse reputational costs for doing the same again and again. This study provides a valuable experience to confirm how a rational actor (Iran) could assume backing down against the first aggressor lead to resolve damage and substantially lower earnings in subsequent events. The IAEA and the UNSC are currently pursuing a policy that offers reducing pressures and sanctions when Iran agrees to stop its nuclear activities by renouncing uranium enrichment. But, while Iran's nuclear program is being regarded as a symbol of national pride by the government and public opinion, it carries a considerable value regarding reputation for resolve; the policy of sanctions and pressure seems to yield no support for such a humiliating digression among the Iranian political parties.

This case is comparable with reputational concerns of the government and people of the United States following the seizure of the US embassy in Tehran by Iranian students in 1979. During the course of the crisis, the public did become concerned with the consequences for US national honor. At the beginning of the crisis, 26% of the public believed the crisis caused the world to have less respect for the United States, but as the crisis progressed the answers became significantly more negative. In early April 1980, 71% agreed that "Up to now, the US has been at the mercy of the Ayatollah, making us look weak and helpless". On October 29, 1980 the Wall Street Journal reported that Reagan's strongest question to Carter in the candidates' debate had been, 'Is America respected throughout the world.'⁹

The study of Iran's behavior in promoting its reputation in both areas (International Law and International Relations) suggests the efficacy of short term investment on reputation for resolve, but



inefficacy of investment on reputation for compliance at least in short term. The unchanged skepticism about Iran's legal commitments along with several resolutions imposed on it at the same time of its highest cooperation with the IAEA (ratifying and implementing the Additional Protocol and Modified Code 3.1), suggests another possibility regarding reputation spill over from international relations to international law. This research could provide a new logical and experimental explanation about how a state reputation for compliance in international law could be punished, regarding its toughness and resolve to promote its reputation in competing the world of international relations.

Conclusion

In this paper, based on the definition of reputation in international law and international relations, the author tried to examine the efficacy of reputation building in security area by analyzing Iran's behavior in foreign affairs. The study of Iran's reputation building in international relations and international law represents the possibility of reputation overflowing from one area to another and limited efficacy of reputation building for compliance in short term. Iran's willingness to challenge status quo and its exceptional firmness against the rivals, motivated by its past irresolute behavior, produces evidence about its willingness to reconstruct the past reputation for resolve in order to deter others from further challenges. The evidences suggest that contrary to the expectations of reputation critics in international relations, state leaders in our study care deeply about their reputations in spite of being faced with several paralyzing sanctions and pressures. At the same time, much weaker support was founded for reputation effectiveness in international law, especially in short term. This means reputation is either theoretically weaker or practically more complicated than much of the international law literature suggests. The most important finding is Iran's reputational sanctions, seemingly for unreliability in international law, is actually



due to its behavior for promoting its reputation for resolve and toughness in international relations. The states punishing Iran in the IAEA are doing so because they anticipate that Iran's unreliable behavior in international relations may possibly spill over to a legal treaty or would fail to fulfill its legal commitments. This fact reminds us to carefully consider the function of reputation in international security agreements as a subordinate element of the same concept in international relations. Reputation assessment in security area should be addressed with respect to these two facts 1) states are more likely to revise their estimates of reliability, regarding their rivals not by taking into account the level of compliance with legal agreements, but with constantly monitoring their resolve in pursuing strategic goals. 2) If this characterization of reputation for compliance and resolve in security area is correct, one may explain why states in security areas (such as arms control or national security) could find more logical reasons to strictly uphold the 'resolve' rather than 'compliance'. Needless to say, this does not mean that the revisionist states with weak reputation for compliance and resolve should fight for the later in security area without due consideration of costs, benefits, and feasibility. The main purpose is to represent the limitations of reputation building for compliance in order to confidence building in security areas.

Notes

1. In the last two years, at least 4 Iranian nuclear scientists have been shot to death in Tehran. The most shocking case was Daryoosh Rezainejad, one of the Iranian nuclear scientists assassinated in front of his wife and 5 years old daughter in Tehran on July 2011. At first, the government of Iran denied that he was a nuclear scientist, in order to stop growing concern of the public. After a few months, however, Dr. Fereydoun Abbasi, vice-president and head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, made an official statement to the 55th session of the general conference of the IAEA on September 2011, confirming Rezainejad's role in the Iranian peaceful nuclear activities.
2. Further reading: Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony* (1984); Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (1984); Virginia Fortna, 'Scraps of Paper? Agreements and the Durability of Peace' 57 *International Organization* (2003) and Andrew T. Guzman *How international law works A practical choice* (2008).
3. See: Gregory D. Miller, *Hypotheses on reputation: alliance choices and the shadow of the past*. 12 *Security studies* (2003) 3 at: 42; Bernd Lahno, trust, reputation and exit in exchange relationships. 339 *journal of conflict resolution* (1995) 3 and Thomas, schelling, *the strategy of conflict* (1960) at 29.
4. For classic literature, see Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: the Struggle for Power and Peace* (1948) and Kenneth Waltz, *theory of international politics* (1979).
5. The author has to say that unproven and rhetorical allegations, like "the Iranian support for extremist movements" or "Iran's apparent involvement in terrorist attacks on Saudi and Israeli targets in the United States" are quoted directly from the article cited in References.
6. President Ahmadinejad, '64th Session of the UNGA' www.un.org/ga/64/generaldebate/pdf/IR_en.pdf.
7. The author has to mention that Iran has signed treaties repudiating the possession of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) including the Biological Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention, and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and there is no credible evidence that Iran is developing CBR (chemical, biological and radiological weapons).
8. In light of the last report of IAEA's director general in 8 November 2011, and his statements about possible military dimensions of Iran's nuclear activity, the US and the



UK carried out more bilateral sanctions against Iran. Shortly after the decision of Iran's parliament to reduce the level of diplomatic relations with the UK, hundreds of so called Iranian students mobilized and overran the UK Embassy in Tehran in 29 November 2011. In reaction to these events UK Foreign Secretary William Hague, in 30 November 2011, made a decision to close the British Embassy in Tehran and required the Iranian diplomatic staff in the UK the immediate closure of the Iranian Embassy in London and leaving the United Kingdom within 48 hours. Canada has also closed its embassy in Tehran in September 2012 and ordered the expulsion of Iranian diplomats from Ottawa, partly because of the country's backing of the Syrian regime.

9. Jack Snyder and et al, "The Cost of Empty Threats: A Penny, Not a Pound" (2011) 105 *American Political Science Review* 3 at 447

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