

# The United States and the Iranian Nuclear Challenge: Inadequate Alternatives, Problematic Choices

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Iran's military nuclear program has emerged as one of the main threats that the international community, the region, and undoubtedly Israel will have to tackle in the coming years. This is particularly evident in view of Iran's conduct in the past few months, which clearly indicates its determination not to yield to international pressure and to achieve control of the nuclear fuel cycle, what will enable it to attain military nuclear capability.

**I**t appears that Tehran's policy and the progress and pace of its emerging nuclear threat will be influenced first and foremost by the moves and policies of the United States, possibly the only player in the international arena with the necessary power to generate effective pressure and leverage – both political and military – on Iran. Washington's current position on the issue states that the diplomatic and political channels should be thoroughly exploited in an attempt to stop the Iranian nuclear program. At the same time, the upper echelons of the US administration adhere to its familiar message regarding the Iranian nuclear situation, that "all options are on the table." Referring here clearly to a military option, the administration considers the use of force as a last resort, if and when all other options failed

What, then, are the options available to the US administration in dealing with the heavy risks posed by the Iranian nuclear program? In effect, the alternatives open to the US can be divided into four main modes of operation: diplomacy, subversion, military force, and deterrence. It is reasonable to assume that the US will opt for a combination of these approaches, and if one of these avenues is exhausted, use of the others will probably increase. This article analyzes the various possibilities available to the United States, the interface between them, their efficiency, and the likelihood of their implementation. Although America's choices concerning Iran impact heavily on Israel and influence its own approach to the threat, this essay does not explore recommendations for Israel, either vis-à-vis the US or Iran.

## **The Diplomatic Approach (and the sanctions route)**

The American administration has pursued a diplomatic approach over the past two to three years, during which it allowed Britain, Germany, and France (the EU-3) to lead negotiations with Tehran. The US supported the Tehran Declaration (October 21, 2003) and the Paris Agreement (November 14, 2004), according to which Tehran undertook not to carry out any enrichment-related activities and re-processing of fissile material until the EU-3 reached a long-term agreement with Iran. The US also approved the long-term agreement proposed by European countries in August 2005 that Iran rejected outright, despite its inclusion of a number of incentives. Later, after Iran resumed conversion of uranium in violation of the Paris Agreement, the US expressed support

for the Russian compromise to allow Iran to operate a nuclear program for peaceful purposes, while enriching uranium on Russian soil instead of in Iran itself.

Iran rejected the Russian proposal, but in practice continues to negotiate its terms. It stepped up the heat further when it removed the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) seals from its nuclear facilities and resumed enrichment on a small scale at its Natanz research facility, testing twenty centrifuges. In light of Iran's defiance, the US managed to achieve what it has been seeking for a long time: involvement of the UN Security Council in the Iranian nuclear problem, alongside the IAEA. The disappointment of the EU-3 over Iran's non-compromising policy contributed to this achievement, reinforcing its alliance with the United States in forming a united front aimed at convincing Russia and China to support them in reporting (or in US terms, referring) the matter to the Security Council.

The United States' perseverance with the diplomatic channel and the great patience the administration has shown is a result of Washington's view that in the current circumstances there are no better options for handling the problem. The diplomatic channel enables the United States to buy time, which allows it to focus on the most urgent area of its foreign policy – Iraq. While for now stabilization in Iraq does not present as an imminent possibility, if achieved it could increase the administration's

options in the Middle East, including with regard to Iran. Moreover, adhering to the diplomatic approach has allowed the administration to deepen its multilateral partnership – the international partnership in general and the trans-Atlantic partnership in particular – that President Bush listed at the top of his foreign policy agenda for his second term of office.<sup>1</sup> Multilateral action is of great importance for the administration in connection with a range of challenges other than Iran, including Iraq, North Korea, Syria and Lebanon, and the Palestinian arena.

Given the advantages the diplomatic approach offers the administration and the chance it may provide a reasonable solution to the problem or, alternatively, will lead to greater international unity and determination to increase pressure on Tehran in response to its intransigence, the administration agreed to substantive concessions during the negotiations with Iran. Specifically, supporting the long-term agreement proposed by European countries, the US agreed to drop the demand that Iran dismantle its enrichment infrastructure; and the US acquiescence to the Russian

proposal de facto included an undeclared agreement for Iran to continue converting uranium at the UCF plant at Esfahan.

It appears that diplomatic moves will not be exhausted in the near future. Even after the Iranian issue has been referred to the Security Council, deliberations in the Council are expected to continue for some time, in view of the European countries' perseverance with the negotiations tactic, even if on more rigid terms, and in view of the serious reservations – particularly of Russia and China – towards using sanctions. It is likely that under these conditions, further compromises will subsequently be offered to Iran.

The chances of the diplomatic alternative alone persuading Iran to abandon its military nuclear program are slim. Tehran has already shown that for the right to enrich uranium and control the nuclear fuel cycle, it is willing to waive what under the Khatami regime was considered of great significance to Iranian diplomacy: the support of EU countries. Under these circumstances, forming a coordinated, tough, and uncompromising international front, capable of exerting even greater pressure on Tehran, will not be an easy task for the United States in the foreseeable future.

Moreover, even if the international community or part of it (through a coalition of the willing) ultimately chooses to impose sanctions on Iran in order to push it toward political compromise, this is not expected to



*Gregory Schulte, US ambassador to the IAEA, at a press briefing in Vienna*

deliver a real threat to the survivability of the conservative regime in Tehran. It will more likely, particularly in the initial stages, be a matter of damaging Iran on a symbolic level. The international community and the United States currently think more

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in terms of "smart sanctions" that will isolate Iran diplomatically and scientifically (for example, imposing travel restrictions on leaders, freezing assets, or stopping scientific cooperation in the field of nuclear activity for peaceful objectives), and less on painful economic measures (such as placing an embargo on Iranian oil exports).

Tough sanctions at this stage do not appear to be a preferred route. In addition to shaking up the world oil market and the possibility that Iran would respond by quitting the NPT, there is also the concern that severe sanctions would primarily hit the Iranian population (like the sanctions imposed on Iraq in the previous decade), alienate it, and lead to an undesirable effect: a national response of domestic cohesion and greater support for the conservative regime. Such an eventuality would probably reduce in advance the chances of success of the United States' second op-

tion – the option of subversion or a regime change.

### **Regime Change**

Achieving a change in the Iranian regime by providing opposition factions with economic, political, and military support but without the United States exerting force is an option that has been considered by decision-makers in Washington for some time. President Bush has repeatedly gone over the heads of the Iranian leaders and intimated to the Iranian people that it should not resign itself to the actions of an "unelected few,"<sup>2</sup> and the US Congress has for a long time been considering legislation (that has not yet become law) designed, among other objectives, to further the transition to democracy in Iran.<sup>3</sup> This is an appealing option because of the low economic, political, and military outlay it requires and the fact that it seemingly offers the potential of solving the problem of Iran acquiring nuclear capacity or, at least, of reducing the threat it poses, if one assumes that a more pragmatic than ideological regime gains control. A regime change presents as an even more inviting option since the June 2005 election of President Ahmadinejad, who favors a more strident and tough declared ideology (even if most of his messages are essentially not new and resonate of the Tehran mullahs' past declarations).

The main disadvantage of the regime change option lies in the slim chance of this occurring within a relevant timescale, before the Ira-

nian nuclear capability is realized. Moreover, the tight control enjoyed by conservative elements in Iran is unprecedented in the Islamic republic. Even with considerable funding and support it is hard to see how in the foreseeable future an opposition can emerge as a threat and a viable alternative to the current regime. On the other hand, in the long term, the policy of cultural repression exerted by the Ahmadinejad government, if it continues, stands to foment unrest against the conservative regime.<sup>4</sup> Yet even so, there is no guarantee at all that a more moderate regime in Tehran would make significant concessions on nuclear capabilities, especially given the wide national consensus, including among reformists, that Iran has the right to develop such capabilities.

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The bottom line: regime change by "soft" and subversive means is not expected to materialize in the short term and may only come to fruition in a number of years or even decades. However, American willingness to invade Iran in order to accelerate change is not a realistic option due to the very heavy price the United States would have to pay, and is not even under consideration. Research also suggests that the great degree of uncertainty involved in a regime change

and the complexity of the task of stabilizing an alternative regime (as the Iraqi model currently shows) prevent regime change from constituting a solution for such complex problems as the nuclear issue.<sup>5</sup>

As a result, the Bush administration has thus far invested relatively limited resources in advancing an Iranian regime change, mainly financing radio broadcasts to the country.<sup>6</sup> In addition, it has also taken pains to maintain open and sometime even direct channels of communication with Tehran, for example, via the US ambassador in Baghdad, Dr. Zalmay Khalilzad, regarding events in Iraq.

### The Military Option

Beyond the difference of opinion within the administration regarding the use of force against Iran, the issue of removing Iran's nuclear capability by military means has also become a hotly disputed topic among the American public. One clear indication of this is a survey conducted recently by the *Los Angeles Times* that reported that 57 percent of Americans support military intervention in Iran if it maintains its nuclear program and is close to achieving military capabilities.<sup>7</sup>

The American administration understands the severe dangers involved in Iran achieving a nuclear capability, including a regional arms race, an escalation in terrorism and extremism in the Middle East, and a serious threat to energy sources and regional stability. Against this backdrop, senior administration officials

have made it clear that the US will not tolerate Iran with a nuclear capability. President Bush and Vice President Cheney recently stressed that Iran, the leading supporter of terror, must not be allowed to have nuclear weapons. Outlining his administration's second term foreign policy objectives, President Bush declared that "if, 20 years from now, the Middle East is dominated by dictators and

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mullahs who build weapons of mass destruction and harbor terrorists, our children and our grandchildren will live in a nightmare world of danger. That must not happen."<sup>8</sup>

In view of the determined statements made by Washington and the recently issued National Security Strategy that reiterates the concept of preemption and defines Iran as the greatest challenge to the United States, one may assume that the administration is seriously considering the possibility whereby it may ultimately have to mount a military operation in order to delay/stop the Iranian nuclear project. On the other hand, the United States is faced with a number of difficult and significant challenges that may lead the administration to decide that the damage incurred by military action in Iran

might exceed its rewards, including:

■ The international arena and European countries strongly oppose military action. The American administration invested great effort in repairing the trans-Atlantic split caused by its decision to go to war in Iraq without international consent, after it realized that it needed a European and international partnership in each of the challenging areas it faces, particularly Iraq. A military move without European, Russian, and Chinese approval would endanger the administration's efforts in other arenas and would probably damage its standing in the Middle East as well. Following what appears to be the failure of negotiations between the EU-3 and Iran, the administration continues to base its strategy on the Iranian issue on an international partnership, as the administration wishes to avoid turning the problem into an American-Iranian issue.

■ The intelligence precedent in Iraq. After no stockpiles of non-conventional weapons were found in Iraq, the administration will have to provide clear intelligence evidence ("a smoking gun") of the existence of military nuclear capabilities in Iran to justify military action against it. To date, the US and the international community have struggled – without success – to prove conclusively that the Iranian nuclear program has military applications. Doing so in the future will continue to be an uphill battle.

■ Endangering efforts to stabilize the situation in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The United States is investing enormous military, financial, diplomatic, and humanitarian resources in efforts to stabilize Iraq, so that it will gradually be able to bring its troops home and quell criticism among the American public. An attack on Iran may lead to Iranian reprisals in Iraq (and Afghanistan), where the Iranians have in recent years established dormant terror cells and amassed considerable capabilities to provide terrorist factions with arms and inflict damage on the US military while disrupting its operations.<sup>9</sup>

■ Threat to the historic American process of democratization in the Middle East.<sup>10</sup> Serious difficulties in Iraq will pose a threat to the United States' ability to stabilize a democratic regime in Baghdad, which is designed to serve as a role model throughout the Middle East. In addition, military action against Iran is expected to bolster extremist patterns in the region's Islamic countries. This would significantly impinge on the ability of the regimes in those countries to embrace the democratic model and would give Iran an opportunity to unite the Islamic world around it in a jihad-like struggle against the United States.

■ Iranian response. Judging by Iran's public threats and deterrent action it appears that it is likely to respond to an attack on it by employing terror tactics (around the world, and not just in Iraq and Afghanistan), using SSMS, threatening freedom of passage in the Straits of Hormuz, and deploying its agents in the region (such

as Hizbollah) to act not only against the United States but also against its allies in the Middle East, including Israel and the Persian Gulf states. An Iranian response might expand the circle of escalation in the region, in a manner and extent that are difficult to predict.<sup>11</sup>

■ Operational complexity. It is common wisdom that Iran has learned the lessons of the attack on the nuclear reactor in Iraq, has concealed some of its nuclear facilities underground, and has dispersed them. Moreover, it is not clear whether there is comprehensive intelligence that can make it possible to stop Iran's nuclear project completely, even by means of massive attack.<sup>12</sup> In addition, the more Iran progresses with uranium conversion, the less important the UCF facility at Esfahan becomes as a bottleneck whose destruction would have achieved a significant technical delay in the Iranian project.

■ Oil prices. An American attack would probably lead to a sharp rise in oil prices, at a time when they would likely already be high. According to various assessments the price of a barrel of oil may, in the case of military confrontation, reach around \$130.



Analysis of the heavy risks involved in an attack against the nuclear facilities in Iran places a question mark over the determination of the United States to remove the Iranian nuclear threat by using military force. The administration's considerations for and against military action (from a cost effective point of view) will be examined through competing assessments on how Iran would respond to an American attack, versus its conduct after it crosses the nuclear threshold. In this regard the following facts should be noted:

■ There are growing voices within the American administration that argue that the price of military action against Iran would be too heavy, and would achieve the opposite result in that it would unite the Iranian people around the regime. Furthermore, there are elements in the administration that estimate that after it obtains the bomb Iran will become a more responsible and restrained player in the region, due to fears that its activity in, for example, the terror arena, would lead to a nuclear crisis. Thus, there are people in the administration who, not openly, assess that Iran will likely have nuclear weapons in five to ten years.<sup>13</sup>

■ The think tank community in Washington and additional leading academics with significant influence on the administration believe that Iran's acquisition of a nuclear capability is inevitable and recommend to the administration not to take any military action against it. Thus, Thomas Barnett, the highly influential advisor



to the Pentagon (many of whose ideas are faithfully implemented by senior officials) recommended to the Bush administration not to base its second term in office on the struggle against Iran's efforts to obtain nuclear arms. According to Barnett, Iran's ambition to achieve a nuclear capability is only natural after the United States toppled two regimes on its eastern and western borders, Afghanistan and Iraq.<sup>14</sup> And another example: as part of extensive research published recently by the Nonproliferation Policy Education Center (NPEC) based in part on interviews with officials in the US administration, one of the editors, Henry Sokolski, revealed that only a few experts and members of the administration are willing to admit publicly (which implies that secretly they do admit) that the possibility of removing the threat by military means is self-defeating and likely to exacerbate the situation.<sup>15</sup>

## Deterrence

The complexity of the military alternative and the price involved in such a course of action highlight the need to create an effective deterrent to Iran. The deterrence alternative has two time dimensions: before completion of the nuclear program and after completion. In the first dimension, the United States will try to convey to Iran that its continued efforts to obtain nuclear arms are not recommended as they will lead to counter measures that will only undermine its national security, instead of strengthening it. At the same time, the deter-

rent measures will be also directed to create leverages and conditions that reduce the risks inherent in a situation in which Iran nonetheless eventually achieves a nuclear capability. A "pre-nuclearization" deterrent is expected to incorporate – in addition to military action – elements from the other alternatives, such as economic pressure and subversive steps.

If this dimension fails and the United States decides not to take military action, it is expected to resign itself to Iran's nuclear capability and to direct its efforts to "classic" deterrence dialogue (à la the Cold War), where it will try to create clearly defined ground rules vis-à-vis Iran, particu-

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larly by demonstrating power and likewise probably through dialogue with Iran via different channels.

Research<sup>16</sup> suggests several examples of deterrence and measures aimed to fashion more comfortable conditions for "the day after" that are relevant to both time dimensions, including:

- Clear military measures, such as: boosting military presence around

Iran; deploying nuclear arms on ships in the Persian Gulf; a sea closure; deploying a nuclear umbrella over countries in the region; boosting ballistic missile defense capabilities of allies in the Middle East; enhancing interception capabilities of aircraft and other Iranian means of transporting nuclear facilities by air, land, and sea; developing a capability of threatening the survivability of the Iranian regime (its leaders, security facilities, command and control systems, economic infrastructure); exporting advanced weaponry to countries in the region; and other measures.

- Diplomatic-economic-security measures, such as: reducing the vulnerability of infrastructure and oil production systems in Gulf states from terrorist attack by developing backup systems; reducing Iran's possibilities of threatening freedom of oil transportation in the Persian Gulf by creating transportation alternatives to the Straits of Hormuz, for example oil pipeline infrastructures (this would reduce the possibility of oil prices soaring even after Iran's "nuclearization"); consolidating international and regional agreement regarding economic and diplomatic sanctions to be imposed on countries that are in breach of the NPT (this would deter countries in the region from starting an arms race should Iran achieve nuclear capability); and increasing defense cooperation with Gulf states in combating terrorism, providing sea defenses, and enhancing nuclear counter proliferation capabilities.

# From the Uranium Mines to Nuclear Weapons

<b>URANIUM MINES</b>  yellow cake	Uranium is a mineral that is mined from the ground. After processing of the uranium ore, it is converted into a compound known as "yellow cake." Iran also bought uranium from external sources.
<b>URANIUM CONVERSION FACILITY (UCF)</b> (at Esfahan)  (natural) uranium tetrafluoride  (natural) uranium hexafluoride (gas)	<p>The yellow cake is transferred to the Uranium Conversion Facility (UCF), located at Esfahan, where it is purified and transformed into uranium tetrafluoride (UF<sub>4</sub>)</p> <p>The uranium tetrafluoride can be transformed into several relevant compounds, but important here is its transformation into uranium hexafluoride, which, under certain temperature and pressure conditions, can assume a gaseous form, suitable for insertion into gas centrifuges, a common method of enrichment also adopted by Iran.</p>
<b>URANIUM ENRICHMENT FACILITY</b> (at Natanz)  Low enriched uranium (LEU) gas (~5% uranium-235) Nuclear power reactor fuel  High enriched uranium (HEU) gas (>80%)	<p>In the enrichment process, located in an underground facility at Natanz, the natural uranium, which has a low (~0.7%) content of the isotope 235, is enriched to a higher value, according to the intended use of the product. Low enriched uranium (LEU), around 5%, is used mainly in nuclear power reactors. Although many of the world's research reactors used high enriched uranium (80-90%), many have been converted to low values (less than 20%), so that they would not be available for use in nuclear weapons that need very high enrichment values (probably more than 90%).</p> <p>In the complex enrichment process, enriched uranium hexafluoride is produced.</p>
<b>URANIUM RECONVERSION FACILITY</b> (at Esfahan?)  HEU metal	<p>If nuclear fuel is desired, the enriched gas will then be transformed into a compound suitable for use in nuclear reactor fuel.</p> <p>For nuclear weapons use, the uranium hexafluoride must be transformed into a metallic form.</p>
<b>HEU MACHINING FACILITY</b> (location unknown)  HEU metal hemispheres	The uranium metal must then be precisely machined into two perfect hemispheres.
<b>NUCLEAR ORDINANCE FACILITY</b> (location unknown) Nuclear explosive Nuclear warhead Nuclear trigger mechanism	These hemispheres can then be inserted into the explosive mechanism (incorporating high explosives, the nuclear trigger mechanism and fast fuses), which then constitutes the nuclear explosive device.
<b>WEAPONS STORAGE SITES</b> (locations unknown)	For military uses, this is usually incorporated into a bomb or missile warhead.

Prepared by Ephraim Asculai

## Conclusion

The four alternatives available to the United States for preventing Iran from gaining a nuclear capability are problematic, and do not necessarily lead to the desired result. On their own, sanctions will probably not persuade Iran to change course and relinquish its nuclear goals, and the process of achieving international consensus on imposing the sanctions looks to be far in the future and as such would allow Tehran to progress significantly with its research and development work (overtly and/or clandestinely). The United States' measures for changing the regime in Iran, even if they become more aggressive, are not expected to succeed before Iran obtains the bomb. The cost of military preemption and the risks it involves are heavy, and the degree of uncertainty regarding the result of this option is high. Moreover, even if the United States opts for this avenue, it is not certain that it will be able to stop the project completely. The deterrence option is particularly relevant to a scenario in which America accepts Iran's nuclearization, because a "pre-nuclearization" deterrence that involves increasing the military threat on Iran's borders is likely to convince Iran of the necessity of obtaining nuclear weapons to protect itself against American aggression.

There are clearly numerous linkages between the various alternatives, and the United States will probably maneuver its policy between them and along parallel lines. These interactions include:

- The diplomatic route-military threat: the administration's current activity in the diplomatic arena is backed up by signaling the possibility of using an aggressive option ("all options are on the table") in order to increase pressure on Iran. Ultimately the administration will possibly have

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to decide on its course, so as not to harm its credibility.

- Military preemption-regime change: a decision on military preemption may unite the Iranian people around the regime and work against the possibility of toppling it (which some feel has increased since Ahmadinejad's rise to power).

- Deterrence in any case: the deterrence alternative will be implemented by any means possible, and in conjunction with the other alternatives.

- Diplomatic route-regime change: failure of the diplomatic channel may move the administration to increase its efforts to change the regime. At the same time, multiplied efforts for regime change aimed at influencing the Iranian public will undermine the basis for imposing

sanctions that will harm that public.

And there are many other intersecting points between the alternatives.

The inadequate alternatives and problematic choices facing the US call for some additional observations:

- American military action to thwart the Iranian nuclear project is not a "sure bet." The fact that the move with the greatest potential to delay the Iranian nuclear project significantly may eventually not be realized must be taken into consideration.

- It is important to ensure that, at the end of the day, Iran does not have any control (not even of limited research aspects) over the nuclear fuel cycle. This should not be allowed, even in return for an understanding between Iran and the international community, which the US would possibly embrace in the absence of any better alternatives.

- In the coming years the United States is expected to accelerate efforts to deter Iran and may look to deploy a nuclear umbrella over Israel. President Bush has already deployed a degree of such an umbrella, as on a few occasions he has clearly and explicitly declared his intention to defend Israel, including by military means, against a direct Iranian nuclear threat.<sup>17</sup>

- In view of the high price of military preemption, the United States may seek to exercise diplomatic means to isolate Iran as the only country developing a nuclear capability in the region and prevent the development



of a nuclear arms race in the Middle East. In this context the issue of Israel's alleged nuclear capabilities may be included as part of the traditional idea of a nuclear-free Middle East, a subject that has already been mentioned in an IAEA decision on Iran reported to the Security Council on February 4, 2006. Proposals on Israel giving up its alleged capabilities have in fact been raised in Washington by renowned arms control experts, such as Joseph Cirincione from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and Henry Sokolski.<sup>18</sup>

## Notes

1. In a speech while on a visit to Canada (Halifax, December 1, 2004), his first visit outside the US after winning reelection, Bush defined the aims of American foreign policy in the twenty-first century and stated that "the first great commitment is to defend our security and spread freedom by building effective multinational and multilateral institutions and supporting effective multilateral action." See <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/12/20041201-4.html>.
2. In his famous "axis of evil" address (State of the Union address, January 29, 2002), President Bush declared that "Iran aggressively pursues these weapons [of mass destruction] and exports terror, while an unelected few repress the Iranian people's hope for freedom." In his most recent State of the Union address (January 31, 2006), he declared that Iran is "a nation now held hostage by a small clerical elite that is isolating and repressing its people."
3. The Iran Freedom and Support Act (Senate version S.333) instructs the administration to support the efforts of the Iranian people to achieve self-determination with regard to the type of regime in Iran, and allows the president to provide members of the opposition in Iran, who are working to advance democracy there, with financial and political aid.
4. On the policy of cultural repression led by Ahmadinejad and the expectation of further unrest in the country, see Mehdi Khalaji, "Tehran's Renewed War on Culture," *PolicyWatch* #1054, Washington Institute, November 21, 2005; and David Ignatius, "Containing Iran," *Washington Post*, January 20, 2006, p. 17.
5. Richard N. Haass, "Regime Change and its Limits," *Foreign Affairs*, July-Aug. 2005.
6. The administration recently announced a new effort to support political change in Iran by means of economic aid to reform elements, an opposition, and civil rights activists in Tehran. To advance this objective, the administration asked Congress for a budget of \$75 million (in addition to the \$10 million that has already been allocated).
7. Greg Miller, "57% Back a Hit on Iran if Defiance Persists," *Los Angeles Times*, January 27, 2006.
8. Halifax, Canada, December 1, 2004; <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/12/20041201-4.html>.
9. For more on Iran's capabilities in Iraq, see the annual threat assessment submitted by the American Director of National Intelligence (DNI), John Negroponte, to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, February 2, 2006, p. 12.
10. For more on the threat to democratization in the Middle East in the case of an attack on Iran, see Thomas Donnelly, "Strategy for Nuclear Iran" in Henry Sokolski and Patrick Clawson (eds.), *Getting Ready for a Nuclear-Ready Iran*, Nonproliferation Policy Education Center (NPEC), Washington DC, October 2005.
11. For more about the assessments of US intelligence experts on this topic, see Bryan Bender, "Iran is Prepared to Retaliate, Experts Warn," *Boston Globe*, February 12, 2006.
12. For more on the intelligence difficulties, see Patrick Clawson, "How to Reign in Iran without Bombing It," *Los Angeles Times*, October 15, 2004.
13. David Sanger, "Why Not a Strike on Iran?" *New York Times*, January 22, 2006.
14. Thomas Barnett, in an interview to NPR radio, January 18, 2005.
15. Sokolski and Clawson (eds.), *Getting Ready for a Nuclear-Ready Iran*, p. 1. The US Department of Defense and the US army funded and contributed to the research, even though it was clearly stated that it does not represent the position of the US administration.
16. "Deter and Contain: Dealing with Nuclear Iran," Sokolski and Clawson (eds.), *Getting Ready for a Nuclear-Ready Iran*, pp 225-56.
17. See, for example, the president's speech in Cleveland, Ohio, March 30, 2006: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/03/20060320-7.htm>.
18. Joseph Cirincione, "Iran and Israel's Nuclear Weapons," *The Globalist* online, March 11, 2005; and Sokolski and Clawson (eds.), *Getting Ready for a Nuclear-Ready Iran*, pp. 16-17.