

# America's Power Game: Iranian People Victims of US Economic Sanctions

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Global Research, December 13, 2012

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

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*Iran's nuclear program seems to have reached a dead end. Iranian officials have politically invested a lot on the country's nuclear program, which was initially set in motion 6 decades ago when President Dwight D. Eisenhower decided to help his close friend Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi construct the first nuclear reactors in Iran, and it seems to be embarrassing for the Iranian government to announce out of the blue that they don't want to pursue nuclear technology anymore, which will give the West a pretext to launch a new psychological war against Tehran and trumpet this victory that it has retreated from its position. And from the other hand, the obdurate United States and its European allies have not indicated that they're willing to change their mind and come to terms with a nuclear Iran.*

The reality is that if the United States and its European allies had compelling evidence that Iran is developing nuclear weapons, they wouldn't hesitate for a moment to launch a military strike against Iran's nuclear facilities, and what troubles them is that Iran is not really seeking nuclear weapons. The only reason for the decade-long controversy over Iran's nuclear program is that the two sides of the conflict are engaged in a power game and nobody likes to be the loser in this erosive confrontation. Acquiring nuclear technology will promote Iran to the level of a regional superpower and a serious rival for Israel, and this is something which the West cannot tolerate.

However, it seems that the ordinary Iranian citizens are the only victims of this power game and charade of double standards. The U.S. government which shamefully protects Israel's undeclared nuclear arsenal and sides with Israel every time that the international community decides to demand Israel to legalize its nuclear activities, such as in the case of the recent UN General Assembly resolution, has pulled out all the stops to prevent Iran from nuclear technology, while even the intelligence agencies inside the United States have admitted that Iran is not developing nuclear weapons or intending to do so.

The 2010 National Intelligence Estimate's reports refuted the allegations that Iran's nuclear program has a military dimension. Even the International Atomic Energy Agency has never published any reports that Iran is moving toward developing nuclear weapons, except for the claims that Iran is not fully cooperating with the agency. But the United States and its allies are hell bent of punishing Iran for the crime it has not committed, and have targeted Iran with backbreaking economic sanctions which are taking a heavy toll on the innocent Iranian people and almost paralyzing the Iranian society and its economy.

Honestly, the problem is not that Iran is acquiring nuclear technology. Pakistan and India possess nuclear weapons, Israel has an arsenal of about 200-400 atomic warheads, the

United States itself is the largest possessor of nuclear weapons in the world, etc. The problem is that Iran's regional clout and its dominance over the region cannot be withstood, and the nuclear issue is a good excuse to pressure Iran.

The economic sanctions which have been imposed on Iran by the UN Security Council and the unilateral sanctions of the United States, European Union and a number of Asian countries along with Canada and Australia have made the daily life in Iran increasingly difficult and painful. The value of Iran's currency, rial, has dropped to its lowest level against dollar, and the price of commodities and goods which are imported from abroad, such as home appliances, computer devices, cell phones, medical equipments and even foodstuff has increased threefold or fourfold. Millions of patients suffering from thalassemia, hemophilia, cancer, multiple sclerosis, cardiac diseases and psychological disorders are deprived of high-quality medicines needed for their treatment which were previously imported from the United States, Canada and the European countries.

Although Iran produces different kinds of agricultural goods, it cannot fully meet the demands of its 75-million population, and so is dependent on imports from other countries, but the limitations imposed by the West on Iran's banking and finance sector have made it incredibly difficult to import such goods.

Over the past months, the United States has dispatched envoys to such countries as South Africa, Angola, India, Turkey, Switzerland, Brazil and South Korea to persuade them to stop doing business with Iran.

It can be said that the United States is literally taking every step it can and doing whatever in its power in order to further isolate and pressure Iran over its nuclear program, but as the American journalist Glenn Greenwald has noted, these sanctions and limitations are nothing but a collective punishment of the Iranian nation.

There's no clear response to the question that why the Iranian people should be penalized in such a brutal and unfair manner and why their connection to the outside world should be severed so unjustifiably. Of the major English-speaking countries, only Australia maintains an embassy in Tehran, and the United States, Canada and Britain don't have any diplomatic representation in Iran for different reasons and this makes it immensely difficult for Iranians to travel to these countries, especially given that large numbers of Iranians currently live in these countries and have relatives and friends in Iran.

Many foreign airlines have suspended their flight operations from and to Iran in the recent month as a result of the sanctions, and those which still operate flights offer their services with extremely expensive airfares. The embassies of European countries in Tehran hectically delay the process of visa issuance for the Iranians intending to travel abroad, and usually demand a huge amount of documents so as to issue the visas. When Canada still had an embassy in Tehran in 2009, it took 35 days for me to be given a visa for Canada, while I was officially invited by a Canadian university to take part in a scientific conference in the city of Calgary, and it was really imminent that I might miss the conference. They issued my visa the same day that I had booked my flight! It's while my Pakistani friend who lived in Switzerland told me that the Canadian embassy in Geneva issued his visa in only 3 days!

The United States has gone so far as to even banning the downloading of free-to-use computer applications for Iranians such as Google Chrome, GTalk and Google Earth. Can anybody please tell me in what ways these computer softwares are connected to Iran's

nuclear program?

So, what's clear is that the United States and its European allies have adopted an unbelievably unfair and hostile attitude toward the Iranian people and have never been sincere in their claims that they support the Iranian people. By imposing these tough sanctions which have influenced every aspect of daily life in Iran and created a heap of problems and difficulties for the Iranian people, they also show that their claims of being committed to human rights are also futile and baseless. Defending human rights is not limited to issuing statements in support of a prisoner who is charged with such capital crimes as drug trafficking, murder and rape. It's already absolutely clear that they look at Iranians as "sub-humans" and consider their rights as worthless and insignificant.

This is the hypocrisy and duplicity which makes one come to the conclusion that the Western leaders are rejoicing at the plight and suffering of the Iranian people.

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