

PASCC

Research in Progress

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ASSESSING PROSPECTS FOR IRANIAN COMPLIANCE WITH THE JCPOA: AN APPLIED CASE STUDY IN SOCIO-CULTURAL MODELING AND ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT:

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) represents a remarkable diplomatic achievement that promises to strengthen the international nuclear nonproliferation regime, and could lead to improved relations between Iran and its P-5 and EU negotiating partners. In fact, Iran and its partners have already substantially fulfilled many of their initial respective obligations, as certified by the IAEA and other international bodies.

However, the JCPOA could backfire if Iran fails to implement its commitments, or if Iran leverages noncompliance accusations against its partners to renege on its obligations or to abandon the plan. Failure to achieve a longer term solution prior to the expiration of the JCPOA's restrictions on Iranian nuclear enrichment and reprocessing capabilities, could also lead to allowing Iran to proceed to translate its nuclear latency into actual nuclear weapons capability, thus negating any short-term gains in U.S. national security.

This study will assess Iran's prospective incentives and disincentives to fully implement the JCPOA as a function of its motivations and intentions to either acquire or disavow future nuclear weapons capability. It will do so by applying a newly developed analytic framework based on socio-cultural factors including identity, values, norms, and threat perceptions associated with Iran's potential future nuclear ambitions. In contrast to existing more conventional analytical methods derived from institutional and neo-realist approaches, this socio-cultural approach could illuminate those domestic dynamics that are most likely to shape Iran's internal deliberations over continued adherence to the JCPOA and its obligations under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. This approach could also help clarify the prospects for establishing a longer term basis for cooperation between Iran and the international community beyond the ten to fifteen year time horizon of the JCPOA.

Research in Progress describes ongoing PASCC research. For more information please contact INSS@usafa.edu.