Not So Fast: Iran and Nuclear Proliferation Realities

Thomas J. Tree

October 29th, 2014

IRP 400

Abstract

The fear of horizontal nuclear proliferation has been present since nuclear weapons were created. The controversy over Iran’s nuclear program has intensified this fear in that if Iran were to become a nuclear-armed state, a nuclear arms race might ensue in the Middle East. Among the potential dangers of a nuclear-armed Iran, this is the least likely to occur. Egypt and Saudi Arabia are the two states in the Middle East most likely to pursue nuclear weapons should Iran ever become a nuclear-armed state. However, analysis of statements made by government officials shows that these two powers currently do not perceive Iran’s nuclear program as enough of a threat to pursue nuclear weapons of their own. Even if they did, their nuclear infrastructure is not developed enough to produce an arsenal of nuclear weapons in the near future, let alone participate in a nuclear arms race.

Word Count: 6,353