



Appeasement Has Failed Before

France, Germany, and Great Britain (a.k.a. the EU3) have repeatedly called for the United States to participate in their negotiations with Iran aimed at ending the country's development of nuclear technology. The EU3 has made little progress in their negotiations, citing Washington's failure to offer Tehran economic incentives and security guarantees. With negotiations apparently deadlocked and the extent of Iran's nuclear programme still unknown, it is worth considering whether appeasing Tehran will ultimately achieve the objectives of all parties.

Though its nuclear programme is alleged to be for civilian purposes, intelligence sources suspect otherwise. An Iranian opposition group, Mujahideen-e Khalq, has suggested that Tehran obtained nuclear technology from Pakistan's Abdul Qadeer Khan. Mohamed ElBaradei, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, has even suggested that "If you have nuclear material, the weapon part is not far away."¹ With Iraq's Saddam Hussein deposed, however, a major threat to Iran's security has been removed, lessening the need for a nuclear deterrent. Iran's desire to continue its uranium enrichment programme and its negotiations to freeze the programme are suspect. Is Tehran's objective to use its nuclear ambitions to extort economic benefits from the West? Negotiating with Iran could end up like former President Clinton's deal with North Korea—a deal which ultimately failed.

Iran along with over 170 countries that are party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty agreed to extend the NPT indefinitely and without conditions in 1995. Therefore, under the NPT, Iran has already agreed not to seek to develop nuclear weapons. Why should the EU3 and the US offer Iran any incentives to honour a treaty which it has already signed? This equates to rewarding a child for bad behaviour. As President Bush stated on his recent trip to Europe, Iran should be held to account rather than the EU3 or the US.

Appeasing Iran by offering economic incentives and security guarantees is likely to fail. Iran, a country with known connections to terrorist organizations, will undoubtedly continue to pursue development of a nuclear weapon. And a few years from now, they may attempt to extract more concessions from the West whilst continuing with their programme. The events of September 11, 2001 placed us on the threshold of a new world in which terrorism is the greatest threat to global security. Nuclear weapons in Iran's possession pose a grave threat to the stability of the Middle East and the security of the rest of the world. To forsake a hardline approach towards Iran and its nuclear ambitions in favour of appeasement only postpones the inevitable confrontation over the issue at the United Nations. By allowing the tail to wag the dog, the costs and risks of appeasement come at a great price in the long-run.

The EU3 should recall appeasement's dismal historical record—Hitler wanted still more than was given to him under the Munich Agreement. On Neville Chamberlain's return to Great Britain in September 1938 following the signing of the Munich Agreement, Winston Churchill stated, "He was given a choice between war and dishonour. He chose dishonour and he will have war anyway." Negotiating with Tehran could ultimately be a dishonour, particularly if the regime eventually realizes its nuclear ambitions. The EU3 fits Churchill's explanation of an appeaser: "An appeaser is one who feeds the crocodile, hoping it will eat him last." The EU3 should recognize the folly of pursuing appeasement of Tehran and should support the United States in referring the matter to the United Nations Security Council with the intention of enforcing the NPT.

¹ From "Concern Over Iran's N-Technology," The Financial Times, December 10, 2004.