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## RESEARCH REPORTS

*Reviews of new research at public agencies and private institutions*

### **"Iran's National Security Policy: Capabilities, Intentions & Impact."**

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2400 N St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037. 106 pp. \$10.95

Author: *Shahram Chubin*

### **"Forever Enemies? American Policy & the Islamic Republic of Iran."**

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2400 N St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037. 144 pp. \$9.95

Author: *Geoffrey Kemp*

**F**ifteen years after forces loyal to the Ayatollah Khomeini drove out the Shah, the position of the Islamic Republic of Iran (pop. 60 million) is not enviable. Its economy—battered over the years by war, mismanagement, corruption, Western sanctions, diplomatic isolation, oil-market fluctuations, and natural disasters—is in shambles, with unemployment officially around 15 percent, inflation at 18 percent, and unofficial estimates of both far higher.

Iran's borders are unstable, it has only a few friends left in the world (notably, Syria and Pakistan), and worst of all, the Great Satan, a.k.a. the United States, is now the lone superpower on the planet and the chief military power in the Persian Gulf. What is a poor revolutionary regime to do? Answer: Begin a military buildup and, according to many Western intelligence analysts, embark on a covert nuclear weapons program.

While the Iranians do not appear to be anywhere near building a bomb yet, the prospect is

disquieting. "An Iranian nuclear capability will radically alter the balance of power in the Middle East," writes Kemp, a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. It also "will increase the dangers of military confrontation since there will be strong pressures from many sources to prevent . . . the deployment."

Iran's nuclear program now is at "a very preliminary stage, with a small research reactor operating and only tentative agreements on expansion," according to Chubin, an Iranian national and an independent scholar formerly with London's International Institute for Strategic Studies. But Iran does not lack well-educated scientists and engineers, and the disastrous state of its economy need not be a hindrance.

Iran's defeat in its 1980–88 war with Iraq had two main sources, says Kemp: "Khomeini's mistaken belief that infantry tactics based on human wave assaults by teenagers armed with the Koran could overwhelm the well-equipped Iraqi heretics, and the international arms

embargo against Iran," which crippled its air power.

From the war with Iraq and Desert Storm, President Hashemi Rafsanjani and other Iranian leaders have drawn the familiar lessons about preparedness and the value of deterrence. There is little reason to worry about Iran's conventional-arms buildup, Chubin and others believe. All evidence indicates that the country's arsenal is no more than half its pre-war size. But Iran's effort to arm itself with advanced missiles and chemical and nuclear weapons is another story.

While the "embryonic nuclear program" seems intended, in Chubin's view, "as a general hedge, an option, rather than a crash program with a particular enemy in mind," that is scant comfort to Iran's neighbors, or to the United States. Allied intelligence agencies, Kemp concludes, should develop "a much better capability to detect and, if necessary, prevent efforts by Iran to procure nuclear items and nuclear know-how on the black market."

### **"Net Loss: Fish, Jobs, and the Marine Environment."**

Worldwatch Institute, 1776 Mass. Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036–1904. 76 pp. \$5

Author: *Peter Weber*

**T**he world's oceans are being overfished. The marine fish catch—which includes 85 percent fish, five

percent crustaceans, such as lobster, and 10 percent mollusks, such as clams—reached a peak of 82 million tons in 1989 and

has been stagnant since then. Atlantic fisheries have been hardest hit.

Yields from the centuries-old

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Atlantic cod fishery and other major marine fisheries actually began to top out and shrink during the 1960s, notes Weber, a research associate at the Worldwatch Institute. But, aided and encouraged by government subsidies—now estimated at \$54 billion annually—the fishing industry expanded and modernized its fleets, reached out to new fishing grounds, and began harvesting traditionally less desirable fish. Fishers also used bigger boats and advanced technology to increase their haul of high-value, hard-to-find species such as tuna and squid. Employing sat-

ellite data and aircraft to track tuna, for example, fishers boosted their catch from 1.7 million tons in 1970 to 4.1 million tons in 1989.

The world's fishing fleet grew from 585,000 large boats in 1970 to 1.2 million 20 years later. "We could go back to the 1970 fleet size and . . . we'd catch the same number of fish," says one fisheries analyst.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that the oceans could sustainably yield about 100 million tons of fish per year—about 20 million tons more than the catch in 1993. But to achieve

that potential increase, Weber notes, fishing first has to be reduced or temporarily eliminated in many fisheries, so that the fish populations are able to recover.

"The overcapacity of the world's fishing fleets means that the industry is in for a period of painful readjustment," Weber notes. "Who gets squeezed out has enormous implications for jobs and coastal communities. . . . If countries continue to favor large-scale, industrial-style fishing, some 14–20 million small-scale fishers and their communities are at risk."

### **"GAIN: Benefits, Costs, and Three-Year Impacts of a Welfare-to-Work Program."**

Manpower Demonstration Research Corp., Three Park Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016. 404 pp. \$18

Authors: *James Riccio et al.*

In trying to move welfare recipients into the world of work, it may be better to stress the need to get any job, even a low-paying one, than to emphasize how training might lead to a "good" job. So suggests this study of California's Greater Avenues of Independence (GAIN) program by Riccio and others at Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation.

GAIN, launched in 1986, is one of the biggest welfare-to-work programs in the United States. In the study, 33,000 welfare recipients in six counties were tracked for three years. Half were enrolled in GAIN; half were put in control groups receiving no special treatment.

The counties' approaches varied. In Riverside, a large county with both urban and rural areas, GAIN participants,

even those assigned to receive education and training, were strongly advised that "almost any job [was] a positive first step, with advancement to come by acquiring a work history and learning skills on the job," Riccio and his colleagues report. A different tack was taken in Alameda County, which includes Oakland. There, the GAIN participants were urged to be selective about jobs and to take advantage of the education and training GAIN offered. The four other counties—including Los Angeles and San Diego—leaned toward this approach.

Riverside County achieved impressive results. The average work earnings of the single parents in its GAIN group, for example, were more than \$3,000 (or nearly 50 percent) higher for the three-year period than the

non-GAIN Riverside control group's, and average total Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) payments were 15 percent lower. In Alameda County, by contrast, the GAIN group's earnings were \$1,500 (or 30 percent) higher than the control group's, and welfare payments were five percent lower.

For the six counties as a whole, GAIN boosted average earnings by \$1,414, or 22 percent, and lowered welfare payments by six percent. But GAIN's success in getting single parents permanently off welfare was limited. In the last quarter of the third year, 53 percent of the GAIN participants in the six counties were receiving AFDC—a proportion only three percentage points less than the rate for the "controls" who were not enrolled in the GAIN program.