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Israel's Role in the Struggle over the Iranian Nuclear Project

Yossi Kuperwasser



Mideast Security and Policy Studies No. 114

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BAR-ILAN UNIVERSITY**

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Israel's Role in the Struggle over the Iranian Nuclear Project

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Israel's Role in the Struggle over the Iranian Nuclear Project

Yossi Kuperwasser

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Though not a participant in the negotiations over the deal regarding the Iranian nuclear program being worked out between the international community and Iran, Israel has been a major player; influential in framing the discussions as well in its effect on the development of the Iranian program. The Israeli role reflects the critical importance of the fate of the program from its perspective, given Iran's repeated calls for Israel's destruction.

While Israel and the United States share a common goal of preventing Iran from gaining nuclear weapons, and cooperate in order to attain this goal, their differing worldviews result in different attitudes to the threat, to nuclear concessions to Iran, and to Iran's regional role. Put succinctly, Washington seeks to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons, while Jerusalem seeks to prevent it from having the capability to produce nuclear weapons.

Israel's strategy toward the Iranian program has consistently been one of coercion. Israel believes that with enough pressure Iran can be convinced that it has no chance of becoming a nuclear weapon state. On the other hand, Israel believes that the deal proposed now will justifiably be presented by Iran as a victory of the Islamic Republic, one that can be translated into further achievements in Iran's quest for regional hegemony.

The Obama administration claims that the Israeli strategy is counterproductive. It justifies these claims with a set of arguments, all

of which are distorted or simply wrong. In fact, the main reason for the reluctance of the administration to consider the strategy proposed by Israel, and by like-minded Arab states and members of Congress, is its optimistic and guilt-driven worldview.

As long as the negotiations continue, Israel should keep doing everything it can to prevent a bad deal with Iran. But if in spite of its efforts a bad deal is signed, then: Israel should multiply its intelligence attempts to know what is happening in Iran, so that it may sound the alarm; it should accelerate its efforts to develop the military capability to defend itself if necessary; and it should find ways to form a regional alliance determined to block Iranian attempts to translate its achievements in the nuclear realm into greater regional influence, even without developing a weapon.

If a deal is not reached, Israel should intensify its consultations with the P5+1 to make sure that they are ready to accelerate the pressure on Iran to make it accept a deal that is better than the one proposed at this point. Under no circumstances should Israel accept understandings with the US, which limit its ability to decide by itself what kind of actions it may take to protect itself against the nuclear threats that may follow the deal.

Israel's Role in the Struggle over the Iranian Nuclear Project

Yossi Kuperwasser

INTRODUCTION

This paper will examine Israel's policy vis-à-vis the Iranian military nuclear program, the tools it employs to promote its goals, and its effect on the program, taking into consideration the policies of the other major players involved, primarily the United States and Iran. The paper will conclude with some recommendations for effective Israeli policy following the introduction of the Lausanne framework for a final deal, both up to the June 30 deadline for concluding the deal and following it, whether or not a deal is reached by that date.

THE IRANIAN MILITARY NUCLEAR PROJECT AND THE NEGOTIATIONS OVER ITS FATE

The Iranian military nuclear program was launched in 1988, following the end of the Iran-Iraq War. Its aim was to protect the Islamic Republic against external threats, and to enable it to fulfil its mission of spreading the rule of Islam, under Iranian Shi'ite leadership, in the Middle East and beyond, eventually changing the world order. This project was the most important endeavor undertaken by Islamic Republic of Iran, and as the years went by it became detrimental to the regime's image. It is not surprising then that the Ayatollahs have invested hundreds of billions of dollars in it.

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The program consists of three components:

First, production of fissile material, mainly through uranium enrichment, but also via production of plutonium in nuclear reactors. For this purpose enormous investment was made in several realms: construction of a heavy water reactor in Arak¹ (as yet uncompleted); construction of two underground enrichment facilities in Natanz (capable of holding 54,000 centrifuges, allegedly to produce enriched uranium for civilian power plants)² and in Fordow³ (built secretly deep inside a mountain and capable of holding 3,000 centrifuges, clearly to conduct enrichment for military purposes); factories for the conversion of raw uranium into yellow cake (U₃O₈); factories for the conversion of yellow cake into UF₆ (the uranium conversion facility – UCF – in Esfahan)⁴; and many other necessary industrial undertakings such as quarries, production of centrifuges, storage facilities, and so forth.

Altogether, Iran today has some 19,000 installed centrifuges, out of which around 9,400 are operational. About 2,700 of the installed centrifuges are located in Fordow. Most of the centrifuges are of the first generation IR-1 type, but about 1,000 are more advanced, and Iran continues to develop new and faster centrifuges. In addition, currently Iran is allowed to have – as per the terms of the JPOA – some 7.5 tons of uranium enriched to a level of 3.5% in a form that enables further enrichment (UF₆), as well as several tons of uranium enriched to 3.5% in forms that do not allow immediate further enrichment. (The US administration, in an attempt to magnify the achievements of the framework, claims that Iran now has 10 tons of uranium enriched to 3.5%, which – if true – means either that it counts all forms of enriched uranium to 3.5%, or that the Iranians are breaching the JPOA. The IAEA last report indicates that as of late May Iran had 8.75 tons). In addition Iran has around 400kg of uranium enriched to 20% in various forms that cannot be immediately enriched, which are not covered by the Lausanne framework. Iran agreed as part of the JPOA not to maintain any stocks of 20%-enriched uranium in gas form. Once enriched to over 90% (military level), these quantities would yield sufficient fissionable material to make six or seven atomic bombs.⁵ Since enriching to 3.5% takes about 45% of the time needed to enrich to over 90%, and since enriching to 20% takes about 75% of the time

necessary to enrich to over 90%, the practical upshot is that Iran is today only a few months away from producing sufficient fissionable material for the creation of its first nuclear device.

Two years ago the situation was even more serious in certain respects. At that time Iran had accumulated close to 200kg of enriched uranium at a level of 20% in gas form, but its activity was then considered illegal, whereas now it is carried out with the agreement of the international community.

The second component is weaponization, namely the conversion of fissile material into nuclear weapons. The weaponization program was accelerated until 2003 and then slowed down. Today, it's not entirely clear how much progress was made in this realm up to that point, since the Iranians refuse to provide information about the possible military dimensions of their program, in spite of the IAEA's unwavering insistence on this point.⁶

The third and final component of the program is production of delivery systems, primarily missiles that can carry the weapon to the chosen targets. The missile projects have yielded the Shahab-3, with a range that enables hitting targets in the Middle East, including Israel, as well as other longer-range missiles, while work continues on missiles with even longer ranges.

Over a 27-year period of cheating, deception, and taking advantage of Western laxity, the Iranians managed to make considerable progress, overcoming – with significant foreign assistance – technological and other hurdles. By 2012 the Iranians were capable of producing enough fissile material for a nuclear bomb within a few months, should they wish.

The US-led international community, pushed by Israel, made clear prior to 2013 that it considered Iran's nuclear activities to be illegitimate and in violation of its obligations as a signatory to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). It also made clear that it was not going to allow Iran to have a nuclear weapon. Following a report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that warned about Iran's activities, the United Nations Security Council adopted, between 2006 and 2010, six resolutions that forbade Iran from having any activity in the three above-mentioned components of the program, called upon Iran to give

up whatever elements of the program it had already acquired, demanded that it provide a full report on its nuclear activities so far, and imposed sanctions on Iran should it refuse to abide by these resolutions.

In order to convince Iran to forsake its nuclear ambitions, and fearing an Israeli strike against the Iranian nuclear facilities and the economic, security, and political implications of such an assault, especially in the run-up to the presidential elections, the US administration was now reluctantly ready to put real pressure on Iran. Together with the European Union, the United States adopted biting sanctions and tried to convince the Israeli government that, if necessary, it would use force in order to prevent Iran gaining a nuclear weapon. Yet immediately after the reelection of President Obama for a second term, and with a new secretary of state, the administration embarked on a new initiative that completely contradicted its declared policy during its first term in office. Starting in early 2013, the United States began discussions with Iran over a deal to legitimize the Iranian enrichment program while placing limitations on its scope, including minimizing the risk of Iran attaining fissile material through the plutonium track, so that the time needed to produce enough fissile material through uranium enrichment for one nuclear bomb (termed Significant Quantity, SQ) would be longer than the couple of months needed at the time. The other components were either ignored (delivery systems production, for example) or considerably marginalized (weaponization, and reporting on the military aspects of the program so far).

These negotiations produced an interim agreement in November 2013, known as the Joint Plan of Action (JPOA), which to a large extent halted Iran's ongoing efforts to shorten even further the time needed for producing the first SQ. In exchange Iran received an easing in sanctions, and a commitment to legitimize enrichment in a final deal, termed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).⁷ The details of the final deal are still being negotiated between Iran and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany (P5+1). In April 2015, in Lausanne, the parties reached a set of not-fully-agreed-upon understandings, presented as the Framework for the JCPOA.⁸ Currently, we are at a decisive stage in the struggle over the fate of the Iranian nuclear program, with the details of the JCPOA at the center of attention.

The framework presented at Lausanne may become a milestone not only in determining the future of the Iranian nuclear program, but also in determining the future of the NPT, the future of the Middle East, and the security of Israel and the entire world. It is unclear yet whether the parties will indeed reach a final agreement, though both sides are eager to do so. Much of the doubt derives from the resolution passed by the US Senate allowing Congress to vote on and veto the final agreement with Iran,⁹ although the terms of the resolution are weaker than some senators would have liked; and also from the reservations of the Iranian leadership about the American version of the Lausanne framework, especially details of the timing of sanctions relief and the nature of the inspections.¹⁰ The questions currently on the table are: whether an agreement can gain support locally, both in the US Congress and in Iran; whether the administration can gain support for a JCPOA agreed with Iran, given the limitations resulting from criticism at home and abroad, and be able to make further concessions during the expert talks before the deadline at the end of June; and whether those opposed to the deal, with Israel at their forefront, will be able to develop a strategy to prevent it from being adopted, building upon their success to force President Obama to accept the Congressional resolution, or will have to come to terms with an agreement based on the framework as a *fait accompli* – and if the latter, what line of action they will adopt.

Basically, the framework is the result of Iran's willingness to accept an extremely watered-down list of restrictions on its nuclear activity, in return for the lifting of all nuclear-related sanctions currently in place against it. According to the framework, Iran will have the legitimacy to operate a full-scale nuclear program that allegedly keeps it one year away from having enough highly-enriched uranium for a nuclear bomb, in case it decides to break out to a nuclear weapon during the first ten years. (The other goal of the deal – making sure that the Iranian nuclear project serves only civilian purposes – was forgotten somewhere during the last stretch of the negotiations). Later on, this threshold will be downsized considerably, even according to President Obama, who is finding it difficult to justify the United States' capitulations to the Iranians, especially after declaring that he has "been very clear that Iran will not get a nuclear weapon on my watch."¹¹

Thereafter Iran will have international legitimacy to conduct a broad nuclear program, which will enable it to produce a vast arsenal of nuclear weapons within a very short period of time. This is inconceivable, but true. In the meanwhile Iran will be soon relieved from the biting economic and trade sanctions it has faced since 2012, and hence will be able to significantly improve its air defense capabilities, double its efforts to become a hegemonic power in the Middle East through its support of terror and insurgency, and accelerate its attempts to harm Israel's security.¹²

In fact, when it comes to assessing the breakout time under the terms of the American version of the framework, Iran will need much less than a year to acquire this amount of highly-enriched uranium. This is because, in addition to the 5,000 operating centrifuges and the 1,000 additional centrifuges that will remain installed but inoperative, it will keep the 13,000 disconnected centrifuges and their infrastructure on its territory (these – including the more advanced operating centrifuges – are going to be kept in Iran under IAEA control), and Iran would be able to start using them gradually within a short period of time after the decision to break out.¹³ Moreover, even if Iran is allowed to keep only 300kg of low enriched uranium (3.5%), the rest of the material it has enriched to this level will not be shipped out of Iran; thus at any given time significant amounts of this material will be available to Iran immediately following a decision to break out. And since no steps have been planned to ship out of Iran or irreversibly degrade its 20%-enriched uranium, of which it already has a significant quantity (although not kept in a readily enriched state, this can be easily converted into enrichable material), Iran would be very close to having the first SQ, and more SQs, immediately following a decision to break out.¹⁴

Since the Iranians are allowed to continue their research and development of advanced centrifuges, and to keep the deep underground facility in Fordow operational – a facility constructed solely for military enrichment purposes, kept as a secret until exposed by the West – they would be able to install there, within a short period of time from the decision to break out, a very efficient set of centrifuges that would further shorten the breakout time, and utilize their available enriched material. The number of operating (5,000) and installed (a further 1,000) centrifuges is

important in defining the breakout time and is dangerous by itself, but the other factors mentioned above are much more critical in this respect, and would leave Iran with a breakout time of merely a few months.¹⁵

On top of this dangerously short breakout time, the option of “sneak out” during the first ten years is another major concern arising from the framework. This is so because, in spite of the expected improvements in monitoring of the Iranian nuclear program by international bodies, the framework does not guarantee “anywhere, anytime” access for the inspectors, and Iranian intelligence, military, and Revolutionary Guard facilities will likely remain out of reach for them. The process described in the framework for dealing with violations almost certainly ensures inaction, since even according to the American version, requests for such inspections will have to go through a joint committee, in which the Iranians will most probably deny access, and also demand to examine the intelligence on which such requests would be based.

The framework has many other shortcomings from a Western point of view, and of course from the point of view of Israel and the pragmatic Arab states. It does not guarantee that Iran will provide full disclosure on its past efforts to develop atomic bombs; it does not make any reference to Iran’s program of developing long range ballistic missiles that are destined to carry nuclear warheads; it is limited to a very short period of time;¹⁶ and the withdrawal of sanctions on Iran is not conditional on any change in its policies on human rights, terrorism, regional insurgency, and the commitment to expedite Israel’s destruction.

In short, all three available options – breakout, sneak out, and using the extensive and advanced enrichment infrastructure to enrich beyond 5% at the end of the ten-year period of limitations – are readily available to the Iranians. Of course, they would all be in breach of Iran’s declarations and commitments, but these are in any case widely considered to be entirely unreliable and inconsequential. As the *Wall Street Journal* put it, the framework would be a good deal if signed with Costa Rica or Holland, but not with Iran.¹⁷

THE REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT, AND THE IMPACT OF THE LEADERS' WORLDVIEWS ON THE DEAL

The regional and international picture has undergone many far-reaching changes since Iran began its nuclear program. Despite the importance of the effort to block this plan for all the main players in the international arena (the United States, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, Germany, China, and Japan), their general agreement to work together against the Iranian nuclear threat, and the fact that the current agreement was reached in spite of the differences between the six countries party to it, these powers never viewed the thwarting of the Iranian plan to be a goal of supreme importance (despite Israel's attempts to convince them to consider it as such), trumping other international and regional considerations. They thus refrained from seeking the removal of the dangerous regime in Tehran, in spite of the regime's extremism, its repression of the Iranian people, its deep involvement in terror and agitation, and its commitment to the overthrow of the regional and world order and to the annihilation of the State of Israel.

The West does attribute such supreme importance to other interests, such as the war on terror, relations with Russia, safeguarding the flow of oil, ensuring regional stability at minimal cost, and others. Against the backdrop of regional instability and the relatively recent war against the "Islamic State," the significant differences between the international powers and the pragmatic regional powers have only deepened regarding Iran's nuclear aspirations and their connection to other threats in the region. While the pragmatic powers in the region view Iran as a central part of the revolutionary radical Islamist camp, and see its nuclear program as a springboard for it to increase its regional hegemony, and therefore as a direct threat to their security and stability, the international powers, including the United States, see Iran as a potential partner in the battle with Islamic ultra-extremism, and in the struggle to promote regional stability and economic interests.¹⁸

The worldviews of the decision makers differ profoundly, and provide an important context for any discussion of the nuclear program and the relations between the parties involved. Western leaders, with President Obama at their forefront, believe in the almost exclusive use of dialogue as

a means to address disagreement. They believe that Muslim perspectives in general, and Iranian perspectives in particular, of the West as a historical oppressor that has wrought great harm to the region, contain an element of truth that needs to be acknowledged. They are convinced that the burden of proof as to the good intentions of the parties to the current negotiations falls first and foremost on the West, and in accordance with their liberal outlook, believe that all people share essentially similar and equally worthy values and aspirations.¹⁹ Moreover, they believe that there is utmost importance to having a coalition that keeps Russia and China committed to working together with Western main powers. Finally they believe, sometimes religiously, that the less radical elements within the Iranian leadership, and especially President Rouhani and Foreign Minister Zarif, are actually moderates who have nothing to do with the Iranian Islamic revolution. They are therefore determined to do whatever they consider reasonable, and this is quite a lot, to strengthen these elements in their domestic political struggle against their more radical adversaries.²⁰ (On some of these points, the French leadership is a bit more skeptical and ready to challenge Western positions.)

Russian and Chinese leaders, and to a considerable extent European leaders too, are much less consumed than the Americans by overarching global worldviews, and focus on promoting their nations' wellbeing and international standing. In this context they tend to view stability and continuity as a supreme goal, and therefore are committed to avoiding developments that may hamper these goals, such as a nuclear bomb in Iranian hands, escalation as a result of the Iranian nuclear project, or prolonged sanctions that may have negative effects on their economy.²¹

On the other hand, the leaders of Iran, who are driven by a sense of revolutionary mission that is both Islamic and Iranian-nationalist, believe that it is their duty to bring about a wholesale change in the world order, using a combination of cunning, force, and daring, and making the most of the freedom of action afforded to them by the reined-in West. They are convinced that the West is hedonistic and has no values whatsoever, besides prolonging life and enjoyment, and thus it is weak, vulnerable, and unworthy of its current preferred status in international affairs.²² Nevertheless, some of them are more realistic regarding their ability to move toward achieving their goals at this point (Rouhani and

Rafsanjani for example), while some believe that Iran may do it faster. All of them realize that they cannot get everything they wish through negotiations. As masters of bazaar negotiating techniques they start with a very rigid position, convince their counterpart that they cannot make any concessions, and eventually show some flexibility on marginal issues while protecting the most valuable elements uncompromised. This was the case in the negotiations led by Rouhani in 2003. Currently the Iranians insist on maintaining the deep underground facility in Fordow, the enrichment infrastructure in Natanz, the veil of secrecy over their past activities, the monitoring parameters, and the sunset clause, while showing some flexibility on secondary issues, such as the plutonium avenue and the amount of enriched material they will be allowed to keep.

As a result, the talks between the powers and Iran are not conducted in a manner reflecting the true balance of power between them, but rather the exact opposite. It is Iran that dictates the agenda, while America and the West attempt to placate the other side, are hesitant about bringing up issues that they fear Iran will refuse to discuss, and are afraid of being accused by Iran or its friends among the P5+1 of lacking serious intentions in the negotiations.²³

It is within the problematic context described above that the struggle over an agreement is currently being conducted. It is sufficient to examine the development of the American position on the issue of the number of centrifuges that Iran will be allowed to keep operational, in order to see the extent to which Washington has agreed to be flexible in its demands, without receiving anything important in return from Tehran.

While at the beginning of the talks (January 2014) the Americans spoke of allowing Iran to keep a symbolic number of centrifuges (i.e., 500-1,000), the number has since risen to 3,000, and then to 4,500, eventually reaching 6,104 in the Lausanne framework.²⁴ The Iranians, on the other hand, have stuck to their initial demand that they be allowed to keep 7,500 centrifuges, rising to 190,000 over the implementation period of the agreement, and their main demands that they not dismantle any centrifuges and will be allowed to keep the infrastructure and the Fordow facility have been accepted.²⁵

The Americans were not insistent on a host of other disputed issues, such as the duration of the main limitations included in the agreement; the nature of the inspection and oversight regime used to enforce it;²⁶ the types of activities Iran will be allowed to pursue at its well-protected and previously secret facility at Fordow (the United States having already withdrawn its initial, justified demand that the facility be dismantled);²⁷ the permitted specifications of the Arak reactor, which the Iranians insist should continue to operate as a heavy water reactor;²⁸ the extent to which Iran will be required to reveal the previous military dimensions of its nuclear activities (information revealed by Israel in September 2014 about Iran's experimental nuclear activities at its Parchin base, which made clear that these were incontrovertibly directed toward developing nuclear weapons,²⁹ received no response from the United States);³⁰ the restrictions on Iran's centrifuge research and development efforts;³¹ and the oversight of Iran's relations with other states in terms of nuclear technology.³² In almost all of these areas Iran has been exceedingly rigid and recalcitrant.

For now, it is not yet clear whether Iran will be content with the recent proposals, or whether it will assume – based on past experience, and on the case of North Korea³³ – that the United States will be prepared to shift its stance even further, despite its public declarations. They may certainly find reasons for optimism in the administration's enthusiasm to sell the framework, to foil any attempt to implement further sanctions immediately, if the target date is not met;³⁴ and in its efforts to silence criticism from Congress and from Israel.³⁵

THE ISRAELI POLICY

The differing worldviews described above set the background for the disagreements that have taken place over the years between Israel and the US administration about the right way to deal with the Iranian threat. Although both countries essentially share a common goal of preventing Iran from gaining nuclear weapons, they differ in their attitudes to the threat itself, to the issue of concessions to Iran in the nuclear context, and to Iran's regional role. Hence there are also

significant differences in terms of how they each define their goals as regards the threshold that should separate the regime of the Ayatollahs from nuclear weaponization; the strategies and tools to be deployed in order to achieve the defined goal; and the relative importance of the goal itself. Put succinctly, the United States seeks to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons, while Israel seeks to prevent it from having the capability to produce nuclear weapons. This is a huge gap. This gap, and the extreme importance each side attributes to achieving its goals in this context, explain why the confrontation regarding the Lausanne framework was inevitable.³⁶

From an Israeli point of view, the US administration seems to have convinced itself that the deal it is trying to reach is the best possible deal and is a reasonable one, while it remains blind to the deal's many shortcomings, and indulges in wishful thinking and distortion of facts in order to justify it. Thus it would seem that, in spite of the wide criticism of the deal, the administration is not willing to listen to any alternative voices regarding the framework. There seems to be no point in trying to convince it with logical arguments, and hence the gap between the two sides is not going to become narrower in the foreseeable future. In a way, the approach of the American leadership is a reflection of its world view: a mixture of optimism and guilt. Echoing Leibnitz's optimism, according to which our world must be the best of all possible worlds based on the deep belief that God is omnibenevolent,³⁷ so does the administration believe deeply in its own attitude of engagement, and therefore is convinced that the deal it produces is the best of all possible deals.

This optimism of the will is not open to being questioned by the pessimism or the realism of logic, or by the common sense presented by critics of the deal. Of course, this makes a mockery of the slogan "no deal is better than a bad deal," since any deal supported by the administration becomes immediately by definition not only a good deal but the best possible deal. Those who do not accept it are therefore perceived to be challenging the premises of this line of thinking; hence they are warmongers and political adversaries, rather than people who have a different opinion and think that there are better deals to be had. After all, the claim that there is a better deal is a sort of blasphemy.

President Obama's acceptance of the compromise that led to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee resolution was clearly only due to it being forced upon him, rather than any realization on his part that there is something wrong with the deal he is trying to promote.

To be specific about the perceived threat, Israel's view is that Iran under the current regime seeks, through a variety of ways, to bring about the destruction of the national state of the Jewish people. This is a central component of Iran's broader efforts to form a new Middle East, controlled by extremist forces aligned with it and under its influence, from which basis it can advance toward changing the entire world order.³⁸ Nuclear weapons are directly essential to this scheme, but also carry a greater significance in terms of the indirect message they convey about Iran's status as a power, about its ability to successfully withstand US and Israeli pressure, and about its ability to topple elements of the current world order which are designed to maintain the superiority of the existing powers, such as the NPT.

Israel believes that if Iran is allowed to become a threshold nuclear state, it will not stay as such for a long period of time. Its assessment is that this will create a zone of vulnerability, and that the time gained will be used by its adversaries to equip themselves with nuclear weapons too. Inevitably, Iranian success in moving toward the production of nuclear weapons will bring about a nuclear arms race in a Middle East already beset by instability, as it will be impossible to justify preventing other states – which have not crudely contravened the NPT over an extended period of time, as did Iran – from developing enrichment capabilities. It will also seriously weaken the pragmatic states in the region, which already question the wisdom of relying for protection exclusively on the United States.³⁹ In light of this, Israel considers Iranian nuclear capability to be a strategic threat of the highest order, and one that could even develop into an existential threat. Its policy therefore is to do everything it can to prevent Iran from achieving this capability. In other words, the width of the threshold separating Iran from nuclear weapons needs to be very great indeed, great enough to enable the preemption of any Iranian attempt to acquire such weapons, to the extent that Iran itself will recognize that there is no point in trying to go nuclear, as there is no chance of succeeding. From Israel's perspective, any significant

narrowing of this threshold represents a red line, and it would feel justified in taking significant risks to prevent this from happening.⁴⁰

Though it is not a global actor, and its ability to directly influence the talks with Iran is limited, Israel does have significant capabilities it can use to influence the Iranian nuclear program and the deal that the P5+1 are trying to reach with Iran. These include: first and foremost, the power of reason that is intertwined with its intelligence capabilities – gathering, research, and operations; the operational capabilities of its secret services and military, in which considerable investments have reportedly been made to develop tailor-made responses to the Iranian challenge, utilizing its state-of-the-art military and intelligence technological assets; its relationships with highly-important bodies such as the US Congress, which take a similar view of the severity of the threat;⁴¹ and its perceived seriousness and determination as regards Iran, which lend great significance to its pronouncements on the subject, especially when these come from Prime Minister Netanyahu, who is seen internationally as “Mr. Iran.”

For example, its intelligence gathering and research capabilities allowed Israel to use the power of reason and be the first to warn of the development of the threat, including shedding light on Iranian activity in the nuclear and SSM areas, and thereby to place the Iranian nuclear issue firmly on the international agenda. The importance that international players place on intelligence cooperation with Israel gave it entry into the small club of Western partners leading this struggle. Foreign reports have attributed to Israel various secret operations against Iran's nuclear program,⁴² and the prime minister's “red line” speech at the United Nations – a prominent case of the use of the power of persuasion – had a decisive impact, in that it caused Iran to refrain from accumulating 20%-enriched uranium to an amount exceeding that referred to by Netanyahu in his speech.⁴³ Similarly important was Netanyahu's subsequent speech to the United Nations, a year later, in which he made clear the gap between the Israeli and American positions regarding Rouhani's election as president.⁴⁴

It is worth noting that a significant proportion of the international determination to impose real sanctions on Iran stemmed from the need to dissuade Israel from using military force against it. Israel's threats

were taken with the utmost seriousness, and it was Israel that succeeded, in cooperation with France, in persuading the powers to insist that Iran give up its store of 20%-enriched uranium as part of the November 2013 JPOA. This was not something that the US administration had insisted upon, as it was probably convinced that Iran would refuse this demand.⁴⁵ As already stated, without Israel's actions Iran would be much closer today to having nuclear weapons, or would even have developed them several years ago.

Over the years, Israel's strategy toward the Iranian nuclear program has consistently been one of force and coercion. Israel has never believed that there is any chance of the Iranian regime willingly changing its outlook or its aims, and therefore has remained convinced that Iran will only change its policy, and give up its nuclear aspirations, if it is forced to do so, through a combination of preventative operations, diplomatic pressure, economic sanctions, and a credible military threat. In this way Israel believes that it can be made clear to Iran that it has no chance of becoming a nuclear weapon state, and therefore that there is nothing to be gained from endangering the regime's survival or from suffering extreme economic distress in an attempt to achieve an unobtainable goal. At the very least, Israel has sought to impress upon the Iranian regime that even if it might be able to reach its nuclear goal, the cost would be so great, in terms of the regime's survival, that the effort involved would clearly not be worth the risk.

In parallel, and as part of its overall strategy, Israel believes that the ultimate solution involves the replacement of the Iranian regime with a pragmatic, pro-Western regime. According to Israeli assessments, this outcome is not merely a pipe dream, given the events of the summer of 2009, and the results of the 2013 Iranian elections, which saw a landslide victory for the candidate widely seen as being by far the most pragmatic out of those allowed to run for election. Israel's perspective is that ideological dictatorships are eventually bound to fall, as a result of domestic pressures. This goal of regime change lay behind the three prerequisites for abandoning the sanctions that Prime Minister Netanyahu raised in his address to Congress on March 2015. Nevertheless, Israel realizes that there is no point in building a policy toward the Iranian nuclear threat with the assumption that the regime will change in the

foreseeable future, or that a series of carrots like those presented in the framework, and the opening of Iran to Western trade, will expedite the process to the extent that a totally different Iran will emerge within ten years. This is wishful thinking, bearing in mind the strong hold of the current regime in Iran over its populace. It is much more plausible that Iranian gains in a deal based on the Lausanne framework will be presented by the regime as a divine victory over the big and the small Satans, and will be used to help it cement its grip on the population, to promote its goals in the region, to strengthen its military and terror capabilities, and to accelerate its activities to threaten Israel's security.

Israel's strategy requires a combination of direct actions and pressures, along with the engagement of the international community, in particular the United States, in exercising pressure in areas outside Israel's direct scope of action. Thus cooperation with the United States on the Iranian issue, and in particular with the administration, is a fundamental and essential component in Israeli strategy, above and beyond the larger strategic importance of the US relationship to Israel's security and international standing. In spite of the above-mentioned differences, such cooperation has been demonstrated in various fields for many years.

In Israel's view, this combination of pressures is the best way both to block the nuclear program, and to ensure that there will be no need to employ the military option, an entirely undesirable outcome. It is clear that Iran does not see itself as being able to confront the military might of the United States, nor even the military capabilities it believes Israel to possess. The more credible the military threat, the less likely that it will need to be carried out; and the greater the pressure on Iran, the greater the probability that it will agree to more significant concessions.⁴⁶

At the same time Israel believes that it is totally wrong to claim that a military option should be ruled out because it may lead to dangerous repercussions, such as Iranian and Hezbollah retaliation against American, Israeli, and Arab targets; or that it would provide Iran with a sound justification to work to acquire a nuclear weapon in order to protect itself; or that it would unite the Iranian people behind the Ayatollahs' radical leadership; or that it would in any case not yield a long delay of the program, since Iran's scientists have already mastered the relevant

technologies, and following an attack would immediately resume their efforts to build the bomb. In fact, it is more reasonable to argue that once the Iranians realize that the Americans (or the Israelis) are ready to use force, they will give up the project altogether. Unlike today, when the Iranians believe that the West is unwilling to use the military option and so take advantage of that to move forward with their program, once a decision to attack is taken there would be no doubt that the attack would be repeated should the Iranians try to rebuild their infrastructure. This was the case with Iraq and Syria. The same is true regarding Iranian retaliation. The regime would not risk everything if its nuclear program is hit hard, as it knows well how vulnerable Iran is. It might retaliate in a way that saves face, but any such act would be dramatically less painful than the damage that would be caused by Iran acquiring a nuclear bomb.

This view is largely shared by a number of other parties involved, including first and foremost the US Congress (and not just the Republican Party).⁴⁷ At the current time, according to this approach, it is clear that the level of pressure on Iran is only sufficient to bring it to the table of negotiations. This is a tactical move on Iran's part, designed to ease the international pressure. It doesn't represent any real intention to change policy, but rather it is a continuation of Iran's efforts to entrench itself as close as possible to nuclear capability, this time legitimately, all the while bolstering its regional standing. Thus Israel and likeminded political powers believe there is a need for a significant increase in economic pressure, diplomatic isolation, and a credible threat of military action, in order to persuade Khamenei to display the "heroic flexibility" he spoke of recently,⁴⁸ and to halt the military nuclear program. The events of 1988, 2003, and 2013 (when US threats of military action, should Iran carry through on threats to harm shipping in the Hormuz Straits, brought about Tehran's immediate capitulation)⁴⁹, as well as Iran's refraining from increasing its stocks of 20%-enriched uranium following Netanyahu's "red line" speech at the UN, are all evidence from Israel's point of view of the need for similar action now. Even under the current sanctions, major Iranian leaders (such as former President Rafsanjani, Rouhani's mentor) suggested that it would be preferable to drink the poison chalice (namely to make considerable concessions regarding the nuclear project) in order to ensure the survival of the regime, just as Ayatollah Khomeini did in 1988 when he decided to end the Iran-Iraq war after eight years.

According to the Israeli view, if the coercive strategy were adopted Iran would have to give up its enrichment capabilities, but would be entitled to keep its nuclear power plant, its scientific research, and its medical isotope production – all of which would use imported enriched uranium, as is the case in many other countries around the world, including Spain, Italy, and South Korea. It would have to give up the hundreds of tons of UF₆ it has produced in its Esfahan conversion facility, which are the raw material for its enrichment process; stop quarrying uranium in its mines and turning it into U₃O₈ (yellow cake), which is the raw material for producing UF₆; dismantle the Qom/Fordow deep underground facility that was built solely to support a military program; close the Natanz facility and dismantle the infrastructure there; refrain from purchasing any unauthorized nuclear material; provide full information regarding its centrifuge production plants; and stop the research and development of advanced centrifuges. Iran would also have to allow the IAEA to interview the people involved in this effort, including Mr. Fahrizadeh, who led the nuclear program weaponization component; stop the development of long-range missiles; and give up the plutonium avenue, which has no other purpose than the production of fissile material for a nuclear bomb. All of this may be looked upon by the American administration as wishful thinking, but all of these elements appear in the six Security Council resolutions regarding the Iranian nuclear program, and all of them are still achievable in Israel's view were the correct strategy to be adopted and implemented.

Faced with the framework agreed upon in Lausanne, Israel has had to scale down its aspirations, and focus on six necessary amendments to the framework: preventing research and development of advanced centrifuges; shipping the enriched material out of Iran; closing down the Fordow facility; reducing the number of centrifuges left installed in Natanz; allowing inspections anytime, anywhere; and forcing Iran to provide all the requested information about its past activities that have a military nuclear dimension. At the same time, Israel continues to demand that ending the limitations should depend on a real change in Iran's regional policy, its support of terror, and its commitment to annihilate the Jewish state. These demands are key to keeping Iran farther away from the capability to produce enough enriched material for a bomb, in both the breakout and the sneak out options. It seems that this new attitude is not making any impression on the American administration.

THE POLICY OF THE US ADMINISTRATION

Unlike Israel (and Congress), the US administration – particularly under Obama, but also under Clinton, and to a lesser extent under Bush – has adopted a fundamentally different strategy, one which stems (as previously described) from a different worldview and a different assessment of the threat. In this approach, the goal is a complex one. On the one hand, it seeks to keep Iran at a reasonable distance from nuclear weapons status, that is, at a distance sufficient to allow forceful intervention to prevent any Iranian effort to produce weapons, although not necessarily one that would deter Iran from considering an attempt to do so. On the other hand, it wishes to bring Iran on board to efforts to stabilize the Middle East, and is willing to pay it a significant price in order to do so, by legitimizing Iran's central role in the region. As a result, the United States has of course no interest in appearing to be working towards a change in the regime in Tehran, despite its hostility toward the United States and Israel, and thus restricts itself to paying lip service to the protection of human rights in Iran under this cruel regime. Beyond this, the United States has a further goal: to prevent Israeli use of force against Iran that would lead to regional escalation. This goal seems to be almost as important as preventing Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons.⁵⁰

The administration's approach to dealing with the threat inherent in the Iranian nuclear program is not only, or not even mainly, to threaten Iran and deter it, but rather to engage it in dialogue, directly or in the context of multilateral talks, and to offer enticements. Hence the Clinton administration refrained from acting decisively against the Iranian missile program, concerned that that might damage relations with Moscow at what was a sensitive time,⁵¹ and the Bush administration refrained from adopting any really biting sanctions in response to the Iranian nuclear program, satisfying itself with the deluxe sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council.⁵²

The Obama administration has opposed the delineation of red lines (apart from the obvious red line of actually producing nuclear weapons),⁵³ and has opposed any move to deepen economic sanctions, although it should be stated that once more severe sanctions were adopted, against its will, it carried out the decision impressively. On the other hand, it also

dismissed the option of containment, which would have meant simply allowing the Iranian program to go ahead, despite the fact that there were voices within the administration that supported this delusional idea.

The administration was reluctant to initiate the expulsion of Iranian banks from the SWIFT mechanism in March 2012,⁵⁴ and vehemently opposed the sanctions imposed by Congress in January 2012,⁵⁵ but in both cases was forced to cave in to pressure from Europe and Congress, which were clearly supported by Israel. As part of the JPOA, the administration supported an easing of sanctions, based on the idea that this would give the Iranians a taste for further easing, which in turn might be enough to entice them to make far-reaching concessions in the negotiations – an idea which has proved to be unfounded. This assumption reflects an error of projecting one's own logic onto one's rival. In practice, the easing of sanctions has only reduced Iran's incentive to make concessions, but the administration has refused to acknowledge this, and continues to pursue its policy and to seek justifications for it. In general, while the administration claimed when introducing the Lausanne framework that it did not leave its gun at the door of the negotiation room, it would seem that it was actually left at home throughout the course of the negotiations.

The action strategy of the administration as regards Israel has focused, as noted, on efforts to prevent Israeli military action. To this end, the administration adopted the formula of "all options are on the table," at first just an empty phrase, which did nothing to dissuade Israel from seriously considering military options and from developing capabilities needed to support them, especially when it became clear that the administration was using this phrase almost solely for Israeli ears, so as not to unsettle Iran.⁵⁶ Consequently, the administration felt obliged to prepare concrete plans for military action, and to build up its own capabilities for handling the Iranian nuclear threat.⁵⁷ These steps have been essential, both to prepare for an eventuality in which Iran tries to make the step to full nuclear capability, and in order to persuade Israel of the seriousness of the US commitment to prevent Iran from having nuclear weapons. Recent American declarations about improvements in the quality of the extremely heavy bunker-buster B-57 may be considered as another reflection of this policy.

Another central course of action used by the administration to rein in Israel is by actually conducting a dialogue with the Iranian regime. This has allowed it to offer carrots to Iran, in parallel to the stick it is also forced to hold, and at the same time has largely neutralized the relevance of the Israeli military threat. According to this logic, an Israeli military operation is unthinkable during negotiations, or once an agreement has been reached in which Iran does not cross the Israeli red line, even if Israel might be opposed to the agreement's details and potential outcome. Israel is not concerned about the negotiations themselves, but about the possibility of these negotiations leading to a bad deal, since Israel's (serious) military option was developed in order to encourage the attainment of a good deal, and only in the utmost extreme case to prevent Iran from getting a weapon.

It should be emphasized that the dialogue with Iran did not begin with Rouhani's election, but much earlier; the process which led to the current talks began in early 2013, around half a year before Rouhani presumed office in August 2013 (the elections were held June 2013).⁵⁸ There is thus no connection between the more practical approach of the new president of Iran and the US push to establish dialogue with Iran. In fact, this move seems much more related to President Obama's sense that in his second term he can afford to be much less swayed by Congress and public opinion, and with a different secretary of state he is more able to engage Iran and other problematic countries directly.

The administration attributes utmost importance to the success of the talks, due to two considerations: those pertinent to the issues at hand – settling the issue in such a way that it can be presented as a gain, or at least as the most acceptable solution attainable without being dragged into an escalation (since in the administration's view these are the only two options, with nothing in between); and considerations of principle, that is, as a proof for the administration's belief that conflicts can and should be resolved by diplomatic means and by dialogue, through international cooperation, rather than by force. In order to prevent the talks' failure, the United States has repeatedly shifted its stance, as already noted, and adopted positions that it would previously have rejected out of hand. It has gone out of its way, again and again, to avoid insulting its Iranian negotiating partners, and affairs even reached the stage where the

president sent a personal letter to the supreme spiritual leader of Iran, in which he requested that the latter consider softening his position.⁵⁹

Two hurdles stand in the administration's way. First, the hesitancy it displays to Iran may bring the Iranians to refuse even the current far-reaching proposals. The Iranians have clarified that they insist on sanctions being lifted immediately after the signing of an agreement, and that inspections will not be conducted in military sites. And second, Israel and Congress have refused to give up on the possibility of scuttling the agreement, with the administration losing the first battle on Capitol Hill, and being forced to accept the Senate Foreign Relations Committee resolution. The administration is applying all its efforts to addressing these two hurdles. While it is promising Iran that it will not increase the pressure on it, toward Israel and Congress, which is trying to draw together one last effort to prevent the proposed agreement being signed, the administration is applying maximum pressure, especially on the prime minister, and is presenting their actions as being motivated by political considerations.⁶⁰ Now facing the need to obtain Congressional approval for the agreement as a result of losing the first battle on the Hill, the administration is expected to fight hard in order to avoid losing the entire campaign, and to convince the Democratic senators to support the deal when and if it is reached and presented to Congress. The culmination of the talks with Iran and the presentation of the deal to Congress are going to be the real make-or-break for the administration, which has gambled much of its prestige and its political capital on this effort.

WHAT LIES AHEAD?

While Israel is not one of the countries participating in the talks with Iran, and the United States does not really consult with it regarding its positions on the issues under negotiation, it does have both a clear and central interest in the outcome of the talks and an impact on the positions of some of the participants. As such, Israel receives regular updates on the progress of the negotiations, mainly from the United States, and is able to contribute intelligence information and insights to help the six in formulating their position. Israel does not oppose the talks per se, and

would certainly be satisfied if they were to result in an agreement that matches its goals. But in practice, Israeli concerns about the form of the talks have proved to be justified, and the talks have been used to arrive at an agreement that Israel finds unacceptable.

This is the state of affairs ahead of the difficult decisions to be made in the coming weeks. The ball is now largely in Iran's hands, and it is impossible to know if it is going to show the required flexibility that would enable the signing of a deal in line with the American version of the framework, as published in a fact sheet provided by the White House. The US administration is very interested in achieving an agreement, not at any price, but certainly at a very high price, and as usual it is not averse to attacking Israel and to seeking to deter it from interfering. Israel, and especially its prime minister, understands that this may be a case of now or never, and it is determined to continue with its efforts to increase the pressure on Iran, so as to allow the administration to reach a better agreement, even at the price of a strained relationship with the president, and even with elements within the Democratic Party.

It is discernable that the advantages for Israel of this course of action outweigh its disadvantages, although these should not be belittled. Certainly coarse intervention in the decision-making processes of Congress represents a last resort, one which Israel has refrained from using throughout the discussions up to this point, partly in recognition of the damage it might cause. But in light of the seriousness and urgency of the threat, and the total rejection of its position by the administration, it would seem that the use of irregular means is justified. There is not likely to be a second chance to get things right, and the situation is similar to the question of whether to activate "special intelligence means" on the eve of the Yom Kippur War. The adoption of the resolution by both houses of Congress indicates the effectiveness of the Israeli campaign, even if Israel was not directly involved in the decision-making on the Hill. In the future Israel will have to continue explaining the shortcomings of the deal promoted by the administration in order to prevent its adoption by Congress, if it is finalized.

It seems that the administration's efforts to bring matters to a point where the ship has sailed, and Israeli efforts will make no difference, have failed.

Given the effectiveness of the prime minister's previous speeches, and the opposition of many Democratic senators to the nascent agreement, as well as the acuteness of the danger inherent in the deal being adopted by Iran, it is not impossible that the prime minister's address to the Congress on March 3, and the Joint Israeli-Arab campaign against the Lausanne framework, will succeed in persuading quite a few of them to oppose the deal. Sixty-seven senators will be required to prevent a presidential veto of a Congressional decision to reject a presented deal.

From an Israeli viewpoint, even if this attempt fails, several other positive outcomes of this policy are expected. First, with mounting opposition to the deal following Netanyahu's speech and the announcement of the framework, and with difficult questions being aimed at the administration not only from the usual suspects but also from among its supporters, the administration finds itself on the defensive. As a result it may feel that it cannot present Iran with further concessions, which it might otherwise have considered in its rush to achieve a deal. Secondly, should Israel find itself in the future in a situation where it has to consider a military strike, no one in Israel or elsewhere will be able to argue that it has not exercised all other options. Israel was prepared to risk its relations with the US administration in order to convince its ally to make a better deal through diplomatic means. This is also relevant politically, for the future judgement of historians on this matter, and may turn out to be relevant to other issues over which Israel and the US administration disagree. Thirdly, the campaign against the coming deal has helped clarify the deal's weaknesses. By launching a public debate on these matters, which the administration was trying to avoid, Israel encouraged criticism of the deal from some of the European partners to the negotiations, which forced the US negotiators to adopt, at least publicly, a sterner position.

In terms of the worsening relationship between the leaders of both states, the damage has already been done. But it is doubtful whether this will spread to the relationships that exist between the establishments on both sides, in a way that might significantly hurt existing ties. Ultimately, this is a relationship that entails close cooperation to the benefit of both countries, reflecting the tremendous importance that Israel attaches to its strategic partnership with its only superpower ally, as well as the deep US commitment to Israel's security. The insult taken by the president

is probably authentic, given his sensitivity to any criticism from Israeli sources, as well as the inability of the administration to see Netanyahu as anything other than a political rival who aligned himself with the Republican Party during the previous elections. Yet this portrayal of insult also appeared to be gimmick designed to help the administration torpedo this joint policy of Congress and Israel.

Looking forward to the coming months, there are essentially three main possible scenarios. It will largely be the Iranians who decide which one ensues. Each scenario requires Israel to develop a relevant strategy to protect itself and to deal successfully with the emerging challenges.

The first scenario is a failure of the efforts to reach a deal, followed by readiness of the administration to enact new biting sanctions against Iran, and by the return of Iran to the same patterns of its nuclear program it pursued before the signing of the JPOA (November 2013). In this scenario Israel will have to use the administration's disappointment to change not only its tools, but also its goals, so that the purpose of the augmented pressure will not be to convince Iran to accept the deal it rejected, but to coerce Iran to abide by the Security Council resolutions. The failure of the administration's strategy will provide Israel and Congress with the leverage to recruit more players to their alternative strategy. In case of a shift in the administration attitude towards the Israeli position, Israel should act as a team player and work hand in hand with the administration to clarify to the Iranian regime that there is no real option of preserving the nuclear military program.

The second scenario is much more plausible, and in it the Iranians and the Americans manage to overcome the last remaining disagreements between them. The deal is submitted for Congressional review, and receives the approval of Congress despite an Israeli campaign against it. While maintaining its efforts to have the deal changed, perhaps with the help of opposing members of Congress or after a new president is elected, Israel should in this case multiply its intelligence attempts to monitor developments in Iran, so that it can sound the alarm if necessary. It will have to accelerate efforts to develop the military capability to defend itself if the need arises, and should find ways to form a regional alliance determined and capable of blocking any Iranian attempt to translate its

achievements in the nuclear realm into greater regional influence. At the same time, Israel should make sure that the United States does not tie its hands and prevent it from taking the steps necessary to foil Iranian attempts to rush to a bomb, bearing in mind the administration's expected reluctance to admit to an Iranian violation of the agreement.

The third scenario is an Iranian attempt to get closer to a bomb following a failure to reach an agreement, while the P5+1 and the internal American political forces are preoccupied with blaming each other for the negotiations' failure, or blaming Israel for it. In this scenario, Israel should be ready fairly quickly to take the necessary steps to prevent Iran from getting too close to a bomb, and to form closer operational cooperation with the United States to achieve this goal.

Under no circumstances should Israel constrain itself by understandings with the United States, such as security guarantees and compensating arms supplies, which limit its ability to decide its own course of action to protect itself against the nuclear threats that may follow a deal. Since Israel is not committed to the deal, it should maintain its right of self-defense independent of it, and keep making sure that Iran does not acquire a nuclear bomb.

In any case, up to the end of June Israel should accelerate its campaign against the deal, and the responsibility for doing so should not lie solely on the shoulders of the government. Civil society and ordinary citizens should find ways to voice loudly their opposition to this dangerous deal. They may turn out to be more effective than the government itself.

In summary, it is possible to say that the fact that Iran has not yet developed nuclear weapons, in spite of the 27 years in which it has been trying to do so, is due in no small part to Israel's efforts. Thus the claims made that Iran's success in proceeding towards the attainment of nuclear weapons represent an Israeli failure, are themselves worthy of ridicule. Without Israel's actions, Iran would have obtained nuclear weapons several years ago. Even a bad deal will postpone to some extent the decision to break out toward a bomb. The issue is not going to be taken off the table, even if a deal is signed. The coalition of forces opposed to this deal will keep up the pressure, as seen in the Senate decision to review the framework,

and in the Republican senators' letter to the Iranian leadership;⁶¹ while Israel will continue to be on the alert to thwart any Iranian attempt to rush to the bomb. The procurement of the S-300 missile system by Iran may make this more difficult in certain respects, but the chances are that Israel and its allies will find a way to overcome these obstacles.

NOTES

¹ “Arak Complex,” *Institute for Science and International Security*, <http://www.isisnucleariran.org/sites/detail/arak/>.

² “Natanz,” *Institute for Science and International Security*, <http://www.isisnucleariran.org/sites/detail/natanz/>.

³ “Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant (FFEP),” *Institute for Science and International Security*, <http://www.isisnucleariran.org/sites/detail/fordow/>.

⁴ “Esfahan,” *Institute for Science and International Security*, <http://www.isisnucleariran.org/sites/detail/esfahan/>.

⁵ Emily B. Landau and Shimon Stein, “Iran and the International Community: Moving toward a Comprehensive Deal?” in Shlomo Brom & Anat Kurz (eds.), *Strategic Assessment for Israel 2014-2015* (Tel Aviv: Institute for National Security Studies, 2015): 63.

⁶ Dennis Ross, “How to Muddle Through with Iran: Finding Middle Ground in the Iranian Nuclear Talks,” *Foreign Affairs*, October 16, 2014, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/2014-10-16/how-muddle-through-iran>.

⁷ For the full JPOA agreement see “Joint Plan of Action,” Geneva, November 24, 2013, http://eeas.europa.eu/statements/docs/2013/131124_03_en.pdf.

⁸ For the full JCPOA agreement see “Parameters for a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action Regarding the Islamic Republic of Iran’s Nuclear Program,” US Department of State, Office of the Spokesperson, April 2, 2015, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/04/240170.htm>.

⁹ Russell Berman, “The Iran Bill Clears the Senate,” *The Atlantic*, May 7, 2015, <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/05/mcconnell-iran-sanctions-cotton-rubio/392300/>.

¹⁰ “Military Sites not Open for Inspection under Nuclear Deal, Senior Iranian Army Official Says,” *Jerusalem Post*, April 11, 2015, <http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Military-sites-not-open-for-inspection-under-nuclear-deal-senior-Iranian-army-official-says-396763>. Ed Royce, “The Sad Truth about the Iran Deal,” *CNN*, April 12, 2015, <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/04/10/opinions/royce-iran-deal-worries/>.

¹¹ Thomas L. Friedman, “Iran and the Obama Doctrine,” *New York Times*, 5 April, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/06/opinion/thomas-friedman-the-obama-doctrine-and-iran-interview.html?_r=0. In a separate interview to NPR, Obama also admitted that “what is a more relevant fear would be that in year 13, 14, 15, they [Iran] have advanced centrifuges that enrich uranium fairly rapidly, and at that point the breakout times would have shrunk almost down to zero.” See “Transcript: President Obama’s Full NPR Interview on Iran Nuclear Deal,” *NPR*, April 7, 2015, <http://www.npr.org/2015/04/07/397933577/transcript-president-obamas-full-npr-interview-on-iran-nuclear-deal>.

¹² Charles Krauthammer, “The Iran Deal: Anatomy of a Disaster,” *Washington Post*, April 9, 2015, http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-iran-deal-anatomy-of-a-disaster/2015/04/09/11bdf9ee-dee7-11e4-a1b8-2ed88bc190d2_story.html.

¹³ Henry Kissinger and George P. Shultz, “The Iran Deal and Its Consequences,” *Wall Street Journal*, April 7, 2015, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/the-iran-deal-and-its-consequences-1428447582>.

¹⁴ David Albright, Andrea Stricker, Serena Kelleher-Vergantini, and Houston Wood, “P5+1/Iran Framework: Needs Strengthening,” *Institute for Science and International Security*, April 11, 2015: 3-7.

¹⁵ In order to build one nuclear warhead, about 25kg of above-90%-enriched uranium (military level) are necessary. This quantity can be reached through enriching 200-250kg of 20%-enriched uranium, which can be extracted from about 1,250-1,500kg of 3.5%-enriched uranium. 3.5% enrichment is about 40%-50% of the enrichment process duration to military level; 20%-enriched uranium takes about 75%-80% of the process time.

¹⁶ Krauthammer, “The Iran Deal: Anatomy of a Disaster.”

¹⁷ “Obama’s Iran ‘Framework,’” *Wall Street Journal*, April 3, 2015, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/obamas-iran-framework-1428019205>.

¹⁸ For example see Dennis Ross’s comment: “Mutual concerns about the threat posed by the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS, also known as the Islamic State), could add to the incentive that both sides have to avoid confrontation.” In: Ross, “How to Muddle Through with Iran.” See also: Landau and Stein, “Iran and the International Community: Moving toward a Comprehensive Deal?”: 66-72.

¹⁹ Obama stated in his speech in Cairo that: “The relationship between Islam and the West includes centuries of coexistence and cooperation, but also conflict and religious wars. More recently, tension has been fed by colonialism that denied rights and opportunities to many Muslims, and a Cold War in which Muslim-majority countries were too often treated as proxies without regard to their own aspirations. Moreover, the sweeping change brought by modernity and globalization led many Muslims to view the West as hostile to the traditions of Islam.” He continued in expressing his belief of global shared values: “I’ve come here to Cairo to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world, one based on mutual interest and mutual respect, and one based upon the truth that America and Islam are not exclusive and need not be in competition. Instead, they overlap, and share common principles -- principles of justice and progress; tolerance and the dignity of all human beings.” For the full transcript see “Remarks by the President on a New Beginning,” Cairo, Egypt, June 4, 2009, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-cairo-university-6-04-09>.

²⁰ Gadwat Bahgat and Robert Sharp, “Prospects for a New US Strategic Orientation in the Middle East,” *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (Summer 2014): 38-39.

²¹ On Russia see Stephen Blank, “Resets, Russia, and Iranian Proliferation,” *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Winter 2012): 14-38. Blank explains that “Moscow has repeatedly stated that on nonproliferation issues it follows its own interests.” On China (and Russia) see George L. Simpson Jr., “Russian and Chinese Support for Tehran: Iranian Reform and Stagnation,” *Middle East Quarterly* (Spring 2010): 63-72.

²² For example see these remarks from Khamenei’s speech in November 2013: “One of the features of the arrogant regime is considering itself superior over others... the result is that they reserve the right of meddling in the affairs of other people, other nations... all in the world must give in to, accept, and submit to that. If others do not accept that what it [arrogance] considers a value, it gives itself the right to meddle in their affairs, impose on them, bully them, put pressure on them. This consideration of one superior than others causes them to claim trusteeship for the affairs of other nations, to claim world management, to consider themselves the leader of the world.

You hear that in the speeches of the officials, the statesmen of America, they speak of the Government of America in a way as if it is the master of all countries. We cannot allow this to be done... They speak about our region in a way as if they are the owner of this region. They speak about the Zionist regime in a way as if the nations

in this region are forced to accept this imposed and forged regime. They treat independent nations, independent governments in a way as if they do not have the right to live. This consideration of superiority over others, other countries, other human beings, this is the basis and the greatest problem of the arrogance. The result is that another characteristic, another characteristic is achieved for the arrogance, and that is not accepting the right [of others]. They neither accept reasonable talk, nor accept the rights of nations.” For the source see Suzanne Maloney, “As Nuclear Talks Inch Forward, Iran’s Supreme Leader Tacks Right With a Blistering Speech,” *Brookings Middle East Politics and Policy*, November 22, 2013, <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/markaz/posts/2013/11/21-khamenei-iran-supreme-leader-speech>. For a full transcript of the speech see <http://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=24552> [Farsi].

It should also be noted that the main message of the Quran is that this hedonistic approach characterizes the infidels.

²³ Michael Doran, “Obama’s Secret Iran Strategy,” *Mosaic*, 2 February, 2015, <http://mosaicmagazine.com/essay/2015/02/obamas-secret-iran-strategy/>. Doran states: “Obama based his policy of outreach to Tehran on two key assumptions of the grand-bargain myth: that Tehran and Washington were natural allies, and that Washington itself was the primary cause of the enmity between the two. If only the United States were to adopt a less belligerent posture, so the thinking went, Iran would reciprocate. In his very first television interview from the White House, Obama announced his desire to talk to the Iranians, to see ‘where there are potential avenues for progress.’ Echoing his inaugural address, he said, ‘[I]f countries like Iran are willing to unclench their fist, they will find an extended hand from us.’”

²⁴ For initial American demands see Michael R. Gordon, “U.S. Lays Out Limits it Seeks in Iran Nuclear Talks,” *New York Times*, November 20, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/21/world/middleeast/us-lays-out-limits-it-seeks-in-iran-nuclear-talks.html?_r=0. The final number of 6,104 was determined in the Lausanne framework.

²⁵ Saeed Kamali Dehghan and Julian Borger, “Iran Needs Greater Uranium Enrichment Capacity, Says Ayatollah Ali Khamenei,” *Guardian*, July 8, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jul/08/iran-increase-uranium-enrichment-capacity-supreme-leader-ali-khamenei>.

²⁶ “There’s little indication that the Obama administration is demanding the kind of invasive inspection regime that would be needed to verify Iran has no appreciable

stockpile of undeclared centrifuges.” See Gary C. Gambill, “Seven Problems with John Kerry’s Iranian Nuclear Clock,” *Middle East Forum*, February 2015, http://www.meforum.org/5043/iran-nuclear-clock#_ftn9. For further details see Lee Smith, “Understanding the P5+1 Nuclear Negotiations with Iran: The Verification Regime,” *Weekly Standard*, November 13, 2014, http://www.weeklystandard.com/blogs/understanding-p51-nuclear-negotiations-iran_818963.html.

²⁷ Doran, in “Obama’s Secret Iran Strategy,” comments: “Over the last year, Obama has reportedly allowed Iran to retain, in one form or another, its facilities at Natanz, Fordow [i.e. Qom], and Arak—sites that Iran built in flagrant violation of the NPT to which it is a signatory. This is the same Obama who declared at the outset of negotiations that the Iranians ‘don’t need to have an underground, fortified facility like Fordow in order to have a peaceful nuclear program. They certainly don’t need a heavy-water reactor at Arak in order to have a peaceful nuclear program. . . . And so the question ultimately is going to be, are they prepared to roll back some of the advancements that they’ve made.’ The answer to his question, by now, is clear: the Iranians will not roll back anything.”

²⁸ In a July 2014 Address to Congress, Wendy Sherman stated that according to the JPOA, Tehran “promised not to fuel or install remaining components at the research reactor in Arak.” This infers that no demands were made to alter the basic characteristics of the heavy water Arak nuclear reactor. See Wendy Sherman, “Status of Negotiations with Iran,” Statement, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, US Department of State, July 29, 2014, <http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Sherman%20Testimony.pdf>. See also: Ross, “How to Muddle Through with Iran.”

²⁹ Jeffrey Heller, “Israel Says Iran Used Parchin Military Site for Testing Nuclear Detonation Technology,” *Reuters*, September 24, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/09/24/us-nuclear-iran-israel-idUSKCN0HJ1UX20140924>. Ari Yashar, “Report Ties Parchin Blast to Iran’s Nuclear Program,” *Israel National News*, October 14, 2014, <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/186168#.VPLZofmsXX4>.

³⁰ Ross, “How to Muddle Through with Iran.” Ross states that “the P5+1 has shown remarkable flexibility during the talks, [...] accepting that Iran should be treated like any other NPT signatory after the full implementation of the comprehensive agreement despite its past transgressions; acquiescing to Iran’s insistence that it not acknowledge that it pursued a nuclear weapons program.”

³¹ According to a source close to Iran's nuclear negotiating team: "This is not true at all, and the trend of R&D on enrichment is moving along its natural track at the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran." See Lazar Berman, "Iran Rejects US Claims it Made Concessions for Talks Extension," *Times of Israel*, December 7, 2014, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/iran-said-to-reject-claims-of-concessions-for-talks-extension/>.

³² According to South Korean intelligence reports, hundreds of North Korean engineers are operating in Iran, and the North Korean-Iranian connections has not been at all discussed throughout the negotiations. See Donald Kirk, "Iran's Partnership with North Korea on Nukes and Missiles May Scuttle Any Deal," *Forbes*, February 20, 2015, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/donaldkirk/2015/02/20/irans-irans-long-time-partnership-with-north-korea-on-nukes-and-missiles-may-scuttle-a-real-deal/>.

³³ American attempts to negotiate with North Korea over its nuclear programs failed due to secret nuclear advancements conducted by the North Koreans. The problematic precedent the North Korea provides for Iran has already been noted by many commentators. For example: "A related problem is whether Iran could be prevented from cheating on any arrangement and acquiring a bomb by stealth. Mr. Kaine (D) underlined that an attempt by the United States to negotiate the end of North Korea's nuclear program failed after the regime covertly expanded its facilities. With Iran, said Mr. Kaine, 'a nation that has proven to be very untrustworthy ... the end result is more likely to be a North Korean situation' if existing infrastructure is not dismantled." See Editorial Board, "The Emerging Iran Nuclear Deal Raises Major Concerns," *Washington Post*, February 5, 2015, http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-emerging-iran-nuclear-deal-raises-major-concerns-in-congress-and-beyond/2015/02/05/4b80fd92-abda-11e4-ad71-7b9eba0f87d6_story.html.

³⁴ David Ignatius, "Proceed with Caution on Iran Diplomacy," *Washington Post*, February 9 2015, http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/proceed-with-caution-on-iran-diplomacy/2015/02/09/35a601e4-b0a7-11e4-854b-a38d13486ba1_story.html.

³⁵ On the administration's efforts to discredit congressional criticism see CNN Wire Service, "Obama Administration Pushing Back against Congressional Efforts to Place New Sanctions on Iran," *Fox6Now*, January 21, 2015, <http://fox6now.com/2015/01/21/obama-administration-pushing-back-against-congressional-efforts-to-place-new-sanctions-on-iran/>. See also: Jennifer Rubin, "Israel vs. Iran: Which Side is the Administration on?" *Washington Post*, January 20, 2015, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/right-turn/wp/2015/01/20/israel-vs-iran-which-side-is->

the-administration-on/. On some of the administration's attempts to discredit Israeli concern, especially from Prime Minister Netanyahu, see "Obama Administration Intensifies Criticism of Israel's Netanyahu," *CPR News*, February 25, 2015, <http://www.npr.org/blogs/thetwo-way/2015/02/25/388948678/netanyahus-talk-destructive-to-u-s-israel-ties-susan-rice-says>. See also: Jennifer Rubin, "Who are you Going to Trust on Iran?" *Washington Post*, February 26, 2015, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/right-turn/wp/2015/02/26/who-are-you-going-to-trust-on-iran/>. In this article Rubin comments, for example: "The administration's lame effort to discredit the prime minister and start a partisan rumpus [...] is nearly as pathetic as its negotiation posture with Iran." Michael Doran regards the personal slander against Netanyahu as an attempt to conceal the substantial political disagreements between the Obama administration and the Israeli leadership.

³⁶ Jacques E.C. Hymans and Matthew S. Gratiyas, "Iran and the Nuclear Threshold," *The Nonproliferation Review*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (2013): 13-38.

³⁷ Leroy Loemker, *Leibniz: Philosophical Papers and Letters* (Reidel, 1969): 311.

³⁸ On the goal of eliminating Israel see Meir Litvak, "Israel in the Eyes of Iran: From Denying the Holocaust to Denying Existence," in Uzi Rabi (ed.), *Iran Time* (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2008): 49-67 [Hebrew]. On the regional aspirations of Iran see Uzi Rabi, "'The Shi'ite Crescent': An Iranian Vision and an Arab Concern," in Uzi Rabi (ed.), *Iran Time* (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2008): 77-98 [Hebrew].

³⁹ Simon Henderson and Olli Heinonen, "Regional Nuclear Plans in the Aftermath of an Iran Deal," *The Washington Institute*, PolicyWatch No. 2337, November 21, 2014, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/regional-nuclear-plans-in-the-aftermath-of-an-iran-deal>. See also: Ephraim Kam and Yoel Guzansky, "Iran's Regional Standing," Shlomo Brom and Anat Kurz (eds.), *Strategic Assessment for Israel 2014-2015* (Tel Aviv: Institute for National Security Studies, 2015): 83-87.

⁴⁰ See PM Netanyahu's Remarks in the US Regarding the Seizure of the Shipment of Missiles from Iran, March 5, 2014, <http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/Spokesman/Pages/spokeiran050314.aspx>.

⁴¹ For some of the criticism within Congress and other American political authorities see, "The Emerging Iran Nuclear Deal Raises Major Concerns," *Washington Post*, February 5, 2015, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-emerging-iran-nuclear-deal-raises-major-concerns-in-congress-and-beyond/2015/02/05/4b80fd92-ab->

da-11e4-ad71-7b9eba0f87d6_story.html.

⁴² See for example: Yoaz Hendel and Yaakov Katz, *Israel Vs. Iran* (Or Yehuda: Kinneret, Zmora-Bitan, Dvir, 2011): 129-172 [Hebrew]; Yossi Melman and Dan Raviv, *Spies Against Armageddon* (Tel Aviv: Yediot Aharonot, 2012): 21-45. See also: Amir Oren, "Israeli Intel Cooperated with U.S. and Britain to Surveil Iran Leaders, New Snowden Leak Reveals," *Haaretz*, February 22, 2015, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/.premium-1.643602>.

⁴³ For a full transcript of the speech see "Full Transcript: Prime Minister Netanyahu Speech to the United Nations General Assembly 2012 (VIDEO)," *Algemeiner*, September 27, 2014, <http://www.algemeiner.com/2012/09/27/full-transcript-prime-minister-netanyahu-speech-to-united-nations-general-assembly-2012-video/>.

⁴⁴ For a full transcript of Netanyahu's speech on Rohani see "Transcript of Netanyahu's UN General Assembly Speech," *Haaretz*, October 1, 2013, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/1.550012>.

⁴⁵ Barbara Slavin, "Israel Says it Persuaded France to Stiffen Terms of Interim Iran Deal," *Al-Monitor*, March 4, 2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/03/israel-france-iran-deal-nuclear-terms-harder.html>.

⁴⁶ As the Iranian expert Karim Sadjadpour remarked: "Iran does not respond to pressure, but it does respond to a lot of pressure." Quoted in: Kenneth Pollack, *Unthinkable: Iran, the Bomb, and American Strategy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013): 167.

⁴⁷ Editorial Board, "The Emerging Iran Nuclear Deal Raises Major Concerns," *Washington Post*, February 5, 2015, http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-emerging-iran-nuclear-deal-raises-major-concerns-in-congress-and-beyond/2015/02/05/4b80fd92-abda-11e4-ad71-7b9eba0f87d6_story.html.

⁴⁸ Arash Karami, "Ayatollah Khamenei's 'Heroic Flexibility,'" *Iran Pulse*, September 19, 2013, <http://iranpulse.al-monitor.com/index.php/2013/09/2854/khame-neis-heroic-flexibility/>.

⁴⁹ See Elisabeth Bumiller, Eric Schmitt, and Thom Shanker, "U.S. Sends Top Iranian Leader a Warning on Strait Threats," *New York Times*, January 12, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/13/world/middleeast/us-warns-top-iran-leader-not-to-shut-strait-of-hormuz.html?pagewanted=all>.

⁵⁰ Steven R. David, "Obama: The Reluctant Realist," *BESA Mideast Security and Policy Studies*, No. 113, forthcoming. David comments that "by raising the threshold for an American attack, Obama is signaling the Israelis that they too must hold off on striking Iran until an actual weapon is produced. This message has been reinforced by virtually every senior official from the Obama administration. The fear is that an Israeli attack, even one carried out without American support, would nonetheless implicate the United States, hurting American interests. The message is clear. Especially as negotiations continue, the United States will not strike Iran and it expects Israel to follow suit."

⁵¹ "Clinton vetoed a 1998 version of the bill that focused on missile proliferation to Iran because it required the imposition of sanctions on Russian entities unless the president determined that a waiver of sanctions was 'essential' to US national security. The administration argued that the legislation, the Iran Missile Proliferation Act of 1998, would harm the administration's effort to garner Russian cooperation on a wide range of proliferation issues." In: Matthew Rice, "Clinton Signs 'Iran Nonproliferation Act,'" *Arms Control Today*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (April 2000): 26.

⁵² "The Bush administration has stated that it generally 'opposes mandatory sanctions and other comparable constraints on the President's flexibility.' In 2006 the Department of State successfully lobbied against passage of legislation sponsored by Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.) that would have ratcheted up sanctions on Iran, contending it would have undermined international diplomacy." See C. I. Bosley, "Congress Moves to Impose Iran Sanctions," *Arms Control Today*, Vol. 37, No. 7 (September 2007): 36-37. For more on this issue see Miles A. Pomper, "House Approves Iran Sanctions Bill," *Arms Control Today*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (May 2006): 33. On the attempts to globalize financial sanctions against Iran see Peter Crail, "News Analysis: U.S. Wields Financial Sanctions Against Iran," *Arms Control Today*, Vol. 38, No. 9 (November 2008): 47-49.

⁵³ Joshua Davidovitch and Times of Israel Staff, "Panetta: Setting Iran Red Lines would Paint US into a Corner," *Times of Israel*, September 16, 2012, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/panetta-setting-iran-red-lines-would-paint-us-into-a-corner/>.

⁵⁴ On the SWIFT expulsion of Iranian banks see "Payments System SWIFT to Expel Iranian Banks Saturday," *Reuters*, March 15, 2012, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/03/15/us-nuclear-iran-idUSBRE82E15M20120315>.

⁵⁵ See: Daniel Klaidman, "Obama's Dangerous Game with Iran," *Newsweek*, Feb-

ruary 13, 2012, <http://www.newsweek.com/obamas-dangerous-game-iran-65711>; Jennifer Rubin, "Iran's Feckless Iran Policy," *Washington Post*, January 27, 2012, http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/right-turn/post/obamas-feckless-iran-policy/2012/01/27/gIQA54ObVQ_blog.html; Jennifer Rubin, "Where are We Headed with Iran Sanctions?" *Washington Post*, February 8, 2012, www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/right-turn/post/where-are-we-headed-with-iran-sanctions/2012/02/08/gIQA2gLMzQ_blog.html. Obama's opposing stance toward sanctions is well-entrenched in his administration's foreign policy. On his objection to the earlier 2010 set of sanctions (CISADA) see Doran, "Obama's Secret Iran Strategy."

⁵⁶ In an interview with Jeffrey Goldberg, President Obama stated: "I think the Israeli people understand it, I think the American people understand it, and I think the Iranians understand it. It [i.e. stating that 'All Options are on the Table'] means a political component that involves isolating Iran; it means an economic component that involves unprecedented and crippling sanctions; it means a diplomatic component in which we have been able to strengthen the coalition that presents Iran with various options through the P-5 plus 1 and ensures that the IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency] is robust in evaluating Iran's military program; and it includes a military component. And I think people understand that .I think that the Israeli government recognizes that ,as president of the United States ,I don't bluff ".For the complete interview see" Obama to Iran and Israel' :As President of the Unites States, I Don't Bluff "" ,*The Atlantic*, March 2, 2012, <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/03/obama-to-iran-and-israel-as-president-of-the-united-states-i-dont-bluff/253875/>. Similar remarks were made by President Obama in his speech in Jerusalem: "But Iran must know this time is not unlimited. And I have made the position of the United States of America clear: Iran must not get a nuclear weapon. This is not a danger that can be contained. As President, I have said to the world that all options are on the table for achieving our objectives. America will do what we must to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran." For the full speech see "Barack Obama's Address at the Jerusalem Convention Center," *Wall Street Journal*, March 21, 2013, <http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire/2013/03/21/text-of-obamas-speech-in-israel/>.

However, by the time of a joint press conference with UK Prime Minister David Cameron in May 2013, the tone against Iran had changed and the notion of 'all options on the table' had vanished: "We discussed Iran, where we agreed to keep up the pressure on Tehran for its continued failure to abide by its nuclear obligations. The burden is on Iran to engage constructively with us and our P5-plus-1 partners in order

to resolve the world's concerns about its nuclear program." For the full transcript see "Transcript: Joint Obama, Cameron Press Conference," *Wall Street Journal*, May 13, 2013, <http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire/2013/05/13/transcript-joint-obama-cameron-press-conference/>.

⁵⁷ "Panetta: We're Developing Military Options on Iran," *USA Today*, March 8, 2012, <http://content.usatoday.com/communities/theoval/post/2012/03/panetta-were-developing-military-options-on-iran/1#.VQmFq47ke3s>; "US Ready for Military Strike on Iran," *Press TV*, May 28, 2012, <http://www.presstv.com/detail/2012/05/28/243555/us-pentagon-strike-iran/>; "Defense Secretary Leon Panetta Threatens Iran with Military Strike if it Develops Nuclear Weapons... But Israel Says the Promises of Force Aren't Enough," *Mail Online*, August 1, 2012, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2182210/In-Israel-Leon-Panetta-threatens-Iran-military-strike-nuclear-weapons.html>; Mark Thompson, "Primed and Ready: Huge Pentagon Bunker-Buster Gets Green Light for Possible Iran Mission," *Time*, January 21, 2013, <http://nation.time.com/2013/01/21/primed-and-ready-huge-pentagon-bunker-buster-gets-green-light-for-possible-iran-mission/>.

⁵⁸ "Report Claims Secret US-Iran Talks Laid Groundwork for Nuclear Deal," *Fox News Channel*, November 24, 2013, <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2013/11/24/report-claims-secret-us-iran-talks-laid-groundwork-for-nuclear-deal/>. For more on this issue see Doran, "Obama's Secret Iran Strategy."

⁵⁹ Jay Solomon and Carol L. Lee, "Obama Wrote Secret Letter to Iran's Khamenei About Fighting Islamic State," *Wall Street Journal*, November 6, 2014, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/obama-wrote-secret-letter-to-irans-khamenei-about-fighting-islamic-state-1415295291>. On the American administration's hesitations see Landau and Stein, "Iran and the International Community: Moving toward a Comprehensive Deal?": 72-73.

⁶⁰ Efraim Inbar, "Obama's Iran Policy and Israel's Elections," *The Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies*, Perspectives Paper No. 288, February 16, 2015, <http://besacenter.org/perspectives-papers/obamas-iran-policy-israels-elections/>. On the administration's attempts to undermine the Prime Minister's credibility see ff. 33.

⁶¹ The letter, signed by 47 Republican senators, was sent to the leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran on March 9, 2015: <http://www.cotton.senate.gov/sites/default/files/150309%20Cotton%20Open%20Letter%20to%20Iranian%20Leaders.pdf>.

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