

DUAL CONTAINMENT AND IRAN
Understanding and Assessing US Policy

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ABSTRACT

Dual Containment is a complex policy by which the United States attempts to simultaneously deal with two hostile nations that are themselves bitter enemies. To analyze the impact of this policy on Iran, one must first unlock its interwoven objectives and consider them in concert with congressional legislation aimed at influencing Iranian behavior. Reality judgments made about the true nature of Iranian behavior that the U.S. deems unacceptable must be based on fact rather than rhetoric. An appreciation must also be had for the perspectives of Arab Gulf states that are most directly effected by Dual Containment. When U.S. policy toward Iran is differentiated into successes and failures it becomes clear that at best Dual Containment is a holding action. What is needed today is a long term vision toward dealing with the Islamic Republic, a "competitive strategy" that can both entice and coerce Iran into assuming a responsible role in the community of nations.

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INTRODUCTION

Since the Iranian revolution of 1979, the question of how to deal with this strange and defiant republic has bedeviled American policy makers. While America's allies and friends have chosen a moderate stance toward Iran, the U.S. has elected to pursue a hard line embodied in its policy of Dual Containment in an attempt to change Iran's objectionable behavior in several key areas. In the four years since the articulation of this policy by Martin Indyk and Anthony Lake of the National Security Council, efforts have increased to ratchet up the rhetoric and economic pressure on Iran. The Iranian regime has responded in kind, with its own unique brand of obstinacy and fiery condemnation of America, an adversary they view in satanic proportions. Yet despite the determined efforts of the world's only remaining superpower, America's successes vis-à-vis Iran are extremely limited and hard to gauge. Has Iran relented in its pursuit of weapons of mass destruction? Has it softened its rhetoric against, or opposition to, the Middle East Peace Process? Has it ceased or decreased its support and encouragement of terrorism? Is it improving its dismal human rights record? Most significantly, are U.S. efforts of late thwarting, denying or even delaying Iran's achievement of any of those aims which the U.S. finds most objectionable? Is it enough just to recognize that the U.S. has succeeded in avoiding thus far the consequences of a direct major confrontation with the Islamic Republic?

As America today stands alone in diametrical opposition to Iran, its allies have become increasingly frustrated with their own Iranian policy shortcomings and are now beginning to wrestle with the same dilemma, what to do about Iran?

This paper will answer these questions and argue that current U.S. policy has been marginally effective in forestalling disaster thus far (deterrence achieved), but must be amended considerably in several areas to achieve U.S. regional objectives over the long term. The paper examines U.S. policy towards Iran with a critical view towards U.S. security interests and concerns regarding Iranian behavior, with the principle aim of proposing clear actions to achieve those U.S. regional objectives. It addresses the evolution of U.S. policy toward Iran, summarizes current U.S.-Iranian relations, and highlights the recent legislation and sanctions adopted by the Clinton Administration. Further, it analyzes current Iranian behavior in those areas the U.S. views as unacceptable and compares and contrasts these with U.S. aims. The successes and failures of U.S. policy initiatives are then evaluated in light of their effect, not only upon the U.S. and Iran, but also upon U.S. friends, both regionally and globally.

These findings are analyzed in the context of the current political climate in the region to determine what combination will best compliment what the authors believe is the foundation of a sound sustainable Gulf policy. Finally, this paper will reexamine what U.S. aims are achievable, how they can be attained, what are the likely costs, and what the American government needs to be willing to do to promote a secure and stable environment in this most volatile region.

Dual Containment: How Did We Get Here?

When confronted with a constant stream of violent television images from the Middle East or Persian Gulf region a westerner may wonder why he or she should be concerned about events in a region so far away with such unfamiliar geography, ideology, culture and politics. Indeed, as average Americans consume affordable petroleum products at a feverish rate, they seldom question their right or ability to do so, nor link this ability to current events in the Middle East. In fact, many argue that the U.S. should not be involved in the volatile affairs of this historically troubled area but should concentrate instead on America's many challenges at home. No more poignant example of this attitude exists than the defining issue of the 1992 presidential campaign. During that election the American peoples' concerns about the domestic economy unseated a President who had just build a multinational coalition of overwhelming force to fight and win a war restoring peace to the Persian Gulf region. In reality, the stability of the Gulf region and the state of the U.S. economy are inextricably linked. Perhaps those who remember sitting in the gas lines of the early 1970s may have forgotten that what happens in the Middle East, and in particular the Persian Gulf, has a direct and lasting impact on the economic welfare of every American.¹ As a region which sits atop two thirds of the world's proven oil reserves, astride some of the world's most important transportation waterways and stands close watch over the locus of three of the world's major religions, the Persian Gulf and surrounding countries of the modern Middle East encompass an area

¹ United States Security Strategy for the Middle East, Department of Defense, Office of International Affairs, May 1995, p. 6.

of vast strategic importance to the U.S.² As early as 1945, President Franklin Roosevelt indicated that America had vital interests in this region.³ This sentiment was recently reiterated by Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Robert Pelletreau in testimony to the House International Relations Committee when he maintained that American interests still include:

- Securing a just and lasting comprehensive peace between Israel and its neighbors.
- Maintaining our steadfast commitment to Israel's security and well being.
- Building and maintaining political, economic, and security relations with our friends in the Gulf and insuring unimpeded commercial access to area petroleum reserves, which are vital to our economic prosperity.
- Ensuring fair access for American business to commercial opportunities in the region.
- Countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the systems to deliver them, and combating terrorism.
- Promoting more open political and economic systems and respect for human rights and the rule of law.⁴

The U.S. faces a formidable obstacle in its quest to maintain the regional peace and security required to achieve the aforementioned goals. Principle among these obstacles is the behavior of the Islamic Republic of Iran. For 17 years, the Iranian regime has touted "death to America" as its mantra and defied U.S. ambitions for peace with a mandate for the kind of behavior Americans find most objectionable. Foremost among American concerns is Iran's alleged unrelenting quest for, and pursuit of, weapons of mass destruction, most ominously, a nuclear weapons capability.⁵ Secondly, Iran has been branded by the administration as a "...financier, armorer, trainer, safe haven and

² Ibid.

³ Ibid, p. 5.

⁴ Statement of Robert H. Pelletreau, Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs, Dept. of State before the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, June 12, 1996, p. 30.

inspiration for the Hizbollah..." and a supporter "... to some of the most violent opponents of peace, including Hamas", and like these organizations, is a vocal and vociferous opponent of the Middle East peace process.⁶ Finally, Iran has undertaken activities to threaten the security of its neighbors and has demonstrated a dismal record of human rights, particularly within its own borders.⁷

The current situation between the U.S. and Iran is the latest chapter in a long stormy relationship which began in friendship but has devolved into an adversarial battle of ideologies, economies, and occasional military confrontations over the future of the wealthiest region of the Middle East, the Persian Gulf.

Political Developments

U.S. involvement in Iran and its participation in the affairs of states bordering the Persian Gulf became significant only after the discovery of oil and upon the decline of British influence in the region.⁸ With the fall of the Mossadeq regime and the ascendance of the Shah to power in 1953, the U.S. maintained a close friendly relationship with Iran as one of its "Twin Pillars" of security along with Saudi Arabia to "buttress" the region against the threat from Iraq and possible encroachment south by the Soviet Union.⁹ After

⁵ Testimony of John M. Deutch, Director of Central Intelligence, Before the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Senate Committee on Government Affairs, One Hundred Fourth Congress, second session, S. Hrg. 104-422, Part II, March 20, 1996, p. 307.

⁶ Statement of Bruce O. Riedel, Deputy Assistant Secretary Of Defense, Near East and South Asia, before the House International Relations Committee, Nov. 9, 1995, pp. 10-11. See also U.S. Security Strategy for The Middle East, p.16, and : U.S. Dept. of State, Office of the Spokesman. Warren Christopher, Secretary Of State, "Fighting Terrorism: Challenge for the Peacemakers, Address to the Washington Institute for Near East Policy Annual Soref Symposium, May 21, 1996, pp. 3-4.

⁷ Anthony Lake, "Confronting Backlash States, Foreign Affairs, March/April 1994, Volume 73 No. 2, pp. 52-52.

⁸ Harvey Sicherman, "The Strange Death of Dual Containment." Orbis, Volume 41, Number 2, Spring 1997, p. 239.

⁹ Eric Watkins, "The Unfolding U.S. policy in the Middle East, International Affairs, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, Volume 73, Number 1, Jan. 1997, p. 7. See also M.E. Ahrari and Brigid Starkey,

years of political, military and economic support to Iran, this policy was overcome by events with the fall of the Shah and the Iranian Revolution in 1979. President Carter, sensing the potential danger in the region posed by the combination of an unstable Iran and the Soviet Union's invasion south into Afghanistan, established the Carter Doctrine stating that the U.S. had indeed vital interests in the region, and would protect those interests, with force if necessary.¹⁰ What developed in the last days of his administration and the ensuing Reagan years was a policy of containment of the Iranian threat during the Iran-Iraq War implemented by an attempt to balance the power between these two adversaries, one against the other, again recognizing the potential from the north if the violence from this conflict were to spread into the sphere of vital interest of the Soviet Union.¹¹ The end of the Iraq war, marked by Saddam's pyrrhic victory and Khomeini's reluctant acquiescence to the cease-fire, left both Iran and Iraq considerably weakened economically, though Iraq's army was still formidable.¹² The subsequent collapse and disintegration of the Soviet Union further reduced threats to U.S. interests in the region and drew American attention elsewhere to affairs in the Caucasus and Eastern Europe where a generation of weak but newly independent nations were about to be born.¹³ This

"Polarity and Stability in the Persian Gulf", The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs, Volume 21, No.1, Winter/Spring 1997, p.135. See also Michael Eisenstadt, Iranian Military Power: Capabilities and Intentions, Washington, D.C., The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, p. 86.

¹⁰ See President Carter (1980 State of the Union message) in U.S. Security Strategy for The Middle East, p.7.

¹¹ Lake, "Confronting Backlash States" pp. 47-48.

¹² Zachary Karabell and Philip Zelikow, "Prelude to War: US Policy Toward Iraq 1988-1990", John F. Kennedy School of Government Course Materials Office, Case No. 1245.0, Harvard University, January 27, 1997, pp. 2,4.

¹³ Ibid, pp. 5-7,12,16.

inattention by the U.S. to Gulf affairs from 1989-1990 contributed to its shock and surprise at Saddam's bold move south into Kuwait.¹⁴

Iran was a silent observer during the second Gulf War, as silent as the next door neighbor can be when the adjoining house is on fire. After the war, America again reconsidered its policy towards Iran. In 1993, Clinton administration advisors dropped the earlier concept of balance of power politics between the two recalcitrant states favoring instead a policy of "dual containment" to deter adventurism by Iran or Iraq.¹⁵ They cited as justification the decline in strategic importance of these weakened states in light of the demise of the former Soviet Union and the need to maintain stability in the region to promote progress in the fledgling Middle East peace process which they had inherited from the Bush administration.¹⁶

From these origins, the policy of "dual containment" was developed. During the past four years, this policy has undergone constant evolution in an attempt to stem the threat of Iranian misbehavior to regional stability.

Economic Developments

In 1979, President Carter declared a State of Emergency with regard to Iran, and promulgated Executive Order No. 12170, blocking certain property of the Government of Iran".¹⁷ This Executive Order has received annual presidential renewal since that time.¹⁸

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵See Martin Indyk, Special Assistant to the President, Remarks on the Clinton Administration's Approach to the Middle East, Washington, D.C., 18 May 1993, in documents and Source Material, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Issue 88, volume XXII, Number 4, Summer, 1993, University of California Press for the Institute for Palestine Studies and Kuwait University, pp. 159-160. See also Lake, "Confronting Backlash States", p.48

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ "The Iran Oil Sanctions Act of 1996: report together with additional views (to accompany H.R. 3107)", One Hundred Fourth Congress, second session, House of Representatives; 104-523, April 17, 1996, p. 9.

In 1984, in the wake of the 1983 Marine barracks bombing in Beirut, Iran was added to the "U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism" which imposed further economic restrictions on the U.S.-Iran relationship.¹⁹

Iranian aggression in 1987 during U.S. tanker escort operations prompted the U.S. to impose yet another Executive Order, No. 12613, mandating additional prohibitions on Iranian imports to the U.S.²⁰ Additionally, in 1987 the Missile Technology Control Regime was established, "to restrict the diffusion of ballistic missiles, the most dangerous vehicles for delivery of nuclear weapons".²¹

American concerns in the current decade about the regional proliferation of weapons of mass destruction spurred Congress to pass in 1992 the Iran/Iraq Non-Proliferation Act, prohibiting and mandating sanctions against those supplying destabilizing weaponry or sensitive dual use technology to Iran or Iraq. U.S. non-proliferation efforts and approaches towards these two countries, however, differ considerably.²²

While the non-proliferation effort in Iraq comes under the charter of U.N. sanctions and the auspices of the U.N. Special Commissioner (UNSCOM), its application towards

See also: "Message from the President of the United States: Continuation of the National Emergency with Respect to Iran", House Document 104-130, October 31, 1995, Washington: U.S. G.P.O.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ The Iran Oil Sanctions Act of 1996: report together with additional views (to accompany H.R. 3107)", One Hundred Fourth Congress, second session, House of Representatives; 104-523, April 17, 1996, pp. 9, 10. See also White House Office of the Press Secretary, "The Iran and Libya Sanctions Act of 1996 Fact Sheet", August 5, 1996, Washington, D.C. White House Press Office, 1996, p. 2.

²⁰ The Iran Oil Sanctions Act of 1996: report together with additional views (to accompany H.R. 3107)", One Hundred Fourth Congress, second session, House of Representatives; 104-523, April 17, 1996, p. 10. See also President, United States. "Declaration of a National Emergency with Respect to Iran: communication from the President of the United States, transmitting his declaration of a national emergency with respect to Iran, pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1703(b) and 50 U.S.C. 1631, One Hundred Fourth Congress, first session; 104-70, May 9, 1995", pp.2, 4, 5.

²¹ Michael Mandelbaum, "lessons of the Next Nuclear War", Foreign Affairs, March/April 1995, p.32.

²² Testimony of Joseph S. Nye, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs before the subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, One Hundred Fourth Congress, first session, S.HRG 104-280, March 1995, p. 21.

Iran is quite different because no U.N. sanctions are in place to curb Iran's proliferation efforts.²³ U.S. efforts center on imposing economic pressure on Iran to deny it the wherewithal to pursue weapons of mass destruction.²⁴ U.S. concerns in this area were heightened when the U.S. oil firm CONOCO negotiated a gas development contract with Iran during the spring of 1995.²⁵ The Clinton administration, intent on its efforts to economically pressure Iran to change its "rogue" behavior, objected to this deal and effectively blocked its implementation through Executive Order No. 12957, banning U.S. companies from contracting to develop Iranian oil assets.²⁶ Up to this time, the U.S. was purchasing in excess of 20 percent of Iranian oil through foreign subsidiaries.²⁷ Additionally, U.S. exports to Iran amounted to \$326 million in 1994.²⁸ America's friends interpreted this trade as inconsistent with America's simultaneous efforts to discourage them from trading with Iran.²⁹ On May 6, 1995 President Clinton signed an Executive Order 12959 which effectively prohibited any U.S. trade with Iran, thereby imposing a total, albeit unilateral, economic embargo against the Islamic Republic. Concurrently, the U.N. succeeded in extending indefinitely the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), a measure

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Testimony of Peter Tarnoff, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs before the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, One Hundred Fourth Congress, first session, November 9, 1995, pp. 7-8, 47-48.

²⁵ "The Iran Oil Sanctions Act of 1996: report together with additional views (to accompany H.R. 3107)", One Hundred Fourth Congress, second session, House of Representatives; 104-523, April 17, 1996, p. 9.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Testimony of Robert B. Pelletreau, Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs, U.S. Department of State, before the Subcommittee on International Economic Policy and Trade of the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, One Hundred Fourth Congress, first session, May 2, 1995, p. 10.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ "The Iran Oil Sanctions Act of 1996: report together with additional views (to accompany H.R. 3107)", One Hundred Fourth Congress, second session, House of Representatives; 104-523, April 17, 1996, p. 10.

illustrating general global solidarity toward the reduction of the nuclear threat.³⁰ This multilateral success at the U.N. however, did not translate to a multilateral approach toward Iran. U.S. friends had little interest in imposing America's brand of economic sanctions, preferring instead to pursue policies of "critical dialogue" with Iran, while continuing to trade with this state which had amassed \$30 billion in foreign debt to its creditors.³¹ The U.S. Congress, dissatisfied with the Clinton administration's failure to garner the multilateral support necessary to put teeth into the economic sanctions, passed the Iran/Libya Oil Sanctions Act of 1996 which directs the administration to impose economic sanctions against those whose petroleum sector trade with Iran equals or exceeds \$40 million.³² President Clinton signed this bill into law on 5 August 1996 as a tool against Iranian terrorism, noting "it will limit the flow of resources necessary to obtain weapons of mass destruction...and shows we are fully prepared to act to restrict the funds to Iran and Libya that fuel terrorist attacks".³³ This action brought a storm of protest from American allies and friends, some of whom have passed blocking statutes to enforce noncompliance with the extraterritorial applications of this law.³⁴

³⁰ The White House, "A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement", February 1996, p. 20.

³¹ Anthony Lake, "Confronting Backlash States", p. 53. See also: Testimony of Robert H. Pelletreau before the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, June, 12, 1996, p. 38.

³² The White House Office of the Press Secretary: "The Iran and Libya Sanctions Act of 1996 Fact Sheet", August 5, 1996, Washington, D.C. White House Press Office, 1996, p. 1. ³² "The Iran Oil Sanctions Act of 1996: report together with additional views (to accompany H.R. 3107)", One Hundred Fourth Congress, second session, House of Representatives; 104-523, April 17, 1996, pp. 10, 11.

³³ Office of The White House Press Secretary, "Remarks by The President at Signing Ceremony for Iran-Libya Sanctions Act of 1996", August, 1996, p. 2.

³⁴ "On 22 Nov. 1996, the E.U. passed a blocking statute requiring non-compliance by European companies. It is up to member governments to work out a mechanism for enforcement." Rosemary Hollis, *Europe and the Middle East: Power by Stealth?* International Affairs, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, Volume 73, Number 1, Jan. 1997. p. 25.

While these recent executive and legislative actions have enabled the U.S. to stand on the moral high ground in dealing with the Islamic Republic, the relative economic success of these efforts in altering Iranian behavior and curtailing its rogue pursuits are at the very least questionable. When queried at Harvard University on 6 March 1997 about the relative success of the recent Executive Order and Sanctions Act, newly retired former Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Robert Pelletreau responded that "neither tactic has provided the desired results", adding that for the future, "maybe Iran will see some benefit in establishing a dialogue".³⁵

Military Developments

U.S. military posture toward Iran has likewise evolved with the economic and political posture. During the regime of the Shah, the U.S. sold Iran sophisticated weaponry, including F-14 fighter aircraft.³⁶ Following the Iranian revolution, as part of the Carter Doctrine, and in the wake of the failed "Desert One" operation, President Carter called for the establishment of a "Rapid Deployment Force" to respond to contingencies in the region, and in 1983 President Reagan created the United States Central Command (CENTCOM).³⁷ However, with limited access to the region, it would have taken months to deploy sufficient heavy forces to deal with a major regional problem.³⁸ This situation lingered until the mid 1980's when Iran began its attacks on oil tankers transiting Gulf waters. The U.S. commenced reflagged merchant ship escort operations in 1987.³⁹ These

³⁵ Robert Pelletreau, lecture, Harvard University, March 6, 1997.

³⁶ Vice Admiral James Ellis, lecture, Harvard University, February 6, 1997.

³⁷ United States Central Command 1996 Posture Statement, p. 2.

³⁸ U.S. Security Strategy for The Middle East, pp. 1-2. See also William Perry, "Working with Gulf Allies to Contain Iraq and Iran", Defense Issues, Volume 10, Number 61, American Forces Information Services, May 18, 1995, p.3.

³⁹ U.S. Security Strategy for the Middle East, p. 39.

naval operations resulted in a number of U.S.-Iranian engagements, including the sinking or damaging of several Iranian vessels and the accidental shootdown of an Iranian Airbus transiting the Gulf.

Upon the culmination of the Iran-Iraq war, U.S. military regional presence did not increase until Saddam Hussein's incursion into Kuwait in 1991, when President Bush built a multinational coalition to defeat Iraq, ultimately deploying a joint force of over 500,000 U.S. personnel to the region. After the war the U.S. retained a more robust presence than in prewar days.⁴⁰ With no permanent U.S. military bases in the region, the U.S. relies on a series of bilateral relationships with the regional states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to obtain access for exercises and prepositioned equipment.⁴¹ This presence, though designed to impose U.S. sanctions against Iraq and deter Iraqi aggression, also serves to deter Iranian military adventurism.⁴²

Present U.S. regional military strategy relies on a three tier approach in cooperation with the states of the GCC to: strengthen individual GCC defense capabilities, promote collective Arab defense cooperation, and facilitate the return of Western forces to fight alongside the GCC in the event of a major aggression. This third tier has four elements: Forward Presence, Rapid Response, Prepositioning and an Operational Plan. Forward Presence entails deployments of U.S. forces to the region to enforce U.N. Security Council Resolutions against Iraq and to exercise with GCC partners to promote

⁴⁰ William Perry, "Working with Gulf Allies to Contain Iraq and Iran", p. 2. See ; U.S. Central Command 1996 Posture Statement, p. 29.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid. See also Statement of Bruce O. Riedel, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, Near East and South Asia, before the House Committee on International Relations, One Hundred Fourth Congress, first session, Nov. 9, 1995. p. 62, and Testimony of Joseph S. Nye before the Subcommittee on Near East And South Asian Affairs of The committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, March 2, 1995, p. 21.

interoperability. Rapid Response capability relies on the Prepositioning of heavy military equipment in the region and on the availability of strategic lift to facilitate the return of western forces to quickly marry up with this equipment in the event of an emergency.

The Operational Plan is exercised, gamed, modified, and updated to deal with the regional threat. The implementation of the entire strategy depends upon regional access, achieved through bilateral defense relationships with the individual GCC states.

Sustainment of this posture and its required force deployments in the region is expensive, but this forward presence and American resolve to protect its vital regional interests provide the essential muscle behind the dual containment policy.⁴³

⁴³ Entire paragraph, See William Perry, "Working with Gulf Allies to Contain Iraq and Iran", p. 2-3; U.S. Central Command 1996 Posture Statement, p. 4; and U.S. Security Strategy for the Middle East, pp. 21, 29-36.

THE REALITY OF CONTEMPORARY IRAN

Before the successes or failures of the U.S. Dual Containment policy toward Iran can be explored, one must make reality judgments as to the behavior of Iran in the areas to which the U.S. objects. It is often noted that those specific Iranian actions that the U.S. finds so egregious are no worse than the human rights abuses found in China, the alleged proliferation of weapons of mass destruction via the Israeli nuclear program, or suspected Arab States' support for Palestinian organizations opposed to the Middle East peace process.⁴⁴ However valid or debatable these comparisons might be, when weighed against any modern measure of international norms, Iran's behavior warrants great concern and in some cases consternation from America and its friends.

Weapons of Mass Destruction

Nuclear weapons remain at the top of the list of the most feared and potentially destructive class of weapons of mass destruction. Since the production of fissile material is the most difficult step in the weaponization process, Iran has attempted to skip this step of the process and acquire this material through clandestine means⁴⁵ Once in possession of 100 pounds of highly enriched uranium, Iran could build the simplest gun-type nuclear weapon with a potential yield of 15-20 kilotons.⁴⁶ With approximately 20 pounds of plutonium, Iranian scientists could build a more sophisticated yet still simple implosion device with roughly the same yield.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Paul Dingledine, Western Policy Options Toward Iran, Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review, Vol. 1, No. 2, November 1994, p 106.

⁴⁵ Michael Eisenstadt, Iranian Military Power: Capabilities and Intentions. Washington, DC: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1996. p. 18.

⁴⁶ Graham Allison, Avoiding Nuclear Anarchy, p. 45.

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 45.

THE IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM

Chronology:

- 1970 Iran under Shah signs Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)
- 1974 Shah advocates Middle East Nuclear Free Zone
Shah establishes Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI)
AEOI sets ambitious plans for 23 nuclear power stations by mid 1990s
- 1976 Federal Republic of Germany agrees to build two 1300 megawatt plants at Bushehr
- 1979 Iranian revolution

During the 1970s under the Shah's regime a weapons research program began with the aim of producing fissile material.

- 1979 Small scale research continues at Tehran Research Center reactor through 1983
- 1984 Nuclear research center opens at Esfahan with Chinese, French and Pakistani assistance
- 1987 Pakistan and Iran sign nuclear technical cooperation with 39 Iranian scientists going to Pakistani facilities for training
Iran signs agreement with Argentina to acquire uranium enriched to 20% for small Tehran research reactor and also calls for training Iranian scientists at Argentinean nuclear center
- 1988 It is believed during this period that the decision is made by the Islamic Republic to pursue acquiring a nuclear weapon
- 1988 U.S. increases pressure on Germany, France, India and Argentina to spurn Iranian nuclear program
- 1990 Iran and China sign a 10 year agreement on scientific cooperation
- 1992 IAEA inspection gives Iran "a clean bill of health"
Iranian agents approach personnel at Ulba Metallurgical Plant in Kazakstan to obtain enriched uranium and express interest in nuclear grade beryllium
- 1993 Three Iranians believed to be connected with the Iranian intelligence services are caught in Turkey attempting to buy nuclear material from smugglers out of the former Soviet Union
- 1995 Iran tries to acquire gas centrifuge technology from Russia as evidenced by the signed Jan '95 nuclear cooperation protocol which was later renounced by President Yelsin

Analysis:

- Iran's efforts to develop a highly enriched uranium production capability mirror that of Iraq
- Iran is attempting to develop the capability to produce both plutonium and highly enriched uranium
- A primary goal is to acquire a heavy water moderated, natural uranium fueled nuclear reactor intended for plutonium production
- Iran is researching at least three uranium enrichment technologies
 - Gas centrifuge (given greatest attention as evidenced by covert procurement program)
 - Gaseous diffusion
 - Laser isotope separation
- China is the main supplier of nuclear technology to Iran
 - Provided electromagnetic isotope separation unit and new research reactor
- Iran is attempting to acquire an indigenous capability to produce weapons grade fissile material while continuing a covert program to purchase fissile material. What has slowed Iran is fiscal constraints, supplier reliance, limitations on indigenous capability (to include ineptness of their nuclear program leader Amrollahi) and most importantly of all, international export controls on nuclear and dual use technology

SOURCES: Michael Eisenstadt, Iranian Military Power: Capabilities and Intentions, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1996, pp. 9-33, 103-111. Geoffrey Kemp, Assessing the Iranian Threat, Fighting Proliferation: New Concerns for the Nineties, Henry Sokolski ed., Air University Press, 1996, pp. 216-219. Shahram Chubin, Iran's Strategic Aims and Constraints, Iran's Strategic Intentions and Capabilities, Patrick Clawson, ed. National Defense University, April 1994, pp. 75-82. The Islamic Republic of Iran: Hostility Abroad, Intolerance at Home, United States Government Whitepaper (unclassified) December 13, 1996, pp. 13-15.

Iran already possesses a confirmed and robust chemical weapons stockpile.⁴⁸ The development of this capability in the 1980's was a direct result of Iraqi chemical attacks. Iran needed a capability to counter Iraq when the world community turned a blind eye to Baghdad's atrocities.⁴⁹ Iran is a signatory of the Chemical Weapons Convention but has yet to ratify the treaty as of late 1996.

IRAN'S CHEMICAL WEAPONS PROGRAM

History

- Begun in 1983 in response to Iraqi chemical weapons attacks during Iran-Iraq War
- By 1987 Iranian military employ artillery to deliver mustard and cyanide munitions
- In 1989, Iran reports 10,000 war deaths (5,000 civilians) and 100,000 casualties from Iraqi chemical attacks

Scope

- Iran has the most active chemical warfare program in the developing world
- Iranian chemical stockpile is estimated to exceed 2,000 tons of:
 - Blister agent (mustard)
 - Blood agent (cyanide)
 - Choking agent (phosgene)
 - Nerve agent (sarin) *postulated*

Known Facilities

- Qazum, Parchin and Esfahan

Sources: *The Islamic Republic of Iran: Hostility Abroad, Intolerance at Home, United States Government Whitepaper (unpublished), December 13, '96, pp. 17-18.* *Proliferation: Threat and Response, Office of Secretary of Defense, April 1996, pp. 15-16.* Michael Eisenstadt, *Iranian Military Power: Capabilities and Intentions, 1996, pp. 26-27.*

Evidence of biological weapons production is less certain than with the Iranian chemical weapons program but efforts are unmistakably underway to build the infrastructure required to rapidly assemble such weapons.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ United States Government Whitepaper, The Islamic Republic of Iran: Hostility Abroad, Intolerance at Home, (Unclassified) 13 December 1996, p. 4.

⁴⁹ Eisenstadt, Iranian Military Power: Capabilities and Intentions, p. 4.

⁵⁰ Proliferation: Threat and Response, Office of the Secretary of Defense, April 1996, p.16.

Terrorism and Political or Religious Assassination

Reality judgments about Iranian foreign policy on which all civilized nations can find common ground must include Tehran's campaign of orchestrated murder outside the borders of Iran. Since 1990, terrorism directly linked to the government of Iran has left few major European NATO nations untouched.

STATE SPONSORED TERRORIST INCIDENTS IN EUROPE DIRECTLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO IRAN 1990-1996

<u>COUNTRY</u>	<u>YEAR</u>	<u>TERRORIST ACT</u>
France	1990	Iranian dissident Cyrus Elahi murdered
Switzerland	1990	Kazem Rajavi, brother of MEK leader murdered
France	1990	Former Iranian Prime Minister Shapur Bakhtiar murdered
Germany	1992	Kurdish leader Sadiq Sarafkindi and 3 colleagues murdered at Mykonos restaurant
Turkey	1993	Pro-secularist journalist Ugur Mumcu murdered
Italy	1993	Mohammed Hussein Naghdi, Senior MEK leader murdered
Turkey	1995	Jewish community leader Yuda Yarum survives car bomb attempt
Turkey	1996	Two MKO activists murdered
Belgium	1996	Iranian agents caught smuggling very large mortar and ammunition into Antwerp

SOURCES: Geoffrey Kemp, *Assessing the Iranian Threat, Fighting Proliferation: New Concerns for the Nineties*, Henry Sokolski ed., Air University Press, 1996, pp. 220-222. Michael Eisenstadt, *Iranian Military Power: Capabilities and Intentions*, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1996, pp. 65-78. *The Islamic Republic of Iran: Hostility Abroad, Intolerance at Home*, United States Government Whitepaper (unclassified) December 13, 1996, pp. 6-7.

Worldwide terrorist incidents indirectly linked to the Islamic Republic are so numerous that even President Rafsanjani himself had difficulty with plausible deniability during his much publicized March 7, 1997 interview with CBS correspondent Mike Wallace.⁵¹

Perhaps no recent terrorist incident will have stronger ramifications for long term Iranian-U.S. relations than proven Iranian involvement in the Khobar Towers bombing. If the investigation following the arrests in Canada of Fahad al-Shehri and Hani Abdel Rahim

⁵¹ Hashemi Rafsanjani interviewed by CBS News correspondent Mike Wallace in Tehran March 7, 1996 broadcast on 60 Minutes and CSPAN.

Al-Sayegh reveal Iranian involvement in the attack that killed 19 U.S. servicemen, even the status quo of restrained hostility in the bi-nation relationship will be difficult to maintain.

Proponents of more liberal policies toward Iran have argued that the fatwa against Salman Rushdie is being conducted by an Iranian foundation not under the control of the Iranian government. However the reality is that all Iranian foundations including Fifteenth of Khordad which is responsible for conducting the fatwa against Rushdie, are supervised by the Iranian Majlis under law enacted in 1994.⁵²

Middle East Peace Process Obstruction

Officially, the Iranian government claims that its strong opposition to the Middle East peace process is solely in the form of rhetoric, well within the bounds of acceptable nation-state behavior. However, the facts paint a much different picture. Iran supplies Lebanese Hizbollah with between \$65 and \$100 million in military and economic aid annually while supplying Palestinian Hamas and Islamic Jihad between \$20 and \$30 million each year.⁵³ Iranian arms and other supplies reach Hizbollah, and the Revolutionary Guards training them in their camps in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, via regular Iran Air flights flown into Damascus, Syria.⁵⁴ However, Lebanon and Syria are not the only countries from which Iran conducts its operations against Israel. In November of 1995 an Iranian diplomat was expelled from Jordan for casing tourist sites frequented by Israelis and inciting Jordanians to conduct attacks against Israeli tourists.⁵⁵

⁵² The Islamic Republic of Iran: Hostility Abroad, Intolerance at Home, United States Government White Paper, p. 7.

⁵³ Eisenstadt, Iranian Military Power: Capabilities and Intentions, p. 75.

⁵⁴ Ibid. p 73.

⁵⁵ The Islamic Republic of Iran: Hostility Abroad, Intolerance at Home, p. 11.

Iran's struggle against Israel is actively supported by the highest members of the Iranian government. Supreme Leader Khamenei, President Rafsanjani and Judiciary Chief Yazdi played prominent roles in the 1991 Tehran conference that formed the committees and foundations along with the funding structure to carry out their plan to destroy Israel.⁵⁶

Destabilizing Neighbors

The most publicized recent example of Iranian destabilization efforts with its neighbors came as the Bahraini government directly implicated Iran in an attempt to overthrow it in June 1996. According to Bahraini officials, 34 members of Hizbollah-Bahrain confessed that they were trained at centers in Qom, Iran and Iranian sponsored Hizbollah camps in Lebanon.⁵⁷ The Iranian government has established the Qods Force; a Revolutionary Guard Unit specifically tasked to provide training, logistic and paramilitary support to foreign pro-Iranian Shia groups. These foreign operatives are funded by a front organization under the leadership of Supreme spiritual Leader Khamenei known as the World Assembly of the Ahl al-Bayt.⁵⁸ Iran is also very active in opposing secular democracy within Turkey. Turkish authorities have had to expel Iranian diplomats for their support of the Islamic Movement Organization (IMO) which has been held responsible for a string of murders and car bombings of pro-secular Turkish authors.⁵⁹ Iran has also been linked to violent Islamic groups operating in the Central Asian Republics of Tajikistan, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 10.

⁵⁷ Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) - Country Report: Third Quarter 1996, p.10.

⁵⁸ The Islamic Republic of Iran: Hostility Abroad, Intolerance at Home, p. 8.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p.7.

⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 8-9.

Human Rights

Iran's record on human rights is particularly dismal in regards to religious persecution. Since 1994 there have been numerous attacks on prominent Jewish and Christian leaders inside the Islamic Republic. The Ansar-e Hizbollah (Helpers of the Party of God) is a group formed in 1995 with reported connections to radical cleric Ayatollah Ahmed Jannati. This group's avowed mission is to support the ideals of the Islamic revolution but its operations have taken the form of verbal and physical attacks on individuals expressing contrary views to those of this group.⁶¹ These vigilantes have also attacked writers and journalists while a simultaneous government crack down on press freedoms has resulted in several ordered publication shut downs, paper subsidy revocations and imprisonment of journalists.⁶²

Perhaps the worst abuses toward any single group have been the treatment of the Bahai community who have been subjected to attempts to eradicate their faith from Iran. Members of Iran's largest non-Muslim religious minority are not permitted to hold public worship, teach their faith, attend state schools, hold any governmental employment, or communicate outside the country.⁶³

⁶¹ EIU Country Report: Third Quarter 1996, p.14.

⁶² Robin Wright, "Dateline Tehran: A Revolution Implodes." *Foreign Policy*, Summer 1996, p. 171.

⁶³ The Islamic Republic of Iran: Hostility Abroad, Intolerance at Home, United States Government White Paper, p. 13.

Analysis of the Effects of U.S. Policy Towards Iran

Successes:

In his book "Iran's Military Power", researcher Michael Eisenstadt concludes that:

Sanctions, like wars, are often better judged by what they prevent than by what they accomplish. Thus to the degree that U.S. policy towards Iran has prevented Iran from becoming more of a threat than it is now, U.S. policy must therefore be judged an overall success.⁶⁴

Indeed, one of the salient characteristics of U.S. efforts to contain Iran is that the U.S. has thus far averted a major confrontation with the Islamic Republic. Whether this condition will continue indefinitely invites further speculation. Achievements in containing Iran are most quantifiable in matters of non-proliferation and military cooperation with friends in the region. In written testimony to the House International Relations Committee on November 9, 1995, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Bruce Riedel enumerated the many successes of the Dual Containment policy, including "denying Iran access to international credit and financial aid..." and noting that "due to U.S. pressure and Iran's economic weakness, Tehran has been forced to substantially reduce military purchases in the last few years. Arms imports have fallen by more than 50 percent since 1992."⁶⁵ Iran's ability to afford these imported arms has decreased to about \$1 billion per year, considerably less than what Saudi Arabia is allocating for defense spending.⁶⁶ Riedel further described U.S. achievements in the area of defense cooperation with partners in the GCC, including positive steps in forward presence, rapid response and improved

⁶⁴ Michael Eisenstadt, "Iranian military Power, Capabilities and Intentions", The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Papers, Number 42, p. xix.

⁶⁵ Testimony of Bruce O. Riedel, before the House Committee on International Relations, Nov. 9, 1995. pp. 61-62.

⁶⁶ Proliferation, Threat and Response, April, 1996, p.14. See also Eisenstadt, Iranian Military Power, p. 2. See also U.S. Central Command, 1996 Posture Statement, pp. 45, 47-48.

access for exercises and repositioning of equipment.⁶⁷ Thus far, America has received signals of cooperation from its friends in support of nonproliferation efforts and achieved slow but steady progress. State Department testimony in June of 1996 reports these developments as a mixed success:

...we have secured commitments from Russia and 30 other governments participating in the Wassenaar arrangements to prevent the acquisition of arms and sensitive dual use items for military use by countries of concern...including Iran and three other pariah states, Iraq, Libya and North Korea. We have achieved general agreement among nuclear materials producer states not to assist Iran in development of nuclear weapons. Russia and China remain important exceptions to this international consensus. We continue to discuss this issue with Moscow and Beijing at the highest levels and will not be satisfied until they stop all nuclear cooperation with Iran.⁶⁸

There is hope however, that American pressure and encouragement have opened the eyes of some of its friends to the potential downsides of dealing with Iran in the trade of nuclear related technology. The Ukraine, according to press reports, has recently recanted on its deal to sell Iran turbines used for its nuclear reactor project.⁶⁹ This decision will not likely deter Iran from pursuing its nuclear power ambitions, but it will certainly complicate Iran's planning and make the realization of those plans that much more difficult, time consuming and perhaps expensive.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Statement of Robert H. Pelletreau before the House International Relations Committee, "Developments in the Middle East", June 12, 1995, p.38. The 1996 U.S. National Security Strategy defines the Wassenaar Arrangement as follows: "Wassenaar Arrangement on export controls for conventional arms and dual-use goods and technologies-the successor to the Coordinating Committee for East-West Trade (COCOM)-to provide a regime for transparency and restraint on dangerous transfers of conventional arms and dual-use technologies". A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement, The White House, Washington, D.C. U.S. Government Printing Office, February, 1996.

⁶⁹ Michael R. Goodman, "Ukraine Decides not to Sell Key Parts for Iranian Reactor", New York Times, April 15, 1997, p. A12.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

In the area of clandestine transfers, administration officials are guardedly optimistic but remain concerned. In February 1993, Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) Woolsley testified that "some black market transactions in Western Europe have included radioactive material from the former Soviet bloc. So far, we have detected no transfers of weapons-grade material in significant quantities. We have no credible reporting that nuclear weapons have left CIS territory and we do not believe that nuclear weapons design information has been sold or transferred to foreign states."⁷¹ In more recent 1996 testimony, DCI Deutch reiterated that "we currently have no evidence that any terrorist organization has obtained contraband nuclear materials. However, we are concerned, because only a small amount of material is necessary to terrorize populated areas."⁷² His caveat to this assessment was, "...we do not know what we are not seeing."⁷³

In the economic arena, U.S. policy has met with mixed success. While imposing a unilateral embargo against Iran, the administration admits that multilateral support would have been more effective, but notes that while America presses forward without Europe, the "European states" have "...substantially reduced the pace and volume of their commercial relations with Iran."⁷⁴ President Clinton, in imposing the total economic embargo against Iran, nevertheless succeeded in avoiding damage to certain collateral objectives in the region.⁷⁵ In his May 6, 1995 Declaration of a National Emergency he

⁷¹ Testimony of Robert Woolsley, Director of Central Intelligence, before the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, One Hundred Third Congress, first session, SHRG 103-208, Feb. 24, 1993, p. 52.

⁷² Testimony of John M. Deutch, Director of Central Intelligence, before the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, One Hundred Fourth Congress, second session, S. Hrg 104-422, Part II, March 20, 1996, p.304.

⁷³ Ibid, p. 312.

⁷⁴ Statement of Pelletreau before the House International Relations Committee, June 12, 1996, p. 9.

⁷⁵ President William J. Clinton, "Declaration of a National Emergency with Respect to Iran, 104th Congress, 1st Session, House Document 104-70, May 6, 1995, p. 2.

stipulated: "... United States persons may be licensed to participate in market-based swaps of crude oil from the Caspian Sea area for Iranian crude oil in support of energy projects in Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan,"⁷⁶ In so doing, he provided exceptions to protect the interests of the several of the new Central Asian Republics, and thus addressed another priority of the United States in the region, that of promoting "successful reform in the former Soviet Union", in particular, those states which "...have strong historic and cultural affinities with the Middle East."⁷⁷

Regarding opposition to Iranian support for terrorism, the most recent developments in the European courts may provide hope for a breakthrough in America's quest to encourage its European friends to support a harder line towards Iran. On April 11, 1997 the International Herald Tribune reported that German courts had rendered guilty verdicts for the perpetrators of the Mykonos restaurant assassinations and confirmed in their ruling that "...the highest levels of the Iranian government ordered the gangland style slaying of three Kurdish dissidents and their translator in Berlin nearly five years ago."⁷⁸ "... The presiding judge ruled that the killings of four dissidents at the Mykonos restaurant were orchestrated by a secretive "Committee for Special Operations" in Tehran whose members included the countries spiritual leader, the President, the Foreign Minister and high security officials."⁷⁹ Consequently, the German government has removed its ambassador, expelled four Iranian diplomats and "...said it would not

⁷⁶ Ibid. See also U.S. Security Strategy for the Middle East, p.9.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ William Drozdiak, "E.U. Recalls Envoys as Iran Is Found Guilty of Terror, 4 Murders in Germany Laid to Tehran Regime", Washington Post Service, International Herald Tribune, April 11, 1997, p. 1.

⁷⁹ Alan Cowell, "Berlin Court Says Top Iran Leaders Ordered Killings", The New York Times, April 11, 1997, p. 1.

participate 'for the foreseeable future' in the policy of 'Critical Dialogue' with Iran."⁸⁰

German diplomatic reaction was followed almost immediately by similar moves from the European Union which has also "... decided on a mass recall of ambassadors from Tehran on Thursday and suspended its so-called critical dialogue with Iran..."⁸¹ Canada also has recalled its Ambassador as a result of the Mykonos verdict.⁸² However, even prior to the German court rulings, the Canadian Government had scaled back its dealings with Iran, signaling its frustration with Iranian behavior and sending the message that it would not acquiesce to "business as usual" with the Islamic Republic.⁸³ What effect these actions will have on the ultimate economic relationship these countries still maintain with Iran remains to be seen. These latest developments have potential, however, to close the gap between the U.S. and its friends in their approaches to this problem.

Failures:

A straight line links Iran's oil income and its ability to sponsor terrorism, build weapons of mass destruction, and acquire sophisticated armaments. Any government or private company that helps Iran expand its oil reserves must accept that it is indirectly contributing to this menace.⁸⁴

This 1995 testimony by Under Secretary of State Tarnoff reflects the gravity the administration attaches to the relationship between Iran's aims and the means it requires to achieve them. What has not been achieved by the Administration's efforts at denying

⁸⁰ Ibid, p. A10. See also Tom Buerkle, "No Break in Ties Expected Despite Policy Shift", International Herald Tribune, April 11, 1997, p. 1.

⁸¹ Buerkle, I.H.T., April 11, 1997, p. 1.

⁸² Phone interview with Paul Dingleline, Director General, Middle East and North African Affairs, Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, April 17, 1997.

⁸³ Phone interview with Paul Dingleline, Director General, Middle East and North African Bureau, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and former Canadian Ambassador to Iran, April 17, 1997.

⁸⁴ Testimony of Under Secretary of State Peter Tarnoff, before the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs, United States Senate, One Hundred Fourth Congress, first session, on S. 1228 "The Iran Foreign Sanctions Act", Oct. 11, 1995, pp. 17-18.

Iran these means to its ends is perhaps more quantifiable. As stated in the Secretary of Defense's Middle East Strategy, U.S. aims vis-à-vis Iran are to: "...deter Iranian political and military adventurism; deny Iran access to sophisticated defense technologies and weaponry, particularly weapons of mass destruction, promote consensus among our allies and partners on the need to contain Iran; and counter Iranian sponsored subversion and terrorism".⁸⁵ There are a number of striking examples of how far the U.S. has yet to go in achieving its objectives in these areas.

Despite successes in the area of weapons transfers, there is still considerable room for concern. U.S. non-proliferation efforts notwithstanding, Iran still manages to obtain some lethal equipment. North Korea has provided Iran with Scud missiles, and U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) publications speculate that "Iran will continue to rely on China as its supplier of cruise missiles".⁸⁶ China has maintained a long-standing relationship of "peaceful nuclear cooperation" with Iran.⁸⁷ DoD sources report:

China is a principle supplier of nuclear technology to Iran, and Russia may soon become another key supplier. The Iranians have purchased an electromagnetic isotope separation unit from China (this was one of the enrichment technologies pursued by Iraq). China has also sold Iran a research reactor that could be used as a training model for a plutonium producing reactor. Iran's procurement activities provide strong evidence of this.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ U.S. Security Strategy for the Middle East, p.21.

⁸⁶ Proliferation: Threat and Response, p. 16.

⁸⁷ Testimony of Bruce O. Riedel, before the House International Relations Committee, Nov. 9, 1995, p.14.

⁸⁸ Proliferation: Threat and Response, p. 14.

Recent congressional testimony also confirms that China or Chinese businesses have assisted Iranian efforts "...both in terms of the infrastructure for building chemical plants and some of the precursors for developing agents."⁸⁹

In December 1995, Senator D'Amato, in a report to the Senate from the Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs, described the necessity for increased pressure by the Administration towards Iran, citing Russia's decision to proceed with the nuclear reactor sale to Iran despite every effort of the Administration and earlier pleas that year from Clinton to Yeltsin.⁹⁰ He mentioned that "multilateral cooperation with economic sanctions on Iran is the most effective way to not only reduce, but eliminate Iran's ability to support terrorism and to acquire nuclear weapons."⁹¹ This, unfortunately, has not been the case. In January 1995, Russia announced an agreement to provide Iran with a 1000 MW reactor to be constructed at Bushehr.⁹² Although Iran subscribes to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, it is noteworthy, however, that after visiting Iran, "The IAEA has said publicly it could not vouch for sites it has not visited, nor be certain that the sites visited would not be used for nuclear weapons related activities in the future."⁹³

Moreover, recent DoD testimony points out that "the Iraqi case serves as a stark reminder

⁸⁹ Ibid. See also Testimony of Bruce O. Riedel, before the House International Relations Committee, Nov. 9, 1995, p.14.

⁹⁰ Senator Alphonse D'Amato, H.R. 3107 Amendments to S1228, "Iran Oil Sanctions Act of 1995" Sep. 8, 1995, p. 4.

⁹¹ Ibid, p.5.

⁹² Warren Christopher, answer to question for the record from testimony to The Subcommittee on the Departments of Commerce, Justice and State, The Judiciary, and related agencies of the Committee on appropriations, House of Representatives, One Hundred Fourth Congress, first session, March 2, 1995, p. 613. See also United States Government White Paper, The Islamic Republic of Iran: Hostility Abroad, Intolerance at Home, December 13, 1996, p. 14.

⁹³ Testimony of Bruce O. Riedel before the House International Relations Committee, 9 Nov. 95, p 13. See also testimony of Joseph S. Nye before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 2 Mar, 1995, p. 32, and United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. "Signatories and Parties to the Treaty on the

that NPT adherence does not guarantee that a state's nuclear program is purely peaceful in nature."⁹⁴ DCI Deutch echoed this sentiment:

Iran's continued nuclear cooperation with Russia and China...even when carried out under international safeguards, could indirectly enhance its technological capabilities for nuclear weapons efforts. We estimate that Iran is some years away from producing a nuclear weapon, but with extensive foreign assistance or receipt of a significant amount of nuclear materials, Iran could produce a weapon much quicker than if left to its own capabilities.... but non-fissile radioactive material dispersed by a conventional explosive or even released accidentally could cause damage to property and the environment, and cause societal and political disruption.⁹⁵

In the domain of multinational support for trade sanctions, results have likewise, been less than optimum. Despite the administration's labors to garner international support for its application of economic pressure on Iran, many U.S. friends and allies agree in principle with U.S. intentions, but simply cannot ignore this large and lucrative market⁹⁶. Granted, most comply with U.S. wishes not to transfer dual use technology but almost all would rather separate politics from business in other areas of trade.⁹⁷ Recently, Turkey, a NATO member, signed a \$20 billion natural gas sales agreement with Iran.⁹⁸ "Turkey insists that U.S. law addresses only investment, not trade."⁹⁹ According to several sources, "...Germany has quietly renewed its export-credit guarantees..." and opposes the

Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons", Fact Sheet, August 22, 1996. Washington, D. C. Office of Public Affairs, 1996.

⁹⁴ Testimony of Bruce O. Riedel before the House International Relations Committee, 9 Nov. 95, p 13

⁹⁵ Statement of John M. Deutch, DCI, before the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, one Hundred Fourth Congress, second session, S. Hrg 104-422, Part II, 20 Mar, 1996, pp. 307-309.

⁹⁶ Rick Atkinson, "Divergent Policies Towards Iran Strain U.S.-German Relations", The Washington Post, June 27, 1996, P. A21.

⁹⁷ Interview with Michel deSalaberry, Canadian Ambassador to Iran, February 7, 1997, Ottawa, Ontario.

⁹⁸ "Iran Takes Economic Steps in Response to U.S. Curbs", The Wall Street Journal", August, 14 1996, p. A3. See also Kelly Couturier, "Ignoring U.S., Turkey and Iran Sign Trade Accords", The Washington Post, December 22, 1996, p. A31.

extraterritoriality of U.S. legislation.¹⁰⁰ Likewise, Japan has rescheduled Tehran's payments.¹⁰¹

In true free market fashion, "Europeans and the Japanese want the Iranians to start making more money so they can pay their debts, and then buy more goods so they can accumulate further debts."¹⁰² As earlier mentioned, the EU opposes the extraterritoriality of the Iran/Libya Sanctions Act and has signaled its opposition through the passage of "blocking" legislation to direct "...non-compliance by European companies".¹⁰³ As the U.S. proclaims its forthright unilateral stand, the French firm, TOTAL SA, has moved in to backfill the broken CONOCO contract (albeit without French financing credits).¹⁰⁴

Concerning the Middle East peace process, and Iranian support for terrorist activity, the U.S. has seen no improvement in Iranian behavior. The literature is replete with sources chronicling this fact. Former Secretary of State Christopher, in a recent speech to the Washington Institute stated "Iran rejects the very notion of peace and has dedicated itself to Israel's destruction".¹⁰⁵ He alluded to the flaming rhetoric, including President Rafsanjani's reference to the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin as "divine vengeance" and Khamenei's statement that "The power of Islam will ultimately bring

⁹⁹ "Iran Takes Economic Steps in Response to U.S. Curbs", *The Wall Street Journal*, August, 14 1996, p. A 21.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.* See also Ahrari and Starkey, "Polarity and Stability in the Persian Gulf", *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, Volume 21, Number, Winter/Spring 1997, p.147.

¹⁰¹ Edward G. Shirley, "The Iran Policy Trap", *Foreign Affairs*, fall 1994, p. 79

¹⁰² *Ibid.* p. 78

¹⁰³ Rosemary Hollis, "Europe and the Middle East: Power by Stealth?", *International Affairs*, January 1997, p. 25.

¹⁰⁴ "The Iran Oil Sanctions Act of 1996: report together with additional views (to accompany H.R. 3107)", One Hundred Fourth Congress, second session, House of Representatives; 104-523, April 17, 1996, p. 10.

about the end of the rootless Zionist regime...which must be destroyed.”¹⁰⁶ These statements fan the fires of revolutionary ardor and often manifest themselves in extremist violence.¹⁰⁷ Christopher vividly illustrated some manifestations of Iranian rhetoric:

...it (Iran) frequently meets with all the major terrorist groups, including Hizbollah, Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and the PFL-PGC. It actually encourages these groups to use terror to destroy the peace process. It provides them with money--up to several million dollars a year in the case of Hamas and others; and up to \$100 million a year for Hizbollah. Iran also supplies them with arms and material support, training, and in some cases--operational guidance.¹⁰⁸

In his paper entitled “Confronting Backlash States” former National Security Advisor Anthony Lake speculated that the administration is committed to pursue dual containment for the long term, noting: “The Clinton Administration is, nevertheless, confident that we can sustain this situation for some time, in large measure because we have an understanding with our regional friends about common threats and how to deal with them.”¹⁰⁹ Considering what has yet to be accomplished, America may have no choice.

To summarize, results of U.S. policy to contain Iran have been mixed. Militarily, U.S. presence has thus far succeeded in deterring direct Iranian military adventurism against America, the Gulf states, or Gulf shipping. Economically, the pressures on Iran have forced it to modify its military expenditure outlays, but not its pursuit of nuclear capability or support for terrorist organizations.¹¹⁰ Dual containment has compounded

¹⁰⁵ Secretary of State Warren Christopher, “Fighting Terrorism: Challenge for the Peacemakers”, address to the Washington Institute for Near East Policy Annual Sorel Symposium, May 21, 1996. U.S. DOS, Office of the Spokesman, p.4.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. p.3.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Lake, “Confronting Backlash States”, p. 49.

¹¹⁰ Testimony of Bruce O. Riedel, before the House Committee on International Relations, Nov. 9, 1995. pp. 61-62. see also U.S. Security Strategy for the Middle East, pp. 16-17.

Iran's problems, but not enough to compel Iran to abandon its objectionable behavior. America's sanction policies have cost it the censure of its friends for its extraterritorial legislation -- a price that though unpleasant, is affordable for now. In failing to garner wider support for its economic initiatives, America's economic posture will not reach its full pressure potential against Iran. Consequently, this economic strategy will take longer to become effective or may fail altogether if Iran is embraced by Europe, Russia, and the Far East as a rich market for business.

Diplomatically, the U.S. has failed to earn the support for containment and alienated its friends by imposing extraterritorial legislation. Moreover, the rhetoric between the U.S. and Iran has become inflammatory and damaging to both sides. America's vocal condemnation of Iran at every turn invokes a like response. Indeed, the scorching discourse merely fuels the flames of Iranian indignation, nationalism, and religious fervor, a sentiment the mullahs have been particularly adept at turning to their advantage in solidifying a moral platform for their positions of power.¹¹¹ This, in turn, makes the Fatwa against Salman Rushdie more impossible to revoke, and has failed to soften the Iranian leadership in its abuse of human rights.¹¹² Evidently, then, there are several areas where the U.S. can do better.

¹¹¹ William A. Rugh, "Time to Modify Our Gulf Policy" Middle East Policy, Volume V, Number 1, January 1997, p. 53.

¹¹² Bernard Hourcade, lecture, National Defense University, Washington, D.C., January 14, 1997.

TOWARD A MORE COHERENT STRATEGY

Since the moment U.S. relations with Iran were officially categorized under the policy of Dual Containment in 1993, scholars and foreign policy practitioners across the ideological spectrum have argued the wisdom and utility of this policy. Debate outside the government runs the gamut from full abandonment of any antagonistic policy toward the Islamic Republic to covert support of Iranian dissident groups and the beaming of inflammatory propaganda into Iran via radio and TV. Until recently however, there has been little incentive for policy change inside the US government. To date, the Dual Containment policy has applied enough diplomatic, military and commercial pressure on Iran to maintain the status quo in the Gulf region. Additionally, in the absence of any better proposal to curb Iran's objectionable behavior, it has been argued that the U.S. should stay the course. Even though success of the Dual Containment policy toward Iran may be difficult to measure, failure of this policy would be readily apparent. Armed conflict, Iranian acquisition of a nuclear weapon or an Iranian sponsored terrorist incident in the U.S. would signify a clear policy failure because the situation would be far worse than the day Dual Containment was initiated. Although the current policy has been able to forestall catastrophe, it has done little to change Iranian behavior and even less to improve relations between the Islamic Republic and the United States. Unfortunately, Dual Containment as currently defined and implemented is simply a holding action -- a finger in a dike -- that has ever increasing pressure building on the other side. There exists no long-term strategy accompanying this holding action to relieve pressure and avert conflict. Without a long term vision, the current policy will not persuade Iran to

change its objectionable behavior and over time the simple laws of probability will make a misstep, misunderstanding or an accident all the more likely to provoke a serious military confrontation that neither nation desires.

Obviously, one cannot propose a strategy with total disregard of political realities. The Iran-Libya Sanctions Act passed in both Houses of Congress by a unanimous vote and little has changed in the collective mood of Congress toward Iran since this bill was signed into law in 1996. Any attempt by the Clinton administration to significantly reduce pressure on Iran or reverse and completely liberalize U.S. relations with the Islamic Republic will very likely clash with legislative sentiment. An entrenched animosity with its roots embedded in the Iranian-U.S. hostage crisis of 1979-1981 shows little signs of weakening and may actually increase in the months ahead as a result of the Khobar Barracks bombing investigation. If suspected Iranian ties to the bombing are confirmed, the administration will have little choice but to act, exacerbating U.S.-Iranian military tensions. Moreover, the deterioration of the Middle East peace process presents a strong likelihood that Iran will attempt to further inflame the situation and bring the Islamic Republic in greater conflict with U.S. interests. Paradoxically however, in the absence of proof of Iranian complicity in the Khobar bombing, recent political events may induce a softening in Washington's policy toward the Islamic Republic.

The departure of Warren Christopher, Anthony Lake and Robert Pelletreau from the Gulf policy formulation process may open more options for U.S. policy modification or long term strategy formulation. Concurrently, U.S. allies are taking another look at their policies toward Iran. Frustration with the lack of change in Tehran's objectionable practices moved the Canadian government in the fall of 1996 to distance itself

diplomatically from the Islamic Republic. Ottawa's decision to terminate "business as usual" included curtailing all diplomatic visits above the director general level, canceling participation in a joint economic council and refusal of an air travel relationship.¹¹³ In the wake of the verdicts rendered in Germany's Mykonos case, a suspension and reevaluation of Europe's Critical Dialog policy and its effect on curbing Iranian sponsored terrorism on European soil has brought them closer to the Canadian point of view. Although Europe's collective response to the Mykonos verdict was not as severe as most U.S. policy makers had hoped, the actions taken did bring American and European policies incrementally closer together. Concurrently, in the U.S. there has been publicized recognition of the weakening impact of unilateral sanctions on Iranian behavior. Recent articles in *Foreign Affairs* by former national security advisers Brzezinski and Scowcroft along with a host of scholars are all captioned under the title "Changing Course in the Persian Gulf" and may signal a shift in U.S. strategic thinking. If the Clinton Administration and Congress are persuaded that unilateral U.S. sanctions toward Iran coupled with strong allied resentment for the extraterritorial nature of administering those sanctions are counterproductive, the U.S. may be willing to soften its position to reach an accommodation with its allies. If some middle ground can be established between the major industrialized nations toward a collective Iranian policy, then prospects for influencing Iranian behavior improve dramatically. Finally, the surprising accession of Mohammed Khatemi to the Iranian presidency and the reelection of his presidential rival Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri to speaker of the Majlis leave open the question of which clerical

¹¹³ Paul Dingleline, interview with Director General, Middle East and North Africa Bureau - Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and the former Canadian Ambassador to Iran.

faction will guide Iranian politics. If Khatemi can reverse the recent crackdown on press and cultural freedoms within the Islamic Republic then this may signal that his landslide popular vote victory has given the pragmatist an increase in power vis-à-vis the conservatives. European Union leaders are taking a “wait and see” attitude toward the potential shift in the Iranian political landscape before resuming or modifying their Critical Dialog policy.¹¹⁴ The Clinton administration may also find the Khatemi victory as an opportune event that calls for a reexamination of current U.S. policy.

Simply stated, what America wants most in the Persian Gulf region is stability so that it may pursue with its allies a comprehensive Middle East peace, secure uninterrupted access to Persian Gulf oil at reasonable prices, and guarantee the security of key regional partners.¹¹⁵ Iran can foil these U.S. interests in the region through objectionable behavior in several key areas: pursuit of weapons of mass destruction including nuclear weapons, support of terrorism and opposition to the peace process, undermining the security of regional friends, and violation of the human rights of its citizens.¹¹⁶ The U.S. currently desires Iran to change its behavior in all these critical areas. However, this spectrum of objectionable Iranian behavior when taken in total is simply too broad and all encompassing to measure incremental steps toward overall success. This spectrum must be broken down into its component parts and worked on an issue by issue basis. Soviet military support for Ho Chi Minh’s forces did not prevent Nixon’s pursuit of détente nor did the appalling conditions in Soviet gulags prevent the Reagan administration from

¹¹⁴ Brian Crowe, interview conducted in on with the Director General for External Relations, Council of the European Union (General Secretariat), May 29, 1997 - Brussels, Belgium.

¹¹⁵ United States Security Strategy for the Middle East, Department of Defense - Office of International Security Affairs; Washington, DC: The Pentagon, May 1995, pp. 6-10.

negotiating with the "Evil Empire" to eliminate an entire class of intermediate range nuclear weapons. The United States must take a hard look at those Iranian actions that it finds most objectionable and attempt to prioritize them in terms of those most vital to national interests and those of significant but lesser importance. This prioritization is crucial to achieving progress toward influencing Iranian policy.

Of the objectionable Iranian activities, there are two overriding imperatives: that a hostile Iran not achieve a nuclear weapons capability, and that it cease its support for international terrorism. There can be little argument that weapons of mass destruction in the possession of the Iranian government jeopardize a vital national interest of the United States. The potential to employ these weapons via aircraft, ballistic missile, or long range artillery significantly threaten Iran's neighbors and can potentially disrupt the free flow of oil to world markets. Iran's existing stockpile of chemical weapons already poses a threat to the world economy and acquisition of nuclear weapons would make a bad situation considerably worse. Employed by the hands of Iranian sponsored terrorists these weapons directly threaten all of Iran's adversaries to include the United States.

Additionally, weapons of mass destruction pose a tremendous risk to U.S. and allied military forces deployed in the Gulf region to enforce U.N. sponsored sanctions toward Iraq. Proliferation of nuclear and biological weapons in Iran or the acquisition of long range ballistic missile systems capable of delivering those chemical weapons already in Iran's inventory, constitute a first tier threat to vital national interests.

Counterproliferation toward the Islamic Republic is not an easy task for the United States. Weapons of mass destruction prove themselves much cheaper defense measures

¹¹⁶ Ibid. pp. 10,16,21.

than conventional arming and may, in effect, be the poor man's ticket to defense security.¹¹⁷ Continued efforts to delay and deny this end may be the best the U.S. can hope for, but it certainly cannot afford to abandon this effort.

The obligation of any government to protect its citizens whether at home or abroad makes Iranian state sponsored terrorism another first tier threat to vital U.S. national interests. Whether that terrorism is funded and orchestrated directly by Iranian agents or conducted by proxies such as Hamas or Hizbollah at Tehran's direction, the United States must stand resolute in its intentions to battle this scourge. Coupled with the threat from weapons of mass destruction, Iranian terrorism takes on ominous dimensions. Although the U.S. can never be assured that this "poor man's offensive weapon" is totally contained, it must never be deterred or held hostage by terrorist threats and rhetoric, and it must maintain a posture which ensures that Iran knows there will be devastating retaliatory consequences for any proven terrorist act. The term terrorism should be applied to any act of Iranian sponsored political or religious assassination conducted outside Iran's borders. The fatwa against Salman Rushdie should not be treated as a separate issue of dispute or considered under the canopy of human rights. The fatwa encourages religious assassination and therefore plain and simply promotes terrorism.

America's promotion of the security of its regional friends, including its "unshakable commitment to the security of Israel" constitute long term objectives towards America's goal of regional security.¹¹⁸ Iran's efforts to disrupt the Middle East peace process are of great concern to U.S. policy makers. Likewise, human rights abuses within the Islamic

¹¹⁷ Michael Eisenstadt, Iranian Military Power: Capabilities and Intentions. Washington, DC: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1996, p. 10.

Republic and its efforts to destabilize neighboring governments are also important but ancillary priorities whereas America's nuclear and terrorist concerns have significant global implications. Attention to Iran's human rights issues should be pursued in the same manner as the U.S. addresses China's abuses and those of other repressive nations. Solutions to these issues should be pursued multilaterally with those countries for which they create the most concern. They must be addressed with patience, pressure and persistence, and never become an insurmountable impediment to dialogue with the United States. As Madeleine Albright said recently, "just because we engage with China doesn't mean we endorse everything they do."¹¹⁹

The process of categorizing and prioritizing U.S. concerns with Iran will allow policy makers to concentrate initially on first tier concerns that are most critical to vital U.S. interests. These can be followed by a more flexible approach to ancillary priorities where progress will require time and a common understanding of basic ideological differences and incongruities. By replacing or supplementing the current Dual Containment policy with a coherent and "competitive strategy" for advancing vital U.S. interests in the Gulf region the United States can provide the visionary leadership needed for allies to emulate. A competitive strategy toward Iran would take the Dual Containment policy to the next step, enabling the U.S. to garner allied support and ultimately achieve its regional goals.

¹¹⁸ *United States Security Strategy for the Middle East*, pp. 7, 8, 24.

¹¹⁹ U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, answer to press questions, CNN, March, 24, 1997.

COMPETITIVE STRATEGY

The concept of Competitive Strategy is not new. Michael Porter of the Harvard Business School coined this term for his corporate techniques developed in the late 1970s. In the 1980s Secretary of Defense Weinberger employed competitive strategies as a major pillar of his department's effort to battle the Soviet military.¹²⁰ Today, theorists such as David Andre and Henry Sokolski are promoting competitive strategies as a comprehensive long-term effort to fight worldwide weapons proliferation.¹²¹ Given that nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction is but one of the aims the U.S. pursues toward Iran, perhaps competitive strategies can be employed to encompass all U.S. grievances with the Islamic Republic. Simply stated, competitive strategies in a national security context are a time-phased action plan that provides a realistic and actionable set of steps with measurable goals to gain and maintain a long term advantage over a particular competitor.¹²² Of course many could argue that merely calling Iran a competitor gives the Islamic Republic an undue measure of respect. Although nothing close to a "peer competitor", Iran is a major power in the Gulf region with a large population and coastline, a rich and nationalistic Persian heritage, possessing ballistic missiles, submarines, chemical weapons and a government that has declared itself an enemy of the United States and Israel. To deny that Iran is a competitor of the United States in the Gulf region simply ignores geostrategic realities. Iran is an asymmetric threat. The Islamic Republic rarely challenges the U.S. or its western allies in areas

¹²⁰ David Andre, "Competitive Strategies: An Approach against Proliferation", Fighting Proliferation: New Concerns for the Nineties, p. 259.

¹²¹ Ibid., p 257.

¹²² Ibid., p. 261.

where the industrialized democracies are the strongest. Rather, Iran attempts to capitalize on inherent vulnerabilities of most liberal democracies such as the tremendous need for oil and natural gas, competition for commercial markets or the freedom of movement that terrorists enjoy in open societies. In what Sam Huntington describes as a quasi war, each side is already engaged in a conflict that attempts to capitalize on its own strengths and exploit the other's weaknesses.¹²³ Any U.S. strategy aimed at affecting Iran must recognize the asymmetric nature of the competition for power in the Gulf region and anticipate Iran's desire to exploit the weaknesses of the industrialized democracies.

When formulating the multinational component of a competitive strategy toward Iran, U.S. policy makers must also recognize that their agenda of priorities, when played to different national audiences, strike different chords of interest for each nation. Human rights abuses, particularly against those of the Bahai faith may have more impact on Canadian public opinion than they do in the U.S.¹²⁴ Another assassination attempt on Salman Rushdie will effect London far more than Washington. The murder of another MEK leader in Paris will get more attention from the German government than the same act committed significantly further away in Istanbul. Iranian debt rescheduling may be far more important to Tokyo and Bonn than Wall Street. Consequently, U.S. competitive strategy toward Iran must possess an appreciation for those hot buttons of Iranian behavior which ignite varying degrees of concern and interest in each of America's friends. Intelligence sharing, declassification of intelligence information and press stimulation of public opinion are all tools available to ferment allied action and achieve a

¹²³ Samuel Huntington, The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order, pp. 216-217.

collective response to Iranian actions. Because America's friends each view their relationship with Iran through a different lens, U.S. policy must recognize these often disparate visions and demonstrate the capacity for rapid and flexible reprioritization of the steps that comprise a competitive strategy to enable maximum collective response to Iranian behavior.

There are numerous options available for the U.S. to incorporate into a competitive strategy. Policy suggestions from political, academic and commercial contributors run the gamut from "Dual Containment Plus" to "Critical Dialogue" to "Constructive Engagement" to "Passive Engagement" to "Benign Neglect" to "Constructive Disengagement." Most of these suggestions propose at least one useful option. However, all these options fail to completely reflect the full range of interdependent and interconnected steps required to satisfactorily achieve success on the critical tier one issues of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism. A competitive strategy toward Iran should incorporate incremental steps that pass a litmus test containing the following questions:

- Do they promote America's regional interests?
- Are they achievable?
- How can they be implemented?
- How much will they cost and are Americans willing to pay this cost?
- How long will they take?
- How can they be measured to determine success?

¹²⁴ Peter Bakewell, interview with Desk Officer Middle East Bureau - Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Government of Canada; February 7, 1997 - Ottawa, Ontario.

The authors believe that the six step strategy advanced in the following pages contain achievable, measurable and affordable suggestions that should be adopted at the earliest date to enhance U.S. interests in the Gulf region.

Incremental Steps of a Competitive Strategy toward Iran

Step 1: No Nukes

America can ill afford to consider its policy towards Iran without addressing its approach to those states who are suppliers to Iran of technologies which will somehow enhance Iranian progress in developing or obtaining weapons of mass destruction or advanced delivery systems. Graham Allison, a Harvard Professor and former Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy, has postulated that the number one threat to the security of the U.S. is the leakage of "loose nuclear" material into the hands of a rogue state or terrorists willing to use it against the U.S. or its allies. He proposes a plan to remove this threatening material from circulation and with it, the temptation for theft, smuggling, barter or other transfer from Russia to anyone seeking to procure this material for illicit purposes. He makes a strong argument that the acquisition of fissile material by Iran is indeed of a more immediately threatening nature than any potential advances in nuclear expertise to be achieved by Iran from its peaceful pursuit of nuclear energy. Ultimately, Allison argues that the U.S. must speed up the buy of excess Russian fissile material, and assist Russia in providing adequate security for its nuclear material so that it doesn't fall into the wrong hands. Essentially, he recommends a dramatic expansion of the Soviet Nuclear Threat Reduction Act of 1991 commonly called the Nunn-Lugar legislation. Allison's plan calls for spending at a significantly higher level in a much shorter time, before a potential mishap or unintended consequence occurs. He estimates the costs of his plan to be on the order of \$4 billion per year for 5 years to be matched by equal contributions from Japan and Europe. Although expensive, it would be money well spent when considering the nuclear deterrent value of this option. The

purchase of Russian nuclear material is by far the most critically important endeavor to deny rouge states or terrorist organizations relatively quick and easy access to this material.¹²⁵

The authors agree with this approach, in concert with a number of ancillary measures to discourage destabilizing nuclear technological cooperation with Iran. First, view this issue in the context of America's relationship with all those states that trade in technology with Iran, considering pressure as diplomatic tool rather than a painful economic club. The punitive measures of the Iran/Libya Sanctions Act are clearly seen by America's allies as extraterritorial and have served to alienate rather than entice America's friends toward a common Iranian policy. Unilateral U.S. efforts are in vain if some state finds it more in its own economic interest to "follow the money" to Iran than to see the issue in a larger than economic context. Unfortunately, some countries cannot afford or are unwilling to see beyond the economics. Therefore, economic incentives to these states are appropriate. Continuous diplomatic pressure can be complimented with the addition of quid pro quo's as rewards for cooperation. Carrots could be tied to refusal to cooperate with Iran's pursuit of a nuclear capability. Ukraine's recent reported reversal on its deal to supply turbines for Iran's nuclear program, while not a final solution, will likely slow

¹²⁵ Graham T. Allison, entire paragraph. Graham Allison, lecture to the Harvard University Institute of Politics, 12 March 1997. Testimony of Graham Allison to the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, March 13, 1996. See also: Graham T. Allison, Owen R. Cote, et.al, Avoiding Nuclear Anarchy, Cambridge Ma., Harvard University, 1996, pp. 4,5,7, 8, 10, 15, 16, 17, 97, 103, 104, 106. Explanatory excerpt: "In its first year, the Nunn-Lugar program allowed the U.S. government to spend up to \$400 million from the defense budget on initiatives designed to offer technical assistance to the Soviet Union (soon to be the Soviet successor states) directed towards the safe and secure transportation and dismantlement of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems, and toward the implementation of other important arms control and other important arms control and non-proliferation objectives."(Avoiding Nuclear Anarchy, p. 4.)

things down, and demonstrates that the influence of American efforts can be effective.¹²⁶

America's next step should be to reach out to Ukraine to recognize its initiative.

Likewise, the U.S. could also offer to work with China on improving its export controls, thereby giving that country better cognizance of what is entering and leaving, in return for agreements to forgo trade with Iran in certain technologies.¹²⁷ If punitive action must be taken to discourage Chinese companies from selling certain nuclear, chemical or missile technologies to Iran than U.S. action should be taken in concert with the EU and Japan directly at those companies.

Next, the U.S. should press for more stringent and intrusive IAEA inspection criteria, to include the approval and practice of no-notice spot inspections at the discretion of this association to discourage or uncover frequent reactor shutdowns, "...a key indicator of potential intent to use a PWR (sic) pressurized water reactor to produce plutonium for a weapons program".¹²⁸

Step 2: Collective Action on Terrorism and Political/Religious Assassination

U.S. unilateral sanctions are ineffective in changing Iranian behavior. Conversely, multilateral cooperation in the Missile Technology Control Regime and limitations on the export of dual use technologies to the Islamic Republic have been effective in slowing Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile development programs. Working with America's friends on reaching some consensus on trade with Iran is the only way the U.S. can

¹²⁶ Michael R. Gordon, "Ukraine Decides Not to Supply Key Parts for Iranian Reactor", New York Times, April 15, 1997, p. A12.

¹²⁷ John Calabrese, interview with Author and Researcher, Middle East Institute, January 13, 1997- Washington, DC.

¹²⁸ See Frank Barnaby in: Eisenstadt, Iranian Military Power, pp.20-21. See also testimony of R. James Woolsey, Director of Central Intelligence before the Committee on Governmental Affairs, United States Senate, One Hundred Third Congress, first session, February 24, 1993, pp. 17-18.

logically hope to exert enough pressure on the Islamic Republic to coerce change. The U.S. has been unable to convince its allies to severely restrict any non-military related commerce with Iran even in the wake of the Mykonos verdict and the recall of European Union ambassadors from Tehran. It is obvious that the U.S. must dramatically revise the severity of any proposed commercial sanctions to arrive at any allied consensus.

However, if the U.S. can move quickly, conditions in Europe may be more favorable for collective action toward Iran than it has been in the last several years.

The stars now appear to be aligning at the European Union for a window of opportunity where the U.S. case on Iran may be heard by receptive ears. The summer 1997 Amsterdam Inter-Governmental Conference of the EU is expected to make consensus formulation in the European Council easier to achieve by moving away from unanimity toward weighted qualified majority.¹²⁹ At the beginning of 1998, Great Britain, America's staunchest ally, assumes the six-month presidency of the European Council. Europe's Critical Dialog is expected to remain in suspension for the foreseeable future due to ministerial disputes over its effectiveness and Iran's refusal to accept several European ambassadors back to Tehran.¹³⁰ This exploitable situation in Europe comes at a time of governmental change in Iran as President Khatemi assumes office. A clear message sent by a cooperative European, American and Japanese policy toward Iranian sponsored terrorism and political/religious assassinations might get the attention of the Iranian leadership. To arrive at an allied consensus, U.S. diplomats would need to

¹²⁹ Hans-Gert Pottering, interview with Member of the European Parliament and Chairman of the Intergovernmental Conference Committee of the European Parliament; 29 May 97 - Brussels, Belgium.

¹³⁰ David Williamson, interview with Secretary General of the European Commission; 27 May 1997 - Brussels, Belgium.

conduct an intense and persistent lobbying campaign in the European Council, Commission and Parliament supplemented with an equally aggressive campaign in Tokyo and European capitals. The U.S. should propose to augment current restrictions on military related commerce and nuclear technologies with a new agreement that solely targets future investment in Iran's oil and gas infrastructure. All U.S. opposition to any other trade with Iran should be curtailed. Energy commerce is the key lever the West can exert on Iran. Without investment in Iran's deteriorating oil infrastructure, the Islamic Republic will be hard pressed to boost production to increase revenue.¹³¹ As long as Saudi Arabia continues to keep the price of oil from rising substantially, Iran can not hope to boost revenue to placate a growing and dissatisfied population without oil infrastructure investment.

As a bargaining chip to entice European and Japanese agreement, the U.S. could offer up the extraterritorial provisions of the Iran/Libya Sanctions Act that attempts to force limitations on foreign investment toward energy resources, a provision to which America's allies so vehemently object. Additionally, the U.S. can encourage energy investment offsets by joining Europe in focusing attention on developing the oil resources of the former Soviet Union's Central Asian Republics. The European Commission is currently working with these Republics on the routing of pipelines for Central Asian oil. Route options include Russia, Turkey and Iran. With the Republics' understandable aversion to Russian pipeline routings, the EU's preferred option is through Turkey.¹³² The

¹³¹ Andrew Hess, interview with Professor of Diplomacy - The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, November 8, 1996 - Medford, Massachusetts.

¹³² Helmut Steinel, interview with Advisor, Directorate General for External Relations with Former Soviet Union Countries - European Commission; 28 May 1997 - Brussels, Belgium

U.S. should join the EU in encouraging the Central Asian Republics to opt for the Turkish pipeline option to gain another lever over Iranian influence and potential oil revenue.

Collective U.S., EU and Japanese restriction on oil investment would still allow the Islamic Republic to service existing European and Japanese loans and would have no impact on current trade in consumer goods. Integral to a collective agreement should be specific and achievable conditions that Iran could meet to permit the lifting of the energy investment moratorium. These could include: a lifting of the Rushdie fatwa; termination of all arms shipments to Hizbollah and Hamas; acceptance of intrusive and stringent UN sponsored nuclear, chemical and biological program inspections and a clear uninterrupted three year period free of Iranian or proxy sponsored terrorism or assassination. Additionally, the allied collective agreement should include punitive sanctions against any Russian or Chinese corporation or business supplying the Islamic Republic with any nuclear, biological, chemical, long range ballistic missile or dual use technologies currently restricted under Western agreement.

Step 3: No Resurgent Iraq

The U.S. should exercise influence in the Security Council to maintain the UN embargo and sanctions on the Iraqi regime until Iraq complies with all UN Security Council Resolutions pertaining to it.¹³³ A recent briefing from the Commander Central Command assesses that Iran still considers Iraq to be its primary local security threat.¹³⁴

¹³³ Henry Sokolski, interview with Director, The Nonproliferation Policy Education Center, January 8, 1997 - Washington DC.

¹³⁴ General J. H. Binford Peay, Commander, U. S. Central Command, briefing: "U. S. Forces to Shape the Central Region for Engagement and Enlargement", Conference on "Strategy, Force Structure, and Defense Planning for the 21st Century", Cambridge, Ma., November 13, 1997.

UN maintenance of stringent sanctions on Iraq is essential to prevent a threat to U.S. regional friends and to Iran and enables all the regional states to maintain credible defense capabilities with less formidable and therefore less regionally destabilizing forces than they would need to oppose a resurgent Iraq. Any return to the concept of an Iraqi/Iranian balance of power policy even if Saddam Hussein is removed from power will only fuel Iran's quest for weapons of mass destruction and improved ballistic missile capability.

Step 4: Delivery System Denial

There is a finite period of time that the U.S. must be successful in delaying Iranian acquisition of long-range ballistic missiles systems. Until the U.S. fields a viable theater missile defense system capable of protecting America's friends in the Gulf, Turkey and Israel, the Iranians must be denied the capability to launch their chemical warheads toward their neighbors. Strict provisions in the Allison initiative outlined in step one should make fissile material purchases contingent on a complete Russian moratorium on the sale of components and the technical assistance to Iran's ballistic missile and nuclear development programs. Additionally, as outlined in step two, the EU, U.S. and Japan should sanction any Chinese or Russian commercial entity dealing in ballistic missile technology transfers to Iran. The U.S. should provide China with technical assistance in building internal export control mechanisms to insure the Chinese government is aware and in control of defense technology leaving the country.¹³⁵

¹³⁵ Michael Yaffe, interview with Foreign Affairs Officer, Nonproliferation and Regional Arms Control Bureau, U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency; January 8, 1997 - Washington, DC.

Finally, the U.S. should vigorously pursue Chinese voluntary participation in the Missile Technology Control Regime, which has shown its potential for self-regulation through the commitment in numbers of its members.

Step 5: Incremental Dialog

It seems incredible that in the last few remaining years of the twentieth century that the world's only superpower has no diplomatic relations or even official dialog with a major regional power having a population of 65 million people. In both Iran and the U.S. even the slightest suggestion of opening a bilateral dialog meets with severe consternation from conservative elements in both governments. Although the Khatemi presidential victory may provide an opportunity for an opening in dialog, both sides will remain extremely cautious. U.S. politicians and policy makers have learned the hard way. Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George Bush, William Casey, Casper Weinberger, Bud McFarland, John Poindexter, Oliver North and most recently Anthony Lake have all been burned by the "Iran factor." If recent history isn't enough of a teacher, the Clinton Administration can expect that any attempt to improve relations with Iran will be met with a chorus of opposition in Congress. On the Iranian side of the equation there appears no willingness to take the kind of dramatic and politically dangerous steps required to break the current cycle of escalating hostility with the U.S.¹³⁶ Unfortunately, time is working against both countries and conditions now warrant some form of dialog to avert the next crisis in U.S. - Iranian relations and correct the drift toward armed confrontation. Recent incidents at sea in January and February of 1997 related to Iranian

¹³⁶ Gary Sick. *The Stalemate in U.S.-Iran Relations*. Fighting Proliferation: New Concerns for the Nineties

involvement in the smuggling of Iraqi oil through Iranian territorial waters, highlight the military volatility of Gulf policies.

The ramming of a U.S. frigate by an Iranian tug and a provocation by an anti-ship missile equipped Iranian patrol boat toward two U.S. destroyers interdicting oil smugglers violating UN sanctions toward Iraq, could easily have erupted into a shooting match if cooler heads had not prevailed.¹³⁷ If some simple low level dialog were successful in establishing military to military command communications between U.S. and Iranian headquarters, intentions could be transmitted and misunderstandings avoided.¹³⁸

Perhaps the most logical place for any official dialog to begin between the Islamic Republic and the United States is at the military to military level. Although many would try, it should be hard to argue against the wisdom and logic of dialog that attempts to establish a mechanism to avoid unintentional military confrontation. This small incremental step could be carried out by senior military officials from both governments that are generally more insulated from wrath of domestic rhetoric than their colleagues in the diplomatic corps. According to scholar Patrick Clawson, the overall objective of such dialog is to prevent going to war accidentally. Specific issues to discuss include incidents at sea, notification of exercises and airspace incursions. Goals would be to establish communications links between Iranian naval districts and U.S. Navy Central Command regional headquarters (NAVCENT) in Bahrain along with links between Iranian air defense centers and the U.S. Joint Task Force, South West Asia (JTF SWA) in Riyadh.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ The Associated Press. *U.S. Says Gulf Oil Smuggled*. 10 Feb 97.

¹³⁸ Patrick Clawson, interview with Professor - Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University; January 10, 1997 - Washington, DC.

¹³⁹ Patrick Clawson interview, January 10, 1997.

From this small beginning U.S. diplomats might be able to build a forum that other contentious issues could be discussed with representatives of the Islamic Republic. Obviously the least difficult issues of dispute should be tackled first and separated from disputes with greater complexity. If success could be gained on some basic political issues then formal diplomatic relations might follow. Engaging the Islamic Republic directly rather than relying on third country intermediaries improves the probability that negotiations will bare fruit.

Step 6: Encouragement of Pragmatists and Iranian Youth

Few U.S. foreign policy experts see any benefit in an implosion of the current Iranian government or another revolution to depose the ruling clerics. Instability in the volatile Gulf region is exactly what the U.S. is trying to avoid. Officially the U.S. government has stated it does not desire a change in the Iranian regime but only a change in the behavior of that regime. Unfortunately, if the Rafsanjani presidency proved anything, it was that even a popular "moderate" by Iranian standards could not overcome the power of conservative clerics in the government. Of course the term moderate is used loosely in the case of Rafsanjani, particularly in light of the Mykonos verdict that directly implicated the Iranian President in the murder of four Iranian dissidents in Berlin.¹⁴⁰ But in comparison to the conservative clerics who dominated the political agenda during his second term, the pragmatic Rafsanjani is indeed more moderate. Supreme Spiritual Leader Khamenei has expanded his hard-line power base over the last few years and Majlis speaker Nateq-Nouri has proven himself a shrewd and ambitious conservative

¹⁴⁰ William Drozdiak, "EU Recalls Envoys as Iran Is Found Guilty of Terror" International Herald Tribune, April 11, 1997.

politician whose xenophobic rhetoric was used to posture himself for the presidential election he lost to Mohammed Khatemi.¹⁴¹ The United States will never deal effectively with an Iranian theocratic political system dominated by conservative clerics. Their need to maintain a front-line against Israel, demonize the United States, export their failing revolution and assassinate their dissidents abroad just to retain their hold on power will never be reconciled with U.S. interests. But internal dissatisfaction with the rule of these conservative clerics is an exploitable weakness of the Iranian government. To the surprise of many foreign observers, the conservative clerics were unable or unwilling to steal the presidency away from Khatemi by rigging the election results. Khatemi's overwhelming support, particularly from younger Iranians who were voicing their dissatisfaction with life in current day Iran, is a force that must worry the conservative clerics. Iran's younger generation, comprising over half the country's population, has no memory of the days of the Shah. The propaganda they have heard about the "great satir" has been told to them by a government they view as thoroughly corrupt. Many of their real impressions of America come from the entertainment media and much sought after consumer goods that arrive in Iran through third countries. For many Iranian young men and women western style dress rapidly appears as soon as the doors close at many private gatherings that often center around a western television show captured by a hidden satellite dish in the attic.¹⁴² As this younger generation matures and the conservative clerics who played a role in the 1979 revolution grow old and fade from the political scene, the world may witness a gradual return of the mullahs to the mosques. Although

¹⁴¹ Robin Wright, "Dateline Tehran: A Revolution Implodes," Foreign Policy. Summer 1996, p. 170.

¹⁴² Michel de Salaberry, interview with Canadian Ambassador to Iran; February 7, 1997 - Ottawa, Ontario

the political power brokers that replace the conservative clerics will likely be Islamic nationalists that do not advocate a secular state system, they will be understanding and more tolerant of the West. Therefore the U.S. should direct its long-term vision today toward cultivating a positive relationship with Iran's youth that will likely bear fruit in another decade.

Current Clinton administration emphasis on differentiating between America's dissatisfaction with the Iranian regime and the lack of any quarrel with the Iranian people should be repeated at every opportunity. Permitting and even encouraging U.S. trade in consumer goods further extends U.S. influence with the population. Any success President Khatemi might have on relaxing cultural or press freedom in Iran should be heralded with dramatic fanfare by the Clinton administration. Inflammatory rhetoric and labels by U.S. officials such as "outlaw or rogue state" should be suspended at least until such time that the Khatemi presidential victory is proven to have no moderating influence in either domestic politics or foreign affairs. University and cultural exchanges should be dramatically expanded and U.S. humanitarian aid for earthquake relief should be immediately and publicly offered every time this geologically unstable region experiences a sizable tremor. Recognizing Iran's geostrategic importance in the Gulf region and eventually incorporating Iran into security discussions with all the Gulf states could play well to Persian nationalist sentiments. In total this process will be a long one requiring patience and persistence on the part of the U.S., but embracing Iran's youth today could fertilize their growing drive for positive change in the Islamic Republic.

Conclusion

This paper has argued for improvements in the U.S. policy towards Iran. The authors reviewed the history of the Dual Containment policy, assessed its highlights and its shortcomings, and estimated the consequences of its potential failure should the administration not achieve the goals it has set forth for the region. They proposed a comprehensive list of those measures, which in combination can best be executed to achieve U.S. regional objectives and avoid failure in the critical areas of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism. The key to success of these initiatives, however, is timing. The Iranian Presidency has just changed hands. Although no one can predict what changes the voice of the Iranian people have set in motion by placing Mr. Khatemi in office, one cannot argue that the people have sent a signal to the current regime. This surprise ballot may also signal to the U.S. a "window of opportunity" to act and undertake the initiatives proposed in this paper. For although the policy of Dual Containment has thus far averted a disaster in the region, it is only a matter of time before America wakes to an "unintended consequence" unless it gives the situation the priority it merits. Most other regional problems will pale in comparison to the prospect of a hostile Iran armed with a nuclear weapon.

Success in this regard will not come easy. The Congress, through its legislation and the President, through his Executive Orders have signaled their resolve that this unintended consequence not come to pass. However, it is not enough to take these hard measures without also working smarter to direct action where it does the most good. The strategy set forth in this paper fills those gaps in the present policy with an eye towards

selective pressure on the most time critical problems: the removal of "loose" nuclear material from circulation, the denial of a delivery capability for weapons of mass destruction, and the maintenance of an effective and resolute posture against terrorism.

There will always be differences between the United States and Iran. The U.S. had its differences with the Soviet Union for more than a generation. That fact however, did not stop America from pursuing to success its global objectives. Nor should the current gap between U.S. and Iranian interests stop America from achieving its regional goals of peace and stability. The time to act toward that goal is now.

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