OCCASIONAL PAPER 2105

Iran Leaving the NPT: Our Next Headache

Edited by Henry Sokolski

September 2021

NPEC
Nonproliferation Policy Education Center

Copyright © 2021 by Henry D. Sokolski
Nonproliferation Policy Education Center
Arlington, VA 22209
www.npolicy.org

Printed in the United States of America

All rights reserved. Except for brief quotations in a review, this book, or parts thereof, must not be reproduced in any form without permission in writting from the Nonproliferation Policy Education Center.

Cover images, from top left clockwise: 1) Boeing 707 refueling F-15s, June 28, 2011, Israeli Air Force Flight Academy ranks ceremony (image: Oren Rosen via WikimediaCommons); 2) Technicians of the International Atomic Energy Agency inspect the site of the uranium conversion plant of Isfahan, central Iran, on Saturday, 3 February 2007 (image: Tehran Times); 3) An image of a "pin dome" from the Iranian Nuclear Archive showing part of an apparatus used to measure changes in the behavior of an implosion system (image: Institute for Science and International Security); 4) Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Rafael Mariano Gross (L) attends the IAEA board's meeting in Vienna, Austria, on March 09, 2020 (image: Anadolou Images).

Iran Leaving the NPT: Our Next Headache

Nonproliferation Policy Education Center
Occasional Paper 2105

September 2021
Series Editor: Henry D. Sokolski

Nonproliferation Policy Education Center

The Nonproliferation Policy Education Center (NPEC), a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, is a nonpartisan, educational organization founded in 1994 to promote a better understanding of strategic weapons proliferation issues. NPEC educates policymakers, journalists, and university professors about proliferation threats and possible new policies and measures to meet them.

For current publications of the Nonproliferation Policy Education Center,
please visit www.npolicy.org.

Contents

Acknowledgments and NPEC....2
Simulation Participants....3
Executive Summary....4
Simulation Format and Scenario....5
Move One – U.S. National Security Council Principals Meeting....6
Move Two – U.N. Security Council Meeting and Its Repercussions....6
Move Three – U.S. Strategy and Hotwash....7
Appendix I – U.S. Resolution to the U.N. 11
Appendix II – Team Notes by Move....13

Acknowledgments:

This research was supported by generous grants from the MacArthur Foundation, the Sarah Scaife Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, and the Smith Richardson Foundation.

About NPEC:

The **Nonproliferation Policy Education Center (NPEC)**, is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, educational organization founded in 1994 to promote a better understanding of strategic weapons proliferation issues. NPEC educates policymakers, journalists, and university professors about proliferation threats and possible new policies and measures to meet them. For more information, visit http://www.npolicy.org/.

The **Diplomatic Simulation of Iran Threatening to Withdraw from the NPT** was not for attribution. The views contained herein do not necessarily reflect the views of each participant or the official policy of their respective agencies, private sector organizations, or the United States Government.

Simulation Participants

Name	**Affiliation**
Nobuyasu Abe	Council on Strategic Risks
Griffin Cannon	U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee
Patrick Clawson	Viterbi Program on Iran and U.S. Policy, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy
Christopher Ford	Geopolitical Policy and Strategy, MITRE Corporation | Strategic Stability Project, U.S. Institute of Peace | Advisory Board, National Security Institute, George Mason University's Antonin Scalia Law School
ElSayed Ghannam	Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Victor Gilinsky	Independent Consultant
Mark Herman	Author of *Wargaming for Leaders*
Mark Holt	Congressional Research Service
Efraim Inbar	Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security
Greg Jones	Proliferation Matters
John Lauder	Independent Consultant
Ian Merritt	U.S. Department of Defense
Henry Sokolski	Nonproliferation Policy Education Center
John Spacapan	Nonproliferation Policy Education Center
Jessica Steffens	U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs
Andrea Stricker	Foundation for Defense of Democracies
Moon Yousif Sulfab	Office of Senate Republican Leader, Senator Mitch McConnell

Executive Summary:

This report reflects what happened during a three-move diplomatic simulation NPEC hosted in August 2021 and in the game's three preparatory meetings. The simulation was set in the present day (summer 2021). Participants responded to a scenario in which Iran threatened to withdraw from the NPT, after which Israel released photos of Iran secretly manufacturing implosion devices. Participants assumed the roles of members of the U.S. National Security Council, key foreign officials, and members of the United Nations Security Council. In the first move, the U.S. President, responding to the crisis, called a National Security Council Principals Committee meeting to draft a U.S. resolution to the U.N. The U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. presented this resolution during a mock U.N. Security Council meeting in the second move. The resolution did not pass. In the third move, participants debated what strategies might ensure the future viability of the NPT and prevent Iran from breaking out and making a bomb.

The simulation produced five takeaways:

1. **The NPT's future enforcement will depend on Washington working with like-minded nations far more than it has ever done before.** The game's play demonstrated that Washington's authority to convince other members of the U.N. to enforce the NPT has declined as a result of its nuclear misadventures with Iraq and North Korea. Not only will the United States have problems convincing China and Russia to take action against Iran, but it will also have difficulty doing so with a good number of friendly states. This disadvantage will persist for some time. As such, it is vital to gain general agreement on a common sense reading of the NPT. Fabricating nuclear warheads awaiting the insertion of nuclear explosive cores — are and should be understood to be clear violations of the treaty. Also, country-neutral rules should be in place that stipulate that states withdrawing from the NPT must clearly be in compliance and must still keep their civil nuclear materials and activities under IAEA safeguards.

2. **The IAEA is likely to become the first stop for any future NPT enforcement**.The game's play demonstrated the advantage of the United States and like-minded nations making a direct appeal to the IAEA director general to conduct special inspections to confirm evidence of a violation. In the future, this will likely be necessary before taking any major U.N. action. This will require the United States to share its most sensitive intelligence with key allies and the IAEA to convince the director general to secure corroborating evidence of possible NPT violations. To make enforcement of NPT violations more effective it would be helpful if both the IAEA and the U.N. had full-time staff to work such issues. Finally, to be ready to react properly to possible NPT and IAEA violations and withdrawals, the United States should encourage key U.S., allied, and international organizational staff to participate in simulations of such scenarios.

3. **Washington and other like-minded nations must resolve the growing tension between relying primarily on the national use of force against NPT violators versus applying broad diplomacy pressure.** States most interested in blocking Iran from getting the bomb (e.g., Israel) believe force must be used to achieve this goal and have little faith in actions of the U.N. or the IAEA to enforce the NPT. They favor having the United States conduct military strikes unilaterally or with a limited number of allies against NPT violators. For them, the NPT cannot survive unless violators clearly understand they will pay a high price, whether authorized by the U.N. or IAEA or not. Another view is that such authorization is critical to long-term, international support of the NPT and IAEA. Resolving the tension between these two views will be central to securing the NPT's survival. Getting this right is of no small moment: The NPT still remains the sole international legal justification for taking enforcement action against states that might try to acquire nuclear

weapons.

4. **If Iran does get the bomb, sanctioning it economically would still be useful to stigmatize its behavior and strengthen future enforcement of the NPT.** Imposing significant economic sanctions until Iran comes back into compliance would be useful to keep Iran in a penalty box until and unless it comes back into compliance with the treaty. With Iran stigmatized, it would be easier to act earlier against lesser violators of the treaty. Stigmatizing bad behavior early would shore up adherence to the NPT far more than taking tougher action later.

5. **Israel's unacknowledged nuclear arsenal and its refusal to limit its nuclear weapons efforts puts America and like-minded nations at a disadvantage in enforcing the NPT in the Middle East and beyond.** Some believe asking Israel to limit its nuclear weapons programs in any way would imperil its security. Others believe it's absolutely essential to rid the Middle East of nuclear weapons – a goal whose ultimate achievement is essential to Israel's survival. The NPT review conferences have repeatedly called for creation of a Middle East nuclear-weapons-free zone, and Iran has accused Israel of nuclear hypocrisy. On these matters, the United States has backed Israel and insisted that Israel does not have a nuclear arsenal. Although this approach has worked for many decades, it will be more and more difficult to sustain.

Simulation Format and Scenario:

Move one was a mock meeting of the U.S. National Security Council. The scenario was set in the present day, the summer of 2021. Throughout July 2021, U.S. intelligence agencies intercept communications between senior Iranian officials and Iran's Supreme Leader suggesting that Iran would follow through on repeated threats to leave the NPT unless its right to enrichment and reprocessing was recognized and all economic sanctions were lifted. On July 27th, U.S. intelligence agencies receive information suggesting the Supreme Leader had decided Iran's best option now was to build a nuclear bomb.

The next day, in consultation with their Israeli intelligence counterparts, CIA officials view Israeli photographic evidence that Iran is manufacturing nuclear implosion devices. U.S. intelligence agencies had previously determined that Iran assembled and tested a single device without highly enriched uranium (HEU), but the photographs the Israelis shared with the CIA were of the assembly of several devices, not one. On July 30th, The Israelis approach the U.S. Secretary of State with the photographic evidence and ask that the United States support a major Israeli strike against Iran's implosion device plant. In specific, the Israelis ask the Secretary to provide U.S. air refueling to Israeli strike aircraft on their way to Iran. The Secretary refuses, stating that the United States will follow the rule of law and take diplomatic action first. The following day, the Israelis leak their photographic evidence to The New York Times, which runs the story with pictures late on the afternoon of Sunday, August 1st.

On the morning of August 2nd, the President holds a press conference and publicly states that, after conferring with the U.S. intelligence community, it is his belief Iran is in violation of the NPT. Within minutes, an Iranian foreign ministry press spokesman goes on TV rejecting the accusation, claiming the Israeli photos are fakes. This spokesman, then announces that Iran has begun the clock on withdrawing from the NPT. The spokesman notes that the clock would continue to run until the White House promises to block further Israeli military strikes against Iran and recognizes Iran's entire nuclear program as being completely peaceful. That afternoon, the U.S. Senate passes a resolution calling on the Administration to take immediate action to enforce the NPT. The President calls for a National Security Council Principals meeting to draft a U.S. resolution to the U.N. Security Council. This is where move one begins.

Move One – U.S. National Security Council Principals Meeting

Participants are presented with three options developed by the National Security Council deputies. The first is a U.S.-led enforcement action, including both economic sanctions and military strikes against Iran. The second option is to work with China, Russia, and the EU to get Iran to immediately resume participation in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The third option is to work cooperatively with the EU and key Pacific allies to draft a U.N. Security Council resolution that would strengthen economic sanctions against Iran. These sanctions would increase penalties every time Iran took an escalatory step. Participants debated a range of policies based on these options, and most agreed that a second NPT enforcement failure, after North Korea's withdrawal in 2003, could seriously, if not permanently, weaken the current nuclear nonproliferation regime.

A combination of Israeli and U.S. military strikes was discussed to delay, not to eliminate, the Iranian nuclear program for a period of years. Participants recognized that even if Israel chose to take unilateral military action, it would fail to eliminate the Iranian nuclear program and could draw the United States into a war to "finish the job" in Iran. Participants noted America's lack of political will and domestic support for entering a war and that the United States might have to live with a nuclear Iran. This resulted in the participants adopting a compound approach: Washington would make it clear that Israel should not act unilaterally but the United States would threaten military force to signal to Iran and other states that NPT violations or withdrawal would have serious consequences.

Most of the game participants recommended that the United States first pursue a diplomatic effort to validate U.S. and Israeli nuclear intelligence on Iran's manufacture of nuclear implosion devices. The U.S. could go directly to the IAEA director general to initiate immediate IAEA special inspections of the Iranian nuclear sites. If the United States could persuade the IAEA director general to act, Washington would not need Chinese or Russian support. The participants discovered that this should be done before proposing a resolution to the U.N. Security Council as the IAEA would be unlikely to agree to special inspections should a U.N. resolution on this topic fail. As such, the IAEA should be the first step in validating and enforcing NPT violations.

One concern raised by the participants is that the IAEA continues to favor the position that the agency is equipped and designed to account for nuclear materials, not discovering illicit nonnuclear weapons-related activities or determining if the NPT has been violated. Yet, it is clear that acquiring or developing implosion devices violates the NPT and the IAEA is better equipped than the U.N. to call out such violations.

Given the possibility that Iran was preparing nuclear implosion devices, the group drafted a U.N. resolution that called for the U.N. Security Council, acting under Article 41 of Chapter VII of the U.N Charter, to demand Iran cease work on any implosion devices and suspend its withdrawal from the NPT. The resolution further authorized the IAEA to inspect any suspect Iranian sites within a matter of days and to report on its findings. Should Iran complete its withdrawal from the NPT, the resolution stated that Iran must be prohibited from transferring, controlling, or manufacturing nuclear weapons or explosive devices. (See appendix for the full text of the U.N. resolution.)

Move Two – United Nations Security Council Meeting and Its Repercussions

In move two, participants assumed the roles on the United Nations Security Council, including the five permanent members, a select group of non-permanent members, and interested states including Iran, Is-

rael, the UAE, and Germany. The participants debated the proposed U.S. resolution and voted. Following the vote, the U.S. National Security Council met to discuss its response to the outcome of the U.N. Security Council meeting.

At the start of this move, the U.S. Ambassador presented the proposed U.S. resolution to the U.N. Security Council. Member states' positions were predictable – U.S. allies supported inspections, while the PRC and Russia created roadblocks. Iran was concerned that the U.S. and Israel would use intelligence obtained during inspections to guide future military attacks. It also noted that the resolution failed to call for all states to join the NPT, acknowledge that Israel is a nuclear weapons state that has threatened Iran, or state that the current crisis must be resolved peacefully without military force.

There was consensus about the need for inspections to validate U.S. intelligence claims. America's nuclear misadventures with Iraq and North Korea undermined its credibility at the U.N. in identifying and enforcing NPT violations. Even allies, such as France, called for more credible evidence of Iran's violation before agreeing to the U.S. resolution. Most nations, including U.S. allies, Russia, and Iran, agreed that an amendment requiring the United States to rejoin the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was needed. Ultimately, Russia and China vetoed the U.S. resolution. The PRC and Russia refused to support any resolution unless it reaffirmed Iran's sovereignty, prohibited military intervention, and required the US to submit its intelligence sources to deep scrutiny and verification.

Following the U.N. Security Council vote, participants were asked to return to their U.S. National Security Council roles to develop a strategy in the wake of the resolution's defeat. America's next step was to approach the IAEA to request special inspections, separate from the U.N. The idea here was to exploit Russia's and China's inability to veto such a request. Assuming that the Iranians would allow inspections, that the inspectors found credible evidence, and that the United States could convince the Israelis to hold their fire, the United States could go back to the U.N. with sufficient proof to pass a resolution.

If the international community was unable to reach agreement on making Iran open up to inspections, the U.S. planned to impose multinational economic sanctions until the Iranians did open up. At the same time, the United States and its allies agreed to move forces to the region with the intent and ability to enforce the sanctions.

Finally, the United States tried to convince Israel to take a diplomatic approach. To do so, the U.S. Secretary of Energy agreed to brief Israel on U.S. estimates of when Iran could acquire five weapons (the number of weapons the Israelis themselves have argued Iran must get before it could pose a military threat). The Energy Secretary gave the brief, which pegged the acquisition date near the end of 2022 and argued that this gave adequate time to allow diplomacy to work. Washington made it clear to Israel that if it chose to strike Iran, it would be doing so unilaterally and could not assume U.S. support. America insisted that Israel work through the IAEA and share any and all of its evidence with Vienna, as would the United States. In the unlikely event that Israel was attacked conventionally or by nuclear weapons, the United States made it clear that it would come to its defense.

Move Three – U.S. Strategy and Hotwash

The purpose of the third move was to discuss the key takeaways from the simulation by focusing on a series of questions regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed U.S. strategy and future value of the NPT. But first, participants resumed their roles on the U.S. National Security Council to refine

Washington's strategy for addressing Iran's NPT withdrawal.

Participants struggled to address an underlying dilemma – was it more important to immediately prevent Iran from getting the bomb or to uphold the NPT? The unspoken assumption was that if Iran succeeded in getting a nuclear weapon, the NPT would fail. Therefore, some participants argued, saving the NPT was secondary, and the United States should use any and all means, including U.S. and allied military efforts that lacked international authorization, first to block Iran from the bomb.

On the other hand, such a military approach could undermine future international support to enforce the NPT, the sole international legal basis for taking military and diplomatic action against states attempting to acquire nuclear weapons. If the primary goal is to protect the NPT to prevent other states from acquiring nuclear weapons, taking a diplomatic approach with Iran would be essential. This, in turn, would require making early, direct contact with Russia and China. Although some participants called for contacting Russia, China, and Iran, the participants skipped taking this course in the game's play.

Regardless of how close Iran or any other nation might get to acquiring a nuclear weapon, most game participants thought it was critical to impose stringent sanctions against any and all NPT violators as early as possible and to maintain them until these states ended their weapons programs and gave up any weapons they may have made (think South Africa). This would send a message to proliferators that any nation that builds or acquires nuclear weapons will suffer draconian sanctions unless and until they come back into compliance with the NPT.

Participants also emphasized the importance of first approaching the IAEA and getting it to verify any NPT violations-related intelligence, as IAEA inspections would provide essential groundwork for going to the U.N. Security Council. Making sure both the IAEA and the U.N. were properly staffed and organized to take needed NPT violation-related actions was discussed at an earlier game preparatory meeting. There is reason to believe neither agency is so organized.

In any case, if Iran stiff-armed IAEA inspectors or the inspections uncovered missing nuclear materials, this would provide an opportunity to approach the U.N. Security Council for a resolution. Approaching the U.N. Security Council first without sufficient, internationally validated evidence, would not only be risky politically, but give the Iranians more time to dismantle or move suspect materials or facilities to evade detection.

Because there is no one-size enforcement method to fit all scenarios, some in the game's preparatory meetings suggested having U.N., IAEA, and national officials game various NPT withdrawal and IAEA violations scenarios.

The game discussion then turned to the simulation findings, and participants answered three major questions:

1. *Do we understand Iran's motives and to the extent that we do, are any of them legitimate?*

Some participants believed Iran's motivation for developing nuclear weapons is primarily defensive. Iran's leadership aims to protect its republic and ideology. Not only has Iran watched the U.S. invade its neighbors, but it fears a Western cultural invasion will undermine the Islamic regime in Iran. Having a nuclear weapon, the participants noted, demonstrates to not only the West, but Iran's own people and neighbors, that the Islamic republic is strong and steadfast. Nuclear weapons provide Iran with a deterrent, and would help diminish the security divide between the United States and Israel. On the other hand, other participants thought Iran may only be seeking nuclear latency as a point of leverage to extract concessions

from the United States in terms of sanctions relief.

This lack of clarity regarding Iran's motives highlights the need to have a way to be in "touch" with Tehran routinely and in crises and, more important, to upgrade our intelligence resources there.

2. *What are the risks and benefits of ignoring the NPT in dealing with the Iranian case? What legal alternatives might there be to the NPT?*

The NPT is the sole, international legal barrier to states that lack nuclear weapons from getting them. The treaty's vitality is itself a key metric for gauging the international norm against acquiring nuclear arms. For nuclear states that are not members of the NPT, the treaty is often viewed as an impediment to them taking military action alone against would-be bomb makers. The treaty is most important legal and diplomatic impediment to nations acquiring the bomb and can be used by the U.N. Security Council to authorize penalties, including military action, against violators.

The treaty, however, is only one of many levers against nuclear proliferation. States can stigmatize bad behavior without the clear authorization of the U.N. or the IAEA and do so even when that behavior cannot be prevented. In the case of friendly countries, such as South Korea, the specter of losing military, commercial, and political ties with the United States is still likely strong enough to keep it from getting the bomb. In Iran's case, economic, and trade sanctions may be the best option to stigmatize Iranian nuclear misbehavior. Although the game's play suggests that it might not be enough ultimately to deter Iran from going nuclear.

That said, ignoring what the NPT demands increases the risks of a nuclear arms race in the Middle East. Certainly, if Iran is permitted to remain in the treaty after it acquires nuclear weapons or is not penalized for violating the treaty, other nations in and outside of the region will strive to match Iran's capabilities. This is an important reason to impose severe additional international economic and trade sanctions on Iran if it should ever get the bomb or try to leave after violating it.

3. *Is there something the United States should be promoting to deter any country from threatening to withdraw from the NPT?*

Ultimately, nuclear weapons proliferation in the Middle East cannot be tackled without addressing Israel's nuclear weapons program. Nuclear deterrence was not Israel's original justification for developing nuclear weapons. In the 1950s, Israeli leaders saw the bomb as a failsafe should Israel lose a conventional war. For these historical reasons (and the Holocaust), Israel is resistant to dismantling its nuclear arsenal. However, some in this game noted that Israel's security may depend on none of its neighbors getting nuclear weapons and that this goal is best achieved by making the Middle East a nuclear-weapon-free zone. If so, Israel's ultimate security could require it to support some form of overt, diplomatic nuclear restraint (e.g., ending its own enrichment of uranium, placing some additional portion of its nuclear activities under international inspections, etc.). So far, this tension has not been addressed, especially in public. Whatever the merits of either side, the case for continuing relative official silence on these matters ought to be re-evaluated.

Another recommendation the game's play supports is the desirability of strengthening the common sense view that a nonweapons state's acquisition or development of the key nonnuclear components of a nuclear weapon constitutes a clear violation of the NPT. Currently, these waters are muddied by the way many

view the IAEA's original charter to verify and account for nuclear material inventories. The IAEA still reads this inspection mandate quite narrowly. As the agency's director general noted in 2006, "absent some nexus to nuclear material, the Agency's legal authority to pursue verification of possible nuclear weapons-related activity is limited." In practice, as well in law, though, the IAEA, can and has inspected even when nuclear materials are not present.[1] One idea discussed in one of the game's preparatory meetings was to create dedicated NPT compliance staffs both at the U.N. and the IAEA and to give the IAEA much more explicit authorization to inspect for nonnuclear weapons-related activities when appropriate.

Yet another recommendation that was discussed at length in the game's first preparatory meeting is having the United States and other like-minded nations support U.N. adoption of country-neutral rules to deter states from violating or withdrawing from the NPT. The most complete treatment of this option is that of Pierre Goldschmidt, former director general of the IAEA for safeguards. In his NPEC report, "Dealing Preventatively with NPT Withdrawals," Mr. Goldschmidt calls for the United States and like-minded states to back a U.N. resolution that would require states that threaten to withdraw from the NPT to keep all of their nuclear materials and facilities under IAEA safeguards (currently, states that withdraw can end such inspections) and to suspend enriching and reprocessing until the IAEA can certify that all special material they produce has been fully accounted for. He also calls for having the U.N. stipulate in advance that if any state withdraws from the NPT, the U.N. will consider this to be "a major threat to international peace and security" under Article 39 of the Charter of the United Nations, which, in turn, would allow the U.N. to sanction the withdrawing state. Finally, he would have the permanent five members of the U.N. Security Council promise not to veto the sanctioning of any withdrawing state if they were the sole state to do so. Several of the game participants noted that the United States had backed such proposals in the early 2000s but were unable to gain support for their passage. The outcome of the Iran simulation, however, strongly suggests that yet another attempt might be in order. In back briefing the game's results to U.S., foreign, and international officials, one other suggestion was made: Encourage the IAEA to game how it might deal with future IAEA violators and states trying to withdraw from the NPT. To date, no such simulations have been attempted or promoted. Given the results of this simulation, however, states, such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and other NPT members of the Abraham Accords might see merit in supporting and participating in such efforts.

1. See George Bunn, "Nuclear Safeguard: How Far Can Inspectors Go?" IAEA Bulletin, March 2007, available at https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/publications/magazines/bulletin/bull48-2/48203494955.pdf.

Appendix I - United States Resolution to the United Nations Security Council

The Security Council,

- Noting with concern that Iran has taken unjustified steps toward withdrawal from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (the "NPT"),
- Reaffirming the NPT as an "essential pillar" of international peace and security, and the "heart" of the nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation regime, the international community has a vested stake in assuring that all state parties to the agreement remain in the treaty,
- Noting with serious concern, there are disturbing indications that Iran is preparing implosion devices capable of receiving weapons-grade nuclear material,
- Reaffirming that halting such actions, including withdrawal from the NPT, is imperative to assure international peace and security,
- Reaffirms that if Iran were to complete its withdrawal from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, this would constitute a threat to international peace and security under Article 39 of the Charter,
- Acting under Article 41 of Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations,
- Decides that Iran shall cease any work on implosion devices and suspend its NPT withdrawal,
- Directs the IAEA to conduct inspections for implosion devices,
- Requires that in a matter of days the IAEA is able to inspect any site that the IAEA deems necessary, and that the IAEA issue a statement on the status of Iran's nuclear program and the location and status of the implosion devices, enriched nuclear matter and centrifuges,
- Decides further that the Secretary-General will inform the IAEA of a reasonable time to report back to the Security Council on a timely and regular basis, and the first report should be within one week,
- Decides further that should the IAEA not be permitted to inspect the sites it deems necessary, a United Nations Security Council meeting will be triggered,
- Decides that in the event that Iran does complete its withdrawal, the Council demands pursuant to Article 41 of the Charter that,
    - Iran shall not receive the transfer from any transferor whatsoever of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or of control over such weapons or explosive devices directly, or indirectly,
    - Iran shall not manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices,
    - Iran shall not seek or receive any assistance in the manufacture of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices,

- Encourages all the member states to make all efforts to implement this resolution,
- Resolves to remain seized of this matter.

Appendix II - Team Notes by Move

Move 1

General Discussion

President:

The first order of business is to get the President up to speed on the latest intelligence. Everyone was briefed in late July, but the President has asked the Director of National Intelligence to provide an update for everyone.

Director of National Intelligence:

We have had a great volume of good intelligence about the Iranian nuclear program over the years. Not all aspects of the program, but several significant aspects. Over the last few days, that intelligence has become more striking and alarming. In a brief in late July, we noted that we intercepted communications between senior Iranian officials and Iran's Supreme Leader suggesting that Iran would finally follow through on its threats to leave the NPT. Those threats were conditioned on acceptance of Iran's enrichment and reprocessing and on sanctions being lifted.

The communications also indicate that Iranian leadership is disappointed that the United States has done nothing to stop Israeli acts of war against Iran's supposedly peaceful nuclear program. The Iranians are also concerned that the United States appears to be lending support to Israel in support of those illegal acts of war. It is not entirely clear that the Iranians are aware of what we are doing in support of the Israelis, but it is clear that they think we are supporting them in some way.

Furthermore, on Tuesday, July 27th, we received intelligence concerning the views of Iran's Supreme Leader. Both communications intelligence and a human source indicate that in response to various pleadings, the Supreme Leader has decided Iran's best option was now to build a nuclear weapon.

We have been engaged in conversations with Israeli intelligence counterparts, who shared photographic evidence that Iran is manufacturing nuclear implosion devices. Our own intelligence previously determined that Iran assembled and tested a device without highly enriched uranium. On Friday, July 30th, the Israelis approached the Secretary of State with their photographic evidence, requesting that the United States support a major Israeli strike against the implosion device plant by providing Israeli strike aircraft with in-air refueling. The Secretary refused, stating that the United States would follow rule of law and take diplomatic action first. The next day, the Israelis leaked their photographic evidence to the New York Times, which ran the story with pictures late on the afternoon of August 1st.

Secretary of State:

Do we trust the Israeli intelligence?

Director of National Intelligence:

It is consistent with previous intelligence. The photographs do not appear to be doctored. We have identified the facility on our own satellite imagery. While there are a number of facilities we have been concerned about, this one is new to us. However, it is consistent with previous intelligence.

Secretary of State:

Is the Iranian claim that we have been cooperating with Israel on covert intelligence true?

Director of National Intelligence:

Yes, it is. We have been providing intelligence to the Israelis about both facilities and individuals. We have also provided certain logistical help to some of their activities. However, our main role has been, as the President directed, to provide intelligence.

President:

Did we provide intelligence to the Israelis on this plant, or is it new to us?

Director of National Intelligence:

This plant is new to us, but it is consistent with our previous intelligence.

Secretary of State:

Does the mention of intelligence on individuals relate to assassination attempts?

Director of National Intelligence:

Our role has been limited to providing information about individuals involved in the development of Iran's nuclear facilities.

Secretary of Defense:

What do we think about the manufacturing output of this new Iranian device? We have a plant in mind, but do we have information about them beginning to use fissile material? Whether or not they are beginning to use fissile material has relevance with regard to anticipated timelines. It also has relevance with regard to whether or not IAEA inspections would find anything, were we to entice Iran to allow inspectors into a given facility, as it would be difficult to detect Iran's activities if materials are moved, unless nuclear materials have already been used. Therefore, the questions of how long until they have nuclear material in hand, whether that material would work, and what delivery systems they would use, become important ones.

Director of National Intelligence:

We have been engaged with the Pentagon on these matters. United States intelligence, in terms of our own body of information, had previously determined that Iran had previously assembled and tested an implosion device without highly-enriched uranium (HEU). We have been concerned for some time because the Iranians have been looking for fissile material in the international market. We are not confident about what material they have been able to acquire. We believe they could have a bomb or two of material.

The new Israeli information indicates that the Iranians have now moved to fabricate implosion devices using HEU, the traces of which would conceivably be discoverable in an inspection. We have been looking at possible designs and we are reasonably confident that the Iranians are capable of putting together a nuclear weapon that would work with this particular implosion device that they are working on. We are less confident that the Iranians have gotten through all the engineering steps for mating a warhead onto a missile. We do not think they have solved that problem.

President:

Given all of this, could we ask our Secretary of Energy, the world's leading expert on plutonium implosion device design, to give insight?

Secretary of Energy:

The plant the Israelis are talking about is likely only manufacturing non-nuclear implosion components. We are unsure where intelligence stands on fissile material, which would be developed in a different facility. We are also unsure whether Iran is manufacturing HEU and putting it into cores, which could be easily hidden and mated with non-nuclear components at any time.

Chief of Staff to the President:

Has American intelligence detected any military preparations in Israel?

Director of National Intelligence:

The President has directed that we should not concentrate substantial intelligence on Israeli activities, so we cannot answer that question with great confidence.

President:

Vice President, can you update everyone on what we have been doing this morning?

Vice President:

After the *New York Times* ran its story, the President held a press conference this morning saying that he believed that Iran was clearly in violation of the NPT. He made it clear that this was his belief, and he also said that this was based on information briefed to him by the U.S. intelligence community, not the Israeli information. He received much pushback, with many people pointing out that the United States has made many inaccurate statements about WMDs in the past, but the President left it at "this is my belief."

Minutes after the press conference, an Iranian foreign ministry representative rejected the United States' claims, said the Israeli pictures were fakes, and said Iran began the clock to withdraw from the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) until the United States promised to block further Israeli military strikes against Iran. The official also said Iran's entire nuclear program was peaceful. While this is Iran's public statement, foreign ministry members are not actually very important in guiding the Supreme Leader's decisions.

The one action the President was prepared to describe in the press conference was that the United States would call for a meeting of the U.N. Security Council on an urgent basis. The President asked his National Security Council advisor to hold a snap deputies' meeting to develop alternative policy options. He also asked that a follow-on National Security Council (NSC) Principals meeting be held early this evening to decide between these options and to draft a resolution to the U.N. Security Council.

President:

We should clarify what the President actually said. The President said he wants a number of alternative policy responses, including, but not necessarily limited to, a U.N. Security Council meeting.

Vice President:

One of the things the principals meeting is tasked to do is draft a U.S. resolution to the U.N. Security

Council. However, the resolution could well be shot down so this group is tasked with suggesting alternative options. The President made it clear that he was available to help, and that he was looking forward to speaking with counterparts.

After the deputies' meeting but before the principals' meeting, the Senate passed a resolution calling on the administration to take immediate action to enforce the NPT. The NSC Deputies met earlier today and drafted three options.

Secretary of Defense:

Do we have any information to suggest that the Iranians have filed notice with the Security Council or given us or any other countries notice of their intention to withdraw from the NPT under Article 10(1)? Have they formally started the withdrawal process or not?

President:

This would be a question best suited for the Secretary of State.

Secretary of State:

They have not, so far as I know.

President:

We should discuss the three options that the deputies produced.

Vice President:

The deputies came up with three options. Option one is US-led NPT "enforcement action." The idea here is that the United States and like-minded states should take several actions, including sanctioning Iranian oil exports and/or taking military action to eliminate the plant unless the U.N. Security Council agrees on a number of points, namely demanding Iran allow in U.N. inspectors, cease work on implosion devices, and freeze the clock regarding NPT withdraw.

Option two is to work with Russia, China, and the EU to get Iran to resume participation in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). This option would use existing JCPOA mechanisms to authorize increased inspections and authorize members to implement snap-back sanctions as they see fit. The United States would also promise to lift sanctions gradually, pending determination of Israeli and American claims that Iran is engaged in activities that violate the NPT.

Secretary of State:

The point stating that we would lift sanctions "pending determination of Israel" is disturbing. Sanctions should instead be lifted pending the determination of the IAEA.

President:

Agreed. The deputies were hasty in drafting this strategy. Sanctions should be lifted pending the determination of inspectors, not Israel and the United States

Vice President:

Option three is even softer, calling on like-minded states to work together and firmly wag our fingers at Iran. The option mentions coordinating and drafting a U.N. Security Council resolution prohibiting the

purchase of Iranian oil and other critical goods and banning key financial transactions. This would only be passed if Iran follows through on threats to withdraw from the NPT and continues refusing to allow International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors to immediately validate Israeli photos. The third option would also develop a menu of options to inflict economic pain for each escalatory step, forewarning Iran. This option would also coordinate with France, Germany, and the U.K. on the above if Russia and China refuse to pass a U.N. Security Council Resolution, as violations would then become subject to secondary sanctions. Finally, this option would call on like-minded states to propose a tighter definition of what should be considered peaceful and permissible under the NPT, that the U.N. could adopt pending an NPT Review Conference that would reinterpret Articles I, II, III, and IV.

Secretary of Defense:

A number of U.N. countries would most certainly not want to touch Article VI.

President:

Correct. That is why it is not listed as part of the option. What other options should we consider?

Vice President:

Whatever we do, it needs to be popular, and we need to get the House of Representatives on board. We need to decide on talking points, and we need to decide who is going to brief the Gang of Four at the Hill and such.

President:

That is precisely the Vice President's job.

Secretary of State:

Is there no provision for contacting the Iranians directly?

Vice President:

Contacting Iran directly would be useless. They refuse to take our telephone calls. They only allow contact through the Swiss.

Secretary of State:

This is serious enough that they would likely accept a telephone call.

Vice President:

That is unlikely, as even Obama was never able to establish any meaningful contact.

Secretary of State:

Will we call the House of Representatives back into session?

President:

People seem to be focusing on the House of Representatives when the Senate matters more. This is a violated treaty. Treatymaking power is shared with the Senate, not the House of Representatives.

Vice President:

If we can get a limited authorization for military force, we can probably get more sway with allies. That would be a reason to try to get the House of Representatives to pass something.

Secretary of Defense:

I have a couple of questions. One has to do with what we are consulting with folks in Washington and foreign allies about. Unless we have a course of action to discuss with them, just vaguely engaging in discussion about what we should do would likely not be very productive. It is very difficult to get people to act in conjunction with you if you do not know what you want to do.

Vice President:

We have not convinced them that we need to act in the first place. That is the first thing we need to do.

President:

The purpose of this meeting is to decide the diplomatic order of battle, which means our primary concern is deciding what to do.

Secretary of Defense:

The second question is about option one. What additional powers would the inspectors have? As a matter of law, we need to get Iran to accept any given dispensation. It could take weeks to set things up as it has in the past, and we do not necessarily have that time.

President:

That may be true, but we can see if Iran will accept our terms. What we need to do is not simply Additional Protection surveillance, but also area-wide surveillance. We also need to get a positive response from Iran very quickly. The broad-area surveillance we need to get Iran under has not been seen since the Iraq war.

Secretary of Defense:

In that case, we would need to define those terms in the resolution.

Director of National Intelligence:

One minor point of clarification: if you did want to send a private message to the Iranians, we have channels to do that, and we could meet with them quietly in one of many Eastern European capitals if you wish to send a message.

President:

That is just as I suspected. That is worth checking a box on quickly.

Head of Central Command:

It may be a good idea to have this body talk very seriously to Joint Chiefs of Staff and make it very clear that Central Command can get everything they require. Furthermore, if we wish to interdict oil flows, we need to get military vessels over there now, as we do not have the requisite presence in the area to effectively interdict oil flows.

President:

Would any U.S. partners be willing to help?

Head of Central Command:

On the diplomatic side, they likely would be willing to help us. However, if things turn kinetic, that may be a different question.

President:

Would they be willing to help us establish stricter control on trade?

Head of Central Command:

It would be worth asking, as they may be willing to do more than they are currently doing.

Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations:

One comment about option three: the idea of seeking interpretation of the NPT articles through the Review Conference would be a very long-term process, so it would likely not be a very practical idea. Therefore, we should instead rely on the United States' unilateral interpretation.

Secretary of State:

The part of option three that attempts to reinterpret NPT articles should be dropped entirely, as its inclusion implicitly concedes that our interpretation of the NPT may be wrong.

Secretary of Defense:

Agreed. This process could end up resulting in a very bad interpretation for us.

President:

The deputies likely included this as part of option three to broaden the solution to the problem and keep things on a country-neutral level, as this is likely not the last time a situation like this will arise. With any bad luck at all, someone else will likely pull this stunt in the future, which may be a reason to reinterpret the NPT.

Secretary of Defense:

The specifics of this situation, which involves allegations and a statement of withdrawal, constitute a reason to keep things Iran-specific. If we keep things country-neutral, other countries will have a dog in the fight when they otherwise may not, as they might think that they are on the chopping block when they otherwise would not be, since none of them have issued statements of withdrawal.

Secretary of Energy:

Even though the use of the broad scope U.N. Inspection Commission would be desirable, even the IAEA could be quite effective, and we could get that going a lot quicker. Iran has substantial stockpiles of enriched uranium, and they have a number of centrifuges; verifying whether that the stockpile is still there would be important, as is verifying the mode of operations of centrifuges. If things go as they have been, then we have many months before they get fissile material into weapons, but if they have suddenly altered operations and they are turning out HEU, we have much less time.

President:

Could we have a hybrid, perhaps, where you start with the IAEA, and get the U.N. Inspection Commission on board?

Secretary of Energy:

Sure, but you could probably get the IAEA going much faster.

Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development:

Since we have photos and an exact location of this implosion facility, under the Additional Protocol, can existing IAEA inspectors go to such a specific location and demand to see it? Would such a step be a good way of attempting to discern Iran's intentions?

President:

We could certainly attempt to do this, but other members of the board, like China, could create problems here.

Secretary of State:

The Director-General can do it on his own. There is a provision of special inspections.

Secretary of Defense:

We should issue a downgrading of the intelligence regarding the facility location, as it is not clear whether that information is public. This would allow us to share that information both publicly and with allies. If we have information that there is fissile material involved, that is much easier for the agency to hook onto. Unless Section II of the JCPOA is invoked, asking the IAEA to look at a facility not involving nuclear material is dicey.

Secretary of the Treasury:

Regarding the financial sanctions included in the options, option one seems only to talk about an energy embargo, whereas option three seems to talk about more, namely critical goods. If option three is meant to be more dovish, then it is odd that it has the more hawkish financial approach. It would be best to keep consistency between the financial options.

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

At the moment, we do have the U.S.S. Ronald Reagan in the area assisting with our withdrawal from Afghanistan, so that provides us with a bit more firepower than we would normally have. Therefore, we could engage in a debilitating strike against limited targets, but any sort of extended military campaign would require a substantial shifting of resources.

President:

What is it that we could reasonably ask of allied countries that currently are not yet supplying as much as they might?

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

We should not expect much in the way of additional help from most of our allies in the region.

President:

What about outside of the region?

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

The British are most likely to lend additional assistance since they are already in the region, but as far as countries like Japan are concerned, it is less clear.

Head of Central Command:

The question of interdiction is not just a military one, but also a financial one. This mixing of broad good imports, as well as energy imports, requires targeting a lot of ships. We could probably target most of them, but it is much easier to target financial systems such as private insurance markets.

President:

The political significance of asking countries to help may involve asking countries to take actions without significant material utility, whereas asking them to take effective actions may pose problems.

Secretary of Defense:

In asking countries to contribute, there is also the issue of our own access, such as, for instance, overflight permissions. It would be easier to get countries to agree to this than it would be to get them to agree to providing material support. It may also be that private insurance markets have something to say regarding immediately dropping coverage. We might see a substantial market reaction.

Secretary of State:

If Iran is really planning to leave the NPT, which is unlikely, they will expect all the items listed on option three, and they will have weighed them and will have decided that that they are an acceptable price to pay for whatever advantage they expect to receive from leaving the NPT. Therefore, it is difficult to see what the advantage of option three is.

President:

The point of option three is to be soft on Iran.

Secretary of State:

We should just drop option three, as it is unlikely to be effective at all.

Vice President:

We should have a debate about whether we can live with an Iran with nuclear weapons in the first place.

President:

That may be worth talking about in another context, but that is not our objective at this point.

Secretary of State:

The process of leaving the NPT is a 90-day process, so if Iran is starting the clock, there are still 90 days to pursue the issue.

Secretary of Defense:

Furthermore, if they have not formally started the clock, then nobody is going to join us in taking any action against Iran.

President:

We can probably assume that they have started the clock, but we may need to talk with Iran to make sure that they have done so.

Secretary of Defense:

Establishing whether Iran had started the withdrawal process was the purpose of the earlier question about whether they had started the clock. We need to establish this fact very clearly because it is the only way to know whether others would be willing to collaborate with the United States on acting against Iran.

President:

For this game to be effective, the clock has to have started. Therefore, for the purposes of the game, Iran has started the clock.

Secretary of Energy:

On the issue of accepting Iranian nuclear weapons, what makes this situation different from North Korea is the existence of the Israelis, who are not likely to be as accepting as the South Koreans about having a nuclear neighbor.

Chief of Staff to the President:

Several other countries in the Middle East are also likely to react if Iran gets the bomb, which makes the Iranian situation markedly different from that of North Korea. It is very unlikely that the Chinese or Russians would go along with U.S. plans. Therefore, if we want to do something, it would likely have to be done unilaterally or just with a few allies, as it is very unlikely that the United States would get full international support for doing anything meaningful that does anything other than just kicking the can down the road.

Secretary of Defense:

A question about option one. One of the actions that we could consider taking as a part of option one is using Chapter VII authority to impose upon Iran nonproliferation obligations perfectly mirroring the NPT. This would specifically require that they remain subject to the terms of Article II, making those terms Chapter VII requirements in a Security Council resolution. This means that Iran would still be subject to the requirements even if they left the NPT, as we would be imposing the requirements by other means. That allows us to say that Iran is still bound not to develop nuclear weapons as a matter of law, but slightly sidesteps the debate about whether they would be able to withdraw and whether anyone would be able to prohibit it.

President:

Does the Secretary of State have thoughts on this?

Secretary of State:

We should take the position that if a country withdraws, it cannot use for military purposes anything it obtained or built when everyone assumed they were procuring technology for peaceful purposes.

President:

Could we pursue this through the mechanism that the Secretary of Defense proposed?

Secretary of State:

Yes, we could.

Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development:

If Iran's nuclear material were all U.S. material, we could demand they return it. This has never been done, but we could, theoretically.

President:

Unfortunately, it is not.

Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development:

They do have some U.S. nuclear material, though.

Secretary of State:

Why did they stop their program in 2003?

Secretary of the Treasury:

A credible military threat from the United States is probably a big reason why they abandoned their program in 2003.

Vice President:

I would like to suggest an "option 1b," which would be that the United States drop broad hints that, while we will not do anything, our Israeli friends are planning to take military action in 72 hours if Iran continues with their plan. Meanwhile, the President could contact the Israeli Prime Minister and ask Israel to get out there and deliberately take action with the explicit purpose of frightening Iran. The United States could then leak info that the Israelis are planning to engage in limited military strikes against Iran, that they are willing to accept any penalty, and that Israel is mobilizing the necessary assets for such a strike. We would also comment that the Israelis have approached other countries requesting they turn a blind eye to Israeli actions.

Secretary of the Treasury:

Another option is threatening draconian financial sanctions. This has never been done before, but we could say that we will use the full weight of the U.S. economy to enforce the U.N. resolution. We could make it illegal to conduct trade with any Iranian company or we could make financial transactions illegal, with some humanitarian exceptions. This goes further than any sanctions we have imposed upon Iran before. This is a unilateral option. We could also get Security Council partners on board, or backstop with an executive operation. We could also strengthen this option using a variety of existing U.S. programs.

President:

This is a good suggestion. Shall we return to the Vice President's proposal now?

Secretary of Defense:

In regards to the Vice President's proposal, we would want to make sure that whatever we leak is true. It seems we are not entirely sure what the state of Israeli planning is, so we need to make sure leaks are true. If it would be a choreographed good-cop-bad-cop scenario, that is certainly feasible. This is not necessarily a bad idea in principle, but we would need to think through what this scenario would look like. People will ask us what our opinion on these strikes is and what our response would be, so we need to be prepared with an answer.

President:

Are the Israelis limited in what they can do without our assistance? If they are going to do something awful, how awful would it be, and how long would it last?

Secretary of Defense:

They could certainly do a good job making this particular plant go away, and a handful of other facilities as well. They would have a great deal of difficulty getting the entire Iranian program and getting through air defenses. They do not have any meaningful ability to revisit targets, which means the United States would almost certainly get immediately entangled in the resulting regional war. This means that is something we would need to prepare for.

Vice President:

Would the Secretary of Defense urge that Israel take these threatening steps?

Secretary of Defense:

Before we urge them, we need to choreograph our good-cop-bad-cop routine, and we need to be sure that what Israel tells us they would do is in fact what they would do.

Director of National Intelligence:

Our intelligence assessments are very much in sync with the Secretary of Defense's assessments of Israel's military capabilities; they could start it, but not finish it. The Vice President's points are consistent with communications we have seen over the past few days of this crisis; a number of countries have commented that they are concerned about what Israel would do, which means the scene is set for something along the lines of the Vice President's plan. Intelligence indicates that other countries are already worried about the Israelis even without us encouraging them to do anything.

Secretary of State:

There are two directions we could go. The first, and the one I thought we had agreed on since the beginning, is the international one, trying to protect the NPT and engaging the security council. The second would be the United States and Israel working together to protect Israel's nuclear weapons monopoly in the Middle East. They are not an NPT signatory, so taking this option would make us lose all credibility internationally and would be a terrible idea.

Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations:

As to why Iran needs to withdraw from the NPT, it is because Iran needs to "stay legal" in their view, meaning that they need to declare that they are withdrawing from the NPT before announcing that they have a nuclear bomb.

President:

My past interactions with the Iranians indicate that this is correct. They really do care about not looking like they are breaking the rules.

Attorney General:

There are two separate issues here. First, you are dealing with withdrawal from the NPT, and second, you are dealing with the leaked intelligence. If you separate them, insofar as the first matter is concerned, you need to ask why. We know that the Iranian leaders intend to be able to reprocess without recourse, and we have now seen Israeli intelligence backing that up. We need to keep all our options open. Option three is the weakest, least favorable, and least popular at this point. Option one seems to be the prevailing option. In general, it sounds like there is going to be a large demand from the American public to respond in some way. Part of it is because of the Israeli leaking, and another part of it will be Congress inevitably calling for some action. Therefore, making sure that you retain as many options as possible moving forward will probably be the best course of action.

President:

As awful as things are for Israel and as scary as it is for the region, it would be worse if we do not do this in the proper order. We should use the existing diplomatic tools quickly and check all the boxes we can before we take action that would be in coalition with others. First, we should get in touch with the head of the IAEA, have a U.N. resolution that tracks option one, get in touch with our allies to brief them on what support we would like, and take some unilateral actions, but only if we make it clear that those unilateral actions would be suspended if current conditions are met. We need to make it very clear with the Israelis that if they want to start a war without us, it would be an extremely risky proposition, and that we are not ready for something like that yet. Therefore, we should develop a U.N. resolution and develop an "option b" to implement if the resolution does not pass, as we will likely not get the requisite agreement from the Chinese and Russians.

Secretary of Defense:

One way to approach this signaling question could be the President making it clear that in the event that Iran is completing the development of a nuclear weapon, the United States would consider that to be a threat of armed force that would justify the use of force in self-defense against Iran under Article 51 of the U.N. Charter. That may help deter Iran and that may also set a course of legal action in motion.

Vice President:

The point of getting the Israelis to frighten everyone is not to actually get them to act, but to create a threat of Israeli action to move diplomacy forward. In addition to creating a legal basis for us to act, what we need to do is put in play a set of actions to enhance deterrence. We need to make it clear that a set of things, including draconian financial actions, potential U.S. military action, and Israeli action, would happen if Iran were to develop a nuclear weapon. This makes it very clear that the world community is taking this very seriously, and that there will be consequences unless Iran backs off.

President:

Much of this makes sense, but the Israeli angle seems like it could be a bad idea. Israel is creating a threat of conflict in the status quo, so there is no reason for us to collaborate with them and work the angle ourselves.

Secretary of State:

The problem with attempting to work with Israel is that we cannot know whether they will do what we tell them to do.

President:

We are in contact with the Israelis, and we need to make it very clear that, in order to please us, they need to keep everything in the garage. It is not going to help us if they go commando.

Secretary of Homeland Security:

If Iran does get the bomb, what are our options? Yes, there is a lot of concern about the Middle East, but we also need to keep in mind that India and Pakistan are also nuclear states, and we need to think about what effects this would have from the broader international perspective.

President:

Iran getting the bomb would be bad. It is the fact that we do not know how bad it would be that makes this a problem. It would also mean the NPT would lose any restraining ability, and that would have global effects.

Secretary of Defense:

Even if they end up crossing that line and we are not able to do anything about it in kinetic terms, that itself is an argument for nasty economic sanctions. We want the meta-narrative to be that if you cross this line, you will be living in deprivation for the rest of time, even if we do not take any kinetic action.

Secretary of State:

Are we applying that level of sanctions to the DPRK right now?

Secretary of Defense:

Yes. The U.N.'s 2017 set of sanctions against the DPRK is pretty fierce.

Resolution Drafting

The following preliminary U.S. Resolution to the U.N. was provided:

> WHEREAS, Iran has taken unjustified steps toward withdrawal from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (the "NPT") and is in violation of its obligations under the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (the "JCPOA"),
>
> WHEREAS, there is clear and unequivocal evidence that Iran is preparing nuclear implosion devices capable of receiving weapons-grade nuclear material,

WHEREAS, Iran likely has, or is about to have, access to weapons-grade nuclear material, and

WHEREAS, halting such actions, including withdrawal from the NPT and violations of the JCPOA, is imperative to assure international peace and security,

NOW, THEREFORE, it is

RESOLVED, that the Security Council calls upon Iran ...

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Security Council calls upon all Member ...

Secretary of State:

It is concerning to draw attention to the fact that the Iranians are in violation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan, since we ourselves pulled out. It seems peculiar to call them out for violating the requirements when it is basically defunct.

Vice President:

Agreed. The second and third WHEREAS are also both not great. We should be calling for extensive investigation, not just saying that we know something to be the case or not be the case. The focus here should be on generating broad international support, which means we should refrain from judging the case too early.

Chief of Staff to the President:

The President says there is intelligence, though.

Vice President:

So what? The President had intelligence in 2003, and it was not accurate.

Secretary of Defense:

That is not our concern. Our concern is whether fore fronting specific evidence makes the resolution less likely to pass. The Vice President is correct that doing so would make the resolution less likely to pass. We only have a chance of getting people not to veto if we do not immediately jam the Israeli evidence, and instead leave ourselves open to further investigation.

Secretary of State:

I am inclined to agree with this.

Secretary of Energy:

Has Iran not already started the clock for withdrawal?

Vice President:

In that case, our first RESOLVED should be requesting Iran stop the clock.

Secretary of Defense:

We could require them to stop under Article VII.

Vice President:

We would not get support for requiring that they stop, but we could *request* they stop the clock. FURTHER RESOLVED should be that, even if they do not stop the clock, they must still follow through on Article II.

Secretary of State:

Are they not required to explain why they are withdrawing?

Secretary of Defense:

Technically, they need to cite a reason for why they are withdrawing, but they do not need to defend it in any meaningful way.

Secretary of Energy:

We want to do this investigation. We want an emergency IAEA statement on Iran's nuclear program and the status of enriched uranium and centrifuges.

Director of National Intelligence:

Before we move to the FURTHER RESOLVED, we need to strengthen the WHEREAS clauses. The President's earlier claims that one of our major goals is to strengthen the NPT sticks out here. A WHEREAS clause drawing on language already used in the U.N. by the Secretary-General could be included. It would be worded as follows, "WHEREAS, the NPT is an 'essential pillar' of international peace and security and the 'heart' of the nuclear disarmament and proliferation regime, the international community has a vested stake in ensuring that all state parties to the agreement remain in the treaty."

Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development:

One direction we may be going is to do things that may take too long under the deadline that we have. We need to make sure that whatever we do is very quick and has a very clear outcome that can be used to build on additional steps that we can take. Whatever we have got has to be something we can do quickly. Such as, will Iran allow within a certain amount of time, the IAEA to see the particular site in question? We could also set a deadline.

Secretary of State:

That last point should build on the FURTHER RESOLVED.

Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development:

Yes. We can say, "FURTHER RESOLVED, that in a matter of days any site that the IAEA deems necessary to see must be inspected, and should they not see what they need to it will trigger a UN Security Council meeting."

Secretary of State:

If they do not agree, then we can regroup and consider what steps should be subsequently taken.

Secretary of Defense:

The following operational clauses should be included, "... that if Iran were to complete its withdrawal from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, this would constitute a threat to interna-

tional peace and security under Article 39 of the Charter" and "that in the event that Iran does complete its withdrawal, the Council demands pursuant to Article 41 of the Charter that Iran not receive the transfer from any transferor whatsoever of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or of control over such weapons or explosive devices directly, or indirectly, and that Iran not manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, and that it not to seek or receive any assistance in the manufacture of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices."

Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations:

The phrasing of "calls upon" is too weak. It should instead be made "demands."

Vice President:

What about "decides Iran shall?"

Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations:

Yes, that is better.

Secretary of Defense:

Agreed.

Vice President:

We should word it as follows, "decides Iran shall cease work on implosion devices."

Secretary of Defense:

We should say "any work" rather than simply "work." This lets us give a rhetorical fig leaf to anyone saying that if Iran has not done any work, then they do not have to stop it.

Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations:

At the bottom, we should also add, "The Security Council encourages all the member states to make all efforts to implement this resolution."

Secretary of State:

We should add that the IAEA should report back quickly.

Vice President:

We could say, "The Secretary-General will consult with the IAEA for a reasonable time to report back to the Security Council."

Secretary of Defense:

We may want to add a periodicity and specific timeframe as part of that statement, to prevent any wiggle room. For instance, we could require monthly reports.

Secretary of State:

Monthly reports would take too long.

Secretary of Defense:

Of course, reports should certainly happen more quickly than that, that was just an example.

Vice President:

We should just note that the first report should be within one week.

Chief of Staff to the President:

The United States should also think about the possibility of this resolution not being passed by the Security Council.

Secretary of Defense:

We do not need to include a RESOLVED that Iran is still pursuant to Article II, as that is just a fact. Furthermore, the operational clauses recommended earlier should be split into the following two RESOLVED clauses, "RESOLVED, that if Iran were to complete its withdrawal from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, this would constitute a threat to international peace and security under Article 39 of the Charter;" "RESOLVED, that in the event that Iran does complete its withdrawal, the Council demands pursuant to Article 41 of the Charter that Iran not receive the transfer from any transferor whatsoever of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or of control over such weapons or explosive devices directly, or indirectly, and that Iran not manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, and that it not to seek or receive any assistance in the manufacture of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices."

Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations:

U.N. Security Council resolutions usually do not say "RESOLVED" and "WHEREAS." Instead, use "NOTED" in the place of WHEREAS and replace RESOLVED with the phrase "Decides that…"

Discussion Re: Ensuring Passage of Resolution

Vice President:

First, we should clean up existing intelligence to make sure it can be publicly released.

Secretary of State:

We should see if we can talk to the Iranians. We should also brief intelligence to governments around the world.

Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development:

The resolution itself helps insofar as passage is concerned, as it makes the case for its own passage.

Vice President:

We should also try to get the House to pass a resolution like the Senate's.

Secretary of State:

What is our reaction if countries bring up the issue of a non-nuclear zone in the Middle East?

Vice President:

Our reaction is inviting them to work on the matter.

Secretary of Defense:

We have one, functionally, enforced by the NPT, and if we cannot make that one mean something, who cares? We need to focus on the issue of the NPT first and foremost.

Chief of Staff to the President:

Is the President ready for diplomatic defeat?

Vice President:

If this fails, we need to be able to take other action. The President needs to make clear that failure to act on this matter is a threat to international security and justifies the U.S. acting under Article VI of the U.N. Charter.

Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations:

Another important thing is persuading the Russians and Chinese. First, they will want to see our intelligence. They will also want to soften the wording of the resolution, so we need to prepare a plan for how to respond.

Secretary of State:

How will they soften it?

Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development:

We could add something about calling people to return to the JCPOA, which was part of option two. That could be seen as a softening.

Secretary of Energy:

Will preparatory military steps be on hold until this resolution is voted down, or should we start moving forces to the Middle East immediately?

Head of Central Command:

The latter option is preferable, as it would make getting the Iranians on the phone easier by making it clear that they must engage with U.N., or else things may blow up.

Vice President:

We should consult urgently with the Israelis, but we should not do anything precipitous.

Secretary of Defense:

We should also begin consulting with countries, such as, for instance, Germany, regarding flyover access

rights, as this takes time and would also make it clear that the United States is serious.

Head of Central Command:

We should also get things working stateside to be able to take military action later. Stateside preparations do not need to be loud but should start now.

Vice President:

Stateside preparations should be loud.

Secretary of Defense:

Emphasis should be placed on the preparation of strike resources and potential airstrike assets.

Vice President:

Missile defense is more important.

Head of Central Command:

Perhaps we could work on getting ATFs ready to move? Of course, though, we are not getting ready to invade Iran, and that should be clear.

Secretary of Defense:

We should also begin whispering to other countries that there are sub-surface assets that we could use if necessary.

Director of National Intelligence:

Should we engage in any covert actions?

Secretary of Defense:

If there are any covert actions in pocket that we can do immediately, we should do them. If there is nothing immediately in pocket, we do not have the time to wait.

Director of National Intelligence:

We could potentially turn out the power in Iran.

Vice President:

We should not do that unless we are ready to respond to Iran doing so in kind.

Secretary of Defense:

We should consult with the president on his comfort level with doing something of the sort. If we are going to do something squirrelly, we should do it sooner rather than later, because if we first say Israel is doing bad things and then do something like turn out the lights, Iran will assume that things are going to escalate. Therefore, we need to do covert things before getting the fear narrative too high.

Secretary of State:

What is our plan for contacting Iran?

Director of National Intelligence:

If you want us to do so, we have our contacts, and we can send whatever message you want.

Vice President:

If we want to do something like contact Iran, lots of countries will be volunteering to help us out (e.g., Iraq, the UAE, Oman).

Secretary of Defense:

It is worth noting that if something like a cyberattack happens, people will be lining up at Consulates for noncombatant evacuation operations (NEO), and we do not have nearly enough resources to support the number of people who will want to evacuate. Therefore, we should start preparing those resources immediately. We should also talk to Gulf State partners who can pump oil because the market will go south quickly. We need to establish whether there is any surge capacity to make up for lost volume.

Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development:

With all of this in mind, we should also plan a face-saving way for Iran to get out of it, i.e., "if you do this, we'll back off." Is there something other than stopping the timetable that would allow them to claim victory but not continue toward withdrawal?

Vice President:

If they allow the inspectors in and they find nothing, that would be a win for them. If they move all their materials out, that would work.

Head of Central Command:

Would they not still withdraw from the NPT, though? They would just have not been demonstrated to be engaging in weapons activities.

Secretary of Defense:

Given North Korean precedent, they could suspend withdrawal. This would be a win for them because it would shorten the timetable, but it also stops them from withdrawing.

Secretary of State:

Would this be an acceptable outcome for us? Does that conform with the rules, to say you could give one days' notice if you want to withdraw?

Secretary of Defense:

In the case of North Korea, it is our legal position that they did finalize their withdraw.

Secretary of State:

So, we accept this business?

Secretary of Defense:

Yes, we accepted that the North Koreans did that.

Secretary of Energy:

Would we not mandate they reset the clock at some point as one of our requirements?

Vice President:

This could be our position, and when the Russians and Chinese object, we could back off.

Secretary of Defense:

Their suspension could be cast as a gesture of bad faith, only giving a chance for IAEA inspectors to establish that no fissile material is present.

Secretary of State:

We were told that one of the things they want is for the United States and Israel to stop their attacks on Iranian facilities. Are we prepared to say that attacks will cease if they come back into conformance?

Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development:

With the NPT or JCPOA?

Secretary of State:

With the NPT.

Vice President:

Israeli attacks have mostly been attacking the precision missile project. Israel may agree to suspend attacks on nuclear sites, but not on the precision missile project, unless Iran agrees to stop the project.

Chief of Staff to the President:

The Israelis would never agree to the last point. They attack them when they are supposedly in conformance with the NPT, so why would they change their policy?

Secretary of Defense:

To agree to suspend attacks, we would have to admit we are involved, which we are in no position to do.

Secretary of State:

We could do a quiet agreement as we have in the past in the Kennedy administration.

Secretary of Defense:

We could try something like that, but it is unlikely that Israel would agree to such a quiet agreement. We should not promise things we cannot deliver on.

Vice President:

We got the Israelis to agree to stop assassinating nuclear scientists, so it is possible.

Secretary of Defense:

Should we include sanctions relief? That is what they really want.

Chief of Staff to the President:

They want money, that is all.

Vice President:

Lifting sanctions would not do much unless we lift terrorism sanctions, but we can offer it anyway. We can always offer to do things that do not ultimately accomplish much as symbolic gestures.

Secretary of Defense:

We could frame it as being pursuant to the JCPOA, i.e., we would lift some sanctions according to the terms of that deal.

Chief of Staff to the President:

Is the United States giving up on the goal of a stronger and longer agreement?

Vice President:

The United States has already given up on a new agreement. U.S. officials have said we do not expect there to be another agreement, but that we expect there to be ways to get Iran to quietly make deals on individual issues. The administration is willing to say that we are not willing to get anything besides the JCPOA. We should prioritize convincing people we know what we are talking about and push the issue of inspection first and foremost, as that is what is going to generate support both at home and internationally.

Secretary of Defense:

In that respect, we should at least give consideration to reaching out to the British, the French, and the Germans, for example, through the JCPOA prism to get their buy-in for whatever strategy we are doing. Their diplomatic elbow grease would help us solicit input and support from those we would have more difficulty appealing to directly. If we could convince them of the merits of our resolution, and have them introduce it, such as through a joint resolution, they might get more mileage in getting it passed than we would. This would also help us to choreograph a good-cop-bad-cop routine with Israel because allies could claim that if anything about the resolution is changed, the United States may take the choke chain off Israel.

Secretary of State:

Do we need a legal brief on the business of declaring certain actions to be violations because they are close to weapons even though they do not have fissile material?

Secretary of Defense:

The United States does not have any questions about this. It has been our position since 2005.

Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development:

Implosion devices must come under all kinds of U.S. controls for knowledge, even though they do not necessarily involve nuclear material. Maybe that would be the angle?

President:

The problem is that the IAEA does not list anything like that, so the legal argument matters a little.

Secretary of State:

We should reiterate our position on withdrawal. You cannot withdrawal in violation of the treaty and divest yourself in violation of your obligations.

Chief of Staff to the President:

But the NPT has an exit option.

President:

It is a withdrawal option, that is different. You cannot withdrawal while you are in violation of the treaty, because that involves violating the contract.

Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development:

We could say implosion devices involve "critical nuclear weapon design information."

Secretary of State:

We do not want to limit ourselves too much.

Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development:

We just need to clarify that the presence of nuclear materials is not necessary. This could be because otherwise, inspectors could get there and there would be no nuclear materials, and they could do nothing about it.

Secretary of Defense:

Interestingly, if you are working on an implosion device without nuclear material, that is technically not a safeguards violation. However, you are still guilty of an Article II violation.

President:

That is precisely why we care about the phrasing of the NPT and how it is interpreted, because the IAEA Safeguards Agreement may not be enough to get you home.

Secretary of Defense:

This is also exactly why we need to make an explicit reference to Article II requirements in the resolution.

Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations:

The easiest and best way to argue our position is that acquisition of the design and production of implosion device is in our view a material breach of Article II of the NPT. This is in the common law sense a

material breach.

Secretary of Defense:

We should make clear that finding of manufacture under Article II includes acquisition and testing of non-nuclear components as well.

Move 2

Resolution Drafting (continued from Move 1)

President:

I have one question regarding the phrase in the resolution that says, "Decides that Iran shall cease any work on implosion devices and suspend its Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) withdrawal." Was there any discussion of how you would get satisfaction on the front of making sure that Iran shall cease any work on implosion devices?

Secretary of State:

Was that provision not tied to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspection?

President:

I was under the impression that IAEA inspection was meant to be tied to special nuclear material.

Secretary of State:

It was meant to be broader.

President:

If that is the case, we may need to clarify. Normally, the IAEA does not look for non-nuclear components and is not authorized to do that.

Vice President:

We could make the second bullet, "requires that in a matter of days any site that the IAEA, whether it be for implosion of nuclear materials or implosion devices […]"

Vice President:

The problem with that is that the IAEA can only look for special nuclear material.

Secretary of Energy:

I thought that they had been granted some sort of broader authority at some point?

Vice President:

Furthermore, the Security Council can give the IAEA any authority they want, even if the IAEA does not currently have expanded authority.

President:

That may be what needs to happen.

Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations:

The Security Council should establish its own commission to inspect and verify Iran on matters outside the IAEA competence as we did in Iraq. Yes, the Security Council can give the IAEA authority, but they do not have the resources to look for non-nuclear materials. Therefore, it may be better to create a new

special commission.

President:

Someone complained that that would take time. Is that the case?

Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations:

That may be. We would need to appoint a head of the commission as well as many other things.

Secretary of Energy:

Also, it may be a bad look to make reference to creating a new special commission as we did in Iraq, since we all know that did not go particularly well.

Secretary of Defense:

These are all good points. There are some residual authorities in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) to look at non-nuclear materials, but because the JCPOA is not being complied with, it is difficult to lean on its provision. It may take a while to create a new special commission. Giving the IAEA permission may be enough, but absent that, they would be limited to looking for nuclear material and could not look for implosion devices in any capacity.

Secretary of the Treasury:

They do have the ability to inspect the correctness and completeness of a state's declarations.

Secretary of Defense:

They do, but that is with regard to special nuclear material and nuclear-related activity, which is where the problem arises.

Secretary of State:

Well, suppose they are looking for special nuclear material and they see round objects and take pictures, would that not blow the lid off Iran's implosion devices? Do we need any more detail than that?

President:

Could you empower the IAEA to look for non-nuclear components and rely on weapons state members of the agency to complete the inspection, or does that require creating a special commission?

Secretary of Defense:

The Security Council could direct the IAEA to inspect whatever may need to be inspected. As for protecting that information, there is some precedent for having members within the Agency who are weapons states members having special clearance. It has been done before in Libya, where a couple of inspectors joined the United States and British teams and verified that concerns were legitimate. We do not need to specify the issue of special clearance in the resolution. But in terms of directing the IAEA to engage in such inspection, we would need to do so in the resolution. This strategy is not 100% foolproof, but there is at least an IAEA procedure that more or less handles the problem.

U.N. Security Council Meeting

United States:

The resolution draft states,

> *The Security Council*,
>
> *Noting* with concern that Iran has taken unjustified steps towards withdrawal from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (the "NPT"),
>
> *Reaffirming* the NPT as an "essential pillar" of international peace and security, and the "heart" of the nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation regime, the international community has a vested stake in assuring that all state parties to the agreement remain in the treaty,
>
> *Noting* with serious concern, there are disturbing indications that Iran is preparing implosion devices capable of receiving weapons-grade nuclear material,
>
> *Reaffirming* that halting such actions, including withdrawal from the NPT, is imperative to assure international peace and security,
>
> *Reaffirms* that if Iran were to complete its withdrawal from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, this would constitute a threat to international peace and security under Article 39 of the Charter,
>
> *Acting* under Article 41 of Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations,
>
> 1. *Decides* that Iran shall cease any work on implosion devices and suspend its NPT withdrawal,
>
> 2. *Directs* the IAEA to conduct inspections for implosion devices,
>
> 3. *Requires* that in a matter of days the IAEA is able to inspect any site that the IAEA deems necessary, and that the IAEA issue a statement on the status of Iran's nuclear program and the location and status of the implosion devices, enriched nuclear material, and centrifuges,
>
> 4. *Decides* further that the Secretary General will inform the IAEA of a reasonable time to report back to the Security Council on a timely and regular basis, and the first report should be within one week,
>
> 5. *Decides* further that should the IAEA not be permitted to inspect the sites it deems necessary, a U.N. Security Council Meeting will be triggered,
>
> 6. *Decides* that in the event that Iran does complete its withdrawal, the Council demands pursuant to Article 41 of the Charter that
>
> i. Iran shall not receive the transfer of from any transferor whatsoever of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or of control over such weapons or explosive devices directly, or indirectly,
>
> ii. Iran shall not manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices,

iii. Iran shall not seek or receive any assistance in the manufacture of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices,

Encourages all the member states to make all efforts to implement this resolution,

Resolves to maintain seized of this matter.

Secretary-General of the U.N.:

The floor is now open for comments.

Iran:

Iran has a number of comments.

Firstly, Iran has every intention of sticking with its IAEA Safeguards Agreements even if it withdraws from the NPT. What concerns Iran is that given United States and Israeli threats, inspections could be turned into a means to collect intel to guide attacks, which has happened in the past when facilities and scientists were killed using information gained from inspections. The idea that the IAEA should inspect any location is inappropriate. The IAEA should only inspect those locations necessary per Safeguards Agreements and should not be going around on fishing expeditions.

Further, Iran notes the monstrous hypocrisy of this resolution. While this resolution notes the importance of the NPT, it does not call all states to join the NPT, and it does not acknowledge that Israel is a nuclear weapons state and that Israel is threatening Iran. Israel should be required to join the NPT, and if anyone should be told that they will not be receiving any nuclear weapons devices, it should be Israel, not Iran, because it is Israel who has these weapons.

Finally, this resolution sets a very bad precedent, because, based on allegations by a state outside of the NPT, it imposes punitive action on Iran, which is not appropriate. It would be much more appropriate for the resolution to call all concerned states to rejoin the JCPOA. In particular, the United States should lift sanctions as it has been called to under the JCPOA. If Israel were to rescind its threats, then Iran would feel compelled to address the issue of withdrawing from the NPT. Iran would also like to point out that the U.S. President has yet to condemn Israeli threats.

China:

China has a number of comments to make, but most importantly, we strongly favor the resolution of this question peacefully through diplomatic means. No country should be thinking about using physical force or military force. We wish to emphasize that in the case that any sanctions or enforcement actions under Article 41 are taken, they should be implemented by each member state. Secondary sanctions should not be invoked.

China also wishes to remind everyone that the Council has a procedural rule called the 24 hours rule. The rule indicates that once a resolution has been presented to the Council for a vote, the Council must wait 24 hours for representatives to receive instructions and guidance from their governments.

France:

The U.S. and French governments have shared worries about other countries withdrawing from the NPT ever since the DPRK claimed to be doing so. However, France would like to offer a couple of criticisms and suggestions.

The first concern is that there is an explicit reference to "indications" of work on implosion devices. However, the Council has not been presented with proof. If they were mere allegations, that would be beneath the Council, but if there were proof, that would be a different story. France would encourage the Americans to be more forthcoming about what information they have available to them. Secondly, it is not clear to France what it is intended that the inspectors from the IAEA would do here that would resolve this problem. It is already the case under Iran's Safeguards Agreement that the IAEA has the authority to look for undeclared nuclear activity, but absent some indications of where inspectors would go to solve the problem of implosion devices, it is unclear to France what inspectors would do and how they could resolve this problem.

As for constructive suggestions, France would like to point out that if Iran were to complete its withdraw from the NPT, it would not have obligations under its Safeguards Agreement to not develop nuclear weapons. Therefore, we may want to address the continuity of Safeguards Agreements in this resolution or encourage Iran to address that issue.

Finally, this resolution lacks some sort of reference to or commitment to the JCPOA, which is something we should all remain committed to; the continuity of the JCPOA is very important to France, therefore, perhaps we could include an additional clause calling all original participants in the JCPOA to return to compliance. Perhaps we could make that a demand under Article 41 of the Charter.

Russia:

Russia is among the greatest supporters of the NPT, and we are concerned about Iran's claims that they will withdraw, however, these actions are clearly a response to the United States' destabilizing actions in the Middle East, especially towards Iran. We agree with France. We would like to see evidence supporting these claims before making a determination. We will not simply believe allegations from Washington, especially when that has led us astray before. We also agree with the French suggestion that a clause referring to the JCPOA should be included in the resolution.

Secretary-General of the U.N.:

Are you recommending any amendments?

Russia:

We are not recommending any amendments at this time because we refuse to consider the resolution until we have the evidence upon which it is supposedly based.

United Kingdom:

The U.K. finds the information sufficiently concerning and the potential, if it is correct, to be so worrying that the issue should be immediately resolved. We feel Iran should not be concerned because if its claims are true, then the inspections mandated by this resolution would clear them of any charges of making nuclear weapons. Therefore, they should welcome the resolution. We stand with the United States on this point.

United States:

Regarding what we know and what we believe to be credible intelligence, the U.S. intelligence is as follows. On July 27th, U.S. intelligence intercepted communications claiming that Iran has decided to develop a nuclear bomb and that they have begun manufacturing nuclear implosion devices. This has been corroborated by Five Eyes colleagues. Our intelligence community has also deemed this intelligence to

be highly credible. We also have photographic evidence that these implosion devices are being developed. The evidence is right before us.

Israel:

Israel would like to begin with an old Jewish maxim, that the work of the righteous is done by others. We support the U.N. Resolution that was brought to the U.N. Security Council by the United States. This situation has been created by the inadequacies of the NPT regime, and we certainly are ready to negotiate a Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zone in the region that will make sure that the inspection regime and that the articles of the IAEA duties are being stringently implemented.

Israel would also like to point out, in response to Iran, that it is Israel that has been threatened by Iran many times to be "erased." Iran has said many times that the Zionist enterprise is not legitimate. Israel has never issued a threat against the existence of Iran, and what we do is merely in defense. Furthermore, Israel hopes that this U.N. Resolution will not pass and that the United States will then have to do something about the situation other than going to the U.N.

Iran:

Iran endorses France's suggestion that there must be a reference to the JCPOA. We think it is particularly important to call upon all parties, and that the United States must be mandated to not withdraw. We are concerned that the United States may withdraw after the crisis passes. Therefore, we would like any withdrawal from the JCPOA to be subject to Security Council approval, as this would make the JCPOA binding.

Iran would also like to second the stance forwarded by Russia, that until the Security Council has been provided with proof of allegations, this resolution is inappropriate. The United States must provide convincing proof that Iran is developing implosion devices at this time, especially given the United States' bad track record with such proof, as can be seen in 2003 with Iraq.

France:

France would not want people to think that France is not concerned about the possibilities that may be faced in this instance. If it is indeed the case that Iran is working on implosion devices, that would be of enormous import, and France would be concerned, as it would be entirely illegal under Article II of the NPT. If this is true, there would be just cause for such a resolution, but it is France's concern that these allegations may not be true. While France appreciates the United States' references to Five Eyes, that is not enough for France, as we have not been allowed to be a member of that group. These concerns are especially true given that the United States has not shared that information with the rest of NATO. The information we have is not enough for France to support this resolution.

Germany:

Germany is pleased with the prospect of a return to the JCPOA but would like to point out that one of the main articles of the JCPOA is that Iran may not develop nuclear weapons. Therefore, if it has done so, that poses a big problem. Germany is also pleased with Iran's claims that they will follow Safeguards Agreements, however, Germany would like to point out that Iran has violated those agreements many times in the past. Therefore, Germany is skeptical that Iran would follow through on its promises.

Iran:

Claims that Iran has violated the agreements are based on misinterpretations of what those agreements

require by IAEA staff and hostile countries. Nevertheless, that is the past. At present, Iran is concerned that there has been no condemnation of Israeli threats and is especially disturbed that there has been no talk of the resolution including a requirement to condemn Israeli threats. Furthermore, Iran is concerned that, while the resolution calls the NPT the "heart" of non-proliferation, it does not call all states in the region, including Israel, to join the regime.

Secretary-General of the U.N.:

Would the representative from Israel like to comment?

Israel:

The Israeli position has been clear for years. The NPT is not satisfactory. We are ready to negotiate with our neighbors a better regime that will satisfy us and eliminate some fears that we have about the intentions of neighbors. This is our alternative. We have seen that the NPT is inadequate, and this is exactly why we have this situation today; because Iran, within the framework of the NPT, has taken actions that could ultimately end up being disastrous.

Secretary-General of the U.N.:

Does the U.K. representative have any comments about the current exchange between Iran and Israel?

United Kingdom:

The U.K. believes that, while the NPT may be insufficient, it is the system we have, and we need to move quickly to resolve these serious questions about security and compliance, and we should all be cooperating and acting on that quickly.

Iran:

If that is the case, then the Council should include condemnation of military attacks by states that cooperate with the IAEA. There is nothing in this resolution condemning military attacks by states cooperating with the IAEA, which means Israel could use the information obtained in further inspections to engage in aggression, as it has in the past. Furthermore, the Council should state that, if the NPT is the system we have, people should join it, instead of staying silent, as Israel has.

United Kingdom:

While it is true that Israel is not a member of the NPT, this is not a meeting of the NPT, it is a meeting of the Security Council. It is not only Israel's security that is at risk, but the security of all countries, because increasing the number of nuclear weapons states in the Middle East could have profound consequences. Therefore, this is something we need to resolve very fast, and all countries ought to join in supporting this resolution.

Secretary-General of the U.N.:

Does the French representative wish to speak?

France:

We are still waiting to hear from our American colleagues on a number of these questions. From the French perspective, this could be a major problem, depending entirely on the intelligence at hand.

Secretary-General of the U.N.:

Perhaps we should ask the United States what else they are willing to do to share information.

United States:

The President has just authorized the United States to share all the photos we have at our disposal and all of the voice communications we have access to. Furthermore, states should feel compelled to act based on the seriousness of these allegations, as the United States may feel the need to act regardless of whether or not this resolution ultimately passes. Therefore, we would like to ask Iran to allow the IAEA to inspect Iranian sites. The IAEA is allowed access to any sites where it is suspected that nuclear materials and equipment may be present, and by our interpretation, that can include equipment such as non-nuclear material necessary to support the operations. All of this would lead the IAEA to be able to determine whether Iran is developing nuclear weapons. Iran should allow inspections or face consequences.

France:

Has the United States received any indication that nuclear material may be involved in the development of these implosion devices?

United States:

We have iron-clad intelligence suggesting that Iran has used nuclear material to begin developing implosion devices.

Russia:

Russia is interested in the full sourcing and technical means used to acquire this information. As a peace-loving nation, we encourage all nations to adhere to the NPT, but we remain committed to stopping the United States from hijacking this body for its own intentions.

Secretary-General of the U.N.:

Has the information that the Americans are now sharing been shared with any of the members present today previously?

United States:

The United States has previously shared this information with the U.K., we were about to share it with France, and we have also consulted with Israel.

Secretary-General of the U.N.:

Would any of those states wish to speak?

China:

China shares the Russian view that the intelligence provided is not convincing and that it is premature to act on a draft resolution. Further, if the resolution is tabled, it should include a statement that all member states of the United Nations are expected, at all times, to adhere to all Articles in the Charter, including those requiring countries to respect territorial sovereignty.

India:

India has been watching this debate with great interest and great concern and wants to strongly reiterate the right of all states to follow appropriate paths to international peace and security. All weapons states must recognize these paths, and unjustified punitive paths must be removed from the resolution. India does not support the spread of any nuclear weapons throughout the world that would be destabilizing to international security.

Israel:

Israel would also like to note that India has voted against Iran in the IAEA several times.

India:

India supports all alternative paths to the NPT and is, in fact, a member of many of these paths.

Mexico:

Mexico would like to reiterate its commitment to the NPT. As a member of the Global South, Mexico would also like to note that, for several years, weapons states have not taken any meaningful steps to reduce their nuclear weapons stockpiles. Furthermore, Mexico believes that a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone might be a good idea in the Middle East. Finally, Mexico thinks that adherence of all states to the NPT is a minimum position and a reasonable expectation.

Secretary-General of the U.N.:

Is the representative from Mexico taking any position on the resolution?

Mexico:

None in particular.

France:

France would like to note that it could be possible for the IAEA to take action without having to engage in the steps that have been outlined in the resolution. One of the provisions of the JCPOA notes that, if the IAEA has concerns about non-nuclear materials that violate the JCPOA requirements, the IAEA may present those issues to Iran, and if Iran is unable to resolve those concerns, then the IAEA may request access to facilities to inspect the alleged sites in question. This is to say, existing mechanisms allow us to take preliminary steps to resolve the issues without necessarily taking the steps outlined in the resolution.

Iran:

If we are talking about actions that are prohibited by the JCPOA, then surely we must talk about the United States, which has withdrawn from the JCPOA and imposed sanctions. Any call to stop actions inconsistent with the JCPOA must call on the United States to rejoin the agreement. Furthermore, any JCPOA inspections cannot be done with a gun to Iran's head, especially when IAEA information has been used to carry out attacks against Iran in the past. So, surely, the Security Council can peacefully resolve this predicament. Iran calls on states like the United States and Israel to adhere to the requirements and mechanisms in the IAEA and JCPOA rather than utilizing bombers and assassins as has been done in the past.

United States:

The United States cannot speak to what previous administrations have done; we can only speak to our intelligence. Before we take this to a vote, this intelligence should be widely distributed among Security Council members, so they can decide for themselves.

Germany:

Germany has a question for Iran. Iran seems to want Israel to join the NPT, but Iran also believes that Israel is not a legitimate government. What value is there for an illegitimate government to join the NPT?

Iran:

Iran does not believe Israel is a legitimate government because they have repeatedly demonstrated their illegitimacy by refusing to adhere to international agreements, as can be seen in their refusal to adhere to U.N. Charter obligations. Iran would welcome in the territory a state that truly represents all the people under its rule; we welcome a one-state solution in which all people who belong in the area and have been forced to flee because of Israeli aggression are allowed to vote. We think that would be a legitimate state.

Secretary-General of the U.N.:

Does anyone else wish to speak on the question and does anyone formally propose any amendments?

Unrelatedly, one part of this whole discussion that has been extremely phony is that nobody knew anything about the intelligence, and that there was no previous contact between states.

United States:

Agreed.

United Kingdom:

The United States did say they shared the information with the U.K.

Iran:

While that may have been phony, it would be realistic for China and Russia to reject the resolution because it is too early to act.

Secretary-General of the U.N.:

Well, that may be true, but another thing to potentially worry about is what happens if Russia and China say yes? We do not know what they will do or how they will vote.

United States:

Do you not think Europe would support the resolution, though?

Secretary-General of the U.N.:

Apparently not.

Iran:

The resolution would likely have to be amended to include a call to return to the JCPOA.

Secretary-General of the U.N.:

That is very likely true. For this resolution to move at all, the United States would have to do something in response to demands. With the French and Iranians focusing on a similar plea, that makes you think that that may well be what the United States would have to agree to.

France:

France would have joined the resolution if references to "indications" were removed and a call to return to the JCPOA were included.

United States:

The United States would be willing to include that. Discussions over the JCPOA have already been happening, and it is Iran that has been dragging its feet.

Iran:

If this resolution were to happen in the Security Council, there would be a quick vote, and then the day after, we would return with a much softer resolution.

China:

China feels the resolution is too premature to be voted for. The resolution should, at minimum, include a paragraph saying that all member states should respect all parts of the U.N. Charter. The United States should understand that Hong Kong and Taiwan are part of China and that any interference of the United States on those issues is against the U.N. Charter, particularly on the human rights question. China would also like the United States to begin issuing visas to members of the Chinese Communist Party.

United Kingdom:

Off the record, would the United States first, before the Security Council meeting, come to China and Russia to offer them concessions to try to get them to support the United States? This seems likely since there is no reason for them to support the United States if it simply brought a resolution out of nowhere.

France:

Last session, there was also a suggestion that we reach out to the British, the French, and the Germans to have them support us before bringing this to the Security Council, and perhaps even pass the baton of presenting the resolution to one of them.

Norway:

Norway believes that it is essential in the process of nuclear disarmament that there be mechanisms for verification. Our approach includes Brazil, the Netherlands, South Africa, Switzerland, and the U.K. Norway also calls for integration of policy perspectives with technical expertise in order to achieve desired outcomes. Norway would also like to establish a funding mechanism that will enable developing countries to participate in NDV activities.

Secretary-General of the U.N.:

Shall we now take a vote? Or is the United States of the view that it withdraws and does not table the resolution? It is an up or down on the original resolution unless someone submits an amendment.

France:

There does not seem to have been much receptivity to any amendments. In the real world, clusters of countries would emerge supporting different views after discussions were had between the different countries. However, that would be difficult to replicate within this simulation.

Iran:

The Iranian representative's primary concern was calling for a statement that everything should be resolved peacefully, and that military force should not be used. As such, an amendment or something of the sort would likely be necessary on that front. Furthermore, it would be surprising if something were not included calling for uniform adherence to the NPT.

United States:

The United States could agree to those suggestions. The United States would be willing to include a statement about returning to the JCPOA and a statement calling for everyone to adhere to the NPT.

Germany:

That second one may be dicey, as it would create a lot of problems for Israel.

Iran:

It would, but under appropriate circumstances. Furthermore, in a situation where all countries respect all U.N. member rights to have full benefits of the Charter including territorial integrity, the Israelis would say, well, as soon as the Iranians accept us, we can talk.

France:

Alternatively, as a compromise, the resolution could include a reference to the 1995 Resolution.

Secretary-General of the U.N.:

How do other people feel about this?

Iran:

Russia and China will still feel that this is premature.

United Kingdom:

Just having proof may not be enough. If you have a picture of devices in the room, how do you know for certain where the room is?

United States:

Well, there may be pictures of people. There are some like that in the nuclear archive.

France:

If the United States' intelligence seems to add up in everyone's mind, the United States could get a lot of support for this resolution. Even if the resolution ultimately fails, that still matters. Whether it is an isolated veto or everyone thinks it is a bad idea makes a big difference. Getting a lot of support, especially

from JCPOA partners, would isolate Iran with Russia and China.

United Kingdom:

The question "where is the room?" was meant to communicate that it is impossible to tell if a given facility is in Iran.

Secretary-General of the U.N.:

Right, that is why the United States representative said, "well, what if there's a picture of an Iranian?"

United Kingdom:

It could be doctored.

Secretary-General of the U.N.:

It could, but for that, there is forensics. It becomes a debate.

United States:

Presumably, the United States is also going around and saying that, absent a resolution, it will engage in military action. This would give people an incentive to agree to inspection to stop the United States from doing anything rash.

Secretary-General of the U.N.:

This discussion is useful for the game. Positions on the NPT matter, and positions on the resolution matter. It matters if you fail big or fail small, especially if you plan on taking action outside of the context of the Security Council.

Russia:

Russia would want to slow the process down and water down the language, but Russia would almost certainly consult with the Chinese if possible. If there was enough consensus and the language was watered down enough and the United States was able to get non-permanent members on board, Russia would potentially be concerned about being the lone veto.

Secretary-General of the U.N.:

The fact that, if there is no resolution, it becomes every man for himself, is also a salient point. People would almost certainly be noticing the United States' contingency plans.

Russia:

There is a scenario where Russia agrees to a watered-down resolution, in hopes that it would make it more difficult for the United States to engage in military action. At the same time, though, Russia wants to keep U.S.-Iran tensions high, which makes this a careful dance for Russia.

India:

India seconds the motion to add a JCPOA provision.

Secretary-General of the U.N.:

Everybody should now vote yes or no, and, if no, explain what could potentially get you to vote yes.

United Kingdom:

The U.K. supports the resolution in its present form.

France:

France would support the resolution if there were an amendment adding a demand to comply with the JCPOA for all members of the agreements. At the very least, France would not oppose it and may support it if the intelligence were strong.

Russia:

Russia's position would be contingent on a lot of backchannel negotiations, especially with China. Russia may not necessarily veto, but it would not support the present form of the resolution. However, Russia may be hesitant to abstain, given 2011. Our interests in this situation are both for Iran to not get a nuclear weapon, but also for the United States to remain distracted in the Middle East, so Russia does not want a solution to this problem.

Secretary-General of the U.N.:

But would you vote yes or no?

Russia:

Russia would want to water this resolution down and stall for as long as possible. The biggest thing would be stalling for time by saying that Russia wants to investigate the intelligence provided by the United States. As such, at the present moment, Russia would vote no.

China:

China would vote no. Any reaction from the United States insofar as the points China is concerned about may change the PRC's opinion.

United States:

The United States would not be willing to amend this resolution but would agree to bilateral negotiations.

China:

That is not firm enough. The PRC would want additional paragraphs demanding strict adherence to all Articles of the U.N. Charter in every context.

United States:

The United States may be able to go along with that.

India:

India is prepared to support the resolution with the addition of the JCPOA provision and with the understanding that the special IAEA inspection will not be unduly dominated by the so-called weapons states.

Iran:

Iran would welcome a resolution about the problems to peace and security in the resolution. Iran would want four components. First, Iran would want a component saying that no military threats can be made against member states, that any concerns should be resolved peacefully, and that there are no justifications for use of military force. Second, Iran would want the Security Council to call every country in the region to join the NPT. Third, Iran would want the Security Council to make the JCPOA binding to prevent the United States from leaving once again. Lastly, Iran requires that this resolution not single out Iran in any provisions and that it is instead applicable to everyone. Iran would endorse and support a resolution that meets those criteria.

Israel:

Israel has expressed its concerns about the inadequacy of the international arrangements to prevent countries from getting nuclear weapons. However, given the circumstances, because we need to figure out what is happening in Iran, Israel supports the resolution in its present form.

Germany:

Germany would support the resolution in its current form but would prefer France's version, which requires rejoining of the JCPOA.

Estonia:

Estonia would support the resolution as written.

Mexico:

Mexico would strongly prefer a version of the resolution including language requiring rejoining the JCPOA, but would support the resolution as written. Additionally, Mexico would comment that much more needs to be done on the front of denuclearization.

Norway:

Norway supports the resolution as written but reiterates its views on policy and technical synergy.

Ireland:

Ireland supports the resolution as written.

National Security Council Meeting

Secretary of State:

We seem to have maintained using force as a backup option, and in earlier meetings, we have talked about prepositioning forces, but did we ever actually make a decision to use force?

President:

We did not ever make a decision, but we did ultimately decide that we want to leave it on the table.

Secretary of State:

The problem is that once the option is on the table, it is difficult to back down.

President:

Well, we backed down in North Korea, even when people thought deployment was happening.

Vice President:

Using force is a bad idea. This is a situation where we should double down on diplomacy. If the resolution fails, we could take the problem to the IAEA Board where China and Russia do not have a veto, to show that the United States has international support. Nevertheless, while the United States should not use force, Israel could be more aggressive, to encourage diplomacy.

Secretary of State:

But do we ever really want to use force?

Secretary of Defense:

The answer on that front would depend on the assessment of how much time we have. Even without a resolution, there are still ways that inspection of the location could happen. However, even if inspection did happen, it would still be quite a bit of time before we have any real information as to what Iran is doing. Even assuming there is nuclear material involved, it would take several weeks if not more for labs to come back with results. It is a non-trivial elapsing of time from where we are right now to an IAEA answer that may or may not corroborate implosion device allegations. That is a lot of time where Iran might keep on going with its development. From a defense perspective, we would want to know what our projected timetable for Iranian development of a bomb is.

President:

The timetable is irrelevant if we cannot do anything in the way of targeting.

Secretary of State:

What are the targets?

Secretary of Defense:

Well, if we believe they could get a bomb, we or the Israelis may believe it to be beneficial to degrade their odds of being able to use a bomb effectively. We would almost certainly not be able to find the bomb, but we could degrade their ability to use the bomb by taking out missiles. However, that would require a big decision to go to war.

President:

As I understand it, they keep their missiles in deep caves, so this would require a major operation.

Secretary of State:

Is this Iran-specific, or is it U.S. policy that we are willing to use force to stop anybody from getting a bomb?

Secretary of Defense:

It varies based on country. Our reaction to Luxembourg getting a bomb would be the same from the perspective of the NPT, but different in other ways, namely on a military front.

President:

The idea of getting led by the nose by the Israelis into a war is not a good one. It seems we are going to have to make a decision that involves sticking to diplomacy even though there is a risk that we will be too late to stop a bomb. Is that what people are recommending? We may have to live with the possibility that, if we do the diplomatic thing, perhaps Iran will get a bomb. Even if that happens, though, the United States will have clean diplomatic skirts, and we will not have let the Israelis lead us into a war. That would be our decision, not theirs.

Vice President:

What is the intelligence community's assessment of the situation? They have long argued that Iran would not attempt to manufacture a weapon until they have the materials to develop an arsenal of at least five. Both the intelligence community and Israel believe that if Iran develops one weapon and tests it, that is simply to show "we *were* armed and we *are* dangerous."

Secretary of Energy:

There have indeed been public statements that Iran will want five weapons, however, our policy is driven by whether they could acquire even one weapon; once they have one weapon, they have crossed the rubicon. Whether or not Israel will be willing to wait is uncertain. We do not want to get led into a war by Israel, but once Israel goes to war with Iran, what are we going to do other than getting drawn in?

President:

Does Iran need to test implosion devices?

Secretary of Energy:

Given Russian support, they would not need to test implosion devices for technical reasons. If they do tests, it will be for political reasons.

Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations:

Preparing United States forces for potential action will help support diplomatic action by convincing the Iranians that the United States is serious. However, the final decision to use force should still be withheld.

President:

Is it the view of anyone that the preparation of forces inevitably means we are going to war with Iran?

Secretary of State:

Not inevitably, but it would be very embarrassing to have forces there and not do anything with them.

Secretary of Defense:

That depends on what we are doing with the forces. If the objective is to, at least partly, increase the odds of diplomatic success, there is not any inevitability to us posturing up and having to go to war just because

we postured up.

Secretary of State:

Logically, no, but politically, yes.

Secretary of Defense:

The logic then is that we should never posture up because we are never certain that we will go to war.

Secretary of State:

No, we just need to be prepared to use deployed forces if necessary. We cannot just deploy our forces with no intention of ever using them.

Secretary of Defense:

The question then becomes what we are willing to do militarily if Iran gets a bomb.

Secretary of State:

Let me ask another question. Do we prioritize protecting the NPT or protecting Israel?

Secretary of Defense:

In this situation, protecting the NPT and protecting Israel are the same thing.

Vice President:

There is broad consensus in Israel and within the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) that Iran's approach to nuclear weapons is not that of North Korea. Israel thinks that Iran knows that if they were to test a nuclear weapon, Israel would attack, and the world would support them. Therefore, Iran believes that they need a small arsenal of at least five weapons before they can do anything.

President:

Secretary of Energy, is Israel in a position to make five weapons quickly, or would that take a long time?

Secretary of Energy:

It would likely take them until the end of next year, depending on how many centrifuges.

President:

If this is the case, the Israelis should not be that hot to attack right now.

Secretary of State:

Plus, Israel has many nuclear weapons themselves, which should further temper their desire to be aggressive.

President:

Has this information been shared with the Israelis?

Secretary of Energy:

There has been no communication with the Israelis.

President:

Then perhaps this is information that should be shared with the Israelis. This may stave them off and may mean that we can more fully pursue the diplomatic option for the time being. We would rather Iran be worried about what we are going to do than be worried about what Israel is going to do, which means we have a vested interest in preventing Israeli aggression.

Head of Central Command:

We can either build up military force so that we have options without it being particularly loud, or we can signal much more loudly.

President:

There is no point in being coy at this point. The idea of hiding deployments is not interesting because the Iranians and the rest of the world must see our forces. There must be pressure on the diplomatic system to perform. We do not want the forces to be arranged so all they can do is attack, because that would defeat the point of using forces to encourage diplomacy.

Secretary of State:

And what would our forces attack anyway?

President:

That is precisely the problem. It seems unlikely that a show of force will get us what we want with regards to the weapons because we do not know where they are.

Attorney General:

Force posturing may cause Iran to suspend their withdrawal from the NPT. It would not get them to change or suspend the development of implosion devices, but might it get them to suspend withdrawal, at the very least.

President:

That fact is less interesting than the diplomatic pressure created by force posturing. The point that there needs to be a cover story other than just attacking is a good one because there needs to be a credible reason why the forces might otherwise be there.

Secretary of Defense:

Was there not consensus on force posturing of some sort? Yesterday's discussion seemed to center at least partly on using the threat of force to get Iran to capitulate. Furthermore, yesterday, we were told that the Israelis were asking for support in a strike. If that is the case, it is not clear that we could truly believe the fact that the Israelis would be willing to back down just because Iran is unable to acquire five nuclear weapons. The Israelis seem to believe there is some sense of urgency right now. Even if you assume that assembly of the devices cannot be done in parallel, we still have the problem of the Israelis believing they are under much more mortal peril than they are.

Secretary of State:

We heard from the Israeli representative that they want the diplomatic efforts to fail because they want to move to a more violent approach, so they will be trying to get the United States in that position, and it seems we would have to be very wary about that.

President:

It seems that if we have some other narrative for why the forces are being built up other than an attack, and if the Israelis are convinced that five weapons are needed before one is produced, the Israeli interest in being trigger happy goes down. Furthermore, U.S. deployment would likely make Israel less eager to be aggressive. The big question is what happens if diplomatic efforts do not slow the program down.

Secretary of State:

I find it extremely unlikely that this "five are needed" thing would fly with Israel.

Vice President:

Regardless of what you think, it has flown with Israel in the past. It is the single biggest stumbling block for why Netanyahu was unable to get the Israeli Defense Force to attack Iran in the past; it has already happened once. It may not be the same debate again, but it has happened in the past.

Secretary of State:

Why would anyone think a country with one or five bombs would attack one with 200?

Vice President:

I do not know why, but regardless, this is a discussion that has happened in Israel in the past.

Secretary of the Treasury:

We are unsure if they have a short weaponization timeline. It might be close to a year still, although they could probably do some weaponization in parallel. Nevertheless, Israel would likely act if they knew that a bomb is being built, even if it is not complete.

Vice President:

Agreed. Iran building one bomb would be quite concerning. We should monitor the situation to see the Israeli reaction. On a personal level, the development of one weapon is, of course, worrying, but the Israelis and the intelligence community have not been worried about one weapon in the past.

Secretary of Defense:

We have been conflating building a device and breakout. They are not the same. It is possible to build a device without breaking out. Israel would be concerned about the building of a bomb regardless of NPT status.

President:

Would wide-area surveillance provisions be unsuccessful in finding anything suspect?

Vice President:

No, they would likely be extremely effective. The Iranian nuclear program has been leaking like a sieve. Iranians seem to be unable to keep secrets.

President:

We should first brief the Secretary of Energy's timeline for the development of five nuclear devices. We should then tell Israel that we agree with the previous Israeli Defense Force assessment that Iran will not develop one bomb until they have the material to develop five. We should also begin posturing forces in the region, tell Israel not to leave home before us, and make it clear that that is the only way for them to have U.S. support in a crisis, which they would certainly want.

Secretary of Defense:

Should we really say, "Don't worry, they only have three bombs, they won't do anything bad until they have five?"

President:

No, we should tell Israel that we share their view that Iran will not even attempt to make the first bomb until they have the materials to make five. This, at the very least, triggers debates in Israel. An important question to consider is what would happen if we do not find anything through IAEA inspection.

Secretary of Energy:

Certainly, you are going to find something on the nuclear side. Searching random sheds for implosion devices would not work, but it is much easier to find centrifuges, and if they are enriching highly-enriched uranium (HEU), that poses an immediate problem.

Secretary of State:

Is this five-bomb thing not arbitrary?

President:

Yes, but what is arbitrary and what Israel believes are two different things. The fact is Israel has believed this in the past.

Secretary of State:

Maybe it was just something fabricated to argue with Netanyahu.

President:

That may be true, but we should still try to reinforce the belief. Our primary goal should be to get as much out of this inspection as possible.

Secretary of State:

What handle does the IAEA have on what is being produced in Iran today?

Secretary of Energy:

They are producing 60% and they are producing 20%. The production rates are not that high. They have stocks of lower enriched uranium. They can get two bombs by the end of this year. As far as the next three bombs are concerned, a lot is going to depend on how many centrifuges they can deploy, because they will already have used their stockpiles.

Secretary of State:

How many kilograms of uranium are required for one bomb?

Secretary of Energy:

About 40 kilograms are required for one bomb. While there are ways that Iran could theoretically have four bombs by the end of this year by using less uranium, that is extremely unlikely.

President:

All we have done through our discussions so far is define the signal-to-noise ratio, which is always present. We should not do this brief publicly, we should brief Israel privately and make it very clear that we expect them to help the IAEA find what we expect them to find, and we should make clear that we will help too. The question that we still do not have an answer to is what will happen if the IAEA does not find very much at all. It may be unlikely, but we should still have an answer to the question. The worry is that Iran might have so much material in their covert program that they could develop a bomb with it.

Secretary of Energy:

It is unclear if they are going to get enough centrifuges. The IAEA has some insight into Iran's centrifuge production and stocks. Further, we did find the clandestine facilities in 2009, so we would likely find any clandestine program during an inspection. What is more concerning is not that the uranium goes missing, but instead that it becomes HEU.

President:

That is a good point. We should start making demands that if anything is treated to be above 20%, there need to be things done to make it inaccessible to the Iranians.

Head of Central Command:

Insofar as potential problems with this proposition, it may leave us in a dangerous position six months from now, when we have put the ball in the Israelis' court. They are looking at three bombs, not one, and they know Iran is developing implosion devices. Keeping the muzzle on Israel leaves them with fewer options and means that all the options that they would have available would be more extreme.

President:

Your worry is that the Israelis might use nuclear weapons?

Head of Central Command:

Potentially. If they truly cannot live in a world with a nuclear Iran and believe we are buying time for a diplomatic strategy, they may feel the need to.

Secretary of Defense:

Our concern is not just with Israel using nukes, but with them using force at all. What happens if our assumptions do not hold, and Iran builds a weapon before they have the material for five?

Vice President:

The Israeli arrogance is such that they would attack conventionally first before using nukes.

Secretary of Defense:

Alternatively, they could threaten to use nukes unless the United States gets involved.

Vice President:

They also probably would not tell us that they are going to try to strike conventionally, because, with the United States, it is easier to get forgiveness than permission.

President:

All of that may be true, but I still have not heard what we should do, just what we should worry about.

Vice President:

We should wait for the Israelis to start a war, get dragged in, and then say that we did not start it.

President:

That is not persuasive. Any alternative views?

Secretary of the Treasury:

What about the economic options? We can still strangle their economy while waiting for inspection results.

President:

Can we do that? Is strangling their economy not something you only do when you know what Iran is doing?

Secretary of the Treasury:

While that may be true under normal circumstances, if we are convinced that Iran is doing something and is hiding it, draconian sanctions are still an option.

Secretary of State:

I am still not persuaded that we know what the targets of any military actions would be.

President:

It seems like enforcing sanctions is very plausible. As a backup plan, draconian sanctions seem to have advantages regarding the neighbors, because it sends a signal that if you do what Iran has done, this is what happens to you as well. Regarding planning around what Israel would do, it seems unnecessary, because if they go on a bombing run, we can just tell them they are on their own.

Secretary of State:

We do not even know if they could pull it off since it involves so many targets.

President:

Right. It would be extremely difficult at the very least.

Vice President:

If the Israeli were to engage in that kind of raid, we could see Hezbollah raining missiles over Israel, which would mean that the United States would come to Israel's aid.

President:

The latter point is separate, and we should make it clear that the United States would come to Israel's aid if it were attacked. We have lots of choices, but most of them are not great. The option of draconian economic sanctions seems to be one of the best at this point, as it creates a threat of sanctions, but also gives us a cover for deploying forces and getting ships in the region.

Secretary of Defense:

The idea that our military would be used to enforce sanctions is not credible, given that we have failed to get U.N. support even for a strong inspection demand.

President:

The presence of the forces gives credibility to the option of sanctions. Whether we use the military to enforce them is a separate question. Furthermore, we need to get other countries, at least our closest allies, on board to help us with sanctioning.

Secretary of Defense:

No one is going to believe that we are going to use our forces to enforce sanctions.

President:

There may be some problems with everything, but we must do something. What we must do is settle on something and hope both that we can stall Israel and that we can find something through inspections. By the way, did we ever reach a consensus on whether the inspections are happening in the first place?

Secretary of Energy:

We agreed to approach the IAEA and try to get them going separate from the U.N.

Secretary of State:

Right, because Russia and China do not have veto power.

President:

What are the odds of that succeeding?

Secretary of Defense:

The odds are not that bad. It has happened before. The IAEA has shown that if the information is credible, they would be willing to request a special inspection.

President:

So, then it seems as though one of our assumptions is that the IAEA will agree. The next is that the Iranians will allow inspection. Another assumption is that the IAEA will find something during the inspection. Yet another is that we can hold Israel back from aggression. And, finally, we are assuming that we could go back to the U.N. in the future and get Iran to change their behavior. If one of these assumptions fails, it seems like the fallback is some sort of multinational sanctions regime that will be enforced by some forces and capabilities that we will have in the region. What the Israelis do, ultimately, we do not know, which will present us with another set of problems, meetings, and decisions. Since we have so many uncertainties, though, we do not necessarily need to start thinking about that right now.

Secretary of Defense:

Are sanctions necessarily tertiary in sequence? It seems to be a separate option. We could do sanctions regardless of what happens.

President:

That is true. We need to think about what would trigger severe economic sanctions.

Secretary of the Treasury:

If we had evidence that Iran had diverted nuclear material, that would help.

President:

Presumably, if we found something like that, we could go back to the U.N. and pass some sort of resolution, as the primary reason that Russia and China are stalling is that there is not sufficiently clear evidence that Iran is doing anything bad.

Move 3

National Security Council Meeting

President:

First, let us draw attention to two things. Tonight, we are going to go back to the National Security Council (NSC), since the U.N. initiative failed. It appears that it would be useful to develop the national strategy further, given our inability to do anything at the U.N. Security Council. After that, we will open a discussion about a number of questions to craft the takeaways of the game. Before we get into wire-brushing our strategy, it would be helpful if everybody would consider two pieces of information that have come to light in the past 36 hours.

First, there was a piece in the Wall Street Journal (WSJ) that ran today that said, "maybe it would be best for all parties concerned if the Biden administration admitted it cannot stop Iran from getting nuclear weapons." The article argued that, instead, the Biden administration ought to simply assert that it will hold Iran to its recently repeated claim that it has no intention of getting nuclear weapons while letting go of concrete objectives. According to the article, simply saying we will hold Iran accountable for getting a nuclear weapon would allow us to put further pressure on the human rights issue. That would also free us to not be as responsible if they get a bomb. The argument is useful to ponder, because the strategy we have formulated does not look like it will be all that successful, and could ultimately put us in a situation where failure would be read as meaning the United States can no longer prevent any countries from getting nuclear weapons.

Having said that, does anyone at the Principals Meeting have any comments to make about approaching the IAEA to request special inspections?

Secretary of State:

With the U.N. resolution having failed, the IAEA is less likely to acquiesce to any requests for inspection.

Secretary of Defense:

If the question is the agency acting on its own gumption, that will depend on the information that is shared. If the authorities are convinced by the information, it is entirely possible that they would say yes; it is not just a political question based on what happened at the U.N.

President:

The question arises, how much information do we have that would dazzle and amaze? Are our assessments of the situation all we have? What can we share that would turn the tide?

Director of National Intelligence:

The point that it would be very difficult to persuade the IAEA to be aggressive on its own in the wake of a failed U.N. resolution is a good one.

President:

Is that another way of saying that perhaps we took the wrong course of action, and should have gone to the IAEA first instead of the U.N.?

Director of National Intelligence:

Approaching the IAEA first may have been a better course of action than approaching the U.N. first.

President:

That is an important takeaway.

Director of National Intelligence:

The body of evidence that has been driving the principals' discussions for the past couple of days has been photographs from Israelis, our own oversight images, and human reporting on the capabilities of the Iranians. Some of that might be too sensitive to share with the IAEA. The best we have is the pictures of the facilities.

President:

Is there anyone we can share the most sensitive info with?

Director of National Intelligence:

We have already shared it with most of our closest allies. We have shared it with the British, and most of it with the French. One would assume those allies would be supportive.

President:

Have we ascertained what close allies would be willing to do in making an appeal to the IAEA Director?

Secretary of State:

If information is so critical, would we not share it with the IAEA?

President:

We almost certainly would. However, it is not mutually exclusive for us to share and for our allies to vouch for us.

Director of National Intelligence:

Would sharing all our information be wise? If we do get into the possibility of a shooting war with Iran, either by choice or if our hand is forced by the Israelis, do we want to jeopardize our best sources of intelligence on Iran just for a 50/50 chance that we could get the IAEA to do something?

President:

That is a good point. It is a coin toss.

Representative of the U.S. to the U.N.:

The IAEA has tried to send inspectors to Iran, but Iran has been rejecting IAEA inspections. The only remaining task for the IAEA is for the Board of Governors to decide that Iran is in non-compliance with its inspection safeguard obligations and report that non-compliance fact to the Security Council, which gives the legal basis for the Security Council to act. That is the best the Board of Governors could do, and if that happens, we could have a chance of succeeding.

President:

What has the success been in getting the IAEA to help in non-compliance? In the case of Iran, have we ever been able to do that?

Secretary of Defense:

Yes, in 2005.

Representative of the U.S. to the U.N.:

Once.

President:

What was that about and how did we do that?

Vice President:

In 2005, the position of the Russians was that the Iranians were in non-compliance with the Safeguards Agreement, but that that was different from non-compliance with the NPT. I am not sure that we ever got the Russians or Board of Governors to say that Iran was not in compliance with the NPT.

Secretary of Defense:

That is exactly right. It is not clear that the Board of Governments could make the NPT call. However, simply making the call about the Safeguards Agreement permitted Security Council action.

President:

Could we get the British to make such a proposition?

Vice President:

A great deal of what happened in 2005 was Iranian non-cooperation. It was not so much that anybody was persuaded by presented intelligence, it was the Iranian refusal to cooperate that got people to change their minds.

President:

It has just been stated that they have not been open about inspections. Perhaps we need to learn more about that. If we have proof of that as well as proof of the substantive violations, perhaps that could get us somewhere. What have they not been allowing? Is it non-compliance or just a lack of fulsome cooperation?

Representative of the U.S. to the UN:

This is for the Board of Governors to decide. They have been repeatedly rejecting inspectors, which is tantamount to non-compliance. It depends on the subjective judgment of the Board of Governors.

President:

Which of our allied countries would be best to push this? A U.S. lead seems bad since we burned a lot of political capital with our failed U.N. approach. Therefore, if we take the lead, we would be likely to fail.

Vice President:

It seems more likely to succeed if the French take the lead than if the British do. The British would be seen as our lapdogs.

President:

Any insight on what is possible with the French?

Secretary of State:

We have no such insight.

President:

In that case, finding out should be an action item. If we cannot get the French to act, there is no use in us acting.

Secretary of State:

Why are we not talking to the Iranians directly?

President:

That is one direction to take, but it is not mutually exclusive with talking to the French.

Secretary of State:

Talking with Iran should be the first thing we do.

President:

Have we reached out yet?

Secretary of State:

No, we have not.

Vice President:

There is no reason to even try. The Iranians would not respond.

President:

That is not a decision worth having right now. There is no harm in trying to reach out.

Secretary of Energy:

The discussion will be a "he said she said." We will accuse them of making weapons, and they will claim not to be making weapons.

President:

What if we did not say that? What if, instead, we just asked them why they are not allowing inspections and offered a quid pro quo of some sort? If we have not done that first, there is no real point in asking other

countries to do the pleading for us, because the first thing our allies will do is ask if we have talked to Iran. What should we do when we reach out to Iran?

Secretary of State:

Should we not just ask them what is going on?

Vice President:

No. The earlier suggestion was the best course of action; we should ask them why they are not allowing inspections.

Secretary of Defense:

If we can, we should ask the Board of Inspectors to report to Vienna. We want the full story about Iranian rebuffs. The info the Director-General will give is the predicate material we will need to reach out to the French.

President:

Could we get the French to ask the Director-General?

Secretary of Defense:

There are lots of people we could hopefully get to privately reach out to the Director-General. These are not mutually exclusive things. We have likely already got people privately pressing the Director-General to report quickly and clearly on Iranian rebuffs.

President:

Any comments about this particular set of suggestions?

Vice President:

It is very unlikely to have an impact on the Iranian progress towards a bomb.

Secretary of State:

All of this operates under the assumption that attempting to acquire a bomb is in fact what Iran is doing.

President:

We seem to be grappling with two problem sets. There is an unspoken assumption that if Iran gets the bomb, that is the end of the NPT. This means we should go through all means to block the bomb, including backing military attacks.

The other view occasionally floated is that taking a military approach will be seen as anything other than supporting the NPT, and that is going to hurt the NPT even more than doing nothing. This means that if you want to block other countries from getting the bomb, you need to take a diplomatic approach that will probably end up meaning nuclear weapons states will have to offer something up in exchange.

There is also this third idea, which is to say that we are against nuclear weapons, that we will keep trying, and that the Iranians do not want the bomb, all while changing the subject to non-proliferation internationally and attempting to hold Iran accountable for human rights violations. Which of these strike us as being

most sound or most unsound? They are three different ways of thinking, and we seem to be struggling to square the circle between these things.

Vice President:

It is extremely likely that if we go the diplomatic route, at least the Saudis, if not some other countries, will pursue the same capabilities that Iran has. Furthermore, this administration and Congress seem to have very little interest in pursuing an ulterior approach, which seems to argue for a third option, which was advocated for in the Wall Street Journal article.

President:

The Wall Street Journal article went a bit too far in saying that human rights are the only thing that matters. The rejoinder is that both human rights and nonproliferation matter, which is clear when you look at the pressure that a nuclear Iran creates for the neighbors. It is not clear that Iran is going to get a bomb, only that they want one.

Secretary of Defense:

What in these options is inconsistent with unilateral tools such as sanctions? Sanctions seem to be compatible with all the options. It is not about telling Iran if we are okay with the bomb, it is just a question of whether kinetic option is something we might pursue. Sanctions seem like a good option because they strengthen the meta-narrative for other countries that if they get the bomb, they will functionally become North Korea, which nobody wants.

President:

The Secretary of State seems to have reservations about sanctions.

Secretary of State:

No. If we are talking about a scenario in which Iran has gotten or is going to get the bomb, we should certainly have a harsh reaction, including but not necessarily limited to sanctions. However, originally, we said we should impose sanctions until they allow inspections. The problem with this is that if they want a bomb, they will never allow inspections.

Director of National Intelligence:

We seem to have almost set up a strawman on going to war with Iran. As the Secretary of Defense noted, we have a broad range of tools that we can use to increase costs involved in Iranian nuclearization, including making some of their money go away.

This could become the basis for a private conversation with Iran, where we can make clear to them what will happen if they do pursue the bomb. We could set something up in Vienna as early as tomorrow with a senior intelligence official, and we can make clear that we are worried that this situation might spiral, that we cannot control Israel, that the international costs might be substantial, and that the Iranians will have to choose very quickly if they want to pursue a path that will make them look like the DPRK.

Secretary of State:

If Iran is going for a bomb, have they not already factored all of this in?

Director of National Intelligence:

Maybe they think we will simply ignore it.

Secretary of Defense:

Just because they have already factored it in does not mean we should not take these actions and communicate the costs to Iran. The alternative is giving them more of a windfall bonus for proliferating.

Secretary of State:

Agreed, we should take all these actions. However, it has thus far been presented as a threat, not a response; a threat would likely be ineffective.

President:

It is not just the threat that we need to offer, we will also have to give Iran something that they might want. You need to make things equitable.

Secretary of Defense:

Well, we need to watch out for moral hazard. If part of our concern is the lesson that other countries draw from this, giving Iran some sort of concession might create the narrative that proliferation will lead to the United States capitulating to demands.

President:

There are concessions we could make that may not be seen as extortion. For instance, we can offer things that we have never considered because we thought we should not have to, such as a Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zone in the Middle East.

Secretary of Homeland Security:

Part of our plan involves the United States deploying military forces along with its allies in case Iran gets the bomb. I have a few questions about specifics. Who are the allies? What are the sets of principles that would guide these forces?

President:

The part of the plan in question, which is to, “move U.S. and allied forces to the region with the ability to enforce the sanctions,” is not necessarily as punishment for getting the bomb, but rather to enforce sanctions that will be in place until Iran allows inspections.

Secretary of Homeland Security:

And the allies in question, are they NATO states, Gulf States, or others?

President:

Principally, we mean any friends with ships. Anyone who has one, we will take. That point was deliberately left open-ended because we are not super sure who may be willing to contribute.

Chief of Staff to the President:

Some Gulf State allies may side with Iran.

President:

We have gotten the message from Israel that they want to do all sorts of things. However, because they clearly want the United States to be involved, maybe they will not be as trigger-happy as we originally believed; they may wait for a situation in which they can guarantee U.S. involvement.

Secretary of State:

What private discussions should we undertake?

Chief of Staff to the President:

This discussion so far has, to some extent, been surprising. The focus on the NPT is odd. If a country does something you do not want, you respond kinetically. We need to discuss whether a nuclear Iran would be bad. If it is bad, then we should do something about it with military force.

Representative of the U.S. to the United Nations:

The United States has always tried to have legal basis for its military action. In the U.N. context, that always has to be self-defense or authorization from the Security Council. From that point of view, even though our attempts to pass a U.N. resolution failed, we should continue efforts in New York, even if just to pass a softer resolution, as that could result in some sort of authorization from the Security Council. In the meantime, the United States should continue putting pressure on Iran to encourage them to be aggressive so that the United States could perhaps respond militarily by expressing self-defense.

Chief of Staff to the President:

We should not do that. Going to the U.N. signals weakness to Iran.

Representative of the U.S. to the United Nations:

That may be true, and that is why we must do both actions concurrently.

Secretary of State:

We have also had bad experiences with the United States using military force in the past few thousand years.

President:

U.S. military action in the Middle East is not such an easy sell anymore. You need to have an argument about the United States being attacked. The Iranians have used proxies to attack forces still in the region, but the argument cannot look concocted, otherwise, it could cost the President his re-election.

Vice President:

Does the Director of National Intelligence think that Iran will test the bomb if they get it? How confident would we be that they have the bomb if they do not test it?

Director of National Intelligence:

We do not know for certain that they would test it. They might have the necessary schematics to not test a bomb. Iran may want to create a general sense that they have the bomb but without the international program that comes with testing.

Vice President:

How confident are we that we could persuade people that Iran has the bomb if they do not test it?

Director of National Intelligence:

Who are we persuading?

Vice President:

There are several groups we need to persuade. The American public. Allies. The Russians and Chinese.

Director of National Intelligence:

You raise a legitimate question. There will always be some ambiguity if they do not test the bomb.

Vice President:

Should we exploit that ambiguity? One of our options is changing the topic. We could just deny that Iran has the bomb, as we did with Pakistan.

President:

We have done this in the past, yes.

Vice President:

If it lasts through the President's term, that is a considerable accomplishment.

Director of National Intelligence:

This raises the question of whether we should prioritize the NPT or stopping Iran from getting the bomb. The Vice President's middle ground keeps the NPT intact and makes clear to Iran that we know they have the bomb and that bad things will happen to them if they make it clear that they have it.

Secretary of Defense:

How does pretending states do not have the bomb protect the NPT?

Vice President:

We have done it before.

Secretary of Defense:

Many of the past states in question were not NPT states.

President:

That is the moral hazard of the proposed approach. It establishes a precedent that if you are close to the bomb, you can just lie about it.

Vice President:

It would be better to live in a world where 20 countries lie about having the bomb rather than simply having the bomb and being open about it.

Secretary of Defense:

Those are our only options?

Vice President:

No, but this is a scenario worth thinking about.

Secretary of Defense:

We need to be careful to not fetishize the NPT as such.

Vice President:

Surely, if countries feel that they cannot acknowledge that they have a weapon, that is a good thing.

Secretary of Defense:

It may not be such a good thing. That precedent would establish that nuclear deterrence is something you can have, so long as you do it on the sly.

Vice President:

We can keep the sanctions on Iran to make it clear that getting the bomb would make you subject to penalties, just not kinetic force.

President:

All we are doing is creating another Israel, right?

Vice President:

No, because we would be sanctioning Iran.

Secretary of Defense:

As far as protecting the norms of the NPT is concerned, Israel was not a signatory. Allowing people to violate the norms as long as they do not rub it in our face would not be good for NPT norms.

President:

The choices made with Israel were not perfect. But if you include the Test Ban Treaty, there is a good point made here; having to deny the existence of the bomb becomes obnoxious because, with every piece of evidence that comes up, you have to deny the claims it supports. This does buy us time, but we would have to do something with that time, not just kick the can down the road. We have not decided on anything

to do with that time.

Secretary of Energy:

The previous mentioning of Pakistan brings up a good point. In the case of Pakistan, they had the bomb but were unable to develop a true nuclear force until they actually began testing. In some sense, forcing Iran into the basement might prevent them from developing a true nuclear force.

Chief of Staff to the President:

The option to ignore it would be construed by regional powers as the Iranians getting the bomb and getting away with it.

President:

The moral hazard point is an important one. You could get away with denying it for weeks, maybe months, but you need to have some purpose for doing it, not just kicking the can.

Secretary of State:

It would be a mistake to pretend; soon, we would be pretending about lots of countries, which creates a terrible precedent.

President:

This is a real option. Unfortunately, however, once you get into it, there is a tremendous inclination just to keep denying. For instance, just at our past string of denials with the DPRK. That is not a particularly good look.

Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development:

It is not quite the same. Attacking the DPRK was not feasible, whereas that may not be true with Iran.

President:

True, but war with Iran would not be a cakewalk.

Vice President:

Secretary of State, you said the approach of ignoring the bomb was a bad one, but can you present a better approach?

Secretary of State:

We have to deal with the facts as they are, or else you are living in a hall of mirrors.

Vice President:

Are you suggesting war?

Secretary of State:

No.

Vice President:

Then what are you suggesting?

Secretary of State:

We started by trying to get inspections. We must take things one step at a time. It may be that Iran is trying to get the bomb, it may be that they are not, it may be that they will back out. We should, first and foremost, try to get inspections to happen. We do not necessarily know how things will look after that first step.

Representative of the U.S. to the United Nations:

For the United States, there may be an option of ignoring an Iranian bomb, but it would be very difficult to restrain Israel from aggression. They would not want to ignore it, which makes this a very different situation from the DPRK.

Secretary of State:

Israel has an enormous arsenal. They would not be at risk. It is quite a different situation from South Korea's.

Head of Central Command:

An Israeli strike does not necessarily mean a ground invasion is inevitable. A limited strike done by the Israelis would look bad for us, but it puts back Iran's weapons program for however many months and means we do not have to live with an Iran with a bomb. Not sure what it means for the NPT, but it stops us from having another example of a country getting the bomb and getting away with it.

President:

Central Command did a lot of very similar boasting during the First Iraqi War, which lead to the Second Iraqi War and extensive occupation.

Head of Central Command:

There is something to be said for mowing the grass. If we do not want Iran to get the bomb, we could allow an Israeli strike. It is not necessarily something that we need to get directly involved in.

President:

CENTCOM needs to talk about what America will be doing. We do not have strict control over the Israelis. Therefore, our primary focus should be talking about the U.S.'s strategy, not what the Israelis will do.

Secretary of State:

What would we be striking if it comes to that?

Head of Central Command:

The sooner we do such a strike, the more we can focus on the weapon itself instead of delivery mechanisms. We can strike the facility where the implosion device is being developed. Not sure where material is stored, but we could strike there as well.

Secretary of State:

It is presumably too late to strike that facility. It has been identified, which means it has been evacuated. If we are going after material, even if you get rid of enrichment devices, there is still plutonium, which can develop multiple weapons a year. If they create a clandestine reprocessing plant, that means they can develop dozens of weapons a year.

Vice President:

The Israelis had remarkable success collecting intelligence about exactly where Iranian nuclear scientists were, which means they may know where to strike. Even if they do not, they would believe they do.

Secretary of State:

The point I was making earlier is that there would be lots of sites to strike.

Head of Central Command:

If you want to be extremely safe, you will also want to hit missiles. If you want to do a thorough disarming, you will need a couple of aircraft carriers, Desert Storm style. That is an option, just not a fun one.

Vice President:

Attempting to thoroughly disarm is decidedly not the Israeli approach.

Secretary of State:

It has failed in the past in Iraq. It did not even hit highly enriched uranium.

Vice President:

But it stopped the program. Saddam could not build the bomb afterward. The Israelis would say, well, we mowed the grass, we set back the program, we succeeded.

Secretary of State:

It had nothing to do with the program.

Vice President:

No. The program failed, they did not get the bomb.

President:

Nobody, including the Israelis, had a clue as to what was going on in the case of Iraq, other than, politically. If you have a picture of something blowing up, you can knock people on their heels. It was not because of strikes that the program failed.

Secretary of Energy:

It succeeded in Syria.

President:

That was a single-node failure. How many facilities do the Iranians have, one?

Secretary of Energy:

No, definitely not just one.

Vice President:

The question becomes what the Israeli approach is. They will fail, and they will draw us in.

President:

That is not American policy. It is not our primary concern. We can respond adequately if that does occur. Separately from that, we need to make it clear to the Israelis that we will defend them if they are attacked. We can do that now.

Head of Central Command:

It might be the other way around in this case. If we say we will defend Israel and they go out and get themselves attacked, we have tied our own hands.

President:

There are ways to say "attack" that gives us some discretion. We cannot not defend the Israelis when they are a non-NATO ally in law. We have crossed that rubicon.

Head of Central Command:

It sounds like the objection to a strike to put the Iranians back is that it ends in a broader regional war that the American public will never support. There are ways to make that strike happen if it needs to happen and to later say, we are not going to go here, we are not going to entirely disarm Iran, we are not going to engage more broadly.

President:

It does not seem like we know what needs to be hit. We do not have the intel to selectively strike.

Secretary of Defense:

The problem is not so much that we have only a notional idea of what to hit. We know what to hit, we just do not know the outer edge of that target set. We cannot know if we have hit everything, we cannot know how much we have set them back. There are lots of things we know we can hit; we can significantly set back their nuclear program.

President:

Right. We are quibbling. We agree here.

Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development:

Let us go back to the President's strategy for a minute. We have leaped ahead and assumed none of this will work, but we had a pretty good strategy that could potentially be effective. Are we at the point that the Additional Protocol that Iran was adhering to is sufficient to allow this inspection to be successful, or is that unrealistic?

President:

The Additional Protocol of Special Inspections still requires the party in question to accept the special inspection, which is not guaranteed. Furthermore, the Additional Protocol inspections are not wide-area surveillance inspections, per se. They are not necessarily inspections we can count on and would not necessarily be as useful as the inspections we would request from the Director-Generals.

Secretary of State:

It seems we have never asked the IAEA if there is any material missing. That seems like it is something we would want to do. If the answer is no, we would want as many inspectors as possible sitting on it.

President:

Are Additional Protocol inspections the same as the inspections we would be pleading with the Director-General for?

Secretary of Defense:

In both situations, the question is whether there is any undeclared nuclear material involved. If we convince the IAEA that this is a reasonable concern, the IAEA has plenty of reason to go to that facility and do tests. If there is material missing, that is itself a major issue, and it would be incredibly important to have the IAEA vouch for that, rather than just doing that ourselves. If there is material missing and nuclear material was used in the implosion device, that is a big concern.

President:

How long would it take?

Secretary of Defense:

The biggest sticking point is getting lab results. Samples would go to multiple labs. It would matter whether all the samples agree, how complicated the data is, and so forth. They would want all the labs to agree. After you have the results, you convene a board to talk about it.

Secretary of Energy:

Iran does not need to use nuclear material to make implosion devices.

Secretary of Defense:

That is true, but our intel says that they had used nuclear material to fabricate this implosion device, which gives us a fighting chance of finding something.

President:

The described process, how long would it take?

Representative of the U.S. to the United Nations:

It is a matter of weeks.

Secretary of Defense:

Several weeks, yes. Another concern is if, for instance, the Russian lab dragged its feet or fudged the answer.

President:

If we got the IAEA to do inspections, would it be prudent to go back to the U.N. Security Council and say, pending IAEA results, we would like to pass a resolution demanding the Iranians suspend their withdrawal clock on the basis that they should not be allowed to run the clock to withdraw when they are suspected of violation?

Vice President:

That assumes they are guilty until proven innocent. Russia and China would not be on board.

Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development:

Not necessarily. More evidence could strengthen our case, which could get them on board.

Secretary of Defense:

If there is missing material or evidence of undeclared material, that might be helpful. If the Iranians stiff-arm inspectors and the Director-General reports that inspectors were stiff-armed, that would also give us more diplomatic ammunition.

Secretary of State:

The Iranians may back down.

President:

What would that suggest we do differently than we are doing now?

Secretary of State:

It is just a principle we should consider going forward.

Vice President:

We should not go to the Security Council until we have further evidence, and we should give the Iranians an opportunity to back down before we formally approach the Security Council.

Takeaway Questions

1. Do we understand Iran's motives and to the extent that we do, are any of them legitimate?

Participant #2:

Hardliners tend to interpret Iran as wanting to get the bomb. But there is a good chance that Iran is trying to get nuclear latency, to get as close to getting the bomb as they can without actually crossing the threshold. That puts Iran in a comfortable position because then they have not breached the NPT. This is a very

big deficiency of the NPT, as it does not prohibit latency. Their objective may be to get latency as high as possible so that they can threaten the United States and extract concessions in the form of sanctions relief.

Participant #3:

The point raised here is very important. Everyone seems to slip almost immediately into sanctions and military responses when we should not even be assuming that they are necessarily going for the bomb.

Participant #1:

Well, if you have the intel we had in the scenario, at what point would we just assume they are going for a bomb? This raises the question of what it would take for the United States to assume Iran was gunning for a bomb.

Participant #4:

The main goal of an Iranian nuclear bomb is defensive. They have seen countries to the West and the East be invaded by the United States, and they want some form of deterrence. It is harder to attack a country with a nuclear bomb. The problem is that there is a security dilemma. What they see as defensive looks, to Iran's neighbors, to be an offensive option. Ultimately, they are afraid of the United States.

Participant #5:

We have always assumed, and this assumption holds, that, since Bushehr, Iran has been trying to develop nuclear weapons expertise to protect their revolution, which is similar to the DPRK's motive of protecting the regime. For Iran, they see it as protecting their whole worldview against a competing worldview of secular anti-Islamic culture.

Participant #6:

Iranian leadership is firmly convinced that the United States poses an existential threat to the Islamic Republic. The United States has been successful in provoking counterrevolutions in several countries and would like to do the same to Iran. The threat is not that the United States would invade Iran, but that the United States would pose a threat to Iran through a form of cultural invasion, which is exactly what has been happening. The Iranian regime has been hollowed out and people are less enthusiastic about revolutionary goals. A bomb shows that the Iranian regime is here to stay not only to neighbors but also to the Iranian people themselves.

Participant #4:

Iran also has hegemonic ambitions. They were once a hegemonic power, and they long to come back to those days. The bomb is a way to do that.

Participant #3:

What is the judgment on the reaction of the Iranian public to a U.S. strike?

Participant #6:

If a U.S. strike were to happen tomorrow, the reaction would be nationalistic outrage, but if it were to happen after a weapon was tested, people would say, "Well, what did those idiots in Tehran expect?"

Participant #4:

The nuclear program is popular.

Participant #6:

We should not exaggerate the popularity of the nuclear program. People do not like it as much as you would think.

Participant #7:

Either option for Iran would result in countries like the United States or E.U. members seeking some sort of concession to the posture that the Iranians have taken. It does not seem like our President would be interested in pursuing a military option or even a regime change. He has been trying to get out of the results of those efforts in the past. With a new leader at the helm in Iran and with the current political environment, a military option is not a top priority.

Participant #6:

Iran's image of how the regime would be toppled is through cultural means, such as through Michelle Obama giving an Academy Award to Argo. And they are correct.

Participant #8:

There is a lot to be said for this defensive framing of the Iranian nuclear program, but, even if this is true, it does not follow that a nuclear Iran would be benign. Defensive motivations and hegemonic aspirations could exist together. It is less relevant how legitimate their motives are and more relevant what the implications of a nuclear Iran would be. The question is then, if a nuclear Iran feels secure in the ways that they imagine they would like to, how does that secure, empowered, comfortable Iran act? It may be that a secure and empowered Iran now feels even more free to act on its instinct for regional hegemony. It may be that a secure Iran is even more dangerous than before.

Participant #9:

Agreed. A nuclear Iran may not be a safe Iran for the world. Also, Iran's nuclear program goes way back to the late 80s or the early 90s, which would make their motivation at that point the Iran-Iraq war, in particular, the gas attacks that nobody reacted to. The Iranians were taken aback by the fact that the Iraqis could get away with these attacks. Certainly, by the late 90s, Iran was seeking expertise, and their primary motivation at that point was defense against Iraq, although they viewed the United States as being complicit and not necessarily justifiably so.

Participant #3:

Iran's nuclear ambitions go back to the Shah.

Participant #9:

In what respect?

Participant #3:

The Shah had an interest in getting the bomb.

Participant #9:

There was a discontinuity after the Shah fell.

Participant #3:

Sure, there was some discontinuity, but the guys that the Shah sent to MIT for special training with the bomb in mind, as well. Some of them came back and are now running things.

Participant #10:

The point that regime change can be achieved much more subtly through the use of soft power means and mechanisms is a good one. The United States has much experience using soft power, and the United States has had a number of mishaps in trying to use hard power. Furthermore, the American public would likely not support international intervention, in particular regime change, if it does not directly implicate U.S. national security.

Participant #6:

Iran's leaders are firmly convinced that their ideology is correct for all people, so, if they get stronger, they will feel the need to impose that ideology onto others more strongly. The fact that they are ideologically driven will not change, which means that if they get stronger, they will always try to further their cause.

Participant #11:

The point that some form of Iran's nuclear program had begun under the Shah is a salient one, as while there are some discontinuities, it poses interesting parallels with the Soviet Union. It may not matter whether Iran sees itself as a cause or a country, as it may be equally enthusiastic to nuclearize, just as Russia was equally enthusiastic to the Soviet Union. This leads to the second point, which is that there are very few countries in history that did not at least claim that their pursuit of weapons was for defensive purposes, which is why it is useful to look at capabilities and not just intentions. It would not matter for what reason Iran was pursuing nuclear weapons, as any given reason would be equally bad for the NPT, just as a strong ally like Japan getting a nuclear weapon would be bad for the NPT. A nuclear weapons program is concerning regardless of what the motivations are.

Participant #3:

Does understanding Iran's motivations not make us more likely to be able to stop Iran from getting a bomb?

2. What are the risks and benefits of ignoring the NPT in dealing with the Iranian case? What legal alternatives might there be to the NPT?

Participant #6:

Can we rephrase the question as, "If it looks like the NPT is going to be violated by a country, is it better to quietly ignore that, or to openly and loudly complain?"

Participant #1:

That is a different question. Could you please first identify why you want to do that?

Participant #6:

If the alternative is that the regime is going to fall apart, would you rather not quietly ignore violations?

Participant #1:

What is so great about the regime that you want to hold onto it?

Participant #6:

It is preferable to hold onto the fiction that we should not have nuclear weapons, even if people are going to violate that fiction.

Participant #8:

Which is better or worse for the regime, a situation in which a country shows that a country can withdraw using regime mechanisms and build a bomb, or a regime in which one is essentially permitted to have a bomb in violation of the regime? You could make the case that a regime in which you can cheat the regime rather than use existing mechanisms to leave the regime is a more damaged one.

Participant #1:

Does the NPT have any benefits that make it worth enforcing? Or is it the case that you either let people cheat and ignore it, or you let people withdraw?

Participant #6:

What you are asking is what are the risks and benefits of enforcing the NPT. That is a different question.

Participant #1:

Let me reformulate. What are the benefits of the NPT? Are there any?

Participant #6:

The primary benefit of the NPT is the virtue of everyone saying we do not have the bomb.

Participant #1:

Is the benefit just the virtue of saying we do not have the bomb, or is it actually not having the bomb?

Participant #6:

Actually, not having the bomb is better, but even just saying so is beneficial, as it is an impediment to other countries using the bomb.

Participant #8:

The NPT is a non-trivial impediment to more states getting the bomb. It is not foolproof and it is not a miracle cure, but there are benefits.

Participant #3:

Can we use this case to push the NPT to the limit and convince countries that we need to tighten the rules? Does anyone care other than the United States?

Participant #1:

That exact sort of thing exactly happened with Iraq. They took advantage of the lax way in which the IAEA operated, and the Additional Protocol is the result. Is that in the cards here or not?

Participant #6:

This sort of thing is not in the cards. People believe that this is all Trump's fault and that Trump provoked it. Macron even went so far as to say so publicly.

Participant #1:

Can you bring all of that stuff back to the NPT?

Participant #6:

The sense is that there are only problems with Iran sticking with the NPT because Trump created a situation where they felt they had to.

Participant #8:

The case of North Korea, where they brazenly violated the NPT, was not a case where anyone was able to use that situation to strengthen the NPT. There was no response.

Participant #1:

You are correct. There was practically no response. Why was that the case?

Participant #2:

In the case of North Korea, the United States keeps on saying that they are trying to get North Korea back to the NPT, and that is quite important vis-à-vis South Korea. If the United States says they failed, South Korea will feel free to work on their own program to get nuclear weapons. In that respect, it is very important to maintain a sense that you are trying to protect the NPT and get countries to adhere to its terms.

Participant #1:

Is it the case that everyone predicts the end of the NPT, and the NPT survives, or is the NPT actually dying?

Participant #6:

The NPT just shrinks.

Participant #4:

To describe the NPT as "shrinking" would be incorrect. The greatest risk is a nuclear race in the Middle East if the United States allows Iran to get close to the bomb.

Participant #1:

Let us be clear, that is not the question. The question is what happens if we do not enforce the NPT in the Iranian case.

Participant #4:

In that case, other Middle Eastern countries would leave the NPT.

Participant #6:

They will not leave the NPT. They will just develop weapons while staying in the NPT. The NPT will not go away, it would just become a less significant factor.

Participant #1:

You are saying that it will become a front for countries to get a bomb in the basement.

Participant #6:

Countries would be two screwdriver turns away from getting a nuclear weapon.

Participant #8:

One of the few things that can be said in support of the DPRK example, and perhaps the reason that the NPT regime was not cratered, is because nobody wants to be North Korea. The regime is staggering along because, while you can cheat in theory, you would still pay a heavy price for it. If that price goes away, that may be much worse for the regime.

Participant #1:

That goes to the comment that it is important to stigmatize bad behavior even if you cannot prevent it.

Participant #8:

Right. But you do not just want to stigmatize bad behavior, you want to punish it.

Participant #1:

That argues for using sanctions at some point if Iran goes ahead and clearly violates the NPT, even if the U.N. with China and Russia are hesitant to do anything.

Participant #3:

It seems in most countries there are people who argue for acquiring the bomb and people who argue against acquiring the bomb. Keeping up the NPT strengthens the hand of those arguing against the bomb.

Participant #8:

It strengthens their hand symbolically, but also allows those people who do not want the bomb to say, "Can you imagine what nuclearizing would do to our economy?"

Participant #3:

Dealing with these issues in the endgame is very difficult. You want to anticipate these situations as much as you can and deal with potential nuclearization as early as possible.

Participant #1:

You are right, but nobody pays attention to that. We love to wait until the bomb is about to explode. What

successes we have had in preventing the bomb have been in the very early days.

Participant #5:

Is it not impossible to build the bomb and stay in the NPT? After all, if you are detected, you would be kicked out by the IAEA. Once you are out, you lose the right to any nuclear cooperation. India is the only case where they were able to get nuclear cooperation back, and that was an extreme case. It is hard to imagine another situation where a country is so important geopolitically that we end up having to do that.

Participant #1:

I do not find such a situation impossible to imagine. You might be being too optimistic.

Participant #12:

Earlier, it was pointed out that the United States insists that we are trying to get North Korea back into the NPT regime and that that is part of the reason why there is legitimacy to the argument that South Korea cannot back out of the NPT and get the bomb. Does that not apply to the Israel-Iran relationship in the Middle East? If it is the case that the ROK is incentivized not to get the bomb because we are trying to get the DPRK back into the NPT, then can we not stop Iran from getting a bomb by using rhetoric that we are trying to get Israel into the NPT regime?

Participant #6:

No. It would not work because Israel is not the reason Iran wants the bomb.

Participant #3:

Would Iran still be going for a bomb if the Israel example did not exist?

Participant #6:

Absolutely.

Participant #8:

Agreed.

Participant #12:

Iran would go in the ROK's place here. It would at least be a disincentive for them, even if not the only one.

Participant #6:

Israel is not the reason Iran wants a bomb. But either way, Israel is not going to get rid of its bombs until there is peace in the Middle East.

Participant #1:

We cannot know that for certain.

Participant #12:

So, you are saying that Iran would not be incentivized at all to stop pursuing the bomb if Israel

denuclearized?

Participant #6:

Absolutely not.

Participant #8:

Agreed. But if we offered such a concession, Iran might try to play us and manipulate us into forcing Israel to denuclearize only to obtain the bomb themselves.

Participant #1:

Would getting rid of Israel's bomb have any effect on the neighbors?

Participant #6:

No. The neighbors have all been very comfortable with an Israeli bomb and have never made any steps towards a bomb.

Participant #13:

It is very possible that Gaddafi was getting a bomb because of Israel.

Participant #6:

No. He wanted a bomb because he wanted to be powerful.

Participant #1:

There is nevertheless some uncertainty here.

Participant #8:

It is unlikely that Israel was a motivation for Gaddafi. The above point was quoted from a Gaddafi speech.

Participant #1:

It is hard to believe that political and diplomatic options for countries reacting to Iran's nuclear activities are simply unrelated to anything Israel might do.

Participant #6:

It has been the case for 40 years.

Participant #1:

You say that, but can we know that for certain?

Participant #3:

Israel was the first country beyond the NPT treaty signing that got a bomb. In a sense, everyone else follows that example.

Participant #1:

It is not entirely convincing that Israel is irrelevant and can be taken out of the equation.

Participant #8:

Let us assume the counterfactual, that Israel transparently and verifiably had no nuclear weapons. What does that change about Iran's course? Most likely, it changes nothing.

Participant #1:

That is not what we are driving at. What we are driving at is whether there is any value in getting Israel to accept nuclear restraints in dealing with the next Iran in the Middle East or not.

Participant #6:

Sure, there is, and the Israelis have said they are not going to test their nuclear weapons. It would be useful to get Iran to agree to the same principle.

Participant #1:

That particular restraint was not such a good choice. But your point, and we should take that point to heart, is that Israeli nuclear restraints would have value in dealing with the next Iran. Maybe there is something else Israel could do besides not testing.

Participant #6:

If you are going to test, hide it very well, please.

Participant #1:

Well, they did not even do that as well as they thought. But that is a separate matter. The question is, what have you done for us lately? That would be the rejoinder.

Participant #11:

It may very well be that the NPT has been more successful than we give it credit for. We, the international community have been able to constrain a number of states and their programs. It may well be that the Iranian case is more one-off than we believe. It could be that the more stressing case is India, as they are the ones we rely on more and more to balance China. Further, in U.S. policy, nonproliferation and defense of the NPT are important, but in any specific case, there is almost always something else that is even more important. We tend to move non-proliferation to the second or third tier. It is only when rogue states like Iran and North Korea are concerned that we move non-proliferation up to a higher dimension.

Participant #3:

When the NPT was signed, countries like Italy were talking about getting the bomb. We did not know how Germany or Japan were going to go, and we did not know if they were going to sign the NPT. It has had a significant impact.

Participant #1:

In the past. I have heard that the NPT is the only legal reason Japan has not gotten the bomb. However, I am unsure how much weight to give that one comment.

Participant #2:

That is wrong. The NPT is not the only factor, it is one of many factors stopping countries from getting nuclear weapons. For instance, in the case of South Korea, if it got the bomb, it would lose all alliance ties with the United States. But they are friendly countries with the United States. In Iran's case, those ties do not exist, so the only real benefit to be lost might be economic benefits.

Participant #1:

Well, you are saying basically the same thing, which is that legal barriers have consequences when they are breached, but only insofar as those barriers exist. Also, Iran may not be a friendly country, but Iran has said in the past that they care deeply about being accused of violating the rules. They have said that they believe that if they are ever found to be in violation of rules, they are in trouble, but that if they are accused of being in violation and it cannot be proven, it is the accuser who is in trouble.

Participant #6:

They care about being caught.

3. Is there something the United States should be promoting in terms of threats or inducements to deter any country from threatening to withdraw from the NPT? Not just in the case of Iran, but also in other cases.

Participant #4:

Deterrence is not very effective.

Participant #6:

All the instruments we used should be promoted. Namely, sanctions, broad international consensus, and the UN.

Participant #10:

Iran is an ideologically bent regime with intentions of attaining regime hegemony. If having nuclear arms would offer deterrence or some form of strategic advantage over rivals in the region, Iran would be willing to do whatever it needs to do to attain nuclear weapons.

Participant #1:

That is a long way of saying, in the case of Iran, the answer is no. In a general sense, is that the answer as well?

Participant #8:

One question that is hard to answer is: how effective is deterrence for dogs that did not bark? And the answer to that is, if somebody is hellbent, there is nothing you can do to stop them from getting the bomb. However, that does not mean deterrence is necessarily ineffective, as there are countries that would otherwise have felt inclined to attain nuclear weapons had NPT mechanisms not been in place. If there were not an international regime of the NPT's sort, there may well have been countries that would have been willing to go down that road.

Participant #1:

Since we agree in principle, is there anything operationally that we could do differently from what has already been done?

Participant #10:

There is precedence for the NPT's nuclear deterrence to be helpful. For instance, South Africa and Brazil gave up nuclear weapons, and they did benefit by signing the NPT.

Participant #3:

At a minimum, you cannot divest yourself of your responsibilities by leaving the NPT. You cannot leave in violation and divest yourself of safeguards obligations. There is a lot of resistance to strengthening withdrawal rights, but we should take the position that countries who have built materials while they were signatories cannot use those materials for non-peaceful purposes because those materials were built with the sufferance of the community under the assumption that they were used for peaceful means. We should make it as hard as possible to leave the NPT. A step further, which is currently not possible, would be to universalize the treaty.

Participant #1:

The United States and other countries have nuclear power, and the international community generally believes that there is a right to enrich. Should use of nuclear power be encouraged?

Participant #3:

It should not be encouraged.

Participant #1:

Well, we are encouraging it in the status quo.

Participant #3:

Right, we are encouraging it for commercial reasons.

Participant #1:

The Israelis have been good about it. They have said they do not need it and do not want it, as it would be a target. It is unclear why their neighbors have not been the same way about it. Perhaps it is because they want to obtain a bomb?

Participant #6:

If you want to universalize the NPT, you have to universalize the commitment on the part of nuclear weapons states to denuclearize, which is a bad idea.

Participant #1:

Why?

Participant #6:

It is a bad idea because China is going to become a great power and we are going to need nuclear weapons to defend ourselves.

Participant #2:

As for the point of peaceful use of nuclear energy, Iran keeps insisting it has a right to peaceful use of nuclear energy. However, we should argue that work on peaceful use of nuclear energy with a hidden intention of getting the bomb is a material breach of the NPT.

Participant #1:

That would be hard to prove in practice, but that is certainly a good point.

Participant #8:

Conventional wisdom is that there is definitely a right to enrich. If that concept were problematized (or debunked, which is unlikely), that would be of enormous benefit to the NPT. The right to enrich is such a big part of the diplomatic counternarrative of countries who are enriching that being able to challenge that idea would be of tremendous value.

Participant #1:

Does the United States need an enrichment program beyond what is happening in New Mexico? Is it necessary? We are shutting down programs, and yet our labs are putting out slides explaining why we need to be able to reprocess. One way to be able to push back intellectually on the right to enrich would be by drawing some lines between which nuclear energy programs are reasonable and which are outrageous.

Participant #3:

We presume that we can keep energy programs from becoming militarized, even though attempts to do so have not been particularly successful in the past. That is exactly why we end up with situations like what we have here.

Participant #6:

None of what is being described would have any impact on Iran.

Participant #1:

The question is about any country, not just Iran. You are right about Iran, but we need to get out of that bubble.

Participant #6:

We cannot deter any country that is seriously considering leaving the NPT.

Participant #1:

We are concerned about all countries, not just the tough cases.

Participant #6:

The countries that are not going to leave are never going to leave, period.

Participant #1:

That is historically blind. There have been lots of countries that have changed their minds.

Participant #6:

That is not because of inducements. That is because the bargain of, "if you do it, we won't," is a persuasive one.

Participant #1:

You are wrong. Several NATO states were induced by U.S. protection.

Participant #6:

That is not necessarily true. Countries like Greece were not induced or persuaded.

Participant #1:

Well, other countries, e.g., Germany, were persuaded by U.S. protection.

4. Should the United States be more concerned about Israel's defense than it is about the spread of nuclear weapons?

Participant #11:

This seems a strange question. Clearly, we are concerned about defense more so than we are about the spread of nuclear weapons. It seems like the question is backward. It seems that the question is really whether we should be more concerned about the spread of nuclear weapons than we should be about Israel's defense.

Participant #1:

Let us reformulate the question, then, to, "should we be more concerned about the spread of nuclear weapons than about Israel's defense?"

Participant #3:

Are Israel's nuclear weapons not sufficient deterrence?

Participant #8:

In an Iranian proliferation case, to be concerned about the spread of nuclear weapons is to be concerned about Israel's defense. They are, in this case, synonymous. Proliferation in Iran would be catastrophic for Israel's defense.

Participant #3:

Why would it be catastrophic when Israel has a huge arsenal?

Participant #5:

Israel is extremely geographically tiny and has highly concentrated population centers, making it much more vulnerable.

Participant #3:

Would Iran survive an attack on Israel?

Participant #5:

Iran would be damaged as well, but Israel would be worse off.

Participant #6:

During the Mongol Invasion, half of the Iranian population died. They have experience surviving even when most of the population died.

Participant #3:

This is obviously not rational. It is the same type of rhetoric Mao used.

Participant #8:

If the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) is some sort of Mao analog, that is certainly cause for concern.

Participant #4:

We are talking as though there is some sort of balance in power between Israel and Iran after Iran goes nuclear. That is not true. It takes time to launch a second strike.

Participant #3:

Israel has bombs on submarines and many other protected nuclear weapons. Israel's second-strike capability is not at risk.

Participant #4:

But would Israel be willing to take several bombs on Tel-Aviv?

Participant #3:

The United States has been in an analogous situation with Russia for many years.

Participant #4:

In any case, Israel sees this as an existential threat.

Participant #3:

That is just all the more reason to have a treaty eliminating WMDs in the Middle East.

Participant #6:

In that case, why not globally?

Participant #1:

It seems our recommendations have all been pulling in one of two directions thus far. One direction gets extremely specific about acting against specific facilities and actors, whereas the other way involves doing something to large sections of the world. You could say they are complementary.

Participant #8:

It is difficult to imagine any argument that an Iranian nuclear weapon would not be significantly worse for Israel's defense. The question was presupposing tension between defense of Israel and spread of nuclear weapons. In this case, it is a false dichotomy.

Participant #4:

Israel living under a nuclear shadow is different than the United States both because of Holocaust syndrome and because of the "Wandering Jew," e.g., that there are certain vulnerabilities to Israeli society that do not exist in other societies.

Participant #3:

What is the point of Israel's nuclear program if it cannot live with a nuclear Iran?

Participant #4:

The point of Israel's nuclear arsenal is because Israel wants to have the nuclear option in its back pocket if it loses a conventional war. After all, Israel cannot afford to lose a conventional war.

Participant #8:

The origins of Israel's nuclear program was not the existence of another country's nuclear program, but rather the potential results of a conventional attack, which could result in Israel being wiped off the map. If Iran gets a bomb and Israel loses that nuclear advantage, that could create some interesting problems.

Participant #1:

The question we were attempting to get at was, is there any tension between Israel's defense and stopping the spread of nuclear weapons to other countries, whether they be in the region or outside. And, it seems the answer to that question is no.

Participant #11:

The original formulation of the question may be more profound than we are giving it credit for. If you take out the phrase "than Israel's defense," we are left with the question we have every time we have a nonproliferation question, which is whether we are more concerned with nonproliferation than we are with some other interest. This is the fundamental question we always face. You just change the country.

Participant #1:

The problem is that the answer generally tends to be no.

Participant #11:

Exactly. However, the dilemma is less apparent in this case, because Israel's defense is very linked with stopping the spread of nuclear weapons in the Middle East. The reason Germany, Japan, and a host of

countries do not have a nuke is because they are under our nuclear umbrella. We cannot do that with Israel.

Participant #1:

We functionally already have.

Participant #11:

Then they can give up their nuclear weapons.

Participant #6:

Well, no. The problem is that the Israelis do not feel comfortable living under the American nuclear umbrella.

Participant #4:

France also rejected the nuclear umbrella. Israel was not the only country that did so.

Participant #6:

We ought to consider whether domestic political factors would influence decision-making.

Participant #1:

On that front, the points that have been made about the lack of appetite for military action and intervention in the general U.S. public today are rather convincing.

1600 Wilson Blvd. | Suite 640 | Arlington, VA 22209 | phone: 571-970-3187
Email: info@npolicy.org
Web: www.npolicy.org