

PRE-EMPTION AND PRECEDENT: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF IRAQ (1981)
AND SYRIA (2007) FOR AN ISRAELI RESPONSE TO
AN IRANIAN NUCLEAR THREAT

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the US Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE
Strategy

by

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Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
2011-01

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				<i>Form Approved</i> OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.					
1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 10-06-2011		2. REPORT TYPE Master's Thesis		3. DATES COVERED (From - To) AUG 2010 – JUN 2011	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Pre-Emption and Precedent: The Significance of Iraq (1981) and Syria (2007) for an Israeli Response to an Iranian Nuclear Threat				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Brower, Timothy M., MAJ, ARNG				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
				8. PERFORMING ORG REPORT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) US Army Command and General Staff College ATTN: ATZL-SWD-GD Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for Public Release; Distribution is Unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT In 1981, Israel conducted a pre-emptive strike on Iraq's Osirak nuclear reactor. Then Israel bombed a Syrian nuclear reactor at al-Kibar in 2007. Today, Israel is facing a new challenge as it considers Iran's nuclear program. This thesis is a comparative case study analyzing how Israel utilized its instruments of national power to deal with the threats in Iraq and Syria and how the international community responded after Israel destroyed their nuclear reactors. After determining the similarities and differences between cases, this thesis draws implications for Israel's ongoing efforts to deal with Iran's nuclear program. This study is significant because it is the first comparative case study to analyze Israel's experiences dealing with Iraq and Syria's nuclear programs. The findings of this study offer insight to US strategic planners as they consider strategies and timelines for dealing with Tehran's nuclear program, recognizing that Israel is willing to act unilaterally as historical events attest. The findings will assist US decision makers as they formulate policy concerning Iran, Israel, and the uncertain road ahead.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Israel, Iraq, Syria, Iran, Nuclear, Case Study					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT (U)	b. ABSTRACT (U)	c. THIS PAGE (U)			19b. PHONE NUMBER (include area code)
			(U)	110	

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39.18

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the US Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

PRE-EMPTION AND PRECEDENT: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF IRAQ (1981) AND SYRIA (2007) FOR AN ISRAELI RESPONSE TO AN IRANIAN NUCLEAR THREAT, by Timothy M. Brower, 110 pages.

In 1981, Israel conducted a pre-emptive strike on Iraq's Osirak nuclear reactor. Then Israel bombed a Syrian nuclear reactor at al-Kibar in 2007. Today, Israel is facing a new challenge as it considers Iran's nuclear program. This thesis is a comparative case study analyzing how Israel utilized its instruments of national power to deal with the threats in Iraq and Syria and how the international community responded after Israel destroyed their nuclear reactors. After determining the similarities and differences between cases, this thesis draws implications for Israel's ongoing efforts to deal with Iran's nuclear program.

This study is significant because it is the first comparative case study to analyze Israel's experiences dealing with Iraq and Syria's nuclear programs. The findings of this study offer insight to US strategic planners as they consider strategies and timelines for dealing with Tehran's nuclear program, recognizing that Israel is willing to act unilaterally as historical events attest. The findings will assist US decision makers as they formulate policy concerning Iran, Israel, and the uncertain road ahead.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work was made possible with the encouragement and insight from my thesis committee. Mr. Stevenson developed a feasible schedule which set out milestones along the way. By following his plan, I never felt the burden of “crunch time.” Mr. Shadid offered valuable assistance in the use of case studies, my selected research design. He encouraged me to provide more in-depth analysis when I might have settled for less. Another integral team member was Dr. Menning whose priceless experience helped tremendously throughout the process. He chose to remain a committee member even after he retired from the Command and General Staff School. Thanks to each of you for your wisdom and guidance!

Most importantly, I want to thank my family for your patience and support. We sacrificed many weekends to make this become a reality. I am so thankful for each of you and count you among God’s greatest blessings.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE THESIS APPROVAL PAGE	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
ACRONYMS.....	ix
TABLES	x
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
Background.....	1
Research Questions.....	2
Assumptions.....	3
Definitions	4
Scope of Study	6
Limitations	6
Delimitations.....	6
Structure and Significance of Study	7
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	9
Iraq	9
Syria	14
Iran	16
Theory.....	19
Summary.....	20
CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH DESIGN.....	21
CHAPTER 4 ANALYSIS	27
Israel's Use of its Instruments of National Power to Deal with Iraq's Nuclear Program	28
Diplomatic.....	28
Information	32
Military (Covert Action and Air Strike)	34
Economic	39

International Responses to Israel's 1981 Attack on Iraq's Osirak Nuclear Reactor	40
Iraq	40
Arab Nations	42
United Nations	43
France.....	45
Britain	46
United States	47
Others	48
Israel's Use of its Instruments of National Power to Deal with Syria's	
Nuclear Program	48
Diplomatic.....	48
Information	50
Military (Covert Action and Air Strike)	51
Economic	56
International Responses to Israel's 2007 Attack on Syria's Nuclear Reactor	56
Syria	56
North Korea	58
Turkey	59
United Nations	59
Arab Nations	61
United States	62
Cross-Case Synthesis (Iraq and Syria).....	64
Findings: Israel's Use of Its Instruments of National Power	64
Timeframe.....	65
Diplomatic.....	67
Information and Economic	67
Israeli Perception of an Existential Threat.....	68
Willingness to Act Unilaterally	68
Israel's Perception of the IAEA	69
Extensive Use of Covert Action	69
Air Strikes	70
Findings: International Responses to Israeli Attacks.....	71
Lack of Military Response by Targeted Nation.....	73
Insignificant Economic Responses	73
Arab Response	73
US-Israeli Relations	74
UN Response	75
Targeting of Israel's Nuclear Program	75
Implications of Case Findings for Israel's Dealings with Iran's Nuclear Program	76
Current Israeli Use of Its Instruments of National Power to Deal with	
Iran's Nuclear Program	76
Israeli Perception of an Existential Threat.....	76
Diplomatic and Economic.....	77
Willingness to Act Unilaterally	80
Extensive Use of Covert Action	81

Timeframe.....	84
Israel's Perception of the IAEA.....	84
Air Strike.....	85
Likely International Responses to an Israeli Attack on Iran's Nuclear Facilities.....	85
Lack of Military Response by Targeted Nation.....	85
Insignificant Economic Response.....	88
Arab Response	89
US-Israeli Relations	90
UN Response and Targeting of Israel's Nuclear Program.....	90
CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION.....	91
Major Discoveries of Case Study	91
Significance of Studies Findings	92
Suggestions for Further Research	94
BIBLIOGRAPHY	96
INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST	100

ACRONYMS

CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
DIME	Diplomatic, Information, Military, Economic
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea)
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IAF	Israeli Air Force
IDF	Israeli Defense Forces
NPT	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
SNIA	Società Nazionale Industria Applicazione
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
US	United States

TABLES

	Page
Table 1. Sample Headlines on Whether or not Israel will Attack Iran's Nuclear Facilities	2
Table 2. Israel's Use of its Instruments of National Power	23
Table 3. International Responses to Israeli Attacks	24
Table 4. Israel's Diplomatic Efforts to Deal with Iraq's Nuclear Program	29
Table 5. Israel's Use of Its Instruments of National Power	65
Table 6. International Responses to Israeli Attacks	71
Table 7. UN Security Council Resolutions against Iran	79

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

You don't want a messianic apocalyptic cult controlling atomic bombs. . . When the wide-eyed believer gets hold of the reins of power and the weapons of mass death, then the world should start worrying, and that's what is happening in Iran.

— Benjamin Netanyahu,
The Point of No Return

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu believes that a nuclear equipped Iran poses an existential threat to the state of Israel. He believes that Iran is rapidly approaching the nuclear threshold and that the world, led by the United States (US), must deal with Iran. Moreover, he does not believe that United Nations' (UN) sanctions will deter Iran from its nuclear ambitions, and he will not wait forever for sanctions to take effect.¹

Prime Minister Netanyahu is not alone in his interest concerning Tehran's emerging nuclear capability. One of the most frequently discussed topics throughout the international community is Iran's nuclear program and whether or not Israel will attempt to destroy its nuclear facilities. Table 1 provides a brief sampling of the differing viewpoints which are seen daily in media headlines.

¹Jeffrey Goldberg, "The Point of No Return," *The Atlantic* (September 2010), <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2010/09/the-point-of-no-return/8186/> (accessed 24 September 2010).

Table 1. Sample Headlines on Whether or not Israel will Attack Iran's Nuclear Facilities

Title	Source, Date
–Would and could Israel attack Iran's nuclear sites?"	<i>BBC Newsnight</i> , 15 October 2010
–Ahmadinejad: Israel Incapable of Attacking Iran"	<i>Fars News Agency</i> , 23 October 2010
–More Than 5 Reasons Why Israel Won't Strike Iran Anytime Soon"	<i>FOXNews.com</i> , 19 August 2010
–Ex-UN envoy John Bolton: Israel should attack Iranian nuclear plant now, before it's too late"	<i>NYDailyNews.com</i> , 17 August 2010
–Medvedev says Israel does not intend to attack Iran"	<i>China View</i> , 20 September 2009
–More and More Jewish Voices Opposing Israel-Promoted Pre-Emptive Attack on Iran"	<i>Washington Report on Middle East Affairs</i> , August 2009
–3 Reasons Israel will attack Iran"	<i>Christian Science Monitor</i> , 13 August 2010
–Is Israel really likely to attack Iran next summer?"	<i>Politique Étrangère</i> , 2010

Source: Created by author.

Indeed, Israel already possesses a track record of preemptive attacks on its Middle Eastern neighbors to delay their nuclear programs. On 7 June 1981, the Israeli Air Force (IAF) attacked and destroyed Iraq's Osirak nuclear reactor at al-Tuwaita. Then on 6 September 2007, the IAF attacked and destroyed a Syrian nuclear plant on the banks of the Euphrates River. But how might these attacks influence Israeli policy makers and military planners as they consider what to do in the present crisis?

Research Questions

This thesis will answer the primary research question: how might Israel's experience dealing with Iraq's nuclear program (1975 to 1981) and its experience dealing

with Syria's nuclear program (2007) guide Israeli politicians and military planners as they consider how to respond to Iran's nuclear program?

To answer this question, the study will also answer the following secondary research questions:

1. How did Israel use its instruments of national power to deal with Iraq and Syria's nuclear programs?
2. How did the international community respond to Israel's attacks on Iraq and Syria's nuclear reactors?
3. What are the similarities and differences between the situations in Iraq and Syria and in the current situation with Iran?

Assumptions

In order to complete this research study, it is necessary to make several assumptions. The first assumption is that Israel's current decision makers and military planners understand Israel's history. Specifically, they possess a firm grasp of how Israel used its instruments of national power to deal with Iraq and Syria's nuclear programs. Furthermore, they will apply the lessons learned from these efforts regarding how to deal with Iran's nuclear program and whether or not to strike its nuclear facilities.

Another assumption is that Iran will continue uranium enrichment operations. In July 2006, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1696 demanding that Iran end its nuclear enrichment program. Following this resolution, the UN passed five additional resolutions imposing sanctions on Iran with the most recent, Resolution 1929, in June

2010.² Nevertheless, Iran insists on its right to obtain nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.³

Next, this study assumes that the US will not conduct military operations against Iran in order to cause a regime change or to destroy its nuclear facilities. Given ongoing US activities in Iraq and Afghanistan and decreasing public support for these operations, this assumption should hold true.

A final assumption is that the US will not take military action to stop Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) from attacking Iran's nuclear facilities. News sources report that US Central Command has already asked the Pentagon whether or not it should allow Israeli aircraft into its airspace. According to multiple sources, the Pentagon responded, "Do not shoot them down."⁴

Definitions

To better understand this study, several terms require operational definitions. They include the following:

²BBC, "UN sanctions against Iran," <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-10768146?print=true> (accessed 23 October 2010).

³Mohammad Khazaei, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations, Statement before The United Nations Security Council on adoption of Resolution 1929, New York, 9 June 2010.

⁴Goldberg.

~~“Instruments of national power”~~ refers to all of the means available to a government in pursuit of its national objectives. They are expressed as diplomatic, information, military, and economic (DIME).⁵

For purposes of this thesis, the ~~“military instrument of national power”~~ includes both conventional forces (i.e. IDF, IAF, etc.) and covert organizations (i.e. Mossad). However, Israel’s Mossad does not fall under the formal structure of the IDF but works closely with it.

~~“International response”~~ refers to the primary ways in which a nation, coalition, alliance, etc. responds to an event (i.e. Israeli attack of a nuclear facility). To assess such responses, this paper uses the four instruments of national power.

Throughout this paper, ~~“pre-emptive strike”~~ and ~~“pre-emptive attack”~~ refer to IAF attacks in both Iraq and Syria. Scholars debate whether or not Israel’s strikes were truly pre-emptive or if they were more ~~“preventive”~~ in nature. The key difference is that a preventive attack attempts to destroy an enemy’s potential capability when an attack is not imminent or known to be planned, while a pre-emptive strike is launched in anticipation of immediate enemy aggression. Scholars generally equate preventive attacks with aggression, and therefore argue that it is illegitimate.⁶

⁵Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2007), I-1.

⁶Louis Rene Beres, ~~“On Assassination as Anticipatory Self-Defense: The Case of Israel,”~~ *Hofstra Law Review* 20 (1991-1992), <http://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?collection=journals&handle=hein.journals/hoflr20&div=16&id=&page=> (accessed 14 May 2011).

Scope of Study

This study does not attempt to address whether or not Israel should attack Iran's nuclear facilities or whether such an attack is even feasible. It will reveal the actualities regarding Israel's use of its instruments of national power to deal with Iraq and Syria's nuclear programs and the implications that these efforts will most likely have for Israel's current decision makers and military planners regarding Iran's nuclear program. This study also identifies important responses of the international community to Israel's destruction of Iraq and Syria's nuclear reactors. These findings provide a baseline from which to determine potential responses to an Israeli strike on Iran's nuclear facilities.

Limitations

The primary limitation of this paper is that it does not consider classified data or information being withheld by a foreign government. In the case of Israel's 1981 attack of Iraq's Osirak nuclear reactor, classified information was declassified after two decades and is now available to the public. In the case of Syria, reliable and accurate information is publicly available from which to draw useful conclusions.

Delimitations

In order to ensure that the research study remains feasible, additional constraints and delimitations exist. When determining international responses, it will only consider significant responses from state and non-state actors. It will not include all responses to Israel's attacks in 1981 and 2007. Additionally, this study will only include sources available prior to 1 March 2011.

Structure and Significance of Study

This study provides an analysis of Israel's nuclear non-proliferation strategy and application of the Begin Doctrine which states that Israel will not allow its enemies to acquire nuclear weapons.⁷ Because of the close ties between the US and Israel, Jerusalem's actions against Iran will likely impact America. The findings of this study offer insight to US strategic planners as they consider strategies and timelines for dealing with Tehran's nuclear program, recognizing that Israel is willing to act unilaterally as historical events attest. Diplomatic engagement, economic sanctions, and a comprehensive information campaign may not produce timely results from Israel's perspective which may prompt Prime Minister Netanyahu and the IAF to strike once again

If Israel does attack Iran's nuclear facilities, Washington must consider probable international responses as well as its own responses. Will America remain the sole defender of Israel on the floor of the UN as it did following the destruction of Iraq's nuclear reactor? How will the US respond if Iran launches retaliatory attacks not only against Israel but also against US troops in the Middle East? Will Washington encourage Israel to formally declare its nuclear program and bring its facilities under IAEA safeguards? Will a window of opportunity open for the Obama administration to call for a nuclear free Middle East? Understanding past international responses to Israeli attacks against Iraq and Syria's nuclear reactors compiled in this study will help US decision makers as they formulate policy and answer these and other questions.

⁷Elli Louka, "Precautionary Self-Defense: Preempting Nuclear Proliferation," http://002ab4a.netsolhost.com/images/Elli_Louka_Nuclear_Weapons_Proliferation.pdf (accessed 15 April 2011).

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter 1, “Introduction” announces the topic and describes its importance. It includes the primary and secondary research questions along with assumptions and key terms. Chapter 2, “Literature Review” presents a comprehensive survey of the current state of literature used throughout this study. It highlights key works, explains major schools of thought, and identifies existing gaps in current literature. Chapter 3, “Research Design” details the methodology used to collect, organize, analyze, and interpret the information which answers the research questions. Chapter 4, “Analysis” explains, analyzes, and interprets the available information and presents the study’s findings. The findings include the similarities and differences regarding how Israel applied its DIME to deal with Iraq and Syria’s nuclear programs and how the international community responded to Israel’s attacks in 1981 and 2007. It then applies these findings to the current situation in Iran. Finally, Chapter 5, “Conclusions” explains the significance of the study and makes recommendations for further studies.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter 1 framed the problem for this study by describing Israel's ongoing concern with Iran's nuclear program and by asking how might Israel attempt to deal with it. It presented this study's primary and secondary research questions which will guide the comparative case study of how Israel dealt with Iraq and Syria's nuclear programs and how the international community responded to Israel's attacks on these nuclear reactors in 1981 and 2007. This chapter continues the process by describing the current body of literature used in this study and concludes by identifying an ongoing gap in current literature.

Iraq

A large amount of literature describes Israel's use of its instruments of national power to deal with Iraq's nuclear program and ultimately its decision to attack the Osirak reactor at al-Tuwaitha on 7 June 1981. This was the first-ever successful attack of a nuclear reactor.⁸ After three decades and the release of previously classified information, this body of literature has grown significantly in both quantity and quality.

Several key books describe the detailed planning of the attack, named Operation Babylon. Those written soon after the attack include Amos Perlmutter's *Two Minutes over Baghdad* (1982), Shlomo Nakdimon's *First Strike: The Exclusive Story of How Israel Foiled Iraq's Attempt to Get the Bomb* (1987), and Dan McKinnon's *Bullseye One Reactor* (1988). These books lack classified information which was withheld from the

⁸Iran attempted to bomb the Osirak reactor during the Iran-Iraq War but failed.

public at the time. For example, the names of the pilots involved in Operation Babylon were withheld to protect them from organizations like Iraq's murderous Mukhabarat.⁹

Once classified information became available to the public, several additional books surfaced. These include Rodger Claire's *Raid on the Sun: Inside Israel's Secret Campaign that Denied Saddam the Bomb* (2004), Amos Perlmutter, Michael I. Handel, and Uri Bar-Joseph's *Two Minutes over Baghdad*, 2nd edition (2003), and most recently, Iftach Spector's *Loud and Clear: The Memoir of an Israeli Fighter Pilot* (2009). These sources provide details of the attack and the training leading to it from the IAF pilots involved in the operation. Spector, for example, flew one of the eight F-16s that bombed the Osirak reactor.

One major point emerging from these works is that a military strike of Iraq's Osirak nuclear reactor was not Israel's first option for dealing with Saddam Hussein's nuclear ambitions. Israel's Institute for Intelligence and Special Operations—the Mossad conducted covert operations for several years before the strike. Claire provides a detailed account of the Mossad's attempt to sabotage the reactor core in a French warehouse as it awaited shipment to Baghdad in April 1979. He presents detailed information leading to the exploitation and assassination of key Iraqi physicists including Yahya al-Meshad who was killed in his French hotel room on 13 June 1980.¹⁰

In addition to covert efforts by the Mossad, Israel made widespread use of its diplomatic instrument of national power to deter nations like France and Italy from

⁹Rodger W. Claire, *Raid on the Sun: Inside Israel's Secret Campaign that Denied Saddam the Bomb* (New York: Broadway Books, 2004), xvi.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 58-64.

providing assistance to Iraq's nuclear program. Nakdimon provides particularly valuable insights into Israel's diplomatic campaign. He reveals the extensive amount of French support to Iraq's nuclear program, countless meetings at highest levels of government between Paris and Baghdad and France's attempts to convince Israel otherwise.

Another key point of these works is that the political decision to conduct the strike at al-Tuwaitha was complex and difficult. As Prime Minister Menachem Begin's media adviser and press attaché from 1978 to 1980, Nakdimon provides the most in-depth look at the Israeli leaders who ordered the strike. He describes divisions within Israel's cabinet including Begin who supported the attack and opposition leader Shimon Peres who did not.¹¹

An additional point is that Israelis, from senior government officials to the pilots executing the raid, believed that Israel's fate was at stake if Hussein was able to acquire nuclear weapons. The youngest of the pilots, Ilan Ramon, explained, "We must not forget that the Tammuz¹² operation was done for the whole Jewish nation."¹³ Of those involved in the operation, many recalled memories of friends and family lost during the Holocaust. Similar recollections guided Israel's leaders in their decision to bomb the Osirak reactor.

Claire reveals the extensive efforts that Israeli operational planners undertook to plan and execute Operation Babylon. These efforts included pilot training at Hill Air

¹¹Shlomo Nakdimon, *First Strike: The Exclusive Story of How Israel Foiled Iraq's Attempt to Get the Bomb* (New York: Summit Books, 1987), 178.

¹²"Tammuz 17" is the Iraqi name given to the Osirak nuclear reactor; Tammuz 17 is July 17, the date the Ba'ath Party came to power in Iraq.

¹³Iftach Spector, *Loud and Clear: The Memoir of an Israeli Fighter Pilot* (Minneapolis: Zenith Press, 2009), 414.

Force Base outside Salt Lake City on the newly acquired F-16As they would use to conduct the strike.¹⁴ Additionally, military planners needed to ensure that the F-16s carried enough fuel to get them to and from the target. This problem was eventually solved by obtaining centerline fuel tanks from the US in March 1981 and by conducting ~~hot~~ refueling”¹⁵ on the runway.¹⁶ To ensure that the Mk-84 2,000 pound bombs would destroy the Osirak reactor, two Israeli nuclear scientists traveled to Washington to meet with representatives from the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission to ascertain whether or not the bombs would suffice.¹⁷ After all, such an attack had never been conducted. Finally, Mossad agents worked diligently to obtain restricted access KH-11 satellite photos of the targeted area from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).¹⁸ These efforts reveal that Israel’s planning efforts began years before the actual attack. Planning covered all details of the operation to ensure that the strike would destroy the nuclear reactor and that the pilots would have the best chance of returning home safely.

In July 2005, Peter Ford wrote *Israel’s Attack on Osiraq: A Model for Future Preventative Strikes?* for the United States Air Force Institute for National Security Studies. Drawing from McKinnon, Nakdimon, Perlmutter, Handel, and Bar-Joseph, Ford describes Israel’s overt, covert, and diplomatic efforts to deter Saddam Hussein from

¹⁴Claire, 73.

¹⁵~~Hot~~ refueling” refers to topping off aircraft on the runway while their engines are running. This practice entails risk because the hot exhaust could ignite the fuel causing it to explode.

¹⁶Claire, 133-135.

¹⁷Ibid., 102.

¹⁸Ibid., 104-105.

obtaining nuclear weapons. Seeing that the international community could not successfully deter Iraq's nuclear program, it became apparent to Israel that it must act unilaterally to destroy the Osirak nuclear reactor.

According to Ford, the decision to strike Osirak came amidst a complex Israeli strategic environment including the first Intifada, tensions in Lebanon, surface-to-air-missiles in the Beka'a valley, a volatile Egyptian peace process, and enormous economic inflation.¹⁹ Politically, Prime Minister Begin lagged behind Labor party leader Shimon Peres in voter polls leading to the November 1981 Knesset election. Begin believed that a successful strike would cause Israelis to perceive him as a decisive politician willing to act courageously in the face of world opposition and thereby secure their votes. Furthermore, Begin believed that Peres would not take military action to stop Iraq, so he felt it his personal responsibility to protect Israel's right to exist.²⁰

Ford concludes that preventative strikes are valuable for two reasons: (1) They buy time and gain international attention, and (2) The strike provided a one-time benefit for Israel because subsequent strikes would be less effective due to dispersed and hardened targets and limited intelligence.²¹ While Ford's first conclusion still holds true, his second was disproved on 6 September 2007 at the remote desert location of al-Kibar, Syria.

¹⁹Peter S. Ford, "Israel's Attack on Osiraq: A Model for Future Preventive Strikes?" *INSS Occasional Paper* 59 (July 2005), 23.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 26-27.

²¹*Ibid.*, ix.

Syria

Immediately following the 6 September 2007 strike on the mysterious target at al-Kibar, there was a media blackout in Israel. Nevertheless, international media outlets began reporting varying accounts of the events. On 19 September 2007 Netanyahu, then the opposition leader, became the first official to say Israel was behind the recent air strike inside Syria.²² Syrian President Bashar al-Assad did not comment on the incident until seven months later claiming the site Israel bombed was not part of a nuclear weapons program but was a military facility under construction.²³ Due to the lack of official government statements and the number of conflicting reports immediately following the strike at al-Kibar, the initial body of literature was largely speculative. Over time, however, more reliable reporting became available as a result of in-depth research into the strike.

One particularly valuable work regarding the Israeli attack at al-Kibar is Erich Follath and Holger Stark's "How Israel Destroyed Syria's Al Kibar Nuclear Reactor" (2009) published by *SpiegelOnline*. To research the attack and its aftermath, Follath and Stark interviewed several key politicians and experts including President Assad, leading Israeli intelligence expert Ronen Bergman, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)-Mohammed El Baradei, US nuclear expert David Albright, and

²²Associated French Press, "Netanyahu says Israel carried out Syria air raid, he backed it," <http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5icAEGzS6dKQGikVrae3 wytVA2S8Q> (accessed 30 November 2010).

²³Reuters.com. "Assad says facility Israel bombed not nuclear," <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSL27399094> (accessed 30 November 2010).

individuals involved in the operation under the condition of anonymity.²⁴ Follath and Stark provide details of how Israel destroyed Syria's nuclear reactor. They provide valuable insight into how Israel applied its DIME and the international responses to the IAF's strike.

Michael Bar-Zohar and Nissim Mishaal's "The long road to Syria" (2010) published by *Ynetnews.com* confirms much of Follath and Stark's information. They focus on the Mossad's use of covert operations before and after the strike. The most recent work regarding the attack at al-Kibar is former US President George W. Bush's *Decision Points* (2010). Bush's memoir provides insight into the White House's response to Olmert's request and ongoing efforts to convince the US to bomb Syria's nuclear reactor.

The most relevant source for this study is Elli Louka's "Precautionary Self-Defense: Preempting Nuclear Proliferation" (2009). He focuses on the legal aspects of Israel's attacks and points out several similarities and differences between Osirak and al-Kibar. Louka describes the al-Kibar attack as preemptive action against a hypothetical and uncertain threat, whereas the Osirak strike reflected anticipatory self-defense to a clear and imminent threat.²⁵

²⁴Erich Follath and Holger Stark, "How Israel Destroyed Syria's Al Kibar Nuclear Reactor," *Spiegel Online*, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,658663-7,00.html> (accessed 26 November 2010).

²⁵Louka.

Iran

The body of literature dealing with Iran's nuclear program is extensive and expanding rapidly. As one of the most pressing security matters to the US, the UN, Europe, Israel, and many Arab nations, coverage of the unfolding events in Tehran emerges on a daily basis. Much of the literature deals with the feasibility of an Israeli attack on Iran's nuclear facilities with strong arguments for and against such an attack.

One particularly valuable research study is *Osirak Redux? Assessing Israeli Capabilities to Destroy Iranian Nuclear Facilities* (2007) by Whitney Raas, research analyst at the Center for Naval Analyses, and Austin Long, member of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Security Studies Program and adjunct researcher at the RAND Corporation. The study provides an in-depth assessment of Israel's capabilities to destroy Iran's nuclear facilities. It describes Iran's carefully concealed and widely dispersed nuclear facilities. Raas and Long assess Iran's three critical nodes as the facilities at Isfahan, Natanz, and Arak, with Natanz being the most critical and most difficult to destroy.²⁶ They evaluate the IAF's weaponry and explain its improvements in accuracy and penetration. The research accounts for Iranian aircraft, surface-to-air missiles, and anti-aircraft artillery and describes three possible attack routes from Israel to targets in Iran. It also considers the fuel limitations of the IAF and possible refueling options and discusses the implications of flying over sovereign nations like Turkey, Jordan, Iraq, and

²⁶At the time the uranium enrichment facility at Qom was unknown. It was declared in September 2009 and could be added to this target list.

Saudi Arabia. Finally, Raas and Long present a correlation of forces accounting for combat and mechanical losses and assess the likelihood of a successful strike.²⁷

Raas and Long conclude ~~that~~ the IAF, after years of modernization, now possesses the capability to destroy even well-hardened targets in Iran with some degree of confidence. Leaving open the question of whether an attack is worth the resulting diplomatic consequences and Iranian response.”²⁸ Whereas Iraq was limited in its ability to respond to Israel’s attack because of its ongoing involvement in the Iran-Iraq War, Iran is much more capable of striking back against Israel and the US with capable proxies such as Hezbollah and by increasing oil prices.²⁹ In November 2009, Steven Simon wrote ~~“~~Contingency Planning Memorandum No. 5: An Israeli Strike on Iran” for the Council on Foreign Relations’ Center for Preventive Action. Like Raas and Long, Simon argues that Israel is capable of unilaterally attacking Iran’s primary three nuclear facilities.³⁰

Others argue that such an attack is unfeasible. In a 2006 telegram sent from the US embassy in Tel Aviv, Dr. Ariel Levite, former deputy chief of Israel’s Atomic Energy Commission claimed that military action was impossible. ~~“~~Levite said that most Israeli officials do not believe a military solution is possible. . . . They believe Iran has learned from Israel’s attack on Iraq’s Osirak reactor, and has dispersed the components of its

²⁷Whitney Raas and Austin Long, ~~“~~Osirak Redux? Assessing Israeli Capabilities to Destroy Iranian Nuclear Facilities,” *International Security* 31, no. 4 (Spring 2007): 7-33.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 30.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 31.

³⁰Steven Simon, ~~“~~Contingency Planning Memorandum No. 5: An Israeli Strike on Iran,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, <http://www.cfr.org/israel/israeli-strike-iran/p20637> (accessed 16 April 2011).

nuclear program throughout Iran, with some elements in places that Israel does not know about.”³¹

Another particularly controversial article is Jeffrey Goldberg’s “The Point of No Return” (2010) which argues that “a nuclear Iran poses the gravest threat since Hitler to the physical survival of the Jewish people”³² and that Israel is preparing to bomb Iran’s nuclear facilities to delay Tehran’s program for three to five years. Many support Goldberg’s analysis. According to James Fallow, fellow correspondent for *The Atlantic*, Goldberg provides invaluable evidence about the complex pressures within the American and Israeli governments.³³

Others, like columnist and blogger Glenn Greenwald, disagree with Goldberg. He accuses Goldberg of being a “propagandist” with a goal “to convince Americans of the efficacy of bombing Iran.”³⁴ Greenwald asserts that “nothing would spur an Iranian desire for nuclear weapons more than a bombing campaign against their country.”³⁵

³¹Yossi Melman, “Haaretz WikiLeaks exclusive/Israel ruled out military option on Iran years ago,” Haaretz.com, <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/haaretz-wikileaks-exclusive-israel-ruled-out-military-option-on-iran-years-ago-1.355024> (accessed 16 April 2011).

³²Goldberg.

³³James Fallows, “Bombing Iran: What is The Atlantic’s Line?” *The Atlantic* (August 2010), <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2010/08/bombing-iran-what-is-the-atlantics-line/61408/> (accessed 16 April 2011).

³⁴Glenn Greenwald, “How propagandists function: Exhibit A,” Salon.com, 12 August 2010, http://www.salon.com/news/opinion/glenn_greenwald/2010/08/12/goldberg/index.html (accessed 16 April 2011).

³⁵Ibid.

Greenwald's comments allude to the much debated issue of whether or not Israel or the US *should* bomb Iran's nuclear facilities.

Theory

This thesis uses a comparative case study which analyzes Israel's strikes on Iraq's Osirak nuclear reactor in 1981 and on Syria's nuclear reactor in 2007 in order to generate reasonable predictions regarding Israel's ongoing efforts to deal with Iran's nuclear program. The case study methodology used throughout this paper comes from Robert K. Yin's *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 4th edition (2009). It provides a comprehensive explanation of the design and use of case studies as a valid research tool.

When considering which methodology to use for this thesis, two additional works surfaced. First, Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May's *Thinking In Time: The Uses of History for Decision Makers* (1986) offers a valuable tool to inform policy formulation through the use of historical examples. Neustadt and Ernest emphasize that those using history to generate decisions must take care to properly assess history as it can lead to faulty application if improperly interpreted. A second work, Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow's *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 2nd edition (1999), also shows promise for analyzing Israel's actions against Iraq and Syria. In their book, Allison and Zelikow explain that most analysts predict a government's behavior only in terms of the Rational Actor Model. However, they argue that two alternative models add necessary insight into decision making; these are the Organizational Behavior Model and Governmental Politics Model. Using the two additional models improves explanations

and predictions because analysts develop an awareness of the organizations and political actors involved in the policy process.³⁶

Summary

Despite the available literature, one primary gap remains in current literature: a comparative case study detailing how Israel used its instruments of national power to deal with Iraq and Syria's nuclear programs, how the international community responded to Israel's attacks in 1981 and 2007, and how these cases might guide Israel's efforts to deal with further crises, including Iran's nuclear program. This thesis conducts a comparative case study in order to fill this knowledge gap.

³⁶Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 2nd ed. (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, Inc., 1999), 4-6.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

This social science study utilizes Robert K. Yin's case study research methodology as described in his book, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, Fourth Edition (2009), which provides a systematic way of looking at events, collecting data, analyzing information, and reporting results. It follows Yin's five components of a research design including: (1) a study's questions, (2) its propositions, (3) its unit(s) of analysis, (4) the logic linking the data to the propositions, and (5) the criteria for interpreting the findings.³⁷

The goal of this study is to answer the primary research question: how might Israel's experience dealing with Iraq's nuclear program (1975 to 1981) and its experience dealing with Syria's nuclear program (2007) guide Israeli politicians and military planners as they consider how to respond to Iran's nuclear program? The research design is such that answers to the following secondary research question will in turn answer the primary research question. Secondary research questions include:

1. How did Israel use its instruments of national power to deal with Iraq and Syria's nuclear programs?
2. How did the international community respond to Israel's attacks on Iraq and Syria's nuclear reactors?
3. What are the similarities and differences between the situations in Iraq and Syria and in the current situation with Iran?

³⁷Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Inc., 2009), 27.

After establishing the study's questions, the second component of Yin's research design is to create propositions. The following propositions are preliminary answers to the secondary research questions and help direct the study and limit its scope.

1. Israel used a combination of diplomatic, information, and military (including covert operations) means to deter and delay Iraq and Syria's nuclear programs. Israel is using its instruments of national power, in ways similar to those used against Iraq and Syria, to deter and delay Iran's nuclear program.
2. The international community (both state and non-state actors) did not respond with significant diplomatic, information, military, and economic means to Israel's attacks. Similarly, the international community will not implement any significant response measures to an Israeli attack of Iran's nuclear facilities. However, Iran is much more capable of responding to an Israeli attack through proxy organizations like Hezbollah.
3. Key similarities between Iraq and Syria include Israel's view of those nations as an existential threat and its willingness to act unilaterally. One primary difference is the fact that Israel used its instruments of national power for six years before attacking Osirak and only seven months before striking at al-Kibar.

Yin's third component of research design is to identify the unit of analysis or "case" for study. This paper considers two cases including: Israel's actions to deal with Iraq's nuclear program from 1975 to 1981 and its actions to deal with Syria's nuclear program in 2007.

After selecting the unit of analysis, Yin's fourth component of research design is to link the data to propositions which answer the secondary research questions. To do so, it is necessary to operationalize the research design. In other words, specific variables are assigned to each secondary research question. Data for each variable not only answers the questions but also allows for comparison between cases (Iraq and Syria). For secondary research questions 1 and 2, the assessment variables include the four instruments of national power: diplomatic, information, military, and economic.

This paper uses tables in order to organize the collected data. Data collection focuses on locating information which best describes each variable. Once collected, this information populated Tables 2 and 3. Associated to secondary research question 1, Table 2 describes the instruments of national power that Israel used to deal with the nuclear programs in Iraq and Syria. Likewise, Table 3 provides answers to secondary research question 2 and describes how members of the international community used their instruments of national power to respond to Israel's attacks in Iraq and Syria.

Table 2. Israel's Use of its Instruments of National Power

	Iraq	Syria
Diplomatic		
Information		
Military		
Economic		

Source: Created by author.

Table 3. International Responses to Israeli Attacks

	Iraq	Syria
United States		
United Nations		
Iraq		
Syria		
Iran		
Other Actors (specific to each case study)		

Source: Created by author.

The fifth component of Yin's research design is to determine the criteria for interpreting the findings. This case study's analytic strategy relies on its theoretical propositions which served as a guide for the study and shaped the data collection plan and overall design. "Cross-case synthesis" is the analytic technique used to analyze the cases (Iraq and Syria). This technique is particularly useful when analyzing multiple case studies. It treats each case as a separate study and then aggregates findings across both cases. Tables 2 and 3 serve as the means to display the data from each case in a uniform framework. The tables' data describes the aforementioned operational variables (i.e. DIME). Once completed, analysis of these variables between cases provides cross-case findings; these findings answer secondary research question 3. These findings rely

strongly on argumentative interpretation, not numeric tallies. Therefore, careful attention is made to ensure that the data supports strong, plausible, and fair arguments.³⁸

Before launching into data collection, Yin argues, “Covering these preceding five components of research designs will effectively force you to begin constructing a preliminary theory related to your topic of study. . . . For case studies, theory development as part of the design phase is essential.”³⁹ This case study will test the following theory which embodies the research design: Israel is willing to conduct unilateral preemptive attacks against actors it perceives as existential threats but only after exhausting its instruments of national power and are no longer able to delay a nation seeking nuclear weapons. It will reveal that the international responses to Israeli attacks in Iraq and Syria were insignificant. In a similar fashion, the international community will not respond with any significant actions, with the exception of Iran which is more capable of responding through proxy organizations like Hezbollah.

The data for this study consists of documentation pertaining to the primary and secondary research questions up until 1 March 2011. Sources include books and periodicals written on the cases along with interviews of key government officials, military planners, and IAF pilots to name a few. Because discussion concerning a potential Israeli attack on Iran’s nuclear facilities is ongoing, new literature continues to emerge on a daily basis.

The amount of data collected for this sample is considered sufficient when major themes and findings begin to repeat themselves from source to source. However,

³⁸Ibid., 156-160.

³⁹Ibid., 35.

emerging literature will continually add new insight to the existing knowledge base. Therefore, evaluation of future sources is necessary to further prove or disprove the findings of this study.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

Chapter 3 Research Design describes the methodology for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the evidence necessary to answer this study's primary and secondary research questions. This chapter answers the following secondary research questions.

1. How did Israel use its instruments of national power to deal with Iraq and Syria's nuclear programs?
2. How did the international community respond to Israel's attacks on Iraq and Syria's nuclear reactors?
3. What are the similarities and differences between the situations in Iraq and Syria and in the current situation with Iran?

First, the study provides an in-depth description regarding how Israel used its instruments of national power to deal with Iraq's nuclear program and how the international community responded to its attack at al-Tuwaitha. Then it describes how Israel used its DIME to deal with Syria's nuclear program and how the international community responded to the strike at al-Kibar. Next it organizes this data into tables which facilitate cross-case synthesis, the analytic technique used to analyze the cases. After conducting cross-case synthesis and explaining the similarities and differences between cases, the findings provide insight to the primary research question: how might Israel's actions experience dealing with Iraq's nuclear program (1975 to 1981) and its experience dealing with Syria's nuclear program (2007) guide Israeli politicians and military planners as they consider how to respond Iran's nuclear program?

Israel's Use of its Instruments of National Power to Deal with Iraq's Nuclear Program

Before conducting the air strike at al-Tuwaitha on 7 June 1981, Israel primarily used its diplomatic and military (including covert operations) instruments of national power to deter and delay Iraq's nuclear program. It also launched an information campaign against those nations assisting Iraq, but this effort was begun too late in the process to have any chance of success. The economic instrument was used sparingly. These efforts are described in detail below and answer secondary question 1.

Diplomatic

Israel attempted six years of diplomacy aimed at deterring nations from cooperating with Iraq on its nuclear program and pressuring others, particularly France and Italy, to abandon their support to Baghdad. Israel's diplomatic efforts began soon after the Mossad informed Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of a possible Iraqi nuclear program following French Premier Jacques Chirac's visit to Baghdad in 1974. Initially, Rabin appealed to Jewish-American organizations to persuade the Ford administration to stop the deal.⁴⁰

Additionally, Jerusalem made personal appeals to dissuade Paris from providing nuclear support to Baghdad. While serving as defense minister, Shimon Peres, a close friend of Chirac's, personally asked him to cancel his recent contract with Hussein. But Chirac was unwilling to turn his back on the deal in which Iraq guaranteed oil contracts, weapon purchases, and automobile purchases in exchange for the Osiris nuclear reactor

⁴⁰Claire, 40.

and seventy-two kilograms of weapons-grade, enriched uranium for start-up fuel.⁴¹ Over the next six years, Israel used diplomatic efforts to deal with Iraq's nuclear program.

Table 4 summarizes these efforts.

Table 4. Israel's Diplomatic Efforts to Deal with Iraq's Nuclear Program

29-30 Apr 1975 (France)	—The Israeli Foreign Minister, Yigal Alon, paid a working visit to Paris as the draft Franco-Iraqi agreement reached its final stages of completion. . . . In his talks with the three main pillars of the French administration, Pres. Giscard, Premier Chirac and Foreign Minister Jean Sauvagnargues, Alon conveyed Israel's concern over the possibility of Iraq's misuse of the nuclear technology and fuels whose purchase it was negotiating with France. They all gave the official French position, though not a party to the NPT, France would continue to behave as though its signature were appended to the treaty."
October 1975 (US)	Israeli Prime Minister Rabin urged US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to obstruct the French nuclear negotiations with Iraq on Israel's behalf. Kissinger claimed that he did try to intervene but to no avail.
13 January 1976 (France)	Alon dispatches Israel's Director General for West European Affairs to meet with French Ambassador Jean Herly to clarify French contacts with Iraq on nuclear affairs.
27 January 1976 (France)	Israeli Knesset member Dr. Yehuda Ben Meir voiced concerns over Iraq's dealings with France and France's acceptance of Iraqi offerings (especially in light of the fact that the Soviet Union refused to supply Iraq with weapons-grade uranium). This led to a follow-up meeting between Alon and Herly.
February 1977 (Iran)	Israeli Foreign Minister Yigal Alon met with a top ranking Iranian official who served as the Iranian liaison for Israel. The two countries did not have any officially sanctioned diplomatic ties. The Iranian official knew Iraq was working with the French to develop a nuclear reactor that could also allow Iraq to produce nuclear weapons. However, the official would not join Israel in alerting the international community due to fear of highlighting Iranian plans to do the same thing.
February 1977 (US)	Disappointed in Iran, Israel now pinned its hopes principally upon the US, which had conducted, since 1975, a most vigorous campaign against dissemination of military nuclear technology. In view of the vigorous US anti-proliferation campaign, it was only natural for the US to attempt to talk Paris into renegotiating its agreement with Iraq. The Carter administration, elected in November 1976, vowed to take a hard-line stance on nuclear proliferation. Election promises pledged sweeping international actions against countries promising nuclear technology for sale. The US slowed down the delivery of uranium and reactors to France and Germany. This slow-down was designed to reflect US policy maker's disapproval of France's deals with Pakistan and Iraq. Next, the administration encouraged France to supply only Caramel fuel (uranium enriched only 20-25 percent) to Iraq.
30-31 March 1977 (France)	The new French Foreign Minister, Louis de Guiringaud visited Israel to meet with Alon to discuss the Iraqi project with similar reassurances to Israeli.

⁴¹Ibid., 40-41.

20 June 1977	Menachem Begin replaced Yitzhak Rabin as Israel's Prime Minister, and Moshe Dayan replaced Yigal Alon as Israeli Foreign Minister.
10 July 1977 (Iran)	Dayan met with the same Iranian official to inquire if Iran was concerned at all with Iraq developing nuclear weapons. The official passed on Dayan's comments to the Shah.
15 July 1977 (France)	Israeli Ambassador to Paris, Gazit, called on France to give Caramel fuel to Iraq, but France resisted the idea claiming the fuel was untested and not the fuel Iraq originally negotiated.
27 December 1977 (Iran)	Dayan met with the Shah of Iran to brief him on the progress of Israel's peace negotiations with Egypt. Iranian government officials informed Dayan of Iraqi nuclear intentions. Iraqi officials reassured Iran that any nuclear weapon was meant for Israel, not Iran.
13 January 1978 (France)	Gazit again visited Guiringaud to slow down plans for delivery until the Caramel fuel could be tested and substituted for delivery to Iraq. Again, the Frenchman declared this was impossible, as the Caramel fuel was not the fuel Iraq originally negotiated.
19 October 1978 (France)	Gazit again visited Guiringaud to question the weapons-grade uranium issue and ask when France would deliver it to Iraq.
January 1979 (France)	Dayan visited French President Giscard and Premier Raymond Barre. Barre placated Dayan about Iraqi intentions, claiming Hussein and Hafez al-Asad had given up the idea of destroying Israel.
Summer 1979 (W. Germany)	Dayan contacted West Germany to persuade them not to produce any components for the Iraqi reactor complex.
23 October 1979	Dayan resigns as Israeli Foreign Minister. Begin assumes dual duty as both Prime Minister and Foreign Minister until Yitzhak Shamir becomes Foreign Minister on 10 March 1980.
July 1980 (Italy)	Shamir sends a handwritten letter to the Italian Foreign Minister, Emilio Colombo, in hopes of convincing Italy to refrain from helping Iraq's nuclear advance any further. "It is of the gravest when nuclear capability is endowed to a regime which achieved power by force, and which is constantly sustained by its fierce antagonism toward the Israeli people."
16 July 1980 (US)	Israel Ambassador to the US met with Secretary of State Edmund Muskie to inquire on the status of US diplomatic pressure on France vis-à-vis the Iraqi nuclear reactor. Whatever actions were taken proved fruitless in stopping France's cooperation with Iraq. Additionally, President Carter made a public declaration that also did not help Israel: "the US would not attempt to impose its views upon states with a nuclear capability—such as France—with regard to the Mideast."
17 July 1980 (US)	US Ambassador Samuel Lewis visited Prime Minister Begin regarding Iraqi nuclear weapons. Begin urged Lewis to bring the matter to the attention of the White House. Lewis urged Begin to "put his trust in President Carter." "No president has been so concerned and so active in trying to stop the spread of nuclear weapons. I am certain if he can find a way to stop the French, he will do so."
22 July 1980 (US)	Israeli Ambassador Evron informed US Assistant Secretary of State Saunders that France again rejected America efforts to intercede on behalf of Israel. Evron and Israel suspected Washington of putting little effort into the developments in Iraq
24 July 1980 (US)	Ambassador Lewis informs Begin his concerns are on the desk of the President and Secretary of State.
28 July 1980 (France)	Israeli Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir met with French Ambassador to Israel, Jean-Pierre Chauvet. Shamir told Chauvet, "Israel holds France exclusively responsible for the results liable to arise from operation of the reactor and misuse of the nuclear fuel." Chauvet argued, "Acquisition of nuclear arms would be lunacy on the part of Iraq. After all, Israel's Jewish and Arab populations are intermingled, and anyone dropping a nuclear bomb on Israel ran the risk of annihilating many thousand of Arabs."
August 1980 (France)	Dr Meir Rosenne, the new Israeli Ambassador to France visited the French Premier about the Iraqi nuclear contract. He received the same answers as those before him

4 September 1980 (W. Germany)	Israeli Ambassador to Bonn, Yohanan Meroz, contacted West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt in the attempt to have West Germany intercede on Israel's behalf to the French. Schmidt labored over the decision, but eventually decided not to intervene. He stated, "France's promises must suffice. I do not see what can be done now."
September 1980 (France)	Israeli Foreign Minister Shamir visited France's UN delegate Francois-Poncet during the UN meeting in New York. Bolstered by the recent Iraqi attack on Iran, Israel expected France to withdraw from the supply of weapons grade fuel. The meeting with the French delegate, however, proved worthless. "Shamir sensed that European cynicism left Israel with no choice other than the one it had repeatedly adopted in the past: to take its fate into its own hands."
November 1980 (France)	Shamir again met with Francois-Poncet and days later with President Giscard. Both of these meetings "were a well-nigh precise rerun of everything said at previous meetings."
December 1980 (US)	"Washington claimed to be under no illusions as the gravity of the danger to be expected from Iraq's possession of nuclear weapons; however the Administration held it preferable to pursue diplomatic approaches to France and Italy, rather than countenance direct Israeli pressure upon Iraq which, the Americans feared, could place obstacles before Mideast peace efforts."
January 1981 (France)	Labor party leader, Shimon Peres met with French President Giscard. This meeting found no new information favorable to Israel. Giscard told Peres, "The best thing for Israel is a military pact with the US. Thereby, your security will be guaranteed by the world's number-one superpower." Peres replied, "Israel does not want to be an American, or a European protectorate."
April 1981 (US)	Secretary of State Alexander Haig went to visit Prime Minister Begin and Foreign Minister Shamir in Israel. Haig confirmed Israel's worst fears: The US had been unable to stop or delay French and Italian efforts to equip Iraq with a nuclear reactor and hot cell. According to President Carter, "They—France and Italy—are sovereign states, just like Israel. We have intervened with France and Italy-but in vain."

Source: Created by author using data from Peter S. Ford, "Israel's Attack on Osiraq: A Model for Future Preventive Strikes?" *INSS Occasional Paper 59* (July 2005): 16-21.

Table 4 reveals Israel's extensive attempts to deal with Hussein's nuclear program diplomatically. Because Jerusalem does not maintain diplomatic ties with Baghdad, it tried to persuade France and Italy to forego their support. But despite multiple engagements through multiple channels, the French only provided assurances that the November 1975 Franco-Iraqi agreement would only permit Iraq's peaceful use of nuclear energy and that Paris would closely monitor the weapons-grade nuclear fuel it provided. Israel's attempts to dissuade Italy produced similar results.

Unable to persuade those states dealing directly with Baghdad, Israel turned to Iran. However, Tehran was unwilling to take action for fear of alerting the international community and drawing attention to the Shah's nuclear ambitions. West Germany also refused to intervene on Israel's behalf.

Hoping that the Carter Administration would maintain its hard-line stance on nuclear proliferation, Israel appealed to Washington. Reluctant to confront Iraq directly which Washington believed would impede the Middle East peace process, the US preferred a diplomatic approach to dissuade France and Italy from cooperating with Iraq. In the end, these efforts failed to stop the French and Italians from supporting Hussein's nuclear program.

Information

Unlike Israel's use of its military and diplomatic instruments of national power to deter and delay Iraq's nuclear program, Israel's information campaign to pressure nations like France and Italy from providing nuclear material, technology, and know-how to Iraq seems marginal at best. It was not until July 1980 that the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee called for a propaganda campaign to inform the French public and world at large of the nuclear threat posed by Iraq. The committee's chairman, Moshe Arens, argued for persuading Western countries to induce them to prevent Iraq from going nuclear.⁴² But such a campaign was started too late to have a meaningful impact.

Nevertheless, the Israeli information campaign began. On 15 July 1980, Matti Shmuelevitz, Director General of the Prime Minister's office, told the German newspaper

⁴²Nakdimon, 130-131.

Die Welt that “Israel cannot afford to sit idle and wait till an Iraqi bomb drops on our heads.”⁴³

Professor Yuval Ne‘eman, an Israeli nuclear scientist who later led the far-right Tehiya Party, favored a military strike at al-Tuwaitha.⁴⁴ He approached *Yediot Aharonot*, Israel’s mass circulation newspaper, and requested to be interviewed on the threat posed by Iraq’s Osirak reactor. In his interview, published on 18 July 1980, Ne‘eman stated, “The reactor purchased by Iraq can have only a military purpose. Iraq has no nuclear research, and the Osiris-type reactor is too small for generating electricity. Consequently, its only significance can be military.”⁴⁵

On 14 September 1980, Deputy Defense Minister Mordechai Zippori stated to an American newspaper, “If it is impossible to halt the Iraqi program by diplomatic means, Israel will have to reconsider its options.”⁴⁶ The message was clear-Israel would resort to military means if diplomacy failed to stop Iraq’s nuclear program. Israel’s information campaign had little impact on those supporting Iraq’s nuclear program, but it gave notice to the world that Israel would not stand-by idly while Saddam Hussein produced nuclear weapons. Israel would take further steps to address the Iraqi threat.

⁴³Ibid., 126-127.

⁴⁴Ibid., 96.

⁴⁵Ibid., 127-128.

⁴⁶Ibid., 147.

Military (Covert Action and Air Strike)

Shortly after becoming prime minister in 1977, Begin authorized the Mossad to conduct covert operations⁴⁷ designed to deter and delay Iraq's atomic program.

Therefore, Yitzhak Hofi, Director General of the Mossad, began planning and directing special operations against high value targets.

In the spring of 1978, Mossad agents began recruiting Butrus Eben Halim, an Iraqi scientist working at the French nuclear reactor at Sarcelles. After luring Halim with sex, money, excitement, and friendship, he informed agents of the date and place from where France would ship Iraq's reactor core.⁴⁸ Then on 6 April 1979, five Mossad agents and an Israeli nuclear engineer sabotaged the core while in a warehouse in La Seyne-sur-Mer. Their efforts delayed the installation of the cores for several months, but construction at al-Tuwaitha continued.⁴⁹

Despite growing suspicion of his handlers, Halim continued to assist the Mossad by introducing agents to Yahia al-Meshad, a member of Iraq's Atomic Energy Commission. When Chirac threatened to alter his original agreement with Hussein by sending low grade, carmalized uranium to al-Tuwaitha, Meshad served as a liaison with the French to ensure only U235, enriched uranium, was sent to Iraq. While Meshad was unwilling to work with undercover Mossad operators, he eagerly accepted the proposition

⁴⁷—“Covert” refers to those actions designed at achieving an objective without anyone knowing who sponsored or executed the operation. The covert operations described here are those generally attributed to Israel's Mossad. Nakdimon and Claire's works were particularly valuable in describing Israeli covert actions.

⁴⁸Claire, 54-58.

⁴⁹Ibid., 47-51.

to spend the night with Marie-Claude Magalle, a French prostitute unknowingly hired by the Mossad to lure targets. On 13 June 1980, after spending an evening with Magalle, agents assassinated Meshad in his Paris hotel room. One month later, two days before her follow-up interview with Paris police regarding Meshad's murder, Magalle was struck and killed by a black Mercedes.⁵⁰ The Mossad needed to ensure that its activities remained a secret.

About the same time of Magalle's death, Salman Rashid, an Iraqi scientist was sent for a two-month fellowship in Geneva, Switzerland, to study magnetic enrichment of uranium. A week before his return to Iraq, Rashid exhibited flu-like symptoms. Physicians at the American Hospital in Geneva were unable to diagnose the virus, and Rashid died six days after first experiencing symptoms. His autopsy revealed a mysterious food poisoning which may have been contracted while Rashid visited local bars and restaurants in Geneva. Weeks later in Paris, another Iraqi engineer, Abdul-Rahman Abdul Rassoul, also contracted food poisoning and died within days.⁵¹ In spite of Iraqi scientists and atomic engineers fearing that they may become the next Mossad target, work at the reactor continued.

On 7 August 1980, a bomb exploded on the front porch of the Società Nazionale Industria Applicazione (SNIA) director's apartment outside of Rome. SNIA, an Italian manufacturer, was working on "hot cells" or shielded labs designed for handling radioactive materials and for separating plutonium from spent fuel and had agreed to provide these hot cells to Iraq in spite of President Carter's request that Italy refrain from

⁵⁰Ibid., 58-63.

⁵¹Ibid., 64-65.

doing so. Simultaneously, two additional bombs detonated in SNIA's Rome headquarters building. A note was left for the director saying, "We know about your personal collaboration with the enemies of the Islamic revolution. All those who cooperate with our enemies will be our enemies. . . . If you don't do this [quit all business dealings with Iraq], we will strike out against you and your family without pity."⁵² The note was signed by the Committee to Safeguard the Islamic Revolution.⁵³

Throughout August-September 1980, threatening letters were sent to scientists and technicians involved at all levels of Iraq's nuclear program. These letters too were signed by the Committee to Safeguard the Islamic Revolution.⁵⁴ Although Iraqi scientists and engineers were fearful of Israel's Mossad, they were terrified of Saddam Hussein. Therefore, progress at al-Tuwaitha continued.

As the Mossad was conducting covert operations, the IAF began contingency planning for a strike at al-Tuwaitha. Ultimately, the Mossad's efforts to buy time had limited effect on delaying Iraq's nuclear program. In October 1980, Hofi reported to Begin that Osirak would be fueled and operational by June 1981. After intense debate, the order to strike was given.⁵⁵

Despite his efforts to delay Iraq's nuclear program, Hofi initially opposed military action at al-Tuwaitha. He expressed, "You run a much greater danger of alienating

⁵²Ibid., 81-82.

⁵³The Mossad used fictitious organizations to conceal Israel's involvement in the bombings.

⁵⁴Ford, 15.

⁵⁵Raas and Long, 10.

America than of destroying Iraq's reactor."⁵⁶ He was not alone. The IDF's Chief of Military Intelligence, General Yehoshua Saguy, and Begin's deputy Prime Minister, Yigael Yadin, also opposed a military attack. They claimed that such action was equivalent to an act of war. Besides, could Iraq actually produce a nuclear weapon? Other members of the security cabinet did not believe Israel could afford to wait to find out. Key supporters of a decision to use military force against the reactor included the IDF's Chief of Staff—General Rafael Eitan, IAF Commander—General David Ivry, and Agricultural Minister—Ariel Sharon.⁵⁷

Prime Minister Menachem Begin's Likud party faced steep competition from the Labor party, led by Shimon Peres, in Knesset elections scheduled for November 1981. Because the Labor party was gaining momentum, Begin viewed a successful attack as a means by which to increase his reputation as a hard-liner. However, he also recognized that a failed attack would further damage his credibility as a leader and most likely cost him the election.⁵⁸

Begin's decision to strike, however, was not solely a political attempt to retain power. Israel's survival as a nation and as a people was his greatest concern. Nakdimon explains, "But above all, what shaped Begin's course, and his personal philosophy, was the Holocaust—that national calamity in which his own father and mother perished, as did most of his family. Unlike other Israelis, who regard it as a unique, never-to-be-repeated historical catastrophe, Begin believes fervently that the Holocaust must teach the Jewish

⁵⁶Claire, 42.

⁵⁷Ibid., 42-43.

⁵⁸Ford, 26, 41.

people to defend itself in its own land, so as to ward off any renewed threat to its existence.”⁵⁹

Begin viewed a nuclear armed Iraq as an existential threat to Israel because he believed Saddam Hussein would use nuclear weapons against Israel. In a 14 October 1980 meeting with a group of ministers, Begin described the choice of two evils. The first choice was to attack Iraq. Begin’s primary concern with this option was that Iraq would shift its ongoing war efforts with Iran to Israel and that Iraq would make peace with Syria to facilitate this endeavor. Begin also expressed concern that the ongoing peace process with Egypt might breakdown.⁶⁰

The second choice—to do nothing, however, was unacceptable to Begin. He explained, “It must be clear that if Israel does not prevent it, Iraq will manufacture nuclear weapons. Everything points to that. Saddam Hussein is a vicious and bloodthirsty tyrant. . . . Somewhere in the vicinity of Baghdad, weapons of mass destruction are being prepared for use against us. . . . It is our duty to our people to take the risk—to act.”⁶¹

Futhermore, Begin believed that Peres would not take direct action against the Osirak nuclear reactor and that he would only engage Iraq diplomatically. Begin felt personally responsible to conduct an air strike while he still maintained final decision authority on whether or not to strike. However, Begin insisted on a unanimous vote to

⁵⁹Nakdimon, 82.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Ibid., 159.

strike from his cabinet before giving the order to execute. Begin believed he needed the political cover that a unanimous vote would provide.⁶²

On 7 June 1981, eight F-16As, each carrying two Mk-84 2,000 lb. bombs with delayed fuses, along with six F-15As, departed Etzion Air Base in the Sinai Peninsula. The planes flew 1600 km at low altitude across the Gulf of Aqaba, southern Jordan, and then across northern Saudi Arabia. While the F-15s set up a combat air patrol to intercept Iraqi MiGs and to conduct electronic warfare operations in order to jam Iraqi air defense systems, the F-16s climbed to 5,000 ft at a distance of four miles from their target. Then the F-16s dove at the Osirak reactor to release their bombs. Seven of the eight pilots successfully deployed their bombs directly on the reactor's containment dome and destroyed the reactor. After striking, the F-16s climbed to high altitude and returned much the same way they had come.⁶³ The strike at Osirak was a phenomenal success, and all of Israel's pilots returned home safely.

Economic

Israel did not use its economic instrument of national power to deal with Iraq's nuclear program. Because it did not maintain economic ties to Baghdad, Israel's only real options were to encourage other states to restrict trade with Iraq or France or to push for UN economic sanctions. One example of the first approach took place early in the Carter administration, which was intent on limiting nuclear proliferation. Israel persuaded the US to slow down the delivery of uranium and reactors to France and Germany. This slow

⁶²Claire, 43.

⁶³Raas and Long, 11.

down was designed to reflect Washington's disapproval of Paris' deals with Pakistan and Iraq. Next, the administration encouraged France to supply only "enriched" fuel (uranium enriched only 20 to 25 percent) to Iraq.⁶⁴ These efforts failed to effect French sales of nuclear technology, equipment, and fuel.

Israel could have worked through the UN to sanction Baghdad. However, Iraq was a party to the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and the IAEA had not recorded a single violation of the nuclear safeguards agreement.⁶⁵ Therefore, Israel's efforts to do so most likely would have fallen on deaf ears.

International Responses to Israel's 1981 Attack on Iraq's Osirak Nuclear Reactor

This section addresses the international responses to Israel's strike on the Osirak nuclear reactors in Iraq. These responses are described below and answer secondary research question 2.

Iraq

On 23 June 1981, Saddam Hussein publicly addressed the public for the first time after the bombing of Osirak. He called on "all peace-loving nations of the world to help the Arabs in one way or another acquire atomic weapons" in order to offset Israel's "nuclear capability."⁶⁶ Next, he accused the French of being an Israeli accomplice in the

⁶⁴Ford, 20.

⁶⁵UN, Department of Public Information, *Yearbook of the United Nations 1981*, UNYearbook.un.org, <http://unyearbook.un.org/unyearbook.html?name=1981index.html> (accessed 19 February 2011), 275.

⁶⁶Claire, 230.

attack. Even though Hussein himself vetoed plans to construct the reactor underground, he also criticized the Iraqi Atomic Energy administration for its lax security and for failing to anticipate the strike.⁶⁷

But the attack at al-Tuwaitha did not end Hussein's nuclear ambitions. Under the umbrella of Atomic Energy, Hussein created the new Office of Research and Development. This top secret department was responsible for simultaneously pursuing two tracks to produce enriched uranium: centrifugal technology and magnetics. The centrifugal process converts uranium ore into uranium gas and separates out U-235 atoms from U-238 by spinning the uranium-compound inside a rotating cylinder, thereby enriching lighter uranium in the center. The second process uses electromagnets to create enriched uranium.⁶⁸ Ultimately, due to IAEA interference, these programs did not produce the atomic weapons Hussein so desperately desired.

Almost thirty years later, Iraq's diplomatic efforts continue as Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki is demanding that Israel compensate Iraq for destroying the Osirak reactor. On 6 January 2010, an Iraqi parliamentary member explained, "Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki is looking into plans that would compel Jerusalem to pay billions of dollars in compensations for its 1981 attack on the Tammuz nuclear reactor."⁶⁹ He also stated, "Al-Maliki's appeal follows an answer received from the UN Secretariat by the government of Iraq on November 25 [2009], which says Iraq has a right to demand

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Ibid., 234-235.

⁶⁹Siasat.com, "Iraq pursuing compensation for Israel nuke attack," <http://www.siasat.com/english/news/iraq-pursuing-compensation-israel-nuke-attack> (accessed 19 February 2011).

compensation for the damage Israel did to it with the attack on the reactor, through a neutral committee, which will assess the extent of the damage.”⁷⁰

Arab Nations

Across the board, Arab state and non-state actors including Kuwait, Jordan, the Palestine Liberation Organization, Syria, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, and Morocco denounced Israel’s attack on Iraq’s sovereign territory. The Council of the League of Arab States condemned Israel’s attack and affirmed the rights of all States to establish peaceful technological and nuclear development programs. It called on nations supporting Israel with economic, political, military, and technological aid, particularly the US, to terminate such aid and help put an end to Israeli aggression.⁷¹

Libya’s Colonel Muammar Qaddafi called on all Arabs to attack Israel’s Dimona nuclear reactor. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia appealed to the US that Israel’s violation of Saudi airspace justified the sale of two additional Airborne Warning and Control System aircraft.⁷²

Egyptian President Anwar Sadat was furious. Having just met with Begin that weekend to discuss the 1979 Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty, Sadat told colleagues that he felt he was made to look as an accomplice to the strike. In response, the Egyptian parliament asked the US to reassess its military aid to Israel.⁷³

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹UN, Department of Public Information, 276.

⁷²Claire, 219, 230.

⁷³Ibid., 229.

United Nations

On 19 June 1981, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 487 which strongly condemned the Israeli attack as a violation of the UN Charter. It called upon Israel to refrain from any such acts in the future and recognized the right of Iraq to establish a nuclear program and to develop its economy and industry for peaceful purposes according to its present and future needs. Resolution 487 called upon Israel to place its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards and to appropriately redress Iraq for the destruction it has suffered.⁷⁴

Reactions to Resolution 487 were mixed. Israel rejected the resolution as biased and argued that by removing the nuclear threat to its existence, Israel was exercising its right to self-defense. Iraq was also dissatisfied with the resolution because it did not include any sanctions against Israel. Iraq's Foreign Minister said the motives behind Israel's attack were to cover up its possession of nuclear weapons and to prevent Arab nations from acquiring scientific or technical knowledge.⁷⁵

On 13 November 1981, the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 36/27 by a vote of 109 to 2, with 34 abstentions. Only Israel and the US voted against the resolution which was entitled, "Armed Israeli aggression against the Iraqi nuclear installations and its grave consequences for the established international system concerning the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and international peace and security."⁷⁶ The resolution noted Israel's refusal to comply with UN Resolution 487.

⁷⁴UN, Department of Public Information, 282.

⁷⁵Ibid., 276-277.

⁷⁶Ibid., 279.

It issued a warning to Israel to cease its threats and the commission of such attacks against nuclear facilities. It also reiterated the call to all nations to cease providing Israel with arms and related material which enable it to commit such acts of aggression against nations.⁷⁷

Finally, the IAEA's Director General expressed that the attack was an assault on the IAEA safeguard system,⁷⁸ and the IAEA Board of Governors adopted a resolution on 12 June 1981 which strongly condemned Israel's attack. It recommended the suspension of Israel's privileges and rights of membership and that the IAEA suspend technical assistance to Israel. The IAEA's General Conference agreed and suspended technical assistance to Israel on 26 September 1981; it would determine whether or not to suspend Israel's privileges and rights of membership at its 1982 regular session if Israel failed to comply with Resolution 487.⁷⁹

In 1982, Saudi Arabia objected to recognizing Israel's credentials on the grounds that Israel violated article XIX (B) and did not comply with Resolution 487. This action prompted the credentials committee to effectively ban Israel's participation in the IAEA. In response, the US, British, and other western delegations walked out of the conference. Ultimately, IAEA allowed Israel full participation after the US suspended its membership and froze its funding to the IAEA until the Board of Governors yielded to American pressure.⁸⁰

⁷⁷Ibid., 283.

⁷⁸Louka.

⁷⁹UN, Department of Public Information, 279.

⁸⁰Louka.

France

Israel's attack at al-Tuwaitha upset the French because of their integral role in Iraq's nuclear program. The attack cost France many lucrative contracts and led to renewed worldwide interest in France's involvement with Baghdad's atomic aspirations, an issue which France did not want widely publicized. French President Mitterrand commented, "Any violation of the law will lead to our condemnation. . . . Whatever may be our feelings for Israel, this is the case now concerning the intervention decided by Israeli leaders against Iraq, which has led to the death of one of our compatriots."⁸¹ Mitterrand was referring to Damien Chaussepied, the sole French technician killed during the raid. Soon after, France recalled 115 nuclear scientists and engineers from al-Tuwaitha; fifteen technicians remained to determine whether or not there were radiation leaks from the reactor.⁸²

French Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson argued that the strike was "unacceptable, dangerous, and a serious violation of international law."⁸³ He told reporters that Israel's attack did not serve the cause of peace in the Middle East. France's input to the UN was largely of a defensive nature. It argued that the sole purpose of the Osirak reactor was scientific research. Furthermore, the agreement between Iraq and France prohibited its use for military purposes.⁸⁴

⁸¹Claire, 227.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴UN, Department of Public Information, 277.

In addition to diplomatic responses, France also waged an information campaign against Israel. French officials and members of the nation's intelligence service began leaking classified information to the world press about Israel's Dimona nuclear reactor and plutonium reprocessing facilities which France helped Israel construct decades earlier.⁸⁵

Britain

Britain also denounced the Israeli strike. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher said, "Armed attack in such circumstances cannot be justified. It represents a grave breach of international law."⁸⁶

British intelligence officials complained to the CIA about providing Israel full access to KH-11 satellite photographs. Such access to KH-11 imagery was withheld from even Britain. CIA Director William Casey responded by launching an investigation into Israel's ability to access restricted satellite photos. The investigation revealed a breakdown in the monitoring system providing Israel full access to KH-11 imagery. One Pentagon official remarked, "The Israelis did everything except task the bird."⁸⁷ In the end, Casey continued to grant Israel KH-11 access but with the original 1979 restrictions in place once again.⁸⁸

⁸⁵Claire, 227-228.

⁸⁶Ibid., 228.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Ibid.

United States

US responses to Israel's attack at al-Tuwaitha varied greatly. President Ronald Reagan remained extremely pro-Israel. When initially told of the attack by National Security Advisor Richard V. Allen, Reagan asked, "Why do you suppose they did it?" Not waiting for a response, Reagan answered himself, "Well, boys will be boys."⁸⁹

Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger had mixed feelings. While generally sympathetic toward Israel, he questioned Israel's unilateral actions without prior notification to the US. He categorized Israel's attack as a direct violation of the US Arms Export Control Act, which stated that all US supplied weaponry be used only for defensive purposes. Furthermore, he wondered how Israel's neighbors would respond as the US was selling military equipment to Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia; all of which were also restricted by the act. If the US did not sanction Israel, would these nations use their American supplied weapons to attack Israel? Secretary of State Alexander Haig and Reagan's chief of staff, James A. Baker, agreed that sanctions were necessary as Israel clearly violated the Arms Export Control Act.⁹⁰

As a result, Secretary of State Haig announced that America was suspending the sale of F-16s to Israel, including four that were currently at General Dynamics awaiting delivery. However by September 1981, the sale of F-16s to Israel quietly resumed.⁹¹

In 1991, a week after the coalition's successful invasion of Iraq, Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney wrote General David Ivry, IAF Commander during the raid,

⁸⁹Ibid., 217-218.

⁹⁰Ibid., 219.

⁹¹Ibid., 220, 231.

saying, “If you hadn’t attacked that reactor in 1981, the Gulf War of 1991 would have looked totally different.”⁹²

Others

Several other nations responded to Israel’s attack. “Japan stated, ‘Israel’s action cannot be justified under any circumstances.’ The West German foreign ministry said it was ‘dismayed and concerned’ by the raid. The Greeks called it ‘unacceptable.’ Even the Argentine Foreign Ministry declared Israel’s action ‘a threat to the peace and security in the Middle East.’”⁹³ But despite the outcry, these verbal responses had little to no impact on Israel.

Israel’s Use of its Instruments of National Power to Deal with Syria’s Nuclear Program

Similar to Israel’s use of its instruments of national power against Iraq’s nuclear program, Israel’s efforts against Syria focused on diplomatic and military means, including covert action. Israel did not use its information or economic instruments of national power to confront Syria’s nuclear program. These efforts are described below and answer secondary research question 1.

Diplomatic

After receiving the initial report of a suspected Syrian nuclear facility in early 2007, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert convened his security cabinet and directed that

⁹²Spector, 386.

⁹³Claire, 228.

they acquire proof of the reactor's existence. He needed evidence to make a case to convince America to attack Syria's nuclear reactor at al-Kibar.⁹⁴

By June 2007, the Mossad had successfully collected enough information for Olmert to make his case, and he headed to Washington. In his memoir, President George W. Bush recounts Olmert's request, "George, I'm asking you to bomb the compound."⁹⁵ But despite being convinced that the structure contained a gas-cooled, graphite-moderated reactor capable of producing weapons-grade plutonium much like North Korea's Yongbyon nuclear facility, the CIA could not confirm the location of additional facilities necessary to convert the plutonium into a weapon. Therefore, Bush responded to Olmert, "I cannot justify an attack on a sovereign nation unless my intelligence agencies stand up and say it's a weapons program."⁹⁶

Instead, Bush informed Olmert that America would take a diplomatic approach by internationally exposing the facility and demanding that Syria dismantle it under IAEA supervision. Olmert told Bush that the threat of a nuclear weapons program in Syria was an "existential" threat to Israel, and he worried that diplomacy would bog down and fail. He said, "I must be honest and sincere with you. Your strategy is very disturbing to me."⁹⁷

⁹⁴Michael Bar-Zohar and Nissim Mishal, "The Long Road to Syria," *Ynetnews*, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3944303,00.html> (accessed 28 January 2011).

⁹⁵George W. Bush, *Decision Points* (London: Random House, 2010), 420-422.

⁹⁶*Ibid.*

⁹⁷*Ibid.*

After receiving confirmation that nuclear materials were already on-hand at al-Kibar in August 2007, Olmert convened Defense Minister Ehud Barak and Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni. The leaders discussed the probable responses if Israel attacked Syria's nuclear facility and communicated their ideas to top security officials. After much debate, the decision was made. Israel would strike.⁹⁸

Fearing a possible military response from Syria following the strike, Prime Minister Olmert called Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan and requested that he relay a message to President Assad: Israel would not tolerate a Syrian nuclear plant. Olmert also conveyed that Israel would take no further military action and that if Assad chose not to draw attention to the strike, Israel would do the same.⁹⁹

Information

Because Israel did not want to forewarn Syria that it suspected the site at al-Kibar was indeed a nuclear reactor, Israeli leaders did not pursue an information campaign to deter Syria's nuclear ambitions. In fact even after the strike, the Israeli government initially refused to acknowledge the strike, in spite of US confirmation of the attack on 11 September 2007.¹⁰⁰

Benjamin Netanyahu, leader of the opposition Likud party, was the first Israeli official to acknowledge the strike when he expressed support for the operation in an

⁹⁸Bar-Zohar and Mishal.

⁹⁹Follath and Stark.

¹⁰⁰Richard Weitz, "Israeli Airstrike in Syria: International Reactions," Center for Nonproliferation Studies, <http://cns.miis.edu/stories/071101.htm> (accessed 1 February 2011).

Israeli Channel One TV interview on 19 September 2007. Despite his political opposition to Olmert, Netanyahu exclaimed, “When we are dealing with matters of national security, I know how to give my support.”¹⁰¹

Despite Netanyahu’s statements, the IDF implemented censorship on Israeli media prohibiting reports on the IAF strike against a target inside Syria, unless the reports were based on revelations in foreign press sources. The IDF lifted the censorship following a request from *Haaretz*, Israel’s oldest daily newspaper, due to the fact that Syrian President Bashar Assad confirmed the strike in an interview broadcast by the British Broadcasting Corporation on 5 February 2008.¹⁰²

Why did Israel impose media censorship? Typically, the purpose of an Israeli media censorship is to conceal military secrets. Some speculate that Israel wanted to minimize the pressure on Syrian leaders to retaliate. Others believe the Israeli government wanted to avoid a public debate regarding the attack because some US officials did not believe the Syrian threat warranted a preemptive strike.¹⁰³

Military (Covert Action and Air Strike)

On 7 February 2007, Iranian General Ali Reza Askari, former head of Iran’s Revolutionary Guard in Lebanon in the 1980s and Iran’s deputy defense minister in the mid-1990s, traveled to Damascus from Tehran. Before continuing on to a CIA safe house

¹⁰¹Yaakov Katz, “Bibi: I congratulated Olmert on Syria op,” *The Jerusalem Post*, <http://www.jpost.com/Israel/Article.aspx?id=75798> (accessed 1 February 2011).

¹⁰²Amir Oren, “IDF lifts censorship of Sept. 6 IAF strike on target inside Syria,” *Haaretz.com*, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/idf-lifts-censorship-of-sept-6-iaf-strike-on-target-inside-syria-1.230392> (accessed 1 February 2011).

¹⁰³Weitz.

in Istanbul, he waited to ensure that his family was safely out of Iran. Askari had fallen out of favor with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and was defecting to the West with the help of the CIA and Mossad.¹⁰⁴

When questioned, Askari revealed a goldmine of Iranian and Syrian secrets, specifically related to Syria's nuclear reactor of which American and Israeli intelligence agencies were completely unaware.¹⁰⁵ He conveyed that Iran was funding a Syrian nuclear reactor at al-Kibar, while North Korea was providing technical expertise. The information prompted the Mossad to begin operations to verify Askari's information.¹⁰⁶

In July 2007, Mossad agents tracked a senior Syrian official to his London hotel room. After departing for a meeting downtown, agents entered the man's room, located his laptop computer, and installed a Trojan Horse. This spyware allowed the Mossad to monitor the computer and copy all of the material saved on it. The findings were shocking: blueprints of a nuclear reactor in the Dir al-Zur area¹⁰⁷, correspondence with North Korean officials, and photographs.¹⁰⁸

The photos were especially revealing. They showed al-Kibar at various stages of its development, probably beginning in 2002, with pipes leading to a pumping station on

¹⁰⁴Follath and Stark.

¹⁰⁵The US misinterpreted the information it received on the Syrian site, while the Mossad and Aman estimated that Syria had no interest in or ability to acquire nuclear weapons.

¹⁰⁶Bar-Zohar and Mishal.

¹⁰⁷Al-Kibar is a desert location along the Euphrates River; it is 130 kilometers from the Iraqi border and 30 kilometers from Dir al-Zur.

¹⁰⁸Bar-Zohar and Mishal.

the Euphrates River which would serve as the cooling water supply system for the reactor. These photos revealed Syria's efforts to modify the building so that it would not look suspicious from overhead imagery. One photo showed an Asian in blue tracksuit trousers standing by an Arab. The Mossad identified the men as Chon Chibu, a leading member of North Korea's nuclear program and chief engineer of the Yongbyon plutonium reactor, and Ibrahim Othman, the director of Syria's Atomic Energy Commission.¹⁰⁹

Almost simultaneously, the Mossad successfully recruited one of the reactor's employees who provided Israel with photographs and video inside the suspected nuclear facility. These photos revealed ongoing construction efforts at al-Kibar.¹¹⁰

In July 2007, Israel's Ofek 7 satellite provided overhead imagery of the al-Kibar facility. Interestingly, Israel launched Ofek 7 just one month before on 11 June 2007.¹¹¹ Based on this imagery, American and Israeli analysts agreed that Syria was indeed building a nuclear facility and that it was based on North Korea's Yongbyon reactor.¹¹²

Israel's Unit 8200, equivalent to America's National Security Agency, provided intercepts of conversations between Syrian scientists and North Korean experts. Israel provided this information to the US, but Washington wanted proof that the facility was

¹⁰⁹Follath and Stark.

¹¹⁰Bar-Zohar and Mishal.

¹¹¹Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Israel successfully launches Ofek 7 satellite," <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Israel+beyond+politics/Israel%20successfully%20launches%20Ofek%207%20satellite%2011-Jun-2007> (accessed 5 May 2011).

¹¹²Bar-Zohar and Mishal.

truly a nuclear reactor and that nuclear material was already at al-Kibar.¹¹³ Strongly desiring American support, Israel intensified its collection efforts from those with stand-off capabilities, including overhead imagery and signals intercepts, to boots on the ground reconnaissance.

In August 2007, Israel's Sayeret Matkal conducted strategic reconnaissance efforts at al-Kibar. Under the cover of darkness, two helicopters transported the reconnaissance soldiers to the facility where they took soil samples that contained radioactive materials. These findings were immediately given to the US National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley who conveyed the information to Bush.¹¹⁴

In the opening days of September 2007, Al Hamed, a North Korean freighter traveling from Pyongyang, arrived in the Syrian port of Tartous with a cargo of uranium material labeled "element."¹¹⁵ Unwilling to wait for the US to intervene, Israel decided to attack.

At 2300 hours on 5 September 2007, ten F-15Is from the IAF's 69th Squadron departed Ramat David Air Base southeast of Haifa for a supported emergency exercise. Thirty minutes later, three of the F-15s were ordered back. The remaining seven flew north over the Mediterranean Sea to Tall al-Abuad where they attacked a Syrian radar station using laser-guided precision weapons and electronic jamming signals to prevent Syria's ability to detect the infiltration. Next, the F-15s flew eighteen minutes east to the

¹¹³Bar-Zohar and Mishal.

¹¹⁴Ibid.

¹¹⁵Seymour M. Hersh, "A Strike in the Dark: What did Israel bomb in Syria?" *New Yorker* 84, no. 1 (2008), http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2008/02/11/080211fa_fact_hersh (accessed 5 May 2011).

nuclear reactor site at al-Kibar where they dropped their Maverick missiles and 500-kg bombs.¹¹⁶ These munitions were laser guided by elite IAF troops who deployed to the area of operations on 4 September to mark the target.¹¹⁷ Once again, the IAF's surgical strike completely destroyed Syria's nuclear facility at al-Kibar, and all of Israel's pilots returned home safely.

Israeli covert operations did not cease with the destruction of the nuclear facility at al-Kibar. On 2 August 2008, General Mohammed Suleiman journeyed to his summer house in Rimal al-Zahabiya, 13km north of Tartous. Suleiman was President Assad's top aide on military and security matters and was responsible for the construction and security of the al-Kibar reactor. He served as Syria's contact to North Korea, coordinated the transfer of parts for the al-Kibar reactor, and arranged security for North Korean scientists and technicians involved in the reactor's construction. After the destruction of the reactor at al-Kibar, Suleiman began planning the construction of a new reactor at a location yet to be determined. While swimming in the water under watch from a team of bodyguards or eating dinner with friends,¹¹⁸ Israeli snipers shot and killed Suleiman.¹¹⁹ The message was clear-Israel would not allow its neighbors to possess nuclear weapons.

¹¹⁶Follath and Stark.

¹¹⁷Bar-Zohar and Mishal.

¹¹⁸Bar-Zohar and Mishal claim that Suleiman was having a dinner party when two snipers came ashore and shot Suleiman while sitting at the dinner table with his guests. Follath and Stark assert that Suleiman was swimming under careful watch of his bodyguards when a yacht carrying snipers shot and killed Suleiman in the water.

¹¹⁹Bar-Zohar and Mishal.

Economic

Israel did not pursue economic means to deal with Syria's nuclear reactor at al-Kibar. The reason was similar to its rationale for not using an information campaign; Israeli efforts to pursue UN sanctions would have informed the world of the covert nuclear reactor site at al-Kibar. Because Damascus was a signatory to the NPT, it was legally obligated to declare the site to the IAEA. Because it did not, Syria remained in violation of the IAEA safeguard agreement.¹²⁰ Therefore, Israel correctly assumed that it could take military action without any significant UN fallout. As a result, economic sanctions were not pursued by Israel in the UN.

International Responses to Israel's 2007 Attack on Syria's Nuclear Reactor

This section addresses the international responses to Israel's strike on Syria's nuclear reactor at al-Kibar. These responses are described in detail below and answer secondary question 2.

Syria

Syria's initial response to the bombing at al-Kibar came on the afternoon of 6 September 2007, just hours after the bombing. The Syrian Arab News Agency reported that Israeli jets flew from the Mediterranean into Syrian airspace at ~~about~~ "about one o'clock" in the morning. A Syrian military spokesman communicated, ~~Air~~ "Air defense units

¹²⁰Louka.

confronted them and forced them to leave after they dropped some ammunition in deserted areas without causing any human or material damage.”¹²¹

One week after the attack, Syrian Foreign Minister Walid Moallem commented, “Israel used live ammunition in a deliberate and hostile attack.”¹²² Moallem explained that Syrian anti-aircraft radar systems detected the Israeli fighters just before the planes released their missiles. However, according to Moallem, the strike did not result in any casualties or damage to property.¹²³

Appealing to UN Secretary, General Ban Ki-moon, and to the president of the Security Council, French Ambassador Jean-Maurice Ripert, Syria’s UN envoy Bashar Jaafari said Syria was “drawing attention to this flagrant violation by Israel of its airspace and to its aggression against the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic in clear and brazen defiance of international law.”¹²⁴ Jaafari continued, “If the international community persists in disregarding these Israeli actions in breach of international law, that is likely to subject the region and international peace and security to serious consequences that may be difficult to control.”¹²⁵

¹²¹Follath and Stark.

¹²²Haaretz.com, “Syrian FM: Israel dropped live ammo,” <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/syrian-fm-israel-dropped-live-ammo-1.229211> (accessed 1 February 2011).

¹²³Ibid.

¹²⁴Associated French Press, “Syria lodges UN complaint against Israel,” *NOW Lebanon*, 12 September 2007, <http://nowlebanon.com/NewsArchiveDetails.aspx?ID=12835> (accessed 5 May 2011).

¹²⁵Ibid.

President Assad's first public comments about the attack came in April 2008 in an interview with Qatar's *al-Watan* newspaper. Assad exclaimed, "Is it logical? A nuclear site did not have protection with surface to air defenses? A nuclear site within the footprint of satellites in the middle of Syria in an open area in the desert? The truth is that the raid was at a military site under construction."¹²⁶ He continued, "We are against mass destruction weapons for Israel, Iran or others. Where would we use it? On Israel it would kill the Palestinians. I do not see this as logical."¹²⁷

North Korea

One week after Israel's strike on the al-Kibar nuclear facility, a spokesman for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) Foreign Ministry, exclaimed, "This is a very dangerous provocation little short of wantonly violating the sovereignty of Syria and seriously harassing the regional peace and security. The DPRK strongly denounces the above-said intrusion and extends full support and solidarity to the Syrian people in their just cause to defend the national security and the regional peace."¹²⁸ Not surprisingly, North Korea did not reveal its contributions to the construction of the Syrian nuclear facility at al-Kibar.

¹²⁶Inal Ersan, "Assad says facility Israel bombed not nuclear: paper," Reuters.com, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2008/04/27/us-korea-north-syria-idUSL271480120080427?pageNumber=2> (accessed 1 February 2011).

¹²⁷Ibid.

¹²⁸Korean Central News Agency of DPRK, "Israel Condemned for Intrusion into Syria's Territorial Air," <http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2007/200709/news09/12.htm> (accessed 1 February 2011).

Turkey

Turkish Foreign Minister Ali Babacan demanded an explanation after finding fuel tanks dropped by Israeli fighters near the Turkish-Syrian border, which he said was a violation of Turkish airspace by Israel. Babacan explained, “All countries in the region must show respect to all countries’ sovereignty and avoid acts that lead to tensions. Otherwise, tensions would be fueled, and peace and stability in the region might be harmed.”¹²⁹

Prime Minister Olmert responded at a cabinet meeting on 28 October 2007. “If Israeli planes indeed penetrated Turkish airspace, then it was without prior intent or any intent to infringe upon or undermine Turkish sovereignty, which we respect.”¹³⁰ Olmert also apologized directly to Turkey’s prime minister for any harm caused.¹³¹ In the end, Turkey took no further action against Israel.

United Nations

In October 2007, Mohamed El Baradei, chief of the IAEA, criticized Israel for attacking the suspicious site in Syria saying, “That to me is very distressful because we have a system. . . . If countries have information that the country is working on a nuclear-related program, they should come to us. . . . But to bomb first and then ask questions later, I think it undermines the system and it doesn’t lead to any solution to any

¹²⁹Haaretz.com, —Syrian FM: Israel dropped live ammo.”

¹³⁰Associated Press, —Olmert Hints at Israel Air Raid on Syria,” *TREND*, 29 October 2007, <http://en.trend.az/news/world/wnews/1062028.html> (accessed 5 May 2011).

¹³¹*Ibid.*

suspicion.”¹³² But besides this criticism, the UN did very little to condemn Israel’s strike in the form of adopting resolutions. During the 2007 IAEA General Conference, the al-Kibar attack was not mentioned. The matter was not brought to the UN Security Council or to the General Assembly.¹³³

In June 2008-ten months after the strike, IAEA experts arrived at al-Kibar to inspect the site. What the inspectors found was incredible! The Syrians removed all debris from the bombed facility and paved over the entire site with concrete. They told inspectors that the site was previously a conventional weapons factory but not a nuclear reactor. They also denied any foreign involvement at al-Kibar.¹³⁴

The inspection team took soil samples and sent them to IAEA laboratories to determine whether the samples had come into contact with uranium. In its report, the IAEA described, “a significant number of anthropogenic natural uranium particles (i.e. produced as a result of chemical processing) [which were] of a type not included in Syria’s declared inventory of nuclear material.”¹³⁵ Syria disputed this claim saying that the Israel’s bombs included the uranium; the IAEA countered that such a case was of “low probability.”¹³⁶

¹³²Reuters.com, “IAEA chief criticizes Israel over Syria raid,” <http://www.reuters.com/article/2007/10/28/us-israel-syria-elbaradei-idUSN2844276720071028> (accessed 2 February 2011).

¹³³Louka.

¹³⁴Follath and Stark.

¹³⁵Ibid.

¹³⁶Ibid.

To this day, the IAEA continues its requests for follow-up inspections including unrestricted access to possible Syrian nuclear sites. However, President Assad refuses saying, “No, we are not going to sign [the protocol authorizing IAEA officials to inspect at any time]. . . . Nobody will accept to sign it. This is something about sovereignty-to come any time to check anything under the title of checking nuclear activities, you can check anything.”¹³⁷ Since the IAEA inspection in June 2008, Syria has not allowed the agency to conduct follow-up inspections.¹³⁸

Arab Nations

The Arab world was largely silent regarding Israel’s strike in Syria. Typically, Arab nations quickly condemn any warlike efforts by Israel. So why did they remain silent? One explanation is that most Arab governments believed that a nuclear-equipped Syria posed a great danger to the Middle East and would increase proliferation as nations like Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey would pursue nuclear weapons to avoid being left behind other Middle Eastern nations developing nuclear capabilities.¹³⁹ Even Iran, Syria’s closest ally in the Middle East, refrained from commenting on the strike.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷Reuters.com, “Syria's Assad says no extra access to nuclear inspectors,” <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/01/31/us-syria-nuclear-idUSTRE70U38K20110131> (accessed 2 February 2011).

¹³⁸Ibid.

¹³⁹Joshua Muravchik, “Preemption, Israeli style,” *latimes.com*, <http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/la-op-muravchik14oct14,0,4176100.story?coll=la-opinion-center> (accessed 2 February 2011).

¹⁴⁰Louka.

Because Syria did not officially acknowledge the attack at first, Arab states were not compelled to protest the strike which was surrounded by widespread speculation. Many rumors linked Damascus to Pyongyang which likely dissuaded Arab nations from protesting to prevent any possible connection with North Korea's highly controversial nuclear program. Arab countries seemed more than willing to sweep the whole event under the carpet.

United States

In the days and weeks following Israel's strike at al-Kibar, reports flooded America's media. These reports, primarily based on information from anonymous government sources, claimed that Israel destroyed a Syrian nuclear reactor that was being secretly built with the assistance of North Korea.¹⁴¹

At a 20 September 2007 news conference, reporters asked President George W. Bush about the incident four times. Bush commented, "I'm not going to comment on the matter."¹⁴² Despite his desire to reveal the operation as a means to isolate the Syrian regime, Bush respected Olmert's wish to maintain secrecy in order to avoid forcing Assad to retaliate. This was an Israeli operation, and Bush felt obligated to respect Olmert's wishes.¹⁴³

On 23 October 2007, David Albright, founder and president of the Institute for Science and International Security, released a satellite image of the target. Taken by a

¹⁴¹Hersh.

¹⁴²Ibid.

¹⁴³Bush, 422.

commercial satellite company, DigitalGlobe, on 10 August 2007, the photo showed a square building and nearby water-pumping station. Albright revealed that the building had similar dimensions as the nuclear reactor building in Yongbyon, North Korea. He said, “The tall building in the image may house a reactor under construction and the pump station along the river may have been intended to supply cooling water to the reactor.”¹⁴⁴

In April 2008, CIA Director Michael Hayden invited Albright to a meeting where he showed him images from the Syrian computer in London. Albright concluded, “There are no longer any serious doubts that we are dealing with a nuclear reactor in Syria.”¹⁴⁵

On 25 April, the CIA released a video titled “Syria’s Covert Nuclear Reactor at al-Kibar.”¹⁴⁶ It was created to demonstrate Syrian-North Korean nuclear cooperation to the US Congress. In the video, analysts provide condemning details of Syria’s nuclear activity at al-Kibar along with ongoing efforts to conceal the program. CIA Director Michael Hayden followed up the video with a speech saying the reactor was within weeks or months of completion when it was destroyed and within a year of becoming operational. Hayden exclaimed, “In the course of a year after they got full up, they would have produced enough plutonium for one or two weapons.”¹⁴⁷ Hayden also pointed out

¹⁴⁴Hersh.

¹⁴⁵Follath and Stark.

¹⁴⁶ROK Drop, “Syria’s Covert Nuclear Reactor at al-Kibar,” ROK Drop Web site, Veoh WebPlayer, 11:39, <http://rokdrop.com/2008/04/26/cia-video-of-syrian-al-kibar-nuclear-reactor-released/> (accessed 5 May 2011).

¹⁴⁷Randall Mikkelsen, “Syrian reactor capacity was 1-2 weapons/year: CIA,” Reuters.com, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2008/04/29/us-korea-north-usa-idUSN2819854620080429?pageNumber=1> (accessed 2 February 2011).

that the Syrian reactor was of a –similar size and technology” to North Korea's Yongbyon reactor.¹⁴⁸

Cross-Case Synthesis (Iraq and Syria)

Cross-case synthesis is the analytic technique used to analyze and compare the cases (Iraq and Syria). Findings are an aggregate of both cases which strengthen the conclusions, as opposed to relying on a single case. Tables display the data from each case in a uniform framework which allows for analysis and the determination of cross-case findings.

Findings: Israel's Use of Its Instruments of National Power

Cross-case synthesis reveals several similarities and differences between the cases. Table 5 organizes the data from which these findings are drawn. These findings answer secondary research question 3.

¹⁴⁸Ibid.

Table 5. Israel's Use of Its Instruments of National Power

	Iraq	Syria
Diplomatic	(See Table 4. Israel's Diplomatic Efforts to Deal with Iraq's Nuclear Program)	- Olmert asks Bush to bomb the al-Kibar reactor (Jun 2007) - Israel shares soil samples containing radioactive material with US National Security Advisor (Aug 2007)
Information	- Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee calls for a propaganda campaign (Jul 1980) - Shmuelewitz comments to <i>Die Welt</i> (15 Jul 1980) - Ne'eman comments to <i>Yediot Aharonot</i> that Osiris is for military purposes (18 Jul 1980) - Zippori Israel would resort to military means (14 Sep 1980)	None.
Military (including covert ops)	- Mossad recruits Halim (Spring 1978) - Sabotage of reactor core at La Seyne-sur-Mer (6 Apr 1979) - Assassination of Meshad (13 Jun 1980) - Assassination of Magalle (10 Jul 1980) - Poisoning of Rashid and Rassoul (Jul-Aug 1980) - SNIA Bombings (7 Aug 1980) - Threatening letters sent to Iraqi scientists and technicians (Aug-Sep 1980) - IAF attacks and destroys Osirak nuclear reactor (7 Jun 1981)	- Askari defects to West and provides a goldmine of intelligence (Feb 2007) - Mossad installs Trojan Horse on Syrian official's laptop (Jul 2007) - Mossad recruits insider at al-Kibar (Jul 2007) - Ofek 7 provides imagery of al-Kibar (Jul 2007) - Unit 8200 intercepts conversations between Syrian scientists and North Korean nuclear experts (2007) - Sayeret Matkal collects soil samples at al-Kibar (Aug 2007) - Israel detects North Korean ship, Al Hamed, at Tartous (Sep 2007) - IAF inserts troops to conduct terminal guidance ops (4 Sep 2007) - IAF attacks and destroys Syrian nuclear reactor at al-Kibar (5-6 Sep 2007)
Economic	None.	None.

Source: Created by author.

Timeframe

The timeframe in each case was significantly different. After learning about Iraq's nuclear program, Israel utilized its instruments of national power for six years (1975 to 1981) to deter nations from cooperating and contributing to Iraq's nuclear program before striking the Osirak reactor at al-Tuwaitha. In the case of Syria, Israel took just seven months (February-September 2007) from the time it learned of Syria's nuclear program to the bombing of the reactor at al-Kibar. So why were the timeframes so different?

Part of the answer stems from whether or not the targeted nation had declared its nuclear program and facilities to the IAEA. Iraq formally declared its nuclear program and the al-Tuwaitha facility. Therefore, Israel first attempted to work within international law which requires that an attack must be imminent prior to a nation launching a justifiable defensive attack on a weapons proliferation activity.¹⁴⁹ Once Israel determined that they had no other way to prevent Osirak from going ~~hot~~” in June 1981, it executed the air strike.¹⁵⁰ It acted after the reactor’s completion but before the facility became operational. If Israel had waited until after fueling commenced, then the likelihood of radiological fallout increased significantly¹⁵¹ which would result in extensive collateral damage and considerably more backlash from the international community.

In the case of Syria, the reactor at al-Kibar was built in secrecy. Therefore, Israel could reasonably argue that the reactor would be used for military purposes.¹⁵² Experts believed that the al-Kibar reactor would reach completion within weeks or months and that it would become operational within a year. But rather than wait for Syria to complete the reactor as it did with Osirak, the IAF launched its attack. Therefore, the timeframe in which Israel is willing to wait to strike a nuclear facility relates to the targeted nation’s transparency and cooperation with the IAEA.

¹⁴⁹Louka.

¹⁵⁰Claire, 98.

¹⁵¹Louka.

¹⁵²Ibid.

Diplomatic

Prior to the Osirak attack, Israel made extensive use of its diplomatic instrument of national power for six years. However, it only used limited diplomatic efforts before the IAF's strike at al-Kibar. When Olmert requested that America bomb the Syrian reactor, President Bush rejected the offer and explained his preference to engage Syria diplomatically. This US response probably solidified Olmert's decision to bomb sooner rather than wait for America to reveal the existence of Syria's covert nuclear facility which would give away Israel's element of surprise and could potentially make the strike more difficult if Syria emplaced air-defense assets at al-Kibar.

Another diplomatic difference between cases concerns the nature of Israel's relation to the nation(s) supplying assistance to the targeted state. In the case of Osirak, Jerusalem maintained diplomatic relations with Paris and Rome and attempted to deter them from supporting Iraq's nuclear program. However, Israel does not have formal diplomatic ties to North Korea and did not attempt to convince Kim Jong Il, Supreme Leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, to stop helping Syria. Even if Jerusalem did maintain diplomatic ties with Pyongyang, it probably would not have attempted to engage the DPRK diplomatically to prevent tipping off North Korea and Syria that Israel knew of the North Korean-Syrian nuclear relationship and had discovered the suspected nuclear facility at al-Kibar.

Information and Economic

Israel chose not to use its information and economic instruments of national power to address Syria's nuclear program. Doing so would only inform Damascus that Israel was aware of its covert nuclear facility. On the other hand, because there was no

attempt to hide what was going on at the Osirak reactor, Israel did attempt to use the media to pressure France and Italy to cease providing nuclear material, technology, and know-how to Iraq. This information campaign was begun late in the process and had little impact on Iraq's nuclear program. Perhaps the sole benefit to Israel's media campaign was that it gave the world notice that Israel was concerned about Saddam Hussein's apparent attempt to build nuclear weapons and would likely take further measures to prevent a nuclear-armed Iraq. Israel did not effectively use its economic instrument of national power in either case.

Israeli Perception of an Existential Threat

Israel considered both Iraq and Syria as an existential threat. In spite of multiple administrations leading Israel's efforts to deal with Iraq (whereas a single administration determined policy regarding Syria), national policy remained largely the same. Israel would not tolerate its enemies' acquisition of nuclear weapons, which has since become known as the Begin Doctrine. If Israel perceives an enemy's acquisition of nuclear weapons as an existential threat, it will take military action to destroy the threat if no other means are available which offer a high probability of success.

Willingness to Act Unilaterally

Both cases also reveal Israel's willingness to act unilaterally without approval or sanction by the US. The strikes were planned and executed solely by the IAF. Israel did obtain KH-11 satellite photos from the US to plan its attack against the Osirak reactor, but the US did not knowingly provide the imagery to aid Israel's military efforts. Concerning the Syrian case, Bush writes, "The bombing demonstrated Israel's

willingness to act alone. Prime Minister Olmert hadn't asked for a green light, and I hadn't given one. He had done what he believed was necessary to protect Israel.”¹⁵³

Israel's Perception of the IAEA

Another finding is that Israel does not place great faith in the IAEA. Israel did not report the suspected Syrian nuclear site to the IAEA in 2007. Instead, it took direct action to destroy it. In the case of Iraq, Israel attacked the Osirak reactor in spite of IAEA safeguards and Iraqi and French reassurances that Baghdad's atomic program was solely for peaceful purposes. The fact that Iraq was cooperating fully with the IAEA did not deter Israel from attacking the Osirak reactor.

Following the attack at al-Kibar, the IAEA's Director General criticized Israel's strike and its failure to report the suspected site to the IAEA beforehand. Israel's decision not to report the suspected nuclear site to the IAEA reveals its lack of confidence in the agency's safeguard system to prevent nations from obtaining nuclear weapons. In the Iraqi case, Israel decided to act when it became clear that the IAEA was not going to stop Iraq's nuclear program.

Extensive Use of Covert Action

Another similarity between cases is the extensive use of covert operations, primarily by the Mossad. These actions included recruiting insiders, sabotage of reactor components, assassination of key nuclear scientists, intimidation (bombings and threatening letters), and installation of malicious computer programs. Additional intelligence activities include acquiring satellite imagery of targets, intercepting

¹⁵³Bush, 422.

communications, and strategic reconnaissance efforts. In the case of Iraq, these efforts were used to delay and deter Baghdad's nuclear program. In the case of Syria, Israel used such efforts to confirm for themselves the existence of a nuclear facility at al-Kibar and to convince the US of the same.

Air Strikes

In both cases, the IAF was ordered to conduct the same mission-attack in order to destroy a nuclear reactor. Both air strikes were conducted against similar targets; each was an above ground reactor at a single location. In the case of Syria, no air defense assets were present. In the case of Iraq, air defense soldiers and assets were present but ineffective. Both flight routes required IAF aircraft to cross international borders revealing Israel's willingness to violate neutral or potentially hostile airspace without prior coordination in order to maintain operations security and accomplish the mission.

In the case of Iraq, eight F-16As and six F-15As flew 1600 km across the Gulf of Aqaba, southern Jordan, and northern Saudi Arabia. The F-16As served as the strike force, while the F-15As set up a combat patrol to intercept Iraqi MiGs and to conduct electronic warfare operations against Iraqi air defense radar. In the Syrian case, seven F-15s flew north over the Mediterranean Sea to Tall al-Abuad where they engaged an intermediate target, a Syrian radar site, and then continued east to al-Kibar. On site, the F-15s deployed their Maverick missiles and 500 kg laser-guided bombs completely destroying the Syrian reactor before returning west across the Turkish-Syrian border. In contrast, the F-16As used Mk-84 2,000 lb unguided bombs with delayed fuses to destroy the Osirak reactor.

Although the details of both missions are similar in many ways, the IAF maintained a sufficient amount of flexibility which allowed it to address specific operational differences. It also incorporated new technologies into operations. With these advancements, the IAF is more able to deal with increasingly complex threats.

Israel's actions demonstrate that it plans operations so as to minimize collateral damage. In both cases, the IAF completely destroyed the nuclear reactor resulting in minimal collateral damage. While ten soldiers and one French civilian were killed at al-Tuwaitha, no casualties were taken at al-Kibar. The attacks were deliberately planned at times when a limited number of personnel would be present at the facilities. Rather than indiscriminate bombing of a wide area, Israel conducted surgical strikes of the nuclear reactors.

Findings: International Responses to Israeli Attacks

Cross-case synthesis also reveals several similarities and differences in the international responses to the attacks in Iraq and Syria (see table 6). These findings answer secondary question 3.

Table 6. International Responses to Israeli Attacks

Iraq		Syria
Iraq	- Hussein calls on all nations to help Arabs acquire nuclear weapons to offset Israel's nuclear capability (23 Jun 1981) - Hussein continues pursuit of nuclear weapons under the Office of Research and Development - al-Maliki demands Israel compensate Iraq for destroying Osirak reactor (Jan 2010)	No Significant Response.
Syria	No Significant Response.	- Syrian Arab News Agency reported that Israeli jets dropped some ammunition without causing any human or material damage (6 Sep 2007) - Foreign Minister Moallem said Syrian anti-aircraft radar detected Israeli fighters just before they released their missiles; the strike did not result in any casualties or property damage (Sep 2007)

		- UN Envoy Jaafari appealed to UN Secretary Ki-moon and Security Council President saying Israel had violated Syrian airspace in defiance of international law - President Assad argued that Syria was not attempting to develop nuclear weapons (Apr 2008)
Arab Nations	- Kuwait, Jordan, the PLO, Syria, UAE, Bahrain, Morocco, and Kenya denounce Israeli attack - Qaddafi calls on all Arabs to attack Israel's Dimona nuclear reactor - Sadat feels he is made to look like an accomplice; Egypt asks US to reassess its military aid to Israel - Council of the League of Arab States condemns Israel's attack, affirms rights of States to establish peaceful nuclear programs, and calls on US to terminate military aid to Israel	- Silence . . . perhaps revealing that most Arab governments opposed a nuclear-equipped Syria
United Nations	- UN passes Resolution 487 condemning Israel's attack, recognizing Iraq's right to pursue peaceful nuclear technologies, and calling on Israel to place its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards (19 Jun 1981) - UN General Assembly passes Resolution 36/27 warning Israel to cease such armed attacks against nuclear facilities and calling nations to stop providing arms to Israel (13 Nov 1981) - IAEA Director General says attack was an assault on IAEA safeguard system - IAEA Board of Governors adopts resolution recommending suspension of Israel's privileges and rights of membership along with IAEA technical support to Israel (12 Jun 1981) - IAEA General Conference suspends technical assistance to Israel (26 Sep 1981) - IAEA's credentials committee effectively bans Israel's participation in the IAEA; US suspends its membership and funding to the IAEA until Board of Governors allows Israel's full participation (1982)	- Mohamed ElBaradei, Chief of IAEA, criticizes Israel's attack on Syria's suspected nuclear site without reporting suspicions to the IAEA first (Oct 2007) - Israel's attack at al-Kibar is not brought before the Security Council or the General Assembly - IAEA inspects site at al-Kibar only to find all debris removed and the entire site paved with concrete; soil samples reveal uranium particles (Jun 2008) - IAEA continues to submit requests to conduct follow-up inspections, but Syria refuses (2010)
France	- French President and Foreign Minister condemn Israel's attack - France recalls 115 nuclear scientists from al-Tuwaita and leaves 15 to assess presence of radiation leaks - France leaks classified information regarding Israel's Dimona nuclear reactor and plutonium reprocessing facilities	No Significant Response.
Britain	- PM Thatcher condemns Israel's attack - British intelligence complains to CIA for providing Israel full access to KH-11 satellite imagery	No Significant Response.
DPRK	No Significant Response.	- Spokesman for DPRK's Foreign Ministry said attack violated sovereignty of Syria and harassed regional peace and stability (Sep 2007)
Turkey	No Significant Response.	- Foreign Minister Babacan demanded an explanation after finding Israeli fuel tanks near the Turkish-Syrian border which he claimed was a violation of Turkish airspace
United States	- President Reagan quietly supports Israel's attack - SECDEF Weinberger questions why Israel did not notify US of pending attack and claims Israel's actions violated the US Arms Export Control Act - Secretary of State Haig and Reagan's CoS support sanctions - US suspends sale of F-16s to Israel - US resumes sale of F-16s to Israel (Sep 1981)	- Unofficial reports flood media - President Bush refuses to comment on bombing (20 Sep 2007) - David Albright reveals that the destroyed Syrian facility had similar dimensions as North Korea's Yongbyon nuclear reactor (23 Oct 2007) - CIA releases video titled "Syria's Covert Nuclear Reactor at al-Kibar" (25 Apr 2008) - CIA Director Hayden says reactor was within weeks or months of completion and one year from becoming operational (Apr 2008)

Source: Created by author.

Lack of Military Response by Targeted Nation

Neither strike provoked a military response from the targeted nations. Iraq was heavily engaged in the Iran-Iraq War. After Iraq's full-scale invasion into Iran in September 1980, Iranian forces stalled the invasion by March 1981,¹⁵⁴ just months before the attack at al-Tuwaitha. Consequently, Iraq was in no position to mount a counterattack against Israel.

Syria, on the other hand, did not respond militarily to the raid at al-Kibar for entirely different reasons. Because the facility along the Euphrates was a covert nuclear site, Assad did not want to draw attention to the facility which would usher in wide-scale condemnation from the UN and the IAEA in particular. Additionally, Syrian forces were unprepared to mount a counteroffensive against its aggressor.

Insignificant Economic Responses

There was only an insignificant economic response to Israel's attack at al-Tuwaitha when the US suspended sale of F-16s to Israel as a result of its breaking the Arms Export Control Act. Within a few short months, however, these sales resumed to Israel. In the case of Syria, no economic measures were taken.

Arab Response

Following the strike at al-Tuwaitha, there was widespread condemnation of Israel's actions by the Arab world. Kuwait, Jordan, the PLO, Syria, UAE, Bahrain,

¹⁵⁴John Pike, "Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988)," GlobalSecurity.org, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/iran-iraq.htm> (accessed 14 May 2011).

Morocco, Kenya, Libya and others condemned Israel's attack. Most Arab nations voiced their outcry on the floor of the UN.

However, the Arab world was largely silent following the IAF's attack at al-Kibar. Because of the media blackout in Israel and speculative reports worldwide, Arab nations were unsure of exactly what had occurred. Moreover, the IDF had not invaded Syria with a large conventional force; instead they conducted a surgical strike which resulted in little collateral damage and no human loss. If the Arab world demanded punitive action from the UN or mounted a counteroffensive, then those nations might be seen as complicit in the building of the al-Kibar reactor. Lastly, many Arab states tacitly approved of the strike because a nuclear-equipped Syria would further destabilize the region.

US-Israeli Relations

The Iraqi case reveals the strong Israeli-American alliance and Washington's unwavering support to Israel. After the strike at al-Tuwaitha, the UN passed several resolutions condemning the attack. The IAEA's credentials committee effectively prohibited Israel's participation in the IAEA until the US intervened. America was also the sole nation to support Israel when it voted against Resolution 36/27 despite 109 states voting to adopt the resolution.

The Syrian case also shows a significant amount of cooperation between the US and Israel. Prior to Israel's attack at al-Kibar, Olmert asked Bush to bomb the reactor. Rather than face the potentially significant responses of the international community alone, Jerusalem would greatly prefer to work in conjunction with the world superpower or to stand behind her altogether. Even though Bush refused to destroy the facility, he

respected Olmert's request to remain silent about the attack. Bush recalled, "This was his operation, and I felt an obligation to respect his wishes. I kept quiet, even though I thought we were missing an opportunity [to isolate Assad's regime]." ¹⁵⁵

UN Response

The manner in which the UN addressed the attacks is one more striking difference between cases. Unlike the UN resolutions passed following the strike at al-Tuwaitha, the attack at al-Kibar was not even brought before the Security Council or the General Assembly. In fact, Israel uncovering and destroying Syria's covert site at al-Kibar caused increased IAEA scrutiny of Syria's nuclear program whose efforts continue to this day.

Targeting of Israel's Nuclear Program

A final finding of this study is that the international community targeted Israel's nuclear program following the Osirak attack but did not after al-Kibar. In the case of Iraq, Hussein called on the international community to help Arabs acquire nuclear weapons to offset Israel's capability, while Qaddafi called on all Arabs to attack Israel's Dimona nuclear reactor. Meanwhile, the UN Security Council pressured Israel to place its nuclear program under IAEA safeguards. France even leaked classified information regarding Israel's Dimona nuclear reactor and plutonium reprocessing facilities.

However, the international community did not target Israel's undeclared nuclear program following the IAF's attack against Syria. The most likely reason is due to the initial controversy surrounding the nature of the site at al-Kibar. If it was not a nuclear

¹⁵⁵Bush, 422.

site as Syria claimed, then there would be no rational grounds for telling Israel to declare its program.

Implications of Case Findings for Israel's Dealings with Iran's Nuclear Program

After conducting cross-case synthesis, the findings which answer the secondary research questions provide a means by which to answer the primary research question: how might Israel's experience dealing with Iraq's nuclear program (1975 to 1981) and its experience dealing with Syria's nuclear program (2007) guide Israeli politicians and military planners as they consider how to respond to Iran's nuclear program? Based on the previous findings, this section provides analysis regarding current and probable Israeli action to deal with Iran's nuclear program. It addresses potential responses should Israel conduct a pre-emptive attack against Iran's nuclear facilities. Finally, it specifies similarities and differences in the Iraqi and Syrian cases and in the current situation with Iran.

Current Israeli Use of Its Instruments of National Power to Deal with Iran's Nuclear Program

Israeli Perception of an Existential Threat

Like in the cases of Iraq and Syria, it is important to understand that current Israeli leaders view the Iranian nuclear program as an existential threat in much the same way that Jerusalem's leaders did in the cases of Iraq and Syria. According to Netanyahu, Israel worries, not only that Iran or one of its proxies would destroy Tel Aviv, but that Tehran will use nuclear weapons as leverage to back its terrorist proxies in their attempt to make life dangerous inside Israel. He fears that Israel will no longer remain a haven for

Jews and that the entire *raison d'être* of the Jewish nation is at stake. Even opponents, like the left-wing Meretz Party who criticize Netanyahu's policies toward the Palestinians, consider Iran's nuclear program as an existential threat.¹⁵⁶ Therefore, it is likely that Israel will once again apply the Begin Doctrine and take action to combat the Iranian nuclear threat. In fact, Israel has already begun to exercise its instruments of national power to deal with this threat.

Diplomatic and Economic

Prime Minister Netanyahu is arguably Israel's most influential and outspoken leader concerning Iran's nuclear program. For example, he traveled to Moscow in February 2010 to ask President Medvedev to cancel Russia's S-300 air defense missile contract to Iran.¹⁵⁷ Pentagon advisor Dan Goure explains the importance of the system saying, "If Tehran obtained the S-300, it would be a game-changer in military thinking for tackling Iran."¹⁵⁸ Iran would use the S-300 to defend its nuclear sites against an Israeli strike. Apparently, Netanyahu succeeded. In September 2010, the Kremlin banned the sale of the S-300 saying that the system was subject to recent UN sanctions.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶Goldberg.

¹⁵⁷Barak Ravid, "Russia tells Netanyahu it will hold off on Iran arms deal," Haaretz.com, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/russia-tells-netanyahu-it-will-hold-off-on-iran-arms-deal-1.263387> (accessed 8 May 2011).

¹⁵⁸Payvand Iran News, "Russia losing to China on Iran S-300 quest," <http://www.payvand.com/news/09/may/1109.html> (accessed 8 May 2011).

¹⁵⁹BBC. "Kremlin bans sale of S-300 missile systems to Iran," <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-11388680> (accessed 8 May 2011).

During Netanyahu's journey to Russia, he also encouraged Medvedev to join international efforts to impose harsher sanctions. Netanyahu states, "President Medvedev heard from me my position about the need for sanctions with teeth. They can bite only if they have teeth. Diluted sanctions don't work."¹⁶⁰ The UN Security Council is the primary forum whereby the world is sanctioning Iran. This is a stark contrast with the Iraqi and Syrian cases where the UN did not take action to stop either nuclear program.

Table 7 describes the various sanctions beginning with UN Security Council Resolution 1696 in July 2006 which demanded that Iran suspend all uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities. In 1970, Iran ratified the NPT and began allowing IAEA inspectors to enter its nuclear facilities in 1992.¹⁶¹ Despite declaring its nuclear program, however, Tehran refuses to comply with the IAEA and to suspend uranium enrichment. Therefore, the Security Council passed five additional resolutions with the most recent, UN Security Council Resolution 1929, in June 2010.

¹⁶⁰Ravid.

¹⁶¹GlobalSecurity.org, "Nuclear Weapons," <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/iran/nuke.htm> (accessed 5 May 2011).

Table 7. UN Security Council Resolutions against Iran

UNSCR	Summary of Resolution
1696 (July 2006)	UNSCR 1696 demanded that Iran suspend all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities, including research and development, and gave it one month to do so or face the possibility of economic and diplomatic sanctions to give effect to its decision.” ¹
1737 (Dec 2006)	Determined to give effect to its unmet 31 July demand that Iran suspend all uranium enrichment-related and reprocessing activities, the Security Council today imposed sanctions on that country, blocking the import or export of sensitive nuclear materiel and equipment and freezing the financial assets of persons or entities supporting its proliferation sensitive nuclear activities or the development of nuclear-weapon delivery systems.” ²
1747 (March 2007)	Determined to constrain Iran’s development of sensitive technologies in support of its nuclear and missile programmes, the Security Council today widened the scope of its December 2006 sanctions against Iran by banning the country’s arms exports and freezing the assets and restricting the travel of additional individuals engaged in the country’s proliferation-sensitive nuclear activities.” ³
1803 (March 2007)	The Security Council today approved a new round of sanctions against Iran for refusing to suspend uranium enrichment and heavy-water-related projects, as had been required in resolutions 1696 (2006), 1737 (2006) and 1747 (2007), and for taking issue with the International Atomic Energy Agency’s (IAEA) right to verify design information provided to it . . . The Council called upon all States to exercise vigilance and restraint” regarding entry into or transit through their territories of individuals engaged in or providing support for Iran’s proliferation-sensitive nuclear activities or for the development of nuclear-weapon delivery systems. . . . The Council further extended the freezing of the financial assets of persons or entities supporting its proliferation-sensitive nuclear activities or the development of nuclear-weapon delivery systems. . . . The Council also continued the blocking of the import and export of sensitive nuclear material and equipment.” ⁴
1835 (September 2008)	Taking note of the 15 September report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) stating that Iran had not suspended uranium-enrichment-related activities, the Security Council today called on that country to fully and without delay comply with Council resolutions that demanded an end to that programme and to meet the requirements of the IAEA Board of Governors. . . . The resolutions the Council reaffirmed -- 1696 (2006), 1737 (2006), 1747 (2007) and 1803 (2008) -- demanded under Chapter VII of the UN Charter that Iran suspend uranium enrichment and heavy-water-related projects, and also established sanctions for non-compliance.” ⁵
1929 (June 2010)	UNSCR 1929 expands the arms embargo on Iran by banning a wider range of conventional arms and equipment related to nuclear proliferation and missile development and by allowing states to search vessels suspected of transporting such cargo to Iran. The resolution also attempts to target Iran’s financial sector, restrict firms linked to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), and restrain Iran’s nuclear proliferation activity.” ⁶

Source: Created by author. ¹UN Security Council, —Security Council Demands Iran Suspend Uranium Enrichment by 31 August, or Face Possible Economic, Diplomatic Sanctions,” U.N. Security Council 8792, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/sc8792.doc.htm> (accessed 5 May 2011); ²UN Security Council, —Security Council Imposes Sanctions on Iran for Failure to Halt Uranium Enrichment, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 1737 (2006),” U.N. Security Council 8928, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/sc8928.doc.htm> (accessed 5 May 2011); ³UN Security Council, —Security Council Toughens Sanctions Against Iran, Adds Arms Embargo, with Unanimous Adoption of Resolution 1747 (2007),” U.N. Security Council 8980, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2007/sc8980.doc.htm> (accessed 5 May 2011); ⁴UN Security Council, —Security Council Tightens Restrictions on Iran’s Proliferation-Sensitive Nuclear Activities, Increases Vigilance Over Iranian Banks has States Inspect Cargo,” U.N. Security Council 9268, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2008/sc9268.doc.htm> (accessed 5 May 2011); ⁵UN Security Council, —Security Council Reaffirms Earlier Resolutions on Iran’s Uranium Enrichment, Calls on Country to Comply with Obligations Fully and Without Delay,” U.N. Security Council 9459, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2008/sc9459.doc.htm> (accessed 5 May 2011); ⁶Varun Vira, John Karian, David Pupkin, Stephen Szrom, Maseh Zarif, Daniel Katz, Eiman Behzadi, and Kerry Harris, —Sanctions on Iran: Reactions and Impact,” <http://www.irantracker.org/us-policy/sanctions-iran-reactions-and-impact> (accessed 8 April 2011).

In addition to the UN, many nations and coalitions including the US, European Union, Australia, Japan, South Korea, and Norway are following up with specific measures to go beyond UN sanctions. On 1 July 2010, President Barak Obama signed the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act which strengthens existing sanctions, authorizes new ones, and supports a multilateral diplomatic strategy to deal with Tehran's nuclear program.¹⁶²

Ultimately, Israeli leaders will determine whether or not diplomatic and economic efforts are effectively deterring and delaying Iran's nuclear program. Netanyahu does not believe that Iran is Israel's problem alone; he believes the world, led by the US, has a responsibility to deal with Tehran. Furthermore, Netanyahu does not place great faith in sanctions including those passed by the UN Security Council or those implemented by the US and other nations.¹⁶³

Willingness to Act Unilaterally

If Israel determines that diplomatic and economic sanctions are no longer viable and covert efforts are no longer capable of buying time, it is likely to take unilateral action to strike Iran's nuclear facilities.

¹⁶²Office of the Press Secretary, "Remarks by the President at Signing of the Iran Sanctions Act," <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-signing-iran-sanctions-act> (accessed 5 May 2011).

¹⁶³Goldberg.

Extensive Use of Covert Action

Similar to their efforts in the Iraqi and Syrian cases, Israel's Mossad is making extensive use of covert action to disrupt and delay Iran's nuclear program.¹⁶⁴ First, the Mossad is targeting and assassinating key scientists and engineers. On 15 January 2007, Ardeshir Hassanpour, a high-level Iranian nuclear scientist, died from exposure to radioactive rays.¹⁶⁵ He worked at the nuclear plant in Isfahan which produces uranium hexafluoride gas.¹⁶⁶ Both *STRATFOR* and Britain's *The Sunday Times* attribute Hassanpour's death to the Mossad.

Another assassination occurred on 12 January 2010 when Masoud Ali Mohammadi, a senior physics professor at Tehran University, was killed when a remotely detonated motorcycle exploded. The Iranian government accused the US and Israel of the attack, but others claim that the Iranian regime conducted the attack as Ali Mohammadi supported Hossein Mousavi, Ahmadinejad's primary opposition candidate in the June 2010 presidential election.¹⁶⁷ According to *The Economist*, Ali Mohammadi was one of

¹⁶⁴It is important to note that, in most cases, the Mossad does not confirm its covert efforts. Therefore, this thesis highlights the actions which have been attributed to the Mossad, however, they may be the result of another agency or a multinational effort. Care is taken to point out differing opinions when appropriate.

¹⁶⁵STRATFOR.com, —Gopolitical Diary: Israel Covert Operations in Iran,” <http://www.stratfor.com/> (accessed 5 April 2011).

¹⁶⁶Sarah Baxter, —Iranian nuclear scientist _assassinated by Mossad,”” *The Sunday Times*, http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/us_and_americas/article1324321.ece (accessed 5 April 2011).

¹⁶⁷Nasser Karimi and Brian Murphy, —Masoud Ali Mohammad: Bomb Kills Iran Nuclear Physicist Tied to Mousavi,”” *The Huffington Post*, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/01/12/masoud-ali-mohammad-bomb-_n_419779.html (accessed 5 April 2011).

the most important people involved in the [Iranian nuclear] programme,”¹⁶⁸ which makes the Mossad a more likely candidate.

On 29 November 2010, agents on motorbikes stuck magnetic explosives to the cars of Dr. Majid Shahriari and Dr. Fereydoun Abbasi-Davani as they drove to work. Shahriari, a prominent nuclear expert, was killed, while Abbasi survived. Abbasi is on a UN list of sanctioned individuals for suspected ties to secret nuclear activities.¹⁶⁹ On 13 February 2011, Ahmadinejad appointed Abbasi as head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran.¹⁷⁰ It is reasonable to assume that the Mossad will continue to target Abbasi.

Besides assassinations, intelligence professionals accredit the Mossad with other forms of covert action to disrupt Iranian operations. For instance, it uses front companies to infiltrate Iran’s purchasing network. These businesses win Tehran’s trust by providing legitimate material initially and then deliver defective items.¹⁷¹ The extent and effectiveness of such operations is unknown.

¹⁶⁸*Economist*, “Who killed the professor? New light is being cast on the strange death of an Iranian physicist,” http://www.economist.com/node/15502383?story_id=15502383 (accessed 5 April 2011).

¹⁶⁹Catrina Stewart, “Bomb blast blamed on Israel and US kills Iran nuclear scientist,” *The Independent*, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/bomb-blast-blamed-on-israel-and-us-kills-iran-nuclear-scientist-2146996.html?service=Print> (accessed 5 April 2011).

¹⁷⁰AllVoices.com, “Irani scientist Fereydoun Abbasi Davani appointed as nuclear chief,” <http://www.allvoices.com/contributed-news/8179207-irani-scientist-fereydoun-abbasi-davani-appointed-as-nuclear-chief?print=true> (accessed 5 April 2011).

¹⁷¹Philip Sherwell, “Israel launches covert war against Iran,” *The Telegraph*, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/israel/4640052/Israel-launches-covert-war-against-Iran.html> (accessed 5 April 2011).

Probably the best known covert operation, most likely a combined American-Israeli effort, is the Stuxnet computer virus which destroyed roughly one-fifth of Iran's nuclear centrifuges in 2009. The virus was designed to send Iran's nuclear centrifuges spinning out of control while displaying normal running operations to plant operators. In November 2010, Ahmadinejad first described the impact of the virus saying the cyberattack only caused ~~minor~~ problems with some of our centrifuges."¹⁷² But according to Secretary of State Clinton, Iran's efforts have been set back several years.¹⁷³

One final quasi-covert action is notable. This action relates to the disappearance of Shahram Amiri, an Iranian nuclear scientist, during a pilgrimage to Mecca in June 2009.¹⁷⁴ Iran's Foreign Minister, Manouchehr Mottaki, accused the US and Saudi Arabia of kidnapping Amiri.¹⁷⁵ However, Secretary of State Clinton claims that he defected ~~of~~ his own free will."¹⁷⁶ Rather than being kidnapped, US officials say that the US paid Amiri \$5M and provided him a new identity in the US for information concerning Iran's nuclear program.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷²William J. Broad, John Markoff, and David E. Sanger, ~~Israeli~~ Test on Worm Called Crucial in Iran Nuclear Delay," *The New York Times*, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/16/world/middleeast/16stuxnet.html?_r=1 (accessed 5 April 2011).

¹⁷³Ibid.

¹⁷⁴Siobhan Gorman, Farnaz Fassihi, and Jay Solomon, ~~Iran~~ Scientist Returns to Tehran," *The Wall Street Journal*, http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703792704575366462408626890.html?mod=WSJ_World_LeadStory (accessed 8 April 2011).

¹⁷⁵Melman.

¹⁷⁶Gorman, Fassihi, and Solomon.

¹⁷⁷BBC, ~~Shahram~~ Amiri spied for the US in Iran, reports say," <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-10661066?print=true> (accessed 8 April 2011).

In July 2010, Amiri resurfaced at an office of the Pakistan Embassy in Washington leading to his return home. Some argue that Iranian authorities threatened to harm Amiri's family if he did not return. An US official says, "His safety depends on him sticking to that fairy tale about pressure and torture. . . . His challenge is trying to convince security forces that he never cooperated with the United States."¹⁷⁸ Although sources do not attribute Amiri's disappearance to the Mossad, his case reveals that both America and Israel are making great effort to deal with Iran's nuclear program.

Timeframe

Because of the success of Israeli and American covert operations, Israeli leaders believe the timeframe in which Iran will possess nuclear weapons has extended significantly. Meir Dagan, retiring Director of the Mossad, estimated in early 2011 that technological difficulties could delay Tehran from obtaining the bomb until 2015.¹⁷⁹ This represents a sharp contrast to earlier estimates by top officials who claimed Iran was on the cusp of success. In June 2010, Secretary of Defense Gates said most intelligence estimates predict that Iran was one to three years from building nuclear weapons, while one Israeli policy maker estimated as soon as March 2011.¹⁸⁰

Israel's Perception of the IAEA

As in the case of Iraq, Israel lacks faith in the ability of the IAEA to ensure that Tehran's nuclear program is used only for peaceful purposes. Additionally, Iran refuses

¹⁷⁸Ibid.

¹⁷⁹Broad, Markoff, and Sanger.

¹⁸⁰Goldberg.

to comply with IAEA demands to halt uranium enrichment activities. Therefore, it is unlikely that the IAEA will be able to deter an Israeli pre-emptive strike.

Air Strike

As time progresses, it is very likely that the IDF will continue to plan and refine a military strike option against Iran's nuclear facilities. Key planning considerations include Iranian air defenses, flight routes, refueling options, etc. The most significant difference from the IAF's strikes in 1981 and 2007 is the fact that Iran possesses three to four likely targets (Isfahan, Natanz, Arak, and possibly Qom), whereas al-Tuwaitha and al-Kibar were single locations. Additionally, the Natanz facility is largely underground which necessitates the use of precision munitions to "burrow" through up to twenty-three meters of soil and concrete.¹⁸¹ These operational challenges certainly make a pre-emptive strike much more complex and difficult.

Likely International Responses to an Israeli Attack on Iran's Nuclear Facilities

Lack of Military Response by Targeted Nation

Unlike the cases of Iraq and Syria, Iran is much more capable of responding militarily to an Israeli strike of its nuclear facilities. Ahmadinejad claims that Iran's response would be "harsh and painful." He says, "Our possibilities would be limitless and would encompass the whole world."¹⁸² Kaveh Ehsani, a political scientist who studies

¹⁸¹Simon.

¹⁸²Associated Press, "Ahmadinejad: Our response to attack would be worldwide," *The Jerusalem Post*, <http://www.jpost.com/IranianThreat/News/Article.aspx?id=185499> (accessed 10 April 2011).

Iran at DePaul University, agrees stating “[Iran’s] strategy to react to this is to export conflict-to Afghanistan and Iraq and Lebanon and Gaza . . . they’ll raise hell anywhere they can, like in Saudi Arabia.”¹⁸³

Lieutenant General Gabi Ashkenazi, Israel’s former chief of staff, explains that Iran maintains an estimated 300 Shahab missiles that can range most parts of Israel. If Tehran launches these missiles, Israel will only have 10 to 12 minutes to seek shelter. But Ashkenazi believes Hezbollah and Hamas pose an even greater retaliatory threat. Hezbollah has rebuilt its arsenal since the 2006 Lebanon War and now possesses some 40,000 rockets near the Israeli-Lebanese border.¹⁸⁴ These rockets warrant concern due to the sheer number and their proximity to Israel. Similarly, Hamas which also receives support from Iran could initiate attacks from the Gaza Strip.¹⁸⁵

Iran could also respond to an IAF strike by attacking tankers in the Strait of Hormuz through which forty percent of the world’s oil flows. Such attacks would drive up oil prices. In fact, Iran’s Revolutionary Guard is already preparing for such action. In April 2010, it conducted a large-scale exercise in the Persian Gulf where it used more than 300 “ultra-fast” boats to attack abandoned war ships being used as targets. Ali Reza Tangsiri, a military spokesman, said the “Ya Mahdi” attack boat, named after the Shiite

¹⁸³Dan Murphy, “Repercussions of an Israeli attack on Iran,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2010/0812/Repercussions-of-an-Israeli-attack-on-Iran> (accessed 11 April 2011).

¹⁸⁴Linda Gradstein, “WikiLeaks Cable: Iranian Missiles Can Strike Israel in 12 Minutes,” *aolnews.com*, <http://www.aolnews.com/2011/01/03/wikileaks-cable-iranian-missiles-can-strike-israel-in-12-minute/> (accessed 11 April 2011).

¹⁸⁵*Ibid.*

Muslim messiah who is expected to one day return and bring universal justice, was ~~less~~ detectable by radar” because of its ~~high~~ speed.”¹⁸⁶

Other likely targets of Iranian aggression include US troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. Many strategists and political analysts believe that Iran will hold the US responsible if Israel attacks Iran’s nuclear facilities. In response, it could increase personnel and material support to militants. Some speculate that it could provide these forces with surface-to-air missiles.¹⁸⁷ In any case, the stakes are high, not only for Israel, but also for the US.

One important counter-point to consider is that Iranian leadership may show restraint in order to preserve power. Wayne White, former deputy director of the Middle East desk at the State Department’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research, explains that Iran may show restraint following an Israeli attack to avoid being drawn into a conflict that could threaten the Islamic revolution. He says, “The Iranians might also appreciate that if they up the ante . . . there could be more blowback on them,” he says, pointing out that a dramatic Iranian attack on US interests, or a precipitous withdrawal from the NPT and UN nuclear monitoring could provoke a US response far more threatening to Iran than the limited strike Israel is capable of.”¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶Scott Peterson, ~~Iran~~ war games begin with new ‘ultra fast’ speed boats,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2010/0422/Iran-war-games-begin-with-new-ultra-fast-speed-boats> (accessed 11 April 2011).

¹⁸⁷Murphy.

¹⁸⁸Ibid.

Insignificant Economic Response

Potential economic sanctioning of Israel could come in many forms. For instance, the UN could demand that Israel compensate Iran for any damages, as it is currently doing in the case of Iraq (see pages 41-42). Or the US might once again halt sales of military equipment like the F35 Joint Strike Fighter which is scheduled for delivery to Israel in 2015.¹⁸⁹

But such US sanctions are unlikely. The US Department of State explains, “U.S. assistance will help ensure that Israel maintains its qualitative military edge over potential threats, and prevent a shift in the security balance of the region. U.S. assistance is also aimed at ensuring for Israel the security it requires to make concessions necessary for comprehensive regional peace.”¹⁹⁰ In other words, the nearly \$3 billion which the US provides annually to Israel, almost entirely in the form of military assistance,¹⁹¹ is a bargaining chip the Obama administration is using to achieve a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In any case, America will play a key role in determining unilateral economic sanctions or influencing multinational reprisals if Israel takes action against Iran.

¹⁸⁹Jeremy M. Sharp, “U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel,” Congressional Research Service (16 September 2010), <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33222.pdf> (accessed 8 May 2011).

¹⁹⁰Ibid.

¹⁹¹Ibid.

Arab Response

Arab nations may outwardly oppose an Israeli attack, but evidence reveals that many states actually support action against Iran's nuclear program. King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia has repeatedly urged the US to attack Iran's nuclear program. According to Adel al-Jubeir, the Saudi ambassador to Washington, Abdullah told General David Petraeus in April 2008 to "cut off the head of the snake."¹⁹²

Others agree. Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa "argued forcefully for taking action to terminate [Iran's] nuclear programme, by whatever means necessary. That programme must be stopped. The danger of letting it go on is greater than the danger of stopping it."¹⁹³

Zeid al-Rifai, former Prime Minister of Jordan, expressed concern that diplomatic efforts to end Tehran's nuclear aspirations will not work. Rifai states, "Bomb Iran, or live with an Iranian bomb. Sanctions, carrots, incentives won't matter."¹⁹⁴

Yousef al-Otaiba, UAE ambassador to the US, also supports a military strike on Iran's nuclear facilities. If Washington allows Tehran to cross the nuclear threshold, the small Arab countries in the Gulf will have no choice but to leave the American sphere of influence and ally themselves with Iran.¹⁹⁵ Although most of the anti-Iranian comments

¹⁹²Ian Black and Simon Tisdall, "Saudi Arabia urges US attack on Iran to stop nuclear programme," *The Guardian*, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/nov/28/us-embassy-cables-saudis-iran/print> (accessed 11 April 2011).

¹⁹³Ibid.

¹⁹⁴Ibid.

¹⁹⁵Goldberg.

were directed toward Washington, these nations would likely publicly condemn, but privately support, an Israeli attack as well.

US-Israeli Relations

If Israel acts autonomously, it may rupture relations between Jerusalem and Washington. By alienating America, Israel could lose its only meaningful ally and further isolate itself from the world. The presiding US administration plays a significant role in the equation. In the cases of Iraq and Syria, Presidents Reagan and Bush both supported Israel's actions. However, President Obama may not provide similar support. Therefore, the timing of an Israeli attack is a key consideration for Jerusalem's decision makers. Should they attack now to prevent further Iranian advancement or wait to see who the next US president will be?

UN Response and Targeting of Israel's Nuclear Program

In response to an Israeli strike on Iran's nuclear facilities, it is possible that the UN, led by the US, will pressure Israel to declare its nuclear program and to fall under IAEA safeguards. In his August 2009 speech in Prague, President Obama called for a nuclear free world. He declared, "So today, I state clearly and with conviction America's commitment and desire to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons. . . . The world must stand together to prevent the spread of these weapons. Now is the time for a strong international response."¹⁹⁶ Despite these pressures, it is unlikely that Israel will declare its nuclear program.

¹⁹⁶Toby Harnden, "President Barack Obama calls for a nuclear free world in Prague speech," *The Telegraph*, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/>

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Chapter 4 provides in-depth answers to this study's primary and secondary research questions. It presents, analyzes, and explains the evidence produced by the comparative case study. This chapter states the major discoveries uncovered in chapter 4. It explains the significance of the study's findings and makes recommendations for further inquiry.

Major Discoveries of Case Study

Based on the comparative case study between Iraq and Syria, the following six discoveries inform the current situation in Iran.

1. Israel almost certainly views Iran's nuclear program as an existential threat as it did with the Iraqi and Syrian cases.
2. Israel is already implementing its instruments of national power to deal with Iran's nuclear program.
3. The success of Israeli and American covert actions have increased the amount of time it will take for Iran to build nuclear weapons.
4. Because it will take Iran longer to build nuclear weapons than initial estimates predicted, Israel is allowing UN diplomatic and economic sanctions, along with the additional sanctions of other actors, to take effect.

barackobama.com/5109810/President-Barack-Obama-calls-for-a-nuclear-free-world-in-Prague-speech.html (accessed 11 April 2011).

5. If Israel determines that diplomatic and economic sanctions are no longer viable and covert efforts are no longer capable of buying time, it is likely to take unilateral action to strike Iran's nuclear facilities.
6. This study is unable to determine with any great certainty the likelihood of an Iranian response to an Israeli attack of its nuclear facilities. However, the research reveals that Iran is much more capable of a military response than Iraq and Syria were in 1981 and 2007, respectively. Nevertheless, these anticipated responses probably will not deter Israel from taking action.
7. If Israel chooses to strike Iran's nuclear facilities, Arab states are unlikely to mount any significant response, other than verbal condemnation.
8. The US is most capable of responding to an unilateral Israeli attack. However, the study indicates that the Obama administration will probably not withdraw support from Israel so that it may continue to pursue other US interests such as a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict even though their tacit encouragement for such action would likely be significantly less than it was during either the Bush or Reagan administrations. This probably will not preclude an attack, but as discussed in Chapter 4, it might cause the delay of the operation until a more supportive US administration comes to power.

Significance of Studies Findings

This study is significant for both US political and military leaders. If Israel conducts a unilateral strike against Iran, it is possible that Iran will take action against US forces and bases in the Middle East, primarily in Iraq and Afghanistan. Moreover, Iran's Revolutionary Guard could threaten a large portion of the world's oil supply in the Strait

of Hormuz. Therefore, military planners should develop contingency plans which consider these potential Iranian responses.

This study also informs political leaders of several important considerations with regard to Israel. First, Israel perceives America as its greatest ally and is allowing time for US sponsored sanctions to take effect. Therefore, Washington must not lose sight of the Iranian nuclear issue as new challenges (Egyptian revolution, protests and revolt in Libya, etc.) compete for the attention of President Obama, the National Security Council, and other key leaders in the US Government. It must continue to proactively address Tehran's efforts to develop nuclear weapons internationally through the UN and with efforts such as Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act and covert actions by the US intelligence community. If Israel determines that sanctions and covert action are no longer able to delay Iran's nuclear program and that it has a reasonable probability of achieving its desired effect on Iranian nuclear weapons development, it will likely conduct a unilateral strike as it did in Iraq and Syria.

If Israel attacks Iran's nuclear facilities, America's leaders must be prepared to answer several difficult questions. Will the US defend Israel on the floor of the UN as it did following the destruction of Iraq's nuclear reactor? Or will the Obama administration condemn the attack? If it chooses the later course, will it perhaps even join with other nations and call for Israel to formally declare its nuclear program and bring its facilities under IAEA safeguards? Will the US assist Israel if Hezbollah, Hamas, Iran, or other Arab nations conduct retaliatory acts? And will this support include commitment of forces?

Finally, the Obama administration must consider how Israel's security concerns of a nuclear-equipped Iran relate to its agenda including the desire for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and a world without nuclear weapons. If, for instance, America continues to strongly back Israel, then Jerusalem might be more willing to halt the construction of new settlements in the West Bank, an ongoing obstacle in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Conversely, Jerusalem is unlikely to agree to such concessions if Washington neglects the Iranian issue.

Suggestions for Further Research

To further prove or disprove the findings of this study, researchers should continue to evaluate current events. Future researchers could apply Allison and Zelikow's models (Rational Policy Model, Organizational Behavior Model, and Government Politics Model) to the Iraq and Syria cases. Doing so will provide needed clarity into Israel's national security decision making process.

Another study might focus on Israel's willingness to accept risk in a potential strike on Iran's nuclear facilities and potential mitigation strategies. For instance, could Israel use unmanned aerial vehicles to conduct such an attack? Or might Israel incorporate medium-range ballistic missiles, like the Jericho II or its successor the Jericho III, into an attack?

As time progresses, future developments will also confirm or deny the assumptions of this study. It is possible, though unlikely, that Israel's next prime minister will not view Iran's nuclear program as an existential threat. On the other hand, current or future Iranian leaders could forego Tehran's nuclear program or agree to fully cooperate

with the IAEA. Such actions would significantly decrease Israel's concern with Iran's atomic program.

Future developments may also convince American leaders to conduct military operations against Iran. If current UN sanctions fail, the Obama administration might attempt to lead a multinational coalition to destroy Iran's nuclear facilities. Or a new, more hawkish, administration could determine to strike Iran's nuclear facilities unilaterally in spite of ongoing UN sanctions. Further study is needed on how these possible developments might influence the likelihood, nature, and effectiveness of the many possible military operations to eliminate Iran's nuclear capability. The importance and complexity of this topic makes it ripe for analysis from many perspectives.

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