

U.S. Nonproliferation Policy in the Middle East

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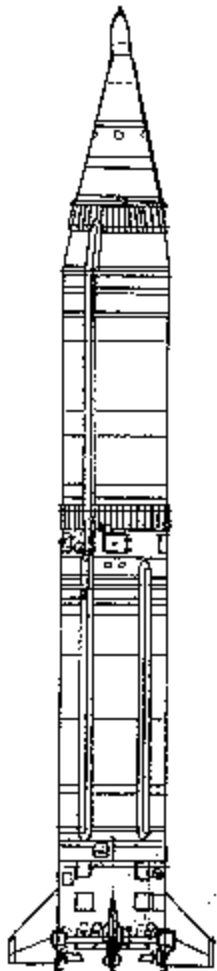
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An Egyptian bomb?

- Egypt explored and abandoned nuclear weapons development in the 1960s. But questions of intent remain today.
- Nuclear infrastructure for an indigenous program is relatively advanced and growing.
- Trend of Egypt's current risk-benefit assessment for nuclear weapons development is not positive.



Is Saudi Arabia a proliferation risk?



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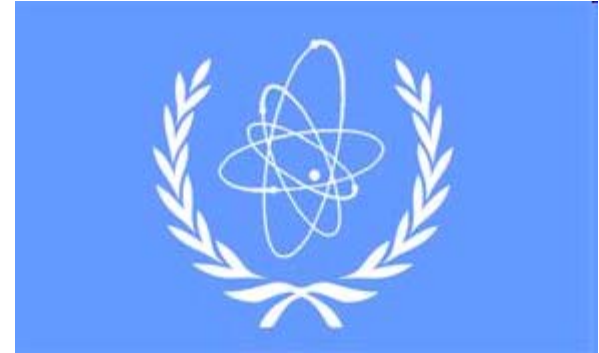
- Past exploration of nuclear weapons option was evidently half-hearted...
- But financial capability plus security vulnerabilities make the development of a Saudi nuclear deterrent a plausible step.
- Like Egypt, recent security trends have not been positive and could contribute to a more serious consideration of a nuclear weapons option.

Strengthening U.S. nonproliferation policy in the Middle East

- Raise barriers to acquisition
 - Strengthen IAEA, NSG, and other multilateral controls
 - Bolster nonproliferation commitments in bilateral relations
- Reduce threats
 - Prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon
 - Address other regional security concerns
 - A “defense umbrella?”
- Integrate nonproliferation policy with regional security strategy and coordinate regional initiatives.

Multilateral approaches to raising proliferation barriers

- Bolster IAEA capabilities.
- Work through the Nuclear Suppliers Group to tighten restrictions on supply of sensitive nuclear technology.
- Prevent black market trafficking in sensitive nuclear technologies.



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Raise barriers to acquisition in bilateral relationships



- Promote UAE nuclear cooperation agreement as the US nonproliferation standard for all new agreements and in any renegotiation of existing terms
- Push Egypt and Saudi Arabia to sign and implement the Additional Protocol
- Secure stocks of bomb-grade nuclear materials around the world to prevent theft

Reducing threats: Iran



- There are no good options for controlling Iran's nuclear program.
- Question is how to manage the Iran nuclear issue in a manner that minimizes the risk of regional proliferation (starting with Egypt and Saudi Arabia).
- Coordination with Gulf states and Egypt on engagement with Iran is essential.

Reducing threats: revive regional arms control talks

- Re-initiating arms control and regional security talks involving Israel and the Arab states will provide a mechanism for confidence building and threat reduction.
- Along with other issues of mutual concern, the parties should discuss conditions under which they could envision a Middle East free of nuclear weapons.
- The prospect of productive talks may be better today than it was in the 1990s.



Reducing threats: a more formal US security guarantee?



“if the United States extends a defense umbrella over the region, if we do even more to develop the military capacity of those in the Gulf, it is unlikely that Iran will be any stronger or safer.”

--Hillary Clinton

“Making the military dimension [of US-Arab relationships] the key component of containing Iran would reflect a fundamental misunderstanding of Iranian power and appeal.” --Emile Hokayem

- Effective US reassurance must consist of more than arms sales and defense commitments.

A role for US nuclear weapons?

- Insofar as the United States uses nuclear threats to coerce Iran to back away from the brink of latent weapons capability, or to deter Iran from crossing thresholds on the way to a latent weapons capability, it will strengthen the hand of those in Iran who advocate for an Iranian nuclear deterrent.
- If Iran conducts a nuclear test, then an explicit US nuclear threat to deter Iran's use of nuclear weapons is probably inevitable. But an explicit doctrine of extended nuclear deterrence in the Middle East would introduce a host of very thorny credibility and management problems.

Integrating policy frameworks

- Strengthening US nonproliferation policy requires better coordination of policy initiatives and integration of expertise.
 - Coordination of Iran diplomacy with Gulf regional security dialogue
 - Coordination of nonproliferation strategy with Arab-Israeli peace initiative
 - Integration of regional expertise in nonproliferation research and analysis