

CHAPTER 10

DETER AND CONTAIN: DEALING WITH A NUCLEAR IRAN

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For nearly 2 decades, Iran has been acquiring nuclear technology from around the world, ostensibly to support its civilian nuclear power program. These efforts have made slow, but steady progress. Reviewing the scope and nature of Iran's clandestine and overt nuclear-related activities over the past 20 years, and the long trail of partial, misleading, and/or untruthful declarations about these activities that it has provided to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), it is hard to avoid the conclusion that many of these activities were likely intended to support a clandestine nuclear weapons program.¹

How close might Iran be to acquiring a capability to produce "the bomb"? It is hard to say, as estimating nuclear timelines is far from an exact science, and Iran's nuclear program often has moved slower than reasonably might have been expected, given what is known about other nuclear programs in the developing world. That being said, several nongovernmental analysts and organizations have estimated that were it to decide to do so, and were it to encounter no major obstacles, Iran could probably produce a nuclear weapon within 3-5 years.

- Were Iran to employ clandestine gas centrifuge cascades of the type being built for its declared civil program (presumably its preferred path), it might be able to acquire enough fissile material for a bomb in 3-5 years—provided that it resolves technical problems that have apparently dogged this effort and centrifuge programs elsewhere.²
- If it were to fall back on its reactor at Bushier, which is nearly complete and which, according to Russian officials, will commence operations by the end of 2006 if there are no teething problems, Iran could produce enough fissile

material for its first bomb within 2-3 years of start-up. To do so, however, it would have to be willing to openly violate its Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) obligations by diverting safeguarded spent fuel, or to withdraw from the NPT before taking this step.³

- If Iran were to secretly obtain fissile material from abroad (i.e., North Korea or Pakistan), it could conceivably build a device or weapon within a year – assuming it possessed plans for a viable design and the necessary special materials and components needed to build a bomb.

By contrast, according to public statements by U.S. intelligence officials and news reports summarizing authoritative U.S. and Israeli intelligence assessments, Iran could have a nuclear weapon by early to mid-next decade – that is, within 5-10 years.⁴

In any case, due to uncertainty about the Islamic Republic's actual nuclear status (as a result of enduring concerns about the possible existence of a clandestine weapons program), Iran increasingly is likely to be perceived as a nuclear capable or *de facto* nuclear weapons state in the coming years. Accordingly, some of its neighbors, and some members of the international community, are likely to start treating Iran with the deference generally reserved for nuclear weapons states.

For this reason, U.S. policymakers and military planners can be expected to devote more attention to the special challenges of deterring and containing a nuclear Iran that derive from the nature of the Islamic Republic, regional political realities, and Iran's support for and involvement in terrorism.

DETECTING THE “MARTYRDOM-SEEKING NATION”

Because Shi'i religious doctrine exalts the suffering and martyrdom of the faithful, and because religion plays a central role in the official ideology of the Islamic Republic, Iran is sometimes portrayed as an “undeterrable” state driven by the absolute imperatives of religion, rather than by the pragmatic concerns of statecraft. This impression has been reinforced by Iran's use of costly human-wave attacks during the Iran-Iraq War, its prolongation of the war with

Iraq due to its single-minded pursuit of the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, and its support for groups such as the Lebanese Hizballah and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, that have pioneered the tactic of the suicide bombing.⁵

Is Iran “Undeterrable”?

Iranian officials frequently have sought to cultivate and play on this image of Iran abroad as a fanatical, indefatigable foe, whose soldiers seek martyrdom, and whose society is willing and able to absorb heavy punishment, in order to bolster the country’s deterrent capability. Thus, according to Iran’s former Army chief of staff, Major General ‘Ali Shahbazi, though

... the United States or some country incited by it may be able to begin a military conflict . . . it will not be strong enough to end it. This is because only Muslims believe that “whether we kill or are killed, we are the victors.” Others do not think this way. ⁶

The perception, however, of Iran as an irrational, undeterrable state with a high pain threshold is both anachronistic and wrong. Within the context of a relatively activist foreign policy, Iranian decisionmakers have generally sought to minimize risk by shunning direct confrontation and by acting through surrogates (such as the Lebanese Hizballah) or by means of stealth (Iranian small boat and mine operations against shipping in the Gulf during the Iran-Iraq War) in order to preserve deniability and create ambiguity about their intentions. Such behavior is evidence of an ability to engage in rational calculation and to accurately assess power relationships.

Moreover, despite the frequent resort to religious imagery in speeches and interviews, Iranian officials often employ the language of deterrence as it is spoken and understood in the West when discussing the country’s national security strategy. Thus, shortly after the *Shehab-3* missile test launch in July 1998, Defense Minister Ali Shamkhani explained that to bolster Iran’s deterrent capability “we have prepared ourselves to absorb the first strike so that it inflicts the least damage on us. We have, however, prepared a second strike which can decisively avenge the first one, while preventing a third strike against us.”⁷

Tehran's conduct during the later stages of the Iran-Iraq War demonstrated that Iran is not insensitive to costs. It is possible to argue that in the heady, optimistic, early days of the revolution— from the early-to-mid 1980s— Iran, as a society, had a relatively high threshold for pain. During the early years of the war, Tehran was willing to endure hardships, make great sacrifices, and incur heavy losses in support of the war effort— eschewing the opportunity for a cease-fire in 1982 to pursue the overthrow of the Ba'ath regime in Baghdad and the export of the revolution. But as the war with Iran dragged on, popular support for it had waned: the population was demoralized and wearied by years of inconclusive fighting, making it increasingly difficult to attract volunteers for the front. Many clerics had come to the conclusion that the war was unwinnable.⁸ This was not, as Ayatollah Khomeini was fond of saying, "a nation of martyrs."

Khomeini was probably the only figure with the charisma and moral authority to inspire the Iranian people to sustain the level of sacrifice required to continue the war for 8 years. The double blow embodied by the unsuccessful conclusion of the war in August 1988 and the death of Khomeini in June 1989 marked the end of the decade of revolutionary radicalism in Iranian politics. Years of revolutionary turmoil and the long, bloody war with Iraq made Iranians weary of political violence and war, and risk averse. With respect to its ability to absorb casualties and bear costs, Iran has since become a much more "normal" state.

This has clearly been manifest in Iran's domestic and foreign policy behavior during the past decade and a half. Its cautious behavior during the 1991 uprising in Iraq, and the 1998 crisis with Afghanistan that followed the Taliban victory there, provides perhaps the best proof that Tehran is wary of stumbling into a costly quagmire for which there would be little or no public support. In both cases, it failed to intervene on behalf of endangered Shi'i communities. It will sooner compromise its Islamic ideological commitments and abandon endangered Shi'i communities to their enemies, rather than risk Iranian national interests by entering into foreign adventures.

Such pragmatism is consistent with a basic principle of decisionmaking established by Khomeini shortly before his death. In a series of letters to then President 'Ali Khamene'i and the Council

of Guardians in December 1987 and January 1988, he affirmed the Islamic government's authority to destroy a mosque or suspend the observance of the five pillars of faith (the fundamentals of Muslim observance) if Iranian state interests so required. In so doing, he sanctioned the supremacy of state interest over both religion and the doctrine of the Revolution.⁹ Ever since then, national interest has been the guiding principle of Iranian decisionmaking, whether with regard to social issues (such as birth control), the economy (foreign investment in the oil sector), or foreign and defense policy (restraint, since the early 1990s, in exporting the revolution).¹⁰

This basic policy framework is unlikely to be altered by the emergence of a new generation of highly nationalistic politicians in the legislative and executive branches of the Iranian government, who count among their ranks many veterans of the security services, the Revolutionary Guard, and the Iran-Iraq War – as exemplified by Iran's new president, Mahmud Ahmadinejad. This is due, in large part, to the fact that those wielding real power in Iran consist largely of the same old familiar cast of "unelected" leaders: Supreme Leader 'Ali Khamene'i, Expediency Council Head 'Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, Guardian Council head Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati, and others. The defiant, confrontational style of this new generation of assertive nationalist leaders (evident in Iran's recent handling of the diplomacy with representatives of the European Union regarding its nuclear program) is, however, liable to further aggravate tensions with the West, and could contribute to an Iranian miscalculation vis-à-vis the United States, Israel, or its more immediate neighbors.¹¹

Challenges for Deterrence.

The main problem in deterring a nuclear Iran is not the putative "irrationality" of the regime or its high threshold for pain. Rather, it is: 1) the impact of political factionalism on the regime's behavior; 2) the possibility that a nuclear Iran might be more likely to engage in terrorism or military aggression, or seek an "eliminationist" solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, and; 3) the effect of domestic instability on the security of Iran's nuclear stockpile and on the officials that control its nuclear arsenal. Each of these could complicate efforts to create a stable deterrent relationship with a nuclear Iran.

Political Factionalism. Political factionalism has sometimes led to dramatic zig-zags in Iranian policy, as different personalities, factions or branches of the government worked at cross purposes, sought to subvert their rivals, or pressed the government to take actions inconsistent with its general policy line. Accordingly, Iranian policy has often been inconsistent and unpredictable. Such behavior would seriously complicate efforts to establish a stable deterrent relationship with a nuclear Iran.

Recent examples of this tendency can be seen in Iranian policy toward Afghanistan and Iraq. According to U.S. officials, while Iranian diplomats played a constructive role at the Bonn Conference in December 2001 and the subsequent creation of an Afghan Interim Authority, members of the Revolutionary Guard *Qods* Force were working to undermine the authority of the nascent central government by arming and training the Afghan Shiite Sepah-e-Mohammad militia and cultivating the warlord Ismail Khan in Herat.¹² Likewise, in the wake of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the Iranian government apparently encouraged Shi'i parties such as the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq to cooperate with coalition forces and to participate in the U.S.-backed Iraq government, while supporting and arming groups engaged in attacks on Iraqi and coalition forces.¹³

This tendency has even expressed itself in the economic domain. Revolutionary Guards shut down a new Tehran airport operated by a Turkish-Austrian consortium only one day after it opened in May 2004 – claiming that the Turkish firm did business in Israel (a charge it denied). In September 2004, the Majlis froze a \$2.5 billion deal with a Turkish consortium to create a privately-owned cell phone network, only days after the contract was signed. Finally, a \$390 million deal with the French company Renault to build cars in Iran came under attack by critical legislators in October 2004, though the Majlis has not blocked this contract. This ongoing struggle between advocates and opponents of foreign investment in Iran – part of the broader political struggle among factions of the dominant conservative bloc – is likely to continue.¹⁴

Propensity for Risk-Taking. There are two schools of thought regarding how nuclear weapons affect the behavior of states. One argues that the acquisition of nuclear weapons induces greater prudence and caution among possessor states, and adduces U.S. and

Soviet behavior during the Cold War as proof. However, post-Cold War revelations about the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis and other Cold War crises have shown how close the superpowers came to nuclear war on several occasions, thereby diminishing the appeal of this model.

The other school of thought argues that the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in general and nuclear weapons in particular can lead to an increased propensity for risk-taking. Iraq's maturing chemical and biological weapons programs may have emboldened Saddam Hussein to pursue a more aggressive regional policy in 1989-90, and ultimately to invade Kuwait. Similarly, the confidence that Pakistan's leadership drew from its May 1998 nuclear weapons test may have emboldened it to attempt to seize a portion of Kashmir from India, in the mistaken belief that India would be deterred from responding militarily, leading to the Kargil Crisis of May-July 1999.

Thus, Iranian decisionmakers might convince themselves that the possession of nuclear weapons could provide them with greater latitude to pursue more aggressive policies against their neighbors, the United States, or Israel. Iran is unlikely to engage in outright military aggression against any of its neighbors; its conventional military forces are weak, and there are few scenarios in which a conventional military move would make sense—at least under current conditions (although a civil war in Iraq might generate pressure for Iran to intervene, particularly if coalition forces were to leave Iraq). For now, however, surrounded by potential enemies and U.S. forces on all sides, Tehran seems more interested in preserving the political and territorial status quo in the Gulf, than in altering it.

A nuclear Iran might, however, increase support for anti-American or anti-Israeli terrorist groups, or be tempted to resume efforts to export the revolution to places where there are large Shi'i communities. Iran's past successes in obscuring its involvement in terrorism or avoiding retribution (e.g., the 1983 Beirut Marine barracks bombing, the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing), might lead some Iranian decisionmakers to believe that they could encourage or sponsor terrorist attacks on U.S. personnel or interests with impunity—and that their possession of "the bomb" would protect

them from retaliation. Such reasoning could lead to miscalculations and imprudent risk-taking. Such a scenario is not far-fetched: an attack by Pakistani-based extremists on the Indian Parliament in December 2001 sparked a prolonged crisis and nearly led to war between the two countries.

A nuclear Iran might also be more inclined to take risks vis-à-vis Israel, in the belief that its nuclear capability would deter retaliation. This may have been the assumption underpinning the assertion in a December 2001 Friday prayer sermon by 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, Expediency Council chairman, that "If one day, the Islamic world is also equipped with weapons like those that Israel possesses now, then the imperialists' strategy will reach a standstill because the use of even one nuclear bomb inside Israel will destroy everything. However, it will only harm the Islamic world. It is not irrational to contemplate such an eventuality."¹⁵

While Rafsanjani's sermon lends itself to alternative readings—as either a matter-of-fact description of strategic reality in a Middle East in which more than one country has nuclear weapons or, more ominously, as a statement of intent—it raises the disquieting possibility that some Iranians may see nuclear weapons as a means of pursuing an eliminationist solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. This would not be surprising in light of the prevalence of anti-Semitic attitudes and anti-Israel vitriol in the public political discourse of both reformers and conservative hard-liners.

A discussion about terrorism and a nuclear Iran necessarily raises the issue of nuclear terrorism. The fact that Iran or its agents have not yet used chemical and/or biological agents in terrorist attacks may indicate the existence of a normative threshold against WMD terror, or it may indicate that, having achieved significant successes by means of conventional terrorism, Tehran and its surrogates perceive no need to incur the risk that use of nonconventional weapons would entail.

Nonetheless, because of the importance that Tehran traditionally has attached to preserving deniability, Iran is likely to seek, when acting against more powerful adversaries, the ability to deliver covertly nonconventional arms by nontraditional means (for instance, terrorists, boats, or remotely piloted aircraft). Because such methods offer the possibility of deniability, they are likely to become important

adjuncts to more traditional delivery means such as missiles, and in situations in which deniability is a critical consideration, they are likely to be the delivery means of choice—either by members of Iran’s security services, or by operatives of Hizballah’s security apparatus, which has cooperated with their Iranian counterparts on some of the most sensitive and risky operations Iran has undertaken. The possibility of deniable, covert delivery of nuclear weapons by Iran could pose a major challenge for deterrence—particularly if the country’s leadership believed that the regime’s survival was at stake. For this reason, convincing Tehran that U.S. forensic capabilities (e.g., the ability to determine the origin of a nuclear device or weapon by analyzing the isotopic signature of its fission products) preclude the possibility of deniable delivery would be of vital importance for efforts to deter a nuclear Iran.

Instability in Iran. Finally, there are the implications of political instability and domestic unrest in a nuclear Iran. Should anti-regime violence escalate to the point that it were to threaten the existence of the Islamic Republic (unlikely in the near-term, but possible in the future, should Iran’s conservative leadership prove unable to better the population’s living standards, and continue to ignore calls for political change), diehard supporters of the old order might lash out at the perceived external enemies of the regime with all means at their disposal, as the regime teeters on the brink. In such a scenario, the apocalyptic possibility of nuclear terrorism by the Islamic Republic in its death throes must be treated seriously.

There is not a lot that the United States can do to alter those aspects of Iranian politics that make establishing a stable deterrence relationship with Tehran potentially problematic. What it can do, is to understand Iran’s “red lines,” the crossing of which could lead to crisis or conflict, while clearly communicating its own “red lines” to Tehran, in order to reduce the risk of miscalculation, and to introduce an element of predictability into relations between the two countries. And it can continue to encourage those Iranians working for political change in their country in the hope that, through these efforts, a more moderate leadership may come to power; a leadership not wedded to the use of terrorism or to the acquisition of nuclear weapons, or at least more likely to act responsibly should Iran nonetheless acquire nuclear weapons.

OPERATIONALIZING DETERRENCE

U.S. efforts to influence a potentially hostile nuclear Iran must incorporate measures to deter by denial as well as by punishment.¹⁶ Raising doubts in the minds of Iranian decisionmakers about the country's ability to reliably deliver its nuclear weapons, and stoking fears that the attempted use of such weapons could threaten their personal survival and that of the regime, could make the use of nuclear weapons prohibitively risky for Tehran in all but the most dire of circumstances.

Deterrence by Denial: Countering Iran's Ability to Project Influence and Deliver Nuclear Weapons.

By preventing Tehran from using its nuclear potential to intimidate neighbors and enemies and casting doubt on its ability to reliably deliver nuclear weapons, the United States and its allies can strengthen deterrence and undermine the utility of Iran's nuclear arsenal. It is therefore crucial to understand how a nuclear Tehran might project influence or deliver its nuclear weapons.

To bolster deterrence and warfighting, Iran has created a triad of capabilities that leverages the country's geographic location adjacent to the world's main oil supply routes, exploits the regimes' connections to terrorist groups with global reach, and reflects the preference of the clerical regime for ambiguity and opacity in its actions. Iran's deterrent/warfighting triad consists of the ability to: 1) disrupt oil exports from the Persian Gulf; 2) launch terror attacks on several continents in conjunction with the Lebanese Hizballah and other groups, and; 3) deliver nonconventional weapons against targets in the Middle East and beyond, by aircraft, land-based ballistic missiles, and by various nontraditional means such as ship-based ballistic missiles, unmanned aerial vehicles, boats, and terrorists.¹⁷

As Iran stands up and expands its nuclear arsenal, it might seek to provide a nuclear "punch" to all three legs of its triad. In addition to building nuclear bombs and ballistic missile warheads, it might produce nuclear naval mines and nuclear-tipped anti-ship missiles (for use against U.S. aircraft carriers), and perhaps eventually, man-portable nuclear devices (the so-called, but inaccurately labeled,

“suitcase nukes”) for use by Iranian special forces or foreign terrorist groups aligned with Tehran.¹⁸

Iran may rely on nontraditional delivery means before it can use more traditional delivery systems, such as strike aircraft or missiles. Iran’s first nuclear weapon might be too large and/or heavy for delivery by aircraft or missiles, and insufficiently rugged to withstand the rigors of flight. It might therefore put such a device on a vehicle or boat.

To counter Iran’s deterrent/warfighting triad, the United States and its allies will need to enhance their ability to:

- Detect and interdict attempts to deliver covertly nuclear devices by sea, air, or land;
- Identify and neutralize terrorist cells affiliated with Tehran;
- Detect and intercept nuclear-armed strike aircraft, cruise, and ballistic missiles;
- Counter Iranian naval mine, small boat, and submarine warfare operations.

Much progress has been made in recent years in developing capabilities to deal with some of these threats. In other areas, much remains to be done. Exactly what can be done will be discussed in greater detail below.

Deterrence by Punishment: Threatening the Survival of the Islamic Republic.

Iran’s leaders must understand that should they brandish or use nuclear weapons, the United States (and/or its regional allies) could threaten their personal survival and the stability of the Islamic Republic by conventional military strikes that:

- Target the senior leadership of the Islamic Republic;
- Disrupt the functioning of the security organizations responsible for the survival of the regime, and;
- Target key elements of the country’s economic infrastructure.

Would the threat of conventional attack be sufficient, or is the threat of nuclear retaliation necessary for deterring a nuclear Iran? The awesome potential of modern air power – particularly the ability to disable modern industrial and economic infrastructures – was dramatically demonstrated during Operations DESERT STORM (1991) and ALLIED FORCE (1999) and, to a lesser degree, Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (2003).

This capability enables Washington to counter conventional and nuclear threats by Iran (and others) with the credible threat of a devastating conventional riposte that does not necessitate the use of nuclear weapons (although the knowledge that the United States possesses a vast nuclear arsenal would undoubtedly enter into the calculations of Iranian decisionmakers).

The bottom line is that the United States does not necessarily have to respond to the emergence of a nuclear Iran by extending a nuclear deterrent umbrella to its regional partners (which would undermine those elements of U.S. nonproliferation policy that seek to devalue nuclear weapons); its conventional capabilities might be sufficient to deter Iran in all but the most extreme circumstances. And at any rate, the United States ultimately retains the ability to use nuclear weapons, if the threat of a conventional response is deemed insufficient in some circumstances to deter the use of nuclear weapons by Iran.

Targeting Iran's Leadership. Iran's leaders must understand that if the Islamic Republic uses nuclear weapons, they will be held accountable for the consequences, and will become legitimate military targets. There are, however, practical obstacles to operationalizing such an approach.

Political authority in the Islamic Republic is widely diffused.¹⁹ Though the Supreme Leader is the paramount authority, many other individuals play important roles in the regime. Moreover, the dualistic power structure of the Islamic Republic, in which revolutionary Islamic institutions counterbalance the traditional institutions of the Iranian state (the Supreme Leader counterbalances the President, the Guardian Council counterbalances the Parliament, and the Revolutionary Guard counterbalances the regular army) provides the system of clerical rule with great resilience, and would complicate efforts to destabilize the Islamic Republic by decapitation strikes.

Though Iran's leadership is drawn from geographically diverse origins, many senior officials now live in Tehran (including some of the posher neighborhoods in north Tehran).²⁰ Many residents of the city know the location of the villas of senior clerics and regime personalities, making decapitation strikes possible—at least in principle. The difficulties of striking leadership targets from the air, however, should not be underestimated. During recent wars in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, and Iraq, numerous attempted strikes on “high value targets” (key individuals) failed. In Iraq alone, some 50 attempted decapitation strikes involving manned aircraft failed to kill even one of the intended leadership targets, while inadvertently killing scores, if not hundreds, of innocent civilians.²¹ Success here will await U.S. development of better human intelligence, and more flexible and responsive precision-strike capabilities and tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs). With sufficient resources and talent devoted to this effort, it could become a viable future option.

If targeting senior officials offers uncertain prospects for success (at least for now), targeting their finances, business interests, and properties has a certain appeal, given the near-legendary avarice and corruption of Iran's clerical elite. It is, however, hard to conceive of how this might be done in a way that is meaningful for purposes of deterrence. Many officials have made their fortunes in the informal economy or through the *bonyads* (parastatal foundations); as a result, little is known about their finances or their business interests, greatly complicating efforts to target their assets.²² Moreover, the financial holdings of many *bonyads* and of at least some senior politicians are highly diversified, further complicating efforts to put the squeeze on these individuals. Perhaps most importantly, the track record of recent efforts elsewhere to target the financial assets of senior government officials and their cronies in order to deter or compel, is not encouraging.²³

Targeting the Regime's Command and Control. In Iran, several organizations have responsibility for ensuring the survival of the regime, including the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), the Law Enforcement Forces (LEF), the Basij militia, the security and intelligence organs of the Justice Ministry, and the street thugs of Ansar-e-Hizballah. The IRGC and LEF units are garrisoned

throughout the country, while the Basij is more loosely organized, as is the more informal Ansar-e-Hizballah. The locations of most major IRGC garrisons and LEF facilities are well-known to local residents, though the fact that these organizations are rather lightly armed (relative to similar entities in other countries, such as Syria's Republican Guard and Iraq's Republican Guard and Special Republican Guard units) and are garrisoned in or near populated areas, could make it difficult to strike these organizations in a way that would undermine their effectiveness and loosen the regime's grip on power.

Targeting Iran's Economic Infrastructure. Iran is acutely vulnerable to economic warfare. Its economy is heavily dependent on oil and gas exports, which provide the country with some 80 percent of its foreign exchange earnings. Nearly all of its major oil and gas fields are located in the exposed southwest corner of the country and in the Gulf—where all six of its major oil terminals are also located—and nearly all of its oil and gas exports pass through the Strait of Hormuz. Four of Iran's six main ports are located on the Persian Gulf; these handle about 90 percent of all imports by tonnage, while Iran's sea lines of communication in the Gulf are vulnerable to interdiction along their entire length.²⁴ Thus, the United States and its allies could halt Iranian oil exports as well as critical imports of refined oil products and other necessities, causing great harm to the economy—which is the regime's Achilles' heel—and perhaps leading to popular unrest and political instability in the Islamic Republic.

During the Iran-Iraq War (1980-88), both belligerents targeted each others' oil industry in the hope that economic warfare might bring their adversary to its knees. Oil facilities, tankers, and tanker terminals were hit, and though these attacks succeeded in reducing overall oil exports of both sides, these attacks were not pressed home in a sustained fashion, and therefore did not have a decisive impact on the outcome of the war.²⁵ There can be little doubt that the United States has the means to succeed where both failed in the past, and effectively shut down Iranian oil exports through action in the air and on the sea. The main challenge would be to deter or disrupt Iranian retaliatory moves, which might not be limited to the Gulf region, and could take the form of an attempt to close the Strait of

Hormuz, attacks on oil and gas installations on the other side of the Gulf, attacks on shipping in the Gulf, and/or a terror campaign spanning several continents.

CONTAINING A NUCLEAR IRAN

What factors might affect Tehran's ability to derive benefit from its nuclear weapons? And how might Tehran's acquisition of nuclear weapons affect U.S. efforts to organize a "coalition of the willing" to deter and contain a nuclear Iran?

Tehran's ability to derive political benefits from nuclear weapons will depend, to some extent, on whether Iran remains silent about its nuclear capabilities, adopts a policy of ambiguity, or makes known its newly acquired capabilities by means of an announcement or a weapons test.²⁶ Iran's actual nuclear status, however, is less important than the fact that in the coming years its neighbors increasingly are likely to perceive it as a threshold nuclear state, if not a *de facto* nuclear power, and to act accordingly. The domestic and regional contexts are also important here: Is there domestic calm or unrest in Iran? Is Iran at peace with its neighbors, or embroiled in crises or war? All these factors will affect the intensity with which the threat posed by Iran's nuclear program is felt by its neighbors, and could affect U.S. efforts to enlist foreign support in containing a nuclear Iran.

During the 1990s, Iran's neighbors rebuffed U.S. efforts to politically isolate and economically pressure the Islamic Republic; they generally deemed these measures as unnecessarily provocative and injurious to their own economic interests. Rather, they have generally preferred to keep open channels of communication with Tehran to avoid antagonizing or provoking their large and powerful neighbor, and to preserve access to Iranian markets. For these same reasons, Iran's neighbors likely will avoid participating in future efforts to politically isolate and economically pressure the Islamic Republic. In the international division of labor, it will largely be the job of the United States, Europe, and others to isolate Iran politically and pressure it economically.

Iran's neighbors might, however, be prepared to join the United States and Europe in pointing out to Iran's leaders that the acquisition of nuclear weapons will more likely harm than help their country,

by prompting the formation of a loosely-knit coalition to contain Iran, deepening the U.S. role in the region, and perhaps prompting further proliferation—much of it directed at the Islamic Republic. Hopefully, this message would encourage Iranian decisionmakers to reassess the potential costs of a nuclear breakout. Some of Iran’s neighbors might also welcome the opportunity to strengthen their hand vis-à-vis Iran by deepening their relationship with Washington; by expanding access, basing, and overflight rights to U.S. forces in the region; and by strengthening their conventional forces to enable them to better deal with potential Iranian military moves.

Small Steps or Grand Design? The Military-Technical and Political-Military Context of Efforts to Contain a Nuclear Iran.

Operation IRAQI FREEDOM initially inspired hopes that the United States would build on its military success in the war to establish a new regional security architecture capable of generating stability and security in the Persian Gulf.²⁷ Most of these proposals call for confidence and security-building measures, the establishment of a regional security forum, collective security arrangements, or a mix of the three. Though such ideas merit consideration, conditions are not ripe for the creation of a regional security architecture in the Gulf, where politics are highly personalized, and characterized by distrust and petty rivalries.²⁸ This militates against the creation of truly effective regional organizations that require state members to cede authority to the collective (this is the experience of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and its Peninsula Shield force) or to work together to counter a common threat.

Accordingly, the United States should work to improve military-technical cooperation with regional friends and allies, by deepening existing bilateral security relationships where feasible (with Turkey, the GCC states, and the Central Asian Republics), forging new bilateral security relationships where possible (with Iraq and Afghanistan), and pursuing regional cooperative ventures where desirable (augmenting efforts already underway to create shared air- and missile-defense early warning and command, control, communications, computers, and intelligence [C⁴I] arrangements).

No doubt, such an approach lacks the appeal of more ambitious proposals to create new regional political and security structures, but it would allow the United States to build on existing bilateral and multilateral efforts and, through incremental steps, lay the foundation for future regional collective security arrangements.

Countering the Iranian Threat.

The principal security threats posed by a nuclear Iran include terror and subversion, limited conventional military operations conducted under the protection of Iran's nuclear umbrella, and the actual use of nuclear weapons. When feasible, it would be desirable for the United States to provide its friends in the region with the means to deal with each of these threats on their own—to include the fielding of an independent conventional retaliatory deterrent by some allies—so that they might have the confidence not to yield to Iranian intimidation, and might not feel compelled to acquire chemical or nuclear weapons to counter Iran's nuclear option. In most cases, however, the burden of responding to these threats will fall to the United States.

Regional Subversion, Global Terror. Iran might support opposition groups or sponsor acts of terrorism in neighboring countries (as it did during the 1980s) in order to intimidate, compel them to deny U.S. access and basing requests, and to undercut U.S. power projection capabilities in the region. Here, intelligence sharing and cooperation with friends and allies, and U.S. efforts to enhance the internal security capabilities of Iran's neighbors, will be key. Also vital will be U.S. efforts to encourage political and economic reform in the region, in order to defuse popular disaffection with the political status quo—particularly in countries where extreme Islamists have in the past shown a willingness to work with Iran's intelligence services (e.g., Turkey, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Afghanistan).

Staying the Hand on the World's Oil Jugular. Iran's conventional offensive options are limited. It does not pose a ground threat to any of its neighbors due to the small size and limited capabilities of its ground forces, although it could launch limited air or rocket and missile strikes into neighboring countries (as it did in Iraq on

several occasions during the past decade). The main conventional threat from Iran is in the naval arena, specifically: the threat it poses to the flow of oil from the region, and the ability of the United States to project power in the Gulf.

Iran's force of mines, missiles, small boats, and submarines could temporarily disrupt shipping in the Strait of Hormuz. It could not, however, block the strait (as it claims), which is too wide and too deep to be obstructed. Moreover, although the Gulf is a significant barrier to major acts of aggression against the southern Gulf states, Iran could conduct limited amphibious operations to seize and hold lightly defended islands or offshore oil platforms in the Gulf. Its naval special forces could sabotage harbor facilities, offshore oil platforms and terminals, and attack ships while in ports throughout the lower Gulf, disrupting oil production and maritime traffic there.

Some Iranian decisionmakers might believe that "the bomb" might provide them with a free hand to take such steps with relative impunity, by deterring an effective response by its neighbors or the United States. For this reason, it is critical that the United States help its GCC allies obtain the means to counter Iran's naval mine, special warfare, small boat, submarine, and coastal anti-ship missile forces on their own. Countering these capabilities will also require a significant U.S. military presence in Gulf. As a result, the U.S. Navy will remain susceptible to Iranian attempts to intimidate U.S. allies into denying U.S. forces access and basing. This will remain a potential vulnerability for the foreseeable future.

For this reason, the U.S. Navy's Sea Power 21 "Sea Basing" concept may be particularly useful for contingencies in or near the Gulf. This concept calls for the U.S. Navy to develop an ability to operate independent of shore-based logistical hubs, thereby limiting the impact of enemy anti-access measures and decisions by friendly states to refuse or limit access, basing, and overflight rights during crises or wartime.²⁹

The concepts under consideration to free the United States from reliance on shore-based facilities include new Maritime Prepositioning Force (Future) cargo ships, Joint Mobile Offshore Bases (JMOBs), and large, semisubmersible platforms. (The latter two are floating structures derived from offshore oil drilling platforms.) These would deploy to crisis zones, and serve as large afloat logistics

hubs, storage or repair depots, forward operating bases for combat and support personnel, or air bases (the cargo ships may be fitted with flight decks and/or runways, or several JMOBs could be linked together for this purpose). These concepts, if proven viable, could preserve the navy's operational freedom in the Gulf, even if denied access to basing in the region. They are all, however, very expensive, are untried, and suffer from various drawbacks that might preclude their eventual deployment.³⁰ Moreover, large floating bases would be vulnerable to an Iranian nuclear strike, vitiating their utility in circumstances where the use of nuclear weapons is a plausible Iranian option.

Preventing Nuclear Armageddon. To deal with the possible use of nuclear weapons by Iran, the United States will need to be able to detect the deployment of nuclear weapons and preempt their use, or at least interdict the device or weapon en route to its target.

The United States and its allies will need to establish the ability to detect the transport of nuclear weapons by small boats or merchant ships originating in Iranian ports, motor vehicles exiting Iran at official and/or unofficial border crossing points, and perhaps eventually, by individuals carrying "suitcase nukes."

Given the relatively short distances that penetrating radiation from a nuclear device or weapon may be detected (tens of meters for gamma radiation, scores of meters for neutron radiation emanating from an unshielded device or weapon), the early detection of a nuclear weapon being delivered by nontraditional means (such as a truck or boat) will pose formidable challenges.³¹ Nonetheless, the United States should consider (if it is not already doing so) unconventional methods of employing radiation monitors: aboard yachts or other civilian pleasure craft plying the waters of the Persian Gulf; on helicopters patrolling the waters of the Persian Gulf; on unattended floating sensors clandestinely emplaced at the mouth of Iranian harbors, and on unattended ground sensors emplaced along traditional smuggling routes on Iran's border and clandestinely planted adjacent to runways at Iranian military airfields. In addition, portal monitoring for radiation sources should be carried out at official border crossing points and ports of entry in neighboring states.³²

Preventing the delivery of a nuclear weapon by sea will also require U.S. naval forces to work with local naval forces and coast guards in the Gulf to identify and monitor suspicious vessels plying the waters of the Gulf and passing through the Strait of Hormuz, and interdict them if need be. Detecting the transport of so-called suitcase bombs will require neighboring states to monitor official ports of entry, unofficial border crossing points, and, if feasible, known smuggling routes, though the sheer number of these might render such a task impractical.

The United States and its allies should likewise continue to encourage the networking of regional air- and missile-defense early warning and C⁴I networks to enhance the capabilities of regional air- and missile-defenses. Several such initiatives are already underway.

- The so-called “Cooperative Belt” (Hizamal-Ta’awun) program to create a distributed C⁴I network for the air defenses of the states of the GCC that will enable them to jointly identify, track, and monitor hostile aircraft and to coordinate a response to airborne threats.³³
- American *Aegis*-equipped cruisers and destroyers in the Persian Gulf can provide early warning and a first line of defense against air or missile attacks from Iran toward the southern Gulf states and Saudi Arabia, with their *AN/SPY-1* radar and *Standard SM-3* missile – which is just now entering operational service with the U.S. Navy.³⁴
- The Cooperative Defense Initiative (CDI), which involves the GCC six, plus two (Egypt and Jordan), and which has promoted cooperation in the area of shared missile defense early warning.³⁵ More, however, needs to be done to enhance cooperation among GCC members and with non-GCC members in the region.

Currently, cooperation in the area of shared missile defense early warning is limited to the GCC plus two, but future efforts could expand to include other participants. Thus, missile defense early warning radars located in Turkey, Iraq, Kuwait, or Saudi Arabia could provide early warning and detection and tracking data for

missiles launched from western Iran against the states of the lower Persian Gulf (Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates [UAE], and Oman), and Israel. Some of the lower Gulf states could provide early warning to Saudi Arabia with regard to missiles coming from south-central or southeastern Iran. The main challenge here will be to convince the Arab Gulf states to increase funding for missile defenses, and to transcend the petty rivalries that have in the past hindered cooperation among the Arab Gulf states in the conventional military arena.

Further afield, Israel, Jordan, and Turkey are also natural candidates for cooperation. Jordan has expressed concern that Israeli missile defenses could knock down incoming missiles from Iraq or Iran over the populated western half of the country, possibly producing casualties on the ground. Contingency deployment of U.S. missile defenses to Jordan might resolve this problem.

In addition, some have argued that boost-phased missile defense systems employing ground-based interceptors located in southeastern Turkey, aboard ships in the Caspian Sea and/or the Sea of Oman, and in Tajikistan, could protect the United States against Iranian intercontinental-range missiles, if and when these are fielded. While a boost-phase missile defense would likely have many advantages over a mid-course national missile defense system, it has a major political drawback: the remnants of intercepted Iranian missiles and their warheads might land in Russia, virtually ensuring that deployment of such a system would meet with strong opposition from Moscow.³⁶

Though regional allies may have an important role to play in deterring and defending against military initiatives by a nuclear Iran, they are unlikely to play a role in any preventive strike the United States might undertake against Iran's nuclear program. The need to preserve operational security, and the desire of local allies to avoid being caught in the middle of a U.S.-Iran conflict, would likely preclude their provision of overt support for a preventive strike, which, for this reason, would probably be conducted by heavy bombers (most likely B-2s) based out of the continental United States. They could, however, play a supporting role in preemptive strikes against deployed Iranian nuclear forces (boats or merchant

vessels, missiles, or bombers) during a crisis, by providing access and basing to U.S. Air Force aircraft (F-117s, F-15Es) participating in such a strike.

Iraq as Regional Counterweight to Iran?

Some have argued that as part of its efforts to dissuade Iran from crossing the nuclear threshold, Washington might indicate to Tehran that should it acquire nuclear weapons, the United States would encourage Iraq to build-up its military as a counterbalance to that of Iran—and thereby ensure that Iran’s acquisition of “the bomb” harms, rather than enhances, its security.³⁷

For now, however, building up the Iraqi military as a counterbalance to Iran is neither practical nor desirable. Rebuilding Iraq’s armed forces will be an immensely costly task that will take many years. Current plans call for the Iraqi Army to field between 100,000-150,000 men, organized into some eight divisions by 2006.³⁸ For the foreseeable future, however, Iraq will lack the funds and the equipment needed to field a larger, more capable army, and the United States is unlikely to provide either. At present, the U.S. priority is to prepare Iraq’s internal security forces to assume increased responsibility for dealing with internal threats—particularly the insurgency raging in the so-called “Sunni triangle.”

Moreover, it will be up to Iraq to decide on the roles, missions, and force structure of its army (though the United States is likely to retain some influence over Iraqi decisions on these matters for years to come). It is not clear that the expansion of the Iraqi Army will be a priority of a new Iraqi government, that an Iraqi government in which Iraqi Shi’a and Kurds are likely to play a major role will see Iran as its primary threat, or that the Iraqi government will take directions from the United States on such matters.

Nor is it in the U.S. interest that Iraq has a large military. For the coming years, it will be in the U.S. interest to keep the Iraqi Army relatively small, logistically constrained, capable of deterring and/or defending against external meddling and intervention in its external affairs, but incapable of threatening its larger neighbors. This might make it easier to convince Iraq’s neighbors to forgive or

defer repayment of its debt and/or reparations burden, and thereby facilitate Iraq's political and economic integration into the region. Finally, it is in the U.S. interest that the Iraqi Army remains small, should efforts to create a stable, democratic Iraq fail, and the country reverts to authoritarian rule and an aggressive posture vis-à-vis its neighbors.

To ensure that a post-Saddam Iraq does not eventually resurrect its WMD programs to counter Iran's own WMD, it would be desirable for the United States to include Iraq in CDI and associated efforts to enhance regional defenses against missiles and WMD, and to provide security guarantees that it will come to Iraq's assistance in the event of Iranian meddling or intervention (should such guarantees be sought from the United States).

Reassure Allies by Enhancing Local Capabilities for Conventional Defense and Deterrence.

The United States will want to ensure that regional friends and allies do not respond to an Iranian nuclear breakout by either accommodating Tehran, or acquiring WMD of their own (Saudi Arabia might try to purchase nuclear weapons, while some of the smaller GCC states might leverage their extensive petrochemical industries to create a modest chemical warfare capability).

To avoid such an outcome, the United States should underscore that nuclear weapons will not stop it from meeting its security commitments to friends and allies in the region, or from retaliating for WMD use against U.S. and allied personnel. Continued U.S. efforts to enhance the ability of CDI participants to defend against and/or mitigate the impact of a WMD incident will be the most tangible expression of this commitment. Such activities should, moreover, be complemented by efforts to enhance the ability of local allies to deal with Iranian subversion, terror, and sea denial capabilities in the Gulf—activities that might someday be conducted under the cover of a nuclear umbrella. However, such capabilities may not be enough to reassure some allies.

The United States should therefore consider helping those allies that feel most threatened by an Iranian "bomb" and that desire to do something about it, to develop a credible independent conventional

deterrent in order to build confidence in their ability to stand up to Iranian intimidation, and to discourage them from acquiring WMD in response to Iran's acquisition of the bomb.

The United States can do this by helping select Gulf allies enhance their naval special warfare and aerial precision-strike capabilities (capabilities that some are already developing) so that if Iran were ever to threaten their ability to produce and export oil, they could threaten to respond in kind by attacking Iranian oil production and export facilities, interrupting Iranian port operations, and interdicting Iran's sea lines of communication. Emphasis should be placed on helping these countries develop relatively short-range precision strike capabilities so that they can hit high-value Iranian targets in the vicinity of the Gulf, but not much beyond that. This is because the most important Iranian economic targets are in the Gulf region, and because the ability to attack leadership or other targets in and around Tehran is of dubious strategic value. And by focusing on only short-range strike capabilities, the United States can ensure that its efforts to build up Arab capabilities in the Gulf do not compromise U.S. efforts to preserve Israel's "qualitative edge." Finally, U.S. assistance in creating such capabilities should be explicitly conditioned on a commitment by these states to eschew the development or acquisition of WMD, and to dramatically clamp down on the smuggling of special materials and dual-use technologies for the WMD programs of third countries (such as Iran) through their territories. This, in particular, is a problem for Dubai in the UAE.³⁹

Admittedly, this is a potentially risky course of action, and it is not altogether clear that enhancing the ability of allies to disrupt the flow of Iranian oil from the region is desirable, or is an acceptable tradeoff for a halt to, or more likely a slowdown in the proliferation of WMD in the Gulf region. For this reason, continued high-level U.S. engagement with its allies will be essential, in order to keep tensions among the GCC states in check, and to restrain them in times of crisis, so that they do not use these capabilities against each other, or Iran, except *in extremis*.

Such efforts should, whenever possible, leverage assets and weapons currently in the inventories of these countries to avoid the appearance that the United States is stoking a regional arms race, to avert tensions among GCC states (who may fear that such capabilities

will more likely be used against their fellow GCC members, rather than Iran), and to avoid provoking Iran. Emphasis should be put on qualitative, over quantitative enhancements, and the creation of small, highly capable units that will constitute the mainstay of regional efforts to deter a nuclear Iran. Most of the smaller countries in the region simply lack the manpower to create large, highly capable forces anyhow. This approach is appropriate, considering their resource base and needs.

This is not an unrealistic goal; several Arab militaries have succeeded in creating small elite units or organizations that performed well in combat, even if the performance of their sister services left much to be desired. Examples of such units or organizations include the special forces of Syria and Jordan, the Republican Guard of Iraq, and Iraq's F-1 and Saudi Arabia's F-15 fighter squadrons.⁴⁰ There are already signs that some of the GCC states may be heading down this path: the UAE's interest in commercial satellite imagery, computerized mission planning support software, advanced simulators, and its efforts to build a potent conventional strike capability around its force of advanced precision munition-equipped *Mirage 2000-9s* (30) and F-16 *Block 60s* (80), show what even a small state can do in this regard.⁴¹

CONCLUSIONS

Efforts to deter and contain a nuclear Iran would likely encounter significant challenges. The nature of the Islamic Republic, regional politics, and Iran's involvement in terrorism make establishing a stable deterrent relationship with a nuclear Iran risky and uncertain. The experience of the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War, and of India and Pakistan since then, demonstrate that both preventive diplomacy and luck may be necessary to avert some kind of nuclear crisis involving Israel or the United States on the one hand, and Iran on the other hand, should Iran become a nuclear power in the coming years. Managing the instability and uncertainty created by a nuclear Iran is likely to pose major challenges for U.S. policymakers.

Iran may likewise emerge as the driving force behind efforts to create a new regional security architecture in the Persian Gulf and southwest Asia. While it is in the long-term U.S. interest to create

a free-standing balance of power in the Gulf that obviates the need for a permanent forward U.S. presence, for the foreseeable future, the stabilization of Iraq, the Global War on Terrorism, and ongoing efforts to counter the nuclear ambitions of Iran will draw the United States deeper into the affairs of the region. Enhancing the military capabilities of regional allies threatened by Iran, deepening bilateral cooperation with these countries, and encouraging multilateral cooperation in the areas of air- and missile-defense and beyond may be the best way to lay the basis for regional collective security. For the near term, however, the United States will remain the “indispensable nation” when it comes to formulating a response to the possible emergence of a nuclear Iran, and to achieving security and stability in a proliferated region.

ENDNOTES - CHAPTER 10

1. For the most comprehensive and up-to-date account of what is known about Iran’s nuclear program, see Report by the Director General to the IAEA Board of Governors, *Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement in the Islamic Republic of Iran*, GOV/2005/67, September 2, 2005.

2. For instance, David Albright and Corey Hinderstein, “Iran: Countdown to Showdown,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, November/December 2004, pp. 67-72.

3. For instance, Victor Gilinsky, Marvin Miller, and Harmon Hubbard, “A Fresh Examination of the Proliferation Dangers of Light Water Reactors,” The Nonproliferation Policy Education Center, October 22, 2004, at <http://www.npec-web.org/projects/NPECLWRREPORTFINALII10-22-2004.pdf>.

4. According to public Israeli intelligence estimates, Iran could have a nuclear weapon as early as 2008, but more likely by 2012. Orly Halpern, “Iranian Nukes: New Estimates for the Bomb,” *The Jerusalem Post*, August 1, 2005, p. 3. Likewise, in a recently completed National Intelligence Estimate, the U.S. intelligence community reportedly concluded that Iran could have a nuclear weapon by “early to mid-next decade.” Dafna Linzer, “Iran is Judged 10 Years from Nuclear Bomb,” *The Washington Post*, August 2, 2005, p. A1; and Steven R. Weisman and Douglas Jehl, “Estimate Revised on When Iran Could Make Nuclear Bomb,” *The New York Times*, August 3, 2005, p. A8. See also, Vice Admiral Lowell E. Jacoby, U.S. Navy, Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, Statement for the Record, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, February 16, 2005, at http://www.dia.mil/Public/Testimonies/DIA_DR_WWT_20050216U.pdf.

5. Parts of this section are based on Michael Eisenstadt, "Living with a Nuclear Iran?" *Survival*, Vol. 41, No. 3, Autumn 1999, pp. 124-148; and Michael Eisenstadt, "Delay, Deter and Contain, Roll Back: Toward a Strategy for Dealing with Iran's Nuclear Ambitions," in Geoffrey Kemp, ed., *Iran's Bomb: American and Iranian Perspectives*, Washington, DC: The Nixon Center, 2004, pp. 13-31.

6. *Ettela'at*, September 24, 1995, p. 3, in *Foreign Broadcast Information System (FBIS)-NES*, October 3, 1995, p. 75. See also the quote of 'Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani cited in endnote 15.

7. Interview with Defense Minister Admiral 'Ali Shamkhani on Tehran IRIB Television Second Program, July 30, 1998, translated in FBIS-NES-98-217, August 5, 1998.

8. Shaul Bakhash, *The Reign of the Ayatollahs: Iran and the Islamic Revolution*, New York: Basic Books, 1990, p. 273.

9. David Menashri, *Revolution at a Crossroads: Iran's Domestic Politics and Regional Ambitions*, Washington, DC: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1997, p. 8. Former President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani recently reaffirmed the enduring relevance of Khomeini's dispensation allowing for the violation of religious duties when they conflicted with *raison d'etat*, in an interview in which he stated that "to put the country in jeopardy on the ground that we are acting on an Islamic basis is not at all Islamic." IRNA, April 12, 2003, at <http://www.irna.ir/en/tnews/030413151207.etn02.shtml>.

10. The fact that Iranian decisionmaking on critical policy issues has, during the past decade and a half, generally been based on *raison d'etat* and the national interest—and not religious doctrine or ideology, has interesting implications for Tehran's claim that Islam prevents it from acquiring or using nuclear weapons.

11. For more on this new generation of politicians, see Bill Samii, "Iran: A New Generation and the Drift to the Right," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, June 21, 2005, at <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2005/6/6840A374-8025-444E-8760-29904337784F.html>; and Patrick Clawson, "Next Generation," *New Republic Online*, June 30, 2005, at <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC06.php?CID=845>.

12. See the comments by Special Presidential Envoy to Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad to The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, August 2, 2002, at <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC07.php?CID=168>.

13. Toby Harnden, "Iran 'Supplies Infra-Red Bombs' that Kill British Troops in Iraq," *Sunday Telegraph*, London, August 21, 2005, p. 27; Bill Gertz, "Rumsfeld Says Iran is Arming Iraqi Insurgents," *Washington Times*, August 20, 2005, p. A4; Eric Schmitt, "Some Bombs Used in Iraq are Made in Iran, U.S. Says," *The New York Times*, August 6, 2005, p. A5; Patrick Bishop, "U.S. Troops Killed as Bremer Accuses Iran," *The Telegraph*, September 19, 2003, at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2003/09/19/wirq19.xml>.

14. Vali Nasr and Ali Gheissari, "Foxes in Iran's Henhouse," *The New York Times*, December 13, 2004, p. A27; Marc Champion, "Iran, Flush with Oil Cash, Seems to Cool to Foreign Investments," *Wall Street Journal*, February 8, 2005, p. 1.

15. Rafsanjani, as quoted by *Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran*, December 14, 2001, and translated by BBC Worldwide Monitoring, December 15, 2001.

16. See Paula A. DeSutter, *Denial and Jeopardy: Deterring Iranian Use of NBC Weapons*, Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1997.

17. Iran reportedly test-launched a short-range ballistic missile from a barge in the Caspian Sea in early 1998. Basing short-range ballistic missiles on merchant ships could allow Iran to hit targets currently out of missile range (such as the United States) while maintaining deniability, since a merchant vessel launch platform might be able to disappear into the great expanses of the open seas after launch and thereby escape detection. See K. Scott McMahon, "Ship-Based Missiles Surface as Potential Terror Weapon," *Defense News*, March 15, 1999, p. 27.

18. For more on "suitcase nukes," see David Smigielski, "A Review of the Suitcase Nuclear Bomb Controversy," *RANSAC Policy Update*, September 2003, at <http://www.ransac.org/Documents/suitcasenukes090103.pdf>.

19. By contrast, in Hafez al-Asad's Syria and Saddam Hussein's Iraq, absolute power was concentrated in the hands of the President making decapitation (e.g., as attempted at the outset of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM) a viable strategy—at least in theory.

20. Thus, the half-dozen top members of Iran's ruling elite hail from different towns and cities from around the country: Supreme Leader 'Ali Khamene'i is from Mashhad in Khorasan province; Expediency Committee head 'Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani is from Bahraman, near Rafsanjan in Kerman province; President Mahmud Ahmadinejad is from Garmsar in Markazi province; Defense Minister Mostafa Mohammad Najjar is from Tehran, which is in Tehran province; while Minister of Intelligence Qolam Hossein Mohseni-Ejei was born in Ejei in Esfahan province. By contrast, in Hafez al-Asad's Syria and Saddam Hussein's Iraq, a disproportionate number of senior officials came from the president's home village or its environs (Qardaha in Latiqiyah governorate, and Tikrit in Salahuddin governorate, respectively), making it possible, at least in theory, to target the family and tribal networks that underpinned the power structures of these regimes.

21. *Off Target: The Conduct of the War and Civilian Casualties in Iraq*, Washington, DC: Human Rights Watch, 2003, pp. 22-23.

22. Jahangir Amuzegar, "Iran's Underground Economy," *Middle East Economic Survey* (MEES), Vol. XLVI, No. 36, September 8, 2003, at <http://66.34.243.131/iran/html/article1161.html>. For more on the corruption of many senior clerics and the resentment this has engendered, see Paul Klebnikov, "Millionaire Mullahs," *Forbes*, July 21, 2003, at <http://www.forbes.com/global/2003/0721/024.html>.

23. During Operation ALLIED FORCE (March-June 1999), NATO airpower engaged in "crony targeting" — bombing the financial assets (factories in particular) of cronies of Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic—in order to generate pressure on him to accept NATO's terms for an end to the bombing. It remains unclear what impact the bombing had on the war's outcome, although it seems that it was not of decisive importance. For assessments of "crony targeting" during

Operation ALLIED FORCE, see Stephen T. Hosmer, *The Conflict Over Kosovo: Why Milosevic Decided to Settle When He Did*, RAND Publication MR-1351-AF, 2001, pp. 73-76; Benjamin S. Lambeth, *NATO's Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment*, RAND Publication MR-1365-AF, 2001, pp. 71-72.

24. For more on Iran's oil industry, see U.S. Department of Energy, "Iran Country Analysis Brief," November 2003, at <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/iran.html>. For information on Iran's commercial ports, see Farjam Behnam, Karan Behrooz, and Dr. Farhad Shahabi, eds., *Iran Almanac 2003*, Tehran, at <http://www.iranalmanac.com>, 2003, pp. 372-373.

25. Anthony H. Cordesman and Abraham R. Wagner, *The Lessons of Modern War: The Iran-Iraq War*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990, pp. 485-489.

26. Iran might initially remain silent to avoid censure for violating its nonproliferation treaty obligations, or to avoid compromising ongoing clandestine efforts to procure fissile material or nuclear technology from abroad. In the long-run, however, Iran's leadership might eventually be tempted to test a nuclear weapon, to demonstrate its nuclear capabilities to its domestic supporters and adversaries, and to the world.

27. For more on post-Saddam security architectures for the Gulf, see James A. Russell, "Searching for a Post-Saddam Regional Security Architecture," *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 7, No. 1, March 2003; Andrew Rathmell, Theodore Karasik, and David Gompert, "A New Persian Gulf Security System," RAND Issue Paper No. 248, 2003; Kenneth M. Pollack, "Securing the Gulf," *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2003, pp. 2-16; and Joseph McMillan, Richard Sokolsky, and Andrew C. Winner, "Toward a New Regional Security Architecture?," *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 3, pp. 161-175.

28. Michael Knights, "Troubled Waters: U.S. Security Assistance to the Gulf States," The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, forthcoming.

29. Admiral Vern Clark, "The U.S. Navy: Sea Power 21" *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, October 2002, at <http://www.chinfo.navy.mil/navpalib/cno/proceedings.html>.

30. For more on this, see Jason Sherman, "A Cargo Ship with a JSF Runway?" *Defense News*, March 15, 2004, pp. 1, 8; Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, *Defense Science Board Task Force on Sea Basing*, August 2003, pp. 73-77, at <http://www.acq.osd.mil/dsb/seabasing.pdf>.

31. For more on the challenges of detecting nuclear devices or weapons, see Steve Fetter, Valery A. Frolov, Marvin Miller, Robert Mozley, Oleg F. Prilutsky, Stanislav N. Rodionov, and Roald Z. Sagdeev, "Detecting Nuclear Warheads," *Science & Global Security*, 1990, Vol. 1, pp. 225-302; Steve Fetter and Frank von Hippel, "The Black Sea Experiment: Measurements of Radiation from a Soviet Warhead," *Science & Global Security*, 1990, Vol. 1, pp. 323-327; S. T. Belyaev, V. I. Lebedev, B. A. Obinyakov, M. V. Zemlyakov, V. A. Ryazantsev, V. M. Armashov, and S. A. Voshchinin, "The Use of Helicopter-borne Neutron Detectors to Detect

Nuclear Warheads in the USSR-US Black Sea Experiment," *Science & Global Security*, 1990, Vol. 1, pp. 328-333.

32. During the Cold War, the U.S. Navy ran a clandestine program in which yachts and pleasure craft were fitted with sensors that could detect radiation emitted by nuclear weapons aboard Soviet warships transiting the Bosphorus in Turkey. The boats, manned by foreign crews in civilian clothes, would draw alongside the Soviet warships as they passed through the strait to allow the sensors to take a reading. See Jeffrey T. Richelson, "Task Force 157: The US Navy's Secret Intelligence Service, 1966-77," *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 11, No. 1, January 1996, pp. 116-119. Such a capability would be useful for dealing with the possibility of the covert delivery by Iran (or other proliferators) of a nuclear device by sea. Likewise during the Cold War, U.S. agents in East Germany planted clandestine radiation monitors along railway lines leading to the Soviet Union, to verify the withdrawal of nuclear-tipped missiles from East Germany, in accordance with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty signed in December 1987. Milt Bearden and James Risen, *The Main Enemy: The Inside Story of the CIA's Final Showdown with the CIA*, New York: Random House, 2003, p. 387.

33. Ed Blanche, "Gulf States Take Major Step Toward C3I Update," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, December 3, 1997, p. 5; Michael Sirak, "GCC Commissions Joint Aircraft Tracking System," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, March 7, 2001, p. 41.

34. Beginning in September 2004, the U.S. Navy commenced the continuous deployment of an *Aegis*-equipped destroyer to the Sea of Japan, as a long-range surveillance and tracking platform capable of sharing cueing and targeting data with ground based missile defenses; in 2005, it expects to field its first ballistic missile defense capable warship, and by 2006, the Navy expects to have 15 destroyers and 3 cruisers configured to conduct ballistic missile defense operations worldwide. Christopher P. Cavas, "U.S. Ships to Begin Detect-and-Track Duties," *Defense News*, August 30, 2004, p. 14.

35. CDI has five pillars which include: 1) shared early warning of missile strikes/C⁴I interoperability to permit a coordinated response to these threats; 2) active defense against theater air and missile threats; 3) passive defense against chemical and biological weapons; 4) medical countermeasures against chemical and biological weapons, and; 5) consequence management to deal with the aftermath of WMD use. For more, see *Cooperative Defense Initiative Against Weapons of Mass Destruction in Southwest Asia*, U.S. Central Command pamphlet, 2002.

36. Richard L. Garwin, "Boost-Phase Intercept: A Better Alternative," *Arms Control Today*, September 2000, at http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2000_09/bpisept00.asp?print.

37. Patrick Clawson, in Washington Institute Special Policy Forum Report No. 743, *A View From Tehran: War and Challenges in the Post-Saddam Middle East*, April 7, 2003.

38. John J. Lumpkin, "Buildup of Iraqi Security Forces Slowed as Policies Changed and Insurgency Grew," January 31, 2005, at <http://www.wtnh.com/Global/>

story.asp?S=2878113; Special Defense Department Briefing on Iraq Security Forces by Lieutenant General David Petraeus, Commander, Multinational Security Transition Command-Iraq, February 4, 2005, at <http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2005/tr20050204-2083.html>.

39. Gary Milhollin and Kelly Motz, "Nukes 'R' Us," *New York Times*, March 4, 2004, p. A29.

40. Kenneth M. Pollack, *Arabs at War: Military Effectiveness, 1948-1991*, Lincoln NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2002, p. 560.

41. For more on efforts by the UAE to create a long-range precision-strike capability, see Michael Knights, *The Unfriendly Skies: Procurement and Employment Trends in GCC Air Forces*, Hastings: Cross-Border Information, 2002, pp. 81, 86.