# Israel's Future and Iran's Nuclear Program

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Israel has had an arsenal of nuclear weapons since the late 1960s, and its current inventory is estimated at between 100 and 200 warheads.[1] Some of these weapons will eventually be, or have already been, placed on Israel's missile-carrying submarines,[2] making them virtually impervious to preemptive military attack. They are or soon will be Israel's invulnerable nuclear deterrent.

Yet, hardly a day goes by without some Israeli official, journalist or lobbyist expressing apocalyptic warnings about Iran's nuclear program.[3] Iran, a state party to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), is in technical violation of some of its treaty obligations, but its program is still under international inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Israel never signed the NPT and thus is not under any international inspection regime.

The tacit assumption behind the apocalyptic pronouncements is that Iran will not only make nuclear weapons, but will use them to destroy Israel shortly thereafter. This amounts to assuming that Iran's leaders are insane. That is, Israel's deterrent notwithstanding, the Iranian clerics' hatred of Israel is so intense that in order to destroy it they would launch a nuclear attack that would kill not only Jews but also up to 1.5 million Muslims living in Israel, as well as triggering an Israeli nuclear counterattack. An Israeli nuclear counterattack, which Iran could not prevent, would turn back the clock on Iran's development for many decades and reduce its leaders to radioactive dust. There is no evidence to suggest that the ruling clerics are so disposed.[4] Some have speculated that Iran might make nuclear weapons and transfer some of them to third parties, e.g. terrorist organizations, for use against Israel.[4] But no country that provides nuclear weapons to a third party can be sure that the transfer will be perfectly secure from discovery or that the weapons will be used as intended. A nuclear attack on Israel using a weapon originating in Iran would undoubtedly be treated as if it came from Tehran, again resulting in Iran's utter destruction.

This is not to say that Iran's nuclear program is benign. It is clear that Iran's near-term intention is to move as close to a nuclear-weapons capability as the nonproliferation regime allows, which is considerable. It is stockpiling enriched uranium, using centrifuge technology that may have come from the notorious A.Q.

Khan network[6], and constructing a heavy-water reactor that could be used for the production of plutonium. Iran's recent test of a missile with a range of 1,200 miles showed that it is pursuing space technology that could also be the basis for a nuclear-weapons delivery system. The CIA's 2007 National Intelligence Estimate said that Iran had been engaged in activities involved in the development of nuclear weapons, but had apparently stopped them in 2003. It is reasonable to suppose that Iran may reinstitute those activities in the future, especially if it feels vulnerable to military attack.[7]

Moreover, concerns about Iran are not confined to its nuclear activities. Iran has been accused of supporting groups working to destabilize governments in various countries in the region. Those governments, including Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Egypt, all of which, like Iran, have abominable records on human rights, are friendly toward the United States and supply it with a considerable amount of oil. They are also regional rivals of Iran. Accordingly, they and the United States view any increase in Iran's influence or prestige with great concern. Since Iran's nuclear program is likely to help its quest for such influence, some of Iran's regional competitors are seeking to counter it through the establishment of nuclear programs of their own, possibly creating a further threat of proliferation in the region.

The result in the United States has been to create common cause between those who view Iran's nuclear program as an existential threat to Israel and conservative foreign-policy hardliners who are ready to advocate military action to reverse Iran's surging ambitions. An example of such advocacy is offered by an organization called the Bipartisan Policy Center in a report supporting a course of action that would inevitably lead to war. The report calls for full-scale assaults not only on Iran's known nuclear facilities, but also on its infrastructure, including its electrical grid, water supplies and factories.[8] Under this scenario, further attacks would occur if Iran were to try to reconstitute its nuclear program.

**Iran's Nuclear History**

It should be noted that the U.S. attitude toward Iranian civil nuclear ambitions has not always been negative because of fear of a piggy-back weapons program. Iran had an interest in nuclear-weapons technology going back to the days of the shah, and the United States was an unintended enabler at the time. Under a nuclear-research cooperation agreement signed in 1957, the United States supplied Iran with its first research reactor in addition to supplies of enriched uranium, plutonium and fissile isotopes. The shah expressed plans in the 1970s to build more than 20 power reactors, and the Ford administration, particularly at the urging of Henry Kissinger, agreed to sell Iran the first eight reactors along with nuclear fuel.[9] There was even some support within the administration for the shah to obtain reprocessing technology for the purpose of separating plutonium from the spent fuel of those reactors,[10] which would have given Iran nuclear weapons material.[11] This was the administration whose White House chief of staff was Dick Cheney, whose secretary of defense was Donald Rumsfeld, and whose head of the nonproliferation office at the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency was Paul Wolfowitz. But Ford lost the 1976 presidential election before signing a new nuclear agreement with Iran, so it

was left as an issue for the incoming Carter administration. Carter administration officials were initially favorable and drafted a new agreement that was tighter in its nonproliferation provisions due to the recent passage of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Act of 1978. But the agreement was shelved when it was discovered that Iran was engaged in clandestine nuclear-weapons research.

Following the 1979 revolution, the Iranian weapons program was mothballed at the order of the Ayatollah Khomeini, who reportedly viewed nuclear weapons as "un-Islamic."[12] The program, however, was restarted in 1984 during the Iran-Iraq War, in which the United States assisted Saddam Hussein with equipment and materials that Saddam found useful for his chemical arsenal.[13] The Iranians undoubtedly also understood that Saddam's own appetite for nuclear weapons continued despite Israel's 1981 destruction of Iraq's Osirak reactor.

The Iranian program remained hidden for approximately 18 years, until an Iranian exile group[14] publicly revealed in 2002 that Iran had been working all along on a nuclear-enrichment program and a heavy-water reactor that Iran could claim were for peaceful purposes, but could lead to the production of nuclear-weapons materials.

The discovery of a clandestine Iranian program sent political shock waves around the world, particularly in Israel. Several rounds of negotiations with Iran, encouraged by the United States and led by three European countries over the past few years, have failed to stop Iran's nuclear activities despite a background of implied threats and an occasional promise of blandishments by the Bush administration.[15] Low-enriched uranium, suitable for use as fuel in a power reactor, is being produced by Iran's centrifuge plant in Natanz. Because these activities were not initially declared to the IAEA, Iran, which is still a party to the NPT, is in violation of its safeguards obligations but has promised to produce a documented history of its enrichment activities. Iran claims its program is purely for peaceful purposes and that it has no intention of enriching uranium to levels that would make possible the production of nuclear weapons, but now that it has the ability to make low-enriched uranium, its ability to produce high-enriched fuel is assured.[16]

Many observers both inside and outside of Israel do not believe the Iranian claim. Iran currently has no operating nuclear-power reactors and therefore has no current need for its own indigenous nuclear fuel. The one reactor soon to operate at Bushehr is subject to a contract under which its fuel will be supplied by Russia, which will take back the spent fuel, making the plutonium contained in it unavailable to Iran. But the possibility of an Iranian bomb based on high-enriched uranium has generated plans in Israel for a military attack on the Iranian nuclear enrichment facilities.[17]

**Existential Threat or Threat to Zionism?**

As previously stated, the public justification by Israel and many of its supporters for such an attack is that the Iranian theocratic government is committed to the destruction of Israel, so that an Iranian bomb would represent a threat to Israel's existence. But one must distinguish between the existence of Israel as a functioning sovereign state, and the Zionist project, which is to create and sustain a democratic Jewish state by calling on Jews all over the world to settle in Israel. Arguments that Iran's nuclear program is not an existential threat to Israel usually ignore that Iran does not have to resort to nuclear weap-

ons or an overt military attack in order to threaten the Zionist project. That is, Iran's nuclear program could help undermine the character of Israel as a democratic Jewish state by contributing to a decline in Jewish immigration to Israel and an increase in Jewish emigration from Israel. That could threaten the continuation of a Jewish majority.[18] From a Zionist point of view, there may be no difference between Israel's physical destruction and the failure of the Zionist project by other means. Thus, most Israelis support military action against Iran.[19] However, the opposing arguments to a military attack at this time are powerful and have so far stayed Israel's hand.

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**Arguments Against an Attack on Iran**

These arguments have three major components:

(1) The construction of an Iranian bomb that can be reliably delivered is still years away. Despite the fact that a gun-type uranium-fission weapon is the easiest to construct, current estimates are that an immediate Iranian breakout from the nonproliferation regime would still put Iran two years away from a bomb that could be delivered by truck and more years away for delivery by missile. Such a breakout, which means leaving the NPT and throwing out the IAEA inspectors, could, by virtue of Iran's nuclear history, result in the invocation of Chapter VII of the UN Charter,[20] making Iran a pariah state subject to worldwide economic sanctions and possible UN-sanctioned military action. There is time for diplomatic efforts to work to convince the Iranians that their better course is to forgo the bomb.

(2) The likelihood of a completely successful attack by Israel that destroys all of Iran's nuclear fuel-making facilities is low. Their facilities are dispersed and some are deeply underground. This is in contrast to the state of the nuclear facilities in Iraq and Syria when Israel attacked them in 1981 and 2007, respectively. In addition, Iran has beefed up its antiaircraft capability and is seeking to purchase Russian S-300 surface-to-air missiles, which would be effective against Israel's current air force.[21] A reasonably successful attack would delay but not destroy Iran's ability to make nuclear weapons, would cause Iran to redouble its efforts in that direction, and would likely produce a degree of public anger that would translate into stronger support for its clerical government. Any military attack would produce Iranian retaliation, not only against Israel but also against American soldiers in Iraq if American support for the attack is given or suspected. It could unleash worldwide terror attacks against U.S. facilities and citizens.

(3) There is no evidence that the clerics ruling Iran, including the Ayatollah Khamenei, would launch a first-strike nuclear attack on Israel. Iran is aware of the Israeli capabilities for nuclear counterattack that would destroy Iran as a functioning entity for an indefinite period and wipe out significant parts of its national patrimony. Reports of the existence of a "martyrdom movement" among Iranian women have been used to fan Israeli fears of unprovoked

Iranian suicide attacks. But even within some of these stories, it becomes apparent that Iranian clerics regard suicide attacks as justified only in the context of defense against attacks by a stronger foe.[22] The ruling clerics did not seek power in order to see Iran destroyed; they see themselves as stewards of a revolution that they believe will bring Shia Islam to its rightful place of world leadership. They are not about to lose it in a nuclear holocaust. In the absence of military aggression against Iran threatening the power of the clerics, they have no theological or other motivation to start a war that could trigger Iran's nuclear destruction. Thus, even if Iran were to possess the bomb, the Iranians would be deterred from using it on another nuclear-weapons state.

**Israel's Reactions Are Counterproductive**

None of the counterindications to a nuclear attack by Iran suggest that Iran's attitude toward the Jewish state is destined to be friendly. Pragmatism, however, may return, as was the case during the Iran-Iraq War, when Israel sold weapons to Iran.[23] Iran remains the chief supporter of Hamas and Hezbollah, and the desire to see an end to the Jewish state, articulated originally by Ayatollah Khomeini and reiterated by Iran's current president, is clear.[24]

But rather than the use of weapons of mass destruction, Iranian leaders are more likely to see patience and the continuance of current trends as the best route to their desired goal for Israel. Indeed, Israeli policies have played into the hands of the Iranian leaders. The West Bank occupation, counterproductive military operations in response to continual harassment, and intransigence on the freezing and removal of settlements have drained much of the reservoir of sympathy and support for Israel that existed at the time of the Six-Day War.

In addition, just the thought of Iran's having nuclear weapons works to further the goals of the Iranian leaders toward Israel. As indicated earlier, by raising the specter of a first-strike nuclear attack by Iran, the Israelis have generated a public debate that obscures and exacerbates the demographic threat facing Israel as a democratic Jewish state. That threat to the Zionist project has no effective military countermeasure. Arguments in favor of an Israeli attack on Iran based on *realpolitik* considerations[25] also do not take this into account.

**The Psychological Burden on Israelis**

Consider the events of the past three years. In response to the kidnapping of two soldiers, Israel invaded Lebanon in 2006 for the second time in the past quarter century and engaged in a war with Hezbollah. The war did not weaken Hezbollah's political position in Lebanon, nor did it prevent the launch of thousands of rockets into Northern Israel. Hezbollah's ability to launch such rockets was degraded but not destroyed, and has apparently been rebuilt. A recent report in the *Times* of London claims that Hezbollah has stockpiled up to 40,000 rockets and is training its forces to use rockets capable of hitting Tel Aviv.[26] More recently, in response to rockets launched by Hamas into Southern Israel, particularly on the town of Sderot, Israel invaded Gaza. The intent was not only to shut down these launches, but also to cut off the smuggling into Gaza of contraband used for rocket construction and explosives. Like the war with Hezbollah, the war with Hamas has resulted in a public-relations disaster for Israel. Exploiting that public-relations advantage may be the reason for Hamas's recent decision to suspend rocket firing,[27] which had continued at low levels along with Israeli air raids, in spite of the separately declared cease-fire agreements.[28] There is no indication that the

suspension will be permanent, and a senior Hamas police commander has been quoted as saying Hamas is working on extending the range of its rockets.[29]

Both wars have been, arguably, a political necessity for Israel. No sovereign state could tolerate its neighbors continually firing rockets into its territory, regardless of the military ineffectiveness of those attacks. The failure to permanently stop the attacks, however, cannot help but raise further the psychological burden on Israelis who live within range of the current generation of rockets, as well as those who will inevitably be within range of the more advanced rockets being developed. The rockets' randomness, along with the uncertainty as to their targets, is unnerving, as British citizens who were alive at the time of the German V-1 and V-2 attacks during the waning days of World War II can testify.

The burden on Israelis of the Iranian nuclear program should be seen through this same lens. Even if Iran does nothing more for the next few years than continue its development of advanced nuclear technology under international safeguards, its nuclear-weapons latency will advance concomitantly. This will lead to the inevitable conclusion that Iran will be able to quickly break out and construct a nuclear arsenal whenever it decides to do so. Despite the arguments advanced earlier as to why Iran is unlikely to make that decision soon — and, having made it, would be unlikely to wage nuclear war — the Israelis' discomfort over the Iran program has risen significantly. It includes the fear of an Iranian nuclear "umbrella" over Hezbollah and Hamas, ostensibly protecting them from Israeli retaliation for rocket attacks.[30] But such an umbrella would not work, for the same reasons given earlier as to why Iran would not launch a nuclear attack against Israel. The fear, however, adds greatly to the already heavy burden produced by the prospect of further rocket harassment in the future.

**The Real Threat Is to Zionism**

Under these conditions, the Zionist project could stall and even reverse. If Israelis begin to believe that their government cannot protect them from nuclear attack or random rocket attacks, some percentage of those who can do so will leave for safer countries, and some Diaspora Jews considering immigration to Israel may rethink their plans. Perhaps more important, those who leave are more likely to be secular Jews, not committed by religious or messianic fervor to remain, while the opposite would be true of most of those who immigrate. This would move the country further away from the secular ideals of its founders and give its religious zealots more power over policy. Recent data show that more people are leaving Israel than are immigrating to it.[31] This trend could be exacerbated by a possible economic decline if foreign investment and tourism decrease as a result of the fear of nuclear war.

The Israeli political establishment is adding to these concerns by fanning hysteria over the Iranian nuclear program. If they convince Israelis that the Iranian leaders are insane enough to start a nuclear war and produce another holocaust, then it would be equally insane for Jews to immigrate to Israel or to remain there in the face of such a threat. This logic makes it easy for Zionists to join forces with American hardliners on Iran and advocate military action. The latter may not care about Zionism but desire to maintain and extend U.S. geopolitical influence in the region, which they fear would be threatened by Iran's emergence as a nuclear-weapons state.

Whether such a preventive war with Iran would result in enhanced U.S. influence in the region is unclear, considering the degree of outrage it would likely engender in every country in the region, including those whose leaders might secretly welcome it. But the war's power to stanch the current population drain from Israel would be doubtful. War would certainly result in a worldwide hardening of Muslim attitudes toward Israel, organized boycotts of Israeli goods, divestment and sanctions directed against some Israeli institutions if not the government itself. There would likely be an increase in terrorist attacks against Jews, possibly making it difficult for Israelis to travel abroad in safety. This puts Israel and the Zionist project between a rock and a hard place. Attacking Iran is unlikely to make Israel's Jewish population feel safer in the long term and might even accelerate emigration in the short term. But the fear of war, nuclear or otherwise, is not the only thing disturbing the psychological comfort of Israelis.

Even without a nuclear threat or rocket attacks, if a "two state solution" with the Palestinians continues to be elusive, and the birthrate of Palestinians both within and outside Israel remains at or near current levels, the fear of Israel becoming a binational state in the future will add to the current concerns of the Jewish majority, especially if emigration and immigration levels continue on their current path. The combination of a perceived future threat to Israel's Jewish character plus the increasing political power of the extremist religious Jews who view the settlements in the West Bank as God's plan, sets up a dangerous internecine political fight with unpredictable consequences. Israelis, usually on the left, who have supported some kind of peace process in the past are increasingly pessimistic about reaching an accommodation with the Palestinians. Nothing shows this better than the wide support in Israel for the recent war in Gaza, a war that has resulted in virtually worldwide condemnation of Israel's tactics. The election of a new government, whose minister of foreign affairs, Avigdor Lieberman, is viewed by many as a racist demagogue, is another indicator that the ranks of the accommodationists within Israel are shrinking.

It is astonishing in retrospect that events and the passage of time since the Six-Day War and the Iranian revolution have resulted in young Iranians becoming more demanding of relief from the strictures of Sharia law and the mullahs, while young people in Israel, based on straw polls taken in high schools during the recent Israel election, are moving toward embracing the radical, racist politics of Avigdor Lieberman.[32] Lieberman's once-expressed support for the expulsion of Israeli Arabs might, if carried out, provide some temporary relief from the fear of losing the Jewish majority in Israel, but it could be done only at the expense of virtually universal condemnation of Israel and significant erosion of support from the secular Jewish Diaspora. It would likely give Iran a get-out-of-jail-free card regarding its past and present nuclear activities and tamp down outside criticism of Hamas and Hezbollah.

To add to the political difficulties faced by Israel, an accommodation with the Palestinians cannot be done without substantive engagement with (Iran-supported) Hamas and the dismantling of most settlements in the West Bank. Having had a settlement program in place for decades that now includes over 250,000 settlers with growing political power and support from some elements in the army, it is hard to see how Israel can dismantle major

settlements and return to its pre-1967 borders or something close to them, without risking civil war. But, unless it dismantles the settlements and agrees to a real two-state solution with a viable and sovereign Palestinian state, there will be no peace for Israel. Without peace, Iran's nuclear program, along with the threat of a resumption of rocket fire, will continue to plague the collective psyche of Israelis.

Zionism's original goal was to bring all Jews in the Diaspora to a Jewish homeland in the Holy Land. It had its best opportunity when Israel was created as a result of the collective world guilt generated by the Holocaust, and by the enthusiasm of a generation of committed, idealistic, optimistic young Jews in league with cold-eyed political architects and operatives. But, as the original promise of a democratic, Jewish "land of milk and honey" has given way to never-ending conflict that could turn nuclear, the growth of religious extremism, the rise of a political class rife with corruption, and a recognition of unfavorable population demographics have combined to replace optimism by a sense of despair among many Israelis. This contributes to the threat of failure for the Zionist project.

**U.S. and Israeli Policy Choices**

While the success of the project is important to Jewish nationalists, it should not be considered a vital national-security interest of the United States. Thus, characterizing Iran's nuclear program as an "existential threat" to Israel is an attempt to obtain support for sanctions and/or military action against Iran by conflating the physical destruction of Israel by a surprise nuclear attack, which Washington should actively work to prevent, with the demographic threats to the Zionist project, which the United States is under no obligation to alleviate. It is one thing to ask Americans to support Israeli military actions that would put them at risk from retaliation if Israel, an ally, is threatened with imminent nuclear attack; it is quite another to ask them to assume such risk simply on behalf of shoring up Zionism. Thus, President Obama's warning to Prime Minister Netanyahu not to launch a surprise attack on Iran, which he delivered during the Israeli leader's recent visit to Washington, is appropriate and implies that there will be no American support for such a venture.[33]

It is only by negotiated compromise and peace with the Palestinians, Iran and the Arab states that Israel can solidify its desired status as a prosperous, democratic Jewish state. The difficulties of reaching that goal are well recognized and daunting, but there is no realistic alternative. Among other things, it is the only sure path toward ultimately converting the Middle East into a nuclear-weapons-free zone in which no country feels the need to produce such weapons to protect its security or enlarge its international influence.

[1] Former President Jimmy Carter is quoted in a BBC News article on May 26, 2008, as follows: "The U.S. has more than 12,000 nuclear weapons; the Soviet Union [sic] has about the same; Great Britain and France have several hundred, and Israel has 150 or more"; http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7420573.stm. See also a report of the Federation of American Scientists, http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/israel/nuke/.

[2] See P. Beaumont and C. Urquhart, "Israel Deploys Nuclear Arms in Submarines," *The Observer*,

October 12, 2003, http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2003/oct/12/israel1.

[3] See P. Hirschberg, "Netanyahu: It's 1938 and Iran Is Germany; Ahmadinejad Is Preparing Another Holocaust," *Ha'aretz*, November 14, 2006, http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/787766.html.

[4] See C. Freilich, "The United States, Israel, and Iran: Defusing an 'Existential' Threat," Arms Control Today, November, 2008. http://www.armscontrol.org/print/3407.

[5] Suicide bombings were carried out by Iranians against the invading Iraqi army during the period of the Iran-Iraq War (1980-88) that was begun by Saddam Hussein. Iran has not attacked another country since its war with Russia in the early part of the 19th century. See also T. Lippman and J. Cole, "What Threat Does Iran Really Pose to Israel?" *The Newark Star-Ledger*, May 19, 2006, http://www.mideasti.org/scholars/editorial/what-threat-does-iran-really-pose-israel.

[6] See report by the International Institute of Strategic Studies, *Nuclear Black Markets: Pakistan, A. Q. Khan, and the Rise of Proliferation Networks*, Chapter 3, May 2, 2007, http://www.iiss.org/publications/strategic-dossiers/nbm/nuclear-black-market-dossier-a-net-assesment/aq-khan-and-onward-prolifertion-from-pakistan/?locale=en.

[7] Iran may want nuclear weapons as a matter of its desire for recognition as a regional power, but in an interview in the *Guardian* on May 14, 2009, International Atomic Energy Agency Director Mohamed El Baradei gave an additional reason: "We still live in a world where if you have nuclear weapons, you are buying power; you are buying insurance against attack. That is not lost on those who do not have nuclear weapons, particularly in [conflict] regions….This is the phenomenon we see now and what people worry about in Iran," http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/may/14/elbaradei-nuclear-weapons-states-un.

[8] See "Meeting the Challenge," Task Force Report for the Bipartisan Policy Center, Washington, DC, September, 2008, http://www.bipartisanpolicy.org/ht/a/GetDocumentAction/i/8448. See also R. Dreyfuss, "Dennis Ross's Iran Plan," *The Nation*, April 27, 2009, pp. 6-7. http://www.thenation.com/doc/20090427/dreyfuss?rel=hp_currently.

[9] See W. Burr, "A Brief History of U.S.-Iranian Nuclear Negotiations," *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, Jan.-Feb. 2009. See also M. Sahimi, "Iran's Nuclear Energy Program. Part V," Payvand News Service, Dec. 22, 2004, http://www.payvand.com/news/04/dec/1186.html.

[10] See D. Linzer, "Past Arguments Don't Square with Current Iran Policy," *The Washington Post*, March 27, 2005, p. A15, http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A3983-2005Mar26?language=printer.

[11] The draft agreement, however, contained no such provision. See National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book Number 268, http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nukevault/ebb268/index.htm.

[12] See Nuclear Threat Initiative Country Profile of Iran, http://www.nti.org/e_research/profiles/Iran/index.html.

[13] See W. Blum, "Anthrax for Export," *The Progressive Magazine*, April 1998, http://www.progressive.org/0901/anth0498.html.

[14] Information about the Iranian program was leaked to the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI). NCRI is viewed by the FBI as a front organization for the Mojahiden-e-Khalk (MEK), which the U.S. State Department has listed as a terrorist organization. The U.S. government had informed the IAEA of the Iranian enrichment activities about a year earlier than the NCRI public revelation.

[15] See D. Blair, "George W. Bush in Last Push to Halt Iran Nuclear Program," *The Telegraph*, June 10, 2008, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2106499/George-W-Bush-in-last-push-to-halt-Iranian-nuclear-programme.html.

[16] Once sufficient LEU has been produced and stockpiled (which could take Iran about two years

to accomplish), a plant with 6,000 advanced centrifuges in operation could take as little as 18 days for 25 kilograms of HEU (one bomb's worth) to be produced.

[17] See S. Frenkel, "Israel 'Prepared to Attack' Iran Nuclear Plants," *Times Online*, Dec. 4, 2008, http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/middle_east/article5284173.ece.

[18] See O. Ilani, "1 in 4 Israelis Would Consider Leaving Country If Iran Gets Nukes," *Ha'aretz*, May 22, 2009, http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1087472.html.

[19] See A. Benn, "Poll: 66% of Israeli Jews back attack on Iran," *Ha'aretz*, May 4, 2009. http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1082790.html.

[20] Chapter VII is entitled "Action with Respect to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression," http://www.un.org/aboutun/charter/chapter7.shtml.

[21] See "Iran: S-300 Missile Deal on Track," PressTV Report, April 15, 2009, http://www.presstv.com/classic/detail.aspx?id=91543&sectionid=351020101.

[22] M. Nissimov, Y. Mansharof, and A. Savyon, "Iranian Women's Magazine Shut Down for Publishing Investigative Article on Martyrdom Movement," Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), May 22, 2008, http://www.memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=ia&ID=IA43908.

[23] See T. Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance — The Secret Dealings of Iran, Israel, and the United States* (Yale University Press, 2007), pp.107-108.

[24] In a speech given at an anti-Zionist meeting in Asia, Iran's president, Mahmoud Ahmedinejad, was quoted in an official translation as having said, "(Israel) should be wiped off the map," The original phrase in Farsi had been uttered by the Ayatollah Khomeini years before. Some have translated the phrase as "…eliminated from the pages of history." In a subsequent interview, Ahmedinejad denied that he was making a military threat, using as an analogy the nonviolent collapse of the Soviet Union resulting in its being "wiped off the map," His intent is still a matter of debate, but in any case, it is the ruling council headed by the Ayatollah Khamenei, rather than the Iranian president, that has the power to engage in war.

[25] See D. Samuels, "Why Israel Will Bomb Iran," *Slate Magazine*, April 9, 2009. http://www.slate.com/id/2215820/

[26] See R. Beeston and N. Blanford, "Hezbollah stockpiles 40,000 rockets near Israel's border," TimesOnline, August 5, 2009. http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/middle_east/article6739175.ece

[27] See E. Bronner, "Hamas Shifts From Rockets to Culture War," *The New York Times*, July 23, 2009. http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/24/world/middleeast/24gaza.html?

[28] See "Hamas Criticizes Gaza Rocket Fire," Al Jazeera News, March 13, 2009, http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2009/03/20093130140335534.html.

[29] See E. Bronner, op. cit.

[30] See C. Freilich, op. cit.

[31] See Deutsche-Presse Agentur, "Emigration from Israel Exceeds Immigration, Report," April 20, 2007, http://stlouis.ujcfedweb.org/page.aspx?id=144274.

[32] See M.J. Rosenberg, "The Rise of Avigdor Lieberman," *Los Angeles Times*, Feb. 11, 2009, http://www.latimes.com/news/printedition/opinion/la-oe-rosenberg11-2009feb11,0,5037251.story.

[33] A. Benn and H. Mozgovaya, "Obama Warns Netanyahu: Don't Surprise Me with Iran Strike," *Ha'aretz*, May 14, 2009, http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1085466.html.