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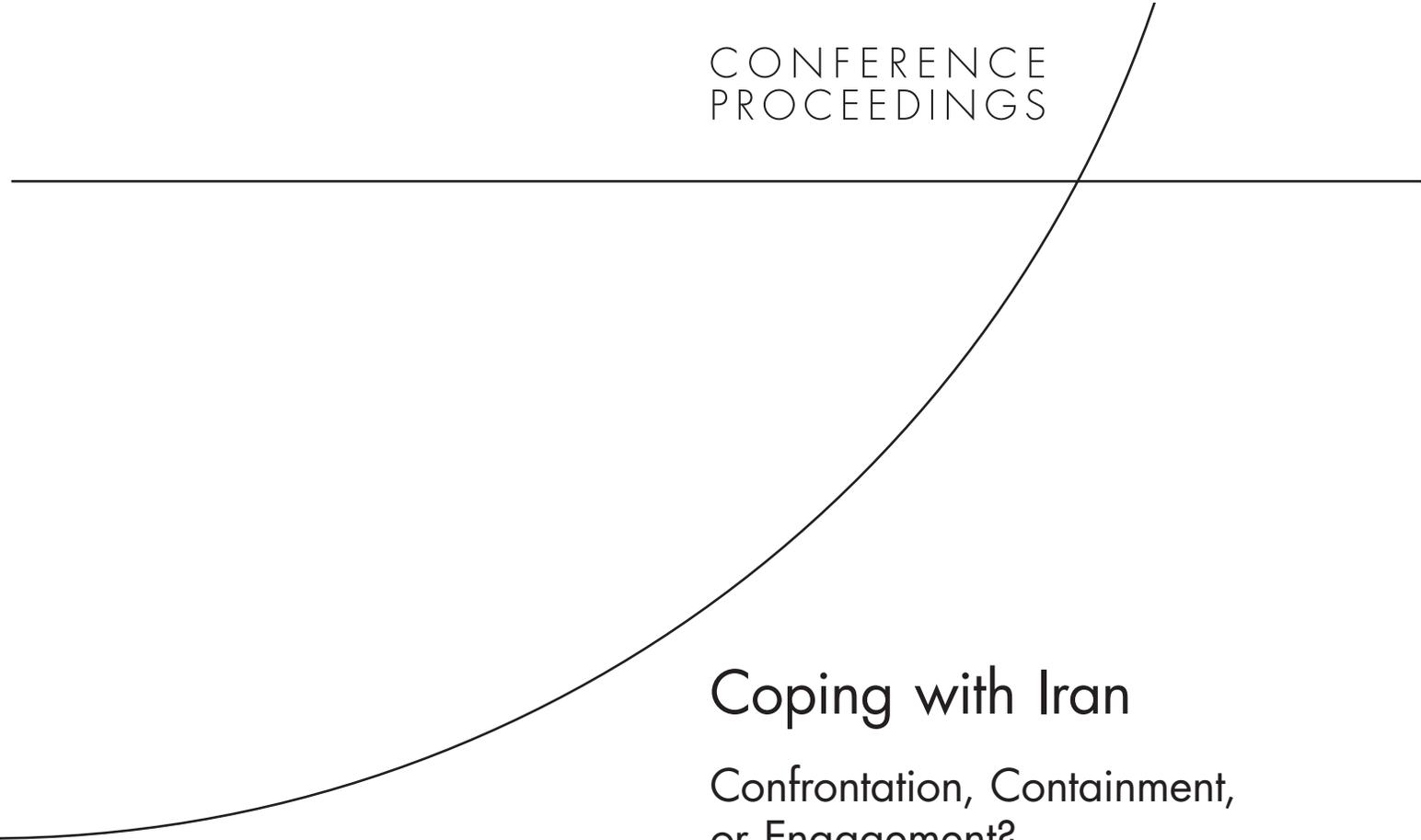
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CONFERENCE
PROCEEDINGS



Coping with Iran

Confrontation, Containment,
or Engagement?

A Conference Report

James Dobbins, Sarah Harting, Dalia Dassa Kaye

Approved for public release; distribution unlimited



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This research was conducted within the Intelligence Policy Center (IPC) of the RAND National Security Research Division (NSRD). NSRD conducts research and analysis for the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, the Unified Commands, the defense agencies, the Department of the Navy, the Marine Corps, the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Intelligence Community, allied foreign governments, and foundations.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Dobbins, James, 1942-

Coping with Iran : confrontation, containment, or engagement? : a conference report / James Dobbins, Sarah Harting, Dalia Dassa Kaye.

p. cm.

Summary of a conference held by the RAND Corporation on Mar. 21, 2007 in Washington, D.C.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-0-8330-4187-6 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. United States—Foreign relations—Iran—Congresses. 2. Iran—Foreign relations—United States—Congresses. I. Harting, Sarah. II. Kaye, Dalia Dassa. III. Rand Corporation. IV. Title.

E183.8.I55D63 2007

327.73055—dc22

2007026898

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Published 2007 by the RAND Corporation

1776 Main Street, P.O. Box 2138, Santa Monica, CA 90407-2138

1200 South Hayes Street, Arlington, VA 22202-5050

4570 Fifth Avenue, Suite 600, Pittsburgh, PA 15213-2665

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PREFACE

On March 21, 2007, the RAND Corporation held a public conference on Capitol Hill titled, "Coping with Iran: Confrontation, Containment, or Engagement?" The director of the RAND International Security and Defense Policy Center, Ambassador James Dobbins, hosted the event. The conference featured high-level experts and was attended by more than 300 guests, including former ambassadors, members of Congress and senior staffers, senior journalists, Pentagon officials, and numerous well-known Middle East analysts. Two high-level officials, Ambassador R. Nicholas Burns, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, and Ambassador Mohammad Javad Zarif, Iranian Ambassador to the United Nations (via videoconference), also shared their national perspectives with the audience in one-hour sessions each. The conference sought to facilitate an informed discussion of the benefits and drawbacks of various policy options for addressing the Iranian challenge.

This report provides a summary account of remarks presented during the conference; this report is not a direct transcript of the conference. The views expressed in this document are those of the participants, as interpreted by the RAND Corporation.

This conference was hosted by the International Security and Defense Policy Center of the RAND National Security Research Division (NSRD). NSRD conducts research and analysis for the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, the Unified Combatant Commands, the defense agencies, the Department of the Navy, the Marine Corps, the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Intelligence Community, allied foreign governments, and foundations.

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CONFERENCE SUMMARY

Discussions throughout the one-day conference "Coping with Iran: Confrontation, Containment, or Engagement?" broached a number of key issues, including internal leadership and societal dynamics within Iran, Iran's relationship with other regional actors, the implications of a nuclear-armed Iran or a military strike against Iran, and the various policy options available to address key issues such as Iran's nuclear capabilities, instability in Iraq, and terrorism. Many participants argued at the conference that some degree of both containment and engagement was the best policy approach toward Iran and that a use-of-force option was neither imminent nor desirable. There was a general sense that UN sanctions and economic pressure was working in isolating Iran (even if some desired that it work faster). Furthermore, Ambassador R. Nicholas Burns emphasized that the United States is willing to be patient to allow economic and diplomatic efforts to work and stated that there are no imminent deadlines that would cause the U.S. government to pursue a drastic course in its approach toward Iran.

To follow are several other key themes that emerged from the discussions:

- **U.S.-Iranian cooperation is possible, especially on Iraq.** Despite a legacy of nearly 30 years of antipathy and mistrust, previous crises—such as the aftermath of the Afghanistan war—have demonstrated that U.S.-Iranian cooperation is possible when key issues of mutual concern are at stake. Several panelists believed that was the situation today with respect to Iraq and that, without Iranian cooperation, the stabilization of Iraq would prove difficult if not impossible. Some panelists believed that the beginnings of U.S.-Iranian cooperation on Iraq (currently within a multilateral framework) could potentially lead to broader, bilateral negotiations in the future, including on the nuclear question. Still, the level

of mistrust is so high that few expected dramatic breakthroughs in the next 20 months.

- **Iran may be interested in working with the United States and the international community to find a solution to the nuclear issue.** Ambassador Mohammad Javad Zarif emphasized Iranian ambitions to strengthen nonproliferation efforts. Panelists noted that successful negotiations would require establishing an end point agreeable to all parties. Ambassador Zarif suggested renewed efforts for an international consortium, which would provide more transparency of Iran's nuclear program as well as increased international monitoring. He also noted that the paradigm of "mistrust and verify" would govern the nature of a solution on Iran's nuclear file. Ambassador Burns stated that, while Iran did not have the right to become a nuclear-armed country, the United States would allow Iran "exit doors" in negotiations.
- **The UN sanction process and international economic pressure are working.** Over the past several months, U.S. leverage has increased as Iran is further isolated by what one panelist called the "coalition of the reluctant." Many panelists believed that "hanging tough" through diplomatic and economic measures—including strengthening restrictions on European trade with Iran—is producing results, changing Iranian calculations and ultimately behavior, at least in the short term. In the long term, few doubted that Iran—under any type of government—would continue to seek a nuclear weapon capability.
- **Preemption is not imminent.** Even among a group of participants with views from across the political spectrum, no panelist argued that the use-of-force option was imminent or desirable. Many recognized the significant risks and

costs of a military strike and the inability of this option to effectively stop Iran's nuclear program. Given the context of the Iraq war, some also noted that there was little stomach for the force option. Still, several panelists cautioned that escalation with Iran was still possible through inadvertent actions or miscalculations. And some noted that Israel viewed the prospect of a nuclear-armed Iran as an existential threat. Despite such concerns, most panelists believed that the sanction process was working and should be given time to work, even if some still preferred to keep the force option on the table. There was no sense of urgency voiced, and some even suggested that the use-of-force clock was slowing for the Israelis as well.

- **Focus is on regime behavior, not regime change.** With the exception of one panelist who argued that the United States should promote regime change in Iran by increasing support for opposition groups from within, most panelists—including Ambassador Burns—focused on changing Iranian behavior, not the Iranian regime. Iran specialists did not believe that there were strong prospects for regime change or revolution in the near term and pointed to the lessons of the Libya model—in which an existing regime can change behavior on issues of importance to the West (e.g., nuclear capabilities and terrorism) without a fundamental shift in the nature of the regime. But some also noted that, in the long term, U.S. support for democratization and human rights could serve U.S. interests.
- **A nuclear-armed Iran can be expected to be more dangerous and aggressive than a non-nuclear-armed Iran.** Just as in the case of Pakistan, a nuclear-armed Iran is likely to demonstrate riskier and more assertive behavior (particularly in areas such as terrorism) and significantly increase the risk of escalation. Still, some analysts argued

that Iranian behavior as a nuclear state will largely depend on the nature of the leadership. Individuals like Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei are more likely to exercise prudence and will not necessarily be spoiling for a fight, while successors to Khamenei are unknown. Most experts also agreed that maintaining a stable deterrence relationship with Iran would prove far more difficult than did the U.S.-Soviet experience.

- **Engagement and containment options were ultimately preferred to confrontation.** Several analysts argued for immediate and direct U.S. engagement with Iran. But other analysts did not view engagement and containment of Iran (through the development of a regional Sunni alliance with tacit support from Israel) as mutually exclusive policy options and suggested that the United States pursue both in tandem. Just as in the case of U.S.-Soviet relations during the Cold War, the United States can negotiate with Iran and, at the same time, develop a containment structure to curtail the growth of Iranian power and influence in the region.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank several individuals who helped make this conference possible. First and foremost, we are deeply grateful for the assistance of Nathan Chandler and Joy Merck from RAND for their tireless efforts. We also wish to thank our other RAND colleagues for their generous time and attention to detail, particularly Shirley Ruhe, Sage Newman, Carmen Ferro, Catherine Hunter, and Terri Perkins. The assistance offered by Sameer Lalwani and Steve Clemmons from the New America Foundation was also crucial to ensuring a successful conference, as was the help we received from our reliable contact on the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Gabriel Bitol. And, of course, many thanks to all of our participants, who, without fail, offered unique insights and expertise—we appreciate the time they devoted to advance this important policy debate.

ABBREVIATIONS

AEI	American Enterprise Institute
DCI	Director of Central Intelligence
DoD	U.S. Department of Defense
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GWOT	global war on terrorism
HEU	highly enriched uranium
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IFOR	Implementation Force
IHT	<i>International Herald Tribune</i>
IISS	International Institute for Strategic Studies
IRGC	Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps
IRI	Islamic Republic of Iran
ISG	Iraq Study Group
JDAM	Joint Direct Attack Munition
MAD	mutually assured destruction
MEK	Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization
NARA	Nuclear-Armed Regional Adversary
NIE	National Intelligence Estimate
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PRC	People's Republic of China
SFOR	Stabilisation Force
UNSC	UN Security Council

INTRODUCTION

James Dobbins

The United States and Iran are two countries with a long history of strained relations. Iranian discontent with the United States is the result of several specific incidents, to include U.S. support for the 1953 coup in Iran, U.S. support for the Shah, U.S. support for Saddam Hussein during the Iran-Iraq war, and the downing of an Iranian civilian airliner by the U.S. Navy. Similarly, U.S. discontent with Iran is the result of such incidents as the seizure of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran; Iranian support for groups associated with the attacks on the U.S. Marines in Lebanon in 1983 and on the Air Force barracks in Khobar Towers in 1996; and Iranian support for Shia militias attacking Sunni, U.S., and coalition forces in Iraq. All of these incidents have complicated the relationship between the United States and Iran, making communication between the two countries increasingly difficult.

However, the relationship between these two countries has not been solely negative. In fact, cooperation between the United States and Iran has led to positive results on several occasions. Following the ousting of the Taliban regime in 2001 in Afghanistan by U.S.-led forces, a diplomatic effort was initiated to create a successor regime. This effort involved neighboring countries with a vested interest in Afghanistan's future to include India, Pakistan, Russia, and Iran. During 10 days of intense negotiations, Iran (represented by Ambassador Mohammad Javad Zarif) contributed in several areas. For example, Ambassador Zarif noted that there was no mention of democracy in the Afghan constitution and no mention of efforts to combat international terrorism, to include cross-border terrorism. In addition, on the final day of negotiations, the Northern Alliance delegation was set to occupy 18 of the approximately 30 cabinet seats. Collective efforts were made by the ambassadors of Russia, India, Iran, and the United States, as well as Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi (then Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan) to persuade the Northern Alliance to make concessions. The Iranians, in particular,

were very persistent in negotiating and due, in the end, to Ambassador Zarif's efforts, the Northern Alliance agreed to give up two more ministries. Iran also expressed its willingness to help build the Afghan Army under U.S. leadership by providing housing, clothing, and equipment. However, this offer for Iranian support was not pursued back in Washington.

The purpose of this conference is to explore the multilayered relationship between the United States and Iran by considering the perspectives each side has on issues such as nuclear weapons. In addition, participants in this conference hope to open the lines of communication between the United States and Iran. After all, a lack of communication between the United States and Iran is not a positive good; and information, if not agreement, is a reliable product of communication.

PANEL 1: INSIDE IRAN

PANEL MEMBERS

Participants:

- Patrick Clawson (Deputy Director for Research, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy)
- Paul Pillar (Center for Peace and Security Studies, Georgetown University)
- Karim Sadjadpour (associate, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace)
- Ray Takeyh (senior fellow for Middle East Studies, Council on Foreign Relations)

Moderator:

- Anne Gearan (diplomatic correspondent, Associated Press)

ROLE OF THE REGIME

Patrick Clawson

Contrary to the mistaken impression that the nuclear issue has allowed Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadi-Nejad to rally nationalist sentiment, the nuclear issue has been the key issue used by his opponents to criticize him. Iranian moderates, and even many in his own camp, have warned that President Ahmadi-Nejad is threatening his regime and the country with his arrogant and stubborn ideological approach. The provocative language used by President Ahmadi-Nejad is needlessly making enemies. The same style he brings to the nuclear issue is what he applies on domestic matters such as his appointment of cronies at the beginning of his term, fights he picked with senior clerics, and the Tehran mayoral election. He digs himself into a deeper hole with mistakes.

His problems are likely only to get worse, because he has a set of fundamentally wrong policies. Iran is set to introduce gasoline rationing this spring or summer, which will result in higher prices for transportation, feeding public complaints about inflation. And the Iranian government is spending at a level that can be sustained only if

oil prices remain high—according to the IMF, only if oil remains at or above \$65 per barrel.

In regard to Iran's nuclear program, it is unlikely that Iran will abandon its ambitions. However, Iran may well decide to postpone those ambitions for another decade or generation if the price is too high. The United States has the ability to change Iran's calculus to postpone its nuclear program by forcing a hard choice on Tehran: raising the cost of proceeding on the current path and providing incentives if Iran takes a different route. Meanwhile, the United States should continue to support democratic-minded reformers in what limited ways it can, such as broadcasting its support for civil society groups. Such support may have little effect on the present nuclear problem, but it is both morally right and may advance U.S. interests in the long term.

HOW THE UNITED STATES MAY MISPERCEIVE IRANIAN POLITICS: SIX OBSERVATIONS

Paul Pillar

1. **Decisionmaking.** Decisionmaking in Tehran is a result of politics and debates. The prominence of Iranian hardliners weighs heavily, however, on the perceptions of Iran in the United States; President Ahmadi-Nejad is perceived as a public and obnoxious face of Iran, which creates further strain because it is "in our face."
2. **Keeping options open.** Many Iranian foreign policies involve decisions not yet taken. For example, the current course in Iran probably is to develop nuclear weapons, but many decisions remain.
3. **Impact of U.S. actions and words.** U.S. actions and words have a substantial effect on the regime in Tehran. They affect Iranian perceptions of opportunities and threats; and such actions and words also help to determine "who's up" or "who's down" in Tehran.
4. **Iranian attitudes toward the United States.** Current Iranian attitudes are not ones of unrelenting hostility

toward the United States, but instead are ones of distrust. However, such attitudes do not pose insurmountable obstacles. The lack of trust is based on Iranian skepticism about whether Washington wants an improved relationship.

5. **Political system.** The current political system in Iran has imbalances and stresses (such as popular dissatisfaction with economic performance). Change, however, is unpredictable. That is why it is fruitless to view, for example, the nuclear issue as running along two timelines: (1) when Iran could possibly acquire an actual bomb and (2) when Iranian mullahs are gone.
6. **Political change.** Political change in Iran will not necessarily be revolutionary. For example, it may be a change in the balance of forces in the current political order or a restructuring (and not a rejection or overthrow) of that order. There is no drive for a new revolution in Iran. Most Iranians are focused on private concerns.

AYATOLLAH ALI KHAMENEI, IRAN'S NUCLEAR "CARPET," AND IRAQ

Karim Sadjadpour

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. In splitting pragmatists from hard-liners, more focus should be placed on Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. In Iran, he is like the CEO. Consider his role over the past 18 years. On one hand, he is opposed to confrontation, for fear that Iran may not survive confrontation with the United States. On the other hand, he is opposed to accommodation and does not want Iran to become another Dubai or Turkey. His preference is for Iran to maintain its status quo. Yet, Iran is paralyzed with mistrust. Supreme Leader Khamenei believes that the United States wants a patron-client relationship with Iran.

Iran's nuclear "carpet." Iran's nuclear posture represents a zero-sum game and, in some sense, can be viewed as a geopolitical bazaar. To better understand Iran's negotiating posture, consider, for

example, Iranian bazaar culture. This culture is known for its cunning and piety. From a young age, such lessons are learned: (1) never appear too enamored with a carpet, and (2) you will rarely see a price on a carpet. When applying such lessons to the nuclear issue, the United States is infatuated with the nuclear "carpet," and, as a result, the United States will be more willing to pay a high price. Similarly, Iranians are not after a specific price; they want the best price they can get. Furthermore, there is no consensus in Tehran in the ruling regime in terms of what it wants; Iran lacks consensus at the highest levels.

The Iraq issue. Iran shares more common interests with the United States vis-à-vis Iraq than does any of its neighbors. Iran seems more amicable than any of its neighbors to the idea of an Iraq with a relative degree of Kurdish autonomy. Also, it is important to note that it will be difficult for the United States to escalate with Iran while cooperating with it at the same time in terms of Iraq.

Final Thoughts: The Iranian Populace and Two Ticking Clocks

The Iranian populace. The security atmosphere in Iran does not raise issues regarding the domestic population such as human rights. If long-term changes within Iran do not include a different government, then this type of security atmosphere will not be hospitable for the Iranian populace.

Two ticking clocks. There are currently two ticking clocks in Iran: (1) the regime and (2) the nuclear issue. Under Khamenei's preference for no confrontation, decisions will be made under duress. But one school of thought in Iran is that, if Iran is to give in to pressure, would this get Iran out of trouble, or would it validate the hard-line approach? This is a fundamental dilemma in Iran—whether to give or reconcile.

THE REGIME: DISAGREEMENT AND DISCORD BUT ALSO CONSENSUS?

Ray Takeyh

Consider articles from the 1970s that discuss internal Iranian dynamics, emphasizing disagreement, discord, and factionalism. Factionalism and discord are not new; they are part of the system. Yet, today, there is a consensus position within the regime on key issues such as Iran's role in the region, the nuclear question, and relations with the United States. The consensus is what is new today, not the factionalism.

There is consensus within Iran that, as a country, Iran has the right to be a power in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East, and Iran needs to be part of any resolutions pertaining to this region; Iran should not be a supplement to the United States, but instead should be part of the table. Furthermore, Iran increasingly views itself as the second most important actor in Iraq and soon to be first. Economic integration efforts between Iran and Iraq present both opportunities and challenges.

As a result, the question becomes whether Iran can achieve both goals (to become a power within the Middle East and to become the most important actor in Iraq). Will pursuit of such goals be perceived as excessively ambitious? Or, if Iran were to invite Saudi Arabia to participate also, would this diffuse some of the tension? Iran is in a position of power but will remain vulnerable at the same time.

In terms of the nuclear issue, Iran feels that it has the right to have an advanced nuclear structure. A narrow sector of reformists disagrees, but the rest of the regime agrees on Iran having a nuclear capability. As for the relationship with the United States, in August 2006, Iran responded to the "5+1" talks and stated that Iran wants comprehensive negotiations across an entire range of issues; Iran does not want to deal with the nuclear issue in isolation. This official document released by the government in Iran offered to negotiate without preconditions ("Islamic Republic," 2006). The United States wants negotiations as well but through a specific framework that first

entails an interim suspension of the enrichment program, followed by U.S. negotiations with Iran on Iraq and "other things." But even this final red line of enrichment suspension is likely to disappear in the coming months and negotiations are likely to result, though it is doubtful that they will succeed. A level of suspicion remains, and, as a result, fundamental progress is unlikely to happen under the current U.S. administration. Nevertheless, the U.S. Department of State has established a benchmark; stabilization will take place only through a negotiation framework.

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

1. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's Trip to Turkey

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice will soon head to Turkey for meetings with Syrian counterparts. Is there any hope that Secretary Rice will be able to accomplish much or be able to positively change U.S-Iranian relations under the current administration?

Response (Patrick Clawson). There have been many contacts at senior levels, but they have been largely unproductive because of the level of mistrust. Iran feels that the United States cannot be counted on to carry through agreements (e.g., Iran-contra affair). Therefore, the George W. Bush administration's approach of multilateral negotiations (instead of bilateral negotiations) is a wise approach. It is much smarter to involve the Europeans than to play to Iran's strategy to split the United States and Europe. International solidarity is the best way to achieve progress on the nuclear issue. Indeed, Europeans are the driver on the nuclear issue, and the United States is following their lead.

Response (Paul Pillar). I have a mild optimism that some progress will be made, despite preconditions. There is a long diplomatic history in which preconditions do not hinder negotiations. In fact, "fuzzy rules" may lead to progress; accomplishments may rely on "fuzziness."

Response (Karim Sadjadpour). Reconciliation is unlikely. The bar should be set lower. Europeans should be used as the interlocutor

because the depth of mutual mistrust and ill will is too deep to overcome. I have no illusions in hoping for improved relations within the next two years.

Response (Ray Takeyh). Rice's visit could result in possible negotiations, though there is no appetite in Iran to accept preconditions, so the United States will need to adjust the "red line." It is unlikely that Iran will acquiesce. However, is it possible to consider negotiations without preconditions? Delaying negotiations could have an impact on the numerical reality (e.g., in North Korea, negotiations resulted in the "freeze + 10," but those 10 nuclear weapons already existed and were irreversible). In other words, delaying negotiations has a cost.

2. President Ahmadi-Nejad as a Political Liability

President Ahmadi-Nejad is a political liability, but to what extent? Has President Bush's approach toward Iran been a gift to him (in terms of more domestic support, for example)?

Response (Ray Takeyh). All Iranian presidencies start with a promise; in the case of Ahmadi-Nejad, that promise was social and economic justice. But the economic situation in Iran has not played to his advantage. Does the nuclear issue help? In a military sense, yes, the nuclear issue helps, but not in a diplomatic sense. Mobilizing the Iranian populace has not received significant acclaim, though U.S. confrontation with Iran would certainly be advantageous in this regard.

Response (Karim Sadjadpour). I agree. People in Iran voted about corruption and economic promises. Arguably, President Ahmadi-Nejad tried to deliver, but, because he was unable to, he showed poorly in the municipal elections. Rehabilitation, however, would happen with military confrontation.

Response (Patrick Clawson). The Iranian response to any military conflict will depend on the circumstances leading to confrontation. That has been the lesson from the past U.S. confrontations with Iran. Following the successful U.S. attacks against the Iranian navy in 1988, and even after the shooting down of the Iranian civilian aircraft, the Iranian public blamed its own government for prolonging the Iran-Iraq

war, rather than blaming the United States. A U.S. strike under current conditions would generate a negative response in Iran. However, Iran's moderates have warned that President Ahmadi-Nejad's aggressive stance puts the country at risk. If President Ahmadi-Nejad were to prove them correct by announcing that Iran is engaged in producing highly enriched uranium (HEU) or if the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) revealed a clandestine program in Iran, then there would be an international crisis. If, in that situation, the United States took action, the response at that point may be quite different from the response if the United States were to act tomorrow.

3. Statement by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei

On March 23, 2006, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei gave a public statement supporting talks between the United States and Iran about the situation in Iraq. Is there any indication that there has been a change in thinking in Iran? And is there something that the United States could do to prevent escalation between Sunni Arab states and Iranians?

Response (Ray Takeyh). The statement is significant. But will Iraq discussions lead to something else? Unclear. As for the second part of the question, there is zero possibility of a U.S.-Israeli strike on a nuclear facility in Iran. Furthermore, the decision to use force against Iranian military operatives in Iraq would be an escalatory dynamic and could provoke more military confrontation. Legally, it would be difficult to attack Iranian nuclear structures.

Response (Karim Sadjadpour). I agree that the statement was significant. As for the second part of the question, first, it was a game of chess, and now it is a game of chicken. For example, take the presence of U.S. Navy carriers in the Persian Gulf. On one hand, the view in Iran is that to give in would validate the hard-liners in D.C. On the other hand, escalation is working. The danger is that the Bush administration will take pressure further to compromise on other issues.

Response (Patrick Clawson). Military action is not on the agenda at present. The essence of the U.S. approach is that great power unity

at the UN is the most effective way to press Iran. The United States has had considerable success forging such unity. If this unity breaks down and if Iran engages in aggressive actions, the United States could consider a military attack.

4. Russia's Decision to Suspend Cooperation at Bushehr

Russia recently suspended cooperation with Iran at the Bushehr nuclear complex. What will the response be? How will Iran respond?

Response (Paul Pillar). This decision was good for the United States. Tehran would be very unhappy about the development, but what remains undecided is significant.

Response (Karim Sadjadpour). Russia is the x factor in the entire equation. China will factor in Russia's read on the nuclear policy. It all goes back to the lack of consensus in Iran. Iran prefers not to work with the Russians. How this plays out will be important.

Response (Ray Takeyh). It is short-sighted for the Russians to disagree with the program. There used to be a Russian deal with Iran. It undermines the international consortium to operate outside of Iran.

5. U.S. Congress and Iranian Parliamentarians

A number of proposals have been submitted to suggest a collaborative, bilateral relationship between the U.S. Congress and Iranian parliamentarians. What is the possibility for participating in such collaboration?

Response (Ray Takeyh). Can you see an Iranian parliamentarian of consequence? I am disinclined to say yes.

Response (Karim Sadjadpour). The Iranian parliament is not particularly important. If Ambassador Zarif cannot come from New York to D.C., then how are personnel in the second and third tiers of Iranian leadership going to travel from Iran to the United States?

6. Effect of Civil Action on U.S. Foreign Policy

Does civil action have any effect on U.S. foreign policy?

Response (Karim Sadjadpour). The worst decision made by the leadership in Iran was to say that the Holocaust did not happen and to say that Israel should be wiped off the map.

7. 2003 Proposal for a Grand Bargain

Some say that the past is prologue. Is there anything to come of the 2003 Iranian proposal to the United States (through the Swiss embassy) for a grand bargain?

Response (Patrick Clawson). There are different accounts on who wrote the proposal and what it actually says. Phil Wilkinson, who thinks the proposal should have been explored, says that senior foreign service officers working on Iran recommended not accepting the proposal. And, shortly after the proposal was received, Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad and Ambassador Zarif met in Geneva to have discussions. It was after that meeting that the United States decided to suspend such bilateral meetings.

8. Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MEK)

The U.S. Department of State has designated Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MEK) as a terrorist organization. Is there any possibility that the United States would use this organization as means for regime change?

Response (Patrick Clawson). It would be silly for the United States to use MEK to advance regime change in Iran. That said, terrorists have human rights, and the United States should not violate those rights by forcibly repatriating the MEK members to Iran.

PANEL 2: LOOKING AT TWO ALTERNATIVE FUTURES

PANEL MEMBERS

Presenter:

- David Ochmanek (director, Project AIR FORCE Strategy and Doctrine Program, RAND Corporation)

Reactions:

- Kenneth Pollack (director of research, Saban Center for Middle East Policy, The Brookings Institution)
- Michael Eisenstadt (director, Military and Security Studies Program, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy)

Moderator:

- Robert Hunter (senior advisor, RAND Corporation)

IRAN, THE UNITED STATES, AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS: AN EXAMINATION OF KEY POLICY ISSUES

David Ochmanek

The purpose of this presentation is to present a summary of work done at RAND over the past two to three years bearing on the issue of Iran and nuclear weapons. Specifically, we offer insights relating to two "futures": one in which Iran develops and fields an arsenal of nuclear weapons, and the other in which the United States attacks Iran in an effort to forestall its acquisition of nuclear weapons. Note that we do not posit these as "alternative futures," since we judge that an attack (or, indeed, a series of attacks) on Iran probably cannot prevent that country from eventually obtaining nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, over the near to mid term, these represent alternative policy choices.

In the process, we address two related questions:

- Is it reasonable to expect that the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) can be persuaded to forego the development of nuclear weapons as a result of some sort of negotiation?
- What are the implications of our findings for policy?

Iran's Motivations for Acquiring Nuclear Weapons

We begin with a brief examination of Iran's motivations for acquiring nuclear weapons. Any list of Iran's national security objectives would surely include the ones listed here. Like any state, the IRI seeks to

- maintain independence and sustain the revolutionary regime—a goal that includes strengthening support for the regime domestically and protecting it from external threats
- deter attack and fend off pressure from outside—especially from the United States, which Iran's leadership regards as Iran's most dangerous adversary
- defeat aggression should deterrence fail
- to the extent possible, increase Iran's prestige and influence over events in its own region and beyond so that the state can more successfully pursue its interests across a wide range of issues.

It is important to recognize that Iran's leaders probably view the acquisition of nuclear weapons as helping them to achieve all of these objectives. As we shall see, if one believes that the United States might unleash a large-scale attack on Iran, nuclear weapons have unique deterrent potential. The current Iranian leadership believes that the prestige that would be associated with successfully developing nuclear weapons would enhance the standing of the regime both at home and abroad.

Note, too, that none of these objectives is peculiar to the theocratic regime now in control of Iran. This does not mean that a government less hostile to the West would necessarily place the same priority on acquiring nuclear weapons, but it is noteworthy that Iran's nuclear program was started under the reign of the shah in the 1970s.

Iran's Conventional Forces

The value that Iran's leaders place on acquiring nuclear weapons must be assessed in light of the capabilities of its current and future conventional forces relative to those of the United States. In brief,

Iran's conventional forces are modest. Its ground forces, including those of the army (Artesh) and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), comprise the equivalent of around 15 divisions. They are reasonably well equipped and trained by the standards of regional powers, though most of their heavy weapons are of 1970s vintage. Iran's limited spending on military forces has not been focused on modernizing its conventional capabilities.

Iran's navy has only eight major combatant vessels (three Kilo-class submarines and five surface ships). The heart of its naval force consists of several hundred small patrol craft, many of which are armed with short-range guided missiles. Iran's threat to shipping in the Persian Gulf is enhanced by modest numbers of antiship cruise missiles, most of Chinese design. These forces are best seen as giving Iran the capability to play a "spoiler" role in the gulf: They can raise the cost and risks associated with operating in the gulf but cannot hope to control maritime operations in the face of determined resistance from the United States.

Iran's 280 combat aircraft are a testimony to the ingenuity of its procurement and maintenance specialists. Most are survivors from the shah's air force, which was equipped and trained by the United States in the late 1960s and 1970s. Virtually all are third-generation (F-4 and F-5-class) fighters, with a few newer, Soviet-made aircraft added in the 1990s. None would be a match for U.S. airpower.

Although there is talk of Iran importing modern, double-digit, radar-guided, surface-to-air missiles, these do not yet appear to be operational, at least in significant numbers.

Iran appears to have focused much of its energy and resources on developing a family of ballistic missiles. Starting with several hundred Scud missiles (of Gulf War fame), the Iranians have sustained a development program that has yielded models of increasing range. The Shahab 3 missile, now operational in limited numbers, can reach targets as far away as Israel. These are mobile missiles, which would be difficult to detect and attack prior to launch.

Keep in mind that Iran spends on its armed forces about 3 percent of what the United States spends (more or less, depending on whether

one uses an exchange-rate calculation or purchasing-power parity). (It also spends considerably less on its military forces than does Saudi Arabia, Turkey, or Israel.) This reality locks it into a position of inferiority vis-à-vis the United States at the level of conventional military operations.

Iran's "Strategic Loneliness"

Iran's thinking about military requirements is influenced as well by a sense of strategic isolation. Iran has no real allies—its relationship with the secular Arabist regime in Syria is probably best characterized as a relationship of mutual convenience. This sense of international isolation has been heightened in the Iranian psyche by the harrowing experience of the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s. The war went on for eight years, during which Iran is said to have suffered around 1 million casualties. Yet, despite the facts that Saddam Hussein's Iraq initiated the war with an invasion of Iran and that the Iraqis went on to use chemical weapons against Iranian forces, the international community took no effective action to intervene.

This sense of "strategic loneliness," combined with Iran's military weakness at the convention level, creates perceptions of a serious "deterrence gap."¹

Iran has sought to fill that gap by emphasizing capabilities at both the low and high ends of the spectrum of military operations: guerrilla, commando, and terrorist or proxy groups at the low end; and ballistic missiles and, potentially, nuclear weapons at the high end.

In light of this, and in light of the regime's evident determination to pursue policies at odds with U.S. interests in the gulf and elsewhere, it seems unlikely that Iran's leaders can be persuaded to give up the pursuit of a nuclear weapon capability of some kind. To be sure, Iran today possesses the capacity to impose costs on its adversaries, and its leadership certainly sees threats of a prolonged insurgency, a protracted terrorist campaign, and interference

¹ The term "strategic loneliness" is taken from Takeyh (2006).

with the shipment of oil and gas from the gulf as having some deterrent effect on U.S. decisionmakers. But nuclear weapons offer a means of imposing strategic costs on Washington.

This does not mean that a formal decision to develop nuclear weapons has been made in Tehran. In whatever manner the United States and other actors in the international community react to Iran's continued efforts to advance its nuclear program, the pursuit of a weapon will be fraught with costs and risks. But a dispassionate assessment of the options available to the IRI suggests that the regime will place a very high priority on getting at least within "sprinting distance" of an operational arsenal. Mastering the nuclear fuel cycle, either with plutonium or uranium or both, is the *sine qua non* of this objective.

A Nuclear-Armed Iran?

With that as background, let us turn to an examination of our two futures. We begin by considering how the IRI might behave in peacetime, crisis, and conflict should it acquire nuclear weapons.

We have only a few relevant historical data points, but they seem consistent. In general, history suggests that states that acquire nuclear weapons may, for a time at least, be more willing to probe the limits of their adversaries' tolerance of aggression:

- The Soviet Union tested its first nuclear device in 1949. Within a year of that test, Soviet Communist Party General Secretary Joseph Stalin gave the "green light" to North Korean Prime Minister Kim Il-Sung to invade South Korea. We cannot, of course, make a direct, causal connection between these events, but it seems plausible that Stalin felt more willing to challenge U.S. interests once he had at least the rudiments of a nuclear deterrent capability.
- The People's Republic of China's (PRC's) first nuclear test was in 1964. By this time, the Sino-Soviet split was deepening. In 1969, after a series of incidents along the Chinese-Russian border, Chairman Mao Zedong ordered the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to ambush Soviet units

patrolling disputed areas along the Ussuri River in an effort to deter further Soviet provocations. Moscow reacted by escalating its military operations along the border, after which Beijing backed down and negotiated an end to the crisis.

- In 1999, one year after its nuclear tests, the government of Pakistan sent 5,000 troops into the Kargil region of Kashmir in an effort to compel India to begin serious negotiations about the status of the disputed region. India responded forcefully, and the international community, which regarded Pakistan as the aggressor, pressured Islamabad to back down.
- Two years later, Islamist radicals based in Pakistan attacked the Indian parliament building in New Delhi with the intention of killing many of India's top governing officials. The attack was foiled by Indian security personnel, and India did not retaliate.

In interviews after these incidents, high-ranking Pakistani military officers stated explicitly that they felt emboldened to challenge India because of the deterrent effect of their nuclear forces. "If there's one single lesson I've learned, it's that possession of a nuclear weapon has not been a bad idea" (Coll, 2006).

Given Iran's past behavior, its security objectives (to the extent that we understand them), and these lessons of history, we should expect a nuclear-armed Iran to challenge more aggressively the interests of the United States and its security partners. We might see more aggressive use of terrorist tactics against U.S. assets in the gulf region or a greater willingness to unleash Iranian-sponsored terrorist or insurgent groups (e.g., Khobar Towers). We might also see increased diplomatic and military pressure against the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries over drilling rights in disputed areas of the gulf.

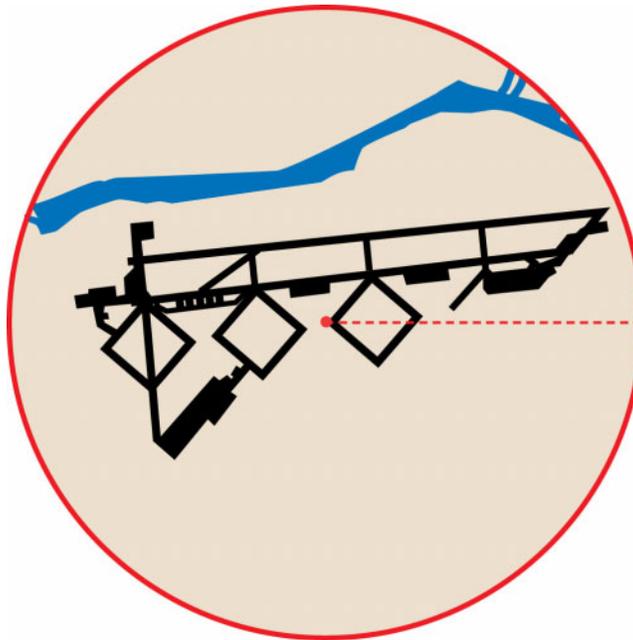
It is also possible that, over time, the security provided by nuclear weapons might contribute to the emergence of more responsible

Iranian behavior that is reflective of a policy that accepts key features of the geopolitical status quo. Certainly, the Soviet Union (post-Khrushchev) and the PRC experienced such an evolution. (In addition, some would argue that the mutual possession of nuclear weapons by both Pakistan and India has helped to stabilize the situation there.)

In any case, nothing in the historical record points to a conclusion that nuclear weapons are seen by their possessors as providing the means for overt, large-scale aggression.

In a crisis or conflict with the United States, regional adversaries pursue the following objectives:

- First, they seek to deter the United States from intervening in a dispute or ongoing local conflict.
- Failing that, they will try to blunt U.S. power-projection operations and, if possible, inflict enough costs on the United States that it abandons the fight.
- As part of this strategy, our adversaries may seek to intimidate U.S. allies and security partners in an effort to split any coalition that might be arrayed against them. They may place especially high priority on convincing other governments in their region to deny the United States access to bases or operating areas in their territory—assets that can be crucial to successful, large-scale, power-projection operations.
- Regional adversaries will seek as well to convince the United States to temper its war aims against them. Of highest priority is to deter the United States from seeking to take down the enemy regime.



RAND CF237-1

Figure 1 - Area of 5-psi Overpressure, 20-Kiloton Airburst

Figure 1 depicts what might be regarded as the lethal radius of a Hiroshima-class fission weapon detonated at about 2,000 feet above ground level. At a distance of just under a mile from ground zero, the peak overpressure is 5 pounds per square inch (psi). This is sufficient to destroy all nonhardened, above-ground structures, including fuel storage tanks, masonry buildings, and, of course, aircraft and vehicles. The 5-psi ring is plotted in Figure 1 over a diagram of Osan Air Base in South Korea, which is representative of a well-developed forward base. The lethal area encompasses virtually the entire base.

So nuclear weapons, if accurately delivered, can have significant operational effects against U.S. theater forces. They can also have strategic effects, altering the decisionmaking calculus of policymakers in allied countries and in the United States. In fact, a small, survivable nuclear arsenal can contribute to all of a regional adversary's wartime objectives. The question is, can adversaries be deterred from using their nukes or from brandishing them credibly?

There is a tendency to regard nuclear weapons as intended primarily to guarantee the survival of the adversary's regime. Certainly, they have this potential. But it should not be assumed that their use would therefore necessarily be reserved for the end game of a conflict—a sort of last-ditch ultimate threat. Such an assumption suggests implicitly that the adversary leadership lacks the capacity to anticipate the outcome of a conventional fight. But we have already seen that Iran's conventional military forces are quite modest. To a first order, there is little reason to believe that, in a serious confrontation with the United States, Iran's conventional forces would fare significantly better than Iraq's did against coalition forces in 1991. However, if the United States were to invade Iran (an operation that is beyond the capacity of U.S. forces today), it would have great difficulty occupying the country.

This being the case, Iran's leaders in wartime might perceive their situation along the following lines:

- Military defeat will end this regime (either because the United States will impose regime change or because internal opponents will overthrow us).
- Our conventional forces cannot prevent defeat (though they might be able to prevent the United States from controlling the country).
- Nuclear threats or use might change the military situation in our favor or might dissuade the United States from continuing its military operation.

Obviously, a situation in which a nuclear-armed adversary adopts this perception can be very dangerous.

What we take away from this is the following: It is, ironically, the enemy state's *weakness* that makes it hard to deter its leaders in a conflict situation. Deterring nuclear-armed regional adversaries (NARAs), such as Iran, in short, is qualitatively different from the deterrence dynamics of the Cold War. Iran (or North Korea) is not simply a "lesser-included case" of our experience with the Soviet Union or, for that matter, China, both of which were large, powerful states.

NARAs have a range of options available for nuclear use. And, in some circumstances, more discreet nuclear use options may appear attractive to adversaries. Such use might include an atmospheric test, a demonstration shot over an uninhabited area, or a high-altitude burst that generates an electromagnetic pulse. All of these options would demonstrate the adversary's capability and will to escalate but would not impose high costs on the United States or its partners. Nuclear attacks on military targets removed from populated areas, while more damaging and more provocative, can have similar effects. Such attacks could put U.S. decisionmakers in a very difficult position. If the NARA retains a significant number of deliverable weapons and refrains from killing large numbers of civilians, its threat to attack cities can have a significant deterrent potential.

None of this should be interpreted as implying that war with a NARA is inevitable or even, necessarily, more likely. After all, even if the nuclear gambit convinces the United States to back off in a conflict, the NARA is probably not materially better off than it was before the war and may be far worse off. As a result, superior U.S. conventional and nuclear forces will continue to have great value in discouraging others from deliberately provoking a war. But history is full of examples of states that stumbled into war—including wars that they were almost certain to lose—due to mistakes or miscalculations.

Should the United States find itself in a conflict involving a NARA, it will have to consider its own war aims very carefully. Forcible regime change under these circumstances will be fraught with extreme risks and may be ruled out in all but the direst of circumstances. If the distinguishing feature of the post-Cold War world was that the United States could, when push came to shove, have its way with regional adversaries, the advent of NARAs spells the end of that era. Instead, we may find ourselves in situations similar to those that prevailed during the Cold War, in which conflicts were rarely fought to a decisive conclusion.

An Attack on Iran

President Bush has stated repeatedly that a nuclear-armed Iran would be "unacceptable." What might be the consequences of an attack aimed at denying Iran this capability?

The first point to make here is that it would be wrong to expect a U.S. attack to bring pressure on the regime from within. It is true that Iran's ruling elites are a fractious bunch. Analysts have identified three major factions among them:

- Hard-liners, such as the Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the current supreme ruler, and Mahmud Ahmadi-Nejad, Iran's president
- Pragmatists, such as Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, who focus on the need to improve the performance of Iran's economy and favor Iran's integration into the international system
- Reformers, such as Iran's former president, Hojjat ol-Eslam Mohammad Khatami, who sought to rein in the power of the mullahs, fight corruption, and expand personal freedom in Iran.

It is also true that, while the reform faction today is currently somewhat dispirited and marginalized, many in Iranian society harbor a substantial amount of dissatisfaction toward the regime, due to its failure to deliver sustained economic growth, continued pervasive corruption, and the imposition of onerous restrictions on personal freedoms.

Having said all of that, however, there is ample evidence to suggest that efforts from outside to exacerbate these fissures in Iran's society and governance are far more likely to have the opposite effect. For example, in 2002, when President Bush included Iran in his "axis of evil," public figures across the spectrum in Iran felt compelled to condemn his characterization. Iranian nationalism is a powerful unifying force, and it is intensified when the nation is seen as being pressured from without. Memories of past Western interventions in Iran's affairs run deep, and hard-liners in Iran's

regime are quick to exploit these feelings when U.S. statements and actions provide them ammunition to do so.

As Ray Takeyh (2006) has observed, Iran's hard-liners are always ready to exploit perceptions of conflict with the United States as a means of diverting attention from their own failings. In the extreme, actual attacks on Iran would lead the regime to put the nation on a war footing, empowering the IRGC and the most hard-line and aggressive elements within the political elite.

How Iran's leaders might react to a U.S. military attack depends, in part, on the size and scope of the attack. If a U.S. attack were limited, Iran's leaders would have incentives to limit their retaliation. If, on the other hand, the U.S. attack were perceived as part of an effort aimed at bringing down the Iranian regime, Iran's leaders would contemplate more extreme response options. Iran's leaders might consider the following responses in the face of a small-scale U.S. attack:

- At a minimum, Iran's forces would be ordered to defend the nation's airspace, waters, and territory as vigorously as possible.
- Iran would likely step up its support to radical Shiite groups in Iraq and encourage them to more aggressively attack U.S. forces and interests there. It is quite possible that groups such as Muqtada al-Sadr's militias would lash out at U.S. forces on their own initiative without waiting for support from Tehran.
- The Iranian regime would see U.S. military assets in the gulf region as legitimate targets for attacks. U.S. naval forces in the gulf would be the most accessible targets. U.S. air forces based in GCC countries might also be targeted, using irregular or special operations forces or, perhaps, ballistic missiles.
- They might authorize attacking "soft" targets affiliated with the United States, such as civilian housing areas in GCC countries, hotels, and airlines.

- The Iranians might also step up the flow of weapons and training to groups such as Hizballah, prodding them to attack Israel as a way of highlighting the connections between the United States and Israel and striking out at U.S. interests. Diplomatically, Iran would seek to internationalize the conflict, mobilizing opposition across the Islamic world and among other "nonaligned" states.

In the face of attacks that were seen as threatening the regime, the Iranians would have a range of more extensive options at their disposal. These include

- attacking "soft" U.S. targets in the region
- attacking U.S. forces and bases in the region but with a greater level of effort
- attacking oil and gas shipments in or near the gulf
- attacking Americans in the United States with terrorist strikes.

It is not possible in this brief presentation to evaluate either the efficacy of U.S. attack options or the viability of these Iranian options. However, several points are clear:

- *First, one should not expect that an Iranian riposte to a U.S. attack will necessarily be limited to a discrete time frame or geographic region. If attacked, Iran's leaders would wish to impose commensurate costs on the United States in the interest of deterring further attacks. It may take time for the Iranians to generate and position assets for retaliatory attacks and to execute them. And, while Iran's retaliations may be of lower intensity than were the U.S. attacks, they may take place over months and years. In short, the United States has the capacity to start a war with Iran without being able to dictate its duration, scope, or the terms on which it ends.*
- *Second, even a highly effective attack on Iran's nuclear infrastructure will not destroy the human capital and the*

technology base needed to reconstruct the program. Like the Iraqis after Israel's attack on the reactor complex at Osirak, the Iranians should be expected to rebuild their program postattack in a more dispersed, covert, and survivable form.

- Third, *popular support for the program within Iran would probably be high.* Historically, short bombing campaigns have typically prompted citizens of the victimized country to rally around their government, and the majority of Iranians should be expect to do just that. The regime would point to the U.S. attack as an example of the sort of thing a nuclear capability is intended to deter.

Of course, reactions to an attack on Iran would spread far beyond Iran and the gulf. Jihadist elements worldwide would characterize the attack—the United States' third on a Muslim country since 2001—as further evidence that the United States is engaged in an all-out “war on Islam.” As such, the attack would be expected to boost support for radical Islamist groups.

Notwithstanding the concerns that countries of the GCC have about Iranian power, opinion among the gulf Arabs would be overwhelmingly against the United States. This would make it more difficult for these governments to cooperate openly with Washington on a variety of issues.

And, to the extent that the U.S. attack would be seen as legitimating Iran's claims that it needs stronger deterrent capabilities, it might make it harder to enforce restrictions on Iran's access to technologies related to nuclear, missile, and other weapons.

Policy Directions

In closing, we offer a few thoughts about some implications of all of this for policy. The United States and its allies have some capacity to influence the state of their relations with Iran. Two important dimensions of that relationship are the extent of cooperation or commonality that both sides perceive in their relations and whether or not Iran has nuclear weapons (see Figure 2). These two dimensions

create four possible cases, with a somewhat blurry line differentiating nuclear from nonnuclear ones (recognizing that Iran's nuclear weapon status could be ambiguous if it chooses not to test).

Obviously, the best case is the lower left corner of the space; the worst is the upper right.

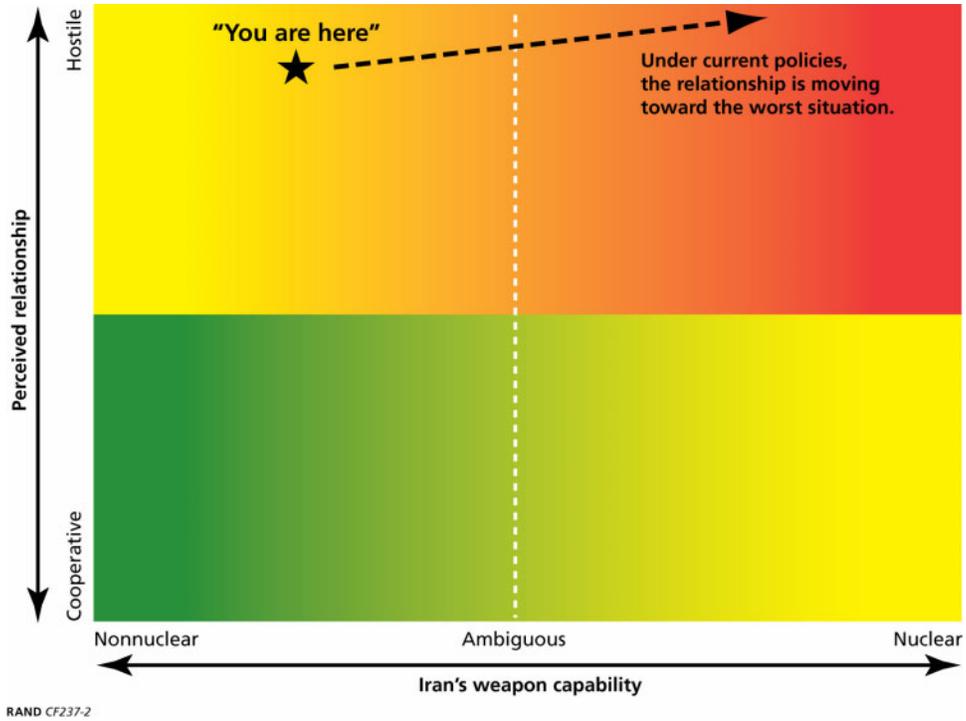


Figure 2 - Shaping the Future U.S.-Iran Security Relationship (1)

The placement of the asterisk in Figure 2 represents the United States' current security relationship with Iran: a relationship of hostility with a nation that, for the time being, does not have nuclear weapons. However, as the arrow in the figure notes, the trends are not promising. Absent some initiative on one or both sides, the relationship is drifting steadily into the worst case.

A military strike on Iran's nuclear facilities can retard, but ultimately probably not prevent, Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. But attacking Iran will almost certainly preclude movement toward a more benign relationship for many years to come.

A central question for this conference is what other outcomes than this might be feasible? Specifically, as shown in Figure 3, is it possible to implement policies that will get the relationship moving "south" (toward less hostility) without, at the same time, making it easier for Iran to move "east" (toward an operational weapon)?

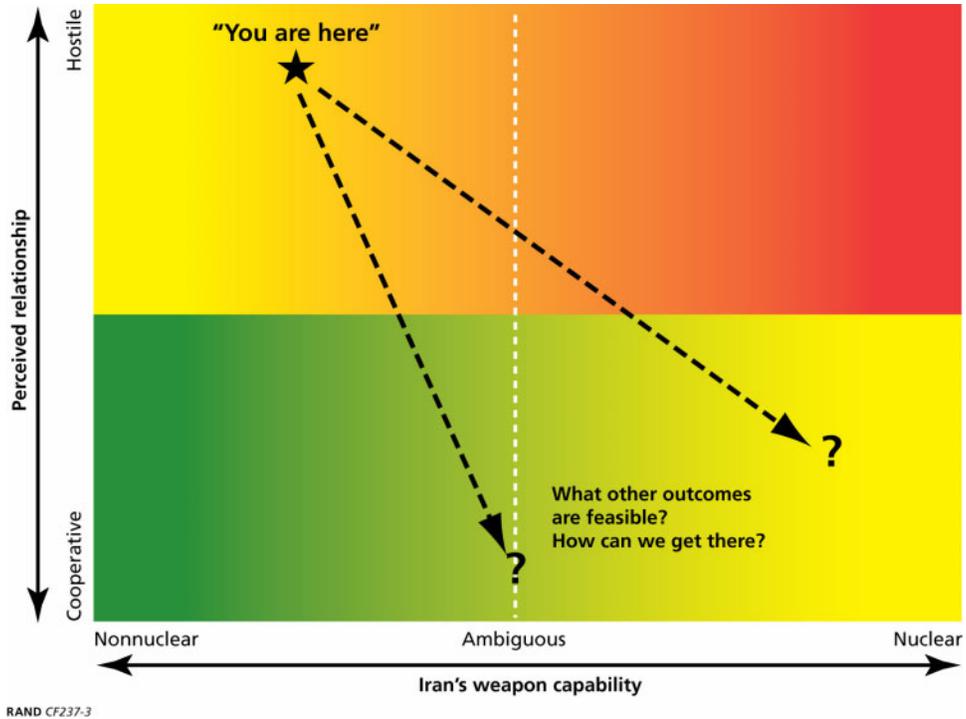


Figure 3 - Shaping the Future U.S.-Iran Security Relationship (2)

To summarize, our key judgments are as follows:

- **Iran's security situation gives it strong incentives to acquire nuclear weapons.** Such weapons would provide it with far greater deterrent potential than would any conventional weapons that it might be able to acquire.
- **A nuclear-armed Iran is not good news for the United States or for Iran's neighbors.** Iran should be expected to pursue its interests somewhat more aggressively once it acquired nuclear weapons. And while, over time, Iran may come to behave more responsibly, U.S. military options vis-à-vis

Iran would become more constrained due to fears of escalation.

- **Any attempt to forestall Iran's development of nuclear weapons via military action may be effective in the short term, but it would very likely render moot prospects for the liberalization of Iranian society and governance for years to come and lock the United States and Iran into a relationship of active hostility.** A protracted conflict spreading beyond the gulf region is the likely result of a large-scale U.S. attack.

In light of the negative consequences for U.S. and regional security of both a nuclear-armed, radicalized Iran and a military attack on Iran, the United States and its allies should more energetically explore options for promoting liberalization within Iraqi society. This is not the same as "regime change" or "democratization from without." Rather, it is about working to empower forces already at work within Iranian society in the hopes of promoting change from within. Such steps might include

- rapidly expanding engagement with Iranian society to include a wide array of cultural and educational exchange programs and reopening embassies, consulates, and information centers in both countries
- supporting efforts through multilateral financial and other institutions aimed at increasing transparency, promoting market reforms, and discouraging corruption. Such moves toward transparency would have the effect of weakening the economic foundations of the theocratic regime, which relies heavily on money from state-controlled enterprises (*bonyads*) as a source of patronage and financing for its domestic and international operations.

At the same time, the international community should continue to enforce selective embargoes on the transfer of sensitive technologies and materials to Iran. The U.S. embargo on gas liquefaction equipment

has been particularly effective in impeding Tehran's efforts to expand exports in this sector. This embargo should be sustained as an incentive for the regime to comply with the most important of the international community's demands.

Finally, the U.S. Department of Defense should accelerate the development and fielding of new capabilities needed to ensure that U.S. forces will be able to effectively counter regional adversaries armed with nuclear weapons. Chief among these are

- robust, multilayered defenses against ballistic and cruise missiles
- better capabilities to detect, track, and destroy small, mobile targets, such as missile launchers
- improved means for destroying or disrupting weapons in hardened and deeply buried facilities.

In combination, these recommendations would represent for the United States a policy of both containment and engagement with Iran, without confrontation.

FIVE KEY POINTS

Kenneth Pollack

(1) **A nuclear-armed Iran.** In the academic view, Kenneth Waltz argues that nuclear weapons have the potential to bring stability.² As noted in the preceding presentation, the possession of nuclear weapons can bring varying results, such as emboldening the regime. We do not know how Iran will respond with nuclear weapons. But it is likely that Iran will be more assertive and aggressive, especially with terrorism and insurgency (i.e., asymmetrical warfare).

Leadership is a critical variable. Who will succeed the supreme leader? Khamenei injects paralysis into the system, which is one of the defining features of his leadership. The bottom line is that,

² See, for example, Sagan and Waltz (1995).

whatever one thinks of how he works, he has been fairly prudent; he has not been reckless, but rather somewhat restrained. Therefore, there may be a way for the United States to contain and engage (i.e., live with a nuclear Iran) with a leader like Khamenei. But the question is, who comes next?

(2) Regional reaction to a nuclear-armed Iran. The regional reaction to a nuclear-armed Iran would be unpredictable, but important to consider. Neighbors are likely to be unhappy with a nuclear-armed Iran, but ultimately may do nothing. Voices will encourage more dramatic action, but context becomes important. In other words, thinking needs to be projected into the future to consider the context of Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons, particularly the situation in Iraq at the time. Will we see a proxy war with Saudi Arabia (as Nawaf Obaid suggested in his well-known *Washington Post* editorial late last year)?³ Or could this result in conventional escalation, with the Saudis grabbing pieces of Iraqi territory in order to prevent it from getting in the hands of the Iranians? It is not unthinkable for there to be Saudi armed forces in Iraqi territory, as one does not need much military capacity if there is a civil war going on. Such a scenario would clearly present a conflictual context for Iran acquiring a nuclear capability. In such an outcome, could the United States provide a nuclear umbrella to regional actors? Consider the consequences if the United States were to leave the region distraught and dismayed. It is an important calculation for the GCC states. If the United States is still in Iraq, they would have a greater sense of the ability of the United States to provide for their security.

(3) Nuclear arms race. There will be a price to pay in the event that Iran pursues the acquisition of nuclear weapons in terms of causing other countries to pursue WMD. Iran is definitive in this respect. Others will calculate how much of a price Iran had to pay to obtain nuclear weapons. If the perception is that Iran did not pay a

³ See Obaid (2006).

high price, then it may provide incentive to other countries to pursue acquiring such weapons for their own security.

(4) Military approach to Iran. If the United States were to confront Iran militarily to destroy its nuclear weapon capability, such military action would destroy the UN approach to dealing with nuclear weapons. The current diplomatic efforts by the UN are having an impact. However, bombing Iran will throw the diplomatic approach out the window. Furthermore, the United States should consider whether it wants to lose Iraq by retarding the Iranian nuclear program (consider Iranian equities). The United States needs to think about Iraq before moving on to Iran.

(5) Path to success. Could the United States stop Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons? A diplomatic approach can achieve success. The impact on the Iranian political system has already been significant. The current strategy should focus on tailoring sticks more than carrots. Furthermore, we need to be much more forthcoming with major carrots to convince the average Iranian that he or she will be better off by accepting the UN's limits on Iran's nuclear program than by defying them. There is a real prospect to stop Iran's nuclear program or to prevent it from crossing a certain line. For example, look at the history of the U.S. and international community's ability to cease countries' ambitions to obtain nuclear weapons (e.g., Egypt).

POWERFUL DRIVERS, RISKS, AND POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

Michael Eisenstadt

Several powerful drivers are moving Iran in the direction of creating a nuclear option: power, prestige, and influence; deterrence and defense; and self-sufficiency. What this means is that Iran is not motivated strictly by security considerations, but also by motivations related to identity and self-image. These are motivations that it would be hard for the international community to address. Moreover, when considering the potential risks of military action, one must also consider the risks of military inaction and the potential costs of a breakdown of deterrence involving a nuclear-armed Iran. How does one

assess the costs and benefits of prevention, or deterrence, given the uncertainties and risks that each entails?

Many thought that the likelihood of finding WMD in Iraq was a "slam dunk." It was not, and, as a result, we must reassess all of our assumptions about Iran and consider courses of action other than what we consider to be Tehran's likely ones. In the case of Iran, the following should be considered:

- *Would Iran weaponize?* After Iraq invaded Kuwait, it attempted to pursue a crash nuclear program, which failed to yield a nuclear device before the war with the coalition. Is the lesson of this episode that it is better to have a force-in-being, than a "rapid" breakout capability that might not be rapid enough during a fast-moving crisis? If so, would Iran be content to simply possess a break-out capability, as opposed to a nuclear force-in-being?
- *Iranian policy.* Following the Iran-Iraq war, Iraq displayed a growing assertiveness, due to its maturing chemical and biological warfare capabilities, culminating in the invasion of Kuwait. Similarly, Iran might feel emboldened by its growing nuclear capabilities. And how are we to understand Rafsanjani's (2001) statement on the impact of a nuclear weapon on Israel? And what impact might Ahmadi-Nejad's apocalyptic world view have on Iranian risk-taking?
- *Early escalation.* It is unlikely that Iran will escalate early, due to the belief that it would lose a conventional war with the United States, as evinced by Ahmadi-Nejad's self-confident public pronouncements, though such a situation has the potential to lead to a grievous miscalculation.
- *Rally around the flag.* This is the idea that a U.S. military strike would result in the Iranian populace rallying around their flag and showing overwhelming support for the Iranian regime. This may be the case, but history

shows that cracks in public and elite support often emerge during a long war that is not going well, resulting in revolution (Russia) or assassination attempts against the leader (Nazi Germany).

In closing, there are several challenges of deterring a nuclear Iran. Iran's past behavior has shown that it can be deterred and that its leadership is risk averse, but it is not clear how Ahmadi-Nejad's presidency affects this calculus. Moreover, Iran has a tendency to engage in policy zigzags, which make a stable deterrent relationship difficult to establish, while a nuclear-armed Iran may continue to sponsor terrorist attacks, possibly leading to a crisis or confrontation with the United States or Israel. And in the event of popular unrest in Iran, what would happen to its arsenal? Finally, given that nearly every WMD program has leaked technology to other proliferants, one must consider the possibility of the transfer of nuclear technology to other states friendly to Iran. Taking all of these issues into consideration, some policy recommendations include

- taking a two-tracked diplomatic approach, emphasizing action both inside and outside of the UN
- deterrence and containment of Tehran with the assistance of regional allies, and
- keeping the military option on the table.

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

1. Effectiveness of Security Guarantees

Consider again the proposal from Iran through the Swiss ambassador and the idea that countries pursue nuclear weapons for their own security. Is it conceivable that security guarantees for Iran would demonstrate that nuclear weapons are not necessary?

Response (David Ochmanek). If Iran felt more secure, some of its incentives to acquire nuclear weapons would be weakened. But, historically, security guarantees have been viable only when the interests of the allies are in alignment. Absent a substantial change

in the U.S.-Iranian relationship, it is hard to see how a U.S. security guarantee would be regarded as credible.

Response (Kenneth Pollack). Iran may want such security guarantees. But will these guarantees meet their concerns? It is unlikely that they will be satisfactory. Two things are necessary for satisfactory guarantees: (1) rhetorical concessions and (2) real concessions. But such rhetorical concessions will need to give the Iranian regime the ability to sell such concessions to the Iranian people as a great victory. Instead of guarantees, the United States and Iran ought to work toward a security forum in the Persian Gulf, similar to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), which would eventually lead to arms control.

Response (Michael Eisenstadt). Diplomacy is the art of the possible. An agreement on such security guarantees will require basic contours such as clearly defined red lines both for the United States (such as no enrichment and no reprocessing) and for Iran (such as U.S. departure from the gulf). I am not opposed to such an agreement, so long as it does not undercut efforts to mobilize the broadest possible diplomatic front to confront Tehran.

2. Lessons from History and Unintended Consequences

Are there any relevant lessons from history? Also, if the decision were made to remove nuclear facilities, what would happen next? Consider the unintended consequences (such as a catalytic war, provoking a third party such as Israel).

Response (David Ochmanek). One lesson from history, dating from the Soviet Union's acquisition of nuclear weapons, is that no administration has found satisfactory options for preventive war. U.S. planners considering an attack on Iran would face a dilemma: On the one hand, they would want to limit the extent of the attack so that Iran would have incentives to limit its response. On the other hand, they may wish to attack a broader range of targets in order to deny Iran certain retaliatory options.

Response (Kenneth Pollack). Another lesson is that deterrence during the Cold War worked. We do not want another cold war in the

Persian Gulf. The diplomatic option provides the greatest likelihood for success.

Response (Michael Eisenstadt). The practical impact of prevention would be to broaden the global war on terrorism (GWOT), but sustaining such a new effort would require strong domestic support, which currently does not exist.

3. Consortium Proposal

Is the proposal for a consortium a nonstarter or a "saving face" proposal? Also, why have many of the sanctions proposed by the United States been focused on the IRGC and not the nuclear program itself? Is this about the nuclear program or about regime change?

Response (David Ochmanek). The IRGC is said to be intimately connected with the nuclear program, and so it is not inappropriate to target sanctions at the IRGC.

Response (Kenneth Pollack). An enrichment consortium would be an option. However, acceptable standards of such a consortium would be contingent on safeguards and inspections (and inspections tied to strong sanctions can be useful).

4. Israel and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

What is the perception in Israel and possible counterreactions? Also, what is the future of the NPT with a nuclear Iran and a potential arms race?

Response (David Ochmanek). The NPT regime is sort of a secondary issue at this point. We now must focus on countering proliferation via a wide range of measures. As for Israel, it lacks the option to carry out an effective attack on Iran's nuclear facilities. It has no truly long-range aircraft and lacks the staging power to conduct follow-up strikes.

Response (Kenneth Pollack). In regard to the NPT, Iran with nuclear weapons could kill the NPT. It comes back to the issue of what price countries have to pay to pursue such weapons. But consider Libya, North Korea, and other countries that saw that this was not a

route worth pursuing. A nuclear-armed Iran, however, may result in other countries pursuing such weapons as well.

Response (Michael Eisenstadt). Consider how, in Israel, some 80 percent of the population is concentrated between Tel Aviv and Haifa. Israel views a nuclear-armed Iran as an existential threat. An Israeli attack may not achieve the desired outcome, but this may not stop Israel. However, Israel has looked at its military options and, as a result, is supporting the diplomatic process. It may plan for a military action, but it will be considered carefully, as a last resort. It is not rushing to act.

CLOSING STATEMENT

Robert Hunter

The United States and Iran are major powers in the Persian Gulf with interests that need to be compatible. One approach for making them so would be to pursue a new security structure under U.S. leadership with all members playing by the rules.

AN IRANIAN PERSPECTIVE

PRESENTER AND RESPONDERS

Remarks:

- Mohammad Javad Zarif (Iranian Ambassador to the United Nations, participating via videoconference from the UN in New York)

Questions:

- Michael Hirsh (senior editor, *Newsweek*)
- David Ignatius (national security columnist, *The Washington Post*)

IRAN'S NATIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

Mohammad Javad Zarif

Iran's national security doctrine is a product of both its experiences and its geography. Iran's experiences have not been entirely positive; Iran has been involved in or directly affected by three devastating wars in the Persian Gulf. The threat of WMD is also an important factor impacting Iran's national security environment. Iran plays an important role not only in the Persian Gulf but also in Central Asia, particularly considering the resurgent Taliban threat.

As for the impact of geography over its national security perceptions, Iran is content with its size, geography, and human and natural resources and feels no need to be threatening in its posture. Iran has not invaded any other country in 250 years. Also, Iran's deep sense of history has played a large role in shaping Iranian perceptions. Iran's history is marred with foreign intervention, which explains why Iran so greatly values its own independence and the independence of other countries as well.

Today marks the first day of the new year in Iran, so, instead of focusing on the past, we can make today a new day, a new year, and a new beginning.

Regional Stability and Security

Regional stability is an imperative for Iran. Iran is helping to bring stability and security to Central Asia and the Caucasus (in countries as Azerbaijan, Armenia, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan), and to the Persian Gulf. The Persian Gulf in particular is Iran's lifeline, and security in the region is of paramount importance. Recall that, at the height of the Iran-Iraq war and Tanker War in the Persian Gulf, the Iranian foreign minister, in a letter on May 29, 1986, to the UN Secretary-General, proposed a regional security cooperation framework for the Persian Gulf. This proposal was later incorporated in UN Security Council (UNSC) resolution 598, which helped end the Iran-Iraq war but was never implemented; however, the region would still benefit from such a security framework. A regional security framework would build confidence among countries and foster cooperation in various fields. The United Nations should have an important role in such a framework. For example, UNSC resolution 598 could be the basis of such a framework and would help to address anxieties emanating from size and power disparities in the region.

The stability of Iraq is of great importance to Iran. Iran was very pleased when Saddam Hussein was removed from power. But, since his removal, Iraq has experienced increasing instability. This instability is affecting Iran and the entire region. The predicted consequences of occupation—a rise in terrorism and extremist violence—are now apparent. There is a need to stop and reverse these developments. But there is no use in looking for scapegoats for the instability in Iraq. Iran's track record in Iraq has been constructive, with political support to the current government and reconstruction assistance.

Iran believes that ending the occupation and empowering the Iraqi government to exercise control will have a tremendous effect on removing the internal rallying ground of the insurgency. Efforts to quell the violence in Iraq also require both regional and international support for the Iraqi government in order to deprive the insurgency of hope for external political and moral support in their terrorist campaign to violently unseat the democratically elected government of Iraq. Regional

countries could express their support for the Iraqi government by holding the next periodic meeting of the foreign ministers of Iraq's neighboring countries in Baghdad, to add political weight to the very positive and constructive meeting held last week. A ministerial-level conference in Baghdad carries great symbolic political significance and sends a strong political message. Sectarian violence, such as the type fomented by individuals like Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, poses wider dangers to the region because of the danger of sectarian-based coalitions developing. Consequently, regional cooperation is needed to address these issues.

Weapons of Mass Destruction

Iran has been a victim of WMD, yet, when chemical weapons were used against Iran, the reaction from the international community was quiet. Furthermore, Iran did not use chemical weapons in retaliation. Iran has also expressed its ideological rejection of nuclear weapons. For example, the supreme leader has issued a fatwa against nuclear weapons. Nuclear deterrence is a myth for Iran; Iran would not and could not engage in that type of behavior. As for strategic considerations, nuclear weapons would lead to a reduction of regional influence and increase Iran's vulnerabilities.

So Iran is not seeking nuclear weapons, but it insists on its right to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. The problem has been that the thresholds being imposed on Iran are fluctuating, and Iran will not accept such arbitrary thresholds. There are efforts to deny Iran certain technology. However, a denial of technology cannot deny the technical know-how that Iran already possesses. There has been increased pressure on Iran to discontinue its pursuit of a nuclear program, even though all countries have the right to nuclear energy.

Resolving the Iranian Nuclear Crisis

A crisis is not inevitable; a solution to the Iranian nuclear issue is possible. However, suspension is not a viable solution and, at best, it can only be a temporary measure. A policy of suspension was already in place for two years. What needs to be found instead is a final

solution that addresses the core issue of enrichment. Two starting principles to help reach this solution are that Iran has a right to this technology and that Iran should not develop nuclear weapons. Additionally, any solution needs to accept the reality that Iran has the technical know-how and suspension will not suspend knowledge.

There are many possible solutions to resolve this issue. Instead of pushing sanctions, a solution that accepts the above-stated realities will result in a more transparent nuclear power with increased international monitoring. Sufficient legal guarantees should be in place for any such agreement, such as the additional protocol and a guarantee that Iran will not withdraw from the NPT. Export control is also an important guarantee. The lack of trust is a serious issue. Given the legacy of mistrust, a "mistrust and verify" framework will help define a solution to this issue. Iran will be hesitant to fully trust promises for receiving exported items (such as nuclear fuel). Iran already has agreements in place with multiple countries for this purpose but has so far been unable to get nuclear fuel. A consortium is an idea that should be given greater thought and consideration. And finally, any solution will require time-bound negotiations without preconditions in order to succeed.

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

1. UNSC Resolution

Consider the situation at present. The UNSC resolution calls for sanctions and a suspension of enrichment. How do you bridge the gap? What about the idea of mutual suspension—that enrichment activities are suspended in exchange for suspended sanctions? Or a consortium for enrichment that would give Iran uranium that can be verified? What about a consortium outside of Iran?

Response (Javad Zarif). The United States has a history of taking action to the UN to put pressure on Iran. But what can suspensions do? What kind of solution is there after suspensions? The preconditions stated by Secretary Rice on May 31, 2006, have prevented people from negotiating. None of the proposals presented by the West gets to the

core of the issue, which is enrichment. This is a serious issue, and suspension is not the answer. Assume that Iran suspends for two months. What will happen after the two months? If experience is any guide, the West will ask for yet another suspension. Iran argues that it does not need to go through this process to find a resolution. A consortium on Iranian soil is a serious idea. The effort should be made to find possibilities and look for solutions. A two-month suspension is not a solution, which is why Iran is not prepared to accept that.

2. A Two-Month Suspension of Enrichment—but What Next?

Clarify what comes after two months. What would give Iran greater confidence?

Response (Javad Zarif). The United States must show that it is serious about addressing rather than dismissing the enrichment issue and willing to discuss a package of measures and verifications. A consortium on Iranian soil, to include monitoring, should be considered.

3. Legitimacy of the UNSC Resolution

Is Iran questioning the legitimacy of the UNSC resolution?

Response (Javad Zarif). To quote Ambassador John Bolton, the UNSC is just another "tool in the toolbox." It should not be used as an instrument of pressure. Has it helped? Did it help? Is there a better way? Iran is not among those who are undermining the UNSC.

4. "Suspension for Suspension"

Going back to the idea of "suspension for suspension," Iran says ideas have been tried before, but have not worked. Do you see a change in the Bush administration approach (in terms of a regime-change approach)—in other words, a willingness to change (as demonstrated in the North Korea negotiations)? What if President Bush and the supreme leader sat down together?

Response (Javad Zarif). Iran is not requesting negotiations. But Iran is willing to search for solutions without preconditions. What

would a UNSC resolution do? Would it lead to a change in policy? Unlikely. Will pressure lead to change in Iran? No.

5. Iran's Role in Iraq

In terms of Iran's role in Iraq, Iran's recent statement seems to take more serious steps to stopping violence in Iraq. The next regional meeting is scheduled for April.

Response (Javad Zarif). A principle for Iran is to stop the insurgency's hope for support. The situation in Iraq is the result of a certain policy implemented that had implications. Stability is an imperative for our national security interests. There are implications for inaction. Six Iranian diplomats are in custody in Iraq. How can Iran help? Iran has not rejected the idea to discuss Iraq with the United States. Last year, Iran accepted the U.S. request—made by Secretary Rice in November 2005 in Congress—to hold discussion with the United States, but the United States withdrew and backtracked after Iran accepted this offer. This was taken as a signal from the United States that it was not prepared to engage in serious discussions.

6. March 2006 Offer by the Supreme Leader

In regards to the March 2006 offer by the supreme leader, does it still stand?

Response (Javad Zarif). Iran accepted a request for direct talks with the United States on Iraq, after Iran was urged by Iraqi political leaders to do so. The statement by the supreme leader in March 2006 to support the decision was very important and indicative of the fact that the issue was controversial in Iran. However, the United States retreated from its original request, and that is why no negotiations took place. The same request may be accepted if officially proposed today.

7. Regional Involvement in Iraq

Consider Iraq's interest in having Iran work together along with other regional countries to help Iraq. What was discussed at the Iraq meeting?

Response (Javad Zarif). Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki stated the necessity of involving neighboring countries in Iraq to show regional support. During the meeting last week, Iran along with Iraq insisted that the next ministerial meeting should be held in Baghdad in order to send a strong political message to the insurgency that the region is solidly behind the current Iraqi government. The United States did not oppose that, and Iraq wanted to adopt it. The next ministerial meeting hopes to pursue this issue further.

8. Iranian Reaction to Russian Suspension of Bushehr

What is Iran's reaction to the Russia suspension at the Bushehr complex?

Response (Javad Zarif). Both Russia and Iran have denied that report.

9. Location of General Ali Reza Askari

Do you have any comments on the reports that General Askari has been located in Turkey?

Response (Javad Zarif). Every indication received from his family is that he was abducted.

10. Israel and Iranians in Custody in Iraq

A recent Israeli quote said that Israel would rather pay \$100 per barrel of oil than have a nuclear-capable Iran. How does Iran deal with the Israeli perception? Secondly, as for the five Iranians recently picked up in Irbil, Iraq: What has the United States said to Iran in terms of why they were arrested, and what does Iran say in terms of what these five were doing?

Response (Javad Zarif). The Iranian office in Irbil has been present since 1992. The Iraqi foreign minister has said that the Iranians were diplomats and needed to be released. The United States should move away from scapegoating Iran and toward solutions. A release of these prisoners would show that the United States is serious about solutions. In regard to Israel, neither option is needed (the high price of oil or a nuclear-armed Iran). The United States should speak with the democratically elected Palestinian government, see what

is acceptable to the Palestinians, what they express in elections (that are viewed to be fair), and then find a solution.

11. The Population's Rights in Iran

The Iranian government stresses its rights as a state, but how can the Iranian government be trusted when it does not provide certain rights for its own citizens?

Response (Javad Zarif). This is mixing issues. Human rights in Iran are evolving. But consider other cases in which there have been violations, such as Abu Ghraib or Guantanamo Bay. Iran has a process in place in which people are permitted to take part in peaceful demonstrations of their views. There is more debate in Iran than in countries allied with the United States. The Iranian government has a right to maintain law and order.

12. Goal of the Regional Ministerial Meeting

What do you plan to get out of the regional ministerial meeting? You mentioned earlier depriving insurgents of external help. Is Iran willing to deal with Sunni Arab neighbors?

Response (Javad Zarif). Iran wants to see the Iraqi government succeed. This is a stated intention of all other countries, but now it needs to be manifested in practice. In order to contain sectarian violence, discussions will continue even if the ministerial meetings do not take place. Iran has made good progress with Saudi Arabia.

13. Hizballah and Hamas

As you stated earlier, the solution to the violence is to deprive the insurgency of external sources of support, but, when you say "external," does this mean state sponsors? In other words, what about organizations such as Hizballah and Hamas?

Response (Javad Zarif). Iran wants to prevent the insurgency from undermining the legitimate, elected government in Baghdad. This is totally different from supporting people fighting occupation (e.g., Hamas and Hizballah). The international community does not support the U.S. decision to label Hamas and Hizballah as terrorist organizations

rather than organizations that are expressing their voice. This is not the common view outside the United States and Israel.

14. Helping Iraq Despite a Continued U.S. Presence

How does Iran feel about helping Iraq with a continued, large U.S. presence in Iraq?

Response (Javad Zarif). The focus should be on addressing the root causes of violence in Iraq.

15. Iran's View of a Consortium

What would Iran like a consortium to look like? And what type of guarantee would be in place against expropriation?

Response (Javad Zarif). Such a consortium would be the joint ownership and operation of enrichment facilities in Iran. This idea is open for negotiation. Proper ownership and management could prevent expropriation. The political will to consider such a possibility is needed, but the first step must be to abandon the illusion of zero-enrichment option and to accept the presence of technical know-how in Iran, which cannot be reversed.

PANEL 3: WHAT TO DO: PREEMPTION? CONTAINMENT? ENGAGEMENT?

PANEL MEMBERS

Participants:

- James Dobbins (director, International Security and Defense Policy Center, RAND Corporation)
- Martin Indyk (director, Saban Center for Middle East Policy, The Brookings Institution)
- Danielle Pletka (vice president, Foreign and Defense Policy Studies, American Enterprise Institute)
- Steven Simon (Hasib J. Sabbagh Senior Fellow for Middle Eastern Studies, Council on Foreign Relations)

Moderator:

- Daniel Levy (senior fellow and director, Middle East Policy Initiative, New America Foundation)

IRAQ OR IRAN: WHICH COMES FIRST?

James Dobbins

So far, discussions have taken place at the descriptive level of what is going on inside Iran. Now we turn to what should be done next. Most of the Bush administration's objectives in the Middle East are praiseworthy and desirable. Successful diplomacy, however, involves the art of sequence and prioritizing competing objectives. The administration has largely failed to do this. For instance, it has never been likely that the United States could stabilize Iraq and destabilize Iran (and Syria) at the same time.

Like any failing state, Iraq can only be held together if its neighbors cooperate in the effort. Neighboring governments simply have too much influence, by reason of their proximity, cultural familiarity, and access. Nor can they afford to remain uninvolved. It is the neighbors, after all, not the United States, that will get the refugees, terrorists, criminals, endemic disease, drugs, and economic disruption that come from having a failed state on their doorstep. So they will become involved. But, in doing so, they will often make the

situation worse by backing competing factions in the local struggle for power. This involvement cannot be prevented. Instead, what one needs to do is engage the neighbors in an effort to put convergent, rather than divergent, pressures on the local leaders.

In 1995, the United States decided that it could not hold Bosnia together unless it engaged Yugoslav president Slobodan Milošević and Croatian president Franjo Tuđman—the two men who were personally responsible for the genocide it was trying to stop—brought them to the conference table, and gave them a privileged position and allowed them to participate, both in a settlement and the implementation of a settlement. There was simply no other way.

In Afghanistan, the United States decided that it was not going to be able to install a broadly based representative government in Kabul that would hold unless it did so with the support of the very countries that had been tearing Afghanistan apart for 20 years—that is to say Russia, India, Iran, and Pakistan.

At the moment, U.S. efforts in Middle East are neither destabilizing Iran nor stabilizing Iraq. It is unlikely that the United States can succeed in either task as long as it tries to do both at the same time.

If stabilizing Iraq is the top priority of the United States, as most Americans currently believe that it should be, then some accommodation with Iran is needed. This is because Iran is the only potential source of regional support for the U.S.-backed regime in Baghdad. No other neighboring state is likely to offer that government substantial assistance.

ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL DIPLOMATIC STRATEGY

Martin Indyk

What should U.S. strategy toward Iran be? Should the United States look to contain or engage the regime, or is a military option (preemption) in order? A strategy that depends on diplomacy is not an admission of defeat—diplomacy has been used effectively to disarm Libya, liberate Lebanon, negotiate Arab-Israeli peace, promote human

rights, and, in earlier times, contain Iraq. Any policy toward Iran needs to decide between changing the *behavior* of the Iranian regime, and changing the Iranian regime itself. An effective diplomatic strategy should focus on behavior, as past efforts to change regimes have not been particularly productive.

Preemption as a strategy can address only the nuclear program. But preemption can only delay the program and carries risks (strengthening hard-liners in Iran and dividing the international community).

Containment and engagement should be viewed as a continuum; elements of both can be pursued simultaneously (e.g., Soviet Union). The Bush administration claims that its offer of negotiations with the Iranian regime is unique, but it was the standard policy of previous administrations. For example, both President Bill Clinton and President Ronald Reagan were prepared for dialogue with Iran, if it was an official dialogue. The idea of dialogue is not a new idea. But, like ships passing in the night, the history of engagement between the United States and Iran has been one of missed opportunities—when one side was ready, the other was not. While the offer of official negotiations is an important element in a diplomatic strategy, there are several other important elements of such a strategy:

- **Regional participation.** A broader regional strategy is needed to counter Iranian efforts to gain dominance in the region. Such regional participation would counter the Iran-Syria-Hizballah alliance that is viewed as a threat by Saudi Arabia and the gulf states, Egypt, Jordan, and Israel (and some parts of the Lebanese and Palestinian leadership as well).
- **UN participation.** Sanctions are far less important than the fact that the UNSC is acting unanimously. Every time the UNSC acts on Iran, it underscores Iranian isolation. As a proud nation, Iranians do not like the stigma of being labeled a renegade by the UN.
- **Economic pressure.** Economic pressure can have an impact, particularly if oil prices continue to fall. The difference between the sanctions imposed on Iran in the

early 1990s and the sanctions being imposed now is that, in the past, there was a wedge between the United States and Europe. It created a boomerang effect that favored Iran because the sanctions caused a trade war between Europe and the United States. Today, Japanese and European powers are thinking twice about investing in Iran.

ADDRESSING UNCERTAINTIES

Danielle Pletka

The complicated nature of the challenge generates clichés such as “should we do *it*?” all of which invite the question what is “it”? The nature of the debate thus far has been quite shallow. Our first question should be, what do we seek to achieve? Do we seek an end to Iran’s support for terrorism, and to what degree? Does this include and end to support for Hizballah or ceasing to provide a safe haven for al Qaeda? Do we seek an end to Iran’s nuclear weapon program? Military action will not provide an easy answer. It may slow the program down, but we are not going to have another opportunity like Osirak. And what will the consequences of United States action be? The Iranian regime may seek to lash out at the United States. There is nothing wrong with dialogue. But to talk about what? To achieve what? If, in truth, *dialogue* means negotiations, then what is the United States willing to give up? Or, will Iran *take* and the United States *give*? Thus far, that has been the pattern: the United States offers benefits (spare parts, access to the WTO) in exchange for Iranian concessions, then Iran reneges on its end and the United States still delivers the benefits.

As for a containment strategy, it is legitimate to ask whether Iran can be contained. Is a key element of containment not deterrence? Can an irrational state such as Iran be deterred? Will Iran find mutually assured destruction (MAD) to be not especially frightening?

On the other hand, suggestions that there needs to be a new regime in Iran is an answer, but it is not easy to achieve. Most experts agree that the regime has a shelf life. But, even if the IRI as we

know it disappears, we are not sure what will come next. If it is true that the United States would be better off without an Islamic system in place in Iran, then the Bush administration has done little to head down that path. There are people inside Iran to whom it is worth talking. No options are especially desirable, but we need to do something to promote alternatives to the regime.

In the meantime, critics should recognize that working through the UN prevents Iran from driving a wedge between the United States and Europeans. Ratcheting up sanctions, even multilaterally outside the United Nations, will further isolate the Tehran regime and increase the costs to and pressures on Iran, which may lead to dissension within the Iranian ranks. One such tool to further pursue is export credits. The European and Asian taxpayers have been subsidizing export credits to Iran. Italian export credits for Iran are more than \$6 billion. European and Asian taxpayers should understand that they are underwriting a highly risky investment; when that becomes clear, support for those investments will quickly dry up.

WHERE TO NOW?

Steven Simon

Iran is at center stage because the United States puts it there as an unintended consequence of a post-9/11 strategy in the region. This strategy accurately interpreted the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon as having been motivated by a perception of the United States as the indispensable backer of local regimes that oppressed their populations. In effect, the United States was identified with these regimes. This led the United States to pursue efforts to change the politics in the region decisively, as it set out to do in Iraq and Afghanistan. As President Bush observed in 2002, the United States "placed stability over freedom" in the Middle East for 60 years, a policy that led indirectly to the events of September 11, 2001. A combination of factors caused the effort to engender stability by spurring a democratic domino effect in the region, beginning with the overthrow of the Baathist regime in Iraq yielded a step increase in the

level of regional instability. Among the welter of unintended consequences was the empowerment of Iran, as its regional strategic rivals were decapitated and engulfed by internecine violence. The perceived need to contain a resurgent Iran apparently pursuing a nuclear weapon capability and led by a demagogue rendered the post-9/11 policy of "creative destruction" obsolete. The United States had now to return to the balance-of-power strategy to which the administration had attributed the rise of al Qaeda. Accordingly, Washington set out to repair its traditional alliances with Sunni states, particularly Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Jordan, to counter the increasing assertiveness of Iran.

Having embarked on this regional realignment, what should the United States do, as a practical matter, to constrain Iran, especially its pursuit of a nuclear fuel cycle? The military option is both costly and uncertain. Surgical strikes have much in common with surgery: They are bloody, the patients can die on the operating table, and the surgeons can be accused of malpractice. The fact is that, the moment the first Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) or cruise missile strikes Iranian soil, the United States will be at war with the IRI. The conflict is likely to escalate rapidly. The U.S. ability to dominate the resulting escalation is scarcely guaranteed, and war will almost certainly strengthen the grip of the clerical regime by buttressing its legitimacy and justifying coercive measures to stifle whatever internal dissent persists after the country has come under U.S. attack.

But, if not a military approach, then what? Acquiescence to Iran's dogged pursuit of a weapon capability is also imprudent. Even if we persuaded ourselves that a nuclear weapon capability would induce Iranian caution in the face of the vastly increased risks of confrontation with the United States, there would still be the risk of deliberate or inadvertent leakage of nuclear technology, material, or weapons to terrorists. Moreover, the impetus an Iranian capability will impart to other regional states to acquire their own capabilities could further destabilize the regional balance.

Fortunately, the United States is not yet in an either-war-or-surrender situation. Diplomacy is still a viable course. This approach has already paid dividends, especially in the UN. Sanctions already have had a surprisingly disproportionate effect within Iran. The cutoff or suspension of the massive European loan guarantees would be a useful additional source of pressure. A policy of engagement and containment, if carried out patiently, yields slow but alluvial progress. Iran is not unlike the Soviet Union in its vulnerability to such a strategy; its leadership is aging and sclerotic, its economic performance is poor, its population is dissatisfied but without recourse, and it is relatively isolated internationally. Even as this approach was implemented, the United States could be competing with Iran on the ground, as it did with the Soviet Union, by demonstrating that it was more effective at improving quality of life in the region and securing justice for its people. Regrettably, as long as the United States remains in Iraq without the power to restore order and shies away from constructive involvement in the Israel-Palestine crisis, Washington will be unable to compete with Iran in the realm of ideology.

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

1. Iraq Study Group Report

In some cases this sounds like a similar script proposed by the Iraq Study Group (ISG). Where do you see U.S. efforts going—toward broader or more limited engagement?

Response (James Dobbins). I encourage the embrace of the ISG results. Meaningful discussions on Iran are based on Iraq. These will be useful only if the forum becomes an occasion for open dialogue. A meaningful exchange needs to be encouraged and facilitated to discuss such issues as nuclear weapons and Israel.

2. An Acceptable Outcome for Israel

What does the threat of a nuclear Iran mean for Israel? What kind of outcome might be acceptable to Israel?

Response (Martin Indyk). If it has no other choice, the United States can live with an Iran armed with nuclear weapons (for example, it lives with a nuclear China, Pakistan, North Korea, and India). For Israel, however, this is an existential dilemma. Even Rafsanjani stated that Iran does not have to worry about Israel, that only one weapon would be needed to destroy it. Having to live with the *threat* of nuclear destruction can have a very negative psychological effect on Israel. However, the Israeli prime minister stated recently that the Iranians have exaggerated how far along they are and that there is still time for economic sanctions and pressure to work. Israel is interested in seeing the diplomatic strategy succeed and is thinking about whether MAD is indeed an option, particularly under a U.S. security umbrella. Therefore, while this is a serious dilemma, it does not mean that Israel will use force to preempt the Iranian program.

3. United States—Aggressive Talk, but Carrying a Small Stick?

The current Bush administration is aggressive in speaking, but carrying a small stick. With whom should the United States work?

Response (Danielle Pletka). We cannot go too far with secondary sanctions, for fear of impacting unity between the United States and Europe. Identifying what is achievable is important (e.g., limiting export credits). We should be working with people opposed to Iran's nuclear weapon program and do a better job of making clear exactly what interests that program will serve. We should underline the risks of doing business with Iran and highlight the example of Bushehr, which is stumbling because the Iranians are so difficult to do business with. We should also highlight this risk to international banks and emphasize that what is viewed as legitimate business may be financing illegitimate businesses as well.

4. Iran's Role in Iraq

To what extent does Iran fill a vacuum in terms of power in Iraq?

Response (Steven Simon). Iran is providing economic support and commodities to southern Iraq. It is an important source of credit in a capital-starved situation. Iran has also provided weapons to militias.

But is Iran capable of determining the direction of Iraqi politics? A recent National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) stated that outside powers are not in a position to affect the political and social dynamics in that way; there will be proxy intervention and meddling, but, in the end, it will be an Iraqi fight.

5. Should Congress Authorize the Use of Force?

A recent piece of legislation was proposed stating that the use of force in Iran should not be allowed unless authorized by Congress. Do you think Congress should legislate in this area? And do you think Congress should even consider the issue now, when sanctions are in place?

Response (James Dobbins). When asked the same question in regard to Iraq, I stated that you should vote for the resolution if you trust the administration to use it prudently. After the speech by President Bush on January 10, 2007, the perception was that there was an accelerated threat in terms of Iran. But now, early use of force is not deemed likely.

Response (Danielle Pletka). The greatest strength of Congress is its ability to provide better ideas and options. Congress should continue to provide tools for the administration to consider; it should not waste energy on the unachievable and the unconstitutional.

6. Lessons from Relations with China in the 1970s

Should we use the U.S. relationship with China in the 1970s as an example of a successful containment and engagement policy (instead of using the example of the Soviet Union)? President Richard Nixon chose to engage China. What is wrong with trying to maximize engagement with Iran?

Response (Martin Indyk). This is now a question of tactics. On the nuclear issue, Iran has repeatedly defied the international community. The United States needs to stick to the demand to suspend enrichment before negotiations on the nuclear file. To drop that condition would concede weakness and likely split the international community. However, the United States is already engaging Iran on Iraq

issues. Multilateral negotiations on the nuclear issue can provide the opportunity to move eventually into bilateral negotiations (as seen with North Korea) that address U.S. and Iranian broader interests in the region.

Response (James Dobbins). Noncommunication is not more productive than communication. Conditions were set in the five-power talks: no negotiations until enrichment is stopped. These five powers each have separate bilateral talks with Iran; the United States should be able to, too.

7. The IRGC and the Risk of Escalation

The IRGC is key to regime survival. By putting restraints on the IRGC, do we risk further escalation?

Response (Steven Simon). The IRGC is intimately connected to Iran's special weapon program; it is also a key pillar of regime support. Weakening the IRGC, if, in fact, U.S. actions in Iraq can achieve this result, might well be perceived by the regime as a prelude to regime change. This said, the Iranian government has a number of reasons to respond to the detention of its personnel in Iraq.

8. The Role of Dissidents in Iran

How can the United States work with dissidents in Iran? How can we trust that the United States will effectively engage dissidents in the community? How can we engage those voices?

Response (Danielle Pletka). The United States does engage some critics of the regime, but we do not do enough, and there is no coherent approach to the Iranian opposition. In addition, our allies that actually have embassies in Tehran could do much more. In terms of human rights, women's rights and more, the effort to engage could be approached more as an international effort.

A U.S. PERSPECTIVE

PRESENTER AND RESPONDERS

Remarks:

- R. Nicholas Burns (Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs)

Questions:

- Michael Hirsh (senior editor, *Newsweek*)
- David Ignatius (national security columnist, *The Washington Post*)

HOW THE U.S. GOVERNMENT VIEWS IRAN

R. Nicholas Burns

The foundations of national security policy are based on global security interests. Currently, how we deal with Iran is the most pressing problem that we have. We have to address the renewed offensive by President Ahmadi-Nejad: What does this mean to the United States, how should the United States respond, and how should the United States deal with allies? There are several indications that Iran is seeking a nuclear weapon capability. The governments in Russia, China, Europe, and Arab states all agree that this is an intention. As a result, efforts are being made to prevent Iran from acquiring this capability.

There are four interlocking foreign policy challenges in the Middle East:

1. continuing unrest in Iraq, where Iran is arming Shia militias;
2. Iranian efforts to bring down the democratically elected government in Lebanon with the help of Hizballah and the Syrian government;
3. Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and Iran's rejection of the Middle East peace process
4. Iran's clear ambitions in the region and clear ambitions to become a nuclear weapon power.

What we have tried to do over the course of the past year or two is to put together a rather comprehensive policy to try to blunt, limit, and contain Iran's ability to be successful in those four areas. We have done that in trying to establish multiple points of pressure against the Iranian leaders, and by that I mean diplomatic and economic pressure, so they will have to recalculate the price of these ambitions. They will face increased pressure within the international community if they proceed with their program without negotiations on policies. In 2005, Russia (under President Vladimir Putin) joined to create a larger effort within the international community. Iran's leaders are faced with two choices: to cooperate or not to cooperate. If Iran chooses not to cooperate, then sanctions will be enforced. There is currently a debate over a new UN resolution on Iran that would open up new areas of sanctions. This new resolution, if passed, would put Bank Sepah and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard command under UN sanctions, would enforce an arms ban on Iranian exports, and would likely encourage countries to restrict their export credits to companies doing business in Iran as well. This would result in a significant increase in the international spotlight on Iran and increase the cost to the Iranian government. (Iran is only one of 11 countries under Chapter VII sanctions.¹)

Iran has made a series of miscalculations in the past. For example, with regard to Iran's work in Natanz, India, Brazil, Japan and the EU all agree that there must be a limit to Iran's actions (through the IAEA). At the same time, Iran is threatening to kick out IAEA inspectors. Iran only has four real friends on the nuclear issue: Cuba, Venezuela, Belarus, and Syria. Secretary Rice is willing to sit down for an extended discussion on the nuclear issue. In addition, there is a broad and cohesive coalition in place over the issue. As seen recently, Russia's decision to suspend work on Bushehr sent a very clear signal to the Iranians that it is not going to be "business as usual" on Bushehr. Without negotiations, there will be a higher cost

¹ United Nations (1945).

to Iran (through, for example, sanctions and export credits). Japan, for instance, has already reduced its level of export credits. The United States is focusing its efforts on what the Iranians value most, which is their integration with financial and trade markets around the world. Iranian economic officials and financial analysts in Tehran now are beginning to worry about credit and trade because the rest of the world outside the UNSC has begun to shut down the normalcy and volume of trade to which Iran had grown accustomed.

Countries outside of the UNSC, in Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, have all taken their own measures to tighten the vise on Iran. Furthermore, the stationing of two U.S. carrier battle groups in the Persian Gulf demonstrates that security in the Persian Gulf is of paramount importance. Other countries have interests in the Middle East, and the United States will defend those interests. As a result, as the vise on Iran tightens, we hope that those people in Iran who understand that they do not live in the world alone and have to relate to other countries and the opinions of those countries will get the upper hand in the discussion and that, at some point, the Iranians will want to sit down and negotiate.

We are firmly focused on a diplomatic solution. The offer for discussions on the nuclear issue is still on the table. There is plenty of time; there is no imminent deadline that would impose a drastic change in course for the United States. The United States will show patience, persistence, and diplomacy. Some have questioned why the United States does not talk to Iran. But this has actually been taking place; Ambassador Khalilzad in Iraq has been working on the issue and the process should continue on a ministerial basis as well.

The focus is on the behavior of the regime in Iran and sending the proper signals for a diplomatic way forward. The United States is also trying to engage the Iranian people more through exchanges between U.S. professionals and Iranians (such as doctors, students, athletes—in some sense, a 21st century effort at ping-pong diplomacy). The United States wants Iranian people to have unfettered access to U.S. information (e.g., Radio Farda). The United States trusts the success

of diplomacy and is working to establish a construct to get to a negotiated settlement.

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

1. The Key to Successful Negotiations

Successful negotiations require a face-saving way to get something (i.e., "suspension for suspension"). The sequencing issue is important.

Response (R. Nicholas Burns). On June 1, 2006, we stated that, if Iran suspends enrichment for the life of the negotiation, then we would suspend sanctions. Their choice was not to accept "suspension for suspension."

2. Moving Diplomacy Forward—Addressing Iran's Concerns

Ambassador Zarif voiced concern over what would follow a two-month suspension. Iranians believe that an international consortium should be an acceptable solution for this. Are safeguards and security guarantees able to facilitate this?

Response (R. Nicholas Burns). The Iranian government will not say yes to suspension. Our proposal is a cold standby, meaning that everything shuts down at Natanz stopping the process before they have the ability to enrich, reprocess, and produce weapons with fissile material. There was no "gentleman's agreement" in December 2006. The United States offered an incentive package, which included positive economic, science, and technology incentives. The President also endorsed a Russian proposal to create an offshore consortium.

3. Eurodiff Consortium

Eurodiff is an offshore consortium, but Iran did not get what it expected.

Response (R. Nicholas Burns). Iran has the right to civil nuclear power, but *not* to the fuel cycle.

4. Change in Perception

Do you think there has been a dramatic change in perception (from Iran having the upper hand)? But there has been no perceived change in Iranian attitude.

Response (R. Nicholas Burns). The basis of U.S. policy is that Iran shall not have a nuclear weapon capability. But we are not establishing artificial deadlines, and diplomacy is the preferred path. The hope is that, within Iran, people outside of the council will understand the potential impact of pursuing such a capability and that this will result in a change in the Iranian stance.

5. The Israeli Assessment

Is the Israeli assessment a concern, considering the fact that Israel views a nuclear-armed Iran as an existential threat?

Response (R. Nicholas Burns). The United States is sympathetic to the Israeli perception. Iran has posed one of the greatest threats to Israel since its establishment. There are two combustible issues in Israel regarding Iran: (1) denial of the Holocaust and (2) Iranian statements about wiping Israel off the map. The United States has close relations with Israel.

6. Bilateral Talks Between the United States and Iran About Iraq

In terms of discussions with the United States and other countries about the situation in Iraq, there is a need to move to a more serious program to stop violence. When Ambassador Zarif was asked whether Iran would renew the offer for bilateral talks with the United States, his response was that they are interested. Is the United States interested in this? What would the agenda be?

Response (R. Nicholas Burns). The discussions that took place on March 10, 2007, were positive and procedural. Should there be working groups? Yes, and meetings at higher levels. We are not excluding the possibility of focusing on other efforts.

7. Restricting Travel of Ambassador Zarif

Is it true that the U.S. government prevented Ambassador Zarif from traveling from New York to D.C.?

Response (R. Nicholas Burns). Yes. The Iranian government will not let Congress or diplomats travel to Iran. Iranian diplomats cannot travel freely through our country if we cannot set foot in their country.

8. Promoting Democracy

What plan is there to promote more engagement between Iran and the United States, and in terms of promoting more democracy in Iran?

Response (R. Nicholas Burns). We seek change in the behavior and actions of the government. We support the creation of a healthy civil society and democracy within Iran to take place at some point, and we will fund international efforts that promote such developments.

9. Export Credits

In Germany, export credits do not use taxpayer's money, and, from 2005 to 2006, there was a 30 percent reduction. However, this is still an impediment with Europeans.

Response (R. Nicholas Burns). Twenty-two billion dollars in export credits from OECD countries was available in 2005 to Iran. This is an important issue. Countries should stop the business-as-usual approach. There are still too many countries trading with Iran, to include dual-use exports.

10. Agreeing on an Acceptable End Point

Finding an end point that is viewed as acceptable by both parties is needed for successful negotiations. Iranians value independence. Acquisition of the nuclear capability is so essential that a request to limit know-how would be viewed as a cessation of independence. What level of regional influence and technical capability is the United States willing to accept in Iran?

Response (R. Nicholas Burns). The United States put together a list of incentives (economic, science and technology, and agriculture). But we understand that Iran has its domestic political area to consider. As a result, in negotiations, we allow the adversary to have "exit doors." Iran has the right to be independent and sovereign. But it does not have the right to be a nuclear-armed country. There are

certain limits to what Iran can do. The United States can provide a framework for an end point, but Iran needs to be willing to sit down to have negotiations. Without such negotiations, it will be sanctioned.

11. U.S. Diplomats in Iran and Controlling Arms Exports

Has the United States ever asked to send U.S. diplomats to Tehran? Could we send them now? Also, is there an effort to broaden the resolution to include arms exports?

Response (R. Nicholas Burns). It is not a current intention to reestablish diplomatic relations with Iran. This has been the policy since 1979 when the Quds Force attacked Americans. Iran funds Middle East terrorist groups, making it impossible to have normal diplomatic relations. As for the resolution, there is an effort to include arms exports, which would be a step forward.

CONCLUSION

James Dobbins

In brief, nobody favored preemption, though it remained an option; instead, most agreed on some degree of containment and engagement. Ambassador Zarif and Under Secretary Burns were both very persuasive. Just think how much better off we would all be if they had been spending their time persuading each other rather than us.

APPENDIX A. CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Coping With Iran: Confrontation, Containment or Engagement?

**Wednesday, March 21st
Senate Dirksen Office Building (SD-G50)
Policy Forum Agenda**

9:30 A.M. – Welcoming Remarks

James Dobbins

Director, International Security & Defense Policy Center
The RAND Corporation

9:45 A.M. – Panel 1: Inside Iran

Patrick Clawson

Deputy Director for Research
The Washington Institute for Near East Policy

Paul Pillar

Center for Peace and Security Studies
Georgetown University

Karim Sadjadpour

Associate
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Ray Takeyh

Senior Fellow for Middle East Studies
Council on Foreign Relations

Moderator

Anne Gearan

Diplomatic Correspondent
Associated Press

11:15 A.M. – Panel 2: Looking at Two Alternate Futures

A RAND Presentation Examining the Consequences of:

- (1) a Nuclear Capable Iran and/or;*
- (2) an American and/or Israeli Attack Against Iran*

David Ochmanek

Senior Defense Analyst
The RAND Corporation

Reactions

Kenneth Pollack

Director of Research, Saban Center for Middle East Policy
The Brookings Institution

Michael Eisenstadt

Director, Military and Security Studies Program
The Washington Institute for Near East Policy

Moderator

Robert Hunter

Senior Advisor
The RAND Corporation

12:45 P.M. – Luncheon Served

1:00 P.M. – An Iranian Perspective

Remarks

Javad Zarif *

Iranian Ambassador to the United Nations

Questions

Michael Hirsh

Senior Editor
Newsweek

David Ignatius

National Security Columnist
The Washington Post

**2:15 P.M. – Panel 3: What to Do: Preemption?
Containment? Engagement?**

James Dobbins

Director, International Security & Defense Policy Center
The RAND Corporation

Martin Indyk

Director of the Saban Center for Middle East Policy
The Brookings Institution

Danielle Pletka

Vice President, Foreign and Defense Policy Studies
American Enterprise Institute

Steven Simon

Hasib J. Sabbagh Senior Fellow for Middle Eastern Studies
Council on Foreign Relations

Moderator

Daniel Levy

Senior Fellow & Director, Middle East Policy Initiative
New America Foundation

3:45 P.M. – An American Perspective

Remarks

R. Nicholas Burns

Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs

Questions

Michael Hirsh

Senior Editor
Newsweek

David Ignatius

National Security Columnist
The Washington Post

APPENDIX B. PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHIES

Coping with Iran: Confrontation, Containment, or Engagement?

Wednesday, March 21, 2007

R. NICHOLAS BURNS

Ambassador R. Nicholas Burns is the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, the U.S. Department of State's third ranking official. Prior to his current assignment, Ambassador Burns was the U.S. Permanent Representative to NATO. As ambassador to NATO, he headed the combined State-Defense Department U.S. Mission to NATO at a time when the alliance committed to new missions in Iraq, Afghanistan, and GWOT and accepted seven new members.

From 1997 to 2001, Ambassador Burns was U.S. Ambassador to Greece. From 1995 to 1997, Ambassador Burns was spokesperson for the U.S. Department of State and Acting Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs for Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. Ambassador Burns served for five years (1990–1995) on the National Security Council staff at the White House. He was special assistant to President Clinton and senior director for Russia, Ukraine, and Eurasia Affairs. Under President George H. W. Bush, he was director for Soviet (and then Russian) Affairs.

Ambassador Burns began his foreign service career in Africa and the Middle East, serving in Mauritania, Cairo, and Jerusalem. He has been awarded the state department's Superior Honor Award for outstanding performance three times, the department's James Clement Dunn Award for Excellence in 1994, and, in 2000, the Charles E. Cobb Award for Trade Development by an Ambassador. He has been decorated by the governments of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania for his work in securing withdrawal of Russian military forces from the Baltic region in the 1990s and for helping to secure their admittance to NATO.

Ambassador Burns earned the Certificat Pratique de Langue Francaise from the University of Paris (Sorbonne) in 1977. He subsequently earned a B.A. in European History from Boston College in

1978, graduated summa cum laude and was elected Phi Beta Kappa. He then received a master's degree with distinction from John Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in 1980 in international economics and American foreign policy. He has received honorary doctorates from eight American universities. Ambassador Burns speaks French, Arabic, and Greek.

PATRICK CLAWSON

Patrick Clawson is deputy director for research of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. He is the author or editor of 24 books and monographs, including *Eternal Iran: Continuity and Chaos* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2005, with Michael Rubin) and *Getting Ready for a Nuclear-Ready Iran* (Strategic Studies Institute of the U.S. Army War College, 2005, edited with Henry D. Sokolski).

Clawson has authored more than 70 articles about the Middle East and international economics, appears frequently on television and radio, and has published op-ed articles in major newspapers including the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Washington Post*. He has also testified before congressional committees more than 20 times and has been an expert witness in more than a dozen federal cases. He speaks Persian and French. Prior to joining The Washington Institute, he spent five years as senior research professor at the National Defense University's Institute for National Strategic Studies and four years each at the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the Foreign Policy Research Institute.

He received his B.A. from Oberlin College and his Ph.D. from the New School for Social Research.

JAMES DOBBINS

Ambassador Dobbins directs RAND's International Security and Defense Policy Center. He has held state department and White House posts including Assistant Secretary of State for Europe, special assistant to the President for the Western Hemisphere, special adviser to the President and Secretary of State for the Balkans, and Ambassador to the European Community. He has handled a variety of crisis

management assignments such as the Clinton administration's special envoy for Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo, and the Bush administration's first special envoy for Afghanistan. He is lead author of a two-volume history of nation-building (RAND, 2003 and 2005) and *The Beginner's Guide to Nation-Building* (RAND, 2007).

In the wake of September 11, 2001, Ambassador Dobbins was designated as the Bush administration's representative to the Afghan opposition. Ambassador Dobbins helped organize and then represented the United States at the Bonn Conference, where a new Afghan government was formed. On December 16, 2001, he raised the flag over the newly reopened U.S. Embassy.

Ambassador Dobbins graduated from the Georgetown School of Foreign Service and served three years in the U.S. Navy.

MICHAEL EISENSTADT

Michael Eisenstadt is a senior fellow and director of The Washington Institute's Military and Security Studies Program. He is a specialist in Persian Gulf and Arab-Israeli security affairs and has published articles and monographs on U.S. strategy in the Middle East; regional security; nonconventional proliferation in the Near East and Southwest Asia; and the armed forces of Iraq, Iran, Syria, Israel, and the Palestinian National Authority.

Prior to joining the institute in 1989, Eisenstadt worked as a civilian military analyst with the U.S. Army. In 1992, he took a leave of absence from the institute to work on the U.S. Air Force Gulf War Air Power Survey, to which he contributed a chapter on Iraqi strategy and planning.

Eisenstadt is a reserve officer in the U.S. Army, serving on active duty in 2001-2002 at U.S. Central Command headquarters and on the Joint Staff during Operation Enduring Freedom and the planning for Operation Iraqi Freedom. He subsequently served as an advisor to the state department's Future of Iraq Defense Policy working group. In 1991, he served in Turkey and Iraq in support of Operation Provide Comfort.

He completed a master's degree in Arab Studies at Georgetown University and has traveled widely in the Middle East.

ANNE GEARAN

Anne Gearan is the chief diplomatic correspondent for The Associated Press in Washington.

She covers foreign affairs at the state department and the White House and on Capitol Hill and travels extensively with the secretary of state. Gearan has made more than a dozen trips to the Middle East. In the past two years, and writes about the region regularly from Washington.

Gearan will cover Secretary Rice's first substantive exchanges with her Iranian counterpart at a conference on security in Iraq that is tentatively set for June 2007 in Istanbul. She has previously covered presidential politics, the White House, the Supreme Court, and criminal justice in Washington.

In four years as the AP's chief Supreme Court and legal affairs correspondent, Gearan covered historic rulings on affirmative action, the death penalty, presidential powers in wartime, gay rights, and the Pledge of Allegiance. In 2000, Gearan covered the Florida recount fight in Tallahassee and the two Supreme Court cases that arose from the election. Gearan covered the Clinton White House in 1999 and 2000, traveling to 42 of the 50 states.

MICHAEL HIRSH

Michael Hirsh covers international affairs for *Newsweek*, reporting on a range of topics from homeland security to postwar Iraq. He co-authored the November 3, 2003, cover story, "Bush's \$87 Billion Mess," about the Iraq reconstruction plan. The issue was one of three that won the 2004 National Magazine Award for General Excellence.

Hirsh was the magazine's foreign editor from January 2001 to January 2002 and helped guide *Newsweek's* award-winning coverage of the September 11 attacks and GWOT. Before that, he was a senior editor and chief diplomatic correspondent in the Washington bureau, writing about foreign affairs and international economics. From September 1998 to

December 1999, as diplomatic correspondent, Hirsh covered foreign policy, the state department and the treasury. He moved to the Washington, D.C., bureau in May 1997, previously serving as a senior editor of *Newsweek International*, covering the same beat.

Prior to joining *Newsweek* in October 1994 as a New York-based senior writer, Hirsh served as the Tokyo-based Asia bureau chief for *Institutional Investor* from 1992 to 1994. Previously, he was a correspondent for the Associated Press in Tokyo and a national editor in New York.

Hirsh was co-winner of the 2002 Ed Cunningham Award for best magazine reporting from abroad for *Newsweek's* terror coverage and contributed to the team of *Newsweek* reporters that earned the magazine the prestigious 2002 National Magazine Award for General Excellence, also for the magazine's coverage of GWOT. Hirsh is the author of nonfiction book *At War with Ourselves: Why America Is Squandering Its Chance to Build a Better World* (Oxford University Press, 2003) which explores U.S. foreign policy and its global role.

ROBERT E. HUNTER

Robert Hunter is senior advisor at the RAND Corporation in Washington. He is also president of the Atlantic Treaty Association, chair of the Council for a Community of Democracies, senior international consultant to Lockheed Martin Overseas Corporation, associate at the Harvard University Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, and senior concept developer for Allied Command Transformation.

From July 1993 to January 1998, Robert Hunter was U.S. Ambassador to NATO and also represented the United States to the Western European Union. He was a principal architect of the "New NATO," created Partnership for Peace, negotiated eight "air strike" decisions for Bosnia and Implementation Force (IFOR)/Stabilisation Force (SFOR), and twice received the Pentagon's highest civilian award, the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) Medal for Distinguished Public Service. Before then, Ambassador Hunter was vice president at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. During the Jimmy Carter

administration, he was director of West European and then Middle East Affairs at the National Security Council. Earlier, he was foreign policy advisor to Senator Edward M. Kennedy, senior fellow at the Overseas Development Council, and research associate at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS). He served on the White House staff during the Lyndon Johnson administration (health, education, welfare, labor) and in the Navy's Special Projects Office (Polaris).

Ambassador Hunter was educated at Wesleyan University (B.A., Phi Beta Kappa) and the London School of Economics (Ph.D., Fulbright Scholar), where he also taught. Among his many publications (more than 800), Ambassador Hunter is author of *Security in Europe* (Indiana University Press, 1972), *The European Security and Defense Policy: NATO's Companion—or Competitor?* (RAND, 2002), *Presidential Control of Foreign Policy: Management or Mishap* (CSIS, 1982), *NATO: The Next Generation* (editor, Westview, 1984), *Grand Strategy for the Western Alliance* (co-editor, Westview, 1984), *The Soviet Dilemma in the Middle East* (Institute for Strategic Studies, 1969).

DAVID IGNATIUS

Washington Post columnist David Ignatius has had a distinguished and wide-ranging career in the news business, serving at various times as a reporter, foreign correspondent, editor, and columnist. He has written widely for magazines and published six novels.

His twice-weekly column on global politics, economics, and international affairs debuted on *The Washington Post* op-ed page in January 1999 and was distributed to more than 600 newspapers worldwide. He continued to write weekly after becoming executive editor of the Paris-based *International Herald Tribune* (IHT) in September 2000. When the *Post* sold its interest in the IHT in January 2003, Ignatius resumed writing twice a week for the op-ed page and was syndicated worldwide by The Washington Post Writers Group. His column won the 2000 Gerald Loeb Award for Commentary and a 2004 Edward Weintal Prize.

In addition to writing his column, Ignatius is co-moderator, with Fareed Zakaria of *Newsweek*, of *PostGlobal*, a new experiment in online

global journalism. *PostGlobal* links more than 50 of the top journalists and commentators around the world in a continuous online discussion of important issues.

Prior to becoming a columnist, Ignatius was the *Post's* assistant managing editor in charge of business news, a position he assumed in 1993. Ignatius served as the *Post's* foreign editor from 1990 to 1992, supervising the paper's Pulitzer Prize-winning coverage of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. From 1986 to 1990, he was editor of the *Post's* Outlook section.

Before joining the *Post* in 1986, Ignatius spent 10 years as a reporter for *The Wall Street Journal*. He transferred overseas to become the paper's Middle East correspondent from 1980 to 1983, covering wars in Lebanon and Iraq. He returned to Washington in 1984 as the *Journal's* chief diplomatic correspondent, and he received the Edward Weintal Prize for Diplomatic Reporting in 1985. Before joining *The Wall Street Journal*, he was an editor at *The Washington Monthly*.

Ignatius attended St. Albans School and Harvard College, from which he graduated magna cum laude in 1973. He received a Frank Knox Fellowship from Harvard and studied at King's College, Cambridge University, from which he received a diploma in economics. He has published articles in *Foreign Affairs*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The New Republic*, *Talk Magazine*, and *The Washington Monthly*. He has also written six novels.

MARTIN INDYK

Middle East expert and former U.S. Ambassador to Israel Martin S. Indyk joined the Brookings Institution on September 1, 2001, and currently serves as the director of the Saban Center for Middle East Policy.

Ambassador Indyk served two tours in Israel, the first during the Rabin years (1995–1997) and the second (2000–June 2001) during efforts to achieve a comprehensive peace and stem the violence of the intifada. Prior to his assignment to Israel, Ambassador Indyk served as special assistant to President Clinton and as senior director of Near East and South Asian Affairs at the NSC. While at the NSC, he served as

principal adviser to the president and the National Security Adviser on Arab-Israeli issues, Iraq, Iran, and South Asia. He was a senior member of Secretary of State Warren Christopher's Middle East peace team and served as the White House representative on the U.S.-Israel Science and Technology Commission.

Before entering government service, Ambassador Indyk served for eight years as founding executive director for the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. He has also been an adjunct professor at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and has taught at the Middle East Institute at Columbia University, the Dayan Center for Middle East Studies at Tel Aviv University, and the Department of Politics at Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia. Ambassador Indyk has published widely on U.S. policy toward the Arab-Israeli peace process, on U.S.-Israeli relations, and on the threats of Middle East stability posed by Iraq and Iran.

Martin Indyk received a bachelor of economics degree from Sydney University in 1972 and a doctorate in international relations from the Australian National University in 1977.

DANIEL LEVY

Daniel Levy is a senior fellow and director of the Middle East Policy Initiative of the American Strategy Program at the New America Foundation. He was the lead Israeli drafter of the Geneva Initiative and directed policy planning and international efforts at the Geneva Campaign Headquarters in Tel Aviv. Previously, Levy served as senior policy adviser to former Israeli Minister of Justice, Yossi Beilin, and, under the Barak government, he worked in the prime minister's office as a special adviser and head of the Jerusalem Affairs unit. He was a member of the Israeli delegation to the Taba negotiations with the Palestinians in January 2001 and of the negotiating team for the "Oslo B" Agreement from May to September 1995 under Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

At the New America Foundation, Levy seeks to encourage thought-provoking debate and offer strategic solutions for resolving the long-running conflicts in the Middle East, core among them the Israeli-

Palestinian conflict. He has published extensively in a broad range of publications including *Ha'aretz*, *The Jerusalem Post*, *The Boston Globe*, *United Press International*, *The American Prospect*, the *International Herald Tribune*, *The Evening Standard* (London), and the blog *TPMCafe*.

DAVID OCHMANEK

David Ochmanek is a senior defense analyst at the RAND Corporation. He has been associated with RAND from 1985 until 1993 and again since 1995. While at RAND, he has worked on assessments of the capabilities of U.S. military forces (especially air forces), arms control, defense planning, regional security, and national security strategy. From 1993 until June 1995, he served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy.

Prior to joining RAND, Ochmanek was a member of the Foreign Service of the United States, serving from 1980 to 1985 in the Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs, U.S. Embassy Bonn, and the Bureau of European and Canadian Affairs. From 1973 to 1978, he was an officer in the U.S. Air Force. He is a graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy and Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs.

PAUL PILLAR

Paul Pillar is a visiting professor and member of the core faculty of the Security Studies Program in the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University.

He retired in 2005 from a 28-year career in the U.S. intelligence community, in which his last position was national intelligence officer for the Near East and South Asia. Earlier, he served in a variety of analytical and managerial positions, including as chief of analytic units at the CIA covering portions of the Near East, the Persian Gulf, and South Asia. Pillar also served in the National Intelligence Council as one of the original members of its Analytic Group. He has been executive assistant to CIA's Deputy Director for Intelligence and executive assistant to Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) William Webster. He has also headed the Assessments and Information Group of

the DCI Counterterrorist Center and, from 1997 to 1999, was deputy chief of the center. He was a Federal Executive Fellow at the Brookings Institution in 1999–2000.

Pillar received an A.B. summa cum laude from Dartmouth College, a B.Phil. from Oxford University, and an M.A. and Ph.D. from Princeton University. He is a retired officer in the U.S. Army Reserve and served on active duty from 1971 to 1973, including a tour of duty in Vietnam. He is the author of *Negotiating Peace* (Princeton University Press, 1983) and *Terrorism and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Brookings Institution Press, 2001).

DANIELLE PLETKA

Danielle Pletka is the vice president for foreign and defense policy studies at The American Enterprise Institute (AEI). Her research areas include the Middle East, South Asia, terrorism, and weapon proliferation. She recently served as a member of the congressionally mandated Task Force on the United Nations, established by the United States Institute of Peace. Before coming to AEI, she served for 10 years as a senior professional staff member for the Near East and South Asia on the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

KENNETH M. POLLACK

Kenneth M. Pollack is an expert on Middle Eastern political-military affairs, with particular emphasis on Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the other nations of the Persian Gulf region. He is currently a senior fellow and director of research at the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution.

Pollack began his career as an Iran-Iraq military analyst at the CIA, where he was an employee from 1988 until 1995. Pollack has also twice served on the staff of the NSC. From 1995 to 1996, he was director for Near East and South Asian Affairs, and, from 1999 to 2001, he served as director for Persian Gulf Affairs.

In addition to these positions, Pollack has also been a senior research professor at the Institute for National Strategic Studies at the National Defense University, where he worked principally on long-

term issues related to Middle Eastern political and military affairs for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He has been the director for National Security Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations and a research fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

Pollack's most recent book is *The Persian Puzzle: The Conflict Between Iran and America* (Random House, 2004). He is also the author of *Arabs at War: Military Effectiveness, 1948-1991* (University of Nebraska Press, 2002) and *The Threatening Storm: The Case for Invading Iraq* (Random House, 2002), which was a *New York Times* and *Washington Post* bestseller. He co-authored the Saban Center monograph *Things Fall Apart: Containing the Spillover of a Civil War in Iraq* (2007) and was the principal author of *A Switch in Time: A New Strategy for America in Iraq* (2006). He is also the author of numerous articles on Middle East policy.

Pollack received his B.A. from Yale University and a Ph.D. in political science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

KARIM SADJADPOUR

Karim Sadjadpour is an associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Formerly an analyst with the International Crisis Group based in Tehran and Washington, D.C., over the past three years, he has conducted dozens of interviews with senior Iranian officials, as well as hundreds of interviews with Iranian intellectuals, clerics, dissidents, paramilitaries, businesspeople, students, activists, and youth, among others.

He is a regular contributor to BBC World TV and radio, CNN, National Public Radio, and PBS *NewsHour*, and has also written for the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *International Herald Tribune*, and *New Republic*. Sadjadpour has testified before the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, given lectures at Harvard, Princeton, and Stanford universities, and spoken before the Council on Foreign Relations and Asia Society in New York.

He has degrees from the University of Michigan and the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, was a visiting fellow at the American University of Beirut, and has been the recipient of

numerous academic awards, including a Fulbright scholarship. He has lived in Latin America, Europe, and the Middle East and speaks Persian, Spanish, Italian, and conversant Arabic.

STEVEN SIMON

Steven Simon is the Hasib J. Sabbagh senior fellow for Middle Eastern studies at the Council on Foreign Relations. Prior to joining the council, Simon specialized in Middle Eastern affairs at the RAND Corporation. He came to RAND from London, where he was the deputy director of the IISS and Carol Deane senior fellow in U.S. security studies. Before moving to the UK in 1999, Simon served at the White House for more than five years as director for global issues and senior director for transnational threats. During this period, he was involved in U.S. counterterrorism policy and operations as well as security policy in the Near East and South Asia. These assignments followed a 15-year career at the U.S. Department of State.

Simon is the author of the February 2007 Council Special Report *After the Surge: The Case for U.S. Military Disengagement from Iraq* (2007). He is the coauthor of *The Age of Sacred Terror* (Random House, 2002), which won the Council on Foreign Relations 2004 Arthur Ross Book Award, and coeditor of *Iraq at the Crossroads: State and Society in the Shadow of Regime Change* (Oxford University Press/IISS, 2003). He is also the coauthor of *Building a Successful Palestinian State* (RAND Corporation, 2005) and *The Arc: A Formal Structure for a Palestinian State* (RAND Corporation, 2005). Most recently, he coauthored *The Next Attack* (Henry Holt, 2005), which examines the evolution of the jihad since September 11, 2001, and the U.S. response, and was a finalist for the Lionel Gelber Prize in 2006.

Simon has published in *Time*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Financial Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *The Washington Times*, *Foreign Affairs*, *The New Republic*, *The New York Review of Books*, *Survival*, *The National Interest*, *World Policy Journal*, and other journals. He is a frequent guest on CNN, BBC, ABC, *60 Minutes*, *Nightline*, *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*, Fox, and NPR.

Simon has a B.A. from Columbia University in classics and Near Eastern languages, an MTS from the Harvard Divinity School, and an MPA from Princeton University. He was a university fellow at Brown University and an international affairs fellow at Oxford University.

RAY TAKEYH

Ray Takeyh is a senior fellow for Middle East Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations. His areas of specialization are Iran, political reform in the Middle East, and Islamist movements and parties. He is also a contributing editor of *The National Interest*.

Takeyh was previously professor of national security studies at the National War College, professor and director of studies at the Near East and South Asia Center, National Defense University, fellow in International Security Studies at Yale University, fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, and fellow at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of California Berkeley.

Takeyh is the author of *Hidden Iran: Politics and Power in the Islamic Republic* (CFR, 2006). He is also the author of two previous books, *The Receding Shadow of the Prophet: The Rise and Fall of Radical Islam* (Praeger, 2004) and *The Origins of the Eisenhower Doctrine: The US, Britain and Nasser's Egypt, 1953-57* (St. Martin's Press, 2000). Takeyh has published widely, including articles in *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, *National Interest*, *Survival*, *World Policy Journal*, *Washington Quarterly*, *Orbis*, *Middle East Journal*, and *Middle East Policy*. His commentary has also been featured in many newspapers, including *The Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Financial Times*, and *International Herald Tribune*.

Takeyh has testified frequently in front of various congressional committees and has appeared on *The Newshour with Jim Lehrer*, *Charlie Rose*, NBC, CBS, CNN, BBC, Fox, and C-SPAN.

Takeyh received a doctorate in modern history from Oxford University in 1997.

MOHAMMAD JAVAD ZARIF

Ambassador Zarif presented his credentials as the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on August 5, 2002, to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Ambassador Zarif is a career diplomat and has served in different senior positions in the Iranian foreign ministry and at various international organizations. His responsibility from 1992 until his appointment as Permanent Representative was Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs.

In the past two decades, Ambassador Zarif has played an active role in the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement, and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Most recently, he was appointed by the UN Secretary-General as a member of the Group of Eminent Persons on Dialogue among Civilizations. He has also served as chair of numerous international conferences including the Asian Preparatory Meeting of the World Conference on Racism (2000), the United Nations Disarmament Commission (2000), Sixth (Legal) Committee of the 47th United Nations General Assembly (1992-1993), Political Committee of the 12th Non-Aligned Summit in Durban (1998), and the OIC High-Level Committee on Dialogue Among Civilizations. He also served as the president of the Asian African Legal Consultative Committee from 1997 to 1998.

Ambassador Zarif holds a Ph.D. in international law and policy from the Graduate School of International Studies, University of Denver. In addition to his diplomatic responsibilities, he has been a visiting professor of international law at University of Tehran, where he has taught human rights, international law, and multilateral diplomacy. Ambassador Zarif serves on the board of editors of a number of scholarly journals, including the *Iranian Journal of International Affairs* and *Iranian Foreign Policy*, and has written extensively on disarmament, human rights, international law, and regional conflicts. His writings include "Reflections of Terrorism, Dialogue and Global Ethics" (*Seton Hall Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations*, Winter 2002); "Impermissibility of the Use or Threat of Use of Nuclear Weapons" (*Iranian Journal of International Affairs*, 1996); "The

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