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DEFUSING TEHRAN



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DEFUSING TEHRAN

THE HEAVY WEIGHTS

TIME FOR AMERICA TO PUT THINGS RIGHT WITH TEHRAN

by *Trita PARSI*

Ahmadinejad's aggressive posture springs from Rasfajani's failure, in which the US has its own share of guilt. The erosion of American leadership in the Middle East favors a rising China and calls for a new regional security system. Washington has no alternative to dialogue.

1. *A*fter the 1991 Persian Gulf War, the United States was in a unique position to construct an inclusive security architecture for the region. This would have been in line with Security Council Resolution 598, which put an end to the Iraq-Iran war and explicitly called for the UN Security Council to address – together with regional states – the question of security in the Persian Gulf.

But the American continued presence in the Persian Gulf depended on its military protection of the Gulf Cooperation Council states against external threats, i.e. Iran and Iraq. A common security arrangement that included Iran could lessen the Arab states' dependence on Washington, give the leadership in Tehran undue influence and undermine the justification for America's military presence in the Persian Gulf, the Administration of Bush Sr. feared. For Pax Americana to be sustained, Iran had to be excluded, contained and isolated.

At the time, Tehran was wrestling with existential issues. Iran's revisionist outlook had put it at odds with all of its immediate Arab neighbors, while devastating its national resources and global prestige.¹ Should it remain an anti-status quo revolutionary state who questioned the very basis for the global and regional order and who sought to undermine the governments of its neighboring states by appealing to their discontented populations, or should it seek to find its place in the regional order as a status-quo state that sought to export the values of its revolution through leadership and cooperation with neighboring governments rather than through confrontation? The regime increasingly recognized that its militaristic approach towards exporting the Islamic revolution had backfired.

The debate in Iran quickly divided between two camps. The “revolutionary” camp argued that Iran was weak and needed to rearm “to defend the revolution.” The other camp, lead by President Hashemi Rafsanjani, argued that economic reconstruction

¹ Emirates' Center for Strategic Studies and Research, "The Gulf Challenges of the Future," 2005, pp. 163- 183.

should be made the key priority with only an incremental rebuilding of the military.²

Between 1989 and 1992, Rafsanjani's "economy-first" camp edged its "revolutionary" rivals out of power. In addition, a decision was made not to abandon the idea of exporting the revolution, but rather, to export it by leading as an example in the Islamic world. Iran needed to make its Islamic model attractive to Muslim nations, by developing and modernizing while still protecting society and Islam against "decadent" Western values, the leadership in Tehran concluded.³ Thus, immediately after Khomeini's death, the new leadership sought to re-establish as far as possible the Shah's economic – and to some extent – politico-military ties to the West.⁴

This approach necessitated reduced tensions with regional and extra-regional states. In particular, since Iran had financed its war internally, Tehran's foreign debt stood at only \$6bn at the end of the war. As a result, Iran was still credit worthy and officials in Tehran thought that they could borrow money from abroad to finance Iran's reconstruction. However, Iran could only receive foreign credit if it obviated adventurism in its foreign policy and avoided moves that would alarm the West. To clear the way for improved economic relations, Tehran sought to resolve outstanding disputes with its Arab neighbors and with the US, such as the taking of American hostages by pro-Iranian Lebanese groups.⁵

According to Gary Sick, "Rafsanjani was much more interested in reconstruction efforts and pragmatic policies... Things began to change [and] 1988-89 was the dividing point where people began to look at things in a different sort of way."⁶

Iran lowered its rhetoric against the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf considerably in 1989 and mustered a charm offensive to improve relations with the GCC states, with some great initial success. Some GCC leaders even expressed hopes that Iran might soon earn observer status in the organization.⁷ Later that year, GCC member states declared that Iran should be included in any future regional security system, much to Tehran's satisfaction.⁸

However, Iranian overtures to the Bush Administration were left unanswered. In his inaugural address in 1989, President Bush signaled to Iran that "Goodwill begets goodwill. Good faith can be a spiral that endlessly moves on." Rafsanjani, who wanted to return Iran to a position on the international stage, sought improved US-Iranian relations and interpreted Bush's statement as an invitation for an Iranian goodwill gesture.⁹ Iran's trump card was American hostages in Lebanon.

Though Rafsanjani told the UN mediator in the hostage situation, Giandomenico

² Yahya SADOWSKI, *Scuds or Butter? The Political Economy of Arms Control in the Middle East*, (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1993), p. 63.

³ Interview with Dr. Abbas MALEKI, Tehran, August 1, 2004.

⁴ Anoushiravan EHTESHAMI, *After Khomeini*, (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 140.

⁵ Yahya SADOWSKI, *Scuds or Butter? The Political Economy of Arms Control in the Middle East*, (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1993), p. 62.

⁶ Interview with Gary SICK, New York, February 25, 2004.

⁷ Anoushiravan EHTESHAMI, *After Khomeini*, (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 142. Hooshang AMIRAHMADI, *The Spiraling Gulf Arms Race*, *Middle East Insight*, Vol 10, no 2., 1994, p. 48.

⁸ Shireen HUNTER, *Iran After Khomeini*, (New York: Praeger, 1992), p. 131.

⁹ Giandomenico PICCO, *Man without a gun*, (New York: Random House, 1999), p. 110.

Picco, that Iran had “had no relations for some time with those holding the hostages” and that “these people are not easy to deal with,” Iran nevertheless successfully intervened and secured the release of the hostages, all in hope that the Americans would “halt their unreasonable animosity towards [Iran].”¹⁰

Though the hostages were all released, the US failed to reciprocate, according to Brent Scowcroft, who served as US National Security Advisor to President Bush at the time. “When the hostages were all released, we didn’t do anything.”¹¹

This was partly due to the fact that although the US recognized that Iran's ideological zeal had reduced significantly and that they had “backed down a lot from the extreme days of Khomeini,” the memories of Iran-Contra was still enough to shy any American politician away from Iran. According to General Scowcroft, the blame primarily lied with Washington. “Picco says it was more our fault. Perhaps he is right... Maybe it was the US’s fault that [he] didn’t succeed in connecting Iran and the US. At the time, Iran was more eager than the US in warming up.”¹²

Much to Tehran’s frustration, Washington rejected Iran’s efforts to reintegrate itself into the region. Iran’s aggressive push for a common security system that could end the perpetual insecurity that put a dark shadow over the energy-rich region was easily thwarted by Washington. At the unipolar moment, Iran was simply no diplomatic match for the US.

America defined the options facing the GCC – to seek a Middle East order with Iran, or an Arab order with the US. By offering the GCC states bilateral security deals, Washington pre-empted an inclusive Persian Gulf security arrangement and managed to keep the mullahs in Tehran isolated.¹³

2. The region is still wrestling with the repercussions of this decision. Rather than increasing security through confidence building measures and intensified and sustained diplomacy, Pax Americana only resulted in the Arabs arming themselves to the teeth with America’s blessing. Though the armament was aimed at containing “the Iranian threat,” the Arabs vastly outspent Iran on arms. For instance, the military expenditure of the United Arab Emirates– an Arab sheikhdom with a population of 2.6 million – was between 1994-99 on average more than three times greater than that of Iran, whose population numbered closer to 65 million. The Arab states’ aggressive armament contributed to Iran's insecurity, which in turn increased tensions between the two sides of the Gulf and undermined the security of the region.

Fifteen years later, with Iran’s influence rising thanks to Washington’s elimination of Tehran’s two regional foes Saddam and the Taliban, the GCC states are emerging as the principal losers of this arrangement. Under America’s security umbrella, the region

¹⁰ Giandomenico PICCO, *Man without a gun*, (New York: Random House, 1999), pp. 113-4.

¹¹ Interview with former National Security Advisor Brent SCOWCROFT, Washington DC, September 27, 2004.

¹² *Idem*.

¹³ Hooshang AMIRAHMADI, *The Spiraling Gulf Arms Race*, *Middle East Insight*, Vol 10, no 2., 1994, p. 49. Paul J. WHITE and William S. LOGAN, *Remaking the Middle East*, (New York: Berg, 1997), p. 204.

resembles Europe between the two world wars; it is fundamentally disordered and riddled with uncertainty, negative competition, and massive instability. Rather than providing security, the absence of an inclusive security arrangement has only increased anticipation of forthcoming insecurity and warfare, while making the Arab states beholden to a security arrangement with an ally that they find increasingly unreliable.

Washington's invasion of Iraq has further fuelled anti-Americanism in the region and put the Arab regimes' security alliance with the US under intensified domestic criticism. Furthermore, the Arabs' nightmare scenario – a US-Iran conflict that would spill over to the Arab states – is inching closer. Combined with Washington's criticism of the lack of democracy in the Arab kingdoms, the common interests between the guarantor of Persian Gulf security and the supposed benefactors of this umbrella are no longer as clear cut.

In spite of this, the Bush administration is today courting the Gulf monarchies with the same proposal it offered them 15 years ago after the first Persian Gulf War – purchase American armory in the billions and Washington will protect you against your Persian nemesis. Robert Joseph, undersecretary of State for arms control and international security, visited Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman in April 2006 to sell the idea of spreading across the region a sophisticated missile defense systems aimed at Iran. While Washington hailed the trip as a success, Arab diplomats in Washington sounded unenthusiastic.

Rather, as geo-political forces have worked to the disadvantage of the Arabs, GCC states have begun to view previously unattractive solutions in a new light. Recently, Arab leaders broke with tradition and voiced support for the idea of a collective security architecture for the region – that includes Iran. In particular, the Arabs are growing increasingly frustrated with Washington's refusal to talk directly with Iran. "How can I find a solution in the absence of direct discussions?," Sayyid Badr bin Hamad bin Hamoud al-Busaidi, the number two at Oman's foreign ministry, told AFP. "Direct dialogue between all parties is important. Between all parties," the Omani official stressed.¹⁴

At the 2004 Gulf Dialogue in Bahrain, Saudi Foreign Minister Saud Al-Faisal declared that there was urgent need "for a collective effort aimed at developing a new and more solid framework for Gulf security." In the Saudi Minister's view, the security arrangement would go beyond the Gulf Cooperation Council states and include "a prosperous Yemen, a stable Iraq, and a friendly Iran," and be underpinned by guarantees provided by the international community as a whole rather than by just "the only superpower in the world."¹⁵

At Track-II and Track-1.5 meetings, Arab officials and non-officials have been pressing their Chinese counterparts to take on a greater role in Gulf security matters. China is needed, they argue, to create a balance between the US and Iran. The Arabs believe that the geopolitical significance of the Persian Gulf region will increase substantially over the next decades as the energy demands of China and India

¹⁴ Oman urges direct US-Iran talks on nuclear row, AFP, May 20, 2006.

¹⁵ Address by Saud al Faisal, Bahrain, December 3, 2004.

skyrocket. The region is expected to supply 32 per cent of the world's oil by 2025, compared to 26 per cent today. As the Asian economies become increasingly dependent on Persian Gulf oil, China, Japan and India will develop a stake in Persian Gulf security and an interest in protecting their energy supply lines, the reasoning goes.

Though currently reluctant to challenge the US, it is difficult to foresee the Asian giants continue to depend on Washington or elementary regional security mechanisms as a guarantee for regional stability. Consequently, with or without Washington's consent, geopolitical forces are making Persian Gulf security matters unlikely to remain solely an American prerogative. The question is how Washington will react to these developments. The current approach – that of increasing America's security burden by setting up military bases in Iraq and by insisting on an arrangement that the Arabs are growing increasingly uncomfortable with – risks widening the gulf between Washington and the Arab sheikhdoms. The longer Washington insists on resisting these geopolitical realities, the greater the interests of America and regional states will diverge. This will have profound consequences for America, the region and the global economic order.

An alternative approach would be to welcome the opportunity to lessen America's security burden in the Persian Gulf and take the lead in creating an inclusive regional security architecture. Such a measure can guarantee Washington a leading voice in Persian Gulf security matters for decades to come, while regaining the trust and support of regional and global actors through American leadership as opposed to American hegemony. That, however, would require Washington to talk to Iran, which in turn requires the current stand-off over the nuclear issue not to solely be seen from the narrow perspective of centrifuge calculations.

WHAT WASHINGTON CAN DO ABOUT IRAN

by *Abbas MALEKI*

With Saddam and the Taliban out of the scene and US troops entangled in Iraq, Teheran's aspiration for a new regional centrality skyrockets, together with its nuclear ambitions. Is Ahmadinejad to lead the game in the Middle East? America's options and Iran's constraints.

1. *I*ran's nuclear ambitions have been the subject of serious debate within the international community for over two years. Iran contends its nuclear program is entirely peaceful and insists the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) guarantees the right to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes; the United States asserts that Iran intends to use its civilian nuclear facilities as a cover for nuclear weapons development. Spanning the middle ground are Russia, China, France, Germany, and the UK, currently engaged in ongoing but periodically stalled negotiations over the status of Iran's uranium conversion and enrichment activities, and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which acknowledges "concerns" regarding Iranian nuclear intentions but maintains there is no convincing evidence that Iran's true objective lies in militarizing its nuclear program.

On January 9, 2006, the Iranian government announced that it would resume enrichment of uranium, ratcheting up the diplomatic crisis. On January 12, 2006, the EU-3 – UK, Germany and France's foreign ministers – and European Union high representative Javier Solana met in Berlin to discuss the Iranian government's decision to resume uranium enrichment. Then the United States and Europe won resolutions at the IAEA to move the issue to the United Nations Security Council. But it took weeks over the winter to get the weakest of Security Council actions, a "presidential statement." Russia, which has huge financial interests in Iran and is supplying it with nuclear reactors, was particularly reluctant to push the Iranians too hard.

After Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Iran's president, announced on April 11, 2006 that his country had succeeded in completing a uranium enrichment cycle, Iran's diplomatic machine went into overdrive to try to impress world opinion. One move was a letter sent later by Mr. Ahmadinejad to George W. Bush and the Iranian president's diplomatic tour launched to Asia and European capitals. The latter suggests that Iran will look increasingly to Asia and its own region for diplomatic and economic ties.

Then Ahmadinejad said on June 2, 2006 that he would oppose "any pressure to deprive our people from their right" to pursue a peaceful nuclear program. Iran's foreign minister, Manouchehr Mottaki, said a day after that Javier Solana, the

European Union's foreign policy chief, was expected to arrive in Tehran with a new package of incentives.

After months of pressure from both sides of the US political spectrum, the Bush administration on May 31, 2006 announced that it would join Europe in negotiations with Iran over its nuclear program. The secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice, presented the decision as proof that the United States is serious about pursuing all avenues of diplomacy before resorting to a military option. But if this announcement indicates anything, it is that the White House has finally begun to recognize what its own policy advisers and military analysts have been privately saying for some time: there is no military option with regard to Iran.

Despite of the fact that Iranian officials have explicitly ruled out using oil as a weapon, on June 4, 2006 Iran's supreme leader Khamenei said that if the United States makes a "wrong move" toward Iran, energy flows in the region would be endangered. Iran dominates the Strait of Hormuz, between the Persian Gulf and high seas. The strait, which separates Iran from the Arabian Peninsula, is only 70 kilometers wide. But the United States rejected Iran's position and added Iran's economy is more dependent from oil export than the rest of the world.

On the other side, in spite of President Bush's insistence on his commitment to diplomatic solution for Iran nuclear crisis, nobody denies that all of options are on the table. Military attack to Iran is not ignored. Former CIA analyst and Presidential advisor Ray McGovern believes US is going to launch a military strike against Iran, which he thinks will take place in June or July 2006. He says, "There is already one carrier task force there in the Gulf, two are steaming toward it at the last report I have at least - they will all be there in another week or so. The aircraft carriers are in place, it doesn't take much to fly the bombers out of British and US bases - cruise missiles are at the ready, Israel is egging us on".

Ironically, the United States offered to lift some of its trade sanctions against Iran as part of a package of benefits aimed at getting Tehran to guarantee it won't pursue nuclear weapons. Lifting sanctions would allow sales to Iran of items like agricultural technology and commercial planes to replace the country's dilapidated fleet. The incentives, which EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana presented in Tehran, are accompanied by a threat of UN Security Council penalties if Iran fails to halt uranium enrichment.

2. The macro-region encompassing the Eastern Mediterranean, Caucasia, South West Asia and Central Asia is characterized by a wide arc of instability. Each of regions as Middle East, Persian Gulf, West and Central Asia are Iran's sub-regional systems. Especially after September 11, 2001, Iran experiences strategic and political insecurity. It's true that two overtly hostile and dangerous regimes for Iran have been removed from Afghanistan and Iraq; but, at the same time, United States' troops has been placed in Iran's neighboring countries at least in South, West and East.

Iran's "Strategic Loneliness" is pushing it to be increasingly active in pursuing its security. Iran's decision makers are trying to optimize Iran's national interests by an

interaction between Iran's mass capabilities and regional collective security. The cognitive approach to Iran's Foreign Policy results in Iranian elite enthusiastically seeking to play greater role in the region. Things such as Iran's support of regional organizations as the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) show the eagerness of Islamic Republic to be part of the Collective arrangements in each of its sub-regions.

Teheran is now thinking to be a big player in such organizations through:

- Participating to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)
- Establishing a new dialogue with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)
- Restablishing the Caspian Cooperation Organization (CASCO)
- Thinking on a Rim of Shi'ite Countries in the Middle East and West Asia.

Despite what is being said about Mr. Ahmadinejad, his government has every reason and means to go for better relations with the US. His administration's main goal is to improve living conditions in Iran. Therefore his main foreign policy strategy must be detente with everybody; unless other countries force Iran to behave otherwise.

The new government has the support of the religious leader and the parliament so it can use its full power. The 17 million votes for Ahmadinejad in the last presidential elections and Iranians' reaction to US pressures showed that, although there are different political views in Iran, any regime change plan is reasonably out of question at the moment.

Iranian-American relations, as is well known, have been notoriously poor ever since the 1979 revolution which toppled the Shah and brought the Islamic Republic to power. All efforts to improve the relationship have foundered. Such a rapprochement may seem highly unlikely at present when Washington and Tehran are so sharply divided over several issues, especially the Iranian nuclear program.

The invasion of Iraq has completely reshaped the dynamics of the region, making Iran the new political power in the Middle East. With its two nearest enemies - Saddam Hussein and the Taliban - gone, Iran has firmly secured its interests in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Through its ties with Hezbollah, Iran has managed to fill the power vacuum left by Syria's abrupt withdrawal from Lebanon. At the same time, Iran has taken advantage of the cut in international funding to the Hamas-dominated Palestinian authority to make up its economic shortfall, thus gaining an even firmer foothold in the Palestinian territories. Meanwhile, record oil prices and booming trade with Russia, China and India have allowed Iran to shrug off any economic pressure to give up its nuclear program. Domestically, a poll secretly commissioned by a parliamentary committee in 2002 found that nearly two-thirds of Iranians supported detente with the West.

Meanwhile, Iran's relations with Russia cover a vast range of regional, multilateral and bilateral ties with huge impacts on Central Asia, the Caucasus and Caspian Basin. Also, Iran-China economic ties have risen to \$200 billions, ranging from crude oil exchange to construction and transportation projects.

3. There have always been many questions concerning the precise policy of the United States towards Iran. Today it is not clear to what degree the United States

wishes to see a total upheaval in Iran – the current government completely replaced, or whether only certain reforms in the Islamic Republic’s policies would be sufficient to quell the animosity which has existed since the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and the subsequent changes towards an Islamic Republic. US Congress has allocated \$85 million to support democracy promotion in Iran.

With various issues of contention still increasingly aflame, most notably the controversy over Tehran’s nuclear energy program, the aims of the Bush administration are still pointed in the same confrontational direction: the language from both Tehran and Washington becomes stronger and increasingly ideological.

Both the United States and Iran have policies that are based on negative impressions of “the other” – a country that appears alien and acts incomprehensibly (outside of democracy) – “hardliners” of the opposing ideological viewpoint.

Furthermore, there is no doubt in Iran that in the United States, President George Bush represents a new, stronger ideological current in the Republican Party – perhaps even representing a religious wave. Therefore, there seems to be very little room for mutual understanding. The American policy based on a particular perception of the opposing government, will not and cannot obtain the receptive ‘listener’ that it needs for its own desired policy results in Iran and the Middle East. The Iranians are a proud people who will not easily be told by others – especially an enemy of sorts – that they are less free and in need of assistance or support to become free.

President Bush, in his 2005 State of the Union Address, said, “And to the Iranian people, I say tonight: As you stand for your liberty, America stands with you.” This was particularly remarkable because American President was addressing directly the Iranian people, and the U.S. position was clarified: Iranians themselves were in an active struggle for freedom and liberty, and the emphasis was put on the role of the United States – as “standing” with the Iranian people, not with the Islamic Iranian government.

The U.S. administration does not recognize the legitimacy of any attempts by the Iranian government toward democracy and democratic institutions. More specifically, the Bush Administration sees all Iranian attempts at free elections, under the guidelines of its own constitution, as flawed and seriously undemocratic. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said, “I do not see the Iranian elections as being a serious attempt to move Iran closer to a democratic future,” and that “an election that took place with an unelected few having decided who could run, with thousands of people having been disqualified, with women having been disqualified altogether, I find it hard to see how this election could certainly contribute to the sense of legitimacy of the Iranian government”. This statement went together with a detailed list of accusations against Teheran:

- Iran supports the international terrorism
- Iran violates human rights
- Iran opposes to Arab Israeli peace process
- Iran is going to have access to nuclear weapons

- Iran is producing Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) like chemical, biological, and missile launchers

4. As to the possible US strategic approaches toward Iran, they may include:

a) Leadership: If the US believes it is the leader of the world in a unipolar system, then it has to deal directly with Teheran with or without the support of other negotiators. In this case, it should make clear what it is prepared to give Iran in return for indefinite suspension of its enrichment program. This approach, however, is highly dangerous. Iran is a leader within the Islamic World, and a major producer of oil and gas. Without a combined approach with the Europeans, the Iranians would likely drive a truck between the two sides and come out a winner.

b) Isolation: This model maintains that the best way to deal with Iran is to neglect it. Iran's internal problems weaken its potential and destabilizes its the society. High oil prices have so far prevented Iran's economic and trade weaknesses to show, but this situation is not given forever. When it comes to trade, in particular, the US has strong embargoing power. Iran's civil air fleet, for example, suffers from the lack of modern airplanes, and American refuse to allow spare parts from US companies (and European ones, which have pieces from American companies) has so far prevented Teheran from solving the problem.

c) Active Engagement: The revolution in Iran has been in power for over 20 years, and it doesn't seem in danger of being overthrown. No significant opposition movement exists. At the same time, Iran's laws are becoming more investor-friendly and foreign companies are responding. Robert Pelletreau, a former US Assistant Secretary, has said that in the 21st century major issues as international terrorism, narcotics trafficking, and the spread of nuclear weapons will require cooperation between US and Iran to be effectively dealt with.

d) Stick and Carrot: Ever since the Islamic Revolution, American officials have tried to persuade Iran to be compatible with the Western powers in terms of domestic government and external policies. The last attempt was a package which Javier Solana brought to Tehran on June 6, 2006. The offer includes a commitment from US, UK, France, Germany, Russia, and China to support Iran's plan for a nuclear energy program for civilian use, including building light-water reactors through joint projects with other countries. The most compelling item is the American offer to end its nearly three-decade policy against direct talks with Iran and to join in the negotiations over Iran's nuclear program. The decision to include the sale of Boeing aircraft parts, along with aircraft and parts from Airbus is a huge step, particularly for the United States.

Since the 1979 revolution, Iran has been subject to American sanctions that hinder the purchase of spare parts for nearly all the planes in its air force, the civilian carrier Iran Air and domestic airlines. The sanctions cover not only American-made airplanes and parts, but also European planes like Airbus, when they use parts made in the United States. They include a travel ban against Iran's ruling religious leaders and government officials involved in the nuclear program, and a freeze of Iranian financial

assets.

Possible Carrots for Iran from the United States are:

- Joining the World Trade Organization;
- The sale of spare parts for Iran's decrepit fleet of Boeing airliners;
- The unfreezing of Iranian assets held in the USA.

On the contrary, Sticks (in the view of Iran) are:

- Further implementation of ILSA (Iran-Libya Sanction Act);
- Ban of Caspian oil and gas transportation via Iran;
- Us financing propaganda domestic against the Islamic Republic. Iran claims 4000 anti-government radios, TVs and websites are currently broadcasting. Most of them have received money from the US government;
- The US making difficult IMF and WB loans for Iran;
- A resolution is currently before the Security Council under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, which invokes the Council's power to demand compliance of member countries and threatens punishment if they refuse;
- Legal and judicial cases against Iran in US Courts. Despite of agreement between Iran and US in 1980 to end of all claims against each other related to Islamic Revolution and hostage taking (Algiers Accord), individuals sue Iran's government in US courts.¹
- Legal Affairs: The U.S. Department of Homeland Security is overseeing about 80 investigations of foreign arms brokers, Iranian military agents and U.S. companies suspected of trying to smuggle to Iran sensitive systems or technology that could be used for military purposes. The export to Iran of such so-called dual-use technologies is banned. A dozen cases involving alleged exports to Iran are now before U.S. courts.

e) Regime Change: The term regime change has only become current in the past decade with the rise of neo-conservative influence in American policy making; the policy that bears its name has been operative for more than fifty years. One need only to think of Iran, Guatemala, Chile, Grenada, Panama and Kosovo to grasp the consistency of that policy. Regime change will continue to be the desired outcome of American strategy, as long as the United States remains the major military power in the world. The notion of regime change is elastic. At one extreme, it involves the outright removal and replacement of the policy leadership of the target state, along with its administrative apparatus.

f) Containment: Short of regime change, the most plausible apparent option is containment, which has also played a significant role in American security policy since World War II. Containment - keeping the target state within bounds so that it does not expand its military capability and threaten other regimes – appears here as a fall-back position, that cedes to regime change when a more favorable configuration of

¹ Some examples of pending trials are: Terry Anderson, kidnapped in Lebanon, claims \$100 millions from Iran; Sicipio, \$20 millions; Reed, \$16 millions; Kabubson, \$9 millions; Their wives: \$10 millions each. Alisa Flato was killed in Israel; Federal court ordered to give her family \$247 millions of Iran's assets.

power develops.

g) *Military attack*: Slightly more than three years ago, George Bush invariably answered every question regarding his plans to attack Iraq by saying that he didn't have such plans on his desk. But by March, 2003, those plans had found their way to his desk. The lesson is that a U.S. attack is never publicized in advance, certainly not if it cannot be legitimized. It will be a surprise. On Tuesday, February 22, 2005, President George Bush said that the idea that he was preparing to attack Iran was "ridiculous," but that "all options are on the table."

5. Bush's attitude is very logical and it is based on Clausewitz's theory of war on which he believes all military attacks should be surprise attacks and the country should purposefully mislead the "enemy" into the belief that they are open to negotiations (such as the statement that all of our options are open) while they are preparing for war. To the Iranians, overall US activities in Iraq demonstrate that military commanders and US policy makers possess "little understanding of the land." This has provided the opponents of the US with a sense of advantage. Tactical errors by the US only serve to enhance that sense. Beyond failing to understand how to operate in Iraq, the US appears hampered by its broader policy of engaging in social engineering.

Inside Iran there is broad public discontent with the Islamic government, but little or no popular sentiment against the country's nuclear development program, because the country is widely believed to need it. Teheran has replied to outside pressures, assuring it is willing to remain a member of the non-proliferation treaty and give the IAEA access to all nuclear sites. But in return, Iran wants an end to its isolation by the US and "full engagement" in political, security, economic and technological fields. Iran is currently the greatest test of American security policy. It has close relations with the Shi'ia factions in Iraq and is preparing to exert as much influence as possible over post-occupation Iraqi politics. Teheran's likely response to a US air strike would be threefold utilizing its cruise missile arsenal to attack US ships, disordering energy flow in the region, presumably in Strait of Hormuz; and retaliating in Iraq and Afghanistan. The turmoil caused by such an action would lead the US to tap its so-called 'mini-nuke' arsenal, opening a new Pandora's Box of chaos.

INDIA'S SECURITY DILEMMA

by *Rajesh M. BASRUR*

Iran-US nuclear confrontation has placed India in a strategically precarious position. Delhi needs both Iran's energy and America's nuclear technology, but if the discord escalates, it could be forced to choose between the two. The great power-to-be can do nothing but watch and wait.

1. *I*ndia is in a state of transition, a somnolent giant that has awakened to its potential as a leading actor on the world stage. Its economy since the early 1990s has been marked by a steady process of globalization and accelerating growth, with Gross Domestic Product rising at an annual average of 5.9% in the period 2001-05.¹ Its thirst for energy is growing concomitantly. It is estimated that by 2010 India, already the world's sixth largest consumer of petroleum, will reach the fourth position behind the US, China and Japan.² Since it does not produce sufficient energy for itself, the energy deficit – currently about 30% – will grow ever larger, so long-term arrangements for assured oil and gas supply are an important pillar of strategic policy. Iran, which holds 10% of the world's oil reserves and the second-largest reserves of gas, is a major source.

The importance of Iran to India's energy security was underlined when Iranian President Mohammad Khatami attended India's Republic Day parade as Chief Guest in January 2003. India has proposed the development of an Asian gas grid, of which the planned 2,775-km Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) pipeline is an important component. Though it was originally planned in 1989, negotiations were delayed because of India's tense relations with Pakistan. They seemed close to fruition when the Iran-US imbroglio emerged to cloud the picture. India has also been negotiating to obtain 5 million tonnes per annum of liquefied natural gas (LNG) from Iran. Other areas of cooperation include development of a gas block by the Indian Oil Corporation in the South Pars gas field and Indian assistance in developing the Iranian port of Chahbahar.

But India's political security strategy has come into conflict with its energy objectives because the US is opposed to the strengthening of the India-Iran relationship. Since the 1990s, India-US relations have experienced a quantum leap, with expansion of trade and investment, defense collaboration and political cooperation on terrorism. The two countries have also been drawn closer by common perceptions on the threat from radical Islam and (potentially) China. During the Cold

¹ Baldev Raj NAYAR, *India's Globalization: Evaluating the Economic Consequences* (Washington, DC: East-West Center Washington, 2006), Table 5, pp. 27-28.

² Beryl ANAND, "Iran Oil, US Spoil, India Foil: Burgeoning India-Iran Relations," Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies, New Delhi, Article No. 1689, March 31, 2005, www.ipcs.org/kashmirLevel3.jsp?action=showView&kValue=1689&subCatID=null&mod=null.

War era, India adopted a defensive approach toward the US. It sought to balance American military-strategic power by developing close relations with the Soviet Union and to distance itself from American economic power by adopting an autarkic economic policy. Both these preferences have been reversed. Today, India sees itself as a rising power on the world stage and seeks to bandwagon with the US in pursuit of this overarching objective. The potential benefits of the new approach include obtaining a “seat at the table” of major powers (including permanent membership of the Security Council), and a better bargaining position vis-à-vis its two main strategic adversaries, China and Pakistan.

A critical obstacle to obtaining the status of a major power is India's outsider status with respect to the nuclear nonproliferation regime. Because of its refusal to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), India has not been made a member of important components of that regime, such as the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Missile Technology Control Regime. Its self-image as an emerging power and its pragmatic desire to be a part of the global decision-making arrangements on nuclear weapons issues makes it reluctant to join some components into which it has been invited, such as the now-shelved Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the Proliferation Security Initiative. The India-US nuclear agreement of July 2005 seeks to resolve this sticky issue and bring India into the nonproliferation regime. The agreement aims to give India the benefits of regime membership in terms of civilian technology and material transfers without technically recognizing it as a nuclear weapons state. Since this would in effect bypass the NPT, it has aroused considerable opposition in the United States, which is required to amend its export laws to bring the agreement into effect. The agreement has run into domestic opposition in the US, with many critics asking what the US is getting in return. The ensuing bargaining process has brought strong Congressional pressure on India to back away from its warming relationship with Iran.

In pursuit of its larger political goals, which hinge on the nuclear deal and the expected cementing of the India-US relationship, India has twice voted in favor of resolutions critical of Iran in the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) Governing Board in September 2005 and February 2006. This has soured relations with Iran, which in turn has turned on the pressure. It has set July 2006 as the deadline for signing the IPI pipeline agreement and appears to be renegeing on the LNG deal. The Chahbahar project has come to a virtual standstill.³ The US has offered some alternatives. In May 2006, India decided to sign on to the US-backed Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (TAP) pipeline. However, the future of the agreement seems uncertain so long as Afghanistan is wracked by political turbulence.⁴ If the nuclear deal works out, it will facilitate expansion of India's nuclear power production. However, nuclear power production, which today at 3,087 megawatts accounts for barely 3% of India's energy production, may not amount to much. Claims have been advanced that nuclear power output could reach as high as 40,000

³ Amit BARUAH, “Partnership with Iran in Trouble,” *Hindu*, May 14, 2006.

⁴ There is a similar problem, on a smaller scale, with the IPI pipeline, which passes through the increasingly turbulent Pakistani province of Balochistan.

megawatts by 2030.⁵ But there is room for doubt, particularly because of the relatively high costs involved.⁶ So long as the Iran-US confrontation persists, India's position will remain an uneasy one.

India's vote against Iran in the IAEA generated considerable heat in domestic politics. Those favoring the vote argued that the India-US deal took precedence, that Iran had violated its commitments as a non-nuclear weapons state under the NPT, and that a nuclear Iran would not be in India's security interests. Those against held that energy from Iran is vital, whereas the energy benefits from the India-US deal will be marginal, that Iran has the right to develop its own nuclear capacity, and that India was playing second fiddle to the United States.⁷ The government's official position was that while Iran has the right to develop civilian nuclear power, it had violated international law. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh obliquely drew attention in Parliament to India's concern that Iran had been a part of the A. Q. Khan proliferation network. He also declared that "it is not in our interest to have another nuclear weapon state in our neighborhood."⁸ The main opposition party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) concurred.⁹

While official statements did not elaborate on the negative implications of a nuclear Iran, strategic commentators have given several reasons for India's discomfort. K. Subrahmanyam, Chairman of the Task Force on Global Strategic Developments, has argued that Iran could be an "Islamic proliferator," is likely to destabilize the global energy market by generating Shia-Sunni conflict in the Middle East and obtaining control over Gulf oil, and may have a radicalizing influence on Central Asia.¹⁰ The fear has also been expressed that Iran's nuclearization will change India's strategic calculus, compelling it to expand its nuclear inventory.¹¹

These are worst-case assumptions, of course, and may seem far-fetched. There are other scenarios in which Iran could take a more moderate turn.¹² But the reality is that no nation wants to see new nuclear powers emerge, the more so in a turbulent area such as the Middle East which is so critical to global stability. India's position thus is that of an anxious bystander. What if Iran were to legally free itself from its NPT obligations by opting out of the treaty? The Indian position on treaty violation would no longer apply. But the other concerns would remain, and India's position would not change.

⁵ "India to Double Power Production from N-Plants," *Hindustan Times*, May 21, 2006.

⁶ M. V. RAMANA, Antonette D'SA and Amulya K. N. REDDY, "Economics of Nuclear Power from Heavy Water Reactors," *Economic and Political Weekly*, April 23, 2005, pp. 1763-1773.

⁷ For an overview of the arguments, see "India's Vote in the IAEA: the Balance Sheet," *ORF Issue Brief*, #5, Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi, November 2005. The publication precedes the February 2006 vote, but reflects the entire debate accurately.

⁸ "'Nuclear-Armed Tehran Not in India's Interest,'" *Times of India*, April 18, 2006.

⁹ Neena VYAS, "Nuclear Iran Not in India's Interest: BJP," *Hindu*, February 15, 2006.

¹⁰ K. SUBRAHMANYAM, "If Iran Went Nuclear..." *Indian Express*, October 5, 2005.

¹¹ B. RAMAN, "Will the US Attack Iran?" *Outlook*, April 11, 2006 <http://www.outlookindia.com/full.asp?fname=raman&fodname=20060411&sid=1>

¹² *The Middle East and the Rising Asian Powers: Imagining Alternative Futures*, Henry L. Stimson Center, Washington, DC, Spring-Summer 2004.

2. In the past, India almost always opposed US military intervention anywhere in the world. This perspective has changed for three reasons: India no longer fears the US presence in its neighbourhood but welcomes it (in the context of constraining Pakistan); it is now a status quo-oriented power that sees its interests as congruent with those of the US and other major powers; and it views intervention against serious threats in the post-September 11 era as sometimes necessary. Thus, India took a careful position on the US invasion of Iraq, expressing its discomfort but not opposing the US outright. It is likely to adopt a similar approach if the US attacks Iran, provided there is no breakdown on the India-US nuclear deal. An important constraint is domestic. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's government is a coalition that has to heed pressure from left-wing allies hostile to the US and the opposition BJP's sharp criticism of its handling of the issue.

There are certainly anxieties about the potential effects of a US strike. First, it will force India to choose sides and that choice will in all probability go in favor of the United States as India has a higher stake in that country than in Iran. It is also too weak to take an independent stance of the kind that the Germans and the French did in the Iraq war. A pro-US stance will kill all arrangements with Iran for the near future. Second, Indians fear that Iran will respond to military force by trying to disrupt the flow of oil and gas from the Middle East and trade flowing through the region. This will bring adverse effects on energy supply, imports and exports, and Indian employment in the Gulf (which is very large) as well as the foreign exchange it generates. Third, Iran may well react by fomenting insurgencies and terrorist actions in the Middle East, which could also disrupt energy supplies. Besides, this asymmetric warfare strategy could spill over into neighboring Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia. Above all, this could directly affect India, which has the second-largest population of Shia Muslims in the world.

In the light of these possibilities, India would prefer that there be a compromise solution, which it has been advocating. This may happen. The United States may be restrained by Russian and Chinese reluctance to support sanctions and European unwillingness to envisage military force. It is also likely to be constrained by the fact that it is already entangled in two conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan that promise to be enduring and expensive. In addition, air strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities are difficult to contemplate as the facilities are dispersed and close to urban centers, which means there will be large-scale civilian casualties from bombing and fallout.¹³ Given the revelation that Iraq had no weapons of mass destruction, the ambiguous nature of Iranian nuclear activities makes it difficult to target Iran as an imminent danger.¹⁴ Iran too has much to lose from a conflict that could cause immense damage, badly hurt its economy and destabilize the ruling elite. India's hope, therefore, that a compromise

¹³ Adil H. KHAN, "Missile Strikes on Iranian Nuclear Facilities: An International Law Perspective from 'Osirak'", Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, New Delhi, A. No. 1948, Feb. 22, 2006 www.ipcs.org/newKashmirLevel2.jsp?action=showView&kValue=1961&subCatID=null&mod=null

¹⁴ Anthony H. CORDESMAN and Khalid R. AL-RODHAN, *Iranian Nuclear Weapons? The Threat from Iran's WMD and Missile Programs*, First Working Draft, Revised, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC, February 21, 2006.

will be worked out is not without foundation.

While calling for a consensus, India is in the unenviable position of having merely to wait and watch and hope for the best as crisis approaches. So far, it has tilted toward the United States, but not too much and with the comfort of knowing that other major powers have as well. If the conflict is resolved peaceably, India may still salvage its losses from the souring of relations with Iran. But if things take a turn for the worse, it will have to choose sides. In all probability, it will go with the US. If it comes to a choice between the energy gains from Iran and the wider political (and economic) benefits that could be obtained from the US, India will opt for the latter. There still remains the possibility that India will lose both ways. Iran might turn away from energy cooperation and the US might reject the nuclear deal. That is a prospect that can only be viewed with alarm. In any event, India's options are limited. It can only bide its time and hope that the tightrope will not sway too much.

IRAN BETWEEN THE GIANTS

by *Francesco SISI*

The United States faces a number of possible choices in dealing with Iran, none of them pretty. Iran's greatest significance may be as a bellwether for future relations with China and Russia. The hopes and fears of Chinese engagement.

1. *W*hat is the future of that large portion of the Middle East stretching from Iran to Israel, including the Arabian Peninsula? The Iranian crisis is rapidly unfolding and the world is moving towards a much bigger problem than the still unsettled issue of the war in Iraq.

In the past few weeks, Iran refused to stop its uranium enrichment program after a UN report said Tehran had done little or nothing to prove it was not developing nuclear arms. At the end of April, at the plenary meeting of the Trilateral Commission in Tokyo, a panel of experts chaired by Henry Kissinger said the world has 15 months to act before Tehran develops nuclear capabilities. The experts detailed how Iran so far has been actually using the chances for dialogue to gain time and secretly pursue its nuclear military program. In two years, they said, Teheran might have the capacity to develop nuclear weapons to deploy on rockets or sell to terrorists. If America does not prevent this, Israel might attack anyway.

If the US strikes against Iranian nuclear facilities, the West may be hit by a wave of terrorist attacks coordinated by a vindictive Iran. This may lead to further American retaliation against Iran, spiraling into open war and possibly leading to the toppling of the Iranian regime and the occupation of Iran. This last event could prove far more complicated than the already messy operation in Iraq. Iran is more populous, its terrain more inaccessible and the territory far vaster than Iraq's.

The alternatives are all frightening. If the dialogue with the Iranian government drags on without results, then the world will have to cope with a nuclear Iran, whose government is unreliable. If the US attacks, then the prospects of a larger war could increase and the western engagement in the Middle East could easily spill into a new Vietnam war.

Anticipating this doomsday scenario, Thomas Friedman, one of America's most authoritative commentators, already made his pick: if we have to choose between Iraq II and a nuclear Iran, we'd better have a nuclear Iran.¹

His side is supported by Edward Luttwak's cold and skeptical analysis, and he is hardly a pacifist. He argues that the Iranian government, despite its boasting, lacks the capability to develop a bomb in anything less than three years.² Furthermore, in Iran there is widespread political opposition against the clerics and the Pasdarans who now

¹ Thomas L. FRIEDMAN "Iraq II or a Nuclear Iran?", The New York Times April 19, 2006

² Edward N. LUTTWAK, "Three Reasons Not to Bomb Iran—Yet", Commentary, April 2006

dominate the political arena. There are plenty of reasons to believe that well before Ahmadinejad will have developed a bomb he will have lost his job as president. Most Iranians are pro-American, and they do not forget that in the past the US has helped Iran many times when it was threatened by Soviet ambitions. The tide in Iran is turning towards Washington. There is no reason to rush and bomb Iran now and make the Iranians enemies while things could change for the better and soon.

We have a little time, then, but we also need to be aware that the overall environment is getting out of control. The Israeli senior researcher in counterterrorism Eli Karmon argued in his recent op-ed: "Iran is interested in helping the Hamas-led government stabilize the situation and take control of the PA. But at the same time, against a backdrop of international pressure over its nuclear ambitions, it is using Islamic Jihad to carry out attacks in Israel. As the crisis concerning the nuclearization of Iran approaches a critical stage, Hizballah, the Palestinian Islamist organizations and al-Qaeda could be used to provoke a regional crisis inside the West Bank and Gaza or at Israel's northern border with Lebanon. The Hamas victory could negatively influence the stability of Egypt and Jordan, while growing activity by al-Qaeda terrorists in Sinai could represent a direct threat to Israel and the PA. Israel, the moderate elements in the PA, Egypt, Jordan, the US and Europe will be torn in the coming months by daunting choices: Let Hamas take control of the Palestinian Authority and "Talibanize" it, with the risk of a spillover to the neighborhood? Let the Iranian nuclear genie out of the bottle? Push for further democratization in the region, thus favoring growing Islamist successes? Or decisively challenge these threats and risk more terrorist activity in the near future, with the hope of victory relegated to the long term?"

These may be reasons why the US is growing alarmed at Iran's rebuffing the IAEA inspections and Washington appears keen on passing a UN resolution for sanctions against Iran. However, even in the worst-case scenario, we are more than a year away from an attack, and many things can happen in one year. In any case, in the short run, the possibility of sanctions, the constant rejections of the inspections all make the market jittery, driving up the price of oil and increasing the revenues of the beleaguered Iranian government.

The other beneficiaries of the high oil prices are all oil producing countries and oil companies, who can now bank on at least a year of price volatility. Any whisper around Iran could send prices over the threshold of \$70 a barrel or higher.

It is bad news for China and India, the newcomers in the old game of oil importing, whose economies in the past years have registered the highest percentage of increase in fuel consumption. It is bad news for Southeast Asia, Japan, Europe and the US. As net importers of oil, their economic performances may not be blocked by higher oil prices but they will still suffer from a price hike.

Meanwhile, the larger question of the future regional balance remains unanswered.

2. Four years ago, many in the US sincerely believed that Iraq was the key to reshaping the Middle East. Democracy would spread all over the region. Syria would fall by an uprising, Iran would follow and even the most conservative kleptocracies of

Arabia would bend to the new creed of political winds blowing from Washington and a remade Iraq. Now it is clear that it was all a delusion, at best. At worst, it is a nightmare where the West has been bleeding money and lives beyond any reasonable gain: no amount of oil in the world could compensate the US for its waste of energy and resources spent so far in Iraq. The price tag for the operation runs over \$810 billion according to the latest estimates. Only the Congressional appropriations are over \$277 billion. It would take the American oil companies decades to make up for the loss incurred by the US state.

Certainly an operation in Iran could not be any cheaper and few dream now of a wave of democratic zeal sweeping Iran and all other autocratic Middle Eastern countries.

Yet the issue that moved the US troops into Iraq still stands: the political geography of the Middle East should be changed and made more stable, but how? The question begs another question: can the US achieve this stabilization alone?

One answer would be that the US is confident of achieving some kind of stabilization alone. Iran was a staunch US ally; it could become one once again. Ahmadinejad could be kicked out, and the clerics too: a new Shah could be enthroned, reverting present Iran to something closer to old Persia.

The US could see to it by itself or with reliable allies to share the burden, ruling out the involvement of more dubious countries. If the move is successful, the prize could be huge. By bringing Iran back to its side, the US could have a strong influence, if not virtual control, over a vast resource-rich area stretching from Afghanistan, to the shores of the Mediterranean. Most of the oil of the world is here and, most importantly, that oil is some of the cheapest to extract. This oil is the price setter for all the oil in the world. Profit margins are higher here than anywhere else. If these profits are squeezed, then other areas where extraction costs are higher—Russia for instance—those areas could have difficulties.

Moreover, this region has been for millennia the passage of the land route connecting the Mediterranean to Asia, whether the Indian subcontinent or the Middle Kingdom. By bringing Iran under the American wing and linking it to Afghanistan, Turkey, Iraq and eventually Lebanon and Israel, the whole region could recover its role as a bridge between east and west. This role was stripped in the last couple of centuries, first by the emergence of fast ship transportation that outpaced the old continental land route, then by the rise of the Soviet Union and the decline of China and India. There was little trade interest in the East. Now that Asia is reviving and creating a growing portion of global wealth, it is linking to the world through its ports. But the large swathe of Asian landlocked regions—Chinese Xingjiang, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, northern Iran, northern Pakistan and eastern Turkey—are begging to regain their past luster as part of the passage of the old Eurasian land route. For this reason, Iran has to be brought back to the fore.

In a way, if the US could manage Iran by itself it would hold sway over the oil and land transportation of the largest and richest landmass in the world: Eurasia. As a result, besides controlling the world's major sea-lanes, the US would have a strong hand also in the security of some of the most important land routes.

But because the stakes are so high and many have an interest in an American

failure, a misstep could easily turn into disaster. It is easy to see how a political or military intervention in Iran could spin out of control. To prevent this, some of the main actors in the “Iranian game” should be brought together to conceive a new Middle East in which the old ideology (fundamentalist Islamism and fundamentalist Democracy promotion) must be forfeited and a new realistic geopolitical and institutional dimension must be played out. China and Russia must be involved in this.

Or not? American neoconservatives like Robert Kagan (whose wife, Victoria Nuland, was Vice President Cheney’s deputy national security advisor and now serves as US ambassador to NATO) and Weekly Standard editor William Kristol, cofounders of the Project for the New American Century (PNAC), don’t seem keen on taking on Iran and then Russia and China with it.³ “Until now the liberal West’s strategy has been to try to integrate these two powers into the international liberal order, to tame them and make them safe for liberalism. If, instead, China and Russia are going to be sturdy pillars of autocracy over the coming decades, enduring and perhaps even prospering, then they cannot be expected to embrace the West’s vision of humanity’s inexorable evolution toward democracy and the end of autocratic rule.”

Given their autocratic nature, the two nations have emerged as the protectors of “an informal league of dictators” that, according to Kagan, currently includes the leaders of Belarus, Uzbekistan, Burma, Zimbabwe, Sudan, Venezuela, Iran and Angola, among others and who, like the leaders of Russia and China themselves, resist any efforts by the West to interfere in their domestic affairs, either through sanctions or other means.

The question is what the United States and Europe decide to do in response: “Unfortunately, al-Qaeda may not be the only challenge liberalism faces today, or even the greatest.”

It is hard to tell how widespread Kagan’s views are in America, but we can see that America is divided over its Iran strategy. There are people against any action in Iran even at the cost of having to deal with a nuclear Iran, and people like Kissinger or Luttwak who think that a nuclear Iran is not an immediate danger and solutions must be found to avoid war. Then, there are people like Kagan who think that an attack on Iran should be some kind of first step in a larger strategy against illiberal regimes. War in Iran would be the beginning of some kind of new cold war against Russia and China. Kagan’s perspective gives a new spin to a possible war in Iran. Russia and China would then be even more set against supporting any kind of action in Iran, sensing that after Iran they might be the next on the list. In fact, Kagan’s argument makes actually more difficult an attack on Iran even if in two years Teheran were proved to possess nuclear weapons, as not many people in the world want to be dragged into a new cold war.

In light of retired Lt. General Fabio Mini’s analysis,⁴ one can argue the following:

a) The US went into Iraq with a very naive political strategy: democracy will spring once Saddam is eliminated.

³ Robert KAGAN “League of Dictators? : Why China and Russia Will Continue to Support Autocracies” April 30, 2006, The Washington Post

⁴ Fabio MINI, “La guerra dopo la guerra”, Einaudi, Torino, 2003

b) After Iraq, this naive strategy was dropped; nobody believes that democracy will naturally arise in Tehran.

c) There is no discussion of the political future of the Middle East following an attack in Iran. But an attack could break the US as the Vietnam crisis did in the 1960s.

d) Who can solve the Middle East puzzle after the war, the US alone, or must Russia and China be called in? There are many arguments on both fronts but this has to be reckoned with before going to war. As Iran has a stake in entangling the US in the Iraqi quagmire, and provides weapons and men to the Iraqi insurgency, so other powers (Russia and China?) might want to see a US crisis in Iran.

There are too many open questions in this confrontation with Iran. Consequently, the US could well “lose the peace” in Iran, even more than it did in Iraq.

In a way, Iraq has taught us an important lesson: before going to war we have to consider what kind of political objective we want to achieve after the conflict. Without these objectives, the aftermath of the war is very likely to be a disaster.

History is full of examples of war and peace made according to realistic objectives, not ideologies. In World War II, Britain and the US allied with Russia to defeat Germany. After the war, the victors recruited former officials of the Nazi regime in order to stabilize the future democracy. Sixty years after we can see that the two moves were successful: Hitler was defeated and a vibrant democracy was established in Germany.

3. The issue of Iran could be an opportunity to solve the Iranian problem, begin to reshape the Middle East, and further engage China and Russia.

This program is ambitious and traps lay on all sides but it could lay the foundations for a larger Middle East solution. Of course, it may be too ambitious. A country like China would be appalled at the idea of such a policy. Chinese political scientists, vaccinated against grand ideas after 30 years of Maoism, are skeptical that large-scale solutions can ever be found. They would instinctively go for smaller solutions, while avoiding getting too involved in the domestic politics of Iran or any other country.

But America thinks differently, it is set on a track to pave the roads of global markets and the development of global economies, of which American companies are protagonists but not the only actors. Wealth and political stability is not just made in America. Hence, the idea of a grand political plan for the Middle East could strike a chord there.

The Chinese are mainly interested in bringing wealth to their own country, which is so large and populous that, once developed, it could alone dwarf the rest of the global market. Hence, the Chinese have a policy of minimizing their interventions abroad. This idea is the backbone of their concept of a peaceful rise: they do not need to go abroad because potentially they have more than enough at home. However, energy and transportation are necessary for China. Beijing has a large gas supply contract with Iran and opening a land route through this country could open the prospects for hundreds of millions of Chinese who can't reach the coast. Then China would feel obliged to pay attention to Iran, with or without the American nod.

On the other hand, dragging China into Iran, out of its traditional East Asian territory, creates a new situation. If China plays a role in Iran, it will have to learn how to help manage the global commercial routes, taking on global responsibilities, but it could also easily take on some of the worst aspects of American interventions abroad, the ones the US enemies call “imperialistic”. Then the abhorred idea of a China threat could gain traction in the global press, which would worry Beijing to no end.

In any case, China should learn how to conduct foreign engagements for its own sake. In the long term, this could be the largest gain of the Iranian game. If the US and the West in general managed to get China involved in a plan for Iran’s future, China could learn how to be a responsible instead of a threatening global actor.



DEFUSING TEHRAN

THE REGIONAL ACTORS

WHY ISRAEL SHOULD TALK TO TEHRAN (WHILE ARMING ITS MISSILES)

by *Soli SHAHVAR*

Ahmadinejad's election has added fiery rhetoric to Iran's deep-rooted hatred toward Israel, while Teheran's nuclear program threatens the very existence of the Jewish state. A diplomatic effort is needed to avoid an uncontrollable escalation. But if worse comes to worst, a strike remains Jerusalem's last option.

1. *M*uch has changed in the world, and especially in the Greater Middle East, after the September 11th 2001 attacks in the USA. The US-led invasion of Afghanistan and later Iraq seem, at first sight, to have been directed against Al-Qaeda's host country (Afghanistan) and what the US believed (or wanted the world to believe) to be one of its main supporters (namely, Iraq). But it is quite possible that all along the US administration was after changing the map of the Middle East, with toppling the Iranian regime as its prime target.

Through the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq the US-led coalition forces indeed managed, relatively easily, to topple two "evil" regimes, namely that of the Taliban and Saddam Hussein; but at the same time they managed to isolate two other "evil" regimes, those of Iran and Syria, with US military presence close-by and ready for action. Simultaneously, the US administration began to promote democracy and civil society within the Middle East, with Iran being one of, if not the most important targets for regime change.

The Iranian regime, which might have been expected to panic, did not. It quickly discerned the opportunity created by the removal of these two rival neighboring regimes, and moved to strengthen its position within the Shi'i communities therein, with greater success in Iraq than in Afghanistan. Thus, the US administration was confronted with a new challenge: Growing, rather than diminishing, Iranian influence.

For Israel the Iranian challenge has been much longer, closer and tangible. The repercussions of the regime change, which took place in Iran as a result of the 1978-79 Revolution, were catastrophic for Israel: A major regional strategic ally was replaced by a staunch enemy, committed to the destruction of the State of Israel. Indeed, this development is regarded as one of Israel's major strategic setbacks, if not the biggest of all.

What are, then, the origins of this hatred of the clerical regime in Iran towards Israel? From the religious view point, Khomeini, and his followers, have always regarded Israel as an illegitimate state, because (1) it has conquered an Islamic land (namely, "Palestine"), (2) it occupies one of Islam's most holy sites (Jerusalem) and (3) it oppresses Muslims (the Palestinians). It is therefore a religious duty of the righteous (the

Muslims) to uncompromisingly struggle to free that land and its Muslim inhabitants from the hands of the evil forces (Israel), and the meaning of this is the actual eradication of Israel.

This religious aspect is further solidified by the Shi'i perception of the Jews as impure (*najes*), apart from them being the first enemies of the Prophet Muhammad. Indeed, just recently did Ayatollah Hosein Nouri Hamadani, one of the Shi'i Sources of Imitation state (14 April 2005, Fars News Agency): "Jews have to be fought against and subdued in order that the conditions for the appearance of the Hidden Imam be set... Today, the policies of the Jews threaten us. The danger of the Jews for humanity and the Muslims should be thoroughly clarified. From the inception of Islam, the one group that posed, and still poses, the greatest opposition is the Jews... From the beginning the Jews have been greedily seeking to accumulate the world's wealth. They always held the most important posts and today they have accumulated all the wealth in one place. And all the world, the USA and Europe especially, are their slaves."

As to the political aspect, Israel has "sinned" because it (1) supported the "oppressive" Pahlavi regime, (2) is part of a global Zionist scheme (presenting, among other things, "the Protocols of the Elders of Zion" as proof) and (3) is a product and a tool of Western (specifically American) imperialism and colonialism.

The radical ideology, with its religious and political dimensions, have turned the armed struggle against Israel into the central strategic interest of the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI), and have thus brought its leaders to actively support the enemies of Israel and oppose any process which might extend the life span of the Jewish state.

Thus, while it has been heavily supporting Palestinian and Islamic terrorist groups with financial and logistic assistance, as well as training and guidance, the clerical regime has become the most steadfast opponent of the Arab-Israeli and the Palestinian-Israeli Peace Process. It has also been producing TV shows, aimed at demonizing Israelis as people who are after the eyes of Palestinian children, to name only one example. To Israelis it seems as if the clerical regime in Iran has turned the anti-Israeli doctrine as part of its own identity, and the destruction of Israel into its main *raison d'être*.

But as long as Iran remained hundreds of kilometers distant from Israel, engaged in a bitter war with Iraq, it did not pose a major threat to the Jewish state. It gradually began to be such once it started, first, to build its armament industry just after the Iran-Iraq War, then, to develop and acquire missile technology, producing the long-range Shahab-3 missiles – and more recently to concentrate efforts in the field of nuclear technology, which Israel regards as primarily aimed at producing nuclear weapons.

2. The Israeli apprehensions at Iranian intentions towards it are not baseless. In an interview with Al-Hayat (3 October 2002), Ahmad Vahid, Head of Iran's Missiles Development Project, clearly stated that Iran decided to develop the Shahab 3 to the range of 1,300 km, mainly in order "to hit Israeli targets in case Israel decides to deliver missiles towards Iran."

In addition, and apart from the usual and constant chanting of “Death to Israel”, periodic anti-Israeli statements have given credence to the Iranian threat. I bring only three such statements by the top leaders of the regime:

- Ayatollah Ali Khamenei (31 Dec 2001, Khabar TV): “The present generation will witness the liberation of Palestine...many of the problems of the Islamic World result from the presence of the cancerous tumor in the body of the Islamic World – the Zionist Regime...any compromise on the Palestinian subject would be in complete opposition to Iranian national interests, and our present prestige, honor and national interests are based on our steadfastness vis-à-vis this cancerous tumor.”
- Ayatollah Mohammad Khatami (24 October 2000, Khabar TV): “In the Quran God commanded to kill the wicked...If we abide by real legal laws, we should mobilize the whole Islamic World for a sharp confrontation with the Zionist Regime...If we abide by the Quran, all of us should mobilize to kill.”
- Ayatollah Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani (14 Dec 2000, Khabar TV): “If one day, a very important day of course, the Islamic World will also be equipped with weapons available to Israel now, the imperialist strategy will reach an impasse, because the employment of one atomic bomb on Israel will wipe it off the face of the earth, but [such a bomb] would only do [partial] damage to the Islamic World [if attacked by Israel or the West]” .It seems that Rafsanjani meant nuclear weapon, and since we know that the Islamic world already has such a weapon, then he probably meant Iran, leader of the “true Islamic world”.

The frequency and ferocity of such anti-Israeli, anti-Zionist and anti-Jewish statements increased sharply with the election of the hard-line Iranian President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad a year ago. In a number of public statements since his election, he has been calling, time and again, for the destruction of Israel, and been continuously casting doubts in the occurrence of the Holocaust.

Yes, there are some experts and commentators, who brush away such statements as mere rhetoric of the IRI. But, the fact remains that they are not living in Israel, where the public opinion holds an opposite view. The Israeli public regards such anti-Israeli statements as expressions of a radical ideology, aimed at destroying Israel, while the missiles and the WMD, are to provide the means to carry it out.

Iran’s growing involvement on Israel’s northern border (through Hezbollah) as well as within the Palestinian territories (through the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Hamas and Hezbollah operatives), has upgraded the Iranian threat to become a much more clear and present, and in the eyes of some Israeli strategists, even an existential one.

This threat is so much alive in the daily life of the average Israeli, that it even became a parameter for describing serious threats in other fields. For example, wishing to describe the danger of budget cuts to the future of the Israeli academia, an Israeli Minister in the former cabinet equaled it to the danger which Iran poses to Israel’s survival. Almost not a single day passes without certain references in the Israeli media to the Iranian regime, its support of Palestinian terror or its nuclear ambitions against Israel.

Presently, the Iranian clerical regime has the ability to hit Israel with the Shahab-3 missiles, or rocket northern Israel with 70-kilometer range Katyusha rockets through

Hezbollah (Zelzal 1 & 2). This conventional capability could indeed turn into major existential threat once Iran would have nuclear weapon. When that would be?

In early 2005 Israel's Military Intelligence assessments believed that Iran would be able to enrich Uranium within 5-6 months, an achievement that would enable it to produce nuclear weapon by 2008 at the latest. Indeed, news of Iranian enrichment began to surface few months ago, and it would be both reasonable and logical to assume that actual enrichment had started earlier than that. The verification of its assessments regarding the enrichment capabilities of Iran means, on the one hand, that Israel has been doing its homework right, but on the other hand, it means that the window of opportunity for checking Iran from acquiring nuclear weapon is fast closing.

3. Iran has been holding a steadfast and uncompromising position in the question of its right to acquire nuclear technology. Given its relative isolation and the growing international criticism against it, one would wonder what stands behind this position. The answer to that seems very logical if seen through Iranian eyes.

It has to be sought in the opportunities open to Iran in the four issues standing between the Washington and Teheran, namely: Iran's abuse of human rights, its lack of democracy, its support of international terrorism and its relentless efforts to acquire WMD.

While the Iranian regime is being criticized, both at home and abroad, on the first three issues, it is only on the fourth – that of WMD – that it enjoys much better circumstances and possesses a certain degree of support both on the domestic and international scenes. Nuclear technology is not only an advanced technology, possessed by a small and prestigious club of elite countries; it could also boost the development and level of other industries, create jobs, and consequently defuse one of the main causes of popular protest in Iran.

The Iranian leadership had thus turned the nuclear issue, which they believe to immune them from any western military attack, into a national agenda, reminiscent in modern Iranian history into what Mosaddeq had done with the nationalization of the oil industry in 1951. Retreat from this uncompromising position would, therefore, deny the Iranian regime an important base of support, invite more international and domestic pressure (such as ceasing support of the Lebanese Hezbollah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and Hamas, as well as providing much greater civil liberties, respect of human rights, and democracy), and consequently increase the chances for toppling of the regime. Furthermore, by strengthening its position in Iraq, which turned into a quagmire for the American forces therein, Iran has turned itself into a major player, further improving its position and bargaining cards.

Through a number of tactical moves Iran tries to win over the public opinion worldwide, but especially in the Islamic countries. The sending of a letter by the Iranian President to his American counterpart was only one such recent move, directed more towards the Western countries. On the other hands, Ahmadinejad's repeated calls for the destruction of Israel, casting doubts about the Holocaust, etc., were directed

more towards the popular mood in the Islamic countries.

With its present long-range missile capabilities, the possession of enriched uranium would ultimately enable the IRI to attack Israel with nuclear-headed missiles. Furthermore, by transferring short-range nuclear missiles to the Hezbollah in Lebanon, or to its satellites in the Palestinian territories, it could even achieve the capability of a second nuclear strike.

One should not disregard certain statements of Nasrallah, such as the following (21 November 2003, al-Manar TV): “Israel’s Air Force is powerful and can bomb anywhere, but what is new is that no matter where they drop their bombs, there will be reprisals...and...it will be our legitimate right to strike not only forward positions, as the enemy expects, but at targets at any range or depth as we so desire...”

Another Iranian option for second nuclear strike deterrence would be the delivery of small tactical nuclear bombs to Palestinian (or other Muslim) extremists, who could detonate them in highly populated Israeli cities in suicide bombing missions. Unrealistic as may this scenario sound to a non-Israeli, it is taken into consideration as an option. In light of the factional nature of the Iranian politics, power struggle, the network of the un-official and un-elected radical power centers, their contacts with and support of terrorist organizations across the Islamic World (Santorini, Karin A, shipment of arms to Hezbollah), and given the long bloody history of terror in Israel, this option turns, at least in Israeli eyes, more realistic.

One major lesson, which could be learned from the September 11 attacks, is that Muslim extremists have the will and the intention to inflict more severe blows to the USA, Israel and their allies, and that they are in constant search of means to magnify the killing, destruction and terror. As a state sponsor of terror, the Iranian regime is highly suspected by Israel as being able to supply such extremists with WMD.

4. Which options are open to Israel in trying to face that threat, and how could it eliminate or at least diminish it? In this respect, Israel has been generally following two main parallel and concurrent tracks: One diplomatic and the other militaristic, with the latter being taken as a pre-caution in case the former fails.

On the diplomatic track, Israel has been trying to pressure Iran indirectly, mainly through its lobby in the USA and the American administration. Although these, in combination with other diplomatic efforts, have been only partially and temporarily successful (namely, the US economic boycott of Iran, or the US-European diplomatic efforts to stop Iran’s nuclear enrichment program), Israel believes that they won’t be sufficient to derail Iran from its course concerning Israel and the nuclear weapon. For that reason Israel has been trying to increase its range of options on the militaristic track.

The militaristic options of Israel vis-à-vis Iran could be roughly divided into defensive and offensive.

As to the defensive measures, Israel managed to successfully develop the anti-missile “Arrow” missiles. Based on the evaluation that there are 10 military air bases in Israel, six of which have top combat air crafts, such as F-15 and F-16, and that against each such base Iran would send three missiles; and assuming that for every

Iranian missile, Israel would send one to two Arrow missiles, which are supposed to have an 80% success rate; this would mean that most of the Iranian missiles would be shot down in the air, and away from Israel. This would leave Israel with a second strike ability, and this brings us to the offensive measures.

On the offensive measures, Israel is supposed to have the capability to retaliate with nuclear weapons by air, land and sea. An Israeli air strike against targets in Iran would probably be based on F-15 and F-16 combat aircrafts, with extended range through the 3,000 liter CFT fuel tanks; equipped with the "Sa'ar" type radar, the newly-developed "Rita" low flight system; and armed with Piton-4, Piton-5 and "Amram" missiles. Less than two years ago (September 2004) Israel has taken delivery of 500 "bunker buster" bombs from the USA – just the thing to destroy deeply buried facilities.

Israel also has air-fueling capability as well as airborne control systems, which enables her to control offensive operations in closer range to the targets. In February 2005 the Commander of the Israeli Air Force, General Eli'ezer Shkedi, stated that if the Israeli government decides on the military option against Iran, then the Air Force would know how to operate. The "Yerikho" land-to-land missiles and at least some of the Israeli submarines could hit targets in Iran from land and sea respectively.

Such weapons and systems provide Israel with a triple capability for a second nuclear strike.

The Israeli satellite "Amos" monitors military movements in Iran as in elsewhere from the space. However, Israel is very concerned about Iran's success in receiving satellite images of strategic sites in Israel from companies which operate some of the satellites in space. Israel has been thinking of ways to face this problem. A less radical way would be to "blind" those satellites when they pass over Israel, while a more radical option would be to destroy them in space.

Still a different offensive option (and a better one for Israel) would be for Israel to pressure the USA to attack Iran. US forces are in a much better position than Israel to launch an attack against targets in Iran. Bush's Iran-related statement that "all options are open," news about activities of US special units in Iran and about the movement of some US forces in Afghanistan towards the Iranian border, could well be part of a psychological warfare, but could also indicate that the Bush Administration is seriously considering a pinpointed attack against certain targets in Iran.

Such an attack, if taken place, would probably not topple the regime, but would face it with two options: First, to attack the US forces in Iraq and the Persian Gulf as well as Israel; and second, to present the attack as a justified cause for Iran to acquire WMD, while in the meantime increase terrorist attacks against the USA, Israel and their allies around the world, but especially in Iraq and the Persian Gulf region, and from the Palestinian Authority and Lebanon. All these would, most probably, cause the oil prices to soar much higher than its present rates, indirectly causing the American public opinion to pressure their administration to come to terms with the Iranian regime, probably sacrificing Israeli interests on the way. On the domestic front, it is most probable that the regime would use this opportunity for further repression at

home, thus abolishing the civic progress that has been achieved since the establishment of the IRI.

Whatever the case, it seems that the least costly and therefore the best option for both Israel and the USA vis-à-vis the clerical regime in Iran would still be a regime change from within. In recent years the Middle East and the wider region have been undergoing a process of reform and change. Countries, such as Kirgizistan, Moldova, Ukraine, and Georgia, have already gone through a popular regime change. In the Middle East region, the winds of change and reform have been blowing, in various levels of intensity, over Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and the Palestinian Authority.

If these winds grew stronger in Lebanon, they might bring about the disarming of the Iranian proxies, and this would very much narrow down Iran's options against Israel. In the PA the winds of democracy have presently produced an Islamic fundamentalist government led by Hamas, but the recent inter-Palestinian confrontation between the PLO and Hamas might turn the picture.

In Iran, popular calls for change and reform towards a more democratic society and politics are at least 100 years old, and have already produced two revolutions. Those calls have been heard quite loudly from time to time, but the clerical regime has managed to temporarily silence them again and again. However, many activists, who initially supported the theocracy, became disillusioned first with the radicals under Khomeini, then with the "pragmatists" under Rafsanjani and of late with the "reformists" led by Khatami.

The monopolization of power by an un-elected, radical and corrupted minority, who have been constantly abusing the basic human rights of the Iranian people, preventing prosperity and causing major social ills, have brought many Iranians to advocate a referendum under international supervision. The success of this popular movement, which could result in regime change, would be the optimal option for both Israel and the USA. As one current Israeli MP, formerly a Cabinet Minister and General in the IDF stated (6 April 2005), "50 Iranian women wearing jeans are more important [for us against the Iranian regime], than us having another advanced F-15 combat aircraft."

So what might bring Israel to strike first? According to a Talmudic saying the Jew should "rise up to kill the person who wishes to kill you." The long-standing hostility and enmity of the clerical regime in Iran towards Israel, its growing activity in opposing the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process, and actively supporting terrorist organizations, combined with its pursuance of nuclear weapons, as well as the memory of pogroms and the Holocaust, could move Israel to strike first, targeting such installations, which in the eyes of its policy-makers endanger Israel.

We should bear in mind that in 1981 Israel attacked the Osirak Atomic Reactor in Iraq in less favorable circumstances. This attack gave stark testimony to warnings of the premier Menachem Begin, who asserted that no enemy of Israel would be allowed to have nuclear weapons, and the then Agriculture and former Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, who argued for a policy under which the development of nuclear weapons by

a hostile regional power would constitute grounds for war. Sharon, and his Defense Minister, Shaoul Mofaz, had repeatedly said that Israel could not agree to a nuclear Iran, and this has been recently reiterated by the current Israeli PM, Ehud Olmert.

Although the major difference between 1981 and today is in the number of nuclear targets, and although not all of those might be known to it, Israel might still go for the attack, possibly out of belief that it will inflict a serious blow to the Iranian efforts to achieve nuclear weapon, delay them for few additional years, hoping that in the meantime there would be a regime change or some other positive development.

What would be the repercussions of such a strike? Iran would probably react, either by missiles or by using its proxies in Lebanon and in the Palestinian territories. Such escalation might enflame the entire region, with serious repercussions. The Iranian nuclear program might, as a result, be delayed, but it would probably intensify and become justified. Furthermore, attack on nuclear installations (which might include not only radioactive, but also other dangerous materials), could release into the open lethal clouds, with disastrous human and environmental implications for a much wider region.

On the other hand, if such an Israeli preemptory attack will not take place, then the repercussions of a nuclear Iran could also be very serious: Such a weapon would increase Iran's feelings of hegemony and its efforts to export its revolution, thus threatening the other regimes in the Middle East. As far as Israel is concerned, such a weapon would not only constitute a direct threat to Israel, but would provide a security umbrella for Hezbollah's and Palestinian terror.

A nuclear Iran could also encourage countries such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Syria, to join the nuclear race, and paradoxically even bring moderate Arab regimes to cooperate with Israel in combating the Iranian threat. The scenarios are many, but the results seem to be catastrophic all the same, first and foremost for Iran and the Iranian people, as well as the clerical regime itself.

5. So what could be done to defuse the explosive potential of this threat perception? 27 years of ferocious anti-Israeli policy has made it very clear that no matter what, the clerical regime is probably not going to give up on its agenda of wiping Israel out of the map. Thus, without a major true change, it seems that both sides are on the collision course, and definitely not because Israel wishes so.

It is for the Iranian people to decide whether they will effect a regime change or not, but one thing is sure: A regime, which has withdrawn from almost all of its initial revolutionary ideals, has already lost its credit with the Iranian people and the world at large. Clinging to an anti-Israeli doctrine did not bring any benefit to the regime, nor to the Iranian people, and to continue pursuing it could do more harm than good. After all, Israel has never called for the destruction of Iran, and has never used its nuclear arsenal even in dire situations, such as the Yom Kippur War or the 1991 Gulf War. But when Israel perceived a threat to be existential, as in the case of the Iraqi nuclear threat, then it moved to strike, and thus removed an existential threat not only to Israel, but also to Iran and its people. By supplying Iran with vital spare parts during the Iran-Iraq

War Israel also helped Iran's ability to resist the Iraqi attacks. It should be reminded that Israel did not see the Shah's nuclear program as a threat; it is the clerical regime's anti-Israeli ideology and actions that have turned this program into a direct threat.

Both countries have a lot in common and could, in cooperating with each other, serve the interests of their own people. Such noble aims have resulted, in other cases, in the creation of regional cooperation frameworks, such as NAFTA, EU and ASEAN, to name a few. Based on their common history, past cooperation, advanced technology and their human and natural resources, Iran and Israel could create a common market, which, in turn, could not only improve the lives of Iranians and Israelis, but that of an entire region, leading it to become one of the most powerful economic markets in the world.

Putting the regime's anti-Israeli ideology aside, there are two major issues standing today between Iran and Israel: The fate of the four Iranian diplomats, whose traces have been lost in 1982; and the issue of the last Iranian shipment of oil to Israel before the 1978-79 Revolution.

As for the first one, Israel has repeatedly said that it has no knowledge of their whereabouts. In an interview with an Israeli journalist in Paris (*Yediot Akharonot*, Mousaf 7-Yamim, 4 March 2005), Robert Khatem, Elie Khbeika's bodyguard and Head of the Lebanese Falanges in 1982, had already confessed those four Iranian diplomats being executed by them.

As to the issue of the last Iranian oil supply to Israel, the case has been in the hand of a neutral arbitrator for some years now, with Iran demanding the payment of almost double the original sum of 500 million dollars, while the Israelis claim that although willing to pay for the oil, it was the Iranians who breached the terms of the contract to supply oil to Israel by unilaterally severing relations with Jerusalem.

These issues could be negotiated, either directly or indirectly, in order to defuse the tension. But it should be clear that with no diplomatic relations and no direct line of communications, any intentional or unintentional action could result in catastrophe for both countries and the region.

HOW PALESTINIANS SEE IRAN

by *Sami ADWAN*

A clash of civilizations seems to be underway between East and West. The Israeli-Palestinian situation is a flashpoint therein. The Iran crisis now seems poised to bring things to a head. Why the Palestinians should remain neutral.

*A*fter 9/11, the theme of cultural clashes between East and West, where East represents Islam and West represents Christianity, has been used very cleverly by the United States. This approach has created a sense of insecurity among the populations and governments of the East: they now fear annihilation at the hands of the West. This motivated certain Islamic countries to seek more power in order to balance the military hegemony of the West.

This issue is fast becoming a top priority in the political agendas of both East and West, and a determining factor in the relations between the two. From the Iranian point of view, the only way to increase security is through becoming a nuclear state. This might turn Iran into a superpower in the East, especially since Iraq has become so weak. Hence, Iran has become the next target of the West, the U.S. above all. At the same time, Israel's nuclear status is a major threat to Iran.

Since the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime, the balance of power in the region has been altered. Israel has become the superpower since it is now the only state with nuclear weapons in the Middle East and it would like to remain this way for its purposes: continuing its occupation and defying any international decisions. Increasingly, Israel is becoming the nation that controls and influences the politics of the region.

In order to balance Israel, Iran requires unconventional power. The West and Israel see Iran as an obstacle even more than they did Saddam.

The official announcement of the Iranian nuclear program by its president and high Iranian religious figures, along with certain statements made by Ahmadinejad against Israel represent a clear military strategy, intended to dissuade the Americans and the Israelis from attacking their nuclear installation in advance.

It is likely that they have already built are very close to having built a nuclear bomb. The Iranians are taking advantage of the situation in Iraq and have proceeded with their nuclear program. The odds of a confrontation taking place between Israel and a nuclear Iran may be very slim but it would be devastating.

A new conflict in the area would have direct and negative consequences on the situation in Palestine from all aspects as we experience the war on Iraq and on Afghanistan and South Lebanon.

The critical point is that the Palestinian cause and the suffering and occupation of the Palestinian people, has been used not just by Ahmadinejad or by the Taliban or by

bin Laden, but also by the Arab countries to justify their oppressive policies and regimes. This was the case even before 1948.

Indeed Ahmadinejad's statements are already being used by Israel to say that they cannot move toward peace negotiations with the Palestinians under such a threat. On the contrary, they will justify all the more their need to continue their occupation of the Palestinian people and land and to get greater political, financial and military support from the West. This of course will prolong the Palestinian wait for freedom, liberty and independence and the killings and confiscation of their lands will continue.

For these reasons a war between the US and Iran—which Israel will of course part in—will create a new reality that will make the resumption of the peace process in the Holy Land impossible: the Israeli priority, as they always claim, is to guarantee their security—especially now from an unconventional attack. This will bring the peace process to a standstill. Israel is creating a difficult situation for a political solution in any way. Being a nuclear state, it can dictate its policy without concern. It can continue violating the rights of the Palestinians and committing more war crimes. Olmert's position is very similar to Sharon's: he wants to expand the alliance with Bush in order to take part in fighting international terrorism, the countries that support terrorism, and the Islamic fundamentals. He unilaterally wants to define the Israeli borders in complete denial of the Palestinian rights and will.

After Arafat's erroneous position during the first Gulf War, I think Abu Mazen will never take a position over Iran, but Hamas will do so. Khaled Meshal, whose leadership in the Hamas party is very strong, has a good relationship with Iran. It might increase the complication of the Palestinian situation. It's hard to predict the potential scenarios of both the Palestinian political parties and the military groups. However, the differences between the religious parties and the secular ones will likely be enlarged. Of course, this depends on the outcome of this conflict. If Iran were to win, the Palestinian Islamists parties will become much stronger than the secular ones and would strengthen the Palestinian alliance with Iran. But if Iran loses, the opposite will occur, and Palestine will grow closer to the West. A "loss" in this case would be if the Iranians were to halt their nuclear program. Any reversal on the nuclear course will lead to Iranian loss of sovereignty and the regional hegemonic position it seeks right now. That is why I feel there will be no successful negotiation on this issue. The cold war between the West and the East has resumed already. But it will not be this time between the Soviet Union and the US but between the Muslim world and the West.

This applies to the Palestinian military groups on a micro level. The Islamist groups will become more dominant. A large scale conflict between those affiliated with Islamist groups and those who are not is not expected because many political factions exist in a single Palestinian family. Factor in the continuation of the Israeli occupation and the high levels of education among Palestinians and the likelihood of a civil war seems slim.

One hopes that Palestinian politicians do not repeat Arafat's mistake; better that they try to be neutral. Ultimately, though, they should focus on their political agenda of ending the Israeli occupation and establishing a democratic, non-militarized state.

It is unlikely that Islamic Jihad and the Al Aqsa Brigades would become Iran's

proxies in the Palestinian territories. Iran is actually supporting Hamas rather than Islamic Jihad mainly due to their hard ideology and of course because they have a greater chance of installing a Palestinian Islamic state. Hamas' strong position in Palestinian society actually prevents Islamic Jihad from becoming a mass movement, though it can maintain certain small military groups. They may become more militarized and skillful in the future, but they won't become a major party. Iran will not receive any benefit by supporting the Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

The painful occupation forces the Palestinian people to follow their emotions and go on thinking that the enemy of their enemy is their friend. In this way, some think that Iran has to continue its nuclear program, increasing its power to the detriment of the US and Israel.

In the end, the Palestinian resistance should be considered an example of a revolution, like any other that has led to the liberation of a people. Combining terrorism and resistance, however, is unacceptable. Doing so only allows the victimizers to continue their violations and deny the victims their rights. Even though Bin Laden and the Iranian regime pledge their support of the Palestinian cause, there is a gap between the words and reality. As a Palestinian, I don't trust in fighting. I only wish for a Palestinian state to coexist peacefully beside an Israeli one. In order to turn this hope into reality it is necessary, first of all, to end the occupation.

ISLAMABAD'S GHOSTS

by *Mohammad SHEHZAD*

As US-Iran tension mounts, Pakistan finds itself trapped in an apparently unsolvable dilemma. It needs Iranian gas and clings to its hard-conquered nuclear arsenal, but as a Muslim nuclear power, it fears to be among the next targets. Will loyalty and geography help?

1. *The* ongoing standoff between the US and Iran over the latter's nuclear program is a matter of grave concern for the Pakistani establishment. There are a number of reasons behind it. Iran was the first country who recognized Pakistan after its creation in 1947. It is a Muslim country with a strong historical and cultural background. Iran and Pakistan are excellent friends. They have strong social, cultural and economic ties. The majority of Iran's population follows the Shia sect of Islam and Pakistan has a sizeable Shia majority. Pakistan is a de facto nuclear power and Iran – according to the US – is going to be the one in the making. The Bush administration accuses Pakistani scientist Dr A. Q. Khan of selling nuclear technology to Iran through his underground network. From time to time, it would put pressure on Pakistan - either to question Dr Khan directly or the obtain his extradition to the US. Pakistan has been resisting this pressure so far.

Pakistan is facing an energy crisis and intends to buy gas from Iran. The fate of \$7.4b IPI (India, Pakistan, Iran) gas pipeline from Iran to India via Pakistan hangs in uncertainty because of the US trepidations over Iran's nuclear plan. The US does not want India and Pakistan to strengthen Iran's economy and enhancing its clout in the region by buying gas. The US has almost stopped India from pursuing IPI by signing a civilian nuclear cooperation pact on March 2, 2006. The pact allows atomic trade between India and other nuclear powers if Nuclear Suppliers Group, an informal group of nations that controls global nuclear transactions, follows suit by lifting curbs on New Delhi.

The pact has enhanced Pakistan's vulnerability, putting it under an inferiority complex. India and Pakistan are archrivals ever since their creation in 1947. Both possess nuclear weapons and have fought four wars. The last war could have been a nuclear war had the US not intervened. Pakistan is a close ally of the US in the war against terror. Islamabad expected to be prised for its services and thought that prise would come in the form of a pact similar to the one the US actually signed with Delhi. Thus the US dashed Pakistan's hopes, making it believe it has been cheated once again – after the big disappointment in 1971, during the Indo-Pakistani war, when Islamabad waited in vain for the US' Seventh Fleet. A school of thought in Pakistan believes that the US is after the Muslim countries. After invading Afghanistan and Iraq, it will attack Iran and Syria and then Pakistan will be in line.

2. Pakistan is financially poor and intellectually corrupt. It has been under the direct military rule for most of its time. During the civilian governments, it was run by the military indirectly. Its policies are made by a clique of army generals. Pakistan's credibility is at the lowest ebb when the international community recognizes it as a country that harbours terrorists of al-Qaeda and sponsors cross-border terrorism. This contributes to make Pakistan worrisome about the US-Iran conflict. Eventually, Pakistan feels it could be a potential victim in this conflict – but at the same time it has no options to play any decisive role.

At an official level, Pakistan recognizes Iran's right to pursue nuclear program only for peaceful means – just like India. But the independent analysts view this issue differently. In their opinion, nuclear technology is a form of knowledge and it is everybody's right to seek knowledge. There should be nobody's monopoly over knowledge. If nuclear weapons are destructive for humanity, then they should be in nobody's hands. The argument that only responsible states should possess nuclear weapons is the dual hypocrisy of the big powers.

Shahnawaz Farooqi, a columnist of Daily Jasarat – a rightwing publication of Pakistan's biggest religious political party, Jamat-e-Islami – says: "Ahmadinejad has exposed the hypocrisy of big powers on the nuclear issue by saying that if the nukes are a threat to global peace, then first of all they should be destroyed. On the other hand, if some countries should have them, then it becomes the right of every country to have them...No nation is as irresponsible and unreliable as is the US. It has used nuclear weapons twice. Therefore, the US should be deprived of its nuclear program because it is the most irresponsible among the so-called rogue states..."

The US is after Iran's nuclear program only because the latter is a Muslim country. America can tolerate nuclear weapons in the hands of Israel or India but not in the hands of any Muslim country. Iran started its nuclear program with the US support in 1950. The US withdrew its support when Iran witnessed an Islamic revolution in 1979. The US severed its relations with Iran when the Iranian militants seized the US Embassy in Tehran on November 4, 1979 and held hostage 52 diplomats and US citizens for 444 days. This vindicates the point that the US cannot afford a deeply Islamic country to go nuclear.

The point is, why did the US tolerate a Muslim country like Pakistan to have nuclear weapons? The analysts have an answer to this question. Pakistan has never been a threat to the US or Israel. Pakistan's archrival has traditionally been India. Moreover, the US might tolerate a Muslim country with nuclear weapons in South Asia (like Pakistan) but not in the Middle East, where a nuclear Iran supporting Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad could be a potential threat to Israel.

The case of Pakistan cannot be compared with Iran. Pakistan has always been a US lackey. It fought its war against the former USSR in late 70's in Afghanistan. This was the period when Pakistan actively pursued its nuclear program and the US condoned it. In some sense, the Afghan jihad was a blessing in disguise for Pakistan. Had it not happened, it's likely that Pakistan wouldn't have become a nuclear power. But one should not be prised to the skies on this achievement. The US will deal with Pakistan's nuclear issue after deciding Iran's fate.

A section of rightwing intelligentsia would go to the extent of saying that the command and control system of Pakistan's nuclear weapons is in the US control. Pakistani cannot use its nuclear weapons against any country without the US approval. Pakistani establishment vehemently contradicts such notions.

3. Various analysts were euphoric over the US offer for direct talks with Iran on its nuclear program. They conveniently forgot that it was conditional and arrogant that Iran immediately rejected. The US would talk to Iran only after the latter would fully and verifiably suspend its enrichment and reprocessing activities at its facilities. Iran would reply by saying: "We support dialogue in a fair and unbiased atmosphere but we will not talk about our undeniable and legitimate rights because this is the right of our people according to international law and treaties. There is no obstacle to negotiation with the US on an equal footing, with reciprocal respect and without preconditions, since what is important for us is to secure our nuclear rights."

This deadlock situation is perceived as a policy shift in Pakistan. It is an embarrassing climb-down for the renowned columnist Ayaz Amir. "Why this shift or climb-down? Because (1) the US has not been able to have its way, (2) Iran has refused to succumb to threats and blackmail, and (3) most important of all, the US is stretched to breaking point in Iraq and as growing signs suggest, no longer has the stomach to open another theatre of war in Iran", Ayaz writes in his column (Dawn, June 2, 2006).

At a seminar on the Iran-US issue hosted by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), an independent think-tank, Talat Masood, a retired defence Lt. General was of the view that the US will never accept a nuclearized Iran. In essence, the standoff between the US and Iran is political rather than technical and therefore calls for a political solution. The technical problems can be solved more easily once the political climate improves. The two countries need to build trust through dialogue and avoid rhetoric. Iran needs to avoid confrontation and address the more pressing problems of growing unemployment and development. Even Arab Muslims states like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan and the Gulf emirates may not want to co-exist with a nuclearized Iran, regardless of the threat from the US and Israel.

If Iran doesn't stop enrichment and reprocessing activities, America will attack it. US army might be fully stretched, but US naval and air forces are not! If an American air-strike destroyed Iran's nuclear installations, Teheran would lose what it has acquired in 56 years. It would be back to square one. So, it is in the interest of Iran to rationalize its viewpoint so that it could continue its nuclear program under accepted norms.

Interview with *Ahmad Malli*, a member of the political council of Hizbullah

(by *Lorenzo Trombetta*)

“We have the power to destroy important

and sensitive targets in northern occupied Palestine”, declared the leader of Lebanese Hizbullah, Sayyid Hasan Nasrallah, on 24 May last year - the eve of the sixth anniversary of the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon in the summer of 2000. “The resistance (a term used to refer to the military wing of the Party of God) has 13 thousand missiles and all of northern Palestine is within our firing range, but we can strike even further”, continued the Shiite leader.¹ For his part, Major-General Amos Gilad, a senior Israeli official, had at the beginning of May referred to Hizbullah's firepower and to its strategic alliance with Iran: “While Tehran has 'Shihab-3' long-range missiles, its second weapon is the Party of God, which has around 14 thousand warheads ready to strike Israel”².

And yet in the interview which follows, Ahmad Malli, member of the political council of Hizbullah, responsible for handling the Iranian issue and former Professor of International Relations at the Lebanese University of Beirut, paints a different picture. More prudently, Malli, 50 years of age and a native of the Nabatiyye region in the south of the country, explains the strategy of the Shiite Party placing it within the local Lebanese context and maintaining a distance from the Iranian nuclear issue and the war-of-words between Tehran and Washington. We would attack Israel only if attacked, he declares, but if Iran asks us and there are no further options, we could also run to the assistance of our ally.

The Party of God was established in the Land of Cedars between 1982 and 1983, soon after the heavy Israeli invasion. Since then, its main mission has been to liberate the occupied territories. For years, the Shiite party has been represented at the political level both in the parliament in Beirut and within local administrations. Hizbullah militarily controls a large part of southern Lebanon. Its most advanced military posts are deployed a few meters from the 'Blue Line', a temporary border demarcation between Israel and Lebanon drawn by the United Nations in the aftermath of Tsahal's withdrawal. In addition, the Party maintains important enclaves in the Beqaa valley and others in the southern region of Mount Lebanon, above the capital. Here, in the shape of its general headquarters, it has a presence in the southern outskirts of the city, in the Haret Hreik district which is inhabited mainly by the Shiite community. Indeed, it was in one of the offices of Hizbullah in Beirut that Ahmad Malli met with Heartland.

¹ As-Safir, 25 May 2005, p.1. Beirut.

² Ynet News, 4 May 2005, www.ynetnews.com

Hizbullah-Iran-Israel

HEARTLAND Ahmadinejad's Iran today stands accused of threatening the security of the region by reason of its new nuclear development plan. There has been talk for a while of a possible military option, favoured by Israel and its ally the United States, aimed at preventing this plan from being realized. In the event of an attack on Tehran, how would Hizbullah react?

MALLI First of all, it is worth remembering that the Iranian nuclear programme is for civilian purposes and, by virtue of this, constitutes an exercise of Iran's ordinary rights within the permitted parameters of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty. Furthermore, no one has yet proven that Tehran is preparing nuclear arms. In contrast, Israel has had nuclear weapons for a while and has never signed the Non-proliferation Treaty. As far as our role is concerned, I don't see what the Party of God has to do with the issue. We are not a State and our country, Lebanon, is not a regional power at the same level as is Israel or Iran.

HEARTLAND Hizbullah is, however, described as a regional actor with links to Iran. Isn't it possible that you might become involved in a conflict – even an armed one?

MALLI No member of Hizbullah has ever denied our close alliance with Iran: it is a friendly nation just as Israel is to the United States. As far as we're concerned, we know our limits and our mission. On a military level, we are not a regional actor and we confine ourselves to defending Lebanon. We definitely do maintain a moral and media profile in the Arab-Islamic world. Having defeated the Israeli enemy with the liberation of our country (Ed. note: the Israelis withdrew from southern Lebanon in May 2000 after 22 years of occupation), we are the only ones in the region to have reversed the trend of Arab nation defeats against Israel. Returning to the issue of Iran and its contention with Washington and Tel Aviv, Tehran has all the military means to defend itself on its own, without resorting to our assistance. You overestimate us if you think that Hizbullah is capable of backing Iran militarily.

HEARTLAND Alongside your organization's moral profile, you are nevertheless equipped with an arsenal capable of striking Israel. Recently, even the Secretary-General of Hizbullah, Sayyid Hasan Nasrallah, talked of thousands of missiles trained on Galilee. Could they be used against the Jewish State as a reprisal in the event of an attack on Iran?

MALLI Yet again, let's remember that it is Israel that threatens the region. Our missiles serve to defend our country against Israeli acts of aggression. Since its foundation in 1948, the list of Zionist attacks against Lebanon has grown very long. And still, today, Israel occupies a part of our territory³ and violates our airspace and seas almost on a daily basis.

³ Malli is referring to the Shab'a Farms, a stretch of land which is disputed between Syria and Lebanon and which, since 1967, has been occupied by Israel. After the withdrawal in 2000, the Jewish State maintains important military observation posts there.

HEARTLAND Has Iran ever asked you to stand by it in the event of an external attack?

MALLI No, never. We've never received such a request from Tehran. However, Iran is certainly a friend to us, while Israel is our enemy.

HEARTLAND And yet, even at a military level, there are undeniable ties between you and Tehran.

MALLI Definitely. Tehran assists Lebanon and exercises its moral influence in the region, just as the Americans and other countries support Israel. The United States ensures Israeli military superiority, just as Tehran plays its cards in order to maintain a balance.

HEARTLAND In the sense that it supplies you with arms? Are there still Iranian officers training your men in the Beqaa Valley?

MALLI In the event of attack, we too have to defend ourselves and cultural and media mechanisms would not suffice. In relation to the presence of Iranian officers in Lebanon, my response is that no Iranian has ever died on our territory directly fighting Israel. It is our cause, today as in the past. We liberated Lebanon. It wasn't the Iranians, Syrians or Egyptians who drove back the enemy.

HEARTLAND Don't you think that, in this context, Hizbullah nevertheless represents a regional card in the hands of Iran?

MALLI We have our own Lebanese agenda which requires us to defend ourselves against the Israeli threat.

HEARTLAND And what if Iran were to ask you for military assistance against Israel?

MALLI Everyone knows that Iran could strike Israel with its long-range missiles as far as to the borders with Egypt.

HEARTLAND But what if it were not in a position to directly threaten Israel?

MALLI If called on by Tehran, in that case Hizbullah would support its friend and ally. Then Israel might decide to not confine itself to attacking Iran, but also Hizbullah posts in Lebanon. In that case, we would have all the avenues to defend ourselves with every means in our power.

HEARTLAND Analysts often allude to an internal division within the Party of God, between an 'Iranophile' faction, that would prefer to give priority to the alliance with Tehran, and another 'Lebanese' faction, which on the contrary calls for a strictly local agenda to be maintained. Do these two factions exist?

MALLI Absolutely not. This is the product of Israeli propaganda aimed at depicting us as a divided front. Since our establishment, we have always been a united party. This does not mean that there is no debate and discussion between the our leaders, but we pursue a single political and strategic vision.

Iran-Israel and the 'Shiite crescent'

HEARTLAND Since taking on the presidency of the Islamic Republic, Ahmadinejad has launched a tough campaign of verbal attacks against Israel. In Europe and the United States, reactions in defence of the Jewish State have been unanimous. How should the behaviour of the new Iranian president be interpreted?

MALLI First of all, it's worth remembering that the Iranian political system is more complex than is depicted in the West. It is not a dictatorship in which the president decides every aspect of the country's strategy. Ahmadinejad is one of the decision-makers, but not the only one. It would be a big mistake to attribute to his verbal statements the status of being the underlying premise of the definitive decisions in Tehran's foreign policy. But then, what is there in what Ahmadinejad has said against Israel that is new? While he talks of eliminating the Jewish State, Tel Aviv acts and eliminates the Palestinian people. The withdrawal from Gaza definitely did not mark a change in Israeli policy. The continued violation of the rights of the Palestinians is there for everyone to see.

HEARTLAND Why do you think Iran is always described as a dangerous country by Western powers? What is the West's problem with Iran?

MALLI Iran has excellent trade relations with Germany, France and Great Britain. It is the United States, Israel's ally, that exerts pressure on European countries to disrupt their relations with Iran

HEARTLAND So what is the United States' problem with Iran, then?

MALLI On more than one occasion, Condoleezza Rice has clearly stated that Iran constitutes a threat to Israel. It's simple. After the fall of Iraq, Tehran is the other obstacle preventing Israel and its allies from imposing their dominion over the region.

HEARTLAND Do you believe, then, that the current American administration and Israeli leaders might decide to intervene against Iran?

MALLI With people like Cheney, Rice and Rumsfeld, nobody can feel safe. I can't rule out that they may resort to military action. Bush has always said that after Iraq, it would be Iran's turn.

HEARTLAND Do you think, however, that Iran might strike first?

MALLI Absolutely not. It is not in Tehran's strategic interest to provoke military hostilities.

HEARTLAND And what if it had nuclear arms?

MALLI Even if it had nuclear arms, Iran would not use them first. Nuclear weapons serve as a deterrent to attacks.

HEARTLAND Another recurring theme in many analyses by Western observers is that of the existence of a 'Shiite crescent': a pan-Shiite political plan by which the Islamic minority, from Iran to Lebanon, passing through southern Iraq, the Gulf States and Syria, would impose their control over the region. Does such a plan exist?

MALLI This is sheer fantasy on the part of those who wish to divide the Muslim world. It is true that we are a minority, but since our beginnings, with Imams 'Ali, Hasan and Husayn⁴, we have chosen not to remain an inert island in a Sunni sea, but to be an active tide in that vast sea. To clarify a misunderstanding that is too often repeated by your media, the Shiites are not an ethnic group developing their own plan to form a state. In the same way, Iran, although it has an overwhelming majority of Shiites, is not the 'Shiite State'. Certainly, there is a strong Shiite presence in the Persian Gulf region which might give rise to the impression of an uninterrupted territorial continuity, but there is no political plan to that end⁵.

HEARTLAND What role does Hizbullah play in this Shiite tide in a Sunni sea?

MALLI Our political choices are not dictated by denominational concerns. When Iran was ruled by the Shiite Shah, before the creation of the Lebanese Party of God, we were all against Tehran's politics while we supported the struggle of the secular yet Sunni Egyptian president Nasser.

HEARTLAND And what if, tomorrow, Iran were to reach an agreement with Israel?

MALLI We would break all ties with Tehran. It would become our enemy even if it continued to be ruled by Shiites.

(translation: John Mifsud)

⁴ 'Ali bin Abi Talib (600-661 A.D.) was the fourth caliph after the Prophet Muhammad and the first Shiite imam. Hasan (625-669) and Husayn (626-680) were his sons and, respectively, the second and third imams of the Shiite community.

⁵ According to the Encyclopaedia of the Orient (<http://i-cias.com/e.o>), Shiites represent 20% of the total population of North Africa and the Middle East (94 million of around 460 million people). They are spread out unevenly among the various countries: Iran (85% of the population), Yemen (73%), Bahrain (60%), Iraq (56%), Kuwait (33%), Lebanon (32%), Jordan (15%) and Saudi Arabia (13%). Numerically less-significant Shiite communities are found in Syria, Qatar, Oman, the United Arab Emirates and Palestine.



DEFUSING TEHRAN

HEARTLAND PLUS

AMERICA IS LOOKING FOR NEW ALLIES

by *Ryan FLOYD*

The rapid expansion of China and India's trade networks exacerbates competition for African resources and erodes US hegemony. Washington must boost its cooperation with Africa's most stable countries. The role of South Africa.

1. *A* new great game has begun in Africa in competition over raw materials, geopolitical influence, and access to markets. American foreign policy towards African countries now centers on the best use of foreign aid. Meanwhile, China, India and other emerging great powers, see Africa through the lens of national interests and are beginning to fill the power vacuum left by the receding former colonial and Cold War powers. Success will depend on America cooperating with self-reliant states to secure our hard interests. The United States should pursue the following interests in order of importance: a) Reinforcing the state and fighting terrorism; b) Securing access to energy and natural gas supplies, c) Preventing Africa from being dominated by a foreign power and d) Enabling African countries to thrive in a capitalist system on their own.

2. Nowhere else in the world is the state more of an artificial construct than in Africa. Countries are made up of a wide array of ethnic groups, many of which have fought one another to get access to government finances. After decades of war, many countries in Africa that were once threatened by internal collapse — Mozambique, Angola, and South Africa, for example — are now secure states. Despite their tribal loyalties, an uncanny number of people in Kenya, Zambia, Nigeria, and Tanzania have loyalty to their country and say, for example, “yes, I am Zambian.” I was heartened to hear someone in Nigeria say, “we Nigerians are more aggressive than the conservative Ghanaians.” While intrastate wars continue in Congo, Cote d’Ivoire, Somalia, and Sudan, they are now the exception rather than the rule.

Nevertheless, these countries represent significant threats to American national security. Unstable states and regions can threaten America’s security directly. Charles Taylor’s pseudo-government in Liberia siphoned off funds from timber and diamond exports to fund destabilizing wars in West Africa. Unstable states can provide cover for terrorists as in Somalia today or Sudan in the 1990s with Osama bin Laden. Governments in Congo, Somalia, and Ethiopia cannot control their own borders. According to a senior analyst at the Department of Defense, seven out of the top ten al Qaeda operatives are now in East Africa, probably Somalia.

The United States should use stable, semi democratic states — Ghana, Zambia, Mozambique, Kenya, and Tanzania — as anchors amid other destabilizing countries. Washington should boost its diplomatic presence in these countries and increase cabinet-level exchanges. How many knew that Zambia, a landlocked country with eight neighbors, had one of the freest economies in Africa and was one of the most politically stable? Washington already leads the pan-Sahel Initiative to enable Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger to combat trans-Saharan threats to stability such as terrorism and international crime. The United States should continue military assistance to assure that a central government can police its borders. The African Union has taken the lead in Sudan, but has been largely under-funded by its own relatively poor countries. Washington should increase AU military cooperation to enable the organization to maintain stability in potentially failing states.

Energy, oil in particular, has become one of the most important pillars of any country's foreign policy. The price of oil has skyrocketed because demand is increasing faster than supply, a situation that could exist for a long time to come. The recent tension between Ukraine and Russia over the supply of natural gas demonstrates the importance of energy in foreign policy. Both India and China are now net importers of oil and are securing imports by signing long-term contracts with many countries.

The United States currently imports 15% of its oil from Africa, which should increase to 20% by 2020. West Africa is home to some of the best quality oil in the world, and requires very little money for extraction. As in the Middle East, the reserves reside in African countries which have had some of the world's worst records in governance. Angola has just emerged from a multi-decade civil war. Nigeria's oil industry is disrupted at least once every two months due to domestic terrorism or kidnappings. Equatorial Guinea has been threatened by coup attempts, most recently by South African mercenaries.

As elsewhere, dumping aid money into these countries will not make them more stable. However, we do know that countries typically function better when the government does not run the entire economy. Nigeria's government manages each of its refineries. Angola's government controls almost all of its manufacturing companies. The United States should encourage the governments to divest from these industries to reduce the temptation for corruption from government managers, and to free up the economy.

Most importantly, we must improve and increase cooperation with these countries. Employees of Royal Dutch Shell and Exxon Mobile are constantly threatened or kidnapped by thugs in the Niger River Delta. President Clinton and Bush have increased military cooperation with Nigeria and Angola, but it is still on a small scale. We need more thorough cooperation as has developed in the Middle East and Central Asia.

3. Africa has become the playground for emerging great powers. The United States has a primary interest in preventing an outside power from dominating the continent.

In place of former colonial powers, a new group of resource-hungry countries is arising. As an example, Nigeria recently sold exploration rights to off-shore oil fields and China, India, Brazil, South Korea, Malaysia, South Africa, Italy, and the United States all competed for the contracts. The United States should partner with South Africa, when possible, to prevent foreign domination. And when we have to choose, we would rather refer leadership to India over China.

China's rapid industrialization has fueled a fast increase in the demand for raw materials and commodities. Beijing has sent its quasi-government companies throughout the world to secure long-term access to resources, much like pre-World War II Japan and Germany. This has involved contracts with Kazakhstan and Russia for oil, Australia for uranium, Brazil for iron ore, and Peru for natural gas. The government uses financial incentives to secure access to commodities in the form of low-interest loans, debt-forgiveness, infrastructure projects, and closer economic ties.

Africa is the world's best source of raw materials. Not only does the continent have a disproportionate amount of minerals, but its governments are weak and more easily manipulated than that of head-strong nuclear Russia. China's "non-interference" policy allows it to support a number of the world's pariah states. In 2005, Chinese companies invested \$600 million in Zimbabwe, one of the largest exporters of platinum in the world. China was the largest buyer of timber from Charles Taylor's Liberia. And now Beijing imports 50% of Sudan's oil and supports its facilities with military personnel while funding a multibillion-dollar dam project.

China offers more investment than the purely extractive Western mining companies do. Along with the mining companies, Beijing's government-controlled companies line up to provide concessionary financing, and infrastructure spending. In addition to buying titanium there, the China Bridge and Road Construction Company has been building roads in Kenya for over a decade. The Chinese government knows that good infrastructure improves a country's export potential. So, the government-controlled companies see the benefit in funding road, bridge, dam, and railroad projects throughout Africa. Their construction companies are cheaper than their counterparts in America and more apt to bid for a \$5-15 million contract than would Bechtel.

China's influence in Africa undermines American foreign policy goals. Washington D.C. has once again expressed its disappointment at Nigeria's plan to change the constitution to allow a president to hold more than two terms. The Chinese do not care about it. The Americans were disappointed in Ethiopia's harsh crackdown on dissidents recently. The Chinese made no comments.

As to India, this country has a long history of relations with Africa. The British brought Indian labor to Africa during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to build railroads. Many Indians remained in East and Southern Africa to set up small trading operations. To this day, the Indian communities in Africa are extremely active in the private sector. Almost every publicly listed company in Kenya has a number of people of Indian origin on its board. The traders, a tough bunch, have weathered the storm, and have given Indian multinationals immediate contracts to expand into east and

southern Africa.

Like China, India now also has a high demand for energy and natural resources, particularly oil. The country has had difficulty importing oil from Middle Eastern countries in the past, due to its conflicts with Islamic Pakistan. India currently imports 16% of its energy from Africa, mainly from Nigeria. Its government-controlled oil companies have been wandering the world in search of long-term contracts. While China outbid India for shares in a block of an offshore oil field in Angola, recently India won a 25% stake in an offshore oil field in Nigeria. India has not made the impression that China has, but the government is beginning to learn that it will need a more forceful strategy in order to win bids. In 2005, the Indian government agreed to \$6 billion in subsidized loans to African countries in exchange for oil importation rights. ONGC, a government-controlled oil company, built a pipeline in Sudan for \$250 million in exchange for prospecting rights.

The Indian government is beginning to realize the weight it may be able to throw around the world. The world does not know what kind of a global power Delhi will be. It has maintained a tight grip on Nepal and Bhutan, and other countries among its near abroad, but has not yet placed Indian military personnel in Africa.

In this scenario, South Africa should be a partner with the United States in preventing India or China from dominating the landscape. South African companies have long dominated the mining sectors in Africa. DeBeers and Anglo American, now incorporate in London, began as South African behemoth mining operations. Now South African corporations are seeing a growing Africa on their doorsteps as an opportunity for growth. Retailers such as Shoprite, Ellerrines, and Truworths have expanded to most of the Anglophone African countries. Mittal Steel's subsidiary in South Africa currently sees the rest of Africa as its fastest-growing export market. The multibillion-dollar South African banks, Standard Bank and ABSA, have significant operations throughout the continent and are expanding rapidly.

Meanwhile, the South African government has been a force for good on the continent. Despite its silence over Zimbabwe, Pretoria has been instrumental in pushing for an Africa led by representative, free-market democracies, beginning with its example. Nelson Mandela was one of the first African leaders to serve a short, elected term, and then voluntarily refrain from reelection. Mbeke looks to follow in his footsteps. Kenya, Zambia, and Senegal, have all followed South Africa's lead here.

The South African military has had difficulty transitioning from white-controlled to black-controlled operations, limiting its ability to deploy force abroad. Yet there is an immense need for the United States to conduct joint operations with their forces. South Africa could be a strong partner in fighting terrorism in the Sahel and east Africa.

4. America's foreign policy depends on self-sufficient countries. Meanwhile, African countries have come to depend on handouts. Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia all depend on foreign aid for more than 40% of their fiscal budgets. Heavy dependence on aid keeps African countries poor and easily manipulated.

African countries have the world's worst problems: low literacy rates, propensity towards drought, high HIV prevalence, and high infant mortality from preventable diseases such as diarrhea. Africa has consumed over \$600 billion in aid since the 1960s with very little to show for it. Many countries have developed from rags to riches in two or three generations (Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore, and now China and India), and none of these depended on extensive foreign aid. Rather, they created conditions conducive for business operations.

With a decrease in foreign aid, African countries would have to cut their bloated bureaucracies. Without that lifeline, African countries would be forced to deal with the nagging problems that prevent extensive foreign direct investment in infrastructure and power. The roads in Africa are notoriously potholed and congested, increasing the transport costs for companies. Inefficient and corrupt government companies produce the world's most expensive power. A hectoliter of beer costs more to produce in Nigeria than almost anywhere else in the world, despite the country's cheap oil resources.

Investment is already helping. Global cement giants have been pouring money into sub Saharan Africa. Mining giants have helped to bring infrastructure money from Asian companies. America must keep up or it will lose out. Learning from the rising Asian powers, the Export-Import bank could offer soft loans to American companies investing in roads, ports, and power in Africa. But spending billions of dollars for "capacity building" in Africa is about as effective as dumping money directly into the Atlantic Ocean.

DIVIDE, PROTECT AND COMMAND

by *David DONADIO*

The US Navy doesn't aim only at keeping its sea supremacy, but also at protecting trade roots from terrorism and piracy. A new system of maritime security is needed, and its costs must be shared with the allies. Time to arm the merchant crews?

1. *W*hen U.S. President George W. Bush spoke of fighting terrorists with “every tool of intelligence, every instrument of law enforcement, and every necessary weapon of war,” he could just as easily have been describing contemporary American maritime policy. Unquestionably the most comprehensive area of U.S. global strategy, maritime policy encompasses signals intelligence gathering in every ocean, drug interdiction in the Caribbean, multilateral police action against pirates and terrorists around the horn of Africa and the Indian Ocean, missile defense off the coasts of Iran and North Korea, and the response to the rise of traditional naval threats like China. It involves the projection of power by massive carrier battle groups, smaller littoral actions by submarines and frigates, Special Forces insertion, and even the security of seaports on the American mainland.

With the rise of a more expeditionary military strategy — as the unprecedented appointment of a Marine as the top U.S. commander in Europe in January of 2003 surely indicates — U.S. maritime capabilities can only grow in importance. The Navy is highly portable by nature, and requires little consent from foreign governments to operate, so it is likely to fare well in what observers have dubbed “the Revolution in Military Affairs,” the ongoing transition to a faster, more agile force.

Even General Tommy Franks, the old artilleryman charged with planning and executing the war in Iraq, admitted that when sandstorms brought advancing American forces to a halt south of Baghdad in late March 2003, he was impressed by the performance of air power, which degraded Iraqi armored units much more effectively than he had expected.¹ And now that one aircraft armed with precision munitions can attack five distinct targets in a single mission, the Navy’s 11 aircraft carriers — each armed with a complement of around 80 aircraft, able to deploy around the world on short notice, and requiring no basing rights to operate — are more powerful than ever.

In humanitarian crises, too, such as the Asian tsunami in December 2004, the U.S. Navy is often the best-equipped force and the first on the scene to provide aid. In this area, the U.S.N.S. *Mercy*, the floating hospital which administered medical care to those injured in the war in Iraq and later to victims of the tsunami, is surely indicative of things to come. As Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist wrote this past December, “Everybody needs medical care; providing it is one of the most powerful ways of

¹ Peter J. BOYER, “The New War Machine,” *The New Yorker*, June 30, 2003.

demonstrating the generosity, compassion and character of the American people. We have to think creatively; we can use medicine as a currency for peace.”²

2. The U.S. Navy’s basic mission remains the same as it was during the Cold War: to project American power around the globe, protecting American interests and those of allies; to preserve peace, stability and commerce; and to train with the navies of allies in anticipation of supporting military operations and denying enemies the service of the sea. In the past, that meant training to fight the Soviets. Increasingly, it means training to fight the Chinese—recent port calls by U.S. vessels in Vietnam and U.S. naval cooperation with India must be interpreted in this light—and North Korea and Iran.

The difference in the Navy’s mission today is what it has to protect its beneficiaries against. U.S. naval superiority, like U.S. military superiority in general, is so overwhelming that America’s sovereign adversaries have all more or less resigned themselves to resisting its power by unconventional means or making threats on which they have little intention of following through. China develops electronic warfare techniques, and buys controlling interests in facilities like the Panama Canal to restrict American mobility until its own navy is more competitive³. North Korea exacts concessions from its neighbors and the United States in exchange for better behavior. And Iran rattles its nuclear saber, threatening Persian Gulf shipping, and employing Hizballah to export its revolutionary ideology throughout the Middle East.

In response, the United States is, as always, cooperating with allies new and old to isolate aggressors and raise the costs of their recalcitrance.

Chinese policy figures prominently on North Korea, which China has a *modus vivendi* in allowing it to be a thorn in the side of the U.S. and its regional allies. The Chinese control 40% of North Korea’s energy imports, so in the end, they know that if it does anything too nasty, they can turn the lights out, but in the meantime, they’re content to make the U.S. devote considerable sea and air — less land, these days — forces to containing it.

The United States is also pursuing technological and military cooperation with Japan in deploying increasingly effective theater missile defense capabilities. As U.S. Rear Admiral Alan B. Hicks reported at a George C. Marshall Institute event on December 19 of last year, at present, three Aegis cruisers armed with Standard missiles can protect all of Japan from limited ballistic missile attack. Within the next 6-12 years, as the Navy fields a newer version of the missile, a single cruiser will be able to protect Japan, and two will be able to protect all of Australia.

Since the United States is wealthy and North Korea destitute, in view of the costs of developing ever more sophisticated missile technology, the deployment of theater missile defense systems is a sensible American response to North Korean pugnacity. And what more versatile place to deploy them than on ships?

² Senator William FRIST, “Creating a U.S. Global Health Corps,” *The American Interest*, Volume I, Number 2 (Winter 2005).

³ Ralph PETERS, “Waters of wealth and war; The crucial Indian Ocean,” *Armed Forces Journal*, March 1, 2006.

The Iranian threat is more complicated. If recent Iranian naval maneuvers are any indication, the Mullahs hope to jeopardize commercial shipping in the Strait of Hormuz — through which all Persian Gulf oil must pass — driving already high oil prices even higher, making them even richer. Having learned the hard way what happens when they actually do attack shipping in the Gulf — as they did during the latter half of the Iran-Iraq War — they do not wish an actual confrontation with the United States, but they do seek to benefit by its potential.

3. Yet while the United States and its allies worry about North Korea and Iran, and should remain constantly prepared to contend with them, how likely do we think either of those regimes is to mount an attack? Probably, not very. With the exception of Iran's sponsorship of international terrorism, both threats appear to be contained.

America's military superiority has thus had paradoxical implications for its foreign policy. Because it is so effective at fighting large wars — though not as accustomed to managing their aftermath — the United States has compelled most of its sovereign threats to abandon hope of accomplishing their objectives through acts of direct aggression. And yet, its Navy has more work than ever.

From narcotraffickers to pirates and criminals to terrorists, non-state actors of all kinds — everyone who stands to lose by the rule of law — are on the rise, and the United States is confronted with the need to prevent them from compromising major trade routes and hijacking sensitive cargoes. This places it in an awkward predicament, a textbook case of trying to swat flies with a sledgehammer: fighting dozen-man dhows off Somalia with \$500 million destroyers.

The problem is growing. As Gal Luft and Anne Korin of the Institute for the Analysis of Global Security wrote recently, “[...] statistics from the International Maritime Bureau (IMB), a piracy watchdog, suggest that both the frequency and the violence of acts of piracy have increased in recent years. In 2003, ship owners reported 445 attacks, in which 92 seafarers were killed or reported missing and 359 were assaulted and taken hostage. (Ships were hijacked in 19 of these cases and boarded in 311.) From 2002 to 2003, the number of those killed and taken hostage in attacks nearly doubled. Pirates have also increased their tactical sophistication, often surrounding a target ship with several boats and firing machine guns and antitank missiles to force it to stop...The total damage caused by piracy — due to losses of ships and cargo and to rising insurance costs — now amounts to \$16 billion per year”.⁴

Though the blue water navy is unsuited to fighting guerilla wars, it is hardly incapable of it. The deeper and more worrisome problem is that it is not cost effective to do so, because even the smallest U.S. warships are much more expensive than the threats they are increasingly called on to counter. In this regard, seafaring guerillas are naval variants of the asymmetric threat faced by American forces on the ground in Iraq and elsewhere.

⁴ Gal LUFT and Anne KORIN, “Terrorism Goes to Sea,” *Terrorism Goes to Sea, Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2004.

4. Whatever their wisdom in other departments, American brass of earlier eras—who are among the most passionate opponents of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld’s revolution—may conceive too narrowly of the naval mission.

No one would argue that the purpose of U.S. naval power is to deliver materiel to the theater of operations and fight and win wars, yet fewer and fewer would say that that is its only purpose. Surely it exists also to protect America’s commercial shipping and that of its trading partners. Luft and Korin paint a stark picture of the problem with respect to the Strait of Malacca, the vital channel between the Indian and Pacific oceans: “According to the IMB, however, the most dangerous passage of all is the Strait of Malacca. Every day, a quarter of world trade, including half of all sea shipments of oil bound for eastern Asia and two-thirds of global shipments of liquefied natural gas, passes through this strait. Roughly 600 freighters loaded with everything from Japanese nuclear waste bound for reprocessing facilities in Europe to raw materials for China’s booming economy traverse this chokepoint daily. Roughly half of all piracy attacks today occur in Southeast Asia, mostly in Indonesian waters... Any disruption of shipping in the South China Sea would harm not only the economies of China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, but that of the United States as well.”⁵

The Indonesian and Malaysian governments argue that a heavy U.S. naval presence in the Strait of Malacca would inflame Islamic hostility and exacerbate the problem, but in other areas, from the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden to the Persian Gulf, where the U.S. Fifth Fleet has its headquarters, the Navy is already approaching things with new challenges in mind.

Whether the old guard likes it or not, this means preparing for a range of only nominally military operations; the sorts of things the Pentagon refers to as “MOOTWA,” or “military operations other than war.” It means boarding a lot more ships, inspecting a lot more cargoes, and taking a much more hands-on approach.

The need has not escaped U.S. military planners. When I visited the Naval Station Great Lakes—where 40,000 sailors a year receive basic training—in 2003, a public affairs officer told me that the Navy was looking to train six times as many sailors to be Masters-at-Arms, its military policemen.

The problem the U.S. faces is that because its greatest interest is and always has been protecting trade, it exports security almost as a pure public good. When it sends its military to protect its allies, it rarely bills them for its services, so it often bears all the costs. And while that works for deterring other states, it’s not as effective against hordes of loosely affiliated people who aren’t answerable to any government, or whose governments are too corrupt and broken to stop them.

5. The U.S. and its allies demand security for their shipping, but at present, no one is able to supply it. The good news, however, is that economic problems usually have economic solutions.

As a recent *Economist* piece relates, major cargo companies are consolidating their shipping onto fewer hulls of ever larger sizes. “The future giants will be a quarter of a

⁵ Luft and Korin.

mile long, 190-foot wide with their bottoms 65-feet below the waterline. They will be able to carry enough containers to fill a line of trucks 68 miles long.”⁶

This affords a practical opportunity. What if large cargo ships could carry their own security detachments, something akin to what companies like Blackwater USA do for officials in Iraq? U.S. Navy SEALs often sign on with Blackwater because they love the thrill of combat and don’t want to quit at age 42. Would it be unthinkable, then, to offer two or three-year contracts to retiring SEALs and those of comparable qualifications on board oil tankers and vessels carrying dangerous cargoes? The costs per ton of cargo would likely be trivial, but they’d add up to nice retirement packages for the recipients, and even better, they’d be borne by consumers rather than the U.S. Navy alone.

At the very least, Luft and Korin think the idea of arming sailors is worthy of exploration: “At a time when the U.S. Congress has decided to enable airline pilots to carry weapons, it is worth examining a similar policy for officers on civilian ships. Arming sailors is more complicated than simply giving them weapons. Officers must be well trained, access to onboard weapons storage must be carefully controlled, and crews must be well vetted. The long-standing (and, in the short term, financially expedient) practice of crewing ships with unfamiliar developing-world crews hired at various ports of call also requires scrutiny—in many hijackings, “insiders” planted on the ships facilitate the attacks”.⁷

Maritime security officers wouldn’t be invincible, of course, but they would be able to protect ships against anything short of attacks mounted (or supported) by sovereign states. Suicide bombers, by nature, cannot be deterred, but pirates and criminals would think twice before attempting to attack a ship if they knew they had an appreciable chance of being blown away in the process. And just as the security officer at the front desk of your office building cannot protect you against armed gunmen, his presence acts to deter thieves and lesser enemies, and he can call in the cops whenever he needs them.

6. If the U.S. learns nothing else from its enemies, it is that it cannot allow black and white distinctions and superficial dichotomies — “act of law enforcement vs. military operation” — to prevent it from reaching a new arrangement for maritime security. It’s clear that any U.S. president, Republican or Democrat, will want to employ the full panoply of options to combat terrorism, piracy and crime on the seas, and President Bush’s September 2005 directive⁸ is a start.

The United States will continue to devote its resources to contending with rising great powers and rogue states alike, and on those fronts its leaders recognize that they may often have to act alone. But with respect to the international order itself, no navy can be omnipresent, fighting everything and nothing at once, so the U.S. will surely

⁶ “The world in a box; The container industry,” *The Economist*, March 18, 2006.

⁷ Luft and Korin.

⁸ U.S. Nat. Strategy for Maritime Security, September 2005. www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/interweb/assetlibrary/HSPD13_MaritimeSecurityStrategy.pdf

have to share costs and burdens. It will have to build new working relationships with foreign navies in critical waterways, particularly in the Indian Ocean. It will have to find ways to bring its immense naval, intelligence, and perhaps most importantly its economic power to bear on the problem. And that'll be all to the good.

CLIMATOLOGY BETWEEN SCIENCE AND POLITICS

by R.A. PIELKE Sr. and R.A. PIELKE Jr.

As pollution increases, it becomes more and more important to assess its impact on climate, in order to cope with the geopolitical consequences of large-scale environmental modifications. The need of a new scientific approach. Global warming is just a part of the story.

1. *I*t has become widely appreciated that humans have an influence on the climate system. As a consequence scientists, political advocates, and policy makers are debating what sorts of policies make sense to implement related to climate change. The timing for such debates have been motivated by the disappointing results of the Kyoto Protocol process, which in any case, is focused only on the period leading to 2012 and was not designed to serve as a comprehensive solution.

But as debate on climate policies takes place, what has not been well appreciated is that decisions related to complex scientific issues often must be based on oversimplifications of the relevant science. Such oversimplifications are of course acceptable if the scientific shorthand nonetheless manifests itself in actions that lead to desirable societal outcomes. Climate science is incredibly complex, yet is at risk of being over-simplified in policy proposals in ways that creates risks for achieving desirable societal outcomes.

Under the Framework Convention on Climate Change the term “climate change” is defined as “a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability over comparable time periods.” This narrow definition stands in stark contrast to the broader definition used by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the United Nations group tasked with assessing climate science for policy makers, which states that climate change is “any change in climate over time whether due to natural variability or as a result of human activity.”

A narrow view of climate change may have been appropriate when the science was less well understood and greenhouse gases were thought to be the primary (and perhaps only) significant human forcing of the climate system. However, in recent decade there has been increasing recognition among many in the scientific community that the components of the Earth System are intimately connected, and that interactions extend from local to global scales. The recognition of the multiple interactions across space and time scales has led to a new interdisciplinary perspective,

which promises to be an effective means to advance our understanding of the Earth System, and its human-caused and natural dynamics.

A consequence of a narrow view of climate science means that important scientific considerations – such as the role of land use effects on climate – may be overlooked in policy discussions. A narrow view may also distract attention from the need to improve adaptation to climate, particularly in developing countries.

2. Multi-decadal climate projections from global atmospheric-ocean circulation models have been the tools used by the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to communicate expected weather conditions in the upcoming decades. Climate models are comprised of approximations of physical, biological, and chemical components of the climate system, expressed as mathematical formulations, and then averaged over grid volumes. These approximations are then converted to a programming language so that they can be solved on a computer and integrated forward in discrete time steps over the chosen model domain. To fully represent the earth system, a global climate model needs to include component models to represent the oceans, atmosphere, land, and continental ice and the interfacial fluxes between each other.

There are three types of applications of these models: for sensitivity studies, for diagnosis and for forecasting.

The application of climate models to improve our understanding of how the system works is a valuable application of these tools. In a sensitivity study, a subset of the forcings and/or feedbacks of the climate system may be altered to examine its response. Such a model of the climate system might be incomplete and not include each of the important feedbacks and forcings. Sensitivity studies can add significant value to scientific understandings, but because they are incomplete, they are not predictions or projections of the climate future. Most climate model studies are of this type, and their results are frequently mistaken as forecasts of the future.

In the second application of climate models, observed data is fed into the model, to produce a real-world constraint on climate data. The model is used to interpolate climate data at locations which do not have observed data.

Finally, the application of climate models to predict the future state of the climate system. Forecasts can be made from a single run of the model, or from a large number of runs which are produced by slightly perturbing the initial conditions and/or other aspects of the model. A set of model runs performed in this manner provides a sense of the confidence in the prediction from a single model run.

With these definitions, how should we think of today's generation of leading climate models, such as those used by the IPCC? Since the global atmospheric-ocean circulation models do not contain all of the important climate forcings and feedbacks, the models results must not be interpreted as forecasts. Since they have been applied to project the decadal-averaged weather conditions in the next 50-100 years and more, they cannot be considered as diagnostic models since we do not yet have the observed data to insert into the models. Therefore, such climate models are more appropriately

described as sensitivity studies. Too often climate models are described as predictions or projections of the future, which can be misleading. Such models can provide important information about how the climate system works, but should not be expected to accurately predict the climate in the coming decades.

Indeed, with respect to multi-decadal climate projections, as we increasingly recognise the diverse, multiple types of influences on the global climate system, accurate forecasts of future global and regional climate become increasingly more challenging. No climate change model even includes all of the important forcings and feedbacks.

A 2005 National Research Council Report entitled “Radiative forcing of climate change: Expanding the concept and addressing uncertainties” identified important human climate forcings that have been ignored so far or are very poorly understood. These include the effects on the climate system of land use/land cover change, the biogeochemical effect of the human input of carbon dioxide and nitrogen compounds, and the effect of aerosol clouds from vehicular, industrial and agricultural activity. These climate forcings can significantly alter the regional structure of spatial heating and cooling, even in the absence of a global warming effect.

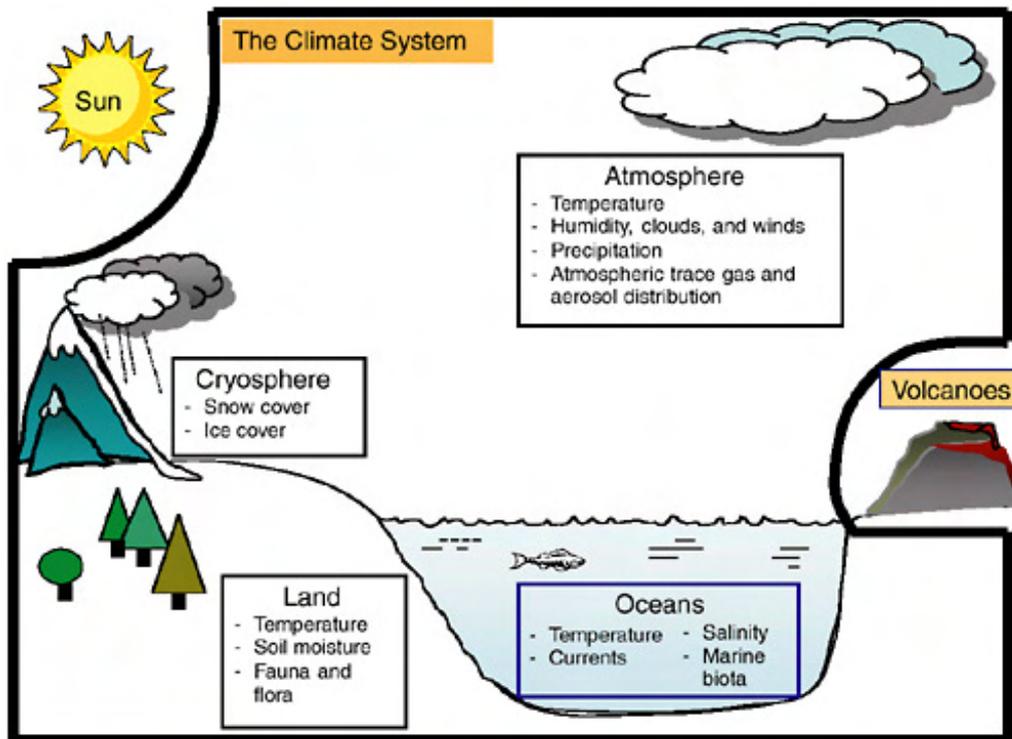
A recent study by J. Feddema and colleagues entitled “The Importance of Land-Cover Change in Simulating Future Climates“ found, for example, that global modeled regional temperature and precipitation patterns in the coming decades were substantially different depending on the human management of the landscape in the coming decades. Similarly, the effect of the human emissions of non-greenhouse gases and aerosols will also have a major effect on regional temperature and precipitation patterns. These effects are in addition to the effects of carbon dioxide emissions.

3. Significant weather events occur on the regional scale and are not evident in a global average surface temperature. Droughts occur in one region, while floods could occur just a few hundred kilometers away. Important influences on regional climate can originate in human activity.

For example, changes to the land surface, such as from urbanization or deforestation, can change patterns of atmospheric heating over these landscapes. This necessarily alters the regional pressure fields and thus the wind pattern. This pressure and wind pattern then affects the pressure and wind patterns at large distances from the region of the heating. Thus regional climate forcings can affect weather not only where the forcing occurs but at long distances from the source of the climate disturbance.

The use of a global average surface temperature trend to assess global warming is an incomplete climate metric. Around 90% of the heat changes in the climate system occur in the oceans. The surface temperature is a poor measure of the accumulation of heat in the oceans. Indeed, over the last decade or so, most of global warming has occurred through depth in the mid latitude oceans of the Southern Hemisphere, for reasons that have not been replicated by the global climate change models. In addition, methane, carbon aerosols and other climate effects play a more important role in global warming than previously thought.

To complicate the issue even further, global warming is only one component of climate change. It is the alteration of atmospheric and ocean circulations as a result of the diversity of climate forcings which have a larger impact on the climate that we experience. The climate forcing of land-use/land-cover change is just one example of such a climate forcing. With regional climate forcings, there are large regional changes which determines whether a region warms or cools, and becomes wetter or drier over time. This can occur even with little or no global average heat changes. We can see the importance of atmospheric circulation changes, for instance, in hurricane tracks. Whether the USA is pummeled by landfalling hurricanes such as Katrina or recurves offshore depends on the regional tropospheric wind field not a global average surface temperature trend. Global warming is just one aspect of a much more complicated environmental issue.



The climate system, consisting of the atmosphere, oceans, land, and cryosphere. (From National Research Council, 2005: Radiative forcing of climate change: Expanding the concept and addressing uncertainties.)

4. To accommodate the large uncertainty in accurately predicting the climate in the coming decades, a focus on global climate models should be complemented with an approach focused on first assessing key societal and environmental vulnerabilities. An example of such an approach is in understanding how population growth and climate change predicted by multi-decadal global climate prediction models combine to pose threats to water resources in semi-arid and arid regions. Charles Vorosmarty and colleagues found that future population growth creating additional demands for water is more important than changes in precipitation as projected under a range of climate

scenarios.

Efforts to modulate the future climate via greenhouse emission reductions can only address a portion of the expected future risks to water resources and escalating tropical cyclone damage. These comparisons, of course, do not mean that human-caused climate change is not a risk, but that responses to climate-related impacts necessarily must focus on a broader range of policy options than only greenhouse gas emissions.

To accommodate the perspective that the Earth System, including the climate, involves complex forcings and interactions across space and time scales requires us to be more inclusive in the involvement of the diverse communities performing climate and environmental change research, and to elevate interdisciplinary scientists to leadership roles in these communities.

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