

**IRAN: REALITY, OPTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES.
PART 3, REGIONAL AND GLOBAL CON-
SEQUENCES OF U.S. MILITARY ACTION IN IRAN**

HEARING

BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY
AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT
AND GOVERNMENT REFORM
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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IRAN: REALITY, OPTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES. PART 3, REGIONAL AND GLOBAL CONSEQUENCES OF U.S. MILITARY ACTION IN IRAN

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2007

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN
AFFAIRS,
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:25 p.m., in room 2247, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. John F. Tierney (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Tierney, Lynch, Higgins, Yarmuth, McCollum, Hodes, McDermott, Shays, and Duncan.

Staff present: Dave Turk, staff director; Andrew Su and Andy Wright, professional staff members; Davis Hake, clerk; Dan Hamilton, fellow; Christopher Bright, minority professional staff member; Todd Greenwood, minority legislative assistant; Nick Palarino, minority senior investigator and policy advisor; and Mark Lavin, minority Army fellow.

Mr. TIERNEY. A quorum being present, the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs hearing entitled, "Iran: Reality, Options and Consequences. Part 3—Regional and Global Consequences of U.S. Military Action in Iran," will come to order.

I ask unanimous consent that only the chairman and the ranking member of the subcommittee be allowed to make opening statements. Without objection, so ordered.

And I ask unanimous consent that the hearing record be kept open for 5 business days so all members of the subcommittee will be allowed to submit a written statement for the record. Again, without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. Shays, I am going to submit my remarks for the record and just abbreviate them. I suggest that your remarks also be allowed to be submitted.

I want to again welcome all of our witnesses and thank them for subjecting themselves to the delays, but also for being gracious enough to come in. We are here to hear what I view as an extraordinary group of witnesses testify on a subject of increasing importance, the possible consequences of American military action against the Islamic Republic of Iran. Today is the third hearing in a series that the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs has undertaken to examine U.S. foreign policy toward Iran.

In our first hearing, we heard experts describe the current conditions, the make-up, and the complexity of Iranian society, including the largely positive public opinion there toward the United States. In our second hearing, we heard insider accounts from former senior diplomats and intelligence officials about missed negotiating opportunities with the Iranians over the past few years.

Today, we are extremely fortunate to have before us a group of top military, diplomatic and intelligence experts who will provide the subcommittee with what the public and the Congress have needed for quite some time, an unvarnished discussion of what could happen should this administration, before exhausting all diplomatic avenues, act to commit American forces in war against Iran.

Make no mistake about it, some like to refer to air strikes or limited military action or other sanitized and neatly controlled terms, but that vocabulary will be meaningless to the people on the receiving end of our force. The Iranian Government and the Iranian people will see any such action as war, and we can expect that they would act accordingly.

Although some Members of this administration and their supporters have loudly opposed attacking Iran, none of them, to my knowledge, have explained what potential consequences we as a Nation would be left having to manage, not only over the next year, but over decades and generations to come.

History shows us, unfortunately, that it is far easier to rattle a saber than it is to clean up the consequences of a war. One need only look at a map to understand Iran's centrality to a whole host of U.S. national security interests. We have a map over there to our right.

We are in the middle of an expensive and bloody war in Iraq and an equally difficult and dangerous campaign to build the entire government and infrastructure of Afghanistan. One is at Iran's western border, and the other its eastern. We have hundreds of thousands of soldiers who have fought and continue to fight in these two countries. We have invested hundreds of billions of dollars and diverted critical military resources.

We heard at our second hearing the positive efforts Iran played in helping to defeat the Taliban in Afghanistan. We have also heard repeatedly about Iran's involvement with the Shi'a militia groups in Iran.

If the United States attacks Iran, how will Iran and its allies retaliate? And what impact will this have on the safety of our troops and the future stability of both Iraq and Afghanistan?

Instead of hard-nosed diplomacy and efforts to improve relations with Iran, or at the very least putting in place controlled mechanisms to avoid having small confrontations or actions spiraling to major hostilities, this administration has been issuing threats and condemnations.

If you look at the map of Iran carefully you will see that Pakistan and Turkey also border Iran—two countries that are absolutely vital to regional and global security. And many of our closest allies in the Middle East, including Saudi Arabia, lie directly across the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz.

But as we will hear from our witnesses today, the potential consequences of military action in Iran do not just stop with those countries directly surrounding Iran. For example, how will attack on yet another Muslim country further erode the U.S.' broader and long-term efforts to win over hearts and minds in our global efforts?

How will the Arab-Israeli peace process be affected?

How will China and Russia react? Will they, for example, take advantage of these American actions to swoop in and scoop up further trade and diplomatic opportunity?

How will the United States and global economy react to actual or threatened disruptions in oil supplies, especially at a time when global supplies are stretched to the maximum and the U.S. economy show signs of a troubling softening?

Everyone agrees that the dilemma posed to us in dealing with Iran is extremely difficult and complex. There are serious and inherent dangers, for example, in an Iran with nuclear weaponry. Among other concerns, a nuclear Iran could serve as a catalyst to a proliferation surge in the region and pose a more threatening presence in the region more generally. Iran has also supported groups aligned with terrorist sympathies. And we certainly need to continue to carefully explore the role that Iran has played in countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan. We need to take all of these developments extremely seriously.

Still, as our two previous Iran-focused hearings and numerous other forums have shown, there are significant alternatives to war that have not yet been exhausted or adequately and skillfully pursued. These alternatives should be considered as opposed to using military action as a first option or until we are directly threatened. But I worry that, unfortunately, the same rosy scenarios and foolhardy thinking that led us into Iraq in 2003 are gaining momentum once again with respect to Iran.

I ask the simple question: have we learned any lessons? If nothing else, I hope we have learned the importance of having our eyes wide open as we contemplate the possible paths forward, especially when one of those paths has such pervasive consequences as war. That is what our hearing today is all about.

The witnesses here today have been asked to testify because of the breadth and depth of their experiences. At least four of the witnesses have served in uniform and collectively bring a wealth of personal and professional experiences. I know they bring a patriotism borne of personal sacrifice and a deep love of our country and its rich heritage and strength of ideas.

I have no doubt that the members of this subcommittee and the American people will benefit from the opportunity to learn from the decades of collective military, diplomatic and intelligence experience before us today. And to do so before the drums of war drown out the ability to have a reasoned and thoughtful discussion.

I want to thank the witnesses again for being with us today. We look forward to your testimony.

I now yield to Ranking Member Chris Shays for his opening remarks.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this third hearing and for holding the first two.

The decisions we make about our future relations with Iran must be based on bipartisanship at home and discussions with our allies abroad. Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger has described Iran's nuclear program as more worrisome than the crisis over North Korea's nuclear weapons. He has predicted that if Iran secures nuclear weapons, nonproliferation efforts may cease to be meaningful and a world of multiple nuclear centers will be created. And he has asked: what would the world look like if the terrorist bombs in London on July 7th had been nuclear and 100,000 people had been killed? Perhaps more poignant, Kissinger has said: I am not recommending military action against Iran, but I am recommending not excluding it.

Today's hearing will focus on the possibility of a military strike against Iran. While the central reason for such a strike seems straightforward, to prevent this state-sponsored terrorism from acquiring nuclear weapons, the outcome of such a strike does not. So what would happen if the United States bombed Iran? The truth is, no one really knows for sure, just as no one really knows for sure what would happen if Iran acquired a nuclear weapon. Of course, none of us want either event to occur. But we must recognize the stakes are enormously high when nations like Iran espouse a philosophy that is irrational. They threaten the survival of their own population, as well as the rest of the world.

These concerns are shared by the majority of the American people. When asked recently whether Iran poses a serious threat to the world, 85 percent of Americans answered yes. Dealing with terrorists leaves responsible leaders with stark choices that will have to be made to protect the American people and the rest of the world.

But this hearing is about hypotheticals, so let us talk in hypotheticals for the moment. If the United States were to attack Iran's nuclear weapons facility, Iran would consider such an act an act of war and retaliate. This retaliation could come in the form of a strike against our allies, retaliation against United States and coalition forces in Iraq and Afghanistan and maybe even Europe, and possibly a wave of terrorist attacks against United States both at home and abroad. Perceptions of the United States would further deteriorate in the Middle East and in other Muslim countries around the world. The bottom line is, we would be at war with Iran, which would be devastating, because what the United States and our allies do not need right now is to open another front against a terrorist state.

Many experts disagree how soon Iran could acquire a nuclear weapon. Some say in 5 years and others say 10. Whatever the time delay, there is little disagreement Iran is intent on acquiring the capability. And if Iran succeeds and builds a nuclear weapon, what then? The Middle East would become even more unstable, the rich oil region would be dominated by a terrorist state that has announced its intent to annihilate one of our staunchest allies, Israel. As Secretary Kissinger observed, other nations would want to acquire the capability, and nonproliferation would cease to be a coherent policy. Indeed, these are just some of the consequences of Iran's obtaining nuclear capability.

Last week the Crown Prince of Bahrain said that the Iranians are seeking to develop nuclear arms, and called on world leaders to find a diplomatic solution. I agree with the Sheikh; the United States has an obligation to find a solution other than war, and we as Congress have an obligation to support the current administration and whatever the administration follows in their efforts to find this solution.

But in the meantime, we cannot allow terrorist states to acquire the means to blackmail the entire world. So to return to Kissinger's insight, while we should not be recommending military action, we should be recommending not excluding it either. We welcome all our witnesses today and look forward to their testimony.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Mr. Shays. We are fortunate to have with us this morning Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson, Colonel Samuel B. Gardiner, Dr. Paul Pillar, Ilan Berman and Lieutenant General Paul K. Van Riper.

We are going to start with the testimony of Colonel Larry Wilkerson, who is the visiting Pamela C. Harriman professor of Government at the College of William and Mary, as well as professional lecturer in the honors program at George Washington University. His last positions in government were as Secretary of State Colin Powell's chief of staff from 2002 to 2005 and associate director of the State Department's Policy Planning staff.

Before serving at the State Department, Colonel Wilkerson served 31 years in the U.S. Army, including as Deputy Executive Officer to then-General Colin Powell when he commanded the U.S. Army Forces Command in 1989; Special Assistant to General Powell when he was chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 1989 until 1993; and as Director and Deputy Director of the U.S. Marine Corps War College in Quantico, VA, from 1993 until 1997.

Colonel Wilkerson holds two advanced degrees; one in international relations and the other in national security studies. And before the Colonel starts, I want to invite anybody who wants to take their jacket off to do so. It's pretty warm in here with the lights in here.

Mr. SHAYS. We are talking about witnesses as well.

Mr. TIERNEY. Witnesses as well. And ask unanimous consent that Mr. McDermott, who is not a member of this particular panel, but who has joined us here today, be allowed to participate. Without objection, so ordered.

Colonel Wilkerson we will be happy to hear your remarks.

STATEMENT OF COLONEL LAWRENCE B. WILKERSON, USA (RET.), FORMER CHIEF OF STAFF AND SENIOR ADVISOR TO SECRETARY OF STATE COLIN POWELL, FORMER SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE U.S. JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF, AND FORMER DIRECTOR OF THE U.S. MARINE CORPS WAR COLLEGE

Colonel WILKERSON. Thank you Mr. Chairman, and thank you for having me here. And Ranking Member Shays and other members of the subcommittee, thank you.

I would like to start and preface just by saying I am a soldier. That is the perspective I am going to be speaking from. I am a strategist. I was educated as a strategist. And that is an important

distinction. Strategists aren't trained by instrument. They are educated. It is a very, very meaningful distinction as a matter of fact. And what I want to—the perspective I want to come from is that—you have my written testimony. I just want to focus on one aspect of it. That aspect of it is, let us assume political, diplomatic, informational, cultural and other instruments of our national power have failed and we do have to use military force. Despite the lack of a substantial and ready link component, because we wouldn't have one—it is tied down in Afghanistan and Iraq and elsewhere—what will be the consequences of using such force, because it would be limited to air and Naval power, perhaps complemented by a few Special Operating Forces to prepare us? That live purpose is the only ultimate objective I can conceive of, as Ranking Member Shays has pointed out, to use military force against Iran.

The result of using such force in my view would be disastrous. I am a soldier. I am speaking from the intellect and the heart. Land-based air power coupled with sea-based air power and small Special Operating Forces deployed in Iran would conduct what I would call a network centric top campaign that is using high developed target maps that devastate the existing grids in Iran; railroad, air, electricity, gas, information, communications, commanding patrol and so forth. Or in a more limited way, these forces would concentrate, take out Iran's air defenses, as probably they could, and then do what damage they could do to the nuclear facilities that we are aware of or that we suspect.

My question in both cases: widespread strikes and use of more focused strikes would be to what purpose? At best, the limited strike scenario would set back Iran's nuclear program a year or two, perhaps a little longer. More likely, it would spur the Iranians, as strategic bombing did the Germans in World War II, to round-the-clock, determined efforts that would swiftly make up the lost time, might even make the program even faster. We may recall that German production actually increased after massive bombing raids by the Allies in World War II. The more widespread strikes, while devastating—and they would be—would solidify a nation of 70-plus million people, a great number of whom are under 35 years of age; a nation that is anything but solidified in its views right now, particularly amongst that age group. And the uniting factor would be nationalism and a visceral hatred for America. The ranks of the Revolutionary Guard would swell. Asymmetric warfare at a time, a place and with a means of Iran's choosing, not ours, would break out wherever U.S. forces were vulnerable, but particularly in Iraq, Qatar, Kuwait and elsewhere at a minimum.

But at the end of the day, what would America have gained by doing this? My answer is very little, except that we would have fallen into one of military history's most common traps: we would have reinforced strategic failure, one of the oldest most consistent failures throughout military history. From the Persian to the British empires, there exist enough examples to give one pause. From Xerxes to Mark Anthony, from Napoleon to Hitler, from World War II to Vietnam and World War I, history is replete with leaders who simply could not say either tactically, operationally or strategically enough, and sacrificed more blood and treasure by adding to that failure. Unless we are prepared to invade Iran with strategic

ground forces, thoroughly defeat the hundreds of thousands of guerrillas that we would most likely encounter, occupy the country for at least a decade or longer, more and deeper failure is the most likely consequence. That is the only conclusion as a strategist and as a military man that I can come to. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Colonel Wilkerson follows:]

Testimony of Colonel Lawrence B. Wilkerson, USA (Retired)
before the
Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs
of the
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
14 November 2007

Iran: Realities, Options, and Regional and Global Consequences of U.S. Military Action

Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Your hearing's title suggests the challenge America confronts with respect to the damage it has done in destroying the balance of power in the Persian Gulf—for that is clearly what we have done however unwittingly. That is the ultimate strategic "reality" we confront. It is one of the principal reasons that in 1991, at the close of the first Gulf War, a decision was made to cease hostilities at the successful fulfillment of the United Nations mandate to eject the Iraqi Army from Kuwait, and not to continue on to Baghdad.

Iran has no enemies of consequence remaining. America has eliminated Iraq, Iran's enemy number one; and we have eliminated—or more precisely, we and NATO are now tying down—Iran's enemy number two, the Taliban. We have not finished off that enemy nor does it appear likely we will do so in the near future, so in a long-range sense Iran probably feels a little disquiet in that direction.

Some would ask, What about Israel? I believe that Iran does not and should not consider that country a threat. Israel has every reason to seek good relations with Iran and few reasons to create strained or bad relations. The same can be said for the Persians with respect to Israel, were the U.S. to get out of the way and use its best diplomatic tools rather than its bombs and bullets. The harsh words of a virtually powerless President in Teheran constitute a rhetorical shield for a concerned leadership, not a predetermined future for Israel. This assessment begs the question of Hezbollah: is it not Israel's enemy and is it not supported by Iran?

Hezbollah's capabilities far outstrip those of al-Qaeda and some of its assumed objectives are antithetical to Israeli interests. Yet here too—particularly with the political leadership of the organization—resides rationality. Were deft moves to occur—in Lebanon, Syria, vis-à-vis Iran and the Israeli-Palestinian situation—the political leadership of Hezbollah and the leadership in Damascus and in Teheran could effect ameliorative change. In short, this challenge too can be met through astute diplomacy.

If eliminating Iran's principal enemies were not enough, we have also driven Syria straight into the embrace of Iran, an embrace I have no doubt that that Arab country finds at least slightly uncomfortable. But we have offered Damascus no opportunity to escape, laying down impossible ultimatums for Syrian leaders like those we lay down for Teheran.

All of this strategic ineptitude on our part flies in the face of one of the basic tenets of international relations—the *conservation of enemies*. A nation never wants any more enemies than it can handle. National leaders who do not appreciate this axiom are strategically naïve. "Bring 'em on" is precisely the sort of leadership rhetoric that displays such naïveté.

Moreover, not only is this strategic imbalance in the Persian Gulf our own fault, in its immediate wake we have inserted our own armed forces onto the fulcrum. In doing this, we may have temporarily set a check on any major Iranian move to exploit the imbalance but we have at the same time tied up our ground forces, much of our air mobility forces, and quite a lot of our other air power forces in what may at best be described as imperial overstretch, at worst sheer strategic lunacy. In short, we are caught in a perfect storm of our own making in Iraq. Moreover, in asymmetric ways, Iran can strike at our ground forces almost at will with guerrilla-style actions.

Meanwhile, America has real, identifiable, substantial strategic interests in the Persian Gulf and in the wider region and we are malpositioned to protect these interests because we are so bogged down in the civil war in Iraq.

There is the Strait of Hormuz and the critical oil line of communications that traverses it. There are friends such as Kuwait, Oman, the UAE, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. There are Jordan and Egypt. There is Israel. There is today not the Soviet Union seeking a warm water port—something I spent years planning and exercising to prevent; but there is the potential Moscow-Teheran linkup that could establish a natural gas monopoly that would make OPEC pale in comparison. That link's combined petroleum assets would not be a subject of humor on Wall Street either. At present, our bellicose policies toward Iran make Russia's strategic task in this regard all the simpler to accomplish.

In addition, there is America's intrinsic and critical strategic interest in attracting and persuading the significant part of the Muslim world that we need to combat the real terrorists in the world who would do us harm. By our continued boots-on-the-ground presence on Arab soil, we alienate that population from India to Indonesia and make it impossible to further our strategic interest in the only way that will sustain success in the conflict with radical Islamists.

We must reposition our military forces as rapidly as possible—over the horizon, in prepositioned stocks, able to exercise with regional powers—so that we can protect these other strategic interests. I imagine that the shape and timeliness of such repositioning occupies a great deal of Admiral William J. Fallon's thoughts these days at U.S. Central Command. Such thoughts must keep that very fine warfighter on pins and needles.

Given this self-induced strategic imbalance of power and the malposition of forces in the Persian Gulf region, what are America's options?

First, the deterioration of our land power, particularly our Army, will soon demand a foreclosure on any option other than withdrawal of substantive landforce structure from Iraq.

By December 2008, at least half of the current land forces in Iraq must be on the move, already withdrawn, or getting ready to do so. The alternative is that our already severely strained land forces will be broken almost completely. So, whatever option we adopt, this reality must be a central pole around which the rest is built.

I believe this reality alone means that using military force against Iran is a fool's gamble. That said, to act thusly is a commonplace in military history. In fact, to do so would replicate once again one of the oldest failures in military history—that is that when a leader encounters strategic failure, his first inclination is to reinforce that failure. From the Persian to the British empires, there exist enough examples to give one pause. From Xerxes to Mark Anthony, from Napoleon to Hitler, from World War I to Vietnam, history is replete with leaders who simply could not say "Enough!" and instead chose to deepen their failure—and sacrifice more blood and treasure—by adding to it.

Second, in order to salvage some success from the strategic mess we have created—and perhaps even move ahead a positive agenda of stability and peace in the region—we need to convene serious talks with all of the regional leaders, including Iran and Syria. Turkey needs to be there as well, as all of you can certainly understand. These region-wide talks should occur concurrently, or nearly so, with U.S. bilateral talks with all of the central players, *starting with Iran*. Moreover, what Dr. Rice has already started—meaningful Israel-Palestinian talks—must be continued and must be perceived as leading to a final settlement, and in the end, *must actually lead there*.

Mr. Chairman, let's assume for a moment that all of this diplomatic—and inevitably, economic, political, and financial—effort fails ultimately and, despite the lack of a substantial and ready land component, military force is the only option left on the table. What would be the consequences of using such force—limited to air and naval power perhaps complemented by a few special operating forces—to prevent Iran's possessing a nuclear weapon? For that latter purpose is the only ultimate objective of which I can conceive with regard to using force against Iran.

This objective assumes that the U.S. cannot tolerate Iran's possessing a nuclear weapon, which to me, as a strategist, is an illogical position to take because Iran is deterable. So long as Israel and America have nuclear weapons, Iran will use its own against neither.

But will Iran provide fissile material, or even an intact weapon, to a terrorist group? That too would seem to me to be deterable. Israel would never wait to strike back should such a weapon be used against it, nor would America abstain (and I am quite confident "proof" would be readily available). I find no irrational mullahs in Teheran with power to do

things unilaterally. Therefore, I must conclude that Teheran is deterable—in any scenario.

But what if we had to use force?

The result of such use in my view would be disastrous.

Land-based airpower, coupled with sea-based airpower, and small special operating forces deployed in Iran, would conduct a network-centric campaign. That is, using highly-developed target maps, they would devastate the existing grids in Iran—rail, road, air, electricity, gas, information/communications, command and control, and so forth. Or, in a more limited way, these forces would concentrate and eliminate Iran's air defenses in order to go after the known nuclear sites, and leave it at that.

My question in both cases, widespread strikes and strikes only at nuclear facilities, is simply this: To what ultimate purpose?

At best, the limited strike scenario would set back Iran's nuclear program a year or two, perhaps a little longer. More likely, it would spur the Iranians—as strategic bombing did the Germans in WWII—to round-the-clock, determined efforts that would swiftly make up for lost time. We may recall that German production actually *increased* after the massive bombing raids by the Allies in WWII.

The more widespread strikes, while devastating, would solidify a nation of 70-plus million people, a great number of whom are under 35 years of age—a nation that is anything but solidified in its views at present. The uniting factor would be nationalism and a visceral hatred for America.

The ranks of the Revolutionary Guards would swell and asymmetric warfare, at a time, a place, and with a means of Iran's choosing, not ours, would break out wherever U.S. forces are vulnerable, particularly in Iraq, Qatar, Kuwait, and elsewhere in the Gulf region.

And, at the end of the day, what would America have gained?

Very little is the answer—except that we would have fallen into one of military history's most common traps: we would have reinforced strategic failure.

Unless we are prepared to invade Iran with sufficient ground forces, thoroughly defeat the hundreds of thousands of guerrillas we would then encounter, occupy the country for at least a decade or longer—more and deeper failure is the most likely consequence.

Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee, thank you for allowing me to speak. I would be pleased to try to answer any questions you may have.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Colonel.

For everybody's information, there is a vote scheduled and a motion to adjourn. There is a single vote on that. We are going to continue to keep the proceeding along. So if people want to go vote and come back, we will continue in place on that.

Our next witness is Colonel Sam Gardiner, U.S. Air Force, retired. Colonel Gardiner is a war strategy scholar and former faculty member of the National War College, the Naval War College and the Air War College. Colonel Gardiner has designed and participated in numerous war game simulations involving Iran, including one we broadcast on CNN in early December.

Colonel.

**STATEMENT OF COLONEL SAMUEL B. GARDINER, USAF (RET.),
FORMER FACULTY MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE,
THE NAVAL WAR COLLEGE AND THE AIR WAR COLLEGE**

Colonel GARDINER. What I have is a net assessment. Essentially it is from the net. What I am going to say is nothing classified. I have told Iranians directly to their face that they need to fear the Americans will strike. What I am telling you, I have told them.

This is the headline we want to avoid. The headline of the future in which a President is faced after a series of U.S. actions with a decision to go for regime change. He is faced with no other option.

There are two military objectives we normally see set out when we talk about conducting a strike against Iran: punish the Iranians for terrorism. This is new. It has more importance than it did 6 months ago. The second, obviously, is to set back the nuclear program.

Let me talk a little bit about targets and the likelihood of success. In the punishment category, obviously the Revolutionary Guard units come to the top of the fore. Interesting about the Revolutionary Guard units we don't hear much talked about is they are prepared for an air strike. They are heavily bunkered and heavily re-vetted. It would be very difficult to put punishment on them. This is the same unit, but spread out.

The second option: go after the terrorist training camps. Not much infrastructure there, and not much density of personnel. Not a very good target. By assessment of the punishment option, here is what I would say after we got through with that: no serious damage done to the Guard units; the strikes on the terrorist training camps doesn't do any damage; Iran continues enrichment and doesn't change its view of the world.

OK. Let us go after the nuclear facilities, is the other alternative. You need to understand the one big weapon that plays a role in this. This is the penetrating 5,000 bomb conventional weapon. The first target that comes to mind is the Natanz enrichment facility. This is the way it looked 5 years ago. The two halls will be buried with 2 meters of concrete, 18 meters of dirt, 60 feet under ground. This is the way it looks today and the way the United States would have to target it, with this conventional penetrating weapon probably putting two weapons on top of each other.

The next target would be the nuclear research facility at Esfahan. Interestingly, what is happening in Iran right now is,

they are moving from just dig and cover to tunneling. It makes targeting much more difficult and harder for us to destroy even nuclear facilities now. This is the kind of targeting we would have to go on. Obviously, the heavy water facility in Iraq would be targeted. And again, what one finds is tunneling and making the targeting difficult.

Here is the third, the final facility I am going to talk about, which is the missile test facility in Parchin where they also do weapons testing. Again, what you see is heavy tunneling to interfere with targeting. This is another interesting point about Parchin, and I raise this; I do not know the answer to this: they are more careful about protecting the facilities there than they are about protecting the nuclear facilities. I suspect it has to do with chemical weapons. I will mention that later.

Bushehr would not be targeted. No reason to kill Russians. It is not important to the nuclear program.

Here is my assessment after that. We can destroy 3 to 5 years of construction. We know how long it took to build those. But the effect on the nuclear program is what Wilkerson said, we may slow it. As a strategist, I would say, you don't take military action when you don't know the outcome. It is very questionable.

The next thing that comes to mind is, if you are going to strike the Iranians, then you got to make sure, this would be the argument, that you get their ability to retaliate so that they can't come back. These are the F-14s at Esfahan, the Alert F-14s. We want to strike those. More shelters and bunkers, heavily sheltered and bunkered Air Force. It could be destroyed. This is the main Naval base at Bandar Abbas, three Russian supplied Kilo submarines and a mini-submarine. Those would be targeted in this elimination of the retaliation capability. The missile patrol boats in Chabahar would be targeted. The Iranians have a series of anti-ship missiles. These are the probable locations. The anti-ship missiles include the old Silkworm as well as the C-805 that was used by Hezbollah to attack an Israeli ship. They are heavily bunkered. They are stored in bunkers. They have sites that are re-vetted when fire dropped. We would probably strike the missile launch areas, the same launch areas that the Iranians used during the Iraq-Iran war where they probably have some Shaab missiles. After all that happens and most of the aircraft would be destroyed, large Naval vessels would be destroyed, but we would be facing small boats, terrorists, chemical capabilities and some missiles.

Let me talk about consequences. Iranians have a number of options. Little or no response, and this is an interesting one, I am going to talk a little bit about this because that is a powerful option, what I call the "low DNA" violent attacks; and then a broader response, no response, very interesting. And my metaphor is the Danish cartoon example in which the Middle East and even Europe became enraged by those cartoons. You will find the same thing happening here. Some governments might even be threatened by the severity of the reaction. And again, that is without any Iranian retaliation. We have said the Iranians are—if we attack them, according to the National Intelligence Estimate—like Iraq that we can expect a major improvement or increase in terrorists. We have said that there is a high likelihood that they would initiate attacks

inside the United States. We would find we would be asked to escort ships in the Gulf. We would be asked during this process to provide additional missiles to Israeli and Gulf states. And the oil pipelines that are in Iraq would be vulnerable and we could very easily see that as being targeted. We would see additional infiltration into Iraq from Iran. And we would see additional U.S. casualties because of that. We could very well see more Naval mines in the Persian Gulf. Not a heavy mine capability, but just a few. We could see the Iranians use speed boats to threaten oil tankers. We could see insurance rates and oil prices jump. Most people talk about a spike, but it is important to remember that may not be in the Iranian interest. Recall, during the Iraq-Iran war, we actually had a price plateau. That is something that they would more likely want to see.

The range of things they could do beyond that is broad and will probably depend on the severity of our strikes. But involved in this we have to understand is they have threatened attacks inside the United States. Remember, Iran has WMD now. This is not something we were talking about. They probably have this range of chemical capabilities. This special storage facility at Esfahan is probably where they store them.

When we talk about Iran providing nuclear weapons to terrorists, I think we have to be able to answer the question: why haven't they given chemicals to terrorists? I can't answer that question, but that is an important question to answer. It brings me back to where I started. It is possible for a President to be put in a position where he has no options because the sequence of events where it is not just that our options aren't successful, but we are at a point where we have to do regime change because his options are no longer limited by the violent extreme war tactics.

[The prepared statement of Colonel Gardiner follows:]

Iran: Reality, Options and Consequences, Part 3
Regional and Global Consequences of US Military Action in Iran

**Potential Targets, Likelihood of Success
and Consequences**

Sam Gardiner, Colonel, USAF (Retired)
Statement to the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs
Committee on Government Oversight and Reform
U.S. House of Representatives
November 14, 2007

1

I call this a "Net Assessment" because the information you are seeing comes from the internet. Nothing is classified. There is nothing here new to the Iranians.

In December of last year I was invited to a small dinner with the Iranian Ambassador to the United Nations, Ambassador Zarif at the time. I sat directly across the table from him. Using the same kind of information I am giving you, I told him Iran needs to take the US threat of a strike seriously. I told him how the US might attack, and I told him my assessment of consequences. He left with a copy of a paper I had written.*

I was at that dinner for the same reason I am testifying here this afternoon. I believe we are all better served if policymakers of both sides look the beast directly in the eyes.

Sam Gardiner, *The End of the 'Summer of Diplomacy: Assessing the U.S. Military Options on Iran*, The Century Foundation, NY, 2006.

Sam Gardiner, Colonel, USAF (Retired)
Statement to the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives
November 14, 2007

The screenshot shows the front page of The Daily Post website. At the top, there are navigation links for HOME PAGE, NY TIMES, TODAY'S PAPER, TOPICS, MOST POPULAR, and THE 6 TOPICS. The main header features the newspaper's name, "The Daily Post", and a "TimesRated Free 14-Day Trial | Log In | Register Now" link. Below the header, there are several promotional banners: "ING DIRECT Save Your Money" with the tagline "Money in the bank changes everything", "The Orange Savings Account 4.50% Annual Percentage Yield Member FDIC", and "NYT Archive Since 1981". A search bar is also present.

The main content area is dominated by a large headline: "126 US soldiers killed by missile attacks in Iraq". Below this headline is a sub-headline: "Military officials in Iraq say the evidence points to Iran...". To the left of the main headline is a vertical navigation menu with categories such as WORLD, U.S., Politics, Washington, Education, N.Y./REGION, BUSINESS, TECHNOLOGY, SPORTS, SCIENCE, HEALTH, OPINION, ARTS, Books, Movies, Music, Television, Theater, STYLE, Dining & Wine, Fashion & Style, Home & Garden, Weddings & Celebrations, TRAVEL, and more.

On the right side of the page, there is an "OPINION" section with links to "Krugman: Partisanship", "Friedman: Diplomacy", "The Economist", and "Editorial: Medical Care". Below this is a "MARKETS" section showing "10:18 AM ET" and a table of market data:

MARKETS	10:18 AM ET	Up/Down	%
DOW	11,867.89	-36.46	-0.31%
NAS	2,431.92	-15.22	-0.62%
S&P	1,431.21	-3.98	-0.28%

Below the market data, there are links for "Tech", "Aids", "Stocks", and "Gadgets".

Let me start with the most serious consequence of a US strike first. Certainly, this loss of life would be terrible. From my war games, however, I would warn you that when this headline appears, the President of the United States will be faced with very few options.

He would have to respond strongly. We could find ourselves deeply involved in a major war in the region.

That is the bottom line of my story, let me start at the beginning.

Objectives of US Military Options

- **Punish Iran for its support of terrorism and attacks on US troops in Iraq.**
- **Set back the Iranian nuclear program 3 to 5 years.**

Two objectives are most mentioned for the use of military force against Iran.

The first is relative new and now seems dominate the thinking of those who favor military action. It's not about the nuclear program. It's about the other aspect of Iranian behavior.

The second focuses on the nuclear program.

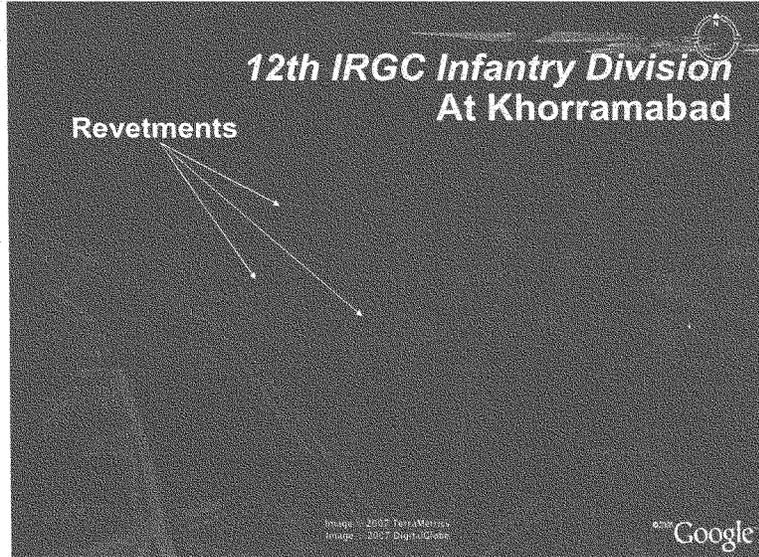
Can we achieve either of these objectives, and what would be the consequences?



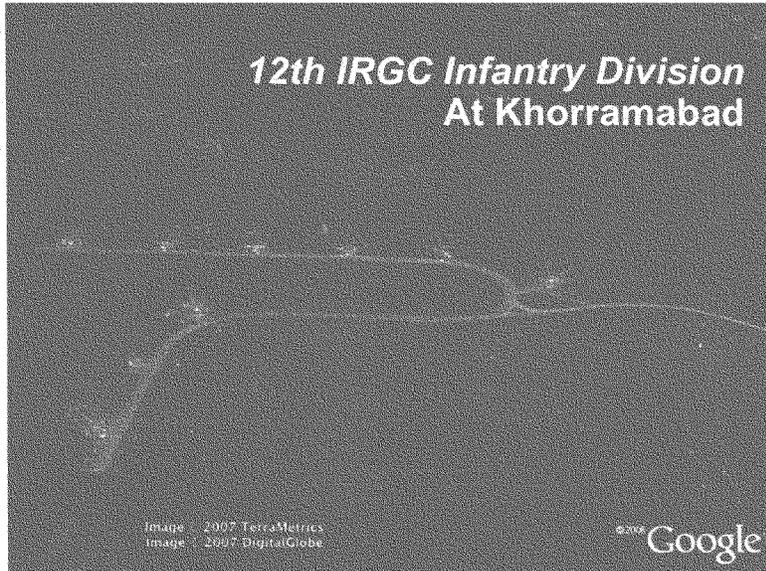
Looking first at targets and likelihood of success...



The five Islamic Revolutionary Guard Divisions are the protectors of the regime. If one wants to punish Iran, these units are very likely targets.

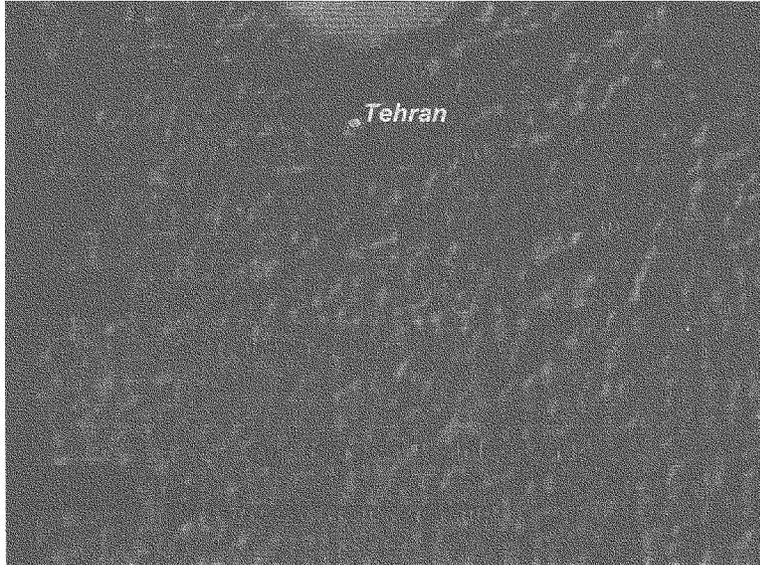


Looking at the IRGC bases, it becomes obvious targeting them is not a simple process. They have prepared for air strikes. Equipment, munitions and facilities are bunkered and in revetments



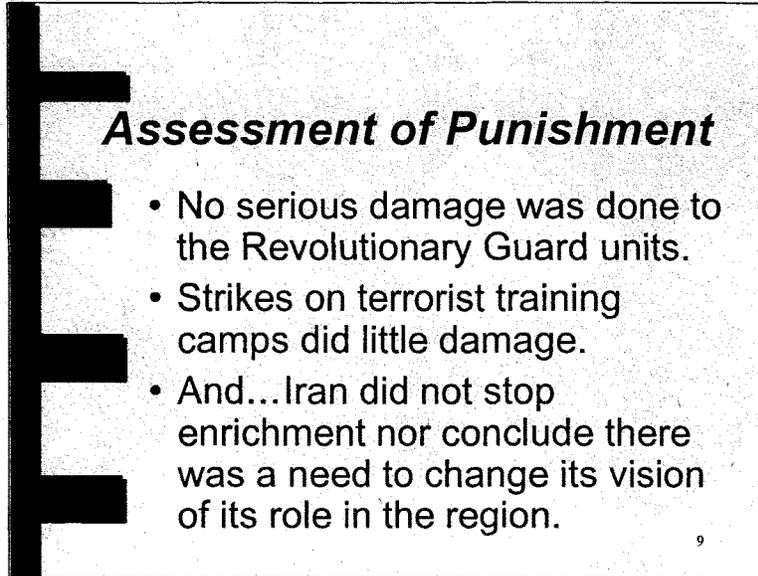
...and they are widely separated.

The IRGC is probably only behind North Korea in protecting its ground forces against attack.



If Iran is going to be punished for supporting terrorism, terrorist training camps would seem to be logical targets.

The problem with these camps, as with others the United States has attacked, they are low infrastructure and low density. They are not very good targets.

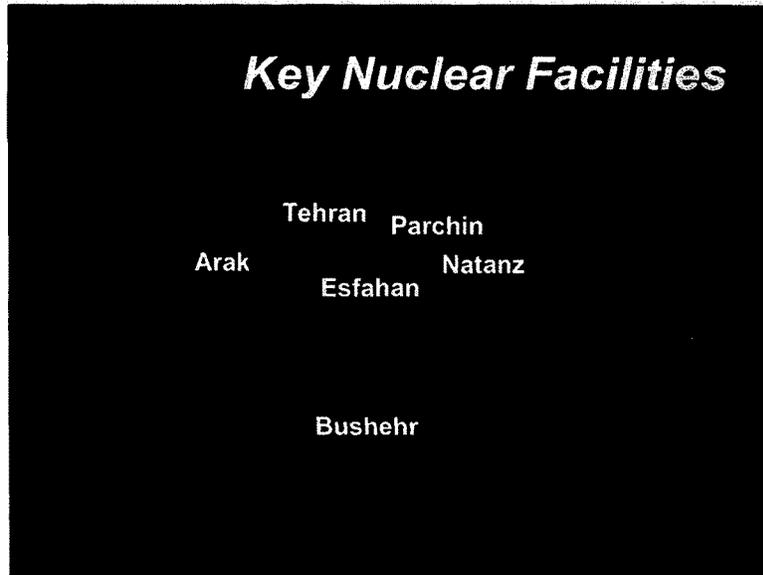


Assessment of Punishment

- No serious damage was done to the Revolutionary Guard units.
- Strikes on terrorist training camps did little damage.
- And... Iran did not stop enrichment nor conclude there was a need to change its vision of its role in the region.

9

If the United States launches punishment attacks against, how well do we do?

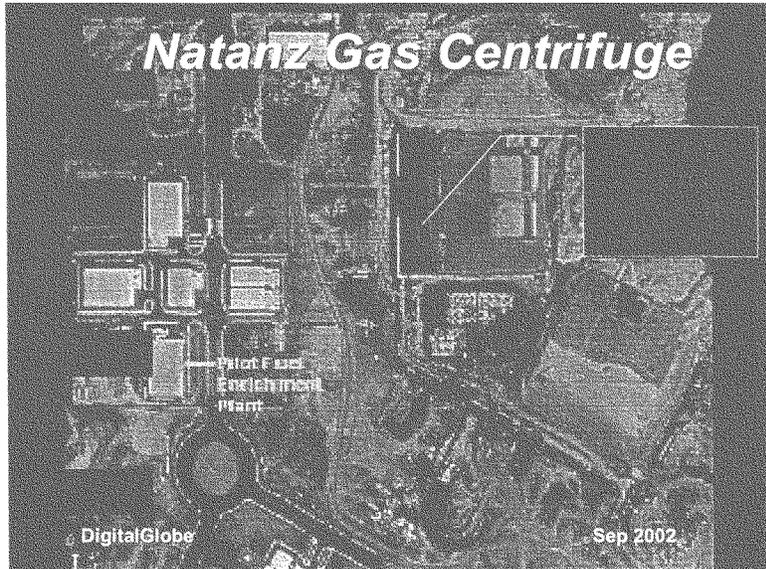


Can we set back the nuclear program?

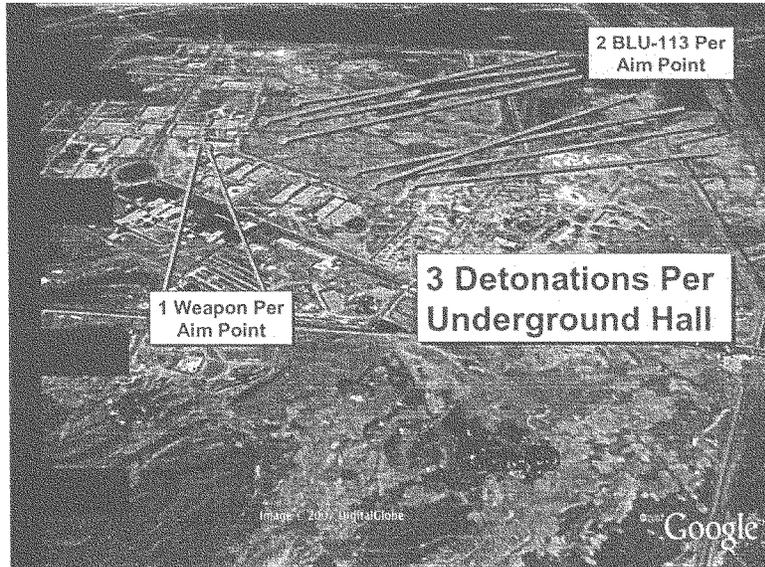
There are six key nuclear facilities that would be considered targets in a strike on the program.



Key to understanding our capability to set back the nuclear program is understanding the capabilities of the primary weapon against deep targets. This is the conventional BLU113.

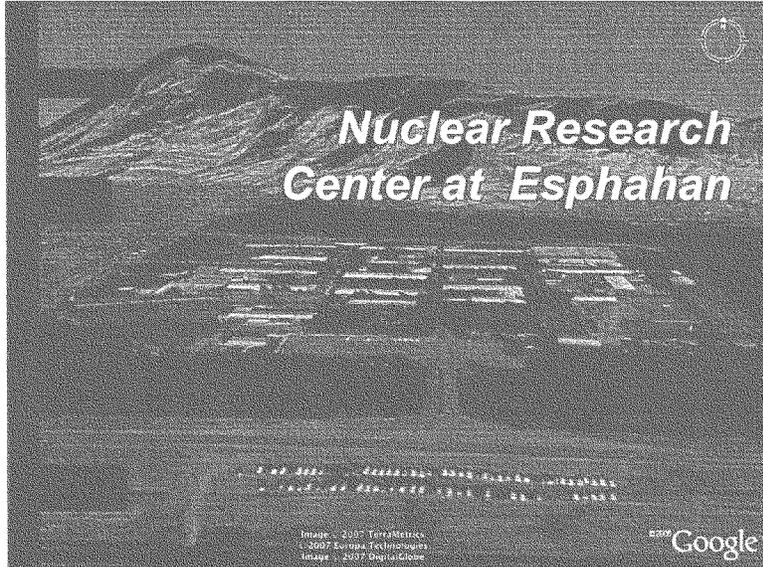


On top of everyone's list of targets is the Natanz Gas Centrifuge Plant. This overhead is from five years ago and shows the two centrifuge halls before they were buried under 2 meters of concrete and 18 meters of soil. That's over 60 feet of protection.

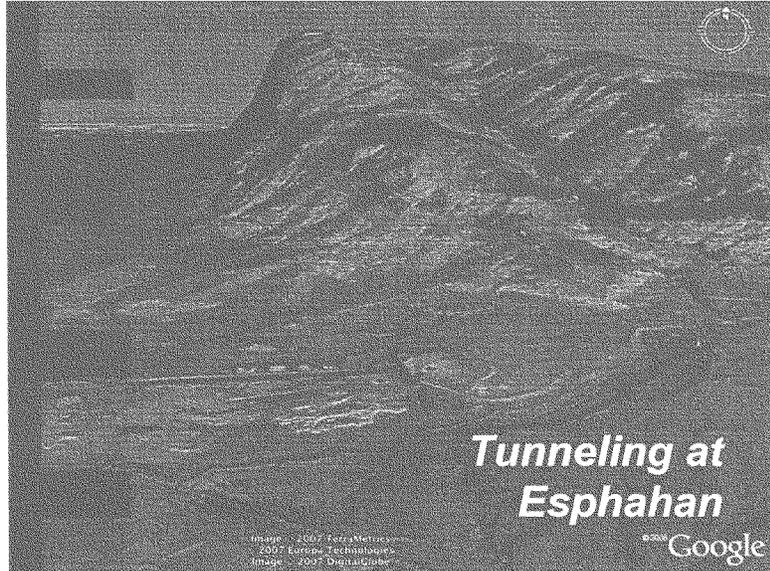


This is the way the facility looks now.

It's a tough target. You can see my estimate of the number of attacks it would take to be 80% confident of destroying the two halls. Each aim point would require two weapons, the second following into the crater of the first.



The second most important target is the Nuclear Research Center at Esphahan.

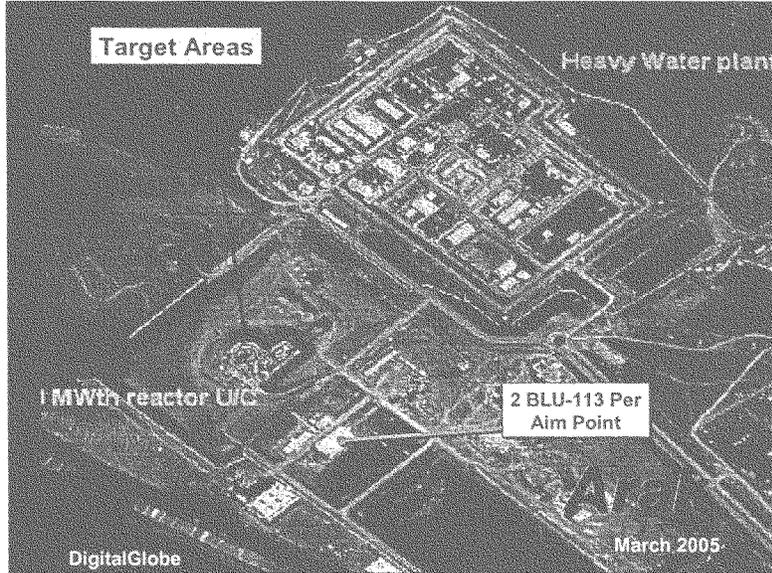


We have seen tunneling at Esphahan, an alternative to the dig-and-fill method first used at Natanz. Probably supported with North Korean equipment, we see more and more tunneling. The targets become more and more difficult.

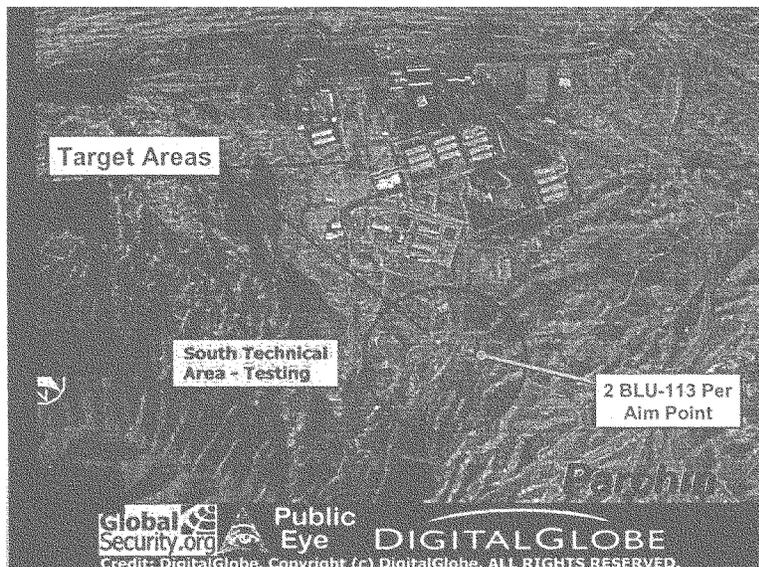


Here is the kind of attack that would be required at Esphahan.

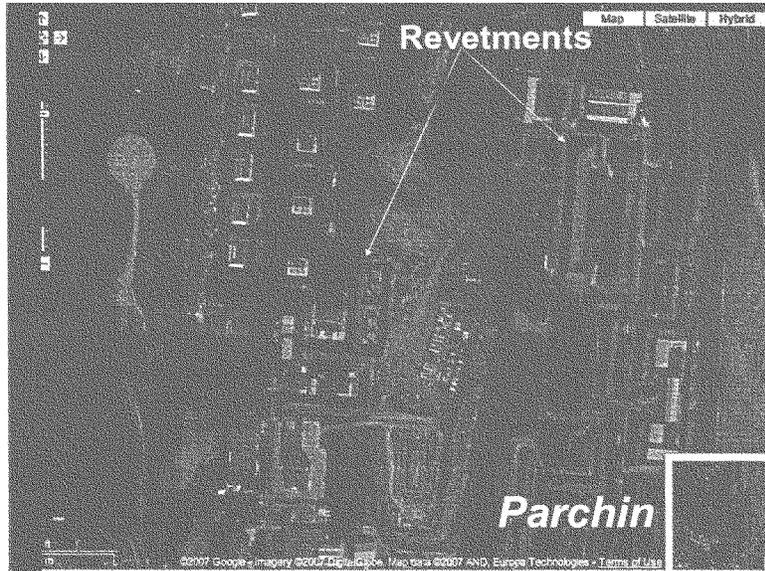
We can close the tunnel entrance, but if we do not know which direction it goes into the mountain, it becomes extremely difficult to destroy what's inside. This is where nuclear weapons might come into targeting, but that is another story.



The heavy water plant at Arak would be on the target list. There is evidence of tunneling here also.

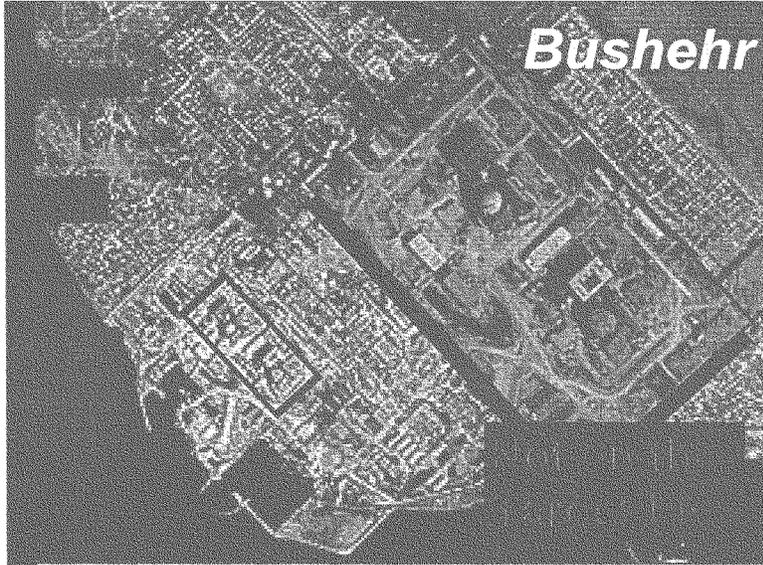


Finally, the weapons and missile test facility at Parchin would be on the list. Again, we have seen more tunneling.



Actually, an interesting footnote is that the facilities in Parchin are better protected than any of the facilities around the other nuclear sites. Here you see buildings and facilities inside heavy revetments.

I suspect some of this hardening is due to the chemical weapons program; I will come to that later.



The long-delayed, Russian-built power plant at Bushehr would most likely not be on the target list. It's not key to the nuclear program. No reason to kill Russians.



Assessment of the Strike on Nuclear Facilities

- Three to five years of construction was destroyed
- The effect on the nuclear program is unknown:
 - Could set it back
 - Could cause acceleration

21

Because we know how long the facilities took to construct, we can be fairly specific about how much facility damage we could do.

We are far from certain, however, about the impact on the nuclear program.

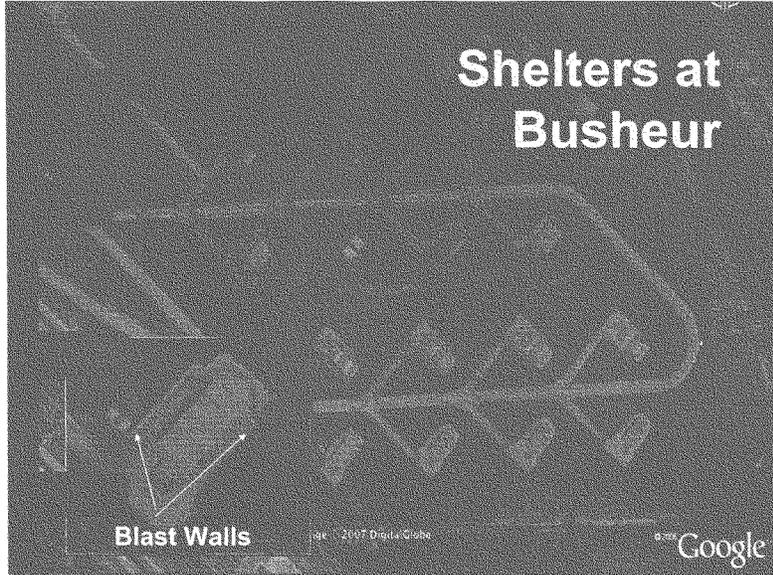
As a teacher of strategy, I would always urge caution when a military option has such uncertainty.



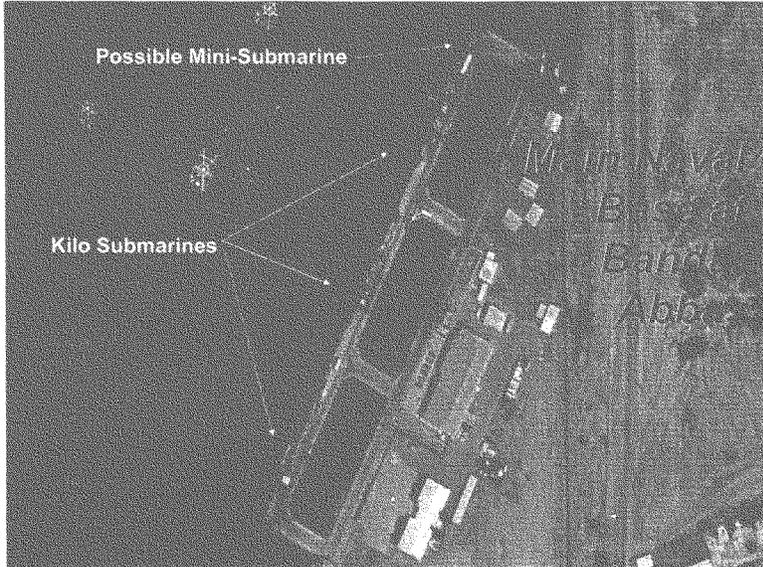
Israel argues that if you meet a bear in the woods, you should not just aim to wound it.

A strong military argument can be made (and will be made) that if we are going to strike Iran we must also strike its capability to retaliate. It would be foolish to do otherwise the argument will go.

Iran has a limited air force capability, it should be attacked.

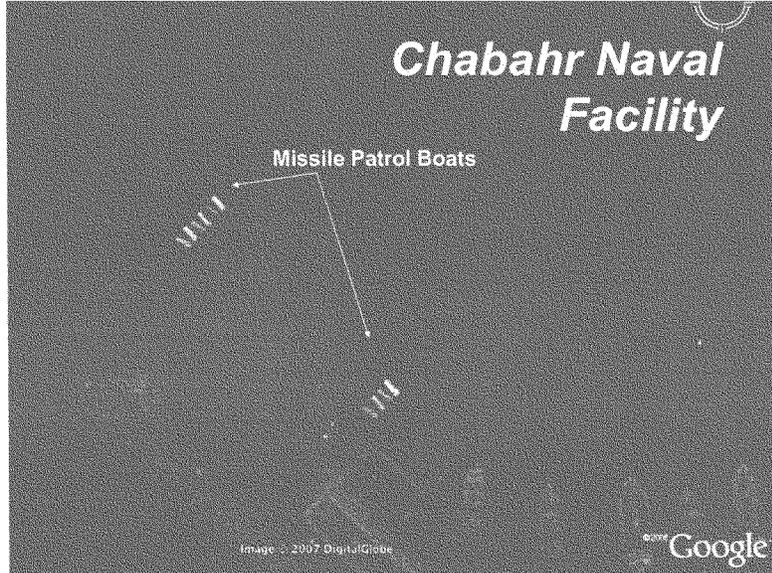


Like the Revolutionary Guard, the aircraft are sheltered against air attack.



On the list of retaliatory capabilities to be destroyed would be the limited naval assets.

You see here the three Russian supplied Kilo submarines and possible a mini-sub of Iranian construction. They would be hit.



The missile patrol boats would be struck.



It would be important to destroy as many as possible of the anti-ship missiles the Iranians have along the Gulf.



Iran has the older Silkworm missiles as well as the more modern C-805, the type used by Hezbollah against an Israeli ship.



The missiles are bunkered for storage. When they are moved from storage, they go into firing positions in revetments.



Certainly we would want to strike the medium range Shaab-3 missiles. Some press reports indicate a portion of the missiles are deployed into the same general firing location the Iranians used during the war with Iraq.

Mobile missile are a difficult target.

At the end of the presentation, I'll come back to the missile threat.

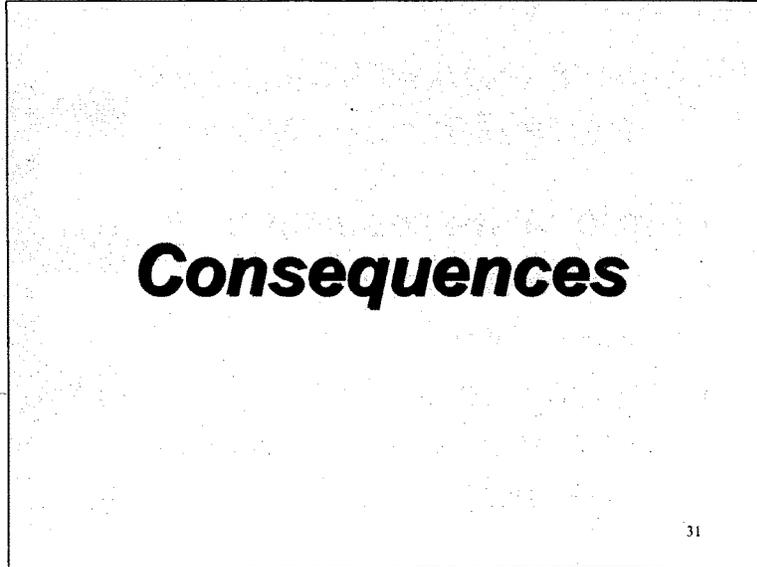
Assessment of the Strike on Retaliation Capabilities

- Iranian combat aircraft were mostly destroyed
- Large naval vessels destroyed
- Capabilities remaining:
 - Small boats
 - Terrorists
 - Chemical capabilities
 - Some missiles

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How well did we do?*

*For additional arguments on preemption: Sam Gardiner, "Et Maintenant en Avant: Preemption and the Planning for Iran," Syracuse Law Review, Volume 57, Number 3, 2007, pp. 443-456.



We often forget the two-sided nature of war? How will the Iranians react?

***Possible Iranian Reactions
to the Military Options***

- Little or no response
- Low DNA violent responses.
- Broad and violent response against US and Israeli interests

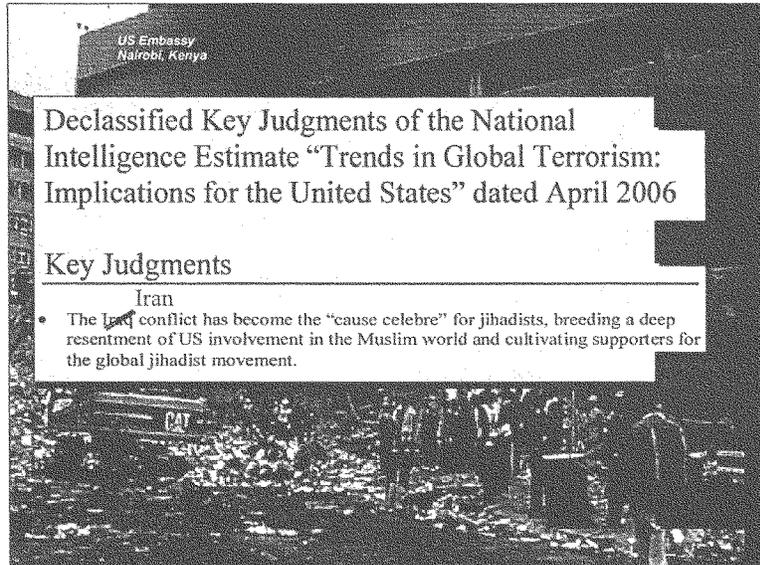
Iran has a range of possible reactions.

Although I don't believe Iran will remain passive after a strike, it is instructive to examine what can happen if Iran does nothing.*

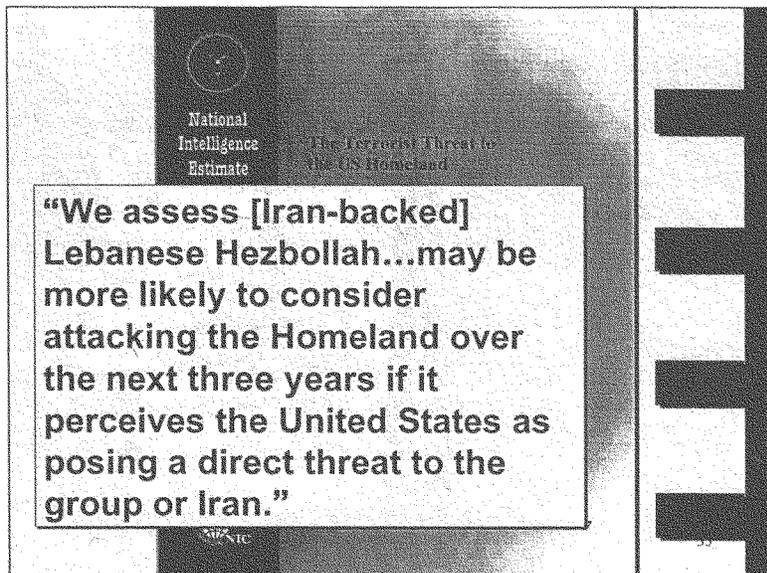
I've called the second category of response "low DNA." Iran responds but keeps its connections to the attacks as muted as possible.

Finally, Iran could choose a violent response to US and Israeli interests.

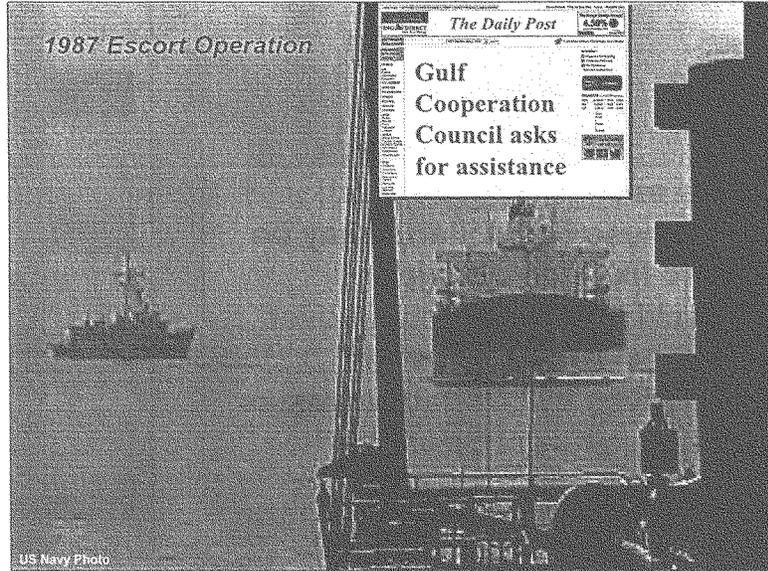
*See Sam Gardiner, *General You Have the Advantage of Time: Iran's Response to the US Military Option*, British American Security Information Council, London, February 2007.



Again, with little or no retaliation from Iran, the National Intelligence Estimate would suggest more global resentment of the United States and cultivating supporters.



Another National Intelligence Estimate more directly makes the connection to attacks on the Homeland by Hezbollah.

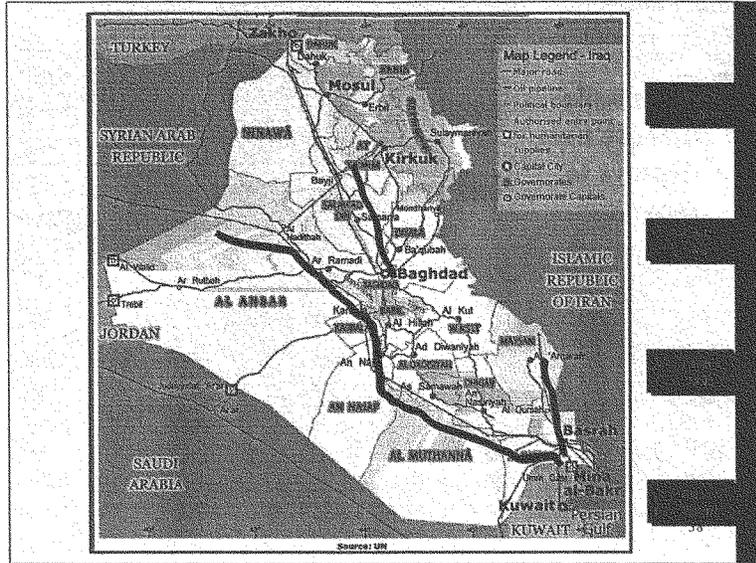


Again, with little or no retaliation by Iran, military forces in the region will be expanded. The Gulf Cooperation Council has previously told the United States that it would want assistance to keep the flow of oil moving out of the Gulf.

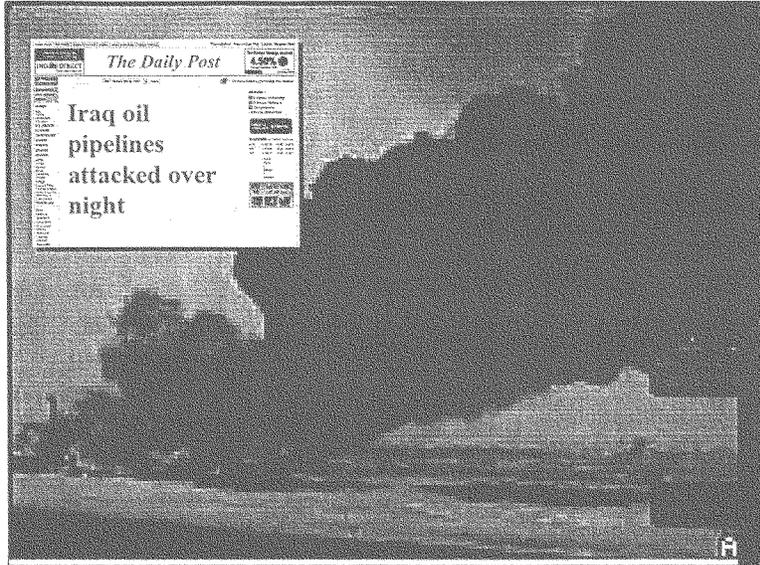
Iran has done nothing but the oil market already spikes because of the growing image of of crisis in the region.



The image gets stronger. Some GCC states and Israel ask for US missile defense deployments.

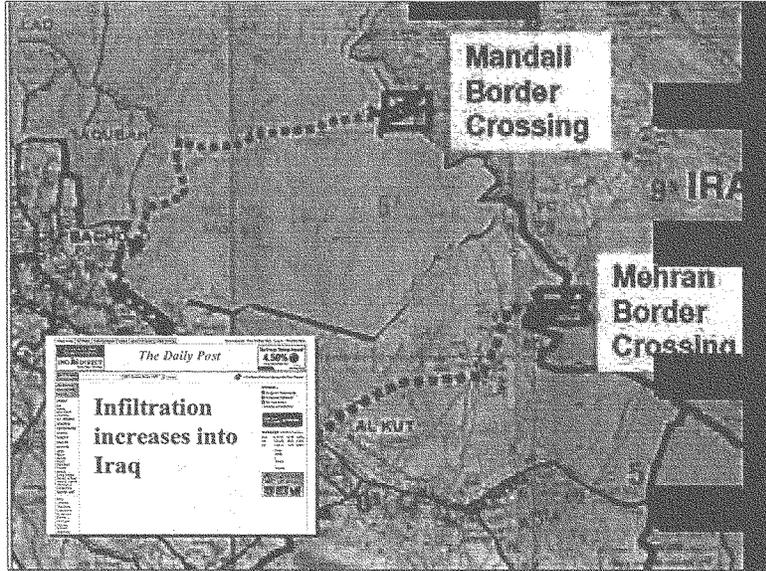


Moving up Iran's escalation ladder, the vulnerable oil pipelines in Iraq offer great possibilities.

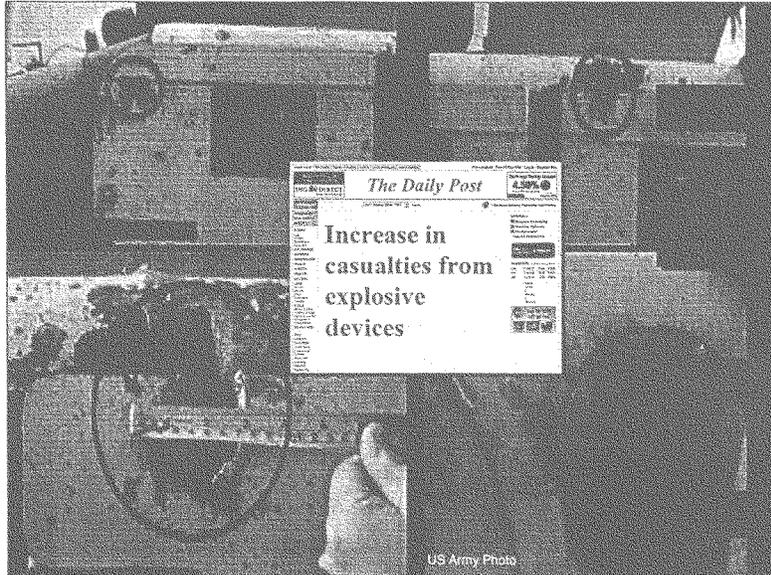


Two million barrels a day come off the market, and it seems as if it is just part of the pattern of violence in Iraq.

The attack is actually good economics for Iran. The oil it is selling the world is now more valuable, and the United States suffers a consequence.



Slowly, Iran could send more members of its Revolutionary Guard into Iraq along with more weapons.

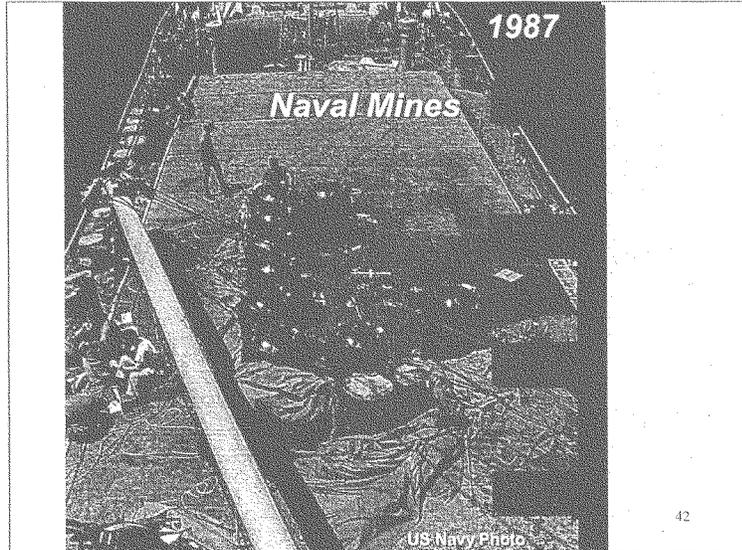


Maybe there is some evidence that Iran is behind the increased violence, but it is not clear the government is behind it.

It is possible for Iran to benefit from a US strike with little or no reaction.

Here is the profound point. Rather than weakening Iran, a strike can strengthen both the regime and its position in the world.

I have seen war games in which the team playing the Iranian leadership discusses how they could get the United States to attack them.

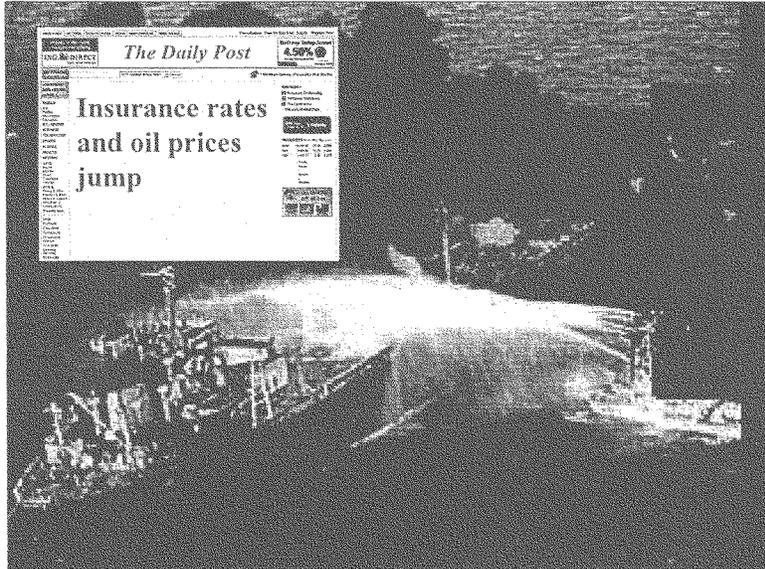


We tend to think of the military aspects of a strike and the Iranian reaction in terms of a short period of time. As I have suggested, that is not in Iran's interest.

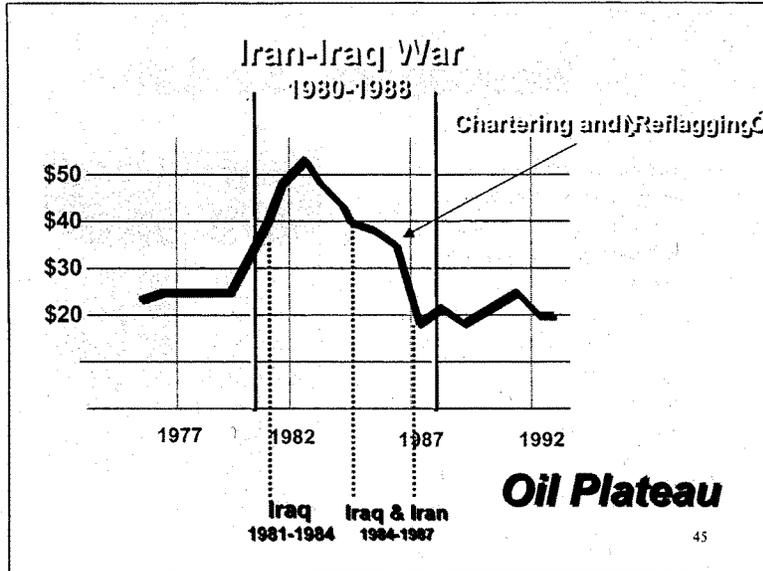
We could begin to see a few mines floating in the Gulf.



We could see Iran using very small craft to attack tankers.



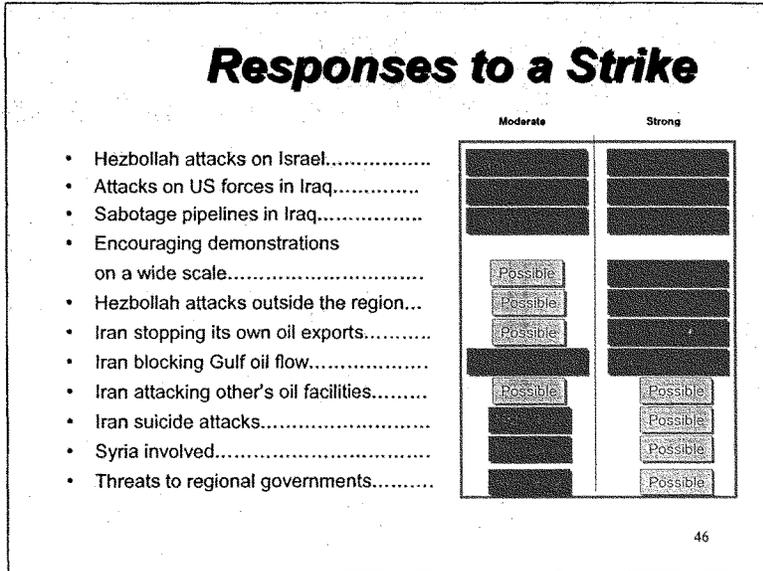
We might even see a tanker or two seriously damaged.



Rather than seeing a spike in oil, we could see an oil plateau.

Some oil company executives are saying \$200/barrel if the United States were to attack Iran. A recent war game concluded \$5 per gallon gasoline and major economic consequences.

We might see a price line in the form we did during the Iran-Iraq war.



Iran will be under pressure at home to respond. Even after an expanded strike by the United States on Iranian retaliatory capabilities, there are a wide range of options.

Israel is important. Even if Israel had no part in the strike, Iran will call it a US/Israeli attack. Israel will become a target.

The United States will become a target.

What you see unfolding here is the escalation ladder to a greater Middle East War.

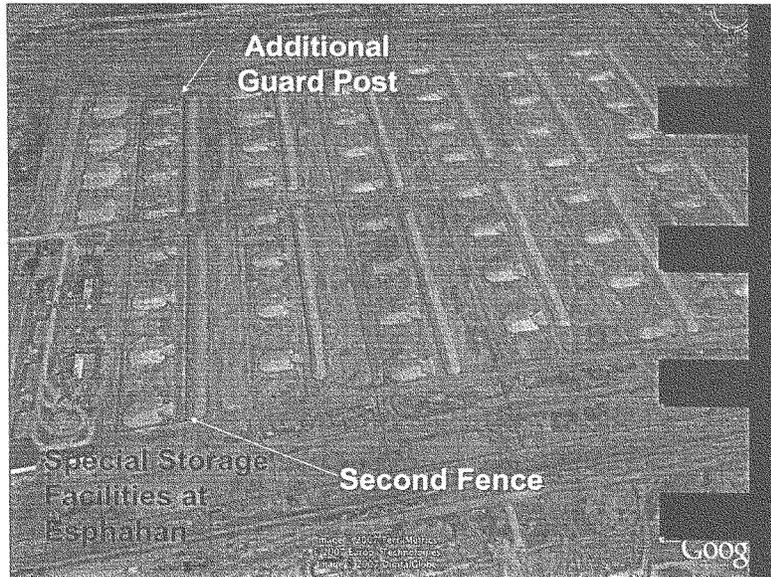


We need to remember. Iran already has WMD. Iran has a major chemical weapons capability and often conducts chemical weapons exercises.

Iran's Chemical Weapons Program

- Types of Chemical Agents:
 - Blister
 - Blood
 - Choking
- Delivery Capability
 - Artillery
 - Bombs

These are the estimates of the agents and delivery methods.

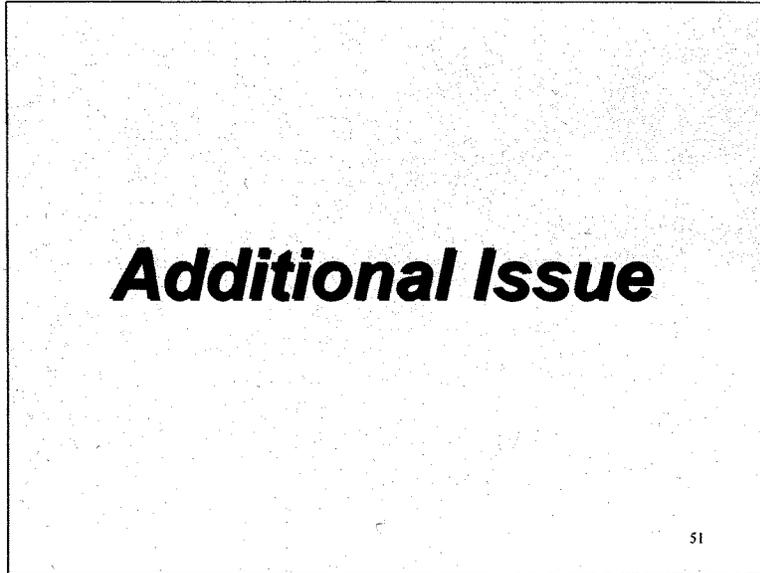


A major chemical plant is located in the vicinity of Esphahan. I believe chemical weapons are stored in this facility near the air base there. Eight of the bunkers have special security, a kind of security I see no other place in Iran.

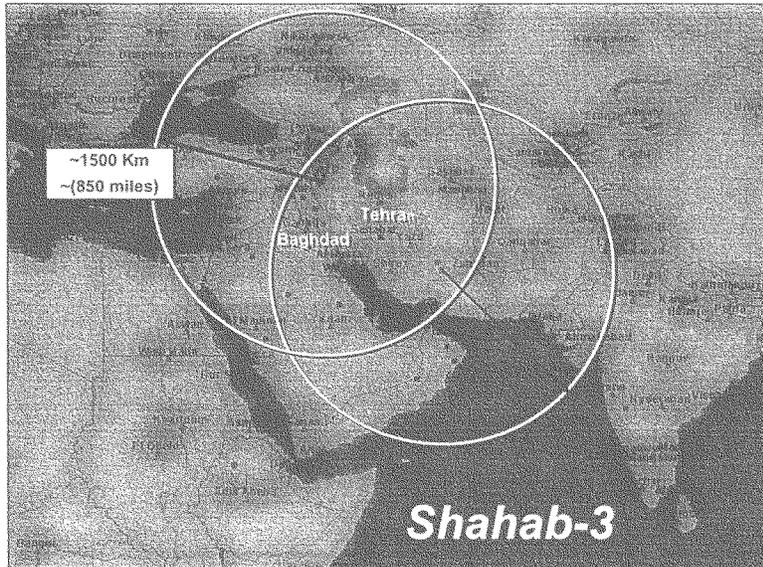


All of this brings me back to where I started. After one looks at the challenge and response cycle, it is very easy to see how the smallest of US military options could eventually bring us to an objective of regime change and a major war in the Middle East.

As a senior player said to me in a recent war game, I can see how the President will have no choice after this thing gets started.



I would like to conclude with a separate but related issue.



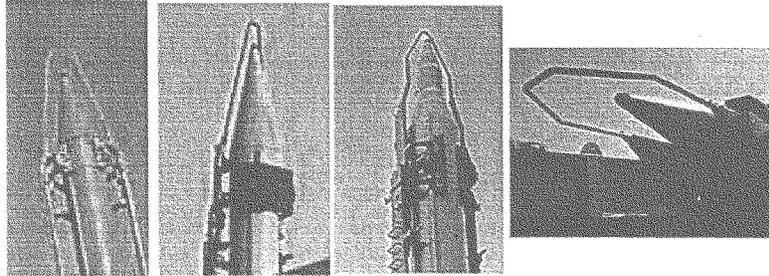
We are often shown this kind of range chart for Iranian missile, specifically the Shahab 3.

The argument unfolds. Iran can now already strike a NATO country. In a few years it will be able to strike the center of Europe, and in a few years after that its missiles will be able to reach the United States.

The consequence is the proposal for two missile defense sites in Europe. The consequence is a growing and serious tension with the Russians.

I urge caution when you see these kinds of projections of Iranian missile capabilities.

Nose Cone and Guard



Source: Bruce H. Schumaker
Berlin, March 27, 2006

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The Iranians exaggerate technology and capabilities. The Shahab 3 is an important case in point.

Six different missile versions have been seen in the September parades. Here are pictures of four different erector front-end designs. This kind of variation is not found in a major operational system.

Iran has conducted 10 launches since 1998 with what appears to be a 30% failure rate.

The erector launcher is modified oil equipment.

The announced range and payload are exaggerated.

Despite the announcement that the missile was deployed with the armed forces in 2003, the evidence is that this is not an operational missile.

The Iranians have announced this is indigenous production, that is probably not true. They have gotten assistance from North Korea and maybe Russia.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you very much, Colonel.

Our next witness is Dr. Paul Pillar, who served for 28 years in the Central Intelligence Agency, including as National Intelligence Officer for the Near East and South Asia from 2000 to 2005, and as Deputy Director of the CIA Counterterrorism Center. He holds a Master's degree and a Ph.D. from Princeton University, and currently serves as a visiting professor of the Security Studies Program at Georgetown University.

Mr. Pillar.

STATEMENT OF PAUL PILLAR, PH.D., FORMER NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE OFFICER FOR THE NEAR EAST AND SOUTH ASIA FROM 2000 TO 2005 AND DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE CIA COUNTERTERRORISM CENTER

Mr. PILLAR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee.

As Mr. Shays correctly noted in his opening comments, no one can accurately predict exactly what the consequences of any U.S. military strike on Iran would be. But in my judgment, there are good grounds for assessing that the risk of major damage to U.S. interests from any such action are substantial and that the probability that such damage would occur is high.

I am going to hit highlights from my written statement in four areas. The first is the likely Iranian regime's response. A U.S. attack probably would make acquisition of nuclear weapon capability appear all the more attractive and even necessary to Iranian leaders and would motivate them to work even more assiduously to acquire such a capability sooner rather than later. One of the likely principal reasons for Iranian interest in such a weapons capability is as a deterrent against external threats, which in Iranian eyes include first and foremost the United States. A U.S. military attack therefore would be for Iranians the most dramatic possible demonstration of a need for such a deterrent. An instructive lesson, in addition to what Colonel Wilkerson mentioned about World War II, was Iraq's response to the Israeli air strike in 1981 that destroyed the Iraqi nuclear reactor of Osirak. That response was not to give up nuclear efforts but to redouble them.

Iranians, as you mentioned, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Shays mentioned as well, would consider any military attack on their territory as an act of war, and they would respond in times and places of their own choosing. Colonel Gardiner has already covered a whole range of plausible possibilities. I would just highlight two in particular. One would be responding inside Iraq where Iran over the past 4 years has assiduously cultivated influence with a wide variety of Iraqi groups. So far, Iran has not fully exploited its position in Iraq to make maximum trouble for the United States. But following a U.S. military attack on Iran, Iran would have less reason than it does now to exercise any restraint at all. The other likely form of asymmetric Iranian response would be international terrorists, including possibly attacks to the U.S. homeland as well as against U.S. targets overseas. Iran retains a formidable terrorist capability in the form of its own state agents, as well as the help from clients such as Lebanese Hezbollah. In recent years, it has held that capability mostly in reserve. But a U.S. military strike

against the Iranian homeland would be just the sort of contingency for which this reserve capability has been retained.

As for other political consequences inside Iran, any U.S. military strike would be a boon to an Iranian hardliner such as President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, whose political strength rests in large part on a message of threat from, and confrontation with, the United States. A U.S. attack would also make it substantially more difficult for Iranian leaders of any political strength to do anything that could be interpreted as a concession or a positive gesture toward the United States.

And I might add finally that an attack could also be expected to affect long-term attitudes of almost all Iranians. Just as Iranians still today, more than half a century later, refer resentfully to the U.S.-instigated coup that overthrew a populous Iranian prime minister in 1953, a military attack, which of course would be an even more open and violent act of hostility, would be a new source of long-term resentment helping to poison relations between Iran and Washington for generations.

Turning to the surrounding region and repercussions that would extend beyond the Middle East to the rest of the world, most governments in the Middle East would oppose U.S. military action against Iran, both in their public rhetoric and in their privately exposed sentiment. The Gulf Arabs, for example, do not focus their attention on the distant possibility of an Iranian nuclear weapon. Iran has conventional superiority over them anyway. They worry more about such things as resistance among their own Shia minorities. And they would also have to worry about how their conspicuous ties with the United States would work to their disadvantage in the event of another intensely unpopular U.S. military operation in the region.

And intensely popular indeed would be not just in the Gulf but elsewhere through the Middle East. Like the war in Iraq, it would be widely viewed by many people in the region as an assault by the United States, the leader of Judeo-Christian West, against Muslims. This perspective toward the Iraq war would increase the likelihood that an attack on Iran would be seen similarly.

When you look at repercussions going beyond the Middle East, again a look at the Iraq war gives us clues as to the likely impact of an attack on Iran. Much of the world would view such an attack, like they view the operation of Iraq, as an unprovoked and unjustified exertion of raw power by the world's only super power. And given particularly the unhappy experience we had with allegations of weapons programs in Iraq, as well as U.S. tolerance of nuclear weapons in the hands of ourselves and our allies, many would see the U.S. action as a blow not against proliferation of weapons, but against a Muslim country with a regime that Washington doesn't happen to like. So the dominant global consequence in my judgment, especially in the broader Muslim world, would be an increase in anti-Americanism which has been documented in so many polls so far over the last 4 or 5 years with regard to the impact of the Iraq war. Another U.S. military offensive in the Middle East would strengthen and lengthen this unfortunate trend.

All of this is speculative and hypothetical, of course, but in weighing the risks of an action as drastic as a military attack on

another state, we cannot afford to limit ourselves to only what is readily measurable. Some of the consequences of such an action would be no less serious and no less detrimental to U.S. interests, even if they can only be inferred and not forecast with certainty and precision. And in that regard, I would note that any hope for benefit of such action also cannot be forecast with certainty or precision either.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Pillar follows:]

Regional and Global Consequences of U.S. Military Action in Iran

**Statement to the
Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs
Committee on Government Reform and Oversight
House of Representatives
14 November 2007**

Paul R. Pillar
Georgetown University

No one can accurately predict the exact consequences of any U.S. military strike or offensive against Iran. But there are good grounds for assessing the risks of any such action. Based on what we know about Iran, the Middle East, and perceptions of the United States in that region and around the world, the risks of major damage to U.S. interests from such action are substantial, and the probability that such damage would occur is high. Any contemplation of military action must fully weigh all of these risks, not just a postulated risk of what Iran conceivably might do in the absence of U.S. military action.

Iranian Responses

I will leave to other witnesses the issue of what physical impact a U.S. military strike could have on the Iranian nuclear program. As for the impact on Iranian decision-making on nuclear matters, a U.S. attack likely would make acquisition of a nuclear weapons capability appear all the more attractive and necessary to Iranian leaders, and would motivate them to work even more assiduously to acquire such a capability sooner rather than later. Current views within the Iranian regime about nuclear weapons probably are not uniform, and many decisions—which still could go in different directions—have yet to be taken in Tehran before Iran came to possess a nuclear weapon. A likely principal reason for any Iranian interest in nuclear weapons, however, is as a deterrent against external threats, which in Iranian eyes includes primarily the United States. A U.S. military attack would be, for Iranians, the most dramatic possible demonstration of the need for such a deterrent.

An instructive lesson is Iraq's response to the Israeli airstrike in 1981 that destroyed the Iraqi nuclear reactor at Osirak. Far from giving up its nuclear activities, Saddam Hussein's regime redoubled them, as well as switching from a plutonium-based to a uranium-based program for producing fissile material. The world saw after Operation Desert Storm how much progress Iraq had made in developing a nuclear weapon in the ensuing decade. Iranian leaders, seeing the difficulties that western powers have had in fully discerning the Iraqi nuclear efforts as well as their own program, would have good reason for believing that they could continue such a program clandestinely.

Some discussion in the United States of possible military action against the Iranian nuclear program describes such action as an airstrike rather than the initiation of a

war. In gauging likely Iranian responses, however, what matters is not American labeling but instead Iranian perceptions. Iranians would consider any action aimed at crippling Iranian nuclear capabilities as an act of war—just as Americans considered the Japanese action aimed at crippling U.S. naval capabilities in the Pacific in 1941 as an act of war and not just an “airstrike.” As an act of war, Tehran could be expected to respond appropriately, in ways of its own choosing, and at times and places of its own choosing.

In selecting their responses, Iranian leaders would be acutely aware of Iran’s military inferiority to the United States, even while taking into account geographic advantages it may have in the Persian Gulf region. The most likely Iranian responses would be unconventional actions that often come under the heading of “asymmetric warfare.” Iraq would be an especially attractive theater for responding. Since Saddam’s overthrow, Iran has assiduously sought to expand its influence throughout Iraq by cultivating relations with, and providing material support to, a variety of Iraqi groups. So far, Iran has not exploited its position in Iraq to make maximum trouble for the United States; despite Iran’s heavy involvement in Iraq, it is hard to attribute any one act of violence to Iranian instigation or direction. Following a U.S. military attack on Iran, Tehran would have far less reason to exercise restraint. Even though Iran does not have an interest in escalating and unending disorder in Iraq, if already attacked it would have much more reason to use the position it has built in Iraq to make life more miserable for U.S. forces than it is now.

The other principal form of asymmetric Iranian response would be international terrorism, including possibly attacks within the U.S. homeland as well as against U.S. targets overseas. Iran retains a formidable terrorist capability, including its own state agents and clients such as Lebanese Hizballah. In recent years it has held that capability mostly in reserve; the last terrorist attack against Americans in which an Iranian hand has been clearly established was the bombing of the military barracks at Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia in 1996. A U.S. military strike against Iran would be just the sort of contingency for which this reserve capability has been retained. The Khobar episode—in which it took years for investigators to establish the Iranian connection, and for which Iran escaped any forceful retaliation—would encourage Iranian decision-makers to believe that they could use terrorism to punish the United States without their hand being apparent. They might even support or instigate attacks by Sunni jihadists, despite the ideological divide that separates them from the Iranian regime and despite the region-wide intensification of sectarian sentiment that the civil war in Iraq has fostered. Confrontation with the United States has been the principal stimulus for whatever dealings Tehran has had with the jihadists; an open U.S.-Iranian military clash would make this stimulus even stronger.

Other Effects in Iran

Any U.S. military strike would be a political boon to Iranian hardliners such as President Ahmadinejad, whose political strength rests in large part on a message of threat from, and confrontation with, the United States. The confirmation of that message that an attack would provide, in addition to a more general rally-around-the-flag effect, would distract attention from the hardliners’ poor economic performance and reduce the chance of favorable political change in Tehran. A U.S. attack also would make it substantially more difficult for Iranian leaders of any political stripe to do anything that could be

interpreted as a concession, or a positive gesture, toward the United States. This would be little different from how politics would work here in the United States if Iran attacked us, which would make it extremely difficult for any American political leader to do or say anything that could be interpreted as a favorable gesture toward Iran.

An attack also could be expected to affect long-term attitudes of almost all Iranians. An instructive example is how the events in Iran of 1953, in which a U.S.-instigated coup removed the populist prime minister Mossadegh, still rankle many Iranians more than half a century later. This resentment persists regardless of how any Iranians feel about Mossadegh himself, or how much they understand the issues that were in play in 1953. A military attack, being an open and violent act of hostility that would be even more salient than a clandestinely supported coup, would have even greater potential for creating this kind of long-term resentment. It would become, for generations to come, the first thing many Iranians think of when thinking of the United States. As such, it would help to poison relations between Tehran and Washington for generations, even if there were substantial change from the current distribution of power inside Iran.

Iran's oil resources and role in the oil market must be considered in any assessment of the risks of military operations against Iran. Iran's dependence on oil revenues and the global nature of the oil market would make it difficult for Tehran to try to use oil as a political weapon in direct retaliation against the United States. The greater risk involves possible disruptions in export of oil from the Persian Gulf as a byproduct of a U.S.-Iranian military clash, especially a clash that escalates beyond the initial U.S. attack because of Iranian military responses against U.S. forces in the Gulf or the more general reasons that many wars escalate well beyond initial intentions. If military operations interrupted Iran's own exports of oil, Tehran would feel less restrained in taking advantage of its geographic position next to the Persian Gulf and Strait of Hormuz to disrupt, at least temporarily, the exports of Arab oil producers. There thus is substantial risk—against the backdrop of the recent demand-driven surge in oil prices—for an even greater additional surge driven by disruption of supplies. Even without direct physical disruption of oil exports, the market's anxiety about possible consequences of U.S.-Iranian combat probably would cause at least a short-term spike in prices.

Middle Eastern Perspectives

Most governments in the Middle East would oppose U.S. military action against Iran, in both their public rhetoric and their privately expressed sentiments. For the oil producers on the south side of the Persian Gulf, concern about disruption of their own oil exports would be only part of the reason. Even though the Gulf Arabs have their own causes for concern about their more populous and more powerful neighbor Iran, they have sought to manage the associated security challenges through means other than military force or the threat of it. Saudi Arabia has used rapprochement with Tehran as its principal tool for dealing with its Iran-related concerns over the last couple of decades. Saudi Arabia's foot-dragging in cooperating with the investigation into the Khobar Towers bombing probably was motivated in part by a desire to keep its relationship with Tehran on an even keel and not give the United States a reason to attack Iran.

The Gulf Arabs' security concerns are not focused on the distant possibility of a nuclear weapon in the hands of Iran, which already is militarily superior to them on a

conventional level anyway. The Sunni rulers of the Gulf states worry more about possible restiveness among their own Shia minorities (a majority in Bahrain) and how a clash with predominantly Shia Iran might stir up these populations. The Gulf states also have to worry about how their conspicuous ties with the United States (especially the highly visible military presence in Qatar and Bahrain) would work to their disadvantage in the event of another intensely unpopular U.S. military operation in the region.

Intensely unpopular it would be, not only in the Persian Gulf region but throughout the Middle East. On this and several other counts, the best basis for estimating the broader consequences of a U.S. attack on Iran is to look at the consequences of the U.S. attack on Iraq. That operation too was deeply disliked throughout the region, even before the Iraqi insurgency developed and the occupation grew sour. The motives of the United States were, and still are, mistrusted. Most Middle Easterners do not believe that the operation was about democracy (which the United States has supported at best inconsistently in the region) or weapons of mass destruction (which were not found) or terrorism (which the war in Iraq has increased, not decreased). Instead, they tend to view the U.S. operation as anti-Muslim. This perspective toward the Iraq war increases the likelihood that most people in the region would view an attack on Iran in similar terms. They would interpret it not primarily in terms of Arabs versus Persians, or Sunni versus Shia, much less in the U.S.-preferred terms of moderates versus extremists. They would view it as one more assault by the United States—the leader of the Judeo-Christian West—against Muslims.

Governments in the Middle East would have to shape their policies against the backdrop of this popular sentiment and the more specific security concerns mentioned above. Although it is impossible to project specific decisions and thus specific consequences for U.S. interests, it is likely that visible cooperation with the United States would become politically costlier or riskier than before, and that the net U.S. influence in the region would thus be less than before. Specific, admittedly immeasurable, forms this might take would be greater reluctance to cooperate on counterterrorism or to provide military access rights.

Global Repercussions

Looking again at some of the broad political and diplomatic effects of the Iraq war provides clues regarding likely global consequences of an attack on Iran. Despite any differences between the two military operations (especially if an attack on Iran did not include sustained ground operations), the new attack would be widely viewed—as much of the world has viewed the operation in Iraq—as an unprovoked and unjustified exertion of raw power by the world's only superpower. Given the experience with alleged weapons programs in Iraq, there would be broad skepticism about American claims concerning dangers from Iran's nuclear program. Given U.S. tolerance of nuclear weapons in the hands of itself and its allies, many would see the U.S. action as a blow not against proliferation of weapons but against a Muslim country with a regime that Washington does not happen to like.

European allies would be no more inclined than now to work in close cooperation with the United States on matters related to Iran. They might become less inclined to do so, given how unilateral U.S. military action would disrupt and probably destroy the diplomatic process on which the Europeans had worked for so long. Russia and China,

which have economic and other reasons not to forfeit relations with Tehran, would very likely become less inclined to cooperate even to the modest degree that they have to date and that has made possible two United Nations Security Council resolutions sanctioning Iran over the nuclear issue.

Beyond the allies and the major powers, and especially in the broader Muslim world, the dominant consequence would be an increase in anti-Americanism. Numerous opinion polls over the past five years have documented a substantial increase in antipathy toward the United States. The Iraq war, as the dominant U.S. action during this period, clearly has much to do with this trend in sentiment. Another U.S. military offensive in the Middle East would strengthen and extend this unfortunate trend.

The further consequences of increased anti-Americanism would be twofold. First, as in the Middle East, many governments would find it politically more difficult to cooperate with Washington, especially in publicly visible ways. In some instances other motivations would be sufficient to sustain cooperation despite this political cost, but in others the United States would find it more difficult to get what it wants from foreign partners.

The other follow-on consequence, and potentially the more costly one, would be an increase in extremist sentiment and support for anti-U.S. terrorism, including terrorism having no connection whatever to the Iranian regime. The boost that the Iraq war has given to Islamist terrorism is only partly because the disorder and insurgency in Iraq have made it a training ground and operating base for international terrorism. It also is because outside Iraq, the war has become a propaganda point and recruiting poster for al-Qa'ida and other extremist groups. A U.S. attack on Iran would have the latter effects, even without an occupation and insurgency.

One might ask whether the U.S. standing in much of the Muslim world already has sunk so low that a new military action would not make an appreciable difference. Even small increments in anti-Americanism, however, can have major effects, particularly with regard to boosting extremism and terrorism. Consider, for example, how an attack on Iran might play in Pakistan, Iran's currently volatile neighbor to the east and like it, a large non-Arab Muslim country. Even if the new attack were to add only one percentage point to existing anti-American sentiment, in a country of 165 million that would represent more than a million and a half people. Suppose that of those, only a tenth were sufficiently angry to become favorably inclined toward extremist groups. Suppose further that of those favorably inclined toward extremist groups only a tenth would actually work on the groups' behalf, and that of those willing to work on their behalf only a tenth would become terrorists themselves. All of these suppositions may be conservative, but they still would yield about 1,600 new terrorists, with easy access to a terrorist career via al-Qa'ida and other elements ensconced in the frontier areas of northwest Pakistan.

All of this is speculative and hypothetical, of course. But in weighing the risks of an action as drastic as a military attack on another state, we cannot afford to limit ourselves only to what is readily measurable. Some of the consequences of such an action would be no less serious and no less detrimental to U.S. interests even if they can only be inferred and not forecast with certainty and precision. Any hoped-for benefits of such action cannot be forecast with certainty and precision either.

The Washington Post

What to Ask Before the Next War

Don't Let the People Who Brought Us Iraq Define the Questions

By Paul R. Pillar
Sunday, February 4, 2007; B07

Imagine that the famously flawed intelligence judgments about Iraq's programs to develop unconventional weapons had been correct. What difference would that have made to the American effort in Iraq?

The Bush administration would have had fewer rhetorical difficulties in defending its decision to go to war, even though any discoveries of weapons programs would have confirmed nothing about the use to which Saddam Hussein might someday have put such weapons or whether Iraq would eventually have acquired nuclear weapons.

But the war itself would be the same agonizing ordeal. An insurgency driven by motives having nothing to do with weapons of mass destruction and little to do with Hussein would still be going on.

Iraq's sectarian divisions and intolerant political culture would still have pushed it into civil war. Iraq would still have become the latest and biggest jihad, winning recruits and donors for al-Qaeda and boosting the militant Islamic movement worldwide. And the United States would still be suffering the same drain of blood and treasure in Iraq and most of the same damage to its global standing and relationships.

This thought experiment highlights how problems with the policy process (or, rather, the lack of a process) that led the United States into the Iraq quagmire went beyond the administration's manipulation of intelligence on weapons programs and terrorist relationships. The administration so successfully shaped the policy question around its chosen selling points involving these two issues that what passed for a national debate gave little attention to important questions about the likely nature and consequences of a war. The debate was largely reduced to contemplating the terms of a pseudo-syllogism: Hussein has weapons of mass destruction; Hussein supports terrorism; therefore, we must use force to remove Hussein.

Now, an accelerating debate about Iran and its nuclear program shows signs of the same dangerous reductionism. Some argue for an airstrike against Iranian nuclear facilities sooner rather than later. Whether the Bush administration will act on such advice in the next two years is uncertain, but it is taking confrontational steps, including augmenting forces in the Persian Gulf and raiding an Iranian consulate, that increase the chance of heightened tension escalating into a military clash.

A long argument over many barely addressed issues would be needed to get from a belief that Iran is seeking nuclear weapons to a conclusion that a military strike, or even policies that increase the risk of U.S.-Iranian hostilities, is advisable. One issue is the uncertainty of the intelligence about Iran's nuclear program, although this is getting some discussion thanks to the recriminations about the intelligence on Iraq.

Other questions that need answering include:

What would be the urgency of taking forceful action, given that the announced estimate is that Iran is still several years from acquiring a nuclear weapon?

How malleable (and how well-defined) are Tehran's intentions, and what changes in Washington's policy might lead Tehran to abandon a weapons program? Even if Tehran's intentions do not change, what other options would impede or slow its nuclear program? If Iran were to acquire nuclear weapons, how would that change its behavior and affect U.S. interests? In particular, why would deterrence, which has kept nuclear peace with other adversaries, not work with Iran?

The likely hardening, concealment and dispersal of Iran's nuclear facilities raise questions about the impact any military strike would have on the program. How much would Iran's nuclear efforts be set back, especially given that bombs are not very good at destroying knowledge and expertise? Would the Iranian response be appreciably different from that of Iraq after Israel bombed its nuclear reactor in 1981 (Iraq redoubled its nuclear efforts while turning to different methods for producing fissile material)?

The most neglected questions concern other consequences of a U.S. strike or any other U.S.-Iranian combat, even if such combat did not lead to a prolonged occupation. How would Tehran respond to an act of war? What terrorism might it launch against the United States? How would it exploit U.S. vulnerabilities next door in Iraq, where it has barely begun to exploit the influence it has assiduously been cultivating? What other military action might it take, with the risk of a wider war in the Persian Gulf?

Other effects concern Iranian politics. How much would the direct assertion of U.S. hostility strengthen Iranian hard-liners, whose policies are partly premised on such hostility? How much would it add to all Iranians' list of historical grievances against the United States and adversely affect relations with future governments?

Broader regional and global ramifications include the impact on the oil market, whether other Middle Eastern nations would be less willing to cooperate with the United States and the prospect of exacerbating the damage the Iraq war already has dealt to U.S. standing worldwide.

Some might argue that the worst case that could ensue from an Iranian nuclear weapon is so bad that it trumps all other considerations. But there is no more reason than there was with Iraq to consider the worst case of only one side of the policy equation. And the worst case that could result from U.S.-Iranian combat is plenty frightening: thousands of

Americans dead from retaliatory terrorist attacks, a broader war in the Persian Gulf, \$150-per-barrel oil, a global recession and more.

That's not the most likely case -- neither is a vision of Iranian-generated mushroom clouds -- but it is plausible that substantial portions of that scenario would materialize.

Avoiding the next military folly in the Middle East requires that the agenda for analysis and debate not be so severely and tendentiously truncated as before Iraq. Not only must proponents of military action not be allowed to manipulate the answers, they also should not be allowed to define the questions.

The writer, a former national intelligence officer for the Near East and South Asia, teaches security studies at Georgetown University.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Doctor.

Our next witness is Mr. Ilan Berman, who is the vice president for policy of the American Foreign Policy Council. He is a member of the Committee on Present Danger and author of, "Tehran Rising: Iran's challenge to the United States." Mr. Berman is a consultant for both the Pentagon and the Central Intelligence Agency. Mr. Berman.

**STATEMENT OF ILAN BERMAN, VICE PRESIDENT, POLICY,
AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY COUNCIL**

Mr. BERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And let me take the opportunity before I start to thank you and to thank Congressman Shays for the opportunity to be here. You have my written statement, and I would like to submit it for the record.

I just want to walk through a couple of points that I made therein. From the outset, I think I should be clear: I am not here to advocate in favor of a military option with regard to Iran. Personally, I think that such an option, if it is attempted, would have tremendous consequences, adverse consequences, for the United States, for American interests and for American allies in the region. In part that is because there are a lot of things that we don't know or can predict, reasonably predict, as Dr. Pillar said. The first is the question of knowledge gaps with regard to the Iranian nuclear program. We know that, over the past two decades, the Iranian regime has placed a premium on building a massive national nuclear endeavor, pursuing both uranium enrichment and plutonium separation. But there is a great deal of actual intelligence that we still don't know about that program. And as a result of that, as a practical matter, this means that the idea of denuclearization, complete elimination of the Iranian nuclear capability simply is not on the table. Rather, the best that we can hope for, the best that we can hope for is to delay and to defer Iran's nuclearization but not to derail that project completely.

The second issue that needs to be taken into account relates to potential responses on the part of the Iranian regime. And we heard from the previous witnesses a rather exhaustive list of what could happen. I would only add my voice to that list and say that, with regard to Iran's capability to project asymmetric harm on U.S. troops and coalition partners, with regard to Iran's ability to increase its support, ratchet up its support for terrorist groups as well as Iran's strategic location atop the Strait of Hormuz, this is a pretty dramatic countermeasure on the part of the Iranian regime that can be harnessed.

The third, and in my estimation the most decisive, counterindication for military action actually has to do with the situation within Iran itself. By all indications, the Iranian regime is wildly unpopular, polling at a very, very low success rate and popularity rate. But the nuclear issue is not. The nuclear issue is actually a very popular issue. And it is in fact a popularity that transcends both ethnic and sectarian lines in Iran. And this means, as a practical matter, that even though this is an issue that has essentially been harnessed by the regime—it is a regime initiative, not a populous initiative—it is one that is both supported by ordinary Iranians and by regime hardliners, although for very different

reasons. And as a result, this means that external action on the part of the United States or another country would be seen as an unacceptable external intrusion. It would harden domestic opinion in support of this program. And it would actually have the practical ancillary effect of strengthening rather than weakening the regime's hold on power, which I think we can all agree is probably not the desired outcome.

But I think it is important to point out here that the elephant in the room is the character of the Iranian regime itself. Nuclear technology is not inherently good or evil. Its ultimate disposition rests upon the character of the regime that will wield it, and what it plans to do with it. And we know that the Islamic Republic is the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism, and its intentions are, to put it plainly, malignant. And this is why the White House, this White House, as well as politicians from both sides of the aisle, have spent a lot of time insisting that one of the world's most dangerous regimes should not be allowed to acquire the world's most dangerous weapon. And, by the way, they are joined by a growing slice of the American public in this viewpoint. The latest poll by Zogby International released just last week suggested that 52 percent of Americans now support the idea of military action to prevent Iran from going nuclear, although the reasons for their conclusion that this is a good idea would vary.

I would point out that there is a number of issues that need to be raised when we think about the ultimate disposition of the military option and about whether or not to take it off the table. Personally, I believe that it cannot be taken off the table for a number of reasons. First of all, because without the credible threat of the use of force, the United States will undermine the other economic and diplomatic strategies that it is currently pursuing. Simply put, Iran is not likely to bend to sanctions if it thinks that all it has to do is weather the sanctions, but then there is nothing else coming down the pike. And as a result, the regime will become convinced that there will be no consequences to its continued intransigence. So this is not a constructive position for us to take.

Without the credible threat of the use of force on the part of the United States, you also have what amounts to a dangerous domino effect that will begin to take shape in the region, indeed is already taking shape in the region, in which a growing number of Iran's neighbors feel compelled to pursue a nuclear program of their own in an effort to counterbalance the emerging Iranian bomb. And the end result of this, I want to be clear, will be not one nuclear Iran but many.

Also, without the credible threat of the use of force, the United States will need to rely upon a deeply flawed deterrence paradigm for dealing with the Iranian regime. This is a paradigm that fails to account, at least in its current state, for communication gaps between Washington and Tehran; fails to account for a lack of understanding of Iranian strategic intentions; and, most of all, fails to account for this new and deeply troubling messianic discourse that is beginning to emerge on the part of at least one segment of the Iranian political system. And I would argue that in particular, all these elements, but that last one in particular makes Iran

undeterrable in the conventional sense of the word, if you are a fan of game theory and deterrence theory like I am.

And the last point here is that, without the credible threat of the use of force on the part of the United States, Iran will soon be able to extend a nuclear umbrella to terrorist groups that it supports. And the practical consequence of this will be a vastly greater reach and wake for groups like Hezbollah and the threat that they and others can pose to America, to American forces, and to American allies. And at the end of the day, it is clear that the military options for dealing with Iran is at best deeply flawed. At worst, it is dangerous. Any calculus of a potential cost, however, I believe, needs to be weighed against the likely result of us doing nothing. And those results in my estimation are the emergence of a new regional order in the Middle East dominated by an atomic Islamic republic. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Berman follows:]

REGIONAL AND GLOBAL CONSEQUENCES OF
U.S. MILITARY ACTION IN IRAN

Statement before the
U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs

Ilan Berman
Vice President for Policy
American Foreign Policy Council

November 14, 2007

Chairman Tierney, Congressman Shays, distinguished members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to address the current crisis with Iran, and the potential of military action against the Iranian regime.

Today, the United States and its allies are fast approaching a fateful choice. After years of intensive work, the Islamic Republic's nuclear program is mature—and approaching operational capability. According to recent European estimates, as well as the assertions of regime officials themselves, Iran is now operating some 3,000 uranium enrichment centrifuges, placing it just one year away from producing enough fissile material for one nuclear weapon.¹ Soon, therefore, Washington will need to choose, as French President Nicolas Sarkozy has put it, between “Iran with the bomb or the bombing of Iran.”²

And yet, almost no serious analyst believes that military action against the Islamic Republic would be simple, or cost-free. To the contrary, the use of force against Iran holds very real risks for the U.S., for its allies in the Middle East, and for the health of the global economy.

The first set of variables that require consideration relates to intelligence. There currently is still a great deal that the United States does not know about the Islamic Republic's nuclear effort. Over the past two decades, the Iranian regime has put a premium upon separating, hiding and fortifying its nuclear facilities. The result is a massive, resilient national nuclear endeavor about which the United States has considerable—but not complete—actionable information. These knowledge gaps greatly complicate military planning, and significantly reduce the chances that it will

be possible to deliver a permanent (or even a decisive) blow to Iran's nuclear infrastructure.

The second has to do with retaliatory capabilities. With more than 150,000 U.S. military personnel stationed within its immediate operational proximity—eastern Iraq and western Afghanistan—Iran has considerable ability to act against American interests in the event of a conflict. And while there is substantial evidence to suggest that Iran is already doing so, expanding the sophistication and the lethality of the insurgency in neighboring Iraq, there can be little doubt that it could foment far greater instability both there and in Afghanistan. Iran could also empower a range of radical groups to step up their attacks on the United States and American interests, either in the Middle East or even closer to home. And, because of its strategic position atop the Strait of Hormuz, the Islamic Republic has the ability to dramatically impact the safety and stability of world oil supplies—something that Iranian officials have expressly threatened to do should hostilities erupt.³

Arguably the most important drawback to military action, however, has to do with the internal dynamics within the Islamic Republic itself. By all accounts, the Iranian regime's atomic effort is a popular affair, supported by a broad cross-section of the country's population. This is surprising since, after more than two-and-a-half decades of clerical rule, Iran's young, vibrant population is uniformly and visibly disillusioned with the Islamic Revolution. Yet, over the past several years, Iran's ayatollahs have deftly managed to repackage what is in effect an effort to acquire a "clerical bomb" into something that is a source of nationalistic and cultural pride for ordinary Iranians. The results have been dramatic; according to recent polls of public opinion within the Islamic Republic, the vast majority of Iranians now support their regime's nuclear efforts, seeing them as both a tool for regional preeminence and a historic and cultural right.⁴ As a result, external military action against the Iranian nuclear program could prove to be distinctly counterproductive, generating a "rally around the flag" effect that strengthens—rather than weakens—the current regime's grip on power.

For these reasons, military action should properly be seen for what it is: an option of last resort. But it an option that *must* remain a key component of American strategy, for a number of reasons:

Diplomacy

Administration officials have repeatedly stressed that no option can be taken "off the table" in dealing with Iran's nuclear program. Far from representing a rush to war, as some have contended, this assertion reflects an understanding that a credible military threat is needed to buttress other aspects of American strategy. Simply put, in order

for the economic and diplomatic pressures now being applied by the Bush administration to stand *any* chance of success, Iran's leaders must know that the United States is aware of their strategic intentions, and is prepared to use force to stop them should all other options fail. Without such a coercive component, the Iranian regime will quickly understand that there effectively are no consequences to its failure to comply with international demands.

Deterrence

Some experts and analysts have responded to the deepening crisis over Iran's nuclear program by suggesting that it would be possible for the United States to deter a nuclear-armed Iran.⁵ In making this assertion, they have relied on the experience of the Cold War, during which the threat of mutual nuclear annihilation created a stable "balance of terror" between Moscow and Washington. There are, however, deep flaws in the logic behind these assumptions. Most scholars now agree that Cold War deterrence functioned successfully because a series of conditions (good communication, rational decisionmaking, well-informed strategic planning, and, most importantly, a shared assumption that war should be avoided) were presumed to exist between the United States and the Soviet Union. Critically, none of these conditions are present in America's current relationship with Iran, indicating that the risk of miscalculation by either Tehran or Washington is simply far too great to comfortably assume it will be possible to establish functional bilateral deterrence relationship.⁶

Further complicating these calculations is the deepening radicalization taking place within the Iranian regime. Since taking office in the Fall of 2005, Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has introduced a new, messianic discourse into Iranian politics. Ahmadinejad sees himself as a self-styled religious missionary, responsible for facilitating the return of the 12th Imam of Shi'a theology, and as a key player in what he has termed "a historic war between the oppressor [generally, the West] and the world of Islam" now taking place in the Middle East.⁷ This apocalyptic worldview strongly suggests that at least one segment of the Iranian leadership may not be deterred by the prospect of a nuclear confrontation. To the contrary, it is likely to welcome it, for both theological and ideological reasons.

Assurance

In late 2002, on the eve of Operation Iraqi Freedom, there was just one declared nuclear aspirant in the Persian Gulf: Iran itself. Today, no fewer than ten nations—Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Jordan and Turkey—have embarked upon national or regional nuclear programs. The timing is not coincidental; countries in the Middle East are deeply apprehensive over the emerging "Iranian bomb," and are actively seeking strategic counterweights to it. The ability of the United States to control, or at least to manage, these trends hinges directly upon the credibility of its military option, as well as the

perceived political will to use it. Simply put, without confidence in America's ability and willingness to protect them, Iran's neighbors will be forced to make other plans. The likely result will be not one new nuclear power in the Middle East, but many.

Counterterrorism

Finally, the importance of a U.S. military option extends to the realm of counterterrorism. Today, there are substantial differences between America's terrorist adversaries. As a result of their ideology and objectives, Sunni terrorist groups can boast no state sponsors or official protection. Shi'ite groups such as Hezbollah, on the other hand, enjoy the overt backing of a wealthy, nearly nuclear patron. Iran's support is financial; U.S. officials now estimate that Tehran "has a nine-digit line item in its budget for support to terrorist organizations."⁸ It is also operational, with the Iranian regime providing a military bulwark against external aggression. Should it be allowed to acquire a nuclear capability, Iran will, *de facto*, be able to provide its terrorist proxies with a nuclear umbrella, thereby affording them far greater freedom of action than ever before.

Let us be clear. There are no easy answers to the current conflict with Iran, only hard choices. A compelling case can be made that, at least for the moment, Iran's nuclear ambitions can be curbed, contained and even derailed through non-military measures such as a robust, coordinated economic warfare strategy.⁹ The time for such "non-kinetic" approaches, however, is rapidly running out. As Iran draws closer to the nuclear threshold, the use of force—unpalatable as it is—will loom ever larger on the horizon. This is only logical. For, as Senator John McCain succinctly explained last year, "there's only one thing worse than the United States exercising the military option; that is a nuclear-armed Iran."¹⁰

NOTES:

¹ "French Officials: Iran Set to Run Nearly 3,000 Uranium-Enriching Centrifuges by Late October," Associated Press, October 3, 2007, <http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2007/10/03/europe/EU-GEN-France-Iran-Nuclear.php>; Ali Akbar Dareini, "Iran: 3,000 Centrifuges Fully Working," Associated Press, November 7, 2007, <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory?id=3830478>.

² As cited in Editorial, "Sarko Steps Up," *Wall Street Journal*, August 29, 2007, A14.

³ See, for example, "Tehran Warns of Fuel Disruptions," BBC (London), June 4, 2006, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/5045604.stm.

⁴ See, for example, “Poll of the Iranian Public,” worldpublicopinion.org, January 16, 2007, http://www.usip.org/iran/iran_presentation.pdf. That survey, carried out jointly by the Center on Policy Attitudes and the University of Maryland’s Center for International and Security Studies, found that 89 percent of 1000 Iranian respondents deemed the development of a nuclear program to be “very important” for their country. At the same time, 61 percent of those polled believed the enhancement of Iran’s “great power status” to be the most important reason behind the acquisition of such a capability.

⁵ See, for example, Barry R. Posen, “We Can Live with a Nuclear Iran,” *New York Times*, February 27, 2006, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/27/opinion/27posen.html>.

⁶ For an excellent analysis of the inapplicability of deterrence to the current crisis with Iran, see James S. Robbins, “The Dangers of Deterrence,” in Ilan Berman, ed., *Taking on Tehran: Strategies for Confronting the Islamic Republic* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield—AFPC, 2007), 17-30.

⁷ On Ahmadinejad’s messianism, see Scott Peterson, “Waiting for the Rapture in Iran,” *Christian Science Monitor*, December 21, 2005, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/1221/p01s04-wome.html>; On Ahmadinejad’s foreign policy views, see “Ahmadinejad: Wipe Israel Off Map,” *Al-Jazeera* (Doha), October 26, 2005, <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/15E6BF77-6F91-46EE-A4B5-A3CE0F9957EA.htm>.

⁸ Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence Stuart Levey, Remarks before the 5th Annual Conference on Trade, Treasury and Cash Management in the Middle East, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, March 7, 2007, http://uae.usembassy.gov/remarks_of_stuart_levey_.html.

⁹ For a comprehensive overview of Iran’s economic vulnerabilities, see Ilan Berman, “Iran Sanctions and International Security,” statement before the House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, October 23, 2007, <http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/110/ber102307.htm>.

¹⁰ “Senators: Military Last Option on Iran,” *cnn.com*, January 16, 2006, <http://edition.cnn.com/2006/US/01/15/iran.congress/index.html>.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Mr. Berman.

Our final witness is General Paul Van Riper, who served with distinction for 41 years in the Marine Corps, including as Commander General with the U.S. Marine Corps Combat Development Command and the first president of the Marine Corps University and the Commanding General of the Second Marine Division. General Van Riper received numerous decorations, including the Silver Star with Gold Star, Bronze Star with Combat V, Purple Heart, and the Legion of Merit.

General, I have to say, I read all of your testimony and found it incredibly informative and quite a history on that. I know you won't be able to read all of that into the record, but I hope people take the opportunity to read it on their own and go to the Web site and whatever because it was incredibly informative. We look forward to your remarks.

STATEMENT OF LT. GENERAL PAUL K. VAN RIPER, USMC (RET.), FORMER COMMANDING GENERAL OF THE U.S. MARINE CORPS COMBAT DEVELOPMENT COMMAND, FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE MARINE CORPS UNIVERSITY AND COMMANDING GENERAL OF THE SECOND MARINE DIVISION

General VAN RIPER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee.

I welcome this opportunity to speak with you today. Your effort to widen public discussion about the direction of our Nation's defense policy is, in my estimation, long overdue. I am going to summarize the three issues which I discuss in the longer paper, but encourage the Members, as well as those outside, to look at the extracted material that I include in the third section which speaks to a different way or a different method of attacking difficult national security problems.

Let me speak first to a national discourse. Americans need to know that war is much too serious a matter to leave to the generals or for that matter the senior elected officials. The decision to wage war and the manner in which it is conducted must be the concern of every citizen. Today, I do not detect the same wide interest in issues of national security among our citizens as we have seen in the past. Someone recently observed, and I think correctly: The military is at war; the Nation is at the mall. We must reverse this indifference. Only through open and candid discussion can we develop better national defense policies.

To my second topic, developing these national security strategies, if we truly are in a global war against radical Islamic insurgents, and I am convinced we are, we must think in terms of a global strategy. We must view the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq and the potential for conflicts in such trouble spots as the Horn of Africa, Southeast Asia and Iran as part of our global concerns. Thus the United States requires a well thought out and generally understood strategy for the ongoing worldwide war. Let me note, the administration speaks of a global war on terrorism. Terrorism along with global warfare is simply a method. What we have is a global insurgency. We now have so many national strategies that our efforts are diffused, some might even say confused. One contemporary source shows nearly 30 national strategies. The public is

largely unaware of all these documents. But if they were, they would find a bewildered array of policies, goals and objectives. Even as a professional soldier, many of these individual strategies perplex me. In the totality, they are beyond my comprehension. The story of how we arrived at today's sad state of affairs is important to understanding how we might improve our situation, especially when there is talk of war in Iran. If there is time during the question and answer portion of the session, I would like to outline that story for members of the committee. In one sentence, I am convinced that the advancement of any number of non-ideas over the past 15 years undermined much of the conceptual work done after the Vietnam war, and directly contributed to the faulty decisionmaking leading up to the invasion of Iraq.

My third issue, we need a new approach to tackling difficult national security problems. America is a nation filled with problem solvers who seem to favor analytical or engineering methods. An analytical approach is a powerful one for those difficulties whose underlying logic will organize a system that is linear and structurally complex. It is inadequate for such a class of problems, and Iran would certainly fit this, whose underlying logic or organizing system is dynamic, nonlinear, interactively complex or, as some literature refers to them, working problems. Interactions of these sorts of systems can and often do produce unanticipated and disproportionate results. What leader could imagine in June 1914 the two pistol shots fired in Sarajevo would set in motion all of the events leading up to the horrors of the First World War? To understand these complex problems, we ought to grasp that taking action in national security settings frequently creates multiple reactions that for any practical purpose are unknowable beforehand. Appreciating this, our Nation's leaders should be more humble when forecasting the results of specific actions in the international arena. Certainly this should be the case when we contemplate confronting Iran or any other nation with military force.

Until we undertake a discourse about the contemporary U.S.-Iranian situation that includes authorities from many fields, I will remain unconvinced that any projection about the effects of military action are anything other than conjecture. The chairman's opening testimony and this subcommittee's meeting on October 30, 2007, serve as an excellent example of how to begin to grapple with the complex problems presented by Iran. I urge the subcommittee members to continue to view the current situation with Iran as a wicked problem that is interactively complex. If the legislative and executive branches would engage in a widened discourse on this vital issue, I believe it would see American Government at its finest. Certainly this is a course of action that every American would want. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of General Van Riper follows:]

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NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

STATEMENT OF
PAUL K. VAN RIPER
LIEUTENANT GENERAL
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS (RETIRED)
BEFORE THE
HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON
NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS
14 NOVEMBER 2007
CONCERNING THE POTENTIAL
REGIONAL AND GLOBAL CONSEQUENCES OF
U.S. MILITARY ACTION IN IRAN

NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL
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NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Introduction

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for providing me this opportunity to speak to you today. Your effort to widen and deepen public discussion about the direction of important elements of our nation's defense policy is, in my estimation, long overdue. Americans deserve this sort of close scrutiny of the Executive Branch's view of national security. They also need the chance to engage each other and public officials in a discourse about crucial matters relating to war and peace.

I include myself among a number of professionals who have long advocated for greater openness in the national security process while at the same time urging fellow citizens to become more involved in issues of national defense. The evidence suggests, however, attempts in this regard have stirred little interest.

To illustrate the sorts of matters that need greater public examination, I have taken the liberty of attaching to this written statement a book chapter and an article I authored or co-authored a number of years ago. They speak in greater detail to issues of war, strategy, and defense planning.

Thucydides said, "The secret of happiness is freedom, and the secret of freedom is courage." I occasionally share a further personal thought with young officers: "The secret of courage is competence and the secret of competence is knowledge."

In the ongoing global war our nation's soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen have proven their courage repeatedly while daily displaying professional competence. Regrettably, many of our most senior civilian leaders offered only bravado as they took our nation into the current war while evidencing little competence in prosecuting that war. As a nation we cannot allow this to happen again; we have found the cost too great. We will likely pay an even higher price if we were to confront Iran in the same ill-considered manner.

In my experience, bravado is usually a failing of those who have never been close to a battlefield or undertaken a serious study of the profession of arms. A lack of competence stems from an unwillingness to learn from others or from experience. The product of these two flawed character traits is usually arrogance and a tendency to believe that simply asserting something is true makes it true. When such assertions are revealed for what they are, public confidence in our leaders erodes. Citizens simply decide not to listen to these leaders.

Despite this very negative outlook on how we arrived at the situation we find ourselves in today, I am encouraged by the actions of the new civilian and military leaders in the Department of Defense. And I take heart in the work of Congressional committees such as yours, which strive to understand the emerging international security environment and to develop appropriate approaches to very difficult problems.

A National Discourse

I was a young child during the Second World War, but I still have memories of my parents and other relatives engaging in serious conversations about the course of that war and the actions of our national leaders. Even as a six year old the gravity of radio news broadcasts was evident to me. As a teenager I followed reporting on the Korean War closely as did my family, friends, and classmates. We all understood how important this conflict was for America and the need to remain informed about the actions of our government. While a college student in the 1960s, I participated in long debates with professors and fellow students—in the classroom and across the campus—concerning the appropriate strategy needed to meet the Soviet threat. We were familiar with the details of U.S. containment policy and strategic approaches such as “flexible response” and “mutually assured destruction.” Our discussions were not uninformed. As a Marine who fought twice in Vietnam I was well aware of the ongoing public argument about nearly every aspect of that war. Few Americans were neutral in their feelings and many felt compelled to carry their views into the public

square. The populace seemed to know that “war is much too serious a matter to leave to the generals” or for that matter to senior elected officials. The decision to wage war and the manner in which it is conducted must be the concern of every citizen.

Today, I do not detect this same wide interest in issues of national security among either students or our citizenry at large. Someone recently observed—I think correctly—that, “The military is at war. The nation is at the mall.” I believe this is largely true. However, we should not be surprised since our president urged us shortly after the attacks of September 11th not to let the nation’s enemies disrupt our way of life. Our leaders have not called upon the nation at large to make sacrifices nor have they welcomed public examination of current security and defense issues. We must reverse this indifference! Only through open and candid discussion can we develop better national defense policies. Furthermore, widespread debate will lead to an informed body politic that is more likely to support military action when it is necessary.

Developing National Security Strategy

The noted strategist and military historian Colin Gray once wrote, “Everything pertaining to strategy relates, or at least might relate, to everything else.”^{[1][1]} I take his words as a warning not to focus too narrowly when examining strategic issues. In the last six years the Defense Department seems to have placed more emphasis on tactics and operations than designing meaningful strategy. If we truly are in a global war against radical Islamist insurgents—and I believe we are—then we must think in terms of a global strategy. We must view the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq and the potential for conflicts in such trouble spots as the Horn of Africa, Southeast Asia, and Iran as part of our global concerns. Thus, the United States requires a well thought-out and widely understood strategy for the ongoing world wide war. To support this strategy we need appropriate campaign plans for each nation or geographical area

where the United States is currently engaged with the enemy as well as places where we might become engaged. Finally, our leaders need to make all Americans aware of the essence of this strategy as well as the unclassified versions of campaign plans.

As committee members are aware, the first written national security strategy appeared in 1988 in response to the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, which required the president to submit an annual *national security strategy report* (NSSR) to Congress. Though criticized by many for its lack of detail the document was welcomed by those who sought a single source in place of the multitude of national security directives that preceded it. However, what many previously viewed as a deficiency has today become an excess. We now have so many national strategies that our efforts are diffused. Some might even go so far as to say confused. One contemporary source shows nearly thirty “national strategies.”^{[2][2]} The public is largely unaware of all these documents, but if they were they would find a bewildering array of policies, goals, and objectives. Even as a professional soldier many of these individual strategies perplex me. In their totality they are beyond my comprehension.

I have yet to meet someone outside of the Washington, D.C. defense community who has knowledge of any of these numerous strategies. This was not the case with the first truly global war, the Second World War, when American citizens were conscious of the strategy that placed the campaign in Europe first and then committed our forces to a coordinated advance across the Central Pacific and the Southwest Pacific. And as I noted earlier, during the Cold War sufficient information was available that citizens ably debated the strategy of containment.

There is a story behind how we as a nation arrived at the sad state of affairs we find ourselves in today. That story is important to understanding how we might improve our situation, especially when currently there is talk of a war with Iran.

The generation of young lieutenants and captains that fought in the Vietnam War returned home disillusioned with the manner in which the nation had prosecuted that war. Many left active service embittered by their experience. Others looked for scapegoats for all that had gone wrong. Among their targets of blame were a supposedly hostile media, an interfering civilian leadership, and a secretary of defense who insisted on micromanaging the conduct of operations. A smaller community of officers committed themselves to discovering the underlying causes to what they saw as a dysfunctional approach to war fighting. Some of this latter group sought fundamental reforms while others focused on closing a perceived gap between American and Soviet military capabilities.

Led and empowered by combat experienced officers who also possessed an intellectual bent such as Admiral Stansfield Turner and Generals Donn Starry and Al Gray, a small corps of officers went back to the study of military history and revisited the works of classical theorists like Carl von Clausewitz and Sun Tzu. As they developed the professional grounding that their entry-level military education had denied them, these officers abandoned the notion that overly detailed management and systems analysis have a place on the battlefield. They recognized that war with its inherent uncertainty, fog, and friction defies mechanistic thinking and checklist decision-making. Most important, they learned of the critical need to tie military actions to political objectives. They saw that the ways and means of military operations must always match the ends of policy. Moreover, they grasped that battles are only fought in support of a campaign while campaigns are carried out solely to accomplish the aims of strategy. They took heed of a North Vietnam general's admission that American armed forces never lost a battle during the Vietnam War, but, as he observed, we lost the war.

By the mid-1980s officers schooled in this different way of thinking found themselves on high-level staffs, often interacting with senior civilian officials. Here they were able to put into practice their new—some would say old but forgotten—understanding of the proper use of military force. General Colin Powell is perhaps the

perfect example of this new breed of officers whose direct and indirect impact was soon felt throughout government. Nowhere were the contributions of these differently schooled officers more important than in the drafting of the first national military strategy and contingency plans. However, their views were not narrowly focused on the military. They understood the clear need to integrate the other instruments of national power—diplomacy, economic, and informational—with the military instrument. They were avid supporters of Clausewitz' famous dictum that, "War is a continuation of policy *with* other means."

The concepts and the enlightened officers produced by the intellectual renaissance of the late 1970s and the 1980s were put to the test when Iraq invaded Kuwait in the summer of 1990. Neither was found wanting. A strong thread of continuity runs from the goals laid out in the 1990 edition of the *National Security Strategy of the United States* through the national policy objectives announced by President Bush on 5 August 1990 and the theater military objectives promulgated on 17 January 1991 to the missions assigned to specific military units. There were no mismatches among the *ends, means, and ways* paradigm as the nation prepared to go to war. The results achieved in Operation Desert Storm by the American military and its government and the coalition it assembled proved we had learned from the hard lessons of the Vietnam War. Cutting edge technology, well trained troops, and modern doctrine were major contributors to the quick victory. But the foundation of this victory rested on the knowledge gained by a return to the study of war from a historical and theoretical perspective.

Ironically, a handful of technically-oriented senior officers and a coterie of analysts soon began to weaken this foundation with unsupported assertions that the world had witnessed a "military technical revolution" in the Gulf War, which made much of the past irrelevant.[3][3] As an example, the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—a submarine admiral—informed us that, "the large battlefield of 200-300 miles . . . will change the nature of warfare so that people such as Sun Tzu,

Clausewitz and Mahan, may well now be wrong. With dominant battlefield awareness, much of the doctrine and tactics that have come before us will have gone before us.”[4][4] The same officer also declared that, “If you see the battlefield you win the war.”[5][5] My retort at the time was, “This is as ludicrous as saying if you see the soccer field you win the match.” First, a coach must have schooled the team how to play to have a realistic chance of winning. As another example, the Air Force Chief of Staff avowed, “In the first quarter of the 21st century, you will be able to find, fix or track, and target in near real-time, anything of consequence that moves or is located on the face of the Earth. Quite frankly, I can tell you we can do most of that today.”[6][6] My response to this unsupportable claim was that we would not “see” enemy soldiers in the basement of a building with any existing or known technologies and even when we “saw” terrorists in the village market we would not be able to separate them from innocent civilians and we would learn to our sorrow that these adversaries were of consequence. And we have! Nonetheless, this unrealistic belief in the power of technology caught on with many Defense Department officials and it soon began to influence new operational concepts, force structure, and the acquisition of weapons and equipment.

Among the more egregious examples of wasted intellectual resources was that caused by the declaration that “network-centric operations” would fundamentally change the way wars are fought. The defense community held hundreds of workshops, conferences, and seminars on network-centric operations during the late 1990s and early 2000s. From these flowed a plethora of concepts, articles, reports, and studies. Few seemed to recognize that the first ancient commander who employed messengers to carry information and instructions between units had created a network. Likewise, commanders who later employed semaphore signals, telegraphs, telephones, radios, and finally computer systems were all networking their forces, an act that usually improved tactical and operational performance. Yes,

expanding the technical idea behind the Navy's Aegis System's Cooperative Engagement Capability (CEC) to other services command and control systems as network-centric proponents advocate might well enhance the ability to exchange information and coordinate activities. But it will only represent another evolutionary advancement, not a revolutionary one. Commanders will still fight as they always have by bringing fire against the enemy and maneuvering to a position of advantage while making use of deception and psychological means to alter that enemy's perception of what is taking place.

Another non-idea that has permeated the American military to great disadvantage in recent years is that of "effects-based operations." In its worst form the concept returns systems analysis to operational planning with promise of the same sad outcome as when Mr. Robert S. McNamara directed use of a similar methodology some 40 years ago. In its most benign form effects-based operations merely suggests that commanders need to consider the effects of all their planned actions. One must ask what is novel about this thought. Any commander worth his salt considers the effects, impacts, results, consequences, outcomes or any other term that suggests what might occur because of the actions he takes. Clausewitz—who dwelt on the need to match ends and means—informed us of this requirement in his oft quoted words, "The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish . . . the kind of war on which they are embarking; neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature." [7][7] Did our military forces need to expend hundreds of millions of dollars and more than five years of effort to verify this conclusion while at the same time asking industry to create costly and ill-founded software programs to support it?

Too many civilian and military leaders accepted these and the promises of other so-called transformational notions with little question. Many ideas had no substantive content beneath the slogans used to advertise them. Those such as

“battle management” suggested that leaders actually could manage battles as if they were a construction project or production process. Military professionals know wars, campaigns, and battles have their own dynamics that will cause them to unfold in unexpected ways. To believe one can manage them is the same as believing a canoeist cannot only navigate his craft, but also manage the stream in which he floats. “Information superiority” implied that there was an identifiable universe of information in every wartime situation that commanders could measure to judge when they had the superior amount. Advocates intimated that gaining this superiority guaranteed battlefield success. Senior officials looking for apparent cost saving measure were only too eager to accept these kinds of vacuous notions. I remain convinced that advancement of these sorts of inane ideas undermined much of work done after the Vietnam War and directly contributed to the faulty decision-making leading up to the invasion of Iraq. Having only a mere inkling of the Iraqi society our senior leaders believed that “decapitation” of the regime would lead to a preordained and happy outcome. Thus, they never developed an operational design for securing Iraq; rather they directed preparation of a military only operations plan for the attack and seizure of Baghdad.

We have arrived at a point where once again Congress must work to see that well founded strategic thinking takes center stage within the Executive Branch. Similarly, the Legislative Branch must insist that we have a global wartime strategy with supporting campaign plans. And it must ensure that that the Department of Defense builds these plans with a through understanding of the security problems they are to alleviate and that their designs are conceptually sound.

An Approach to Tackling Difficult National Security Problems

America is a nation filled with problem solvers who seem to favor analytical or engineering methods. An analytical approach is a powerful one for those difficulties whose underlying logic or organizing system is linear. Authorities sometimes refer to these systems as “structurally complex.” Structurally complex systems can have many diverse elements. In fact, the more elements or parts in the system the more complex

it becomes. As an example, an airplane is more complex than an automobile. However, in these systems the freedom of action of the parts is limited. In fact, too much freedom of action can cause the system to malfunction. Actions among the parts of structurally complex systems follow a path of cause and effect, thus they lend themselves to the tools of systems analysis. To illustrate, an aerodynamic flaw in a newly designed airplane is likely to be a structurally complex problem. Aeronautical engineers may find it extremely difficult to solve, however, they know that the laws of Newtonian Physics, if properly applied, will allow them to determine the cause of the problem and to develop a solution. We find that individuals experienced in a particular field usually are able to move rapidly from efforts at problem definition to the steps required for problem solving.

Too few American recognize a second class of problems, those whose underlying logic or organizing system is dynamic or non-linear. Analytical approaches are usually inadequate for this class of problems. Authorities often call these systems "interactively complex." These systems frequently have great freedom of action among their elements or parts. Thus, rather than cause and effect, we frequently observe cascading effects where a single cause produces multiple outcomes that ripple through the system in all directions. In theory we should be able to trace the results or effects of each action. In reality we cannot follow them in any meaningful sense because the interactions quickly progress to a point where no computer can handle the calculations needed to track them. To illustrate, even a bounded problem like that found in the game of chess allows for more potential interactions than there are atoms in the universe. The interactions in these sorts of systems can and often do produce unanticipated and disproportionate results. What leader could have imagined in June 1914 that two pistol shots fired at Archduke Franz Ferdinand as he visited Sarajevo would set in motion all the events leading up to the horrors of the First World War? Systems analysis is the wrong tool for attacking interactively complex problems. And as John Gaddis, the "dean" of diplomatic historians notes, so

are the “scientific” methods of political science.[8][8] International relations, economies, and social systems are all examples of interactively complex systems. War itself is interactively complex.

If we understand interactively complex problems we ought to grasp that taking action in societal or national security settings frequently creates multiple reactions that for any practical purpose are unknowable beforehand. Appreciating this, our nation’s leaders should be more humble when forecasting the results of specific actions in the international arena. Certainly this should be the case when they contemplate confronting Iran or any other nation with military force.

In 1973 Urban designers Horst Rittel and Melvin Weber wrote a seminal article in which they coined the terms “wicked” and “tame” to classify problems.[9][9] Though they did not use the nomenclature of interactively and structurally complex systems in association with wicked and tame problems there is a definite relationship. In an effort to improve operational design the Army and Marine Corps are exploring the insights gained from Rittel and Weber’s research and related work. A recent paper authored for this project explains the key characteristics of wicked problems. An extract from that paper is included here to further explain why wicked problems are so distinctive.

*There is no definitive way to formulate a wicked problem. First of all, a problem does not exist objectively. What exists is a mess—a complex tangle of conditions—which only becomes a problem when someone decides that the conditions are unsatisfactory and require resolution. We can attribute the problem to any number of different causes and can formulate the problem in any number of different ways. The formulation of the problem depends on individual perspective—different people see the problem differently—and so it is difficult, if not impossible, to formulate the problem in a way that all stakeholders can agree to. Any understanding of a wicked problem is an interpretation—a creation based on a particular perspective—rather than an objective truth. In this sense, a wicked problem cannot be *known*, but must be *constructed*—that is, the problem to be solved must be created out of the mess. Understanding a wicked problem is not a matter of*

capturing reality sufficiently correctly, but of constructing an interpretation that is sufficiently useful in dealing with the reality.

We cannot understand a wicked problem without proposing a solution. The information needed to understand the problem depends on the idea for solving it. We propose potential solutions as a way of hypothesizing about the problem. Establishing the problem and conceiving a solution are identical and simultaneous cognitive processes, since every instance of creatively formulating the problem points in the direction of a particular solution.

Wicked problems have no "stopping rule." It is impossible to say conclusively that a wicked problem has been solved. Wicked problems are rarely solved conclusively, but are resolved conditionally and temporarily. Work on a wicked problem does not cease because the problem is definitively solved, but because the problem solvers run out of time, resources or resolve—the solution is deemed "good enough" or "the best that can be done under the circumstances."

Wicked problems have better or worse solutions, not right or wrong ones. There is no objective measure of success in dealing with wicked problems. No objective method exists for determining the correctness of a solution, as exists for a mathematics or physics problem. Different stakeholders will judge the quality of a solution based on individual perspectives, and there can be significant disagreement. The quality of a solution depends on how we have formulated the problem. For example, if we see the problem as defeating guerrillas, a kinetic solution may work, but if we see the problem as preventing the population from supporting the guerrillas, that same solution could be counterproductive.

There is no immediate and no ultimate test of a solution to a wicked problem. The perceived quality of a solution can change over time. Any solution will generate waves of repercussions that ripple outward over an extended or even indefinite period. A solution that seems to achieve positive results initially could generate delayed negative consequences that outweigh any initial good that was achieved. One cannot judge the full consequences of a course of action until these waves of repercussions have run out, by which point it will long have become impossible to isolate individual causes and effects, since in the mean time numerous other events will have affected the situation.

Every solution to a wicked problem is a "one-shot" operation. Every attempted course of action has repercussions that will change the situation and cannot be undone. Even if a course of action does not solve the problem satisfactorily, and another attempt becomes necessary, it will be an attempt

to solve a different problem—and often a problem that is more difficult than before. As a result, every attempt matters significantly. Wicked problems thus pose a dilemma: we cannot learn about a wicked problem without trying out solutions, but cannot try out solutions without changing the problem.

Wicked problems have no fixed set of potential solutions. Solutions to wicked problems do not pre-exist as alternatives from which to choose, like buying a new car. Wicked problems are not multiple-choice. Solutions must be *created* rather than chosen. A whole host of potential solutions may emerge, or it may be that no satisfactory solution appears. *Every wicked problem is essentially unique and novel.* Each wicked problem is a one-of-a-kind situation requiring a custom solution rather than a standard solution modified to fit circumstances. No classes of wicked problems exist for which common principles apply and to which generic solution “templates” can be applied.

Every wicked problem is a symptom of another problem. Wicked problems tend to be interconnected in cause and effect. Any attempt to establish the cause of a problem reveals a preceding problem, of which the original problem is only a symptom. Significant judgment is required merely to decide how widely to define the problem. *Wicked problems are interactively complex.* Interactive complexity is a function of the freedom of interaction of the elements that make up a situation: the greater freedom, the greater the interactive complexity. Interactively complex situations are highly sensitive to inputs; immeasurably small influences can generate disproportionately large effects. With interactive complexity it is often impossible to isolate individual causes and their effects, since the parts are all connected in a complex web. Interactive complexity produces fundamentally unpredictable and even counterintuitive behavior. Cause and effect may be separated in time and space: an input at a given time and place produces an output much later at a different place. Effects will rarely remain steady; some causal chains may dampen over time, eventually dying out, while others may amplify through reinforcing feedback. Effects may reverse themselves over time: a cause that has one effect initially may produce the opposite effect later—only to return to the original effect still later. A single cause can have multiple effects, while a single effect can be the result of multiple causes. Major inputs can have little effect, but a minor input beyond a tipping point can push a situation into a qualitatively different state.[10][10]

In essence Rittel and Weber told us that while we might find a so-called tame problem very hard to solve, we would know where to begin. An example often used

to illustrate this idea is working a crossword puzzle. I might not be able to complete a particularly difficult crossword puzzle, but it is not because I do not know how to approach the problem. I realize what I am supposed to do, but in this case I am not smart enough to succeed. Others with more talent following the same rule-set would be successful. In contrast, each wicked problem is unique, thus, there are no standard methods or approaches for solving them. The uniqueness of each of these problems precludes ordered analysis. We must view them holistically with the first order of business being to "frame" or "formulate" the problem. The most effective way to do this for societal problems like those of national security is to bring experts from many disparate fields together and to enter into a discourse. In exploring the problem through the experiences of many people insights are gained that can inform us on how to move forward.

Chairman Tierney's Opening Statement to this Subcommittee's meeting on 30 October 2007 serves as an excellent example of the how to begin to grapple with the complex problem presented by Iran.

We need to ask several basic questions. What makes Iranians tick? What drives and motivates their behavior? Do Iranians want democracy? Are they resoundingly anti-American, or are there opportunities for improvements in our relationship? How can we reintegrate Iran into the global economy and get them to adhere to international human rights standards? And, given our lack of connection over the last thirty years, what don't we know; where are our blind spots?

By understanding Iranians and building our knowledge of the intricacies in our fractured relationship, the Subcommittee will be able to conduct our Constitutionally-mandated oversight; to find out if the current Administration has thought through all of these issues adequately and thoroughly, and to ask tough questions that get to the heart of the myriad of issues involved.[11][11]

I urge Subcommittee members to continue to view the current situation with Iran as a “wicked” problem that is interactively complex. As you learn more about the U.S.—Iranian problem within the context of the larger Middle East dilemma and the ongoing global Islamist insurgency, you will increase the odds that you can persuade the Executive Branch from making the same tragic mistakes America has experienced since 2002. If you were to convince your House and Senate colleagues to engage in an expanded professional discourse about U.S.—Iranian relations you would heighten the chances even further of a favorable outcome. Lastly, if the Legislative Branch were to engage the Executive Branch in a widening discourse on this vital issue, I believe we would see American government at its finest. Certainly this is a course of action that every American would applaud. Fundamentally, this is the kind of leadership our citizens desire from their elected representatives.

Again, I thank the Subcommittee for the opportunity to share my thoughts.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you very much. We really shouldn't applaud. All the witnesses have done an excellent job in sharing with us their information on that, and we spent a lot of time doing that. We do appreciate it.

There is another series of votes, as you heard the alarm going off, two votes in fact. I thought what I might do is ask my 5 minutes of questions here, and then we will take a little break, come back and others can vote, and then we will do that after. But we will suspend after that.

Let me just start by asking generally the panel, I think we can assume that neither Iran or the rest of the world is unintelligent and uninformed, and they are all pretty much aware of what the U.S. military capabilities are. Given that fact, I think there is a question as to what value is added to any diplomatic or other efforts we might make to resolve these issues by continuing very loudly to rattle the saber and heightening intensity about rhetoric about the military option. Anybody care to respond to that?

Dr. Pillar.

Mr. PILLAR. Mr. Chairman, in my judgment, it works to the detriment of the diplomacy in a number of respects. That is to say, it makes it less likely the sanctions will work. No. 1, it makes a nuclear deterrent seem all the more worth striving for in the eyes of the Iranians. No. 2, it helps the political position of hardliners. No. 3, it makes all Iranian leaders of whatever political stripe find it politically more difficult to do anything that makes it look like they are making nice toward the United States. And finally, it cements the view that, I am afraid, too many Iranian leaders already have, that there is simply no hope of a better relationship with the United States, even if they did improve their behavior on nuclear weapons, Iraq or anything else. So it detracts from the diplomacy. It does not enhance it.

Colonel GARDINER. I just had one thing. I think the thing that they are concerned about is not the military instrument but the fact that they believe it means regime change. I hear this from Iranians a lot. What we need to take off the table is regime change, which we have not taken off the table.

Mr. TIERNEY. Let me ask another question. What do we make—and, Colonel Gardiner, you mentioned this in your remarks—that the Iranians presumably already have weapons of mass destruction and biological and chemical agents? What do the members of the panel make of the fact that they never shared those, to our knowledge, with any terrorist to date, and how does that line up with a fear that they might share nuclear materials with them?

General, do you want to start, and we will move from right to left.

General VAN RIPER. Mr. Chairman, I have no special expertise on Iran or the Iranian situation, though I have played a red commander in a country very similar to that. I think it is something we need to always fear. But I don't think it calls, at this point, for any serious talk about going to war.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Berman.

Mr. BERMAN. By way of explanation, I think it is worth remembering a historical anecdote from the recent past. In September 2005, about a month after Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was elected es-

essentially to the Iranian Presidency, he addressed the General Assembly in New York. And most of you may remember this as the speech in which he talked about the fact that he was surrounded by a green light and nobody blinked for half an hour. The speech that I was more interested in was the speech that he gave immediately afterwards. And in that discussion, he said, yes, my government, my country is pursuing this technology, nuclear technology, and not only that, but we stand ready to share it with any and all comers in the Islamic world. Just to be clear, proliferation is a declaratory state policy.

Mr. TIERNEY. That is Mr. Ahmadinejad's comment, not necessarily state policy. If you understand the complexities of the Iranian political structure, I think it is very likely two different things.

Mr. BERMAN. Well, that is certainly true. I would say that if he had his way, and there is an awful lot of tea reading going on about his exact place now in the hierarchy, I would certainly make the argument that he is less of a marginal player than his predecessor in the decisionmaking structure. But that is obviously for the experts to decide. I would say only that there is great merit in taking statements like that at their word, especially because the real center of gravity in the Iranian political system, Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, actually did not say that those comments were out of line or that they were out of step. He actually confirmed them at a later discussion, a later time. So I think, on that issue, there is probably more consonance than dissidence within the Iranian political spectrum. It bears taking them seriously.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you. Dr. Pillar, why are you worried about them having the biological and chemical if that is a concern?

Mr. PILLAR. We should be careful to distinguish between the rhetorical and what is actually in the self-interest of the regime. I would note that not only has Iran not passed any of these unconventional weapons to clients in terrorist groups, but there is no known incidence of any state passing any kind of unconventional weapons, weapons of mass destruction, to a so-called terrorist client, even though this is what we talk about lots and we seem to fear quite a bit. And there is a substantial record on this, including most of the history of the Soviet Union, which of course had radical clients, and they had all brands of unconventional weapons. The reason is, when you ask, what would be the interest of such a regime to pass some such weapons to another group where they would lose control, the interest simply isn't there. It is all disadvantage rather than advantage. They lose control. And if they were ever used, a group that is known to be a client of Iran, say Lebanese Hezbollah, would automatically be assumed by Washington and everybody else that they would be acting on Iran's behalf, so there is simply no advantage to it.

Mr. TIERNEY. Colonel, do you have something you want to add to that?

Colonel WILKERSON. I would just say two things: Rational leaders. We are not talking about Ahmadinejad; we are talking about Khamenei and Rafsanjani, the Council in general; and two, deterrence, it works.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you. We are going to stand adjourned for a couple of minutes. And again, I thank you for your indulgence.

The subcommittee is now back in session. Thank you again for your indulgence.

I'm told that we have at least an hour before the next vote. We'll go to Mr. Yarmuth for your questions.

Mr. YARMUTH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I was curious as to what—I think you may have all heard that the military options would lead to some rather dramatic repercussions around the world. In your experience, what do you think the odds are that those in the decisionmaking positions in the administration understand what you understand?

Colonel WILKERSON. I'll take a shot at that, because I think I can probably differ with some of the people here at the table, having been somewhat recently in the discussion.

I don't think they have any plan whatsoever to use force. I think the rhetoric you're hearing now, the hard noises, if you will, is designed primarily to try to regain some leverage vis-à-vis Tehran. I think Dr. Rice eventually has her orders to do something along the diplomatic track that makes it different, and we're just trying to regain some leverage before we do that.

Whether that's the right thing, I don't know; and it presupposes that we will remove this stipulation that they cease enriching or any activities even resembling before we come to the table makes a big difference. Because if we haven't, then anything she might embark on is useless.

Mr. YARMUTH. Other opinions?

And, actually, I want to know—I'm assuming they know what you have just said and understand all of these potential outcomes. Although, in terms of the Iraqi experience, it doesn't indicate that they particularly were aware.

Colonel GARDINER. It's difficult to answer, but I'll try it anyway.

It's very difficult in the heat of decisionmaking—and I say this from watching people make decisions even in the hypothetical situation of war games—to look at second- and third-order of consequences. I can promise you I can reproduce bad decisionmaking very easily by putting people under pressure and giving them a complex problem like Iran, or giving them a situation where you see some Americans have died, what do we do? So there's a real dilemma as security issues become more complex that we find ways for decisionmakers to bring sort of the second and third order of consequences into their decisionmaking.

Mr. PILLAR. Mr. Yarmuth, rather than comment on that, because you've correctly noted the recent exposure to Iraq should not give us a lot of encouragement to assume that certain things are borne in line by decisionmakers—although I suppose the silver lining in that particular cloud is, given the recency of the unhappy Iraq experience, all of us—Members of Congress, the President and presumably senior people in the administration—are a little more attuned to these things.

But just one other comment to follow on to Colonel Gardiner's comments. We haven't really addressed yet in this session directly what I think is one of the main hazards that we face in this climate of extremely tense relations between the United States and

Iran, and that is a military clash breaking out inadvertently, as escalation from some incident, even if neither Tehran nor Washington has planned it in advance. And it is in those situations that the point that Sam Gardiner made about not bringing to bear some of the secondary and tertiary consequences you're likely to see.

Mr. YARMUTH. If either of you two would want to elaborate on that, that's fine. Yes, General?

General VAN RIPER. Sir, I take exception to what my professional colleague, Colonel Gardiner, says about second- and third-order effects. This is what I tried to include in my written testimony. This is typical, I believe, of American decisionmaking, that is, to think that there's any ability to trace these effects.

I normally use a very simple example to illustrate what I'm talking about in these non-linear systems, anytime you're in an interactively complex non-linear system from a physics sense, and I'll try to illustrate. If you took a bounded problem, which is a chess board, opening moves, there are 400 potential opening moves. At the second move, it's 72,000 potential moves. It then goes in the third to 9 million, then to some 315 billion, and all the moves on the board exceeds the number of atoms in the universe.

So the hubris that even in war games or in discussions that we have any real idea of what's going to happen in second- or third-order effects, the best metaphor for thinking about this is not like the machinery, like what happens if we have a problem with an airplane, but an ecology we really don't—which we don't understand.

The more we study an ecological system, the more likely we are to do something in the positive. I would say what happened in the case of Iraq, there was an assertion that if we put energy into the system in terms of invasion, it would be all a happy outcome. We did not understand that system of the Middle East.

And what I would urge is the only way you get to the inside in these problems is through a wide discourse with people with great and varying backgrounds, to try to first frame the problem, what is the problem. We've narrowed it here this afternoon to nuclear weapons. That's a pretty narrow view of it, and in even some of the testimony that's been given by witnesses it comes down to an either/or. I think we've got to widen this system we're looking at and have a wider discourse to get to the real issues.

Mr. YARMUTH. May I just followup real quickly, Mr. Chairman, and just ask, where does that go on? Is that type of thinking and analysis typical of what goes on in the White House or the Defense Department, any White House or Defense Department?

General VAN RIPER. I'm obviously not privileged to know what happens in those locations. I think as we look at our history, certainly in the early stage of the cold war, there were these sorts of discussions, both academic, those from the political arena, military, economists, historians, all brought together to wrestle with these problems. And it's what happens, it's in the discourse you begin to understand the logic of the problem; and until you understand the logic, there is no counter-logic, i.e., no answers. They're mere assertions.

And that's what I think we're seeing. We're seeing mere assertions. If I do X or Y, this is the likely outcome, or this is the risk. Not so.

Mr. YARMUTH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, General. Thank you, Mr. Yarmuth.

Mr. Hodes, you're recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HODES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to pass it this time.

Mr. TIERNEY. Ms. McCollum, you're recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to take this discussion that we're having—I want to take this discussion and just get into it a little deeper.

So a lot of us feel it's very likely that some minor skirmish or event could cause military conflict to escalate into something much broader. So there might not even be time for the Congress to debate before this administration or any administration would react to events on the field.

But this environment that we're in currently right now is—it's very harsh, and the rhetoric is very, very heated. So any minor skirmish, taking the rhetoric with it, I see the escalation happening potentially very, very quickly, and it's very worrisome.

So under what instances do you think we might see something escalate so that we could be prepared? I mean, the whole issue with the Iranian Guard comes up quite a bit, with them supplying weapons or them crossing the borders, but do you know—I mean, have we put circuit breakers in place?

You talked about the cold war. I mean, there were opportunities for governments to talk to each other. Are there circuit breakers in there so that we could stop an incident from escalating out of control? Do we have any diplomatic back channels? And I'd like to hear a little bit more about how you think the State Department and the Pentagon can anticipate the threat and try to work to get ahead of it, to set up some of these safeguards and back channels.

Then the other incident that could happen is the Nation of Israel has talked about leaving all of its options on the table with Iran. What would our reaction be to that? What should our reaction to that be in order to keep being drawn in and to work with Israel to keep them from being drawn in to raising the confrontational dilemma there?

Thank you.

Colonel WILKERSON. I'll be brief. I just want to—back to your question, Mr. Yarmuth, the untoward incident occurring is also a concern of mine; and I think the circuit breaker we have in place, the best circuit breaker is Admiral William J. Fallon, "Fox" Fallon. I think he's imbued with all of the possibilities that might happen in the Persian Gulf region; and I think his Commander's vision out to his naval forces, who are the forces in proximity most apt to start something outside of Iraq, is just that: to avoid it, to avoid it, to avoid it. We don't want 15 British sailors to be replicated with 15 American sailors or whatever.

That said, I'm still very concerned about the proximity of forces, as I'm sure he is. It probably keeps him up at night thinking about how close they are and how an event like you were just describing could take place and be across its belly.

I take some confidence from the fact I do not believe the Vice President is in charge of national security policy anymore. I believe others are. The Vice President is still a very influential voice vis-à-vis those policies, but I don't believe that, as in the first administration, he's basically in charge of them. And so that gives me some confidence that military commanders, Secretary Gates and others, will take the kinds of actions that are necessary to tamp something like this down fairly swiftly and, even more importantly, to prevent it from happening in the first place.

Mr. BERMAN. If I may, I think you hit upon something that's critically important here, which is sort of where are the most likely flash points. We've had a discussion now for about an hour and a half of the question of the nuclear program and is that a *casus belli* and what can we do.

I happen to believe that Iranian involvement in Iraq, in operation against Coalition forces in Iraq, is the most immediate place where the rubber meets the road, where there's a potential for a crisis, particularly because of the reports that I hear from Coalition commanders, from combatant commanders about the degree of Iranian involvement in the funding of both Shi'ite and Sunni militias active now against the Coalition.

My recommendation would be to say that there is much work that still needs to be done to forge a serious counterinsurgency strategy, not simply against the Sunni insurgency as we've done, and discussed, and debated, but also about Iranian infiltration into Iraq; and that, actually, if you're talking about circuit breakers, has the ability to contain a skirmish if it does come out, and prevent it from expanding into a full-blown conflict.

Mr. PILLAR. Ms. McCollum, if I can comment on both parts of your question and, one, with regard to circuit breakers, although I'm happy to have someone like Admiral Fallon as the internal circuit breaker in our government, I think your question implies partly an argument for dialog and engagement with the Iranians; and if we can't have something as full-blown as the hotline that we did with Moscow for years and years, at least talking to them beyond the extremely limited talks we've had between Ambassador Crocker and his counterpart in Iraq would be one way to get a circuit breaker.

On your second question, with regard to what Israel might do, my comment here would be the perceptions of the Iranians and other people in the region, again, would matter most. And the widespread perception would be anything Israel does would have been done with U.S. connivance; and there would be some actual physical, logistical, operational basis for assuming that, including possible use of Iraqi air space, where we're the people who really control it.

Colonel GARDINER. If I could add quickly to two of the points. One of them is there's reason to be optimistic after some of the events of the last week.

The release of the Iranians that have been captured, a portion from Mosul; the public announcement by military officials that we have had less IEDs, less attacks; and then Admiral Fallon's testimony in Financial Times. That is a major circuit breaker that was

put in. We've narrowed—we've pulled back from the edge with the Iranians, and I think that was an important thing.

As far as Israel is concerned, if I can go back to sort of the military dimension of the problem, they—the Iranians—would have left over the capacity to do us severe damage if Israel does that without our involvement because they do not have the capability to destroy all those retaliation capabilities. We must make it clear to Israel that we won't tolerate them doing this by themselves.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you.

Thank you, Ms. McCollum.

Mr. Shays, you're recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you.

Again, Mr. Chairman, I really appreciate you having this hearing; and I appreciate our witnesses. I learn more, frankly, from witnesses who don't necessarily get classified material because then they can talk about what we all read in the New York Times. I can't talk about what we read in the New York Times because I'm told sometimes at a classified briefing. So it's—sometimes I choose not to be—get those briefings.

But I want to ask a number of questions. First, I think if we ended up using military force in Iran, it would be a huge setback for us in the world. I don't know if we are going to position ourselves where that appears to be the only option.

Do you all agree that you have basically three ways to deal with the issue: You talk, through diplomacy; you have sanctions and embargoes; and you use military force. Are those basically the three categories? Is there another one I can add?

General VAN RIPER. Mr. Shays, I think anytime we begin to categorize, again, we narrow down the horizon. I think at this point—

Mr. SHAYS. Are you going to give me another option besides those three? I only have 5 minutes. Is there another one that I am missing?

Mr. TIERNEY. I'll give you a little longer time if the gentleman wants to respond.

General VAN RIPER. If I did, sir, I would be doing the same thing. I'd just be adding to your categories.

What I'm suggesting is that we do something like the Future of Iraq Project that was done by the State Department prior to the invasion of Iraq but was never utilized. We have a wider discussion that brings those sort of folks in, and these are mental models for constructing—

Mr. SHAYS. But you're arguing for the diplomacy and the talks and that. That's fine, but I'm just asking, is there any other than those three? And you're not adding to the list.

General VAN RIPER. Sir, what I'm coming from, I'm coming from Clausewitz's dictum. It's usually translated as "war is a continuation of politics by other means," meaning you supplant the other means.

The better German translation is—

Mr. SHAYS. You're making an argument to me, I think, that you can avoid using military force by other means.

General VAN RIPER. With a mixture of other means is the better translation.

Mr. SHAYS. If the answer is no, I'd like to get on to the more important question.

You have basically three ways to deal with it: diplomacy and all the art of dialog and so on; you have sanctions; and you have military use. And you have all these options within each group, and you disagree with my categories, and that's fine, but those are the three that I know.

Colonel WILKERSON. I'd throw one more out there—

Mr. SHAYS. OK, fine.

Colonel WILKERSON [continuing]. Mr. Shays, and that's what I would call information, and that's what you're doing right now.

Mr. SHAYS. Good. I think that's a good one to add. Thank you very much.

In the end, I happen to believe that you should have embassies in every country, and there should be no requirement on what you do to get an embassy. In other words, we should have one in North Korea, we should have one in Cuba, and we should have one in Iran. I think to me that's one of the big lessons I've learned in the past years.

If we had an embassy in Iraq, we would have known how pathetic, for instance, their infrastructure was; and, to be honest with all of us, we don't just have State employees in our embassies. So it would have been hugely helpful.

What I take—I found myself reacting, Dr. Pillar, to your comments that, you know, tell me a country—there is no record of any country giving a nuclear weapon to a terrorist. And I'm thinking, well, that's true. And so I thought, well, that's kind of convincing. Then I thought, there was no record of any country or terrorist organization attacking the Twin Towers and bringing down the Twin Towers and taking—attempting to take four planes. There was no record of it. We could have said we don't need to fear that. So I don't take the same comfort you may take in it because, frankly, there aren't a lot of countries that have nuclear weapons.

As we expand the list, it's very possible that we will see a new paradigm. I, for instance, think that, you know, Al Gore is right. There is this inconvenient truth of global warming. And I think, frankly, too many of my Republican colleagues don't want to deal with it.

I, frankly, think too many of my Democratic colleagues don't want to deal with the inconvenient truth of the 9/11 Commission which talked about Islamic terrorists who would do us harm. I feel like we're dealing with a different group, and I don't think those old rules—so I'm just responding to your comment about it.

North Korea and Pakistan gave weapons to Libya, Iraq, or—excuse me, technology to Libya, Iraq and Iran. Have they given them to any other country that we know of? Mr. Berman, any others?

Mr. BERMAN. I'm sorry, sir. It doesn't roll off the tongue. If you give me a moment, I will try to come up with a list. I will say that the level—

Mr. SHAYS. But those are the three, primarily, correct?

Mr. BERMAN. The primary ones, yes, sir.

Colonel WILKERSON. There were others involved in the AQ Khan network, but I'm not even sure I can talk about that here.

Mr. SHAYS. OK. Unfortunately, you had a classified briefing, so you can't do it.

I think the thing that I found the most significant is that a military attack might set back a nuclear program 2 to 5 years. That was I think given by you, Colonel Gardiner, and do you all agree that's the extent of what would happen?

Colonel GARDINER. Could I—I said the construction 3 to 5 years. See, we can't know how—

Mr. SHAYS. If other words, if you don't bomb—if you don't kill their scientists and their technology, you've just dealt with the construction aspect?

Colonel GARDINER. That's the only thing we can be precise about.

Mr. SHAYS. And so the reason why it worked a bit in Iran was it wasn't their scientists building the plant—the weapons grade material plant—in Iraq when Israel bombed it. In other words, there it lasted far more than 3 to 5 years.

Colonel GARDINER. No, it actually accelerated. I'll go back to—

Mr. SHAYS. I heard his comments. But, with all due respect, they did not build a weapons grade material plant. They stopped and didn't build one, correct? They did other things. They needed to still get the weapons grade material, correct?

Who is—and, gentlemen, I'll end with this—who is the gentleman that was—was it you, Mr. Pillar, or the other statement, was it you, General Van Riper, who said that it accelerates the effort?

Mr. PILLAR. The experience after the strike on the Osirik reactor was Iraq switched from a plutonium cycle to a uranium cycle, and then we saw what the result was 10 years later.

Mr. SHAYS. But the problem was that they needed to get the weapons grade material; and so the effort to prevent them from getting the weapons grade material plutonium, that succeeded, didn't it?

Mr. PILLAR. Mr. Shays, I was making a point about the effect on incentives.

Mr. SHAYS. OK. But I'm making another point, and you can answer that. They did succeed in stopping them from getting the weapons grade material, correct?

Mr. PILLAR. No, sir, they didn't. Iraq redoubled its efforts, using the uranium rather than plutonium.

Mr. SHAYS. And did they have weapons grade material?

Mr. PILLAR. They came—they came scarily—

Mr. SHAYS. No, the honest answer is no. They had the technology to build but not the weapons grade material, correct?

Mr. PILLAR. As of 1991, you're right, sir.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Mr. Shays.

Mr. HODES, do you want to continue passing or do you want to go?

Mr. HODES. No, I'm ready.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Hodes for 5 minutes.

Mr. HODES. Thanks. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, thank you for being here today.

I really have no idea who my colleague, Mr. Shays, is referring to when he suggests that there are people here who don't under-

stand the threat of terrorism that we face and are dealing with, especially in the post-9/11 era.

It seems to me, to use a term that General Van Riper mentioned, we have an interactively complex situation in the Middle East now, made worse by our quagmire in Iraq. We have a resurgent Taliban and Al Qaeda. We have not enough force and effort in Afghanistan. Pakistan is in turmoil, with an ongoing question as to how it will shape up. We have involvement with Iran and Syria, with Hezbollah and Hamas, and a festering Israeli Palestinian situation; and, in the middle of that mix, we have the possibility of a nuclear-weapon-armed Iran, which adds to this stew.

Do any of you have confidence that the United States currently has an adequate and articulable national security strategy to deal with this situation?

Colonel WILKERSON. Directly answering your question, yes and no, they don't.

Mr. HODES. Thank you for that. That's a great start.

Colonel WILKERSON. They have a horde of them, as was pointed out by one of the panelists, and none of them make a lot of sense to me. And I've read most of them, if not all of them, and this is most discouraging.

Back to a point made earlier, there is only one place in your government, including you and this body, where strategic thinking goes on on a routine basis. That's in the policy planning staff of that pinko Commie bunch of people at Foggy Bottom. Nowhere else in your government does strategic planning go on.

So that's part of the answer to the question why we don't have a coherent, reasonably logical strategy for dealing with all the challenges we confront, not the least of which is terrorism presented by people like Al Qaeda, Jemaah Islamiya and others who are intent on doing us harm, which I might add is probably an insignificant number of people in the world, and yet we're not focused on that very insignificant group of people. We're instead running it across the globe.

You didn't even mention in your litany probably one of the most serious things happening today, and that is in the heart of Europe where people are planning—using the civil liberties that exist there, which in some countries even exceed our own—using those to do planning to get together to do the kinds of nefarious things that Al Qaeda did to us and they have done in Madrid and Bali and London. And battle-hardened veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan are going to Europe to fill their ranks out. This is very dangerous.

Mr. HODES. Anybody else want to comment on whether or not you believe there is a comprehensive national security strategy? General?

General VAN RIPER. Sir, as I mentioned in my testimony, I did a Web search; and I found 29 strategies the U.S. Government's produced to have national security or national security strategy in them.

Until the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986, there was no place those of us in uniform could go to find a national security or national military strategy. That was rectified; and, in 1988, the first national security strategy was produced. For those of us who taught strategy, that was a wellspring, because we could go back

and talk about how you could come from that document, work your way through military objectives and military action if needed.

We had—before, we had a deficiency. Now, we have this excess. As I indicated, I don't know what they say. If we were permitted to return questions to the panel, mine would be, how many panel members have read any one or even one of these strategies?

Most important, though, even if we'd all read them, how many American citizens have read them? How many American citizens understood them?

Even as a 6-year-old, in World War II, I had some glimmering that we were fighting in Europe first and then we're going to fight in the Pacific. As a teenager, I understood what we were attempting to do in terms of the cold war with Korea; and certainly during the cold war, I understood and with my fellow students could talk about massive retaliation, flexible response.

When I go on campuses today, I don't see those sorts of discussions about national security. As I said, the Nation's at the mall. Only the military's engaging in this in small, small groups. We need a national discourse.

Mr. HODES. Let me just followup. To the extent that anybody can discern from the large number of strategies that you've talked about some sense of a national security strategy, is anybody satisfied that what the administration is contemplating, talking about, thinking about and doing about Iran fits in to any comprehensive, articulable and organized strategy that would help bring Members of Congress along or the disengaged American populace to understand what threats we're facing, how we intend to face them and why we're doing what we're doing?

General VAN RIPER. My response would be, absolutely not, sir.

Mr. HODES. Mr. Berman.

Mr. BERMAN. I would concur. I think what we have with regard to Iran is not a strategy but several strategies that are being pursued by separate elements of the bureaucracy: economic punitive measures, diplomatic measures, and others. There's nothing resembling a coherent framework in which all of these can be integrated, at least not as of yet.

Colonel GARDINER. Just two points to connect. One of them is going back to the question on firebreak or circuit breakers. If we had a strategy, it would help the Iranians understand our behavior better. I do not know, I can't articulate the U.S.' red line for Iran, meaning at what point we would use force.

It has been said we can't allow them to have nuclear weapons, but, in his last press conference, the President said they can't have the knowledge to produce nuclear weapons. By that red line, we have crossed and we should be using force against Iran. We can't be that sloppy in our discussion of what our policies are with respect to Iran.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Colonel; and thank you, Mr. Hodes.

Mr. HODES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. TIERNEY. I just note that in the General's testimony, in a line he said, in the last 6 years, the Defense Department seems to have placed more emphasis on tactics and operations than designing meaningful strategy. I think that's exactly what you were get-

ting at, is they might have tactics but what they were going to do if they haven't fit it into a strategy on that.

That's why we're having another series of hearings, this particular committee; and I think some of you are aware of that running parallel with this on what is our strategy going forward in the full world arena on that and this and a host of other issues and how does it all fit in.

Mr. Lynch, you're recognized for 5 minutes.

Colonel WILKERSON. May I just reinforce that for a second?

Mr. TIERNEY. Certainly.

Colonel WILKERSON. When Ambassador Richard Haas and Secretary Powell sent me over to the Pentagon to establish joint staff liaison with the policy planning staff at the State Department, I encountered the military building its national military strategy. Rumsfeld subsequently forbade us at State to come back to the Pentagon or the Pentagon to come to State. But when I encountered it, I asked the man in charge of building the national military strategy how he was doing that in the absence of a national security strategy. He said, it's tough.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Lynch, you're recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'm among a group of us here that believes that there should be some dialog at some level with Iran. We are all very careful not to undermine our State Department initiatives and the general policy, if you call it that, coming out of the State Department today.

Are there examples in the past where—I'm sure during the cold war—there was talk about dialog going on? We've been approached, some of us on this committee, by members of the Bundestag and other members of the European Parliament to engage perhaps some members of the moderate political bent in Iran. And yet there is some reluctance there because of the position that the State Department has taken, and we don't want to undermine their central role in setting national policy.

What are some of the solutions that you might see in terms of your own experience, your own knowledge of history and how we've handled this in the past? Is there a way to go forward to establish some type of dialog, even recognizing the absolutely offensive positions that have been taken by Ahmadinejad publicly?

Mr. PILLAR. Mr. Lynch, if I can respond, we don't even have to go as far back as the cold war. We have the sterling example in Libya, which led to the tripartite agreement between Libya, United States and U.K., which in my judgment was a foreign policy success for the Bush administration and the Blair government.

And what happened there was we talked to them, and there were at that time secret, but now it's been made public—and this does go back to my personal experience, because I had the privilege of being part of the initial rounds of secret talks that began in 1999, which led then finally to the agreement which resulted in the dismantling of the Libyan unconventional weapons program and their becoming a partner, rather than an adversary on terrorism.

So the two key lessons to take from that, No. 1, we talked and, No. 2, we talked with an open agenda. We discussed everything of concern to us, about terrorism, about Qaddafi's rather erratic diplomacy and about unconventional weapons; and we also talked about

the things that were on the Libyan's mind as well. And we eventually had success, and I give the administration a lot of credit for that, by the way.

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Berman.

Mr. BERMAN. If I may, sir, I would add one caveat to Dr. Pillar's comments.

I think it pays to take a look at the political center of gravity within the Islamic republic. It's quite clear that the current nuclear crisis is reaching a point in which the compulsion to do a deal on our part is actually very great. We would like very much to avoid a conflict. We would like to reach some sort of negotiated settlement.

I think—I often say there's really only two things that you can't escape. You can't escape geography, and you can't escape demography. Iran is a country of 70 million people in which two-thirds of the population, 50 million people, are 35 and younger, which means they've lived all or most of their lives under the Islamic republic. And they are uniformly, according to all sorts of polls done by both Democrats and Republicans, disaffected and discontented with the current state of affairs.

I would be very careful to articulate a negotiated settlement that makes those people, that constituency, view us as having abandoned support for them in favor of support for a regime that is, frankly, unpopular and swimming against the tide of history.

Mr. LYNCH. OK.

Colonel WILKERSON. Can I just pick up on those very same points?

Iraq is the hegemony in the Persian Gulf by demography, by size and a number of other factors that a strategist would look at. We recognize that. That's the reason we overthrew Mossadegh in 1953 with Kermit Roosevelt, Frank Wisner, and a bunch of leftovers from the OSS in World War II.

We then installed the Shah, and for 26 years we fed that hegemony. We fed it with \$20 billion worth of arms from Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger. Read Robert Dowlick's book and you will understand just how significant this transfer was. We almost decided to give them nuclear weapons.

Then comes the revolution, and all of a sudden we've got a different set of people in Tehran. That doesn't change the fact they're still a hegemony, and we need to recognize that. Iraq, of course, balanced them for a while. We took Iraq's side in the Iran-Iraq war. We did. Iran would have beaten Iraq had we not done that, even though Iraq had strategic, operational and tactical surprise on Iran when it attacked.

So they are the hegemony. We need to recognize that; and we need to deal diplomatically, economically and otherwise with coming to some kind of accommodation with that very real strategic reality.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Mr. Lynch.

Mr. McDermott.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

John Kennedy got into the Bay of Pigs—

Mr. TIERNEY. I think you need to put your mic on. The “up” position is on.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. John Kennedy got into the Bay of Pigs; and then, when it came to the Cuban Missile Crisis, he said to his brother, hey, get everybody in here on all sides of this issue. Let’s have a little talk about it before we go off in any kind of strange way.

It seems to me we’re in a similar kind of situation here, and I want to ask about a process that I hear people talk about, never sat through one, don’t know what they really are. They’re called war games. How many of you have actually participated in a war game?

So you have all been through one.

The possibility—I know Mr.—Colonel Gardiner’s putting one on CNN here shortly. What about having the Congress go through that process over in the Caucus Room in the Cannon Building or down in the basement of the Capitol and let us actually experience it? Tell us what that would do for us in terms of us letting—if we’re the ones that are supposed to declare war, like the Constitution says—because what scares people like me is the people in the White House right now says the President has enough authority to go ahead and do whatever he wants in Iran. And I still believe the Constitution is correct, that we have the right, but we really don’t know what the options are.

I mean, this is as close to an exploration of the options as will happen in the U.S. Congress. I’d like to ratchet it up one level. Tell me about a war game for all of us.

Colonel GARDINER. I started teaching at the War College and became dissatisfied with the way students understood strategy after the traditional teaching methods. I began war gaming because—for two reasons. No. 1 is there’s a very fundamental thing about adults learning. Adults don’t learn when they’re told. I mean, you will remember 10 percent of what I tell you within an hour, but within 2 days you won’t remember anything. If you participate in the process, if you experience the process, if you have a sense for the decisions, I will tell you that you will understand the situation better. That’s the first thing I will tell you.

The second thing I will tell you, I know by experience and having done this with people who have served in the White House, who have been Chiefs of Staff in numbers of administrations, will say, wow, I had no idea ’til we did this what I learned.

And I used in my briefing an example that came out of one of those games for senior people, who said, I see now, if we start down this road, eventually the President will be put in a position where he has no choice but to go for regime change because the situation will unfold to that thing.

I mean, that’s the kind of thing that I think you begin to see understandings for. I think, you know, there are techniques, and I will—let me just build on what General Van Riper says, that he used the term “wicked problem.” That’s a term that architects use, and when architects talk about a “wicked problem,” they don’t mean you back away from it. When architects say a “wicked problem,” it’s like the design of a room. You don’t find a solution analytically, but you try different arrangements till you say, wow, I got

the furniture in a good place. The only way you can do that is by trying, exercising, and participating, I think.

Colonel WILKERSON. That's what diplomacy is all about.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. And is it possible—could you take 25 of us, picked randomly from the floor, and put us through a war game and come out with—and let the American people see it through television and the press and whatever watching it? General.

General VAN RIPER. Sir, I would encourage a step before that, though I certainly would encourage what you are suggesting.

The term before was mentioned "strategic planning." There's a wonderful book by Henry Mintzberg, called "The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning," and what he points out, in all fields in our society—government, industry, academia—those in the senior leadership positions find themselves so busy with day-to-day activity they walk away from setting the strategy and turn it over to the planners. And planners do what they do best, they plan.

The analogy I would use is the skipper of a naval vessel who would say to his navigator, pick the port and chart the course. That doesn't happen. The captain picks the port and observes as the navigator charts the course.

So, strategic planning, as he said, is an oxymoron. What we first need is to involve the most senior leaders in this. Otherwise, it will be the same thing. It will be a plan that they have no investment in.

The second step, after we persuade the very top national leadership to be involved in your game, is to become informed on the problem. There's no use starting the game until we understand, No. 1, what is the problem and what's the context, how have we framed it, how have we said it, how have we formulated it, and then there might be some hope of gaining something from that game.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. But we here are always trying to smell the forest from the back of a galloping horse. How do we do that first step? How do we get the leadership and the committee chairmen and whatever that might be necessary, or could we have some benefit from just using ordinary troops like us?

General VAN RIPER. I'm not optimistic at this point, and I'm on this side of the committee from—for 60 years as I voted—I'm sorry, it's 50 years as I voted, but I'm not optimistic. And the reason I'm not optimistic, before the term "information" or "information operations" was used, we hear that, we hear public diplomacy, strategic communications. All that is in the realm of technical or tactical.

We, as a Nation, have lost the strategic narrative. Our President has lost the strategic narrative. I find it sometimes hard to believe what he's telling, and I'm from his party. So until we regain the strategic narrative, I'm not sure how we can tell our story around the world and be credible.

So as much as I would encourage this intellectual activity prior to the game, I fear we may have to wait for another year and a half before it will be of benefit, which may, unfortunately, be too late.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Mr. McDermott.

We're going to allow one question per member of the panel here, since we've gone through for the 5 minutes once, and I just want to raise one point with the General.

The PBS program "Nova" and Malcolm Gladwell's book "Blink" features vignettes of the gigantic \$250 million Defense Department war game called the Millennium Challenge of 2002. I think you mentioned—alluded to that in your remarks.

In it, they say that you revealed how, as the leader of the enemy forces, you inflicted enormous and unexpected casualties on the American fleet and ground troops, invading a country in the Persian Gulf. This apparently displeased the Pentagon leadership so badly they stopped the exercise, refloated the sunken ships and revived the dead and started over with a script requiring you to do as they expected. You refused.

Would you tell us what the lessons of that war game were and the lessons of the Pentagon's reaction mean to us when we're considering what's going on here in Iran?

General VAN RIPER. First, let me proceed by saying that was the most corrupt thing I ever saw the American military do. The good news is I never saw it before; I've not seen it sense.

I do not believe with the new leadership—and I'm very encouraged by the new Secretary, the new chairman. I'm very encouraged with General Jim Mattis who took over the Joint Forces Command, which is where this particular game was played, that we would never see something like that.

Under the previous leadership in the Pentagon, they did not seem the least bit interested in what might have been gained from that particular game. There was an idea at the beginning, pre-conceived of how it was going to be. It was billed as free play. That is, I, as the red commander, military commander would have a great deal of latitude because they were so convinced these non-ideas would work.

When they didn't, they simply scripted it to a pre-ordained conclusion, which I would have had no problem with, until I saw them brief congressional staffers and brief the media that this was still a free play exercise and these, as I described them, non-ideas had proved successful.

Unfortunately, those ideas are like a virus. They're permeating our military forces now, not to the good, and I think is one of the reasons we haven't had the serious strategic discussions from the uniform side in the last 5 to 8 years.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Shays, your question.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you. I want to read you a quote from Mr. Sarkozy, and I'd like to—and Chancellor Merkel, and I'll like to get your reaction. "There will be no peace in the world." This is from Sarkozy. There will be no peace in the world if the international community falters in the face of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Iran is entitled to power for civilian purposes, but if we allow Iran to acquire nuclear weapons we would incur an unacceptable risk to the stability of the region and stability of the world.

And German Chancellor Merkel said, "Iran is ignoring U.N. Sanctions Council resolutions. Iran is blatantly threatening Israel. Let's not fool ourselves. If Iran were to acquire a nuclear bomb, the consequences would be disastrous."

This isn't President Bush or anyone else. These are two pretty cautious leaders, for the most part.

My question to you is, can any of you see a circumstance where you would recommend to the President of the United States to use military force in order to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons?

I'd like each of you to answer that question.

Colonel WILKERSON. Let me start by saying that I would then ask Mr. Sarkozy and Angela Merkel, as I did Joschka Fischer when he made similar comments, how many German troops, how many French troops?

Mr. SHAYS. Fair enough.

Colonel WILKERSON. And the answers were not very good.

Mr. SHAYS. That's a great answer. Thank you.

Colonel GARDINER. I would answer it in probably not a direct way that you would like.

What I would say is, we've got to keep reminding ourselves this is not a crisis that is coming down on us immediately. They're having trouble with the P1s. That's a long path to make a weapon. We've got to remember we've got some time. So I think that there's—I always preface this, we don't have a crisis other than of our own creation right now.

Mr. SHAYS. Neither of you ruled out military force, but you're suggesting that there's time, you're suggesting that other people need to put their oar in the water, too, and so on.

Dr. Pillar.

Mr. PILLAR. Mr. Shays, I think you correctly identified in your opening comments what I would regard as the main downside of an Iranian nuclear weapon, and that is the impact on proliferation elsewhere in the Middle East. And I agree with your earlier comments, that when you look at Egypt, Saudi Arabia and so on, there might be a cascading effect. But exactly the point that Colonel Gardiner mentioned, there is not something we are facing now or probably even close to it.

And on the issue that was raised before about deterrence, deterrence works. It does not depend on a specific ideology or degree of extremism or lack of it. Deterrence worked with the likes of Stalin and Mao. And even though there is so much in the current Iranian leadership which is anathema to us and extreme, they are not suicidal; and that is the basis for deterrence working, even with the kinds of uncertainties that Mr. Berman correctly mentioned before.

We haven't had the whole decades to buildup a strategic doctrine like we and the Soviets did, but we're dealing with that situation in the south Asia, too, with the Indians and Pakistanis.

Mr. BERMAN. I'm sorry, I would take a very different view of the feasibility of deterrence, for a number of reasons. Among other things, because I find it facile to the extreme to assume that the same value on human life that we impose upon our own society, that we calculate as part of our strategic calculus, is applied on the other side.

I think there's plenty of evidence in the public record on the part of not only Mr. Ahmadinejad, who is correctly perceived as not quite the most stable player in the Iranian game, absolutely true, but with regards to others as well, key senior players who are seen

as rational, former President Rafasanjani, Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, that would give one pause if we were to seriously think about whether or not it would be credible to assume that if this regime acquires a nuclear capability, we would, under any conceivable circumstance, be able to prevent them from utilizing these weapons and be able to prevent them from acting hostilely or being more emboldened.

Mr. SHAYS. Let me get the General's answer. Thank you.

General VAN RIPER. War is certainly an instrument of policy; and there are occasions, unfortunately, when it's the Army instruments going to work. I think in terms of Nazi Germany, there was no answer in that era. I don't think, though others have used that analogy, that we're at that point at this particular time.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Shays.

Mr. Yarmuth, do you have a question?

Mr. YARMUTH. Yes. First of all, since Mr. McDermott mentioned Article I of the Constitution, I want to give him one of my buttons here so that he can wear it around. I agree totally with his characterization of the authority.

I want to just followup on something Mr. Shays said, the whole issue of preemptive war and whether the President's mention of knowledge of the atomic bomb—I mean, the formula of the atomic bomb was published in a Madison, WI, newspaper 27 years ago. I mean, everybody has access to how to do it. So that would be a pretty low bar to reach.

I'm curious as to whether the issue of—whether just the mere possession of atomic weapons sets a standard for preemptive war which has serious ramifications in maybe other arenas. Are we at risk if we were to engage upon military action simply because a country possessed—no matter how dangerous—possessed an atomic weapon? Does that have ramifications beyond that setting?

Mr. TIERNEY. Who were you asking that?

Mr. YARMUTH. I think Colonel Wilkerson seems like he's anxious to answer it.

Colonel WILKERSON. I just—I've got to run, and I just want to make one comment. I think this may sound like semantics, but I don't think it is. It certainly isn't for a soldier.

There's a difference between preventive war and preemptive war. Preemptive war, if it's provable, is even recognized by Article 51 of the U.N. Charter. This is preventive war. This is not preemptive war. There's no proof that the weapon is there ready to be launched at the United States or Israel or anybody else. You'd have a hell of a time proving that in a court of international law. That might not be very comforting, but it does mean this is a different calculus that we are starting with regard to war, and I would submit, as a soldier and a citizen, it's a very dangerous calculus.

Mr. YARMUTH. Possession by itself would be inadequate without proof that there was an imminent attempt.

Colonel WILKERSON. I think you'd need even convincing proof.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Hodes, I think you may be able to have one question before we go to vote.

Mr. HODES. I'll keep it to one.

Given what we saw in our efforts in Iraq in terms of lack of planning and preparedness, what's your sense on the level of preparation in military planning that has been done to defend against the full range of potential Iranian reactions in contrast to planning for U.S. offensive efforts on Iran's nuclear sites? Dr. Pillar.

Mr. PILLAR. I'm certainly not privy to the plans. I think probably on the military side there's been more planning than on some of the other dimensions we discussed, the political and the diplomatic, but Iran, I think, has been a presumed foe in a lot of military planning that's already gone on.

But the question would probably be things having to do with availability of resources and so on, given our continuing commitments in Iraq.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you.

Mr. Lynch, do you have a question?

Mr. LYNCH. Very quick one, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan during the 1980's, the United States, largely the CIA and largely in a secret effort, supplied training to the mujahideen, supplied Stinger missiles to mujahideen, supplied training to the tribal leaders there, Stinger missiles being used to shoot down Soviet helicopters. A lot of that was just below the surface, but I'm sure a lot of folks, including the Soviets, knew where that was coming from.

Now we are trying to stop Iran from acting in a similar just-below-the-radar effort against our own troops, supplying weapons, supplying training against our forces. By our conduct in the region, have we forfeited the moral high ground to complain about that type of activity that's going on right now?

Mr. TIERNEY. Who would you like to answer that question, Mr. Lynch, because we only have time for one.

Mr. LYNCH. Anyone who would be crazy enough to answer it.

Colonel GARDINER. I will be crazy. I don't know, but there is enough in the open literature to suggest that the United States is backing groups that are conducting operations inside Iran right now, and there are a number mentioned, the MEK, the PJACK in the north, sort of the offshoot of the PKK. The Iranians write about it. The Turkish write about it. Seymour Hersh has written about it in the New Yorker. There has to be an element of truth, in my mind.

Mr. LYNCH. There's a lot of activity going on around that Iranian border, no question about it.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you, Mr. Lynch.

Mr. McDermott, your final question.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Colonel Wilkerson, you were in the State Department who created the plan for what we should expect in Iraq after the war. It was thrown away by the Defense Department. Is there anybody or has anyone done a similar thing about Iran that is hidden somewhere or buried in a wastebasket somewhere or that we can get our hands on?

Colonel WILKERSON. The Future of Iraq Project is well-known, as you've just indicated. What is not well-known is that General Horr, General Chris, General Zinni and a host of other Central Command commanders had some rather elaborate planning for what's called phase four should we go to war with Iraq, which everyone

thought was at the top of Central Command's list, for contingency planning and deliberate planning.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. For going to war with Iraq?

Colonel WILKERSON. Right.

With Iran, the same thing exists. I would be willing to tell you, almost, you know, take an oath to it, that the Central Command Commander has on the shelf a plan for war with Iran, a number of different iterations of that. He's probably got it down, dusting it off and working on it right now. And there is a phase four, and that phase four would probably indicate to you everything we've said here today, how astronomically difficult it will be with the resources we have to carry out that plan.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. But nothing at the State Department similar to.

Colonel WILKERSON. I don't think there is. I'm not aware that there is. There are experts and so forth, but I don't think they've done the kind of planning with regard to that country that they did with regard to Iraq.

Mr. TIERNEY. Thank you very much.

I want to thank my colleagues—

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Is it that the only Intelligence Committee can get that data?

Colonel WILKERSON. They should be able to.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Thank you.

Mr. TIERNEY. I thank my colleagues for their questioning and thank each one of the panel members. Colonel Gardiner, Colonel Wilkerson, Dr. Pillar, Mr. Berman, and General Van Riper, thank you all very, very much for your expertise.

This hearing will be replicated on our Web site for people to get to see the transcripts of all three hearings, including all the testimonies here on <http://nationalsecurity.oversight.house.gov/>; and we hope you will take advantage of it. The testimony you gave us today, I think, was very significant and helpful as we try to determine policy moving forward.

Thank you again for your time and for your patience during the various votes. Thank you.

Meeting is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:46 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

