

The Israeli Strategy against the Iranian Nuclear Project

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Beginning in 2009, under the Netanyahu-Barak government, Israel devised a new strategy against the Iranian nuclear program that included: clandestine countermeasures to thwart the program (a strategy employed in the preceding years), an intensive diplomatic effort, and the presentation of a concrete military option. The previous strategy was based primarily on clandestine countermeasures (both operational and diplomatic) through use of intelligence forces, while the other two pillars – diplomatic and military – were less well developed. The new (“current”) strategy was necessary because the previous strategy did not halt Iran’s progress toward the nuclear threshold.

The selection of the new strategy reflected a willingness to pay a heavy economic, diplomatic, and security price, bespeaking the greater priority assigned by the Netanyahu-Barak government to the Iranian threat than was assigned by the preceding government. This is evident in the “revealed preference” approach, which reflects the decision maker’s order of priorities based on his willingness to invest resources in various issues.

The new strategy’s success was proven by the leverage it created to propel the international effort to stop the nuclear program, by intensifying sanctions to a level that brought Iran to the negotiating table. It is possible that Iranian fear of an Israeli attack was also a factor. At the same time, this strategy has not yet brought the desired results, as reflected in the international agreement signed by Iran and the major powers on November 24, 2013¹ and the US administration’s willingness to leave Iran with an enrichment infrastructure for civilian purposes in

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the framework of a permanent settlement. Israel's next challenge is to influence the major powers to aim for a permanent settlement that meets Israel's security needs, or alternatively, to prepare for a situation in which no agreement is reached.

The Iranian Nuclear Threat

Iran has posed a threat to Israel since the Islamic regime gained power in 1979. It denies Israel's right to exist, aspires to destroy it, works to delegitimize Israel throughout the world, and heads a political front opposed to peace agreements with Israel. Iran uses terrorism and subversion, and is responsible for arming Hizbollah and Hamas with thousands of missiles and rockets aimed at population centers in Israel.

It is widely believed that by the time the interim agreement was signed in Geneva, Iran had acquired the infrastructure enabling it to create a preliminary nuclear explosive device within a period of a few months to a year from the time it decides to do so,² and had amassed enough uranium at a low level of enrichment to build a number of nuclear bombs after suitable enrichment.³ Iran presumably seeks to attain nuclear weapons capability for several reasons:

- a. To obtain a nuclear deterrent against the major powers, headed by the United States. A nuclear weapon can forestall any possibility of the major powers intervening in Iran's internal affairs or in steps that it takes beyond its borders.
- b. To create a nuclear strategic balance with Israel, given the nuclear capability that Iran attributes to Israel. From its perspective, the balance is designed to deter Israel against an attack and constitute a lever for defeating it in the distant future.
- c. To achieve Iranian regional hegemony in the Middle East.
- d. To strengthen Iran's standing and influence in the Islamic world.
- e. For internal purposes – to enhance the Islamic regime's prestige among the Iranian people in general, and especially among its supporters.

To Iran's way of thinking, a large arsenal is not necessary in order to achieve a nuclear strategic balance with Israel. In April 2012 former Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani said that if a nuclear conflict ever breaks out, Israel, as a small country, could not withstand even one atomic bomb, and it would be "very easy to destroy all of its capabilities."⁴ Iran presumably believes that eliminating Israel's nuclear advantage would give it reason to hope that Israel could be defeated some day in

conventional warfare, especially given Israel's quantitative inferiority. Iran apparently hopes that the balance will limit Israel's ability to undertake conventional military operations deep in the territory of its neighbors and leave Israel more exposed to violence. Iran also seeks to undermine the foundations of the peace process, which is based on Arab recognition that Israel cannot be destroyed in part because of the nuclear force attributed to it, which restricts the scope of conventional warfare.

In addition, the Iranian nuclear project is liable to ignite a nuclear arms race that would aggravate the threat to Israel and the stability of the Middle East and the entire world. Such a race could also ultimately threaten the security of Iran itself. For all these reasons, Israel sees the Iranian nuclear project as a major risk that may become a severe national security threat.

Israeli Strategy until 2009

Until 2009, Israel focused on clandestine efforts (both operational and diplomatic), and was careful to maintain its role in the international diplomatic effort. As former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said, "The US and the other powers should lead the international effort; Israel needs to be a partner in this process, but it cannot and should not lead this international struggle. This was the policy of the Sharon government, and of my government as well."⁵

According to reports in foreign media, the clandestine effort involved many operations by Israel and/or the US, particularly from the middle of the first decade of the twenty-first century, such as the assassination of Iranian scientists involved in the project and cyber attacks against the uranium enrichment centrifuges. The dominance of these efforts was reflected in then-Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's appointment of Mossad head Maj. Gen. (ret.) Meir Dagan as head of all aspects of the Israeli effort to thwart the Iranian nuclear program. In addition to his position as head of the Mossad, Dagan was made responsible for "coordinating between the Israeli agencies dealing with the issue – Military Intelligence, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defense, the Air Force, and the Israel Atomic Energy Commission; presenting Israel's position to decision makers in Western intelligence

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communities; and coordinating the international effort to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons with them.”⁶

These clandestine efforts indeed achieved impressive successes that delayed the Iranian project, but Iran nevertheless continued to progress toward the nuclear threshold. According to a Military Intelligence assessment of late 2009, Iran then had already completed its acquisition of uranium enrichment technology, enriched enough uranium at a low level for an initial bomb (subject to enrichment to a high level), made progress in developing a nuclear explosive device, and developed ballistic missiles capable of carrying a nuclear warhead. At the same time, it was believed that Iran was not trying to build a bomb quickly; it was building a multi-faceted infrastructure that would enable it to break out to nuclear weapons production when it felt that conditions were ripe.⁷

Ultimately, it appears that the political leadership did not make sufficient use of the time provided by the clandestine campaign against the Iranian nuclear program until 2009 to promote additional aspects of the struggle against the Iranian nuclear project, which continued moving forward. Under the Olmert government Israel advanced preparations to deal with the threat of the nuclear project through military force, but it became entangled in the Lebanese and Palestinian theaters. The IDF devoted most of its efforts to rebuilding its land forces following the Second Lebanon War, and the political leadership was preoccupied with trying – unsuccessfully – to promote a permanent settlement with the Palestinians.

The Current Strategy

Starting in 2009, Israeli military attack capability and readiness against Iran were enhanced at an investment of over NIS 10 billion,⁸ and an intensive diplomatic effort was launched in the international community. Since then, the Israeli strategy has rested on three pillars:

- a. Clandestine measures – a continuation of the previous strategy.
- b. A determined independent diplomatic effort, which placed Israel in an extremist position, compared with the position of the major powers, led by the US.
- c. A concrete independent military option – for the sake of deterrence against progress in the nuclear project and as a lever for promoting diplomacy, or a decision to attack on short notice without US involvement, if there is no alternative.

As declared by Prime Minister Netanyahu, the strategic goal is to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons and the capability of producing them, i.e., from becoming a nuclear threshold state. The interim agreement has not changed this goal.⁹

The change in Israel's strategy apparently stemmed from the realization by the Netanyahu-Barak government that the Iranian nuclear threat had made great strides forward,¹⁰ and that obstructing it required strong and vigorous action, even at the cost of friction with Washington and at a high economic cost, and even at the expense of Israel's domestic priorities, which prompted the social protests of the summer of 2011.

The new strategy was designed to effect a substantial change in the campaign against the nuclear project, but it is not known whether such a change actually took place. As long as the clandestine effort was the focus (as in the previous strategy), the staff of the Mossad director general provided the necessary management mechanism. However, with the transition to the new strategy – clandestine, diplomatic, and military – the Prime Minister had to establish a different central management mechanism and employ the Ministry of Foreign Affairs much more actively in public diplomacy roles.

The Concrete Military Option

The most significant change in the new strategy is in the military sphere. To be sure, according to media reports, Israel has for many years been developing military capability for an attack on Iran, and senior Israeli officials hinted at, and also threatened to use, military force against the nuclear project.¹¹ However, it appears that only in recent years have the capability, readiness, and intention been combined in a concrete military option (a "pistol on the table"), which gave the international community an incentive to take decisive action against Iran. It appears that the fear of a greater conflict in the Middle East liable to result from an Israeli attack joined the latent fear of an Iranian bomb. Indeed, the drive by Iran and the P5+1 to sign the interim agreement may have been to reduce the legitimacy of an Israeli attack on Iran.

This was expressed by former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who said that Prime Minister Netanyahu's threats of military action had been taken seriously in Iran, because Israel was perceived as a US ally. She added that Israeli criticism was also helpful to the US in dealing with Russia and China, which were perceived as being closer to

Iran, as occurred in previous initiatives leading to UN Security Council resolutions on sanctions against Iran. In those cases as well, fear that Israel would carry out its threat to attack Iran was effective.¹²

Remarks by Maj. Gen. (ret.) Ido Nehushtan, commander of the Israeli Air Force in 2008-12, indicate that the concrete military option has two elements: proven performance capability and “credibility of use” (“to show the capability and the readiness to use it if and when this is necessary”). In this case, military force will be used only when there is no other choice. Nehushtan made it clear that an attack was preferable to a situation in which Iran acquires nuclear weapons.¹³

The “cocking” episode highlighted the “credibility of use” element. According to the “Uvda” (“Fact”) television program, in 2010 Netanyahu ordered IDF Chief of Staff Gabi Ashkenazi and Mossad head Dagan to prepare the security establishment for an immediate attack against Iran (“cocking a gun”). This instruction also reflected recognition that the clandestine campaign led by the Mossad had outlived its usefulness. According to this report, Ashkenazi and Dagan disagreed with Netanyahu. The chief of staff asserted that “cocking” would bring war with Iran closer. In an interview with “Uvda,” then-Minister of Defense Barak made it clear that the order did not mean going to war. He said, “The chief of staff should build the operational capability. He should tell

the political leadership whether or not it can be carried out from a professional standpoint, and he can, and should, attach his recommendation, but it can be carried out against his recommendation.”¹⁴ “Uvda” exposed the poor relations between the political leadership and senior figures in the security establishment, a sorry state of affairs in the face of as formidable a challenge as the Iranian issue.

In 2011, the dispute reached the media. Public discussion centered on the question whether Israel should attack Iran. Those opposed to an attack, headed by Dagan (after leaving his position in the Mossad), asserted that it would lead to a full

scale war with the participation of Iran’s allies and Israel would suffer great damage,¹⁵ and that in any case the military option would delay the nuclear project by at most a few years. Others claimed that a surgical

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military strike against Iran's nuclear facilities would not lead to a general regional war, and that delaying the project until the next round would likely prove to be an important achievement in dealing with this grave threat, despite the anticipated counter-response.

The Intensive Diplomatic Effort

The immediate intensive effort is led personally by Prime Minister Netanyahu, who has undertaken the job to persuade the international community of the gravity of the Iranian threat and the need to eliminate the nuclear project. The military option was designed to enable him to do this, if the international community did not reach this conclusion on its own. The diplomatic effort succeeded in prompting intensification of sanctions to the point where they brought Iran to the negotiating table; however, in the course of the dialogue between the major powers and the new Iranian President, Hassan Rouhani, a material dispute between Israel and the US emerged.

The Dispute with the US

While Israel is demanding that the Iranian nuclear infrastructure be dismantled entirely, as was also demanded by the UN Security Council ("track A"), the US administration's position is that Iran can retain limited enrichment capability for civilian purposes ("track B"). This position was presented clearly by President Obama in December 2013 at the Saban Forum. He stated that insisting that Iran refrain from any enrichment on its territory was unrealistic, and that in order to achieve a permanent settlement, Iran should be allowed to conduct a very curtailed civilian nuclear program subject to tight supervision. Obama's remarks indicated that with acceptance of a limited civilian program, Iran should be required to concede the main facilities and equipment of its nuclear project, including advanced centrifuges and a heavy water facility.¹⁶

The United States approach, namely, the idea that "insisting that Iran refrain from any enrichment on its territory is unrealistic," is a major success for Iran in face of of Israel's unsuccessful public diplomacy efforts, particularly in the final months of 2013. A senior American official who spoke with members of an Israeli delegation in early October 2013 said that Western leaders were coming to realize that Iran will probably retain some nuclear capability, while Netanyahu was insisting on setting conditions that most experts say are unrealistic. The question is whether

it is better to keep a limited Iranian capability under tight supervision than to insist on the total dismantling of Iran's nuclear capability (and perhaps to achieve no agreement at all).¹⁷ This approach bespeaks Iran's successful advocacy of its position concerning continued enrichment in Iran and an assessment by Western experts that downplays the risk and denies the possibility of a change in Iran's position. According to this conception, only track B is possible. Even if the administration believes this about the results of the negotiations on a permanent settlement, this declaration, even before the negotiations begin, gives Iran a clear advantage. It appears that President Obama's statement at the Saban Forum was to set a goal for his administration that he regards as achievable, and to adjust the expectations of his target audience accordingly.

In contrast to the US administration, Israel regards the continued existence of a uranium enrichment infrastructure in Iran as a major risk. Several reasons can be cited for this. First, Iran has not changed its intentions. Despite the exposure of its military nuclear project, Iran continues to claim it is a project for "peaceful purposes" only. Any civilian project remaining in Iran is therefore liable to grow into a military project in the future, accompanied by concealment measures. Next time, however, given the fact that Iran has already neared the nuclear threshold and has the requisite know-how and experience, its breakout is liable to be quick. Israel fully distrusts the Iranian regime, while the US wants to put the regime's intentions to the test, in light of the change in the regime's approach since the election of Rouhani.

Second, Iran has no urgent need for an enrichment facility "for peaceful purposes." A project for civilian purposes can be carried out even without enrichment on Iranian territory. Moreover, Iran has no pressing need to develop nuclear energy for its civilian economy, because it has the world's largest natural gas reserves and possesses 10 percent of the world's proven oil reserves. Assuming the veracity of the Iranian position, why should it insist on retaining an enrichment capability of limited importance to its economy at the expense of continued sanctions, instead of accelerating the development of its gas production infrastructure and exporting the gas? If Iran insists on this point, it is reasonable to assume that the project involved is not a civilian one.

Third, supervision will be difficult and costly. As long as the infrastructure exists, there will always be concern that Iran will breakout to nuclear weapons capability as soon as it identifies a weakness

in the international system. This course of events will give the US and Israel a relatively short alert, compared with what complete dismantling of the infrastructure affords, and will require many years of complex supervision and costly investment in intelligence. This investment will multiply, assuming that similar projects spring up in other countries. Furthermore, there is also a risk of overreaction, leading to a cycle of violence caused by a false alarm.

The Gravity of the Threat

The fundamental reasons for the dispute between the US and Israel are different assessments of the gravity of the Iranian nuclear threat and a gap in the assessment of the opportunity to achieve a better agreement, given the effect of the sanctions on Iran.

President Obama has underscored that preventing Iranian possession of nuclear weapons is an American and an international interest, not solely an Israeli one. An objective observer of the dispute between him and Netanyahu, however, is likely to receive the impression that the nuclear project and Iran's becoming a threshold country are an exclusively Israeli problem, while the threat to the US is much more distant and contingent only on Iran's actual possession of nuclear weapons – and that even then there is a long road before Iran can harm American interests. Obama explains the gap like this: "I think Prime Minister Netanyahu understandably is very skeptical about Iran, given the threats that they've made repeatedly against Israel, given the aid that they've given to organizations like Hezbollah and Hamas that have fired rockets into Israel. If I were the Prime Minister of Israel, I would be very wary as well of any kind of talk from the Iranians."¹⁸

To the same extent it can be asked from where the US derives its lower estimation of the threat. It is possible that the US administration is affected by the understandable anxiety about involvement in another theater of conflict, following its experience of Iraq and Afghanistan. Furthermore, it is likely that the administration is relying on a technical intelligence estimate of Iran's distance from a nuclear weapon in an orderly serial progression from uranium enrichment to obtaining a standard nuclear weapon. However,

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the capability of delivering an Iranian bomb to remote targets around the world, including the US, does not necessarily require many years of developing intercontinental launching equipment and adaptation of nuclear warheads to missiles. It can be based on larger explosive devices delivered secretly to distant locations by various means.

In any case, when the possible uses Iran is liable to make of nuclear capability are examined, even at the threshold level, a number of serious threats to the US and other countries around the world stand out. First, Iran is liable to expose the US and other countries to violence. Nuclear capability will increase Iran's readiness to use terrorism and subversion, and restrict the ability of the US to act against it, even if Iran becomes involved in disasters like the 9/11 terrorist attacks, or if it wants to take control of assets in the Persian Gulf.¹⁹

Second, Iranian nuclear capability will reinforce its hegemonic aspiration in the global energy market, especially in the Persian Gulf, which contains more than half the world's oil reserves, and incur potential for a future crisis. Consider Saddam Hussein's attempt to

dictate oil prices: How would the situation have looked had the Iraqi dictator possessed nuclear weapons before the invasion of Kuwait in 1990? Iranian hegemony in the Persian Gulf would have a global effect. American dependence on imported oil has lessened, but the need for oil among East Asian and European countries is expected to grow.

Third, nuclear capability will magnify the Iranian threat to other countries, encourage the collapse of the nonproliferation regime, and be liable to lead Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Turkey to develop nuclear capabilities.²⁰ This process may then spread all over the world. Finally, Iran is liable to intervene more in the affairs of other countries with large Muslim populations through subversion, terrorism, and support of extremist Islamic movements, as it does in Lebanon.

As to the opportunity to generate a strategic turnaround regarding the nuclear threat, Iran came to the negotiating table because of the economic sanctions, which became effective starting in 2012 and severely damaged Iran. Iran could continue to withstand the sanctions at a high cost, but

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probably believed that further escalation was in store (more tightening of the sanctions, an economic blockade, and military action), and that even a breakout to a bomb would not guarantee the end of its isolation. The effectiveness of the sanctions weapon against Iran stemmed from the dilemma it created between external security needs (the nuclear program) and the regime's internal challenges (its image and internal stability).

Following the sanctions, voices were heard in Iran calling for "Islamic realism" (in contrast to "extremist idealism") in dealing with the US. For example, in September 2013 Rafsanjani claimed that compromise was the order of the day, as the Prophet Muhammad had done in the Hudaybiyyah agreement, which prepared the foundations for a bloodless victory, and as Khomeini had done when he was forced to sign the ceasefire agreement with Iraq in July 1988, despite his promise to overthrow Saddam Hussein. This approach was adopted, at least tactically, by Iranian Supreme Leader Khamenei, who answered Rafsanjani by saying, "A wrestler may exercise flexibility for a tactical reason, but he won't forget who his rival is and what his goal is."²¹ President Rouhani noted with satisfaction in December 2013 that the interim agreement was already contributing to Iran's economy.²²

Conclusion

The road to a solution of the Iranian nuclear project is still in its initial phases. It appears that the US did not fully take advantage of the means of pressure available to it and the opportunity to shift to track A; already at an early stage, it hastily released Iran from the Security Council demand for complete dismantling of its nuclear infrastructure.

The heart of the problem is the gap between the assessments by Israel and the US and other countries of how grave the Iranian threat is, and especially the significance of allowing Iran to retain its enrichment infrastructure. This gap is not due merely to the threat against Israel; it also concerns the threat facing the US and other countries. Unless Iran itself makes a crude mistake, this gap can be narrowed only by public diplomacy. The lesson for Israel in the short term, based on its profound knowledge of the Iranian threat, is therefore to redouble its efforts in public diplomacy in all the target countries and audiences that can affect the permanent settlement, in order to limit the possibility that Iran will

become a nuclear threshold country and thereby pose a threat to their interests.

Iran should not be expected to abandon its ambition to obtain nuclear weapons; it will merely postpone it to a more distant future. The goal should therefore be to put Iran at a maximum distance from a bomb, so that the tactical change in the regime's position will gradually become strategically significant for Israel and the rest of the world. For this purpose, Israel should adhere to its current strategy, whose short term goal is to achieve and implement an optimal permanent settlement between the major powers and Iran as soon as possible. The first priority is a return to track A.

If this track is blocked, Israel will have to endorse track B for lack of an alternative, and be deeply involved in its particulars. It is important to verify that the restricted enrichment capability and tight supervision on this track will not allow Iran to break out to a military project without discovery and response, and that the "distance from the threshold" will be maintained, based on criteria agreed to by the US and Israel that will not be subject to different interpretations in the future, as is the case at present. It should be verified that the civilian project will be minimal, and it must be explicitly defined which activities Iran can conduct in this framework and which it cannot.

The negotiations with Iran have hitherto involved a technical discussion, without Iran being required to refrain from aggression against Israel, while in practice the interim agreement detracts from the legitimacy of Israel's right to defend itself by attacking the nuclear project in Iran. Therefore, in an agreement Iran should be required to recognize the right of Israel and all the countries in the region to exist in peace and security, and to abandon its involvement in terrorism. For its part, Israel should act with determination and moderation to lower the level of tension between it and Iran as much as possible.

In the systemic sphere, Israel requires an intensive effort that requires the definition of clear and realistic goals, an outlining as to how the campaign should be conducted, established mechanisms to conduct it, and a detailed plan of action for the narrow window of opportunity. In addition, there is a clear need to prepare for the possibility that the current negotiations will not achieve Israel's objectives.

Notes

- 1 Amos Yadlin, "The Geneva Agreement: Neither a 'Historic Agreement' nor a 'Historic Failure,'" *INSS Insight* No. 489, November 27, 2013.
- 2 In an AP interview on October 5, 2013, in answer to a question about Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's assessment that Iran was six months away from a bomb, US President Obama said, "Our assessment continues to be a year or more away." See <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/text-obamas-exclusive-interview-ap>.
- 3 Neri Brenner, "MI Chief: Iran Can Produce 4 Bombs," *Ynet*, February 2, 2012, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4184286,00.html>.
- 4 Rafsanjani was President of Iran from 1989 until 1997, and led Iran's nuclear project during that period. This statement echoes his statement of December 2001, when he declared that one nuclear bomb in Israel would destroy everything, while one such bomb would only cause damage to the Muslim world. He asserted that his statements were not designed to threaten Israel, but to emphasize that making the region nuclear free was worthwhile. Source: MEMRI April 5, 2012, http://www.memri.org/cgi-webaxy/sal/sal.pl?lang=he&ID=107345_memri&act=show&dbid=articles&dataid=3111.
- 5 See Attila Somfalvi, "Olmert Slams PM: We Have Declared War on US," *Ynet*, December 1, 2013, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4460069,00.html>.
- 6 Yossi Melman and Dan Raviv, *Shadow Wars* (Tel Aviv: Yediot Books, 2012), chapter 1.
- 7 Ephraim Kam and Ephraim Asculai, "Countdown to the Iranian Bomb," *Strategic Assessment* 12, no. 4 (2010): 7-20.
- 8 Amos Harel and Barak Ravid, "Olmert: Netanyahu's Wrangling with the Obama Administration over Iran Endangers Israel," *Haaretz*, December 1, 2013, <http://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/1.2179610>. See also "Olmert: Netanyahu Spent 11 Billion on 'Adventurous Fantasies,'" *Haaretz*, January 11, 2013, <http://www.haaretz.co.il/news/elections/1.1905437>.
- 9 Netanyahu at the Likud Conference, Channel 22, December 19, 2013.
- 10 MK Tzahi Nanegbi, former Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee chairman, noted on December 1, 2013 at an INSS conference that great progress had been made in the Iranian nuclear project in 2005-9, during the period of the Olmert government.
- 11 For example, then-Minister of Transportation Lt. Gen. (ret.) Shaul Mofaz stated in June 2008, "If Iran continues its program to develop nuclear weapons, we will attack it." He added, "A military operation against Iran will be with the consent, understanding, and support of the US." See "US on an Attack on Iran: We Prefer Diplomacy," *Ynet*, June 7, 2008, <http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-3552786,00.html>.
- 12 Eli Bardenstein, "Clinton: Criticism by Israel of Nuclear Agreement Helps US," *Maariv*, December 22, 2013, <http://www.nrg.co.il/online/1/ART2/533/010.html>.

- 13 "Nehushtan: The Goal is not to Attack but to Prevent Iran from Acquiring Nuclear Capability," *Nana10* website, October 26, 2013, <http://news.nana10.co.il/Article/?ArticleID=1013640>.
- 14 "Uvda," *Channel 2*, November 4, 2012; "Netanyahu: We Won't Let the Americans Decide for Us," *Mako* website, November 5, 2012, http://www.mako.co.il/tv-ilana_dayan/2013-e2afde9009f4a310/Article-c0bb99a4b90da31006.htm&sCh=3d385dd2dd5d4110&pId=565984153.
- 15 Meir Dagan: "Barak Said There Will Be 500 Fatalities? There Will Be Many More," *Haaretz*, October 29, 2011, <http://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/1.1579101>.
- 16 "President Obama Speaks at Saban Forum – Part B," *Channel 2 News*, December 7, 2013, <http://www.mako.co.il/news-channel2/Weekend-Newscast/Article-8cbc2161e8ec241004.htm>.
- 17 *Mako*, October 5, 2013, <http://www.mako.co.il/news-world/international/Article-b59002a16d88141004.htm>.
- 18 Obama AP interview, October 5, 2013, English, <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/501259/text-of-obamas-exclusive-interview-with-the-ap>.
- 19 Mark Doyle, "A Nuclear-Armed Iran and US Extended Deterrence in the Gulf," *Strategic Assessment* 16, no. 3 (2013): 47-56.
- 20 Following the signing of the interim agreement, Abdullah al-Askar, chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the Shura Council (which advises the Saudi Arabian government), said, "I think Saudi Arabia will go ahead if Iran goes ahead [and gets a nuclear weapon]. I think Egypt, maybe Turkey, Saudi Arabia, maybe the Emirates, would go ahead and acquire the same technology." Source: Reuters, *Walla News*, November 24, 2013, <http://news.walla.co.il/?w=/13/2697449>.
- 21 "Leadership Struggle between Khamenei and Rafsanjani: English," MEMRI, September 24, 2013, http://www.memri.org.il/cgi-webaxy/sal/sal.pl?lang=he&ID=107345_memri&act=show&dbid=articles&dataid=3490.
- 22 Doron Peskin, "Rouhani Optimistic: Geneva Agreement Already Helping Iranian Economy," *Calcalist*, December 8, 2013, <http://www.calcalist.co.il/world/articles/0,7340,L-3618844,00.html>.