

## Nuclear activity a hot-button issue in Iran, North Korea

BY CHLOE LINDEMAN  
STAFF WRITER

"Death to America! Death to Israel!" cried the masses of Iranians celebrating the 34th anniversary of the Iranian Revolution on Feb. 10.

Tensions have tightened between the international community and Iran due to the threat of nuclear activity.

Iran claims that its nuclear facilities are solely to create energy, but the U.S. and Israel fear the development of nuclear weaponry. Both countries have condemned Iran's activity.

"Are they really developing a nuclear weapon or just nuclear power capabilities?" asked Director of the Friends Center and Campus Ministry Coordinator Max Carter. "I think it goes without question that one leads to the other.

"Yes, they'll have nuclear weapons in five years ... (but) Iran has absolutely no interest in striking Israel with nuclear weapons."

If Carter is correct, then what interest does Iran have in gaining nuclear power?

"Iran is in a region that is basically driven by conflict," Amal Khoury, assistant professor of Peace and Conflict Studies, said. "I think one of the reasons they are building a nuclear force is the self-defense issue, (seeking a) balance of power in the region."

Carter spoke more specifically to the region's impact on Iran.

"They're (Iran) surrounded by folk who have nuclear weapons," Carter said. "To the north is Russia where there are all these soviet-era weapons that could fall into the hands of crazies. South of them is Pakistan and India; they're loaded with nukes. To the East of them is China, loaded with nukes. To the West of them is Israel, loaded with nukes."

Iran desires the same security that its surrounding countries enjoy.

"In this world where you have the

hierarchical power — when you have superpowers and when you have conflicts all around — the arms race is something that is not really avoidable," said Khoury.

The U.S., Russia, China, Pakistan, India, the U.K. and France are among the major nuclear world superpowers, while Israel is a regional superpower.



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Carter recognized Israel as a strong force in the region due to its highly militarized approach to security of people and land.

The Middle East is not the only region feeling pressure from the international community because of nuclear developments. Despite numerous warnings, North Korea has also carried out nuclear testing.

According to the BBC, North Korea

completed its third nuclear test on Feb. 12. The test was the most powerful ever administered by the nation.

South Korea, Japan and the U.S. initially detected the activity because of an earthquake it caused, but the Korean Central News Agency said the test "did not pose any negative impact on the

surrounding ecological environment."

"The latest nuclear test was only the first action," announced the North Korean foreign ministry despite criticisms from the U.S. and the international community.

North Korea said the test was issued because of the "reckless hostility of the United States."

According to Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, to demonstrate his seriousness

regarding nuclear initiatives, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry described both the North Korean and the Iranian "reckless (nuclear) efforts" as "impermissible" within the international community.

Kerry did not expand upon repercussions North Korea may face for its action.

But Khoury thinks that forbidding nuclear testing might result in backlash.

"The continuous U.S. pressures against the (nuclear) weapons make it even worse for both North Korea and Iran ... both want to show that they have more," said Khoury.

"As long as North Korea regards the U.S. as an existential threat, North Korea would refuse to give up nuclear weapons," said Professor of Political Science George Guo. "However, the U.S. insists that North Korea must give up nuclear weapons before it will talk."

Another dilemma is determining which nations are permitted to access nuclear weapons.

"I think this is one contentious issue in terms of the international community," said Khoury. "Why are some states allowed to build nuclear weapons and others not?"

"The international community needs to move toward more negotiation and diplomatic processes," said Khoury. "It's important to look at the overall, broader questions."

"Peace and Nuclear Non-proliferation," a conference held on campus on Feb. 16, attempted to address some of these questions.

The conference, co-sponsored by the Wake Forest University Humanities Institute and Guilford's Center for Principled Problem Solving, included panel presentations addressing several different aspects of nuclear capability.

Because of the College's Quaker background and the presence of a Peace and Conflict Studies department, Guilford promotes activities like this conference to encourage discussion about complex world issues.

## Irish government releases enslaved Magdalene women

BY BRITTANY MURDOCK  
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For years, select women in Ireland have been banished by their government to workhouses — or laundries — operated by Catholic nuns. While living in the Magdalene Laundries, female residents endured grueling physical labor, inhumane working conditions and verbal abuse on a daily basis.

Over 10,000 women passed through these laundries between 1992 and 1996. Some women stayed months or years, while others never left. Laundries were opened for unmarried women, women from broken homes, women with mental or physical disabilities and orphans. Additional resident workers included women convicted of crimes such as theft, prostitution, or even not paying for a train ticket.

In 1993, more than 150 cremated and buried bodies were discovered when a group of nuns sold a Magdalene convent to a real estate developer in Dublin, Ireland. These findings triggered an investigation of the state's involvement with the laundries.

An inquiry into the state's involvement was headed by Senator Martin McAleese.

"We hope the report will bring healing and peace of mind to all concerned, most especially the women whose experience of the Magdalene Laundries had a profound and enduring

negative effect on their lives," McAleese told the Guardian.

Although the Irish government originally denied all involvement with the laundries, the 1,000 page report showed that of the 10,000 women, 2,124 were referred to these institutions by the state.

Prime Minister Enda Kenny repeatedly apologized for any "stigma" that was attached to these women and for the amount of time it took the government to carry out the inquiry. Several advocacy groups were dissatisfied with this apology, citing a desire for a more meaningful and emotional apology for all that they endured.

The enslaved women participated in vigorous manual labor without compensation, were incarcerated against their will, and abused verbally and physically. Additionally, they were forced into a harsh regime of prayer and received little respect from family members, those facilitating the program, and the state.

"Long term effects would likely include a profound sense of worthlessness, difficulty forming stable relationships, trust issues, anxiety, vulnerability to depression and a tendency toward aggression aimed at one's self and/or at others," said Guilford's Director of Counseling Gaither Terrell.

"Justice for Magdalenes" is one of the many advocacy groups created to help survivors of these traumatic experiences.

"I have always described them as 'Ireland's disappeared,'"

James Smith, a spokesman for Justice for Magdalenes, told The New York Times. "They were edited out in the past and unfortunately the government seems to want to forget them in the present. But we won't let that happen."

What role does the Catholic Church play in this scandal?

Merely a decade ago, the Irish crossed their chests when passing a priest on the streets. But, with the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI and the shocking revelations of priests' sexual abuse of boys, the once prominent reputation of the Catholic Church has diminished.

The Catholic Church is now declining in tradition.

Support of the Church has faded, and opportunities to speak with the survivors of the laundries were rejected by Church leaders.

"It seems as though the Catholic Church has really fallen far off the track," said Catholic sophomore Duncan FitzGerald.

Visiting Assistant Professor of Political Science Robert Duncan made predictions for Ireland's relationship with the Catholic Church.

"Maybe there will be the separation of church and state," said Duncan. "With all these incidents going on, maybe it's time that the church and state will finally separate from one another."

As advocacy groups fight for justice, the Catholic Church remains silent.