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Sommario/riassunto	Were Iran to acquire nuclear weapons, there is a grave risk it would be tempted to provide them to terrorists. After all, mass casualty terrorism done by proxies has worked well for Iran to date. The fear about what Iran might do with nuclear weapons is fed by the concern that Tehran has no clear reason to be pursuing nuclear weapons. The strategic rationale for Iran's nuclear program is by no means obvious. Unlike proliferators such as Israel or Pakistan, Iran faces no historic enemy

who would welcome an opportunity to wipe the state off the face of the earth. Iran is encircled by troubled neighbors, but nuclear weapons does nothing to help counter the threats that could come from state collapse in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, or Azerbaijan. Achieving trans-Atlantic consensus on how to respond to Iran's nuclear program will be difficult. This is a remarkably bad time for the international community to face the Iran nuclear problem, because the tensions about the Iraq WMD issue still poison relations and weaken U.S. ability to respond. Nevertheless, Iran's nuclear program poses a stark challenge to the international nonproliferation regime. There is no doubt that Iran is developing worrisome capabilities. If the world community led by Western countries is unable to prevent Iranian proliferation, then it is unclear that there is much meaning to global nonproliferation norms. Iran's nuclear program raises stark shortcomings with the global nonproliferation norms. The basic deal behind the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is that countries are allowed to acquire a wide range of troubling capabilities in return for being open and transparent. The NPT gives Iran every right to have a full closed fuel cycle, with large uranium enrichment facilities and a reprocessing plant that can extract substantial amounts of plutonium-capabilities which would permit Iran at any time to rapidly "break out" of the NPT, building a considerable number of nuclear weapons in a short time. Had Iran been fully transparent about its nuclear activities, then even if Iran had gone so far as to operate a full closed fuel cycle, the international community would have been split deeply about how to react. It is fortunate indeed that Iran decided to cheat on its NPT obligations by hiding some of what is doing, because that has made much easier the construction of an international consensus that Iran's nuclear program is troubling. But the experience with Iran should lead to reflection about whether the basic NPT deal needs to be revisited.

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