



Image of Iran in Elite U.S. Newspapers: Exploring the Clash of Civilizations

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Abstract

This study focuses on the ideological representation of Iran and its nuclear issue in the editorial line of the New York Times” and the Washington Post. Iran’s nuclear issue has for a long time been a centre of attention in the American politics and their main stream media. Iran’s nuclear program started in 1960s with a 5-megawatt nuclear research reactor for peace purposes. Iran signed Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), on July 1, 1968. The US support for the Iran’s nuclear continued until the shah was toppled by the Khomeini Islamic revolution in 1979. The Islamic revolutionary government continued the nuclear program with the less Western assistance. The U.S. media are quite consistent with the U.S. foreign policy, work within the frame of ideological background and rely mostly on sources sympathetic to American interests. Within the context of the “clash of civilizations” the interpretive frames and slants used by the newspapers’ editorial line were relatively in agreement with the political discourse. The coverage portrayed Iran more as a rogue and fundamental state and most often covered Iran’s leader as a bad guy. The newspapers viewed that Iran’s free hand with its nuclear weapons will turn it into regional domination controlling the Arabs and their oil. The newspapers viewed Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s regimes as undemocratic, fundamentalist and authoritarian. However, the newspapers were advisable to the American policy makers for alliance-building, direct engagement and negotiations by making Iran’s nuclear from a threat to peace. The newspapers categorically argue that for the United States to attack Iran without exhausting all diplomatic options would be a terrible mistake. Key words: Iran image/Nuclear issue/New York Times/Washington Post/ Clash of Civilizations

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